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Narrative, Agency, and Mood: On the Social Construction of National History in Scotland

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INTRODUCTION

It is a commonplace in the study of nationalism that the construction of national identity inevitably relies on the creation and use of narratives—part history, part myth—that imbue nations and nationalist projects with coherence and purpose. This article seeks to render this idea more complex and analytically useful by asking how such narrative discourses become connected to personal identities. Why and how do people invest themselves in nations and nationalisms? An important part of the answer lies in the ways that constructions of narrative and agency at the collective level articulate with experiences of narrative and agency at a personal level. It is our constant existential concern with power that binds together collectivities and individuals, national narratives, and life histories. We must attend to this connection in order to better understand the powerful resonances nationalist discourses often have.

I use data from my research on the nationalist movement in Scotland to illustrate this argument, offering it as a specific example of a general process. Nationalism in this case is understood broadly to refer to demands for greater political autonomy, whether in the form of devolved government or independent statehood, and associated calls for recognition of a distinct cultural identity. The recent establishment of a modern democratic parliament in Edinburgh, officially opened on 1 July 1999, was the outcome of three decades of building pressure for this constitutional change. This movement has roots that go back to United Kingdom-wide demands for home rule in both Scotland and Ireland in the late nineteenth century, demands that in Scotland were a response to the growing centralization of power at Westminster. The Scottish National Party (SNP) was established by 1934, but enjoyed little success until the 1960s, being marginalized by the larger project of the expanding welfare state and consolidation of a British identity around the enduring vision of empire and the trials of two World Wars. But the movement gradually gained strength, stimulated in the 1960s by rising economic expectations, in the 1970s by the vision of underwriting an independent Scotland with revenues from newly discovered

North Sea oil, and in the 1980s and 1990s by a rejection of Thatcherism and a defensive stance in regard to the welfare state. The latter was often seen as a peculiarly Scottish institution under attack by Conservative governments elected by English constituencies.

It was this last period of opposition to the neoliberal project of Conservative government after 1979 that served to consolidate Scottish public opinion around a consensus in favor of a strong devolved parliament. During this time, support for the SNP has grown, with considerable highs and lows, and support for Labour—converted to the devolution cause in the 1980s—has remained solid. Meanwhile, support for the Conservatives, implacable opponents of constitutional change for so many years, collapsed at the 1997 general election. Beyond the party political dynamic, in which competition for votes from the SNP helped lead Labour to a strong commitment to devolution, there has been a broader, left-leaning nationalist movement embedded in the institutions and media of Scottish civil society. A complex array of campaigning groups emerged with names like Campaign for a Scottish Parliament, Common Cause, Democracy for Scotland, and especially the Scottish Constitutional Convention. They became instrumental in coordinating the parties, influential intellectuals, and the broader electorate around the movement and finally the successful Referendum on the establishment of a parliament with tax-raising powers in September 1997.

As a cultural anthropologist, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork throughout Scotland, but primarily in the Central Belt (Edinburgh-Glasgow) in 1993–1994 (Hearn 2000). This involved participant observation and interviews with people in social networks that revolved around pro-home rule campaigning groups, political parties, community education, and the arts, academia, and journalism. The interviews quoted in the latter part of this article come from that fieldwork. By linking this data to academic and popular texts dealing with Scottish history and historiography, I will offer an interpretation of how the social process of imagining national history plays a key role in the political consolidation and mobilization around the nationalist project.

NARRATIVE, AGENCY, AND MOOD

Before turning to the Scottish case in more detail, let me begin by examining the relations between the ideas of narrative, agency, and the construction of individual and collective subjects. It is widely accepted that a core ingredient in the discourses of nationalist movements is the telling of history, the portrayal of the nation as a continuous actor on the historical stage (e.g. Smith 1999:57–95; McCrone 1998:52–55). So strong is the need to create this national narrative, that nations are obliged to “forget” things and “get history wrong” in Renan’s famous phrase (1996), in order to achieve the requisite narrative coherence. As for the social forces that generate nationalisms and their discourses in the first place, there is of course diverse opinion. Some argue that the pressures of

economic modernization, and particularly its uneven development, is a central cause (Gellner 1983; Hechter 1975; Mattosian 1994; Nairn 1977). Others place more emphasis on the role of the state, and military and economic competition between states, in nation building (Breuilly 1993; Mann 1988; Tilly 1975), and still others see ethnicity as an especially significant factor (Connor 1994; Smith 1991), relatively independent from the forces of economics and state building. Within these three broad and often overlapping theoretical tendencies, certain themes have often been emphasized that help explain how national identities are created and recreated. Gellner (1983) placed particular emphasis on the state's role in cultivating literacy and a common language through mass education to meet the needs of an industrialized economy (cf. Deutsch 1953). Anderson (1991) has also given significant weight to the spread of literacy and standardized languages, although Hastings (1997) has argued that vernacular translations of the Bible were a significant factor much earlier than realized by Anderson, Gellner, and others who emphasize nationalism's modernity. In such "modernist" approaches there has often been a focus on the role of the state in creating "invented traditions" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1984) that put a patina of antiquity on newly formed nationalities, and on unifying political symbols in the form of monuments and public rituals (Mosse 1975). Finally, in terms of social structure, many thinkers from across the theoretical spectrum have stressed the role of intellectuals and middle classes in responding to changing political and economic conditions and articulating new national identities (Greenfeld 1992; Hroch 1985; Kedourie 1993; Nairn 1977; Smith 1994).

It is not the purpose of this essay to adjudicate between these approaches, all of which have merit. While I prefer an approach that defines nationalism as a phenomenon arising out of the political economic transformations of the last five hundred years, bound up with the rise of capitalism, the modern state, and Euro-American hegemony, I see economic, political, ethnic, and class processes as equally implicated in nationalism. My purpose here is with a more specific question that does not directly impinge on macro-theoretical debates about the ultimate causes of nationalism. This is how the anthropologist Anthony Cohen has put the question that concerns me: "The 'nation' is a grand generalization that does not discriminate among, and says nothing specific about, its individual members. By contrast, the individual is highly specific and is distinguished from other individuals in innumerable and very particular ways. Why, then, do individuals elect to identify themselves (to themselves as well as to others) in terms of the nation?" (1996:802).

I want to argue that an important part of the answer to this question has to do with how actual people connect with the collective narratives that their lives and particular circumstances present to them. Let me begin with narrative in general, before I turn to nationalist narratives in Scotland. The social historian Margaret Somers has wrestled long and hard with the role of narrative in social analysis and has offered a useful framework for thinking about aspects and

forms of narrativity (see Somers 1992, 1994, 1995; and Somers and Gibson 1994).¹ Somers' arguments about narrativity arise out of a concern to develop an analytic framework that facilitates relational and particularizing as opposed to categorical and universalizing approaches to identity. This includes critiques of recent approaches to "identity politics" which have had a propensity to explain experience and action through location in social categories (1994:607–13), and of universalizing theories of social action (e.g. rational choice, see Somers 1998) that dehistoricize and decontextualize social meaning and action. For Somers, social action is not explained by locating social actors in common-sense social identities (e.g. gender, race, class), but rather by building up a picture of the salient narratives people participate in and the network of social relations in which this happens.

