Civilization and Englishness:
The construction of the proper subject

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Abstract

Jeremy Bentham began his writing career in 1776, and although much of his work remained unpublished until recently, his influence among social reformers and social engineers was enormous. The paradigm within which social engineering projects were established and justified was that laws derived their unique status from their belonging to the category of Law, and that the Law of a particular state obtained its obligatory power from its origin in the will of the sovereign, itself unbound by law. Two consequences followed, one necessary, one merely predictable. The only opposition to the sovereign will was opinion and discussion, neither of which could be guaranteed apart from the sovereign will, since natural rights were 'nonsense on stilts'. Second, the major focus of legal pedagogy was confirmed in its preoccupations with forms and techniques. The human and the humane were simply secondary and precarious dependencies on this 'barbarous, ill-informed jurisprudence'. Considering the laborious transformation of 'England' from geographical expression to cultural artefact, I consider the cultural underpinnings that common law and the 'matchless constitution' depended upon, their plasticity and openness to compromise and negotiation, and argue, not for a return to a lost world, but to a lost vision and way of thinking, one obscured and, indeed, perverted, by what Leavis once called 'technologico-Benthamism'.

> ... you say, it is not the fault of the laborer that he is not well educated (b)ut though he has no share in the fault, he will, if you are foolish enough to give him supreme power in the state, have a very large share in the punishment... It is not necessary now to inquire whether, with universal education, we could safely have universal suffrage. What we are asked to do is give universal suffrage before there is universal education.
> (Macaulay (1842) 1889, 629)

> It is not useful, but hurtful, that the constitution of the country should declare ignorance to be entitled to as much power as knowledge.
> (Mill (1861) 1991, 188)

Aesthetic politics

> Our collection is law and literature. It could equally, instead, be literature and law; and it could equally be, since we have learned that literature, writing, is not the written word alone, but performance by speech, the body, the collective and choreographed interaction and communication of the mannered and deliberately learned and knowing body, be a culture on which a small world, the ruling classes of a small country depended; on which, if it has forgotten or never encountered the lessons, it may be necessary for larger worlds to have to learn again, if they are to survive. The stakes are larger now, but it may be necessary to recall that ambitious ends have modest beginnings. And so to culture, to writing in that larger sense of literature, and then to law; to aesthetics as politics, to culture as the basis of constitution, of constitutions of law and state.

For much of the eighteenth century, 'civilization' in England seems to have implied strategies for the avoidance of the ideological and physical conflicts, and which cast such a long shadow from the previous century. (Underdown 1987; 1996). The aesthetic of the gentleman was assiduously promoted among social elites. Dancing was thought to produce a pleasing grace and social interaction with the softening influences of women not, Locke stressed, to the exclusion of that disagreement without which scientific improvement and social progress would be impossible (Locke (1693) 1989; Shaftesbury (1711) 1999; Klein 1994), but to permit its constructive containment within restrained and polite conversation.

The drawing room, the promenade, opera and theatre provided space for mannered performances and the coffee house formed the site for, ideally, information provided in their periodicals and the urbane exchange of views among gentlemen, merchants and even commercial travellers. (Porter 2000; Brewer 1997). By the mid-eighteenth century, 'clubs of apprentices and artisans marked political anniversaries by the breaking... of hogsheads of beer rather than by the breaking of heads'. (Barker-Benfield 1992, 90-1). Consideration for others facilitates, for Hutcheson, the affection and loyalty that ultimately underpin the constitution. For the virtue which such behaviour represents, we are, he considers, not dependent upon nature but upon cultivation: 'through writing, teaching, conversation and social interaction, we can cultivate it in others' (Bishop 1996, 280) but also in ourselves through our activity, contributing not only to the achievement of social harmony but also helping to 'overcome the cheerless and depressed mental condition induced by a certain kind of religious and moral environment,(making) us... capable of a sense of joy' (Mountner 1993, 49).

