

8. Nineteenth-Century Scotland: Political Unionism and Cultural Nationalism, 1843-1906

Christopher Harvie

I.

When Goethe wrote to Carlyle in 1828 about the latter's *Life of Schiller*, he dwelt on Carlyle's Scottish identity, and the specific ways in which national and international identities complemented each other: "The efforts of the best poets and aesthetic writers throughout the world have been directed towards the general characteristics of humanity . . . (but) one must study and make allowances for the peculiarities of each nation, in order to have real intercourse with it. The special characteristics of a people are like its language and currency. They facilitate exchange; indeed they first make exchange possible."¹ Somewhat over a century later, Georg Lukacs' *The Historical Novel* (1936) dealt with Sir Walter Scott as an "English" writer, and subsumed the history of Scotland completely in that of the larger economy.

"History to the defeated," wrote W. H. Auden (at roughly the same time), "can say alas, but cannot help or pardon." Historical importance is partly determined by contemporary political relevance. Success rewards some movements by extending their histories as researchers are attracted to the field; failure penalizes others, whose histories remain only half-developed. Scottish political and cultural history in the democratic epoch was for years awkwardly suspended between the two conditions. Its revival has accompanied the assertion of a more nationalist politics since the 1960s, but the continuing confusion about whether this is actually going to end successfully has tended to distort the recovery of the earlier period.

¹ Cited in J. A. FROUDE, *Thomas Carlyle: A History of the First Forty Years of his Life*, London 1885, pp. 414-420.

The major interest of the international historical establishment has been in the Scottish Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. This developed rapidly after the 1960, but since its methodologies were derived from intellectual history and political and economic theory, its involvement with *Scottish* history was at first limited, particularly in areas where intellectual activity interacted with religion, psychology and popular culture.² "Enlightenment" scholars tended to be European and American; their Scots colleagues were, by contrast, preoccupied with a more melancholy challenge: explaining how their own society had somehow disevolved by the mid-nineteenth century, when H. T. Buckle could write of it: "In no civilised country is toleration so little understood . . . in none is the spirit of bigotry and persecution so extensively diffused."³

After the Church of Scotland had split apart in 1843, the subsequent period - Victorian Scotland - seemed almost a black hole, covered only thinly by a few political biographies, accounts of forgotten religious disputes, and obsequious company histories. Despite one or two exceptional works, notably L. J. Saunders' *Scottish Democracy* (1950), the attitude of near-despair about ever fathoming a period apparently so deficient in consciousness voiced by David Craig in his *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People* (1961) - "the country was emptied of the *majority* of its literary talents" - seemed general.⁴ The Scotland that mattered had been ingested into international capitalism - the Clyde shipbuilding interest or the Glasgow iron ring, the investment trusts of the East coast. What remained was consigned to the Kailyard, the defensive, demotic, all-too-marketable rural past.⁵ This was, truly, "North Britain".

² For a bibliography see R. H. CAMPBELL, A. S. SKINNER (eds.), *The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment*, Edinburgh 1982.

³ H. T. BUCKLE, *History of Civilisation in England*, III, London 1871, p. 140.

⁴ D. CRAIG, *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People*, London 1961, pp. 13 f.

⁵ See Tom NAIRN's first round with "the great Tartan monster" in: *The three dreams of Scottish nationalism*, in: K. MILLER (ed.), *Memoirs of a Modern Scotland*, London 1970, 34-54, esp. pp. 40 f.

Political Unionism and Cultural Nationalism

The intellectual and social stresses of the 1960s also promoted an alternative thesis about Enlightenment and assimilation: George Elder Davie's *The Democratic Intellect* (1961), in which a less deterministic approach seemed to show that the assault of "Anglicization" was less conclusive, and the Scottish tradition continued. Since then many of the gaps in our knowledge of the politics and society of Victorian Scotland have also been filled in, revealing a much more complex socio-political culture - yet the sense of a "fall" remains, particularly for the years 1843- 1879, before Gladstone's Midlothian campaign quickened the pace of Scottish political life, and the campaign to restore the Secretaryship (abolished in 1745) started.

II. Dramatis Personae

The contrast between Craig and Davie emphasizes the distinctive, and continuing, qualities of the Scottish cultural and political élites. Firstly, they communicated with what Anthony D. Smith would call a well-developed "vertical *ethnie*", as distinct from the "lateral *ethnie*" which agglomerated itself around the English aristocratic-professional "establishment".⁶ This sense of communality was reinforced by institutions - church, law, local government, education - which both created upward patterns of recruitment, and virtually constituted the post-1707 Scottish state. At the same time a "one-way" valve enabled them to feed cadres to the less flexible, more class-bound, English élite. These groups both undertook the modernization of Scotland, from the late seventeenth century on, and in their internal debate about the consequences of this, created much of the theoretical groundwork for the industrialization processes of other countries. Thus in Scotland the dividing line between "organic" and "traditional" intellectuals has always been

⁶ A. D. SMITH, *National Identity*, Harmondsworth 1991, pp. 52-59.

Christopher Harvie

very blurred, with such "traditional" groups as clergy, teachers and writers (as sociologists, popularizers and journalists) frequently playing an "organic" role.

Into this "national" sphere, however, a "business class" evolved as the manufacturing percentage of gross national product increased, from around 20 per cent in 1800 to over 60 per cent in 1907. It was authentically Scots in that it owned most of Scots industry. Had that industry been oriented to a Scots market, it might have *felt* Scots. But its free-trading, export-oriented, ethos meant that it regarded Scotland as no more than a collection of increasingly troublesome factors of production. Industrial "maturity" might have brought about a structural change in favour of consumer goods and services, but small houses and low wages meant that the level of demand stayed low, and with it the idea of a national market. This was reinforced by an emigration ethic (Scotland was the only country in Europe in which, *after* industrialization, emigration still ran at the high rate of 4 per cent of the population per decade). This meant that the political goals demanded by the intellectuals could still apparently be achieved, away from the country, by settlers and administrators, without diminishing "Scottishness".

III. Forgetting the Enlightenment

It was that "progressive" element - the people who wanted to be true "organic" intellectuals - which seemed to take a negative view of the whole Enlightenment/improvement project, as well as moving, actually as well as spiritually, south. Thomas Carlyle in his essay on Burns wrote: "Never perhaps was there a class of writers so clear and well-ordered, yet so totally

Political Unionism and Cultural Nationalism

destitute, to all appearance, of any patriotic affection, nay, of any human affection whatever."⁷

Although deeply imprinted by traditionally Scottish modes of thought, Carlyle's "revolutionary" character, allied to his hostility to market society as "mechanism", made him father the social atomism of his Britain on the *literati*, transferring to Scotland Schiller's complaint against the eighteenth-century German intelligentsia. Such cold mechanism could not cope with the social strains of industrialization, the revival in fundamentalist religion, or revolutionary nationalism.

This rejection was too comprehensive - the *literati* had welcomed Burns as rapturously as they had "Ossian" MacPherson - but it influenced the view of the British metropolitan intelligentsia and the newly-educated working class to whom Carlyle ministered: even modern writers - J. W. Burrow, for example, in the 1960s - could regard Scots sociology as mysteriously disappearing in the 1820s.⁸ This happened even though the *literati* continued to be read in the mid-nineteenth-century Scottish universities, the Darwinian controversy reanimated the evolutionary studies of such as Monboddo, and "conjectural history" accompanied the rise of the Scots anthropologists in the 1870s and 1880s.⁹

Yet a fastidious aristocratic *ethos* pervaded this revival, notably through Stevenson's novels, Arthur Balfour's metaphysics, the republication of Lord Cockburn's "Works", and the Rev. Henry Grey Graham's *Scottish Social Life in the Eighteenth Century* (1891). The sort of Edinburgh Tory John Connell described in his life of W. E. Henley - "animated by a sturdy, intelligent vigorous scepticism about the flabby theories in politics which were then becoming fashionable" - made it the alternative to the pawky Liberalism of the Kailyard. Stevenson's reanimation of Lord Braxfield, who lashed the

⁷ Review of J. G. LOCKHART's *Life of Burns*, in: *The Edinburgh Review* 96 (1828), repr. in: *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, London 1905, p. 258.

⁸ J. W. BURROW, *Evolution and Society*, Cambridge 1966, p. 16.

⁹ See G. DAVIE, *Scottish philosophy and Robertson Smith*, in: CAMPBELL, SKINNER, *Scottish Enlightenment* (above n. 2), pp. 101-145.