Somers emphasizes two aspects of narrativity: "emplotment" and "evaluative criteria." Emplotment, unlike simple chronology or categorization, situates events and experiences within a coherent temporal order, no matter how fantastic: "To make something understandable in the context of narrative is to give it historicity and relationality. This works for us because when events are located in a temporal (however fleeting) and sequential plot we can then explain their relationship to other events. Plot can thus be seen as the logic or syntax of narrative" (Somers 1994:617).

For Somers, such emplotments inevitably contain "evaluative criteria," which are necessary for culling relevant knowledge out the welter of human experience: "in the face of a potentially limitless array of social experiences deriving from social contact with events, institutions, and people, the evaluative capacity of emplotment demands and enables *selective appropriation* in constructing narratives. A plot must be thematic" (*ibid.*, original emphasis).

Thus narrative is seen as crucial for orienting and guiding behavior, making both practical and moral sense of reality. Somers then proceeds to formulate four main dimensions of narrativity: ontological, public, metanarrative, and conceptual (*ibid.*:618–20). By "ontological narratives" she means the ways people use narratives to make sense of their own lives on a personal level, investing their lives in various stories.² This often involves appropriating and customizing "public narratives": "... those narratives attached to cultural and institutional formations larger than the single individual, to intersubjective networks or institutions, however local or grand . . ." (*ibid.*:619). Narratives explaining the rising and falling fortunes of families, corporations, and nations, or periods of unemployment, or epidemic illness, would be examples. Metanarratives are meant much in the sense made popular by Lyotard (1989), as master narratives that encompass much or all of human history—either as master frameworks of explanation, for example, the Individual versus Society, or progressive stories of the rise (and sometimes fall) of Nationalism, Liberalism, Socialism, Globalization, and the like. Finally, conceptual narratives are those modes of explanation formulated by social researchers in their efforts to un-

derstand society and history, and which often interpenetrate with metanarratives. Somers' entire project is one of devising a conceptual narrative that is more sensitive to human variability, one that recursively appreciates the role of narrativity both in social theory and throughout social life. My concern in this article is with the analytic utility of, and relationships between, Somers' first three dimensions of narrative, especially the ontological dimension. I will not address the conceptual dimension, which inevitably leads to metatheoretical discussions beyond my present purpose.

Somers' stresses that her objective is to come up with a better way of understanding agency, one which appreciates the contexts and specificity of social action, and thus tracing the explanations for social action down to the ontological level is obviously crucial. As she puts it, "So basic to agency is ontological narrativity that if we want to explain—that is, to know, to make sense of, to account for, perhaps even to predict, anything about the practices of social and historical actors, their collective actions, their modes and meanings of institution-building and group-formations, and their apparent incoherencies—we must first recognize the place of ontological narratives in social life" (*ibid.*:618).

I am very sympathetic to this argument, but it is also at this point that I start to become unsatisfied and want to go further, for two reasons. First, we are left with little sense of how these various dimensions of narrativity interact, both as social processes and in the experiences of individuals. I want to suggest that this has to do with how agency and narrative are conceptualized here, the former as a kind of primary, unformed human capacity for action, the latter as a structuring filter through which beliefs and practices are oriented and directed, thus shaping social action. What is missing here is an understanding that, for persons, agency is not simply either raw potential for action, or the actual expression of action, but also something in between, something that is deeply felt as an existential need to act, that is either being frustrated or realized in general. We need another, mediating concept that directs our attention to this middle ground between the potential for and performance of agency, to our dispositions toward agency.

Secondly, in addition to the aspects of "emplotment" and "evaluative criteria," narratives characteristically involve protagonists. A narrative is not simply a thematic syntax of events, it is a path carved, a journey charted and projected through the world, usually by one or a few central characters. When a person identifies with a collective narrative, of the nation for instance, they do not simply locate themselves within that orienting story; they invest themselves in and identify with the central protagonist, the collectivity, the nation. A metaphorical link is forged between individual and collective identities.³ It is because public and meta-narratives have key protagonists—the nation, the class, the race, the gender, the members of the profession, the leaders and employees of the corporation, the great people of 'this city'—that individuals

identify with them. It is through an isomorphism between the individual and the collective as protagonist that people become attached to narratives.

Thus narratives do not just provide conceptual maps and templates for action, they frequently say something urgent about power and agency, both for collectivities and for individuals. This is certainly true for narratives about nationalism. Moreover (and here I am being contentiously speculative in order to push our thinking forward), despite their complexity and variation, narratives can be understood as corresponding to a limited set of paradigmatic agentic situations or dispositions, that help give narratives a sense of relevance to the individual. At least part of what binds Somers' public and meta-narratives to our ontological narratives is that they appeal to us according to how they explain, justify, and resonate with our actual experiences of agency, of empowerment and disempowerment. Narratives can be understood according to how they express one of three paradigmatic agentic situations:

(1) *With the flow*: The agent/protagonist's will and desire is compatible with and complimentary to the flow/employment of an encompassing narrative, justifying the agent's actions in the world, ultimately placing the agent in harmony with the order of things.

(2) *Against the flow*: The agent/protagonist's will and desire runs contrary to the flow/employment of an encompassing narrative, eliciting either stoic resignation, or defiant resistance. In the latter case, a narrative of struggle may be contained within a larger narrative of the first type, in which the protagonist expects to be ultimately justified.

(3) *Cross-currents*: The agent/protagonist's will is relatively indeterminate, and the sense of employment relatively weak and open-ended, eliciting either an anxious desire for a stronger narrative frame, or a confident sense of relatively unconstrained self-direction.