The subversive reverse side of Hutchesonian virtue was that where affection and loyalty diminish, and the metropole of a province or colony 'degenerates from a safe, mild and limited power to a severe and absolute one... if oppressive laws are made with respect to the colonies or provinces... they are no longer bound in their subjection.' (Hutcheson (1725 1990, 149; Robbins 1954). Hutcheson, an Irish Presbyterian of moderate persuasion who spent most of his teaching career at the University of Glasgow, made the hypothetical moral case for Irish and American independence. Political association – between England and Scotland, Britain and Ireland, and Britain and her Atlantic colonies - and social cohesion are made to seem

contingent principally upon the virtues of mannered mutual respect among English gentlemen (and gentlewomen). The private lessons of the home – for Locke and Shaftesbury, much turned on the gentleness of paternal guidance, the informed choice of, especially, a boy's tutor and the avoidance of too early an exposure to the disorder of a school – concerning deportment, mien and conversational turn-taking were to be imported into the public world. The economic importance of England for Scotland had been evident since before the union of the countries in 1707, and avoidance of the hypothetical conditions for dissolution of political ties made by Hutcheson seemed to make a suitable case for the aesthetic construction of an appropriate Englishman.

Politics in social theory

Dissolution of the union between England and Scotland was never seriously on the political agenda after 1707. There may have been those who would have preferred a federal union (Robertson 1985), but Scottish commerce quickly derived too much benefit from the English Atlantic trade, significantly the product of slaves whose existence was conveniently below the horizon of civility and sociability. The opportunities of empire, in offices and finance as well as trade, were too great for Scots to be deterred by the "Scottophobia" (Colley 1992, ch 3) with which the English greeted the disproportionate success enjoyed by their better-educated northern neighbours. Of much greater concern to the Scots was that the English might be unaware of the social causes and conditions of the 'liberty and property' into which they had apparently blundered and upon which the peace and prosperity of Scotland relied.

This, then, was a new pedagogical project: how to reveal the political classes of Englishman to themselves and thereby improve them (the Scots of the Enlightenment, John Millar aside (Millar 1771, 1806) were not concerned with either women or, rarely, with 'the mob'). The task seems not unlike the one envisaged by Smith in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Smith (1791) 1982, 158-9). If what is best for a government to do resembles, in the means of its detection, that of the discovery of what is best for the human subject, the deceit of self-regard and the temptations of short-term gain is first achieved by seeing itself through the eyes of others – the 'impartial spectator. In the case of government, this would importantly include those over whom it claims authority and the means by which it exercises it. Smith had already indicated the basis of legitimacy in the consent to any claimed legal authority, coupled with the utility of the laws through which authority is exercised over those subject to it. (Smith (1766) 1982, 397-8; 404). As a necessary next step, a man of 'constancy and firmness... does not merely affect the sentiments of the impartial spectator. He really adopts them', becomes them in his most intimate thoughts and actions, when no actual spectator is present. Thus, to Hume at the end of his life (Livingstone 1990), and to Smith, writing *The Wealth of Nations* (Smith (1776) 1976, II, chs 7 and 8, and 486); Skinner 1990), there was little to commend the retention of America by Britain, even were it possible. There existed neither consent nor utility. After independence, Smith looked forward to a more fruitful, mutually beneficial trade between the United States and Britain. (Smith (1783) 1986)

From Edinburgh, Hume sought to remove what he saw as some of the sentimental clutter which obscured the realistic view of government essential to the preservation of liberty and the security of property: 'governors have nothing to support them but

opinion'(Hume (1777) 1987, 32), which relies, in effect, on interest and prescription. The House of Commons is the repository of that opinion in Britain, and the constitutional instability implied by its overwhelming power within the tripartite assemblage of King, Lords and Parliament is palliated by the venality of its members in accepting offices and sinecures from the crown in return for supporting the crown's ministers. (Hume (1777) 1987, 45. The *Essays* soon return us to the architecture of Hume's thought, which, often as summaries, amplifications and applications of his earlier writing, they were intended to do.