Christopher Harvie

Scots Jacobins in broad Doric, as "Weir of Hermiston" is, to say the least, an ambiguous paradigm of the Scottish political tradition.¹⁰

In fact the Enlightenment was far more complex in its Scottish context than most intellectual historians imagined. Its political theory provided a continuity with earlier, pre-nation state ideas of community. George Davie has noted the persistence of the small-scale *polis*, from Andrew Fletcher's *Conversation concerning a Right Regulation of Governments* (1704), with their assault on the influence of large capital cities, to Adam Ferguson's *Essay on Civil Society* (1766).¹¹ J. G. A. Pocock and his pupil Arthur Williamson go even further back to the implanting in Scotland through George Buchanan of the civic humanist ideology of the Italian Renaissance. The reception of *Ossian* (1760-1766) was not eccentric, but underlined the combination of social speculation and communitarianism which later sustained the success both of Burns and of Scott.¹²

The Enlightenment's social philosophy did not evolve from the small community towards the Hanoverian nation-state.¹³ A provincial intelligentsia of gentry, lawyers and clergy did not "naturally" give way to "British" businessmen and technologists. This was in part because the "common sense" sociology of such as Ferguson was conservative, presupposing "eternal" social relationships grounded in the faculty of "consciousness". When challenged by incontrovertible social change, it invoked "sociability" - not a goal of the Continental *literati* - and wanted to promote it through education "in what

¹⁰ J. CONNELL, *W. E. Henley*, London 1949, p. 136; and see C. HARVIE, *Stevenson's politics*, in: J. CALDER (ed.), *Robert Louis Stevenson and Victorian Scotland*, Edinburgh 1982, pp. 107-125.

¹¹ A. FLETCHER, *An Account of a Conversation Concerning a Right Regulation of Governments*, Edinburgh 1704, repr. in: D. DAICHES (ed.), *Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun: Selected Political Writings and Speeches*, Edinburgh 1979, pp. 106-137; DAVIE, *Philosophy* (above n. 9), pp. 125-139.

¹² See M. G. H. PITTOCK, *The Rediscovery of Scotland*, London 1991, esp. ch. 3.

¹³ N. PHILLIPSON, *Scottish public opinion and the Union in the age of the association*, in: N. T. PHILLIPSON, R. MITCHISON (eds.), *Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, Edinburgh 1970, 125-147, pp. 125 f.

Political Unionism and Cultural Nationalism

was, for the time, a remarkably well-educated and literate population, in country as well as in town".¹⁴

Against Carlyle's gibe, the intellectuals were (or became) eager to communicate, through the universities, publishing projects such as the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, local discussion circles, churches, and libraries. But this coexisted ambiguously with the internal consistency of "common sense". Fluency and popularity stimulated the conviction of Burns, Scott and Galt that they had an audience to reach and something important to say to it. But they subjected philosophy to calculations about the market, or deflected ethical debates into struggles over institutional management.

Moving towards evolutionary or dynamic concepts of society meant that Scots writers had to accept that they were popularizers or men whose achievements were necessarily temporary. This was risky. Much later the geologist Hugh Miller wrote: "Such is the state of progression in geological science, that the geologist who stands still for but a very little must be content to find himself left behind."¹⁵ Miller, a man trapped in a nineteenth-century tension between revelation and research, recognized the cumulative and transforming power of the acquisition of knowledge, but he could not himself master and survive it.

Finally, any provincial culture, however advanced, was affected by what Benedict Anderson has called "print capitalism".¹⁶ Its market was defined by the British state and the English language community, and the general tendency among publishers, editors, and so on, was to gravitate to the metropolis, *en route* defining the literary hierarchy of the province. For example, following on Scott, Susan Ferrier, Hogg and Galt, the "Scotch

¹⁴ See D. WITHERINGTON, What was distinctive about the Scottish Enlightenment?, in: J. CARTER, J. H. PITTOCK (eds.), *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment*, Aberdeen 1987, 9-16, p. 15.

¹⁵ C. WATERSTON, Hugh Miller, in: J. CALDER (ed.), *The Enterprising Scot*, Edinburgh 1986, 159-169, p. 165.

¹⁶ B. ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin or Spread of Nationalism*, London 1983, esp. ch. 5.

Christopher Harvie

novel" attained a remarkable prominence. But without the development of a national publishing culture, this could only be temporary and "fashionable". The collapse of Scott's venture in mass-market publishing in 1825 left its imprint, distorting its future potential through a "niche" market for romantic escapism.

IV. The Religious Reaction

The "temporary" quality of the Enlightenment seemed demonstrated by the particularly virulent outbreak of the evangelical revival that followed it. Victor Kiernan has interpreted it as a robust restatement of conservative civil society: "the great merit, in the face of egalitarian ideas, of throwing into relief the equality of soul without disturbing the inequality of ranks. All men were not equally good, as Rousseau had made people think, but they were all equally bad."¹⁷

Nowhere, of course, was the conservative cause more robustly upheld than in Scotland, with drastic suppression of liberal *literati* and working-class radicals alike. Through Cockburn's *Memorials* and R. L. Stevenson's *Weir of Hermiston*, figures like the "hanging judge" Lord Braxfield projected monstrous shadows. But the two forces cannot be equated: the evangelical revival had in Scotland a "national" and "progressive" element quite distinct from either English Wesleyanism or the élite activities of the Clapham sect.

Eager to associate the bourgeoisie with its war policy, the government encouraged the evangelical revival against the *status quo* of the Moderates as well as the Jacobin challenge, even where this meant running the risk of

¹⁷ V. KIERNAN, *Evangelicalism and the French Revolution*, in: *Past and Present* 1 (1952), 38-56, pp. 49 f.; and see Sir Leslie STEPHEN, *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century*, London 1904, p. 97.

Political Unionism and Cultural Nationalism

catering for the evangelical bourgeoisie's demand to control the church.¹⁸ Scots evangelicalism had some "imperial" qualities: its anti-slavery and foreign missions concerns, its linkages to the patronage of the Dundases in India and the Admiralty, but the hostile soubriquets the Moderates bestowed on it - "wild" and "popular" - are significant, recalling that it also embraced the Covenanting ideal and the pre-Union projects of the Godly Commonwealth and the active parish.¹⁹ Although this idea tended to be associated with socially backward areas of Scotland, and was deprecated by the Moderate intelligentsia, they had played their part in developing it, both by enhancing the role of the General Assembly as an institution of Scots government and by the encouragement of the *Gemeinschaft* ideologies associated with the Ossianic episode.²⁰ In one direction the sequence Ossian - Burns - Scott certainly leads to Scotland "as commodity" and the commercialization of romanticism; but the shift of the 1790s and 1800s also moved "civic humanism" from a concern about "militant society" - in the *literati's* promotion of a Scottish militia in the 1760s - into the use of church policy to cope with the problems of "industrial society". What Saint-Simon (and following him, Carlyle) would later see as a crucial "critical" episode in social evolution was thus negotiated.

Internal tensions and political pressures otherwise made it difficult for any ethos of "civic virtue" to prosper. Regency Scotland, under Dundas, offered the alternatives of shameless currying for political favour or a withdrawal into pietism. Yet in the Leslie case of 1805 it is evident that while the Moderates had aligned themselves with Tory repression, Evangelicals were prepared to make common cause with Whigs and radicals in the issue of religious

¹⁸ For the British political background see L. COLLEY, *Whose nation? Class and national consciousness in Britain, 1750-1830*, in: *Past and Present* 113 (1984), 97-117, pp. 104 f.

¹⁹ S. J. BROWN, *Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth in Scotland*, Oxford 1982, p. xvii.

²⁰ R. SHER, *Literature and the Church of Scotland*, in: A. HOOK (ed.), *The History of Scottish Literature*, vol. II, 1660-1800, Aberdeen 1987, 259-272, p. 263.

Christopher Harvie

freedom.²¹ Anti-slavery, Sunday schools and foreign missions were much more "radical" in Scotland than in England, while the social role played by the Church of Scotland - in education, poor relief and social discipline - made the battle over its future into a struggle for a form of devolved politics which lay closer to the daily lives of the Scottish people than parliamentary reform. Far from being proponents of a reasoned unionism the Moderates were animated only, as Henry Cockburn put it, by "passive devotion to the gentry" while Thomas Chalmers can now be seen as the Scottish equivalent of contemporary politicians who combined the causes of nationalism with religious and political liberty: Daniel O'Connell in Ireland or N. F. T. Gruntvig in Denmark.²²

Did the Enlightenment terminate in intellectual exhaustion and political disaster in the 1820s? The Dundases' "management" of Scotland admittedly ended in 1826; the city of Edinburgh went bankrupt; the same financial crisis damaged Scottish industry and banking and felled Sir Walter Scott, whose "Malagrowther" polemics and late, deeply pessimistic short stories were a commentary on this. Reform of a type which would end the old system of government by consultation would be carried out by "Scotch reviewers" who had little reason to love it. Nicholas Phillipson sees reactions to this as a "strategy of noisy inaction" which masked acquiescence in assimilation; I have seen it more as a disoriented conservative nationalism, but both of us regard Scott's Scottishness as retrospective and pessimistic.²³ The political philosophy conveyed at this juncture by John Galt, in his various, ironically-observed "theoretical histories", is both much more positive, and deeply

²¹ I. D. L. CLARK, From protest to reaction: the Moderate regime in the Church of Scotland, in: PHILLIPSON, MITCHISON, *Age of Improvement* (above n. 13), 200-224, pp. 291, 222.