These are of course ideal types, and no individual life or collective history can be pigeon-holed into one of them. The point is that specific narratives about collective identities, of which there are usually multiple and competing versions, are liable to take on one of these forms. Not only that, but different individual and collective agents may relate to the same public and meta-narratives through different agentic paradigms. One can celebrate, be pitted against, or be baffled by the narrative of globalization. But the actual appeal of specific, historically situated narratives for individuals (in their "relational settings" as Somers would put it), and how individuals respond to these narratives, will have to do with how these paradigmatic forms of narrative-protagonist relations resonate with personal experience. This aspect of how our sense of agency connects with narratives I will call a "mood." I play on the double meaning of that word, on the one hand meaning a feeling, a state of mind, an inclination to do something, a disposition; and on the other referring, as in grammar, to a limited set of forms a verb can take, expressing how it is being used by the speaker. I should make it clear that this is not a matter of identifying a realm of 'feeling'

or ‘affect’ in these moods, as opposed to ‘logic’ or ‘cognition’ in narratives proper. Moods and narratives are complex mental structures, with both affective and cognitive dimensions. The point of the concept of mood is to help us understand how individual and collective senses of agency become intertwined. Neither are moods simply an aspect of narratives. They are characteristic relationships between social actors and the narratives they find meaningful and important. It is a relationship that is evoked partly by this parallelism between the person and the collectivity as protagonists-in-narratives, and partly by associated clusters of symbols and icons that call up these relationships in a more general way, as do the great heroes, achievements, tragedies, and martyrs that usually populate national histories.

It is perhaps helpful if I flesh out this concept by differentiating it from some similar concepts that it may echo. Raymond Williams developed the concept of a “structure of feeling” (1977:132–33) in an attempt to get beyond more static formulations such as ‘ideology’ and ‘world view’ in cultural analysis. This concept is closely connected to his concern with “emergent” forms of culture, as the most lively and vibrant dimension of culture at any given moment, and in contrast to what he called its “dominant” and “residual” dimensions. Williams’ relates “structures of feeling” to the literary notion of “style,” being a characteristic take on the shared experience of a given period. He could have usefully compared it to the idea of *zeitgeist*, which it also resembles. His aim was to link the more fixed cognitive frameworks that guide social behavior to a more fluid but still structured experience—something still in process. The concept was for him a “cultural hypothesis,” a guide for understanding the more personally felt aspects of social experience in a given generation or period.

In his celebrated attempt to analyze the power of religious symbols Clifford Geertz identifies their capacity to inculcate “moods and motivations” in those who believe (1973:96–98). With this pair of terms he aims to encompass two aspects of how symbols orient belief and behavior. On the one hand symbols motivate, leading behavior in particular directions, toward particular ends. On the other hand they instill moods, general attitudes towards the world that color perception and experience. There is something of a cognitive/affective division of labor between these two concepts for Geertz. It is a formulation that both reflects and tries to move beyond classical anthropological concerns with cultural styles and personality types, and is meant to help explain the regularities of social outlook and action among communities of believers, by helping to characterize whole complexes of social meaning.

The concept of “mood” put forward here shares with Williams’ “structure of feeling” and Geertz’s “symbols, moods and motivations” a concern for how conscious thought and complexes of ideas merge with affect and experience. It partakes of the same conceptual genealogy. But it is actually a much more circumscribed concept, specifically concerned with how narratives gain salience for persons. It is less concerned to supplement a more structural and cognitivist

dimension of social analysis with one more sensitive to affect, and more concerned with how narratives, across the dimensions defined by Somers, are bound together by how they express, both cognitively and emotionally, human experiences of power. I try to illustrate and elaborate what I mean below through an examination of the Scottish case, but I suspect that this conceptual apparatus is applicable to other cases of national history, and to social movements and narrative discourses more generally.

SCOTTISH NARRATIVES

I would here like to map out an evolution of dominant narratives within the historiography of Scotland, and in the next section I will turn specifically to the role of moods in this same process. I am not applying the concepts of narrative and mood discussed above rigidly and mechanically, but rather I am adopting them as a general perspective that helps illuminate key aspects of my account.

Marinell Ash's celebrated study of Walter Scott, *The Strange Death of Scottish History* (1980) revolves around a paradox: although Walter Scott is seen as perhaps the inventor of the historical novel, with all its attendant nationalism and romanticism, and although he actively worked to promote popular interest in Scottish history, his life was followed by a massive turning away from that very project in Scotland. While many have blamed this on Scott's supposed backward looking romanticism, Ash argues that larger social forces were at work: "The spirit of Scott's historical revolution was deeply utilitarian and initially his revolution fulfilled a national need. But when his conception was no longer useful to the Scots they abandoned it, speaking as usual in terms of liberation and freedom. The Reformation was freedom, the Union was freedom, the Disruption [a schism in the Church of Scotland in 1843] was freedom, and the death of Scottish history was freedom. Perhaps" (Ash 1980:150).

This profound rejection of Scottish history, which affected both Scottish and English historians, lasted well into the twentieth century. Discussing his frustrations upon setting out to write a political history of Scotland in the 1970s, the Scottish historian Michael Fry has asserted:

Here, in the consensus reached by all Scottish historians and political scientists of note by about the time of the First World War, was the answer to the question I had posed myself 20 years ago. There were no books on Scottish political history because Scottish political history did not exist. What was more, it ought not to exist, at least so long as Scotland expected to continue enjoying the benefits bestowed on her when the Whigs had set out, a century previously, to arrange her final and irrevocable assimilation to England. By this means, among others, civilization was advancing and I, or anybody else with a mind to diligent inquiry, should content myself with that and kindly keep my doubts to myself (1992:86).

Fry calls this the "whig interpretation of Scottish history." The whig version of Scotland's history coalesced in the nineteenth century out of two earlier strands. There had already existed a mytho-history in England (associated with

Sir Edward Coke in the early seventeenth century) that praised England's "ancient constitution" and long-standing defense of Anglo-Saxon liberties. To this, David Hume, in the mode of the "conjectural history" of the Scottish Enlightenment, countered that it was rapid social and economic progress that had in fact secured greater liberty in England and subsequently Scotland (Fry 1992:73). Later still Edmund Burke provided a Tory version of this organicist narrative in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* 1969 [1790], arguing that the strength and superiority of the British state lay in its long, organic evolution, unbroken by radical revolution. By the early nineteenth century these various themes of constitutional evolution and socio-economic progress had become fused into the classic whig narrative, exemplified by such historians as Macaulay (1849), Cockburn (1852), and Buckle (1964 [1861]). In this narrative, constitutionalism, democracy, and economic 'improvement'—in other words, all things good—seemed to flow from England to Scotland and, via the empire, to the rest of the world. It is in many of its essentials the antecedent of modernization theory in the twentieth century.

This new historiographic hegemony was underwritten by the political-economic processes at work, specifically the rise to power of the Whigs and their evolution into the Liberal Party, with its program of constitutional reform in the nineteenth century. Scotland had retained a considerable degree of autonomy at the time of Union in 1707, allowing it to be largely governed through a tightly controlled system of patronage in the eighteenth century. But the strains and upheavals of the nineteenth century (industrialization, urbanization, poverty, a major Church schism in 1843) drew it much further into the orbit of the British state by the end of the century. It was through the increase in the franchise, especially in 1832 in Scotland, that the Liberals managed to out-manuever the conservative, landed Tories, politically eclipsing them for the rest of the century (Fry 1987; Paterson 1994).