Hume has not been particularly well served by his major editor, who counsels 'caution' in approaching Hume's *oeuvre*. The volume of his work, the variety of his expression and his changes of perspective, as Selby-Bigge saw them, 'preclude' finding a unity in his work. The *Treatise* is 'ill-proportioned, incoherent, ill-expressed', the *Enquiries* 'tiresome and egoistic'. (Selby-Bigge (1893) 1972, vii, x). Annette Baier, by contrast, argues that 'the unity in Hume's thought, not merely in the *Treatise*, but in all his writings, is increasingly recognized' (Baier 1994, viii). The reason for the difference lies, I think, in the breadth and open-endedness, and the interconnectedness of Hume's vision, embracing and drawing conclusions from both the natural and social sciences and humanities in a way perhaps unacceptable for scholars of Selby-Bigge's generation. As a recent editorial introduction put it, Hume

> sought to push the empirical philosophy implicit in Newton's methods to its logical conclusion, and in doing so came to doubt the very possibility of scientific knowledge itself. In doing this he continued the Enlightenment tradition of strict avoidance of comforting metaphysical assertions, but unlike some earlier zealots he found a useful, even necessary place in social life of the seemingly irrational world of custom and tradition. (Appleby, Covington, Hoyt, Latham and Sneider 1996, 73).

His solution to his diagnosis of the failure of 'comforting metaphysical assertions' has to be seen for present purposes in the context of his prognosis for a possibly secure future for Englishness; and hence to the preservation of liberty and the related security of property. If reason will not suffice either to explain the world or to provide an independently secure justification for action in it, something else must do so. As Smith was to put it in an essay published posthumously, we must take care not to mistake the defeasible language in which we try to make natural phenomena comprehensible with the operations of the phenomena themselves.(Smith (1795) 1982, 105) Scientific theory is for Smith, at any one moment the product of scientific discourse, of conversation and sociability among scientific observers who create meaning and select among rival explanations. Their preferences, then, 'are quasi-logical and aesthetic' (Raphael and Skinner 1982, 21). To attribute them dogmatically to something higher and undisputable was, precisely, to invite dispute which, in face of claims to irrefutability, was likely to become intemperate.

If Hume could write that, with the passing of the Stuart monarchy with its "lofty idea of (its) legal authority", it may now

> be justly affirmed without any danger of exaggeration that we in this island have since enjoyed, if not the best system of government, at least the most entire system of liberty that was ever known amongst mankind (Hume (1778) 1983, V, 520),

this new situation was not, in his view the gift of "lawyers, entangled in the subtleties and forms of their profession", but, to the overcoming of the dogmatics of Roman Catholic 'superstition' by the equally dogmatic 'enthusiasm' of evangelical protestantisms, the myriad diversity of whose intolerances then tired the populace into what he saw as the peaceful and productive easiness of latitudinarianism. (Hume (1778) 1983, V ch LIX).

As with Smith, so with Hume, religious toleration by itself was not enough to sustain 'the most entire system of liberty', on the continuance of which in England, Scotland depended. Dwyer writes of the centrality to Scottish thinking of 'the social pleasure and ethical value of conversation' (Dwyer 1993, 1), and Hume was able to provide a motive that goes beyond the recommendations of Locke and Shaftesbury. As a sceptic he observes that no logic connects the very events we wish and require to connect: cause with effect; past regularities with predictions of future events, or factually desirable outcomes with any ethically binding compulsion to produce them. In his notorious example, 'T'is not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the world to the scratching of my finger'. (Hume (1733) 1978, 416). Far from a recipe for anomie and social disintegration, Hume sees this 'philosophical melancholy and delirium' as naturally seeking its own solution in convivial sociability; wining, dining and pleasurable conversation with friends both renders ridiculous the 'delirium' of 'cold speculations' and cements social relations. The anxiety of uncertainty is held at bay, not by its resolution, which is, for Hume not possible, but by sharing its difficulties; by the kind of natural coordination Hume compares in the *Enquiries* to men rowing a boat without explicit agreement. (Hume (1777) 1972, 306) Relativism is not treated to the refutation of the philosophers, namely that it defeats itself by relying on the non-relative premise that everything is relative, but managed by social practice. Uncertainty is incurable by reason, but men are led to cope with the impossibility of living with it by 'fictions' – not to be confused with falsehoods – conventions, mutual assumptions that what cannot be connected by reason will nevertheless remain empirically reliable.