²² M. FRY, *Patronage and Principle: A Political History of Scotland*, Aberdeen 1987, p. 45.

²³ C. HARVIE, Scott and the image of Scotland, in: A. BOLD (ed.), *Sir Walter Scott: The Long-Forgotten Melody*, London 1983, pp. 17-42, 37 f; and see N. PHILLIPSON, Nationalism and ideology, in: J. N. WOLFE (ed.), *Government and Nationalism in Scotland*, Edinburgh 1969, pp. 167-188.

Political Unionism and Cultural Nationalism

sceptical of the competence of Westminster. The progression from *Annals of the Parish* (1821) to *The Provost* (1822) mirrors the corruption of "improvement" into "management", with Provost Pawkie as Dundas, who "got the cart up the brae, and the whole council reduced to the will and pleasure of his majesty".²⁴ When, in *The Member*, Galt has an autobiographical character, Mr. Selby, talk of the capriciousness of Parliament, he might almost be summing up its dealings with the Scottish Church in the 1830s: "Till Governments, and Houses of Commons, and those institutions which the sinful condition of man renders necessary, are made responsible to a tribunal of appeal, whose decisions shall control them, there can be no effectual reform. The first step is to take away all will of its own from Government - for statesmen are but mere men, rarely in talent above the average of their species, from what I've seen - and oblige it to consider itself no better than an individual, even with respect to its own individual subjects. Let the Law be in all respects be paramount, and it will matter little whether the lords or the vagabonds send members to Parliament. . ."²⁵

Galt's plea is essentially for a written constitution and a division of powers, and may bear the imprint of his Canadian experience and lessons learned from the United States. Chalmers' argument was similar in defence of the constitutional autonomy of religious establishments. Cockburn called this the Kirk's claim to superintend "the whole Christian and civic economy of our population", and given Chalmers' involvement in the campaign to renew the parochial system of poor relief, and the extension of the Kirk's role in education, the ambition of the project cannot be denied.²⁶ So, rather than the 1820s seeing the erosion of significant Scottish intellectual life by windy symbolism and sentimentalism, the opposite seems to be the case. Although the French Wars had transformed a measured assimilation into something

²⁴ J. GALT, *The Provost*, 1822, repr. Edinburgh 1913, p. 22.

²⁵ IDEM, *The Member*, 1832, repr. Edinburgh 1985, p. 62.

²⁶ H. COCKBURN, *Journal*, Edinburgh 1874, II, p. 181; and see O. CHECKLAND, *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland*, Edinburgh 1980, pp. 31 f.

Christopher Harvie

headlong, and Conservatives really thought politics had got out of control, in England as well as in Scotland, the *praxis* of political ideas was expanded, albeit vertiginously.

V. Thomas Carlyle

For political writing to migrate from formal discourses to novels or theology was not a sign of weakness, but - given the growing social importance of these forms - an indication of vitality. It could even be that these attempts were swamped by a mighty attempt at synthesis which followed their general tendencies, but despaired of the dislocation in the Scots *polis*. The acute dualism involved in trying to reconcile a non-national "improvement" ideology with an older "authentic" social order, acquired its own voice in Thomas Carlyle. Carlyle's reinterpretation of the Christian "soul" as the secular individual contributed to nineteenth-century liberalism; his "condition of England question" to Christian Socialism and Disraelian Conservatism, not to speak of the "great tradition" of the English social novel.

Yet his immediate impact was deeply disruptive of the mores of English culture. *Signs of the Times* (1829) with its stress on the dynamism of material progress *and* the loss of *felt* community draws on Herder and Schiller, yet its central metaphor, the "mechanization" of man and mind, seems to be drawn from Adam Ferguson's *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767): "Manufactures prosper most where the mind is least consulted, and where the workshop may, without any great effort of imagination, be considered as an engine, the parts of which are men."²⁷ In a stimulating essay on *Class and Ideology*, Victor Kiernan sees Carlyle as embodying the "dim or squinting

²⁷ Cited in D. YOUNG (ed.), *Edinburgh in the Age of Improvement*, Edinburgh 1967, p. 28.

Political Unionism and Cultural Nationalism

vision of the past" of a capitalist class whose compromises with the aristocratic order had caused it to lose intellectual impetus: "He had only the most negative view of the Enlightenment to which his native land contributed so much."²⁸ This underestimates the influence of Ferguson, and Carlyle's radical distrust of the landed order. The problem was more that of the *polis*. Ferguson's static social ideal had to be set against what Carlyle insisted were the permanent changes wrought by the French Revolution.

There remains at the root of Carlyle's thought the fierce radicalism and nationalism of the man who had sympathized with the "Bonnymuir rebels" of 1820 - witness the essay on Burns, and even more the lyrical encomium of Scotland in the essay on Scott, written after six years in the south: "Thought, conscience, the sense that man is denizen of a Universe, creature of an Eternity, has penetrated to the remotest cottage, to the simplest heart. Beautiful and awful, the feeling of a Heavenly Behest, of Duty god-commanded, over-canopies all life."²⁹

Despite his coinage of the "condition of England question", and profound effect on the evolution of a type of English nationalism, this impulse was transferred to the concept of *Weltliteratur* Carlyle had derived from Goethe: "The world as text," as Dr. Rory Watson has put it, "and the text as voice" made him the prophet of "heroic individualism."³⁰ In this existentialism,

²⁸ V. KIERNAN, Class and ideology, in: *History of European Ideas* 6 (1985), 267-286, p. 271.

²⁹ *Sir Walter Scott*, in: *The London and Westminster Review*, vols. I-IV (1837), repr. in: *Scottish and Other Miscellanies*, London, p. 71; Carlyle to Edward Irving, Letter of 28 Dec. 1819, cited in: J. A. FROUDE, *Carlyle*, I (above n. 1), p. 77; for Carlyle's later recollections see *ibid.*, p. 73.

³⁰ R. WATSON, *The world as text and the text as voice*, in: D. GIFFORD (ed.), *The History of Scottish Literature*, vol. III, *The Nineteenth Century*, Aberdeen 1988, pp. 153-168; and compare Carlyle's *Signs of the Times* with Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795), quoted by E. KEDOURIE in his *Nationalism*, London 1960, p. 45; see also B. KING, *The Life of Mazzini*, 1902, repr. London n.d., pp. 297, 300 f; CARLYLE, *Robert Burns*, in: *Scottish and Other Miscellanies*, p. 27; for Carlyle's influence on Irish nationalism see O. D. EDWARDS, *Ireland*, in: IDEM et al. (eds.), *Celtic Nationalism*, London 1968, pp. 123 f.

Christopher Harvie

which up to the 1848-revolutions took a radical, progressive form, in his friendship with Italian and Irish revolutionaries, Carlyle swept the communitarian problem to one side, only to wind up shackled to the heroic individuality of Frederick the Great. Not the least of the reasons for Scotland's low European profile in the twentieth century was the subsequent German career of Carlyle's Prussianism.³¹

VI. Disruptions

Carlyle went south as the communitarian problem exploded, in the conflict over patronage in the Church. The Disruption of 1843 was the central trauma of nineteenth-century Scotland. In 1916 Harold Laski recognized its importance, and also the lack of any analytical literature about it.³² In part this was due to the way the event itself shattered the categories of Scottish politics, pushing the "critical" argument into a range of discourses which could no longer find a common intellectual-political centre. But as the careers of MacLeod Campbell, Edward Irving and Hugh Miller showed, it was also a *politique* channelling into orthodox church-political discourse of a much more stimulating - and disturbing - range of psychological as well as theological concerns.

On a political level, even after 1843, the Scots assumed they possessed a constitutional ideal which ensured special treatment for the "estates"; that they were politically articulate - though in a rather specialized way - and that they benefited from particular conventions at Westminster. Whether these convictions sustained one another was a different matter. For the first, the

³¹ P. ZENZINGER, Thomas Carlyle's reputation in Germany, in: H. W. DRESCHER (ed.), Thomas Carlyle 1981, Frankfurt a.M. 1983, pp. 331-350.

³² H. LASKI, Studies in the Problem of Sovereignty, Yale 1916, p. 208.