In the twentieth century the whig historical paradigm continued, but with a change of content. Perhaps the most widely read social historian of Scotland, T. C. Smout, explicitly draws comparisons between the transformation of the Scottish economy after the Union and twentieth-century theories of economic development in the 'Third World' using W. W. Rostow's language of the necessary conditions for economic "take-off" (1972:223–30). This narrative also continued to inform understandings of developments within the United Kingdom state itself. As the empire shrank, the modern welfare state grew to become the new expression of this steady organic growth toward (now social) democracy (cf. Marshall 1983). In the process, British socialism and the Labour Party became heavily invested in a whiggish understanding of British history as well. Thus an historical discourse—which had roots in Tory conservatism and traditionalism in the eighteenth century, and then developed into the justification of Whig/Liberal parliamentarianism in the nineteenth century—had mutated to become the vessel of progressive democratic socialism in Britain. All three

political projects were justified by the story of an organic and inevitable historical development into a unitary British state that guarantees freedom.

The whig/modernization interpretation of Scottish history is an organicist narrative of improvement and incorporation that has been remarkably resilient over at least two centuries. It is a narrative that accepts and legitimates the predominant historical trends, particularly from the perspectives of successive and structurally varying generations of rising middle classes within the British political system. As Graeme Morton has shown, this is not a narrative in which the Scottish nation is negated, but rather one in which it is portrayed as in sync with the larger flow of history, with modernization. Thus he has examined the prominent role of Scottish middle classes in Edinburgh's mid-nineteenth-century civil society in celebrating and commemorating Scottish national identity in terms compatible with British Union and Empire, what he calls "unionist nationalism" (1999). With the experience and memory of two world wars, and the growth of the British labor movement and welfare state, "the nation" was increasingly subordinated to "class" as the key actor in the dominant historical narratives of national modernization.

In the stormy 1970s, with recession, labor unrest, and nationalist revival in Scotland, this organicist narrative was recast yet again, but in marxist terms that challenged the story of unification within the British state as the ultimate path to modernity. Various key texts both stimulated and articulated a reconceptualization of Scotland's political position. The American Michael Hechter, drawing on Immanuel Wallerstein's core-periphery model, explained nationalist revival in Scotland and Wales as the long-term effect of an "internal colonialism" of the British state, that led the ethnically marked "Celtic fringe" to become structurally "underdeveloped" (1975).⁴ Similarly, Tom Nairn's *The Break-Up of Britain* (1977) drew inspiration from Ernest Gellner's (1964) emphasis on the role of uneven development in the process of nationalism, arguing that Scotland's national development had been interrupted by its incorporation into the expanding sphere of British capitalism and empire. And, with the decline of empire and ailing industrial capitalism, it was almost inevitably being revived, as Scotland's peripheral position in relation to the English core was more and more revealed. Thus while classic nineteenth-century nationalisms, particularly of central and eastern Europe, were defensive responses generated by the tide of capitalism coming in (unevenly), Scotland's nationalism had been co-opted and forestalled due to its proximity to one of the great dynastic proto-nation-states of the Atlantic seaboard, England, and was now returning as the tide of capitalism went out.⁵

These texts, particularly Nairn's, were not unique and idiosyncratic, but part of a peculiar Scottish reception and application of marxist critiques of modernization theory that developed in the 1960s and 1970s in various countries. They became part of a widespread common sense understanding of Scotland's situation, held particularly by the Scottish left.⁶ Moreover, these notions of eco-

conomic colonization were also accompanied by an idea of cultural colonization, most forcefully articulated by Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull in *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture* (1989). They borrow Frantz Fanon's concept of "inferiorization" and apply it to Scotland, arguing that Scottish intellectuals have been socialized to denigrate Scottish culture, seeing it as inherently inferior to English culture. Toward this end they analyze the anglophile whig historiography described above, showing how polarized tropes are recurrently used to describe the relationship between Scotland ("dark," "backward," "fanatical," "violent," "barbaric") and England ("enlightened," "advanced," "reasonable," "decent," "civilized,") (1989:7). They argue that Scottish history has constantly been made to pivot on the Union of 1707, which allowed England's good qualities to flow into Scotland and displace its bad ones (*ibid.*:16–50). As a prime example of this enduring co-optation of the intelligentsia they take Tom Nairn to task for his characterization of Scotland as suffering from a "neurotic" and "deformed" "cultural sub-nationalism" signified by tartanry and the couthiness of the Kailyard literature early in this century (*ibid.*: 51–61; cf. Nairn 1977:148–69). The authors see this as Nairn's metropolitan revulsion for his own culture, suggesting that in the final analysis his Scottish nationalism is subordinated to the project of British socialism, and is thus something less than genuine.

I have focused on texts that represent academic discussions because they handily summarize key themes, and academic intellectual discourses are an important part of the ideological process I am discussing. But my own ethnographic fieldwork confirms that, far from being esoteric, these texts are well-connected to a matrix of popular thought in Scotland. In numerous interviews with people involved in pro-devolution/independence politics at various levels, I explicitly raised the question of the applicability of the idea of colonialism to Scotland, and found it frequently confirmed, albeit with often subtle qualifications (see Hearn 1996). An historically contingent but important factor in the appeal of this colonialism paradigm is the political effect of the eighteen years of Conservative government (1979–1997), during which a more left-of-center consensus and growing support for devolution tended to consolidate around the Labour Party in Scotland and its general dominance of Scottish politics and local government. Over these years the Scottish Office was increasingly perceived as the administrative arm of a government not popularly elected in Scotland, and as imposing often unwanted social and economic policies. Thus even the Conservative Secretary of State Malcolm Rifkind likened his powers to those of a colonial governor. On another front, processes of rural repopulation and employment stagnation provided grist for the mill of several small anti-English, ethnic nationalist protest groups in the early 1990s, with names such as "Settler Watch" and "Scottish Watch." Capitalizing on popular notions of Scots being substantially displaced from jobs and housing in Scotland by in-migrating English, these groups spoke in their flyers and pamphlets of "white settlers" and "the new clearances" (cf. Jedrej and Nuttall 1996). Hav-

ing said this, these groups tended to reject marxist analyses as yet another foreign ideology imposed on a “natural” Scottish world view.

