

Towards a European History of Concepts: an Introduction

Karin Tilmans (European University Institute, Florence)

The Dutch conceptual history project has been generously received by academic critics, who have praised it for charting a territory in Dutch history that had so far remained largely unexplored. Yet several reviewers of the first volumes of the project, stressed the need to further explore and develop the international and comparative dimensions of Dutch conceptual history. This suggestion is entirely justified and could be further extended to include other existing projects in conceptual history, for they all tend to write the history of concepts primarily in a national context. The intention of the current special issue, "Towards a European History of Concepts", is to begin to remedy this situation by placing the findings to date of the Dutch project in a European context. Such a publication not only benefits Dutch conceptual history, but also the conceptual history research being currently carried out in other European countries.

There are, it would seem, two main ways to attempt to transcend the hitherto dominant national framework in the study of the history of concepts, both of which will be explored in the internationalization project here proposed. The first and most obvious one is systematically to compare the history of various key concepts in different European countries, over a longer period of time, in order to highlight the parallels and differences in national conceptual development. For example, by comparing the history of the Dutch concept of citizenship to the history of that same concept in Germany, England and France, important insights into both national peculiarities and common patterns of conceptual development may be gained. Crucially important as such cross-border comparisons may be, they do not tell the whole story of the international dimensions of conceptual development. To bring that out in all its richness and complexity, it is necessary to go beyond the comparison of various national patterns of conceptual development and to attempt to study the process of international interaction in the development of concepts. Thus, for instance, the radical redefinition of the concept of liberty during the later part of the eighteenth century took place in a way that clearly defied national borders and that can only be studied as an international conceptual dialogue. The exploration of this latter aspect of conceptual development could and should eventually lead to the formulation of a wide-ranging research project on the European history of concepts.

The current issue, however, is intended to be a first exploration of the various

comparative and international dimensions of conceptual history, taking Dutch conceptual history as its starting point and central focus and applying the two approaches of international comparison and international interaction to the Dutch case. In order to do so fruitfully, the project here limits itself to the three political concepts of fatherland, liberty and citizenship, both because political concepts have been the main focus of the first volumes of the Dutch project and because the history of these concepts has been thoroughly researched in the case of other relevant European countries. The exploration of the comparative dimension and the international interaction of these concepts is, moreover, limited to the three major and most important European countries surrounding the Dutch Republic, that is England, France and Germany or, to be precise, the Holy Roman Empire, and focuses on the early-modern period from 1550 till 1850.

As Peter Burke, Lazio Kontler and others have argued, the majority in European society was not mono-lingual, but multi-lingual at least up to the late 18th century, and in some countries like Finland for example, even longer. Cities in particular (ports, trading centres) were multi-lingual places. Latin as an administrative language was in use everywhere on the Continent, except in England and France, up to the 15th century. As an academic language its influence lasted much longer, even in England, and especially so in the smaller European countries. On the European continent, from the 17th century onwards, French took the role of the dominant elite language in political and academic matters, as well as in polite conversation. Even at the height of the war against the French, continental European elites spoke and wrote to each other in French (for example Hardenberg, Stein and Tzar Alexander during the Napoleonic wars). In Eastern and Northern Europe during the 18th and early 19th centuries, German tended to be a second or third elite language, alongside French. From the late Enlightenment onwards, and even more so after the Revolution, French political and legal concepts were either directly relevant to people's everyday lives in large parts of the European continent, as during Napoleonic rule, or they constituted a positive or negative (especially in the English case) norm against which a 'national' political language was more or less consciously

developed. Generally, the 19th century may be regarded as a period of 'nationalisation' of political languages, including concepts like 'nation', 'fatherland' and 'people'. The concepts of 'patrie', 'Vaterland', 'vaderland' and their English equivalents (not 'fatherland' which was considered an alien concept in Britain) were associated with supposed particular French, German, Dutch, English/British values and qualities. They were imbued with emotion and their semantic entourage became nation specific. Three articles in this journal issue deal with Britain and the concepts of fatherland, liberty and citizenship, two with France and the concepts of nation and citizenship and two with the Holy Roman Empire and the concepts of fatherland and citizenship.

For studies of conceptual history the multilingual character of most early modern European societies (with the exception of England and France) has to be taken into account. This means that asymmetrical conceptual transfers and translation processes, not only between countries but also within countries, were typical features up to at least the early 19th century. Elites frequently had to switch between a 'foreign' or old lingua franca (Latin, French) and popular/vernacular languages (German, Dutch, Polish etc.). These ongoing translation processes, like frequent irritations, brought about a great fluidity in the meaning of terms in the vernacular languages (meaning understood here in the sense of reference to concepts and/or 'realities', as well as in the sense of use patterns). Everywhere in Europe, with the exception of France and England, the early modern period is a period of extreme conceptual instability due to continuous flows in translation. It took some time until stable translations between the 'foreign' or old (French, Latin) elite terms and their possible meanings in the vernacular/popular languages were established. Translation flows were asymmetrical. During the early modern period and up to the mid-19th century, France was the great exporter of political, legal and social concepts, whereas conceptual imports into France were relatively rare. England too, up

to the early 19th century, was no great importer of concepts, but it did not export much either, except of course to America and other parts of the non-European world. Thus, French and English political, legal and social languages acquired a relative self-sufficiency early on, whereas everywhere else in Europe 'national' languages became more self-referential only during the mid- or later 19th century.