Political Unionism and Cultural Nationalism

Duke of Argyll, a Peelite Tory active in the Ten Years' Conflict, denounced parliamentary meddling with the Kirk as the "worst possible parliamentary constitution (which) placed all initiative in the hands of the Crown" and commended his non-intrusionist countrymen for their "fresh and powerful conception of the origin, of the nature, of much of the functions of the Christian Church".³³ A more committed non-intrusionist, Hugh Miller, drew parallels between theology, constitutionalism and nationalism. Of a discussion in a Newcastle inn he wrote, in his *First Impressions of England*: "The countryman was silent. 'You Scotch are a strange people,' said one of the commercial gentlemen. 'When I was in Scotland two years ago, I could hear of scarce anything among you but your Church question. What good does all your theology do you?' 'Independently altogether of religious considerations,' I replied, 'it has done for our people what all your Societies for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and all your Penny and Saturday Magazines, will never do for yours: it has awakened their intellects, and taught them how to think. The development of the popular mind in Scotland is a result of its theology.'³⁴

Since Parliament passed little "positive" legislation, assumptions about a distinctive Scottish *polis* could persist in a diluted form. In 1867 even A. V. Dicey, later the high priest of parliamentary sovereignty, could write that: "Irish and Scotch Members are from the necessity of the case representatives of a class, and do therefore exert a force out of all proportion to their numbers. Few governments would dare to legislate for Scotland and Ireland in the face of the united opposition of the Scotch or Irish members. Anyone who is unwilling to see the working classes legislate for the majority of the nation, as the Scotch Members legislate for Scotland, will prefer the direct supremacy of numbers to the indirect supremacy of a tribunate."³⁵

³³ The DUKE OF ARGYLL, *Autobiography*, London 1906, p. 170.

³⁴ H. MILLER, *First Impressions of England*, London 1847, p. 11.

³⁵ A.V. DICEY, *The balance of classes*, in: A. O. RUTSON (ed.), *Essays on Reform*, London 1867, p. 80.

The consensual creation of the Secretaryship in 1885 reflected this, and assumed a notion of sovereignty limited by the "fundamental" law of the Union of 1707. Even at this late date there were echoes of the Church's claim to independent jurisdiction (presently under threat from radical disestablishers), of the peculiarities of the land system and the law.³⁶

The problem was that this consensus inhibited any alignment of nationalist impulses with political liberalism. Laski commended the "essential federalism of society" demonstrated by the Non-Intrusionists in the struggle with the state before 1843, and aligned it with similar views articulated in the Oxford Movement.³⁷ In his study of the political ideas of Robert Monteith and David Urquhart, Bernard Aspinwall has also commented on a similar communitarian social vision among Scots Catholic converts and fellow travellers, something perhaps transmitted to John Wheatley, in his ideal of a world transformed into socialist city states, and via Urquhart's friend Le Play, to the civic humanism of Patrick Geddes.³⁸ But however ecumenical this degree of agreement, it accorded ill with the dynamic of the growing Scottish industrial bourgeoisie of the time, who believed that such social overhead capital additional to the traditional institutions, could be supplied privately. Until 1878, when the collapse of the City of Glasgow Bank delivered a major blow to such self-confidence, they tended to quit the political arena altogether.

³⁶ See C. HARVIE, Dicey's last stand, in: C. CROUCH, D. MARQUAND (eds.), *The New Centralism*, Oxford 1989, pp. 39-55.

³⁷ LASKI, *Sovereignty* (above n. 32).

³⁸ B. ASPINWALL, David Urquhart, Robert Monteith and the Catholic Church: a search for justice and peace, in: *The Innes Review* 31 (1980), 57-70, p. 72; and see I. S. WOOD, Scottish labour in the 1920s, in: I. DONNACHIE et al. (eds.), *Forward!: Labour Politics in Scotland, 1888-1988*, Edinburgh 1989, p. 34; and H. MELLER, Patrick Geddes: An Analysis of his Theory of Civics, 1880-1904, in: *Victorian Studies* (1976), 291-315, pp. 298 f.

VII. North Britain

Victorian Scotland produced demanding social philosophy, a contribution almost as distinguished as that of the eighteenth century. Hamilton and Ferrier, Hutchison Stirling, Campbell Fraser and Veitch in metaphysics, Lorimer in jurisprudence, the Chambers brothers, Hugh Miller, MacLennan, Robertson Smith, Lang and Frazer in social anthropology and Patrick Geddes in sociology are both strikingly original and relate back to the categories of the Enlightenment. The lack, however, of a Scottish *polis* led inevitably to a centrifugal tendency, both of individuals and of philosophical relationships, and cognate difficulties in reassembling this achievement as a distinct *epos*.

Some of these problems are seen in the career of Carlyle's Scottish correspondent, the Forfarshire laird Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, also the friend of Guizot and Madame de Stael. Like Carlyle, Erskine had been affected by the millenarianism of Edward Irvine, but his concept of God was essentially one sprung from the common-sense tradition - a "teaching God" whose mercy was universally available and whose incarnation was in the individual conscience. Erskine had correctly detected in Carlyle the unstable coexistence of political science and the religious impulse; his response to this was to be a subtle affirmation of theism whose influence reached F. D. Maurice, Thomas Chalmers and James Lorimer, and which was later on to be crucial in homogenizing in Scotland the results of "modernist" theology.³⁹

There is a preoccupation with *virtu* in Erskine which echoes Enlightenment concerns, yet the "Christian Socialists" with whom he was aligned in England were perhaps the only group which was seriously concerned to create an integrative "British" religious ideology which should draw on all the national traditions. This is evident, for example, in Charles Kingsley's remarkable

³⁹ W. HANNA (ed.), *The Letters of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen*, Edinburgh 1877, I, pp. 301, 306.

Christopher Harvie

"condition of England" novel *Alton Locke* (1850) in which Carlyle made a personal appearance.⁴⁰ The psychic stress of this ambitious adaptation, however, left its mark. The degree to which Erskine's religious modernism was coated in a near-mawkish emotionalism, showed a disturbing psychological reflex. The debates on Enlightenment and improvement had been carried on within a vocabulary of "common-sense" rationalism, edging awkwardly into sentiment and romanticism. But when metaphysics broke the bounds of the *polis*, psychic stress was bound to lurk along the way "from Milne's Bar to the Absolute".

Karl Miller, in *Cockburn's Millenium* (1975) has suggested that, at this time, schizophrenia, in a Laingian sense, was a "sensible" response to the Scots intellectuals' dilemma. Henry Cockburn, the progressive, "assimilationist" Whig lawyer, of Edinburgh's New Town (which he disliked intensely) invented an archaic, ruralist *Doppelgänger* in the laird of Bonaly.⁴¹ Both John Gibson Lockhart, in *Adam Blair* (1821) and James Hogg, in *Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) created Calvinists whose cultivation, by free-will, of certain aspects of their character provoked the counter-attack of their instinctual selves. In a more institutional sense, Chalmers held both to the scientism of the Enlightenment and to the seventeenth-century ideal of the "Godly Commonwealth" which Moderate churchmen and *literati* had roundly condemned, and in this he was probably representative of many members of the "Popular Party".⁴² Its leading publicist Hugh Miller's fatal psychological crisis seems, from the evidence of *My Schools and Schoolmasters*, to have been a powerful blend of personal and intellectual tensions. This seems to be part of the migration of the "nexus" of inclusive theory to imaginative literature, which John Anderson would later insist on as a condition of the centrality of philosophical criticism

⁴⁰ See C. T. HARVIE, *The Centre of Things: Political Fiction in Britain from Disraeli to the Present*, London 1991, pp. 24-26.

⁴¹ K. MILLER, *Cockburn's Millenium*, London 1975, chs. 7 and 8.

⁴² BROWN, Chalmers (above n. 19), pp. 107-109.

Political Unionism and Cultural Nationalism

during a period of extensive social change, but it could also suggest - particularly in a period when the "Scotch philosophy" was under pressure from utilitarianism - an incipient collapse of its categories, and a loss of the confidence necessary to resist the intellectual hegemony of the larger southern neighbour.⁴³

VIII. The Survival of Scottish Toryism

An aspect of this is a tone of apprehension, even paranoia. Chalmers, Carlyle, even the level-headed Cockburn, saw the industrial masses not as manageable but as molten: civil society was only the crust over something volcanic. Where did this loss of nerve - only paralleled in England in the acute economic crisis of the early 1840s - come from?⁴⁴ The period 1820-1848 was certainly, in Scotland as elsewhere in Europe, one of profound and multiple political crises, but these were individually surmountable. The old system of management vanished by 1833; labour discontent, repressed in 1820 and again in 1838, was diffused into localized protest and legalistic, moral force Chartism. The church crisis broke the bounds of the new governing arrangements, obsessed the middle classes for fifty years, but lost its politically constructive potential after 1843, issuing in pointless competitive church-building.

⁴³ Cited in G. E. DAVIE, *The Democratic Intellect: Scotland and Her Universities in the Nineteenth Century*, Edinburgh 1961, pp. 83-85. The frequency of mental or psychosomatic illness among the leaders of religious thought in Victorian Scotland - Irving, Miller, Erskine, Tulloch, Dr. John Brown - would suggest some support for theories of psychic strain.

⁴⁴ See C. T. HARVIE, *Political thrillers and the condition of England*, in: A. MARWICK (ed.), *Literature and Society*, London 1990, pp. 217-248.