It was the confluence of the post-1960s revival of intellectual marxism in the academy, the particular forms it took in Scotland, and structural aspects of economic and political conditions of the time that made the marxist/colonialism narrative salient. This is still an organicist story of modernization, but there has been a significant shift in the narrative construction. Large, perhaps inexorable historical forces continue to work toward their conclusion, however the forces and conclusions have changed. The original incorporation of Scotland into Britain, while still treated as relatively predetermined by historical forces, is no longer posed as irreversible, nor as an unqualified good, and the basic terminology of the narrative has been altered. The debate is sometimes couched in terms of whether Scotland was an “internal colony” of England, or a “junior partner” in empire (cf. McCrone 1992). Unlike something that has been organically absorbed, colonies can revolt in search of independence (indeed may be impelled to by the “logic of history”), and political partnerships can be dissolved. In other words, with the rise of the marxist/colonial narrative, the fundamental terms through which the historical relationship between Scotland and England is constructed have crossed a threshold toward greater uncertainty. With the collapse of the USSR and the general delegitimation of marxism in popular and academic discourses, the salience of this narrative is now weakening, but over the last three decades it served a purpose, and altered the historiographic landscape.

It is always risky trying to identify new ideational structures as they are taking shape, but let me try. As the possibility of devolution became a reality with the opening of Scotland’s parliament in 1999, the possibility of eventual independence has become more plausible. The old, classic British whig narrative has been shaken, and it can no longer do the legitimating job as effectively as it once did. This process, I would suggest, has two dimensions. First, there are various revisions and rehabilitations of that narrative of British integration underway, and secondly, there is a question of its subsumption into the growing narrative of the integrating European Union. As the party of government, New Labour has been obliged to explain its multifaceted devolution agenda in terms of the strengthening, rather than the weakening, of British integration. Not surprisingly considering what I have argued so far, this has been presented as a project of modernization of the British state. For New Labour, the modernization of the party and the modernization of constitutional arrangements are of a piece, corresponding parts of a broad agenda of political reform. Moreover, this constitutional modernization is linked to a familiar programme of increasing productivity and competitiveness in the global economy. “Improvement” continues apace.

From the Scottish end, there has arisen out of the marxian arguments of recent decades a new strain that highlights the “contractual” nature of the consti-

tutional arrangements between Scotland and England (see Hearn 1998). Thus Lindsay Paterson has argued that Scotland has long enjoyed a substantial degree of institutional autonomy within the British State, and that with the growth of state centralization in the twentieth century, Scottish political institutions and actors have increasingly been obliged to re-negotiate the constitutional distribution of powers in order to maintain their legitimacy on the ground in Scotland (1991, 1994). From the perspective of constitutional law, Neil MacCormick has focused on the deep ambiguities in the Act of Union of 1707. He stresses that it can be interpreted either as an “incorporating union” after the manner of A. V. Dicey, in which the English constitution subsumed the Scottish, or as an originary event in which both the constitutions of England and Scotland were replaced by a novel constitutional creation (1998). Brown et al. (1998) have characterized the union between these two countries as a “marriage of convenience” which has proven to be less convenient in recent years, at least for the Scots (Ibid.:229–30).⁷ This general reading of the history of relations between Scotland and England/Britain appears to rest on a crucial strategic insight: if Scots want to actively change their constitutional arrangements, then it is debilitating to embed their arguments for such change in deterministic constructions of history, whether of a whig/modernization or marxist/world systems variety. What recent political pressures for constitutional change have called for is an understanding of history that emphasizes its voluntaristic, rather than predetermined aspects, and that is in fact what has emerged. The 1970s discourses of crisis and rupture have yielded place (at least for the time being) to one of conscious, moderate intervention in the historical process, a language that befits a period in which those holding political power are attempting to deliver devolution, while appearing to be in full control of the process.

The preceding account is primarily concerned with a complex of what Somers would call public and metanarratives, which, while analytically distinct, tend to merge in practice. I have focused in particular on shifting trends in the public narratives about Scotland in Scotland, and how these articulate with larger metanarratives about modernization and development. This is not a simple sequence of replacements: while the marxist stories of Scotland’s colonization gained currency, the older organicist whig narrative continued apace. It is an attempt to sketch an unfolding evolution of ideas, highlighting what is new in given periods. Most significant for the framework outlined above is the shifting role of the Scottish nation as core protagonist in the drama of national history. During the heyday of empire, the Scottish nation moves “with the flow” of history, so much so that it is all but occluded as a political agent by the middle of the twentieth century, much to Michael Fry’s frustration. In the post-1960s period, as the future of Britain becomes more problematic with the decline of empire and the growth of the European Union, the Scottish nation enjoys a recovery as a protagonist, but one that is pushing “against the flow” of the dominant organicist/modernization paradigm of British history, but perhaps

“with the flow” of a larger narrative of a new modernizing Europe with more room for small nations (cf. Harvie 1992; Nairn 1997:133–49). As this new assertion of Scotland as an actor (no matter how small) on the historical stage becomes normalized, and years of political debate are at least temporarily quelled by the achievement of devolution, the situation for the protagonist becomes more ambiguous, and Scotland is portrayed more as a free agent, negotiating the ‘cross-currents’ of its relations with England, Britain, and Europe as it sees fit.

SCOTTISH MOODS

I have looked at the shifting portrayals of Scotland as the protagonist in larger public and metanarratives, let me now try to convey a sense of how this connects to ontological narratives. I hope to indicate more fully what I mean by moods. Perhaps the best way to develop this part of the argument would be through an in depth treatment of biographical material, but constraints of space, data, and the need to present a broader argument prevent me from doing that here. Nevertheless, hopefully some of what follows will suggest how one might proceed in that direction. Here I simply want to give the three paradigmatic moods discussed above (“with the flow,” “against the flow,” and “cross-currents”) a distinctive Scottish cast by highlighting distinctive tropes, recurring clusters of icons and symbols commonly found in Scottish historical discourses that evoke feelings of (1) empowerment, (2) disempowerment, and (3) conflicted feelings about agency, that broadly correspond to these moods. The main thing that I want to show is that feelings of power and agency are central to how people make sense of and find personal significance in Scotland’s national history. These tropes are disseminated and reinforced through a myriad of channels, including standard public political rituals such as rallies, speeches, and debates, but also through books, magazines, radio, television, and everyday conversation. Conventional ways of expressing historical moods are articulated across this array of modes of communication.

(1) *Empowerment*: The whig narrative of Scotland’s incorporation into Britain and grand movement with the larger flow of history was often accompanied by a kind of triumphal pride. This triumphal mood arises in part from Scotland’s association with the power and splendor of empire, and legitimate feeling of contribution to that project. We have already seen an indication of it in Morton’s account of “unionist nationalism” (1999). The array of monuments and statues across Scotland celebrating the works and lives of Walter Scott, Robert Burns, Robert the Bruce, and William Wallace stem from the middle years of the nineteenth century, and express a kind of civic pride felt by middle-class subscribers to these projects, asserting a confident sense of national identity as associate members of the imperial project. Both Scott and Burns were seen as proof of Scotland’s substantial contribution to the civilized world of letters, and Wallace and Bruce as defenders of a national vigor which, vouch-

safed by the medieval Wars of Independence, now served a greater purpose. A toast proposed by Colonel Mellish in 1859 at the Glasgow celebration (one of many that year) of the centenary of Robert Burns' birth, captures the triumphalist spirit at its fullest: "that the countrymen of Robert Burns have lately and most brilliantly participated in many gallant achievements of the British navy and army, and have thus shown that they are of the same stamp as those who bled with Wallace, and were led on by Robert Bruce, and whose spirit is still to be found among their descendants, ready with strong hands and stout hearts to do their duty to their country" (quoted in Morton 1999:175).