Politics, culture and the management of insurrection

The social problem perceived as most pressing by English elites and the Scots *literati* in the eighteenth century had been that of avoiding the religious and political disorder of the revolutionary period that ended with the removal of the Stuart monarchy and its replacement. If Britain's rulers could find ways of culturally and institutionally mediating their disagreements, they could manage the ruled, whose grievances were usually local, through the decentralized authority of the magistracy, mitigating law by custom, compromise and negotiation (Thompson 1991), or, in the colonies, by a benign neglect that conceded, in effect, self-government. (Marshall 2005). In Burke's words, in what seems almost the impassioned swansong of that era,

> whilst *manners* remain entire, they will correct the vices of the law and so soften it at length to their own temper. But we have to lament that in most of the late proceedings we see very few traces of that generosity, humanity and dignity of mind which formerly characterized this nation. (Burke (1777) 1963, 231)

Two converging tendencies transformed the situation and eventually generated new cultural 'solutions'. First, Parliament ceased to be understood as the institutional medium for managing disagreements among the country's rulers and for legitimating the taxation that paid for the aggressive growth of empire. George III's ministries began to see themselves as imperial sovereigns, almost 'a self-originating magistracy, independent of the people and unconnected with their opinions and feelings' (Burke (1771), 1963, 363). It no longer followed, gave 'a technical dress and a specific sanction to the general sense of the community', but in his view was increasingly a rubber stamp for executive policies. The occasion of one of Burke's constitutional expostulations illustrates the second tendency. The House of Commons had decided in 1769 to reject John Wilkes, the successful candidate in the Middlesex election, and appoint, instead, the loser, one Colonel Luttrell. Wilkes symbolized the 'nationalization' of politics among the less privileged, using the courts, national campaigns and eventually forming a society to promote a bill of rights, to resist what he claimed was an unprecedented government authoritarianism. (Rude 1963). He was lionized from Massachusetts to the Netherlands, and evoked the spectre of popular demands for a share in political power that was resisted but ultimately proved impossible to exorcise.

The Americans of the thirteen colonies seceded rather than submit to an authoritarian, and, as they saw it, corrupt Parliament, but this was not an option in the metropole or, as it turned out, in Ireland. When the 1784-1801 Pitt Administration first failed to deliver Parliamentary reform and then encouraged reactionary measures designed to penalize radicalism during and after the Revolution in France, popular disorder with concomitant agitation for change grew. Both were enhanced by agricultural pauperization associated with enclosures and by new forms of labour relations that disregarded customary entitlements and forced greater dependence on wages. (Snelling 1987; Earl of Winchelsea to the Board of Agriculture 1816). These changes in part reflected the growing influence of the political economists, whose conviction that a free market in capital and labour would ultimately result in a benign balance, maximizing the benefit to both, was denounced by Samuel Taylor Coleridge as 'a science which begins with *abstractions* in order to exclude whatever is not subject to technical calculation,' assuming that such abstractions represent 'the *whole* of human nature' (Coleridge (1818) in Morrow 1990, 102). As now, economists, although not their victims, failed to appreciate that the basis of their discipline was political. (See Coleridge (1817) 1990, 144). And whilst Morrow may be correct in categorizing as unfair and inadequate Coleridge's assessment of Malthus' teaching (Morrow 1990, 106) as that 'he who would prevent the Poor from rotting away in disease, misery and wickedness is an enemy of his country', Malthus *did* write that he whose labour was unwanted and who had no support from family, friends or charity 'has no right to the smallest portion of food, and in fact has no business to be where he is'. (Hollander 1997, 896).

Hopes of relief from an unreformed Parliament were, as Coleridge pointed out, amusing were they not also tragically misguided (Coleridge (1795) 1990, 44) and the Reform Act of 1832 promised no material change. Three years prior to the Act, Coleridge proposed a solution to the obvious threat to social stability posed by yawning gaps in wealth and mutual social respect, and the harshness of government response. In spite of his perhaps unexpected terminology, the germs of later approaches can be discerned in his proposals. Education for Coleridge 'was to educe, to call forth... as the blossom is educed from the bud. In proportion as the individual is likely to be placed, all that is good and proper should be educed' (Coleridge (1813) in Snyder 1929, 45). Drawing out here implies also drawing *in*, into a wider community made intelligible, say, to the worker both by the redemption of his ignorance, but also in the conjunction of community and subject in the process of education. Assuming the duty of education, the community has changed as much as the newly enlightened worker. In *The Constitution of Law and State* (Coleridge (1829) 1990), two concepts are crucial: the idea and the constitution. An idea, an essentially critical tool (Morrow 1990, 131), is not abstracted from the existing form of, for example, a state, but is the antecedent thought of a state according to purposes that the subsequent constitution of an existing state may fail fully to realize. The social contract, whilst never, perhaps an empirical historical phenomenon, is the idea of reciprocity and consent implied by the constitution of a realm of political community. The idea has a reality in that some grasp of it will, consciously or not, affect the consciences and behaviour of human subjects. When the idea becomes a conscious reflection, it may be used 'as a constructive diagram' to measure the particular success or failure of the manifestation of the idea in view.