Christopher Harvie

The self-consciousness of the Scottish "Estates" (law, religion, education, etc.), the idea of a widening frontier - exemplified not only by emigration but by Scotland's inclusion in the British railway network in the late 1840s - and the "deep structure" of Scottish legalism ensured that these discontents never coalesced. The divided urban-rural nature of Scots politics, the novelty of adapting to a legitimate parliamentary system and the sheer pressure of coping with a sequence of economic challenges meant that the bourgeoisie, radical or otherwise, never had the chance to focus its political direction along comprehensively "national" lines.⁴⁵ When this did happen, momentarily, in the 1850s, there was irresolution and a lack of confidence, a taking refuge in the safeguarding of symbols rather than the assertion of power.⁴⁶

Bodies like the National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights, 1853-1854, showed that, in an overwhelmingly Liberal-voting country, the surviving Scottish Tories had managed to establish a socio-cultural hegemony of sorts. In 1838 the Sheriff of Glasgow, Archibald Alison, took the lead in crushing the Spinners Union; in the economic slump of 1842, the Peel government directly intervened to combat distress in the textile centre of Paisley and (prompted by the pamphlets of Alison's brother, Prof. W. P. Alison) issued a Royal Commission into the Scottish poor law.⁴⁷ This was a direct attack on Chalmers' concept of the parish and had succeeded by 1845 in creating a Scottish poor law liberated from the Kirk Sessions but still far less "liberal" - if that is the word - than the English. As Ian Levitt has pointed out, this removed poor relief from a body whose instincts were Liberal and

⁴⁵ For Scottish politics after 1832 see I. G. C. HUTCHINSON, *Scotland 1832-1926: A Political History*, Edinburgh 1985.

⁴⁶ See H. J. HANHAM, *Mid-century Scottish nationalism, romantic and radical*, in: R. ROBSON (ed.), *Ideas and Institutions of Victorian Britain*, London 1967, pp. 143-179.

⁴⁷ T. C. SMOUT, *A Century of the Scottish People*, Glasgow 1986, p. 25; H. FRASER, *Conflict and Class: Scottish Workers, 1700-1838*, Edinburgh 1988, pp. 153-155.

Political Unionism and Cultural Nationalism

democratic, and vested it, both at local and at national level, in "a distinct social group, stemming from the old pre-industrial order".⁴⁸

More, with the *Edinburgh* reviewers now ageing and seemingly immobilized by the spectre of a militant working class, the centre of the cultural stage had been captured by the men from *Blackwoods* under John Wilson, "Christopher North", who took over the demotic directness of Wordsworth's diction while abandoning its socially-critical position.⁴⁹ Wilson could communicate in Scots - and did, most effectively, in *Noctes Ambrosianae*, but chose to combine authoritarian "British" politics with a portrayal of Scotland which anticipated, in almost every detail, the product of the Kailyard of the 1880s.⁵⁰ In W. E. Aytoun and Theodore Martin he found accomplices whose sentimental Jacobitism proved in the 1840s fully adaptable to installing the Hanoverian monarchy in its annual Balmoral phase as the symbol of the Scottish Victorian compromise. This had trappings of Scottishness which Henry Mackenzie's sentimentalism had lacked in the 1770s, but could be counted on to be similarly supine in the face of the Westminster Parliament.

Much more than Scott's protests in the 1830s, the Scottish Rights movement - in which various of the above were involved - was the politics of noisy inaction. If the Disruption winded Scottish Liberalism, and emigration or journalism (whose decade this was) were always attractive to radical activists, sentiment of this sort could easily shift into an aggressive mode, as with the Rev. James Begg, Free Churchman, nationalist, housing reformer and Protestant bigot. In the 1860s and 1870s the Tories effectively exchanged Jacobite nationalism for Orangeism, but not before aggrieved Presbyterians had instituted a sort of theological trench-warfare, which both penalized the

⁴⁸ I. LEVITT, Welfare, government and the working class: Scotland, 1845-1894, in: D. MCCRONE et al. (eds.), *The Making of Scotland: Nation, Culture and Social Change*, Edinburgh 1989, 109-122, pp. 109-111.

⁴⁹ A. NOBLE, John Wilson (Christopher North) and the Tory hegemony, in: D. GIFFORD, *History* (above n. 30), 125-152, p. 134.

⁵⁰ I. CAMPBELL, *Kailyard*, Edinburgh 1981, pp. 28-40.

Christopher Harvie

careers of academics disposed to a nationally-minded politics of conciliation, such as Sir William Hamilton or J. F. Ferrier, and delayed the vital "national" issue of a comprehensive educational reform.⁵¹

IX. English Assault and Scottish Defence

It was the Liberals, not the Tories, who saw an archaic Scottish particularism dethroned by the centralized British state. Cockburn had demanded restoration of the Scottish Secretaryship to cope with the Church crisis in the 1830s, but kept away from the Scottish Rights movement in 1853: "it is useless and wrong to attempt to resist the general current."⁵² Even when - largely influenced by Irish events - a home rule movement got under way in the 1880s, it was checked by the concession of a Scottish Secretary in the Cabinet in 1885, and coincided with an invasion of Scottish seats by English carpet-baggers. Their money, one imagines, had an attraction for a Liberal Party which lost many wealthy backers in the secession of 1886.

Scotland lost out in the great period of what could be called the Liberalism of print capitalism. Between 1843 and 1878 Scotland seemed to produce nothing to compare with Dickens, George Eliot, Thackeray, Trollope, Browning, Tennyson, the Rosettis, Swinburne, and theology and metaphysics appeared to have lost way. Gladstone, coming north in the latter year to fight the Midlothian campaign, praised the intellectual capacity of his new constituents, yet the one major mid-Victorian Liberal treatment of Scottish history, the third volume of Buckle's *History of Civilisation in England*, published in 1860, assaulted the "deductive" foundations of the common

⁵¹ DAVIE, *Philosophy* (above n. 9), p. 97; and see HUTCHISON, *Scotland* (above n. 45), pp. 122-125.

⁵² COCKBURN, *Journal*, II (above n. 26), entry for 10 July 1853, pp. 291-293.

Political Unionism and Cultural Nationalism

sense metaphysics of the Scots Enlightenment as both élitist and obscurantist: "The Scotch literature, notwithstanding its brilliancy, its power, and the splendid discoveries of which it was the vehicle, produced little or no effect on the nation at large . . . Its method, both of investigation and of proof, was too refined suit ordinary understandings. Therefore, upon ordinary understandings it was inoperative. In Scotland, as in ancient Greece, and in modern Germany, the intellectual classes, being essentially deductive, have been unable to influence the main body of the people. They have considered things at too great an altitude, and at too great a remove."⁵³

Buckle did not stop at this, but damned Scotch metaphysics for arresting the country's nineteenth-century development; an indictment continued by the native Liberal J. M. Robertson in *The Perversion of Scotland* in 1886.⁵⁴

In 1865 John Stuart Mill, then at the height of his reputation, assaulted the Scottish common sense philosophical tradition, in his *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, and two years later was rewarded with the rectorship of St. Andrews University.⁵⁵ The victory of a southern empiricism seemed complete, both to the English Liberals who sat for Scottish seats - John Morley, Augustine Birrell, H. H. Asquith - and to many positivistic Scottish radicals repelled by the country's overdriven religiosity and aiming at success in the metropolitan literary society governed by the likes of G. H. Lewes and Frederic Harrison. This view was also apparently conveyed in the literary reaction to the Kailyard school, by novels like George Douglas Brown's *The House with the Green Shutters* (1900), John MacDougall Hay's *Gillespie* (1913) and the work of the young John Buchan. Reinforced by Lytton Strachey's "debunking" it remained to the fore in

⁵³ BUCKLE, *Civilisation*, III (above n. 3), pp. 465 f.

⁵⁴ J. M. ROBERTSON, *The Perversion of Scotland*, London 1886, esp. p. 210.

⁵⁵ DAVIE, *Democratic Intellect* (above n. 43), pp. 101-110.

the criticism and historiography (such as it was) of the Scottish Renaissance.⁵⁶

This challenge apparently went unanswered. John Inglis, Lord Glencorse's address on "Law and History" is a *riposte* of sorts to Buckle, and John Veitch's *Sir William Hamilton* attempts likewise to deal with Mill - but no attempt at a thorough-going refutation.⁵⁷ The Scots were in part marginalized by the rescue of both Oxford and Cambridge from the state of backwardness mocked by Adam Smith and Sir William Hamilton, ironically through the agency of Benjamin Jowett and Mark Pattison, liberal theologians best described as English "Moderates".⁵⁸ They could now use their endowments to shift south new Scottish generations - Andrew Lang, Robertson Smith, J. G. Frazer, A. D. Lindsay, John Buchan and Douglas Brown - but without replicating that concentration of a "national interest" that made Jesus College Oxford lead the Welsh political revival of the 1880s.⁵⁹

There also occurred that rediscovery of Celticism - Renan's *Essay sur la Poesie des Races Celtiques* (1854), and Matthew Arnold's *Lectures on Celtic Literature* (1865) - which secured to Ireland and Wales, and to a some extent a Scotland made more Celtic by internal migration, a respectable but definitely subordination to metropolitan, Anglophone culture. Arnold, following Renan wrote the Celt out of the modern world: "It is not in the outward and visible world of material life, that the Celtic genius of Wales and Ireland can at this day hope to count for much; it is in the inward world of thought and science. What it *has* been, what it *has* done, let us ask to attend

⁵⁶ H. MACDIARMID referred to *The House with the Green Shutters* as "the same thing disguised as its opposite", in: *Contemporary Scottish Studies* 1924, repr. *Edinburgh, Scottish Educational Journal*, 1974, 106-108, p. 108; and see D. CARSWELL, *Brother Scots*, London 1927.