In recent years these historical personages have more often been called upon as symbols of dissent from the terms of the British union (less so Scott), but this only highlights the multivocality and contextual nature of symbols. The underlying continuity is that these figures are objects of pride, icons of national achievement.

More generally, this triumphal mood shades into various tropes of national excellence around the themes of science and learning. On the one hand, Scotland's Enlightenment and the global influence of intellectual figures such as David Hume and Adam Smith feeds into the idea that Scottish culture has placed an unusually high premium on access to education, summed up in the notion of the "democratic intellect" made popular by George Davie (1960). This has often been viewed as part of an egalitarian spirit rooted in Scottish culture (a conceit effectively critiqued by McCrone 1992:88–120). On the other hand, there is a complex pride that revolves around Scots' contributions to technological innovation (television, the telephone, cloning, and so forth), as well as the sheer strength of industrial labor, reflected in the ship building on the Clyde and associated engineering feats such as the Forth Bridge. These themes are tied to the age of empire, though with its decline both as a geopolitical reality, and as a commonly accepted sign of 'greatness,' they have tended to be represented more as achievements in their own right. Likewise, an earlier positive evaluation put on Scots' direct contribution to empire in the roles of soldiers, missionaries, administrators, and adventurers has been tempered in recent decades by moderately left-wing anticolonialist sentiment. Nonetheless, the key point is that there is a vocabulary of commonly recognized historical symbols that give evidence to Scotland's ability to have an influence on the wider world, whether or not these symbols are construed in terms of an imperial context.

(2) *Disempowerment*: This triumphalism however, has long been accompanied by a trope of elegiacism (cf. McArthur 1994) that articulates a loss of national agency—feelings of victimization and disempowerment. This mood reflects a tragic-romantic understanding of the Scottish experience, the history of the Scottish highlands providing a primary symbolic resource.⁸ First, the defeats of the Scottish highland clans and Bonnie Prince Charlie in the apotheosis of the Jacobite uprisings at Culloden in 1746 has provided endless fodder

for tragic historical fiction. The transformation of the Jacobite highland symbology in the mid-nineteenth century, fusing it with Scotland's martial role in the empire, suggests not just an "invention of tradition" (cf. Trevor-Roper 1984; McCrone et al. 1995), but a significant inversion of symbolism, transforming elegy into triumph for a new national middle-class. Secondly, there is the story of the "highland clearances" (c.1790–1830), in which highland tenants, living under extremely insecure terms of tenure, were relocated or forced off their lands by their landlords, or more directly, by their landlords' agents and factors. The tragedy here is exacerbated by the fact that the landlords were highland clan chiefs who had become ennobled, anglicized and largely absentee, and thus there is a profound theme of betrayal involved in this story. The narrative is preserved and reproduced both in academic histories and in more popular novels, such as John Preeble's *The Highland Clearances*. But it also endures as a lively part of popular discourse. Moreover, it fits within a more general and temporally extended story of Scottish disempowerment, as a kind of key, emblematic episode. This point is illustrated in an interview with an erstwhile left-wing member of the SNP who had once stood as an SNP candidate for local government:

Basically the Scottish upper classes abandoned their country. They wanted to become acolytes of the London court and the London aristocracy. It's a very painful story indeed of how the Scottish lairds, in the highlands especially, abandoned their people simply to become the playthings of the London court. They ceased to be the guardians of the land. . . . they saw the clans as a means, or something to extract money out of. That was a very fundamental change, and they became feudal lords in the true sense of the word. So, linked up with the sense of a political loss of the Scottish parliament in 1707, is tied up very closely, with the fact that the ordinary people of Scotland did feel extremely powerless, in the face of the fact that the landed gentry and aristocracy completely abandoned any loyalty, except in the worst kind of kitsch, kilt-y sort of way, to Scotland, and they simply became acolytes, they talked with English accents, they lived as close as they could to their aristocratic English betters, and despised the people that lived 'below them' if you like. And latterly of course exactly the same is true for Scottish capital, which showed no loyalty whatever to the Scottish workforce, and was equally as rapacious and threw people on the scrap heap if you like . . .

As this quote indicates, the betrayal of the peasantry by the elites in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries blends into a more recent vintage of elegiac symbols to be found in the decline of Scottish heavy industry and an associated communal working-class culture. Twenty years of painful deindustrialization have substantially restructured Scotland's economy, to the point where few harbor dreams of a simple recovery of Scotland's lost industrial glory, and many are happy to see the back of a working class culture that sometimes involved profound religious bigotry and brutal sexism. Nonetheless, there is also a strong romantic attachment to that bygone era. As one informant, active in community education and women's issues, and supportive of the home rule cause, said to me while recalling the working class community she grew up in:

I just remember older men at the steel works who taught me about [Robert] Burns. . . . [JH: There was a sense of community?] . . . There was a real sense of community . . . a pattern to how people walked about the town, and across, all the men met after shifts or before their shifts. . . . there were two roads between the steel works and the textile plant . . . young folk met old folk, it was really vibrant. When Ian MacGregor was Chairman at BSC he literally dropped in in a helicopter one afternoon and told them there were no jobs as of next week. . . . and it just completely cut the heart out of that place, and it never recovered . . .

(3) *Conflicted feeling about agency*: These themes of triumphalism and elegiacism can easily fold back into one another in mid-conversation. I worked with a study group in a community education project that was exploring Scottish history, generally from a left nationalist perspective. In a focus group interview, while discussing themes of history, community, and empowerment, the following exchange transpired:

Speaker 1: People see good in the Scottish people. . . . there are people like myself who maybe don't see it . . . but outsiders might see it . . . the surgeons, we've had people who invented T.V., we've had . . . aw . . . Adam Smith done the economics . . . thousands . . .

Speaker 2: . . . John Paul Jones in the American Navy . . .

Speaker 1: . . . who? . . . did we not fight him? . . . [laughter] . . . but we've got all these, I mean for a small nation, it's great, and I think we still, I think we've lost our confidence . . .

Speaker 3: . . . yeah . . . how do you get it back? That's what I want to know. The Tories have done a really good job—that money's the god, and how do you turn people back from that . . . cause a lot of people went with it . . .

Speaker 1: . . . oh aye . . . 'I'm alright Jack' . . .