The constitution of England is an idea that combines two principles, of permanence and change and of equilibrium among competing interests. It has also a second dimension, namely that of 'eliciting the latent *man* in all of the natives of the soil, *train(ing) them up* to citizens of the country, free subjects of the realm'. (Coleridge (1829) 1990, 176). Here Coleridge presents the idea of a non-denominational church, a national clerisy whose duties concretize in the operation of universities, schools appropriate to the various social orders, teaching in as practical a fashion as possible, not merely the sciences and matters related to their heritage, but also 'popular ethics, i.e. a Digest of the Criminal Laws' and... evidence, diet and health. None of this implies an end to commerce, cultivation and manufacture, but, in safeguarding the human, an end to its being paid for by the wretchedness and poverty of those least privileged. Freedom and obedience and 'usefulness to the state' can thus be reconciled among 'subjects, citizens and patriots... prepared to die for (the state's) defence'. There is much in Coleridge that is echoed among the members of the English Liberal consensus of the nineteen-thirties, the Keynesian conviction that successfully managed capitalism is not contingent on undermining organized labour or inflicting periodic impoverishment on workers; Beveridge's highly popular form of pastoralism (Beveridge 1942) and the free health care system itself. (Addison 1977). Together with the state provision of education thought to be commensurate with the abilities of its recipients, ultimately from primary through tertiary education, the post-war Labour government's program could have been following an updated Coleridgean 'diagram'.

Perry Anderson magisterially complains of the aestheticisation, even anesthetization, of much British intellectual life which this program represents (Anderson 1992, ch 5,)

until after the mid-twentieth century, one in which archaic icons of order such as the monarchy persist, Whig history lurks in unexpected places, and where in place of American sociology, French philosophical innovation or German political legal or social analysis, the Leavises and literary criticism seemed to reign. His assessment of British scholarship seems in one sense accurate if FR Leavis could still write, in 1975, in the tradition of Coleridge, Matthew Arnold and the architect of post-war British education, Lord Butler:

> English ... involves a consciousness of one's full human responsibility, purpose and the whole range of human valuations. Thought of that order, if it is to matter in the world of practice, must, I suppose, be collaborative and continuous in some relevant community – in the first place, the community of those responsible and practically engaged in a university English School. (Leavis (1975) 1998).

Anderson perhaps gives insufficient weight to the fact behind the humane if often patronizing effort to make English studies the pivotal discipline in inquiries into 'one's full human responsibility and purpose', a political calculation *had* been made. Even after the extension of the franchise in 1867, Britain's rulers remained deeply suspicious of democracy. Democracy

> is the poor saying to the rich, we are the masters now by the establishment of liberty, which means democracy, and, as all men are brothers, entitled to share and share alike in the common stock, we will make you disgorge or we will put you to death. (Stephen (1873) 1967, 175).

Mutual respect and trust were not to be found here. By 1873, after a leisurely progress even to conferring the vote on the 'respectable' working class, another thinker than Stephen might have pondered why there had been no insurrection, why the 'bawling, hustling and smashing' 'Populace'(Arnold (1861) 1994, 72) remained so determined to enter a legislature so reluctant to confer admission, instead of abandoning the effort and trying to force fundamental constitutional change, as the Americans had done, as the French were to make a habit of doing, and as central Europeans attempted to do in 1848. Macaulay's was a political and unapologetically chauvinist explanation, offered still in the aftermath of the 1832 Act. The measured and ultimately Whiggish revolutions of the seventeenth century had provided, he asserted, unprecedented liberty and a model of how gradualism, compromise and the performance of politics in a mainly talking register could be relied upon:

> For the authority of law, for the security of property, for the peace of our street, for the happiness of our homes, our gratitude is due to the Long Parliament, the Convention and... to William of Orange. (Macaulay (1848) 1967, 398).