⁵⁷ See C. HARVIE, *Legalism, myth and national identity in Scotland in the imperial epoch*, in: *Cencrastus* 26 (Summer 1987), pp. 35-41.

⁵⁸ P. HINCHLIFF, *Benjamin Jowett and the Christian Religion*, Oxford 1987, p. 18; M. PATTISON, *Suggestions on Academical Organisation*, Edinburgh 1869, p. 307.

⁵⁹ See K. O. MORGAN, *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales, 1880-1980*, Oxford 1983, p. 100.

Political Unionism and Cultural Nationalism

to that as a matter of science and history, not to what it will be or will do, as a matter of modern politics."⁶⁰

This highly qualified respect mitigated the Protestant "Anglo-Saxonism" of the Scottish Lowlands, at a time of large-scale immigration from the Highlands. But perhaps, when Anglo-Saxonism was associated with the "higher types", it also made the country's "evolution" seem retarded.⁶¹

Viewed from within the country, this was not the case. Mid-Victorian Scottish culture was localized, with discussion-groups in market towns concerned with a remarkably sophisticated range of issues, and much intellectual effort which went into the founding of the weekly press and into Liberal politics: two areas of activity not available at all before the 1830s.⁶² London - the world centre of print - obviously had its magnetic effect, but Scottish culture, despite the much greater scale of change, still managed to integrate industrialization, demographic change, urbanization, emigration, Highland and Lowland, while in South Wales and in Northern Ireland the new industrial society proved incompatible with the agricultural past.

George Davie, again, has argued that out of one of the most humiliating incidents in the intellectual life of Victorian Scotland came an intellectual achievement comparable with that of Ferguson and Adam Smith. In 1878 the Free Church of Scotland prosecuted the great anthropologist Robertson Smith for heresy, as a result of which he lost his chair at its college in Aberdeen, only to gain a Fellowship at Trinity, Cambridge, and the editorship of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. An observer might have been tempted to agree with Buckle, even if the episode could be put down to distorted post-Disruption religious politics. But he would also have to account for the remarkable attempt that Robertson Smith then made to create a sociological

⁶⁰ M. ARNOLD, *The Study of Celtic Literature*, 1865, repr. London 1912, p. 13; and see M. STEPHENS, Ernest Renan, in: *The Oxford Companion to the Literature of Wales*, Oxford 1986, p. 511.

⁶¹ L. P. CURTIS, *Apes and Angels*, Newton Abbot 1971, pp. 96-98.

⁶² W. DONALDSON, *Popular Literature in Victorian Scotland*, Aberdeen 1986, pp. 14-28.

Christopher Harvie

basis for the Christian doctrine of the atonement, in his lectures on *The Religion of the Semites*, which he delivered at Aberdeen in 1888. Applying the procedures of "conjectural history", Robertson Smith argued that ritual sacrificial meals, originally cannibalistic, evolved along with Jewish society first into a class-stratified exhibition: sacrifice as proof of wealth. This was criticized by the prophets concerned to re-ify and purify the ritual: "The prophets look forward to the human sacrifice done to end all human sacrifices, in which a willing victim, by allowing himself to be put to death in striking circumstances, brings about the religious revolution designed to have irreversible effects . . . The communion from now on becomes commemorative, and the bloodshed is abolished from religion."⁶³

This ambition was particularly bold: to reconcile "scientific" history with the uniqueness of the Christian revelation. Davie argues that Robertson Smith's achievement was comparable with that of Ferrier and MacLennan, and a testament to a public profile that anthropology - and indeed energy of inquiry - enjoyed in mid-Victorian Scotland. According to Richard Dorson, Scotland did more for the development of folk-lore studies and anthropology, through Hugh Miller, Lang, Frazer and W. A. Clouston, than any other nation.⁶⁴ This was an inquiry which bridged the learned and the popular, and had as much to do with politics and religious activism as with antiquarianism: the tradition of "Popular Enlightenment" explored by Dr. Donaldson was still running through the publications of the Chambers brothers and William Alexander, and continually surviving the irruption of sectarian small-mindedness.

⁶³ DAVIE, *Philosophy* (above n. 9), p. 134.

⁶⁴ R. DORSON, *The British Folklorists*, London 1964, pp. 137-152.

Political Unionism and Cultural Nationalism

X. A Second Enlightenment?

Davie regards Scottish social anthropology as a second Enlightenment. At the same time his philosophy-centred interpretation deprecates in a rather moralistic way the challenge offered by other schools to the "Common Sense" tradition. But in a liberal, pluralistic society, with competing ideologies, the interesting thing was how adept the Scots were at mastering them. The critiques of Buckle and Mill coincided with another attack on Hamilton from James Hutchison Stirling, who in 1865 published his *Secret of Hegel*, the main influence on the next generation of philosophers, notably T. H. Green and Edward Caird. To Davie the Hegelians' preference for social reform over philosophizing compromised the integrity of the Scottish school and drove it towards the shallows of pragmatism. Yet he admits that there was often a continuity in terms of content, and that many of the new men were consciously extending the "holism" of the common-sense tradition. The symposium *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, edited by Andrew Seth and R. B. Haldane and published in memory of Green in 1883, showed a new evaluation of the possibilities of state intervention in economic and social life, and a strong sense of the international context of law.

The "Carlyleian" critique of society also received a second wind, and an economic/ideological context with the writing and lecturing of John Ruskin, "a Scot of Scots" according to Frederic Harrison, from his *Unto this Last* (1861) on.⁶⁵ Like Hegelianism, this had a particularly strong impact on Oxford, where Ruskin was Slade professor of Fine Art after 1867, but the first analysis of Ruskin's economics was published in 1881 by another arch-systemiser, Patrick Geddes, in Scotland. The "Ruskin Societies" founded in Edinburgh and Glasgow have yet to be researched - as have bodies like Edinburgh Theosophists, whose drama group pioneered some of Ibsen's most challenging works - but they seem to have had some influence on the rise of

⁶⁵ See F. HARRISON, *John Ruskin*, London 1905, p. 6.

Christopher Harvie

Scots municipal socialism *and* the "European" radicalism in art and design which was to characterize *fin-de-siècle* Scotland.⁶⁶

This anomalous - but, as we have seen, traditional - merging of the "improving" and the mythic provides one reason for the reputation in Scotland of W. E. Gladstone, whose combination of civic virtue and the epic could still strike echoes in a society where the oral tradition was strong. The general approval of his Irish Home Rule policy, despite militant Protestant traditions, essentially set in motion the Catholic-radical alignment of Scottish politics, so influential right up to the present day.⁶⁷ To his straightforward "scientific" liberal contemporaries Gladstone's Irish policy was intolerable, but the "European sense" of which J. L. Hammond has written, was consonant with Scots, Irish or Welsh ideas of identity, and incompatible with "Anglo-Saxonism" or business-led imperialism. It is difficult to pin ideology on such an "old parliamentary hand", but his sense of "Christendom" (the "international public right" diffused among the European nations) and of self-government (initially among religious groups; latterly among nations) seems to accord with the Scottish tradition both of divided sovereignty and (particularly in the nineteenth century, under Prof. James Lorimer and James Bryce) of international law.⁶⁸

Lorimer *qua* university reformer figures in Davie's *Democratic Intellect* on an almost heroic scale, yet Davie provides very little background on a fascinating and so far under-researched figure, whose commitment to the theory of international law was reckoned highly unusual in the British legal circles of his time, and who put forward in his *Institutes of the Law of Nations* a scheme for European political federation as early as 1883. In his pioneering reconstruction of Kellie Castle, in Fife, Lorimer was also a noted

⁶⁶ Some indication of this "bourgeois socialist" culture is given in K. MIDDLEMASS, *The Clydesiders*, London 1965, pp. 30-32.

⁶⁷ See T. GALLAGHER, *The Uneasy Peace*, Manchester 1986.

⁶⁸ C. HARVIE, Gladstonianism, the provinces, and popular political culture, in: R. BELLAMY (ed.), *Victorian Liberalism*, London 1989, pp. 152-174.