This suggests a kind of dialectical interdependence between the “triumphalist” and “elegiac” moods described above. The tension here is one that has been somewhat captured and codified as “the Caledonian antisyzygy,” a term coined by the literary critic Gregory Smith and promoted by Hugh MacDiarmid, Scotland's premier twentieth-century poet and an outspoken nationalist, to describe the pervasive interplay of opposites—natural and supernatural, reason and emotion—supposedly characteristic of Scottish literature (see Bold 1990:230). Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* provides an extreme and explicit example of this literary trope, but more generally it can be seen in stylistic tensions or oscillations between such things as gravity and levity, and between Celtic other-worldliness and dour Calvinist this-worldliness.⁹ But this term has been taken up in Scotland and is often applied more loosely and broadly to suggest characteristic contradictions in Scottish culture and personality, expressed in terms of a series of binary oppositions between: the rational head and the emotional heart, religious enthusiasm versus austerity, drink versus abstinence, highlands versus lowlands, Catholic versus Protestant, and so on.

A classic example of this trope can be found in an influential essay from 1975

by the Scottish historian Christopher Harvie, in which he draws a distinction between the “red” and “black” Scots:

If anything characterized post-Union (or for that matter post-Reformation) Scottish culture it was its essentially schizoid quality. The ‘red’ Dr Jekyll part of the intelligentsia—Hume, Carlyle, Geddes, Reith—was cosmopolitan, self-avowedly ‘enlightened,’ and, given a chance, authoritarian, expanding into and exploiting greater and more bountiful fields than their own country could provide. Back home, in his kailyard, lurked Hyde, demotic, parochial and ‘black’ reactionary, keeper of Tom Nairn’s ‘great Tartan monster,’ reader of the *Sunday Post*. ‘Red’ and ‘black’ Scotland depended on each other: Jekyll remitted money and prestige; Hyde kept the place distinctive, ensured that the ladder of social promotion was kept open, that the social stratification of the English governing classes was not imposed. Nationalist agitation, of a very hygienic sort, ensured that the Scots, red and black together, would control the rate of their own assimilation to the greater world. Whatever might befall the crofters of the North or the Lanarkshire miners, or the majority of Glasgow families who lived for most of this century in one- or two-roomed houses, Jekyll would always have the empire as his oyster, while Hyde would keep his less fortunate compatriots content with religion, football, and whisky (1998:90).

We do not have to accept Harvie’s characterization. The point is that he is employing a kind of literary device that resonates with a widespread understanding of Scottishness in Scotland—as involving a certain, perhaps creative tension between outward-looking innovators and conservative homebodies—that is seen as somehow prescribed by Scotland’s fate within the Union and Empire. Using the Jekyll and Hyde analogy, this rendition of the Caledonian anti-zygy collapses Scotland into two types of Scots, who in turn are portrayed as two halves of a divided personality. Thus the dilemmas of national agency are given personage and form, cast as inner conflict.

It is a motif that crops up repeatedly. Thus, for example, in the opening editorial “comment” page of a small “left nationalist quarterly” magazine published in the early 1990s called *Liberation* we find:

The dual consciousness that has engulfed the Scots since Union, which is a direct consequence of the political, economic and cultural domination by our powerful neighbor, is the main obstacle to our aspirations for independence. However empirical evidence suggests that our sense of Britishness is being superseded by a mature and wide-spread confidence in our identity as Scots. A precipitative cultural renaissance inevitably and inexorably wins over hearts and minds: a British void is being filled in by an authentic and deep-rooted sense of Scottishness (Liberation Editorial Group 1993:4).

Here the struggle is not between two types of Scots (red and black), but rather between British and Scottish identities, the former an obstacle to self-determination, the latter a liberating force. I pursued this notion of a Scottish ‘split personality’ in interviews across a range of pro-home rule and/or independence activists in Scotland, working in political parties, campaigning groups, the arts and academia, and found that most people were familiar with it. It seemed to resonate particularly strongly for two groups. First, among those involved in the areas of arts, languages and literature, no doubt because such people are

more familiar with it as an established trope of literary analysis and cultural commentary in Scotland, and because there is a real tension between arts and literature based on Scottish themes and languages, and a more metropolitan, London-centered (and thus English) standard against which such artistic practices are inevitably measured. Secondly, it seemed to be immediately familiar to most of those I interviewed who were active in the SNP, I suspect because the party's political project is routinely articulated in party discourse in terms of a dilemma of mobilizing both hearts and minds. Some within the party maintain that the SNP's argument for independence is too often couched in terms of cold, rational economic arguments, failing to inspire support on a more emotional level. On the other hand, it is often argued that there is broad support for nationalism at the level of sentiment, but that skeptical rationalism constantly raises doubts about the viability of independence, doubts that must be countered with reasoned arguments. It matters little that these two assessments of what stands in the way of winning the argument for independence seem to contradict each other. The crucial point is that this trope of a conflicted, internally divided self and will provides a framework for thinking about and generating nationalist rhetoric, in a way that is familiar to the popular imagination.

Statements about the Scottish situation in regard to political self-determination are frequently highly reflexive, explicitly highlighting the conditions of collective agency, and self-understandings of agency. I remember a speech given by Alex Salmond, former leader of the SNP, supporting an SNP candidate in the local elections in 1994, in which he played on this theme. He referred to a Scottish tendency to become mired in a history of losses and surrenders, arguing that (I paraphrase from memory): '. . . we always celebrate our glorious defeats, the Battle of Culloden, losing the World Cup in Argentina in 1978 . . . enough with glorious defeats, give me some grubby little victories . . .'

When I raised this theme with one SNP supporter in an interview, asking if it rang true for him, responded:

There is a romance of defeat . . . that does have a strong emotional appeal for many Scots. Just as, I dare say, Robert E. Lee in defeat is a more potent symbol than Ulysses S. Grant in victory. And . . . the same is true in many countries . . . in many cultures . . . It does come into effect in Scotland. Now I think the 'romantic heart' versus the 'rational head' is sometimes advanced, but I think the case for nationalism is perfectly rational. And I think that a much more difficult problem psychologically for the Scots, is not a dichotomy between a rational head and an emotional heart, . . . but a romantic heart and a head which is suffering from a monster inferiority complex. [JH: And where did that come from?] It comes from, in my view it comes from a sense of impotence . . .

He went on to compare the feelings of exclusion aroused by the frequent equation of England and the United Kingdom with the effects of using the male pronoun to refer to both men and women. This experience made him sympathetic to arguments for gender inclusive language. Another informant, a woman from England who had been very active in a key home rule campaigning group

for many years, acknowledged a lack of confidence in the Scottish political psyche, likening it to a sense of ingrained subordination that women often have to struggle against. As she put it: “Scotland is a bit like a battered wife.” Whether or not we think such comparisons are apt, the point is that they are made because these people see parallels, they recognize in this “mood” of Scottish nationalist discourse a more general theme of empowerment and disempowerment that is experienced at a very personal level.