On the other hand, there was a tradition of radicalism as old as the set of Whig beliefs to which Macaulay subscribed, and the question is, how did it come to adhere to Parliamentary Whiggism to the point of wanting to become part of it? One answer is that radicalism, both in England and later in America, always did wish to participate in a representative process and to be governed through the common law, albeit in both cases in a modified form. (Aylmer 1975; Pearson 2005). In a different perspective, we

could notice the close connection drawn between active citizenship and education. In his passionate advocacy of the 1831-2 Reform Bill, Macaulay articulates a number of goals. Middle class campaigners for reform must be admitted to the franchise, or they will join with the working class radicals, endangering the social order. Such admittance is both deserved and possible ‘without any violent shock’. (Macaulay (1831) 1889, 484). Two considerations disincline him from agreeing with those who urge either no reform or the ‘symmetry’ of universal suffrage: the labouring classes are economically insecure and they are uneducated. Especially in periods of distress, demagogues who cared little for the constitution would blind workers’ judgements and flatter them into support for ruinous experiments in social change: ‘it is not by numbers, but by property and intelligence (i.e., in this period, the possession of an education) by which the nation must be governed’. (485). The argument is repeated in Macaulay’s speech opposing universal manhood suffrage in the People’s Charter (Macaulay (1842) 1889, 628) and Clive is surely correct to ‘find something repelling about the tone’ of the argument. ‘If only, he seems to be saying, the working class were well enough educated to deserve the vote. But alas they are not, and so they can’t have it’. (Clive 1973, 169).

One might, though, put the patronizing tone to which Clive rightly objects in the contexts of the time: the (to Macaulay) imminent threats of violence and the consequent risk to property, and to the obtuseness of his opponents in seeming to ignore possible cures; of his less inoffensive, indeed progressive speeches on Jewish disabilities, on Ireland and on factory reform. But if we are seeing the man as symptomatic of his time and place, we should notice, as Clive concedes, his faith in education, and not just any education, but that in ‘that literature , the brightest, the purest, the most durable of all the glories of our country’. (Macaulay (1846) 1889, 734). More than British commerce or arms, it has, he considers, carried art to the Germans, liberty to the French, cemented relations with Americans, and given ‘instruction and delight’ to those who will turn antipodean deserts into gardens. ‘... wherever British literature spreads, may it be attended by British virtue and by British freedom’. Is education, the lack of which seemed to link suffrage with threats to the security of property, the task of the state?

> Let Adam Smith answer that question for me. His authority, always high, is on this subject entitled to peculiar respect, because he disliked busy, prying, interfering governments… He was of the opinion that the State ought not to meddle with the education of the rich. But he has expressly told us that a distinction is to be made, especially in a commercial and highly civilized society, between the education of the rich and the education of the poor. (Macaulay (1847) 1889, 736).

If it is the duty of the state to maintain order and where possible, health, to punish infractions of the law and to require respect for its constitution, how can it evade the means by which these endeavors may be made more effective? The language of 1831-2 and 1842, which Clive finds offensive acquires a new inflection in an instructive example in Macaulay’s 1847 Commons speech. Uninstructed workers rebel, and attack the Queen’s troops, wounding an official. In the subsequent skirmish and the criminal trials that follow, many ignorant men lose their lives. Who but the state, that failed to provide education, can be blamed for the gullibility of the men who listened to a demagogue who inflamed their passions? (737-8).

Matthew Arnold, with convictions about the nature and value of education similar to those of Macaulay, experienced, as he saw it, similar frustrations: a continually volatile working class and a governing class too myopic to deal with the situation in a constructive and humane way. The power of the Barbarians (his term for the aristocracy) was waning, and the vacuum of government required filling. In his admired Prussia, von Humboldt or Schleiermacher provided a broad culturally rich curriculum on which the rising middle classes might draw in order to learn of its responsibilities. Intellectually, however, the British middle class (the Philistines) remained woefully deficient. As moral leaders, able to provide ‘a sound centre of authority’ to an unruly working class (Arnold’s ‘populace’), they were wanting. Retailing the history of his education in a satirical moment in Arnold’s *Friendship’s Garland*, Businessman Bottles tells the German education academic, Arminius, of his experiences with Archimedes Silverpump, PhD, a man committed ‘to men of our age’...