Political Unionism and Cultural Nationalism

cultural nationalist, and his son Robert became the greatest Scottish architect of the vernacular revival school.⁶⁹

James Bryce has been better served. In a recent study the German scholar Thomas Kleinknecht has dealt in particular with Bryce's concept of "imperium" - derived from his studies in the history of the Holy Roman Empire - in which sovereignty was divided between the national, local or religious unit and the "imperium". Ideally, this supreme, peace-keeping authority was shared between an elected Emperor and a conciliar church: the Ghibelline position found in the conflicts of the fourteenth century. Kleinknecht shows that this ideal was common to Bryce and Gladstone, both through their classicism and through their veneration for Dante, the Ghibelline poet, as the bridge between the ancients and the moderns. Bryce's federalism, applied to the Holy Roman Empire, to America, to the abortive Imperial Federation League and to Ireland - and ultimately to the League of Nations ideal - thus stands against the dogma of parliamentary sovereignty preached, time and time again, by his close friend A. V. Dicey, and enthusiastically adopted by imperialists and Fabians alike.⁷⁰ Bryce's Glasgow university education was firmly in the common sense tradition. His professor, the Rev. "Logic Bob" Buchanan "carried on the tradition and ideas of Dr. Thomas Reid, who had taught in Glasgow eighty years before" and this influence seems to have been far more important than any one of his subsequent Oxford tutors.⁷¹

Lorimer and Bryce share the same Scottish political tradition as F. S. Oliver (the grandson of the dissenting leader Duncan MacLaren) and the Round Table group, with their plans for federalism in the 1900s.⁷² As Lorimer's

⁶⁹ See the DNB entry for Professor James Lorimer (1819-1890), by Aeneas Mackay.

⁷⁰ T. KLEINKNECHT, *Imperiale und Internationale Ordnung. Eine Untersuchung zum Gelehrtenliberalismus am Beispiel von James Bryce, 1838-1922*, Göttingen 1986, esp. pp. 103-107.

⁷¹ H. A. L. FISHER, *James Bryce, I*, London 1927, p. 16.

⁷² See J. E. KENDLE, *The Round Table and "Home Rule all Round"*, in: *The Historical Journal* 11 (1968), pp. 332-353.

Christopher Harvie

architectural interests would suggest, such preoccupations were linked with a recurrence of the epic, folkloric preoccupations of the Ossianic episode. Scots lawyers, influenced by von Savigny, Prussian justice-minister and patron of the brothers Grimm, interested themselves in antiquarianism and the recovery of the oral tradition - particularly in the 1870s and 1880s - and this activity bore within it the same concern to discover within the popular tradition an expression of a "positive law".⁷³ Bryce himself was fascinated by his Celtic forebears - reading *Ossian* and attempting to learn Gaelic - and his friend Aeneas Mackay, later Professor of Constitutional Law at Edinburgh, was a leading figure in the creation of the Scottish Historical Association and the Scottish Texts Society in the 1880s.⁷⁴ John Veitch, "Logic Bob's" successor at Glasgow, was also an authority on Border history and the ballad tradition, who was to inspire the young John Buchan.

As in the eighteenth century, we have the preoccupation with man in society; the centrality of philosophic criticism; the desire to systematize knowledge and diffuse it. The deductive system-building of the Scots tradition stood up rather well, even in the days of Darwinian super-empiricism. Burrow and Evans-Pritchard regard the "science" of social anthropology as essentially derived from conjectural history, even in the case of J. G. Frazer.⁷⁵ So why does Burrow's contend that Dugald Stewart "stood not near the beginning of an intellectual tradition but virtually at the end of one"?⁷⁶

⁷³ Sample from Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Annual Reports (1881-1890); and see J. LORIMER, *The Institutes of Law*, 1872, repr. Edinburgh 1880, p. 50.

⁷⁴ See DNB article on Mackay, by A. H. Millar; various texts by Savigny were donated by him to the Edinburgh University Law Library.

⁷⁵ BURROW, *Evolution* (above n. 8), pp. 10-12.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

XI. The Imperial Frontier

In *Scotland and Nationalism* (1977) I argued that Scottish consciousness in the nineteenth century was elusive because, in a country in which emigration was so much part of the experience of every family, consciousness tended to define itself on the margin of this experience, in a process similar to that described by Frederick Jackson Turner in *The Frontier in American History* (1896). This underestimated the continuing influence of Europe on the Scots, but I believe it was still considerable, particularly when "settler liberty" in the latter half of the nineteenth century brought Scots such as Sir John A. MacDonald and Alexander Mackenzie in Canada, Robert Stout in New Zealand, and Andrew Fisher in Australia into leading political positions.⁷⁷ One of the last beneficiaries of Whig imperial patronage was, intriguingly enough, Patrick Geddes, who was given town planning opportunities in Ireland by Lord Aberdeen and in India by Lord Pentland.⁷⁸

The diversion of Scottish identity into the imperial project is a subject of such vastness that a synoptic view still appears remote. The tradition of civic *vertu*, the debate on modernization, the missionary activity of the religious revival: such eighteenth-century precedents could all be drawn on in the creation of new communities. In *Chartism*, virtually the only positive recommendation of Carlyle was the encouragement of emigration - something which accorded with his rural radicalism, and with Galt's energetic but unrewarded attempts to promote settlement in Canada.⁷⁹ It also concurred, less estimably, with the fortunes piled up by Scots nabobs during the Dundases' years of directing Indian policy, and with the sort of intellectual

⁷⁷ C. HARVIE, *Scotland and Nationalism*, London 1977, pp. 98-100.

⁷⁸ LADY PENTLAND, *Life of John Sinclair, Lord Pentland*, London 1928; [JOHN CAMPBELL GORDON, First Marquis of Aberdeen and Temair and ISHBEL MARIA GORDON, Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair], *We twa': reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeen*, 2 vols., Edinburgh 1925.

⁷⁹ See T. CARLYLE, *Chartism*, London 1839, ch. 10.

understanding of the processes of administration and modernization exemplified in James Mill's *History of British India* (1817-1818).⁸⁰

Empire, however, was intellectually dangerous. Exploited in commercial literature, it led to propaganda, oversimplification, and too close a relationship to the racialism of the successful. Mill's dogmatism that the Indians could only govern themselves if they became good utilitarians, was modulated in an optimistic way by Lorimer, who envisaged miscegenation producing a new Anglo-Indian élite, but this was more often overshadowed by a vulgar prejudice. Carlyle was in part the culprit. His arguments anent the Irish in *Chartism* or the Jamaicans in *The Nigger Question* (1851) were more complex - and less illiberal - than they seemed at first glance, but they apparently bore out the "researches" of Professor Robert Knox in the 1840s, in which the enemy was the educated or imitative native, the very man whom Mill strove to create.⁸¹

Perhaps the "ideal type" - in Max Weber's sense - of this predicament was John Buchan. Trained as a philosopher under Veitch, he was a folklorist and anthropologist of the school of Lang, and throughout his life a systematizer and popularizer, as publisher and editor on one hand, as propagandist and epic storyteller on the other. Before 1914 he was an exemplary, if not altogether attractive, "lad o' pairts". At a price, *Prester John* (1910), for example, is a rattling good yarn, but one in which, throughout, political competence is related to race. Even John Laputa, Buchan's "black general", who has an almost Shakespearian presence, is characterized as a Copt rather than a "lower" Kaffir. Is this really only to be taken as fantasy, its Africa a Rider Haggard world whose inhabitants bear no relationship to reality? Kipling, politically a much more conservative animal than Buchan, wrote sympathetically about real Indians whom he knew. Buchan would move fast towards empathy but, pre-war, he wrote formulaically about imaginary Africans. He comes alive, however, when he describes his settler David

⁸⁰ See E. T. STOKES, *The English Utilitarians and India*, Oxford 1959.

⁸¹ For Knox see O. D. EDWARDS, *Burke and Hare*, Edinburgh 1981.

Political Unionism and Cultural Nationalism

Craufurd "getting on"; he celebrated the settler, with his indifference to the native population, not the trustee.

XII. The Road to *The House with the Green Shutters*

The intellectual life of Victorian Scotland seems, however, to end up occluded by the Enlightenment's apparent "antithesis", the demotic nostalgia of the Kailyard which Tom Nairn regarded as an inevitable condition of the "metropolitan- and emigration-directed" evolution of the national intelligentsia.⁸² Yet, granted that its main defining character was a domination by the market - in this alone it was not far from the great age of Scott and Galt - it evidently exercised its considerable influence by resuming and strengthening certain "Enlightenment" themes. These involve the "sentiment" of Mackenzie and the grotesquerie of Galt, elements of Hegelian and even Ibsenite didactics, the dissemination of knowledge (whatever Robertson Nicholl's faults, he was a great public educator) and in the case of J. M. Barrie, a modernistic and experimental aesthetic.⁸³ In comparison with the "best-seller"-culture of *fin-de-siècle* England - the ravings of Marie Corelli, William Le Queux, or Charles Garvice - the Kailyard was almost a "responsible" force.

In this context George Douglas Brown's *The House with the Green Shutters* is a crucial document, not just the "same thing disguised as its opposite" reaction to the sentimentalities of MacLaren and Crockett which MacDiarmid accused it of being. As recently-discovered fragments of the original text have

⁸² T. NAIRN, *The Break-Up of Britain. Crisis and Neo-Nationalism*, London 1977, pp. 157-160.