CONCLUSION

The language of narratives and moods put forward here is an analytic device, a means for directing our attention to the ways in which the individual’s sense of personal agency finds expression and meaning in socially constructed collective agents. While evocative historical symbols (Mosse 1975), invented traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1984), and myths of shared origin are important (Smith 1999:57–95), these get their normative and ideological pull by being bound up with terms and sensations of power and efficacy, not simply by defining membership in shared identities. Without the promise of power, of self-determination, or an explanation for one’s disempowerment, such identities are hollow. Toward the end of the focus group discussion quoted above, the leader of the Scottish history study group responded to the question, “What difference would a parliament make?”

I’d say a parliament alone is not the answer, I would agree with that, but I would say a parliament, a powerful parliament—recently I’m coming to believe a separate, an independent parliament as well—is the essential first step. Because it creates a structure and a process by which we as a people can then participate in the process of deciding what we want, and you know, being a part of that process, ‘cause at the moment we’re not, we’re acted upon. It doesn’t matter what we think, what we say, the way we vote, how we feel, we are acted upon by political processes over which we have no control.

This emphatic linkage between a parliament and the very possibility of agency needs to be understood against the complex backdrop of narratives and moods I have been exploring. That is what gives it substance for these people. I would suggest that this is also part of the significance of the closing clause of Part I of the *Claim of Right* of 1988. This is probably the most significant document generated by the devolution movement of the last three decades, and led to the formation of the Scottish Constitutional Convention, which played a central role in consolidating public opinion around designs for a parliament in the late 1980s and 1990s. Part I of the *Claim* begins with an account of Scotland’s enduring historical, cultural, and political identity and autonomy, and then turns to an analysis of the current political situation under the Thatcher government, thus defining an arc from past to present, like all good nationalist narratives. But it concludes: “There is a profound hypocrisy in saying that the Scots should stand on their own feet while simultaneously denying them management of their own political affairs, and that denial is a clear deprivation of choice for

Scots. Scots can stand on their own feet only by refusing to accept the constitution which denies them the power to do so" (Edwards 1989:29).

It is in the nature of social movements to generate such constructions of collective history and agency—they are bound to do so by the very terms of their political projects and rhetoric. Actual agency, real power on the ground, is of course highly differentiated in Scotland, as elsewhere, along various dimensions—gender, class, urban-rural, etc.. This is precisely the point, that these “moods” help collapse these differences into a unified agentic state, investing them in historical narratives, thus linking individual to collective agency, and the latter to national narratives. It is in the interplay of what I have called “mood” and “narrative” that history comes alive, and becomes salient for the articulation of individual identity and agency in collective terms.

NOTES

1. My thanks to the anonymous reviewer for *CSSH* of an earlier draft of this article for directing my attention to the relevance of Somers' works for my argument. I focus here on what seems to me to be the clearest overall statement of her project (1994).

2. In a similar vein, Alasdair MacIntyre has spoken of the “self in a narrative mode” (1984:206) because, as he puts it “the unity of a human life is the unity of a narrative quest” (ibid.:219). But this demand for narrative unity permeates both personal and social life:

A central thesis then begins to emerge: man is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal. He is not essentially, but becomes through his history, a teller of stories that aspire to truth. But the key question for men is not about their own authorship; I can only answer the question ‘What am I to do?’ if I can answer the prior question ‘Of what stories do I find myself a part?’ We enter human society, that is, with one or more imputed characters—roles into which we have been drafted—and we have to learn what they are in order to be able to understand how others respond to us and how our responses to them are apt to be construed (1984:216).

3. I am inclined to argue that individual agency provides the paradigm for understanding social action, that our notions of collective action are necessarily metaphorically based on individual action. This is an assertion about how we come to understand and conceptualize action, not about the relative merits of focusing on individuals versus social groups in the study of action, nor an assertion that the rationality and values that guide social action must be construed in individualistic terms. Lakoff and Johnson have claimed that “*The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another*” (1980:5; italics in original). They go on to argue that direct human manipulation of the external world provides the metaphorical prototype for all our understandings of causation, citing child development studies and prototype theories of semantics and categorization in support of their argument (ibid.: 69–76). In effect they argue that individual human agency provides the most basic model for thinking about cause and effect; even if we are able to abstract away elements of will and consciousness, conceptually preserving only the observed interaction of forces and bodies, the gestalt experience of individual action on the world informs our basic understanding of causation. This can also be seen as an anthropomorphic line of argument—we invest causal processes with specifically human qualities. (For a compelling argument about why humans as a species tend to anthropomorphize, see Guthrie 1993.) This

argument is of course very difficult to prove or disprove, and my only point here is that the argument I am making about the relationship between individual and collective action tends to support their view, while being more restricted in its claims.

4. Hechter later revised this argument to specify that Scotland was in fact “overdeveloped,” in the sense of structurally over-specialized in the heavy industries (1982).

5. It is important to note that Nairn’s analyses of Scottish nationalism is linked to his diagnosis, developed especially with Perry Anderson (cf. 1987), of the British state, which sees the latter as incompletely modernized due to its precocious role in the rise of capitalism, having failed to achieve a modern, bourgeois-republican revolution (see Ingham 1984 and Wood 1991 for critiques of this diagnoses).

6. Other important examples of this style of thinking include *The Red Paper on Scotland* (1975), edited by Gordon Brown, and *Scottish Capitalism* (1980), edited by Tony Dickson. For a debate that helps illustrate this historiographic shift, see the exchange between Immanuel Wallerstein (1980) and T. C. Smout (1980a, 1980b). David McCrone has provided a thorough assessment of the problems involved in trying to apply uneven development models to the Scottish case (1992: 34–62).

7. One of my former informants, a long-time observer of the Scottish scene, has spoken of an “Edinburgh School” with a particular, moderate approach to issues of nationalism, civil society, and constitutional change in Scotland. These authors are all based at the University of Edinburgh, and what I have called a “contractualist approach” can be seen as an aspect of this Edinburgh School. Moreover, I myself am based at Edinburgh, and am influenced by this same school of thought.

8. One might also include the fascination with Mary Queen of Scots under this heading, as a tragic figure, a figurehead of Scotland, unable to negotiate the changing political climate. However, the readings here are complicated by Mary’s peculiar alien status as a French Catholic opponent of the Reformation. The Protestant covenanting martyrs of the seventeenth century might also be considered under this rubric, but here again the images are less clearly tragic *for the nation*, in that the social hegemony of the Presbyterian Churches in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be read as the ultimate justification and success of their sufferings.

9. Another classic example of ruptured mentality can be found in James Hogg’s *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1977[1824]).

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