> useful knowledge, living languages... non of your antiquated rubbish – all practical work – latest discoveries in science – lights of all colours – fizz fizz, bang bang. That’s what I call forming a man. (Paul 1902, 128).

Bottles, according to the narrator of the tale, ‘made an immense fortune’ and left his mind to his newspaper and his religious minister. ‘His mind *qua* mind...’ ‘You need not go on’, interrupted Arminius, ‘I know what that man’s mind *qua* mind is well enough’. (129). Education for the middle class as Arnold observed them, was to be practical. Licensed victuallers’ children were ‘to have a sheer school of Licensed Victuallers’, commercial travellers’ children to have a commercial travellers’ school, yet to bring them all up, not only at home, but at school, too, in a kind of odour of licensed victualism or bagmanism is not a wise training...’ (Arnold (1861) 1994, 80). Arnold’s proscription draws on the later Macaulay’s conviction that the future of the civilizing mission depends upon state involvement but has, twenty years on, a more European faith in the state’s beneficence under the control of a suitably informed middle class. (Arnold (1879) 1903, 1-48). The ‘sweetness and light’ that will transform the Philistines and calm the Populace requires, on the one hand , a distance from the practical, as Bottles would have understood it, but also a passionate commitment to culture as the basis of order and civilization – hence the pivotal role of the ‘critic’ in inspiring ‘us to keep down the Philistine in ourselves’. ‘1789 asked of a thing, is it rational? 1642 asked of a thing, is it legal, or, when it went furthest, is it according to conscience? This is the English fashion’. (Arnold (1865) 1896, vii, 10). As Lloyd and Thomas put it:

> At one in this, with the principal bourgeois thinkers of the time, from Christian socialists... to... Ruskin and even Thomas Carlyle, Mill and Arnold,... a theoretical and practical understanding of culture has less to do with the inculcation of a literary canon than with the larger and harmonious development of human powers, historically and individually. (Lloyd and Thomas 1998, 124).

After the shock of World War I and the fright of Bolshevism, the Newbolt Report (Newbolt 1919), perhaps the most comprehensive report on the teaching of English ever commissioned, echoes the above quotation, but also repeats the pedagogical

project of the eighteenth century Scots. English is to be the basis of liberal education, to transcend class, to instruct the isles' inhabitants who (the commissioners know) they are. If the working class regard literature like ' antimacassars, fish-knives and other unintelligible and futile trivialities of middle-class culture" (252), their alienation is a forgivable product of all that Arnold rejected, education for a trade, not for a (national) life. In the tradition of empire, professors of English are to accept the role of both ambassadors and 'as we gladly recognize – a missionary in a more real and active sense than any of his colleagues'. (259). In their custody, even if many of their beneficiaries see no more of the university than its outer perimeters, is not merely the grammar, prose and poetry of the written text, but the history, romance and essence of – a fiction. The fiction that haunts the report is, of course, a unity that pretends that class does not exist, a fiction that the governments of capitalist states must all maintain, by repressive or Coleridgean means; but the further contradiction is the non-existence of 'England'. It is not a jurisdiction, as critics have tirelessly remarked, with a constitution to choreograph the state, citizens and rights and duties in a complex minuet, but a text from Locke, Swift, Hume and Smith and Burke.

Conclusion

All 'nations' are aesthetic projects. The drapery of the *rechtstaat* may originate on Saville Row or in K-Mart. The *idea*, as Coleridge would have it, precedes. Is there assent, *con*sent? To ask, to what, and in what circumstances is to engage in the kind of political psychoanalysis which, perhaps, the *rechtstaat* is designed to elide. There may be a certain formal symmetry between an ethnically Bolivian US citizen in New York and an Anglo militiaman defending his nation from a UN conspiracy in Michigan. A Tamil chef in Bradford and a white man from Fife may agree to be British rather than English, but they are quite substantively constructing the cultural artefact of England, which is very convenient, but to which neither wishes to adhere. Whether we date the English discipline from Hugh Blair at Edinburgh or Adam Smith at Glasgow is unimportant (Miller 1990). Just like our Tamil chef, who contributed to a gastronomic transformation in Yorkshire, they found a site for the articulation of their performances, and this is what might make us hesitate before the threat of cultural imperialism. (Viswanathan 1998). The apparently dominated are eminently capable of using imperialism for their own purposes. (Pennycook 1998).

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