⁸³ See CAMPBELL, Kailyard (above n. 50); C. HARVIE, *Behind the Bonnie Brier Bush*, in: *Proteus* (1977), pp. 55-70; and IDEM, *The Barrie who never grew up*, in: H. W. DRESCHER (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction*, Frankfurt a.M. 1985, pp. 321-336.

Christopher Harvie

disclosed, the book was originally intended to be a much more programmatic study of the way in which the growth of the railways impacted on mid-nineteenth-century Scotland, in which the *leitmotiv* was directly taken from Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets* his striking image of the towns of Britain "thus silently bleeding to death, or what we call dancing away to other points of the British territory", and his story of Joplin of Reading, his security and hopes subverted by the new geography.⁸⁴ The clash of male tyranny with this economic nemesis gives the novel its brutal poignancy, and also makes John Gourlay symbolic of the damage that nineteenth-century Scotland was inflicting on itself. Brown had worked with David Meldrum on editing John Galt and could see, through the "theoretical histories" the dynamic destructiveness of individual enterprise unconstrained by community. The fate of the Gourlays is in fact the working out of Galt's pessimism about the future of the *polis*.⁸⁵

Yet the Gourlays are not necessarily foredoomed. In an episode curiously overlooked by most commentators, young Gourlay is treated to the common-sense philosophy in full flight, at the lecture of "Auld Tam", the professor of logic:

"I am speaking now,' said Tam, 'of the comfort of a true philosophy, less of its higher aspect than its comfort to the mind of man. Physically, each man is highest on the globe; intellectually, the philosopher alone dominates the world. To him are only two entities that matter - himself and the Eternal; or, if another, it is his fellow-man, whom serving he serves the ultimate of being. But he is master of the outer world. The mind, indeed, in its first blank outlook on life is terrified by the demoniac force of nature and the swarming misery of man; by the vast totality of things, the cold remoteness of the starry heavens, and the threat of the devouring seas. It is puny in their midst.'

⁸⁴ See A. McCLEERY, *The devil damn thee black: a note on *The House with the Green Shutters**, in: *The Scottish Literary Journal* 16 (May 1989), p. 45; compare with CARLYLE, *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, London 1852, pp. 228-230.

⁸⁵ J. VEITCH, *George Douglas Brown*, London 1952, p. 85; and G. D. BROWN, *The House with the Green Shutters*, 1900, repr. Edinburgh n.d., pp. 82 f.

Political Unionism and Cultural Nationalism

Gourlay woke up, and the sweat broke on him. Great Heaven, had Tam been through it too!

'At that stage,' quoth the wise man, 'the mind is dispersed in a thousand perceptions and a thousand fears; there is no central greatness in the soul. It is assailed by terrors which men sunk in the material never seem to feel. Phenomena, uninformed by thought, bewilder and depress.'

'Just like me!' thought Gourlay, and listened with a thrilling interest because it was 'just like him.'⁸⁶

This is not satirical, it is an offer of possible redemption, reinforced when Tam - who seems to have strong elements of John Veitch in him - awards young Gourlay the Raeburn Prize, for an essay which he criticizes as being "without philosophy". "An Arctic Night" is a sort of nightmare assault of sense-impressions, not far from the sort of thought processes Virginia Woolf's characters undergo. Young Gourlay cannot escape from this manic empiricism, "too nervous a sense of the external world", and is ultimately dragged into the hopeless materialism of drunkenness. As in Greek tragedy, the final effect *is* positive and purgative. The recitation by Mrs. Gourlay of 13th Corinthians before her suicide is not just a blazing indictment of what had failed in the Scottish social order, it resumes Carlyle's critique of mechanism in *Signs of the Times*: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."⁸⁷

The power of this self-criticism - echoed by MacDougall Hay in *Gillespie* but also present in other contemporary works such as Barrie's disturbing *Sentimental Tommy* (1896) and Neil Munro's *Gilean the Dreamer* (1899) - shows that in the Edwardian epoch in Scotland many of the components not

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 165 f.

⁸⁷ I find, coincidentally, that this has been pointed out by W. STORRAR, *Scottish Identity: A Christian Vision*, Edinburgh 1991, pp. 187-189.

Christopher Harvie

just of a national revival but of modernism were already in place. Robertson Smith, as editor of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, spurred Frazer into research which had a profound influence on figures as various as Freud, Jung, Yeats and T. S. Eliot. Another combination of the mythic and the empirical, the sociologist Patrick Geddes, combined the Darwinian, Positivistic and anthropological strands, and reached out to architectural innovators like Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Attempts to recover the Scottish folk tradition occurred on a large scale with the Child and Greig-Duncan projects in the Scottish north-east.⁸⁸

Several other of the building-blocks of a "bourgeois", Scandinavian-style nationalism were in place - a student movement, pressure for a "national" history, cultural organizations such as the Burns Federation (1886), An Comunn Gaidhealach (1892), a movement for "authentic" vernacular architecture and a distinctive Scottish school of artists. Such impulses were paradoxical: national but also bound up with the responsibilities and opportunities provided by imperialism and international print capitalism - Geddes' greatest influence was probably on the Indian nationalists whom he impressed while on his town planning commissions.⁸⁹ The scope of this ambition, and the retarded development of a Scottish "core" meant that a country in deep social difficulty lacked an empirical social politics which could prescribe immediate remedies. By the time it started to do so, through the rise of the politics associated with the Young Scots Society, the journal *Forward* and the Independent Labour Party, the catastrophe of the First World War had overtaken it.

⁸⁸ R. ACKERMANN, *J. G. Frazer: His Life and Work*, Cambridge 1987; and see the essays in R. FRASER (ed.), *Sir James Frazer and the Literary Imagination*, London 1990; for Scottish folk-lore collecting see I. A. OLSON, *Scottish traditional song and the Greig-Duncan collection*, in: C. CRAIG (ed.), *The History of Scottish Literature*, vol. IV, *The Twentieth Century*, Aberdeen 1988, pp. 37-48.

⁸⁹ See Jawaharlal Nehru's tribute to him in a letter of 1936 to his daughter Indira, in: S. GANDHI (ed.), *Freedom's Daughter*, London 1989.

Political Unionism and Cultural Nationalism

Patrick Geddes had described a "Scottish Renaissance" in the 1890s; he was shrewder in seeing its lineaments in the young Christopher Grieve in 1918. Buchan, too, was a stimulator of the literary activity of the 1920s. Even Buchan's thrillers, moreover, were didactic folk-tales on the pattern of the oral tradition, concerned not to validate state authority but produce right conduct in situations of extreme moral ambiguity and social peril.⁹⁰ In his study of *Montrose* (1926) and his novel *Witch Wood* (1928) he restated the moderate Covenanting concept of a divided sovereignty: "There is but one master in the land, and its name is Law -which in itself is a creation of a free people under the inspiration of the Almighty. That law may be changed by the people's will, but till it be so changed it is to be revered and obeyed. It has ordained the King's prerogative, the rights of the subject, and the rights and duties of the Kirk. The state is like the body, whose health is only to be maintained by a just proportion among its members. If a man's belly be his god, his limbs will suffer; if he use only his legs, his arms will dwindle. If, therefore, the King should intrude upon the subject's rights, or the subject whittle at the King's prerogative, or the kirk set herself above the Crown, there will be a sick state and an ailing people."⁹¹

In 1925 Buchan figured as the subject of one of the first essays in MacDiarmid's *Contemporary Scottish Studies*, acclaimed as "the Dean of Modern Scottish Letters", yet at the same time rebuked for not pulling his cultural-political weight in the great national enterprise. Within a decade, thanks to the contributions of Edwin Muir, Neil Gunn, Eric Linklater, Lewis Grassie Gibbon and above all MacDiarmid himself, the "Scottish Renaissance" had become a reality.⁹²

⁹⁰ See J. BUCHAN, *The novel and the fairy tale*, an address to the Scottish branch of the English Association (1932); and C. HARVIE, J. G. Frazer and John Buchan, in: FRASER, Sir James Frazer (above n. 88), pp. 253-269.

⁹¹ BUCHAN, *Witch Wood*, 1928, repr. Edinburgh 1950, p. 69.

⁹² See MACDIARMID, *Scottish Studies* (above n. 56). There is no adequate single-volume treatment of the Renaissance itself, D. GLEN's *Hugh MacDiarmid and the Scottish Renaissance*, Edinburgh 1964, having been overtaken by the amount of subsequent

Christopher Harvie

If the original Enlightenment had diffused itself in didactics, poetry and political conflict, its successor re-emerged through these. But it emerged into its own "witch wood": a country stricken by economic depression, and a world in which the democratic order was in eclipse.

scholarship. An excellent account in German by S. HAGEMANN, *Die Schottische Renaissance. Literatur und Nation im 20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt a.M. 1992.