To take the concept of 'fatherland' as a test case, another question, related to the issue of having a subject or object role, concerns the grammatical position of 'vaterland' and the equivalent English, French and German terms in sentences. When, where, and why does 'vaterland' appear only in the object position? When, where, and why does it move into the subject position? And if the term appears as a subject, is it constructed as 'doing' something (demanding, protecting, nourishing, fighting ..., like a person) or does it just 'have' something, for example certain qualities (like any anonymous being)? What is the 'vaterland' in spatial terms, where is it located in space, what is the object of patriotism in spatial terms? In France, to begin with the easiest case, the answer seems to be relatively unproblematic. In most utterances in which the term 'patrie' appears, 'la patrie' as a space is identical with the state/territory called France. Smaller units (Bretagne, Provence, Normandie etc.) were probably never addressed as 'patrie' by speakers, at least not in the early modern and contemporary periods (although this may have to be checked). However, there may be occasional uses of 'la patrie' alluding to a larger 'idea of la France', even in spatial terms; for example for de Gaulle in his combat against Petain's Vichy regime. For Petain, 'la patrie' was identical with 'l'Etat francais'; for de Gaulle, it had to be something else, either an imagined territorial France in the past or future, or the French Empire. But in general, 'la patrie', territorially speaking, was 'la France', and vice versa. For England/Britain the answer is less obvious and becomes more complicated from the 18th century onwards. The object of patriotism in spatial terms could be England, Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland), the British Isles (the former with Ireland

and other islands), or the British Empire, perhaps even in some exceptional cases the English speaking peoples or an imagined English race. Most writers would leave undecided exactly what territory they had in mind when they spoke/wrote of the 'nation' or 'their country' in the abstract. However, England as a whole (not Cornwall or Yorkshire etc.) would in any case be the smallest possible territorial unit to which the term 'nation' could be applied. In Germany, it was even more unclear what 'Vaterland' meant in spatial terms, and this remained so even after the establishment of the Kaiserreich, during the Weimar Republic, the Nazi regime and up to 1990. The reasons are obvious and need not be further elaborated here. The famous song, "Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland? ...", alluding to the problem of defining Germany as a territorial, as well as ethnic, moral and political unit, remained pertinent until the 1990s. Compared to this history, the Dutch case is probably easier, although the question remains whether 'vaderland' — in spatial terms — was always conceived by the users of the term as meaning the state (or the union of states) called the Netherlands. Was it possible for inhabitants of Dutch provinces to call their province the 'vaderland'? At least in the period before and around 1830, the Belgians must have had a different view. For them, 'la patrie', praised in Auber's opera "La Muette de Portici", played at Brussels in 1830 and supposed to have sparked the Revolution, clearly meant something else.

The next question concerns the temporal dimension: Where is the 'vaderland' located in historical time, what is the 'space of experience' and the 'horizon of expectation' that accompany mention of the term? In the Dutch case, 'vaderland' seems to have been a rather nostalgic concept, a backward-looking concept all through the 18th century and beyond, even in revolutionary periods. Apparently, the ideal time of the Dutch 'vaderland' was a golden past which had to be restored. It remains to be asked however, whether there was no alternative discourse, whether at least some writers at some point in Dutch history dared to conceive of the Dutch 'vaderland' as something to be created totally anew, without reference to a golden past.

Such a shift towards the future seems to have occurred in late 18th and early 19th-century Germany, where 'Vaterland' became a concept of expectation for a younger generation, a concept loaded with moral and political demands and values which had not much to do with a remote imagined German past or the more immediate past of the German 'Reich' after 1648, but was expected to be realised in the future. Whether similar shifts of temporal orientation affected the French term 'patrie' is not clear to us. One might argue, that 'la patrie' in French political and popular discourse was rather conceived of as a sort of timeless entity, something given and preordained that was always there and remained essentially the same; but this would have to be checked. Concerning the English case, when, where, and why such temporal horizon shifts concerning the English/British 'nation' or 'England/Britain' itself might have occurred, will be explored.

Content of the Volume

Brian Cummings deals in his article with something more than a political theory of nationhood. He focusses on the peculiar and often contradictory pressures of national identity, and especially national identity through language. He argues that 'fatherland' would have been the natural word for the English to use, but as they do not use it he analyses why this is the case. In doing so he is concerned with what Koselleck called "der Vorgeschichte", the prehistory of a concept. Cummings claims that within the terminological ambiguity of the period 1600-1800, it was for a time possible that 'fatherland' might have become the current English word for the concept. The conceptual change comes through political language (Milton proves a strong case); a nation will become the dominant concept in England, referring to a political body above and beyond the king. Brian Cummings very convincingly tells the story of the conscious destruction of a patriarchal notion of nationhood in

Stuart England by Puritans and Republicans, and its continuation in the 'country' vs. 'court-opposition' during the 18th century.

According to Jonathan Scott, the most striking contrast between Dutch and English republican accounts of liberty was that the latter were morally universal and militarily expansive. From the moment of its foundation the English republic was, and was building, an empire. In English republican writing this imperial strain had apocalyptic and Machiavellian variants. This perception of liberty as self-government — what Charles I had said it was not — itself had two primary variants. The first, explored by Milton, Sidney and Vane, stressed the disciplined self-government of the person, as well as of the state. The resulting moral philosophy of politics was intertwined with a protestant commitment to reformation of manners, and a Christian humanist metaphysics indebted to Plato and Aristotle. This was a long way from Nedham and Harrington's sceptical interest of state, and equally from Dutch republicanism in its post Cartesian and Hobbesian form. The other English republican understanding of self-government was legal and constitutional. This had its core in the formula, ultimately derived from Plato's Laws, that a commonwealth was a government of laws and not of men. This became the seventeenth-century alternative to failed governments of dynasty, patriarchy, and heredity. In 1700, in contrast to the United Provinces, England had a monarchy, an aristocracy, and a predominantly rural society and economy. Yet to an extent belied by these realities, and without European parallel in relation to them, its political commonwealth was commercial, legal and urban (as well as protestant). This was what you might expect to arise from the ashes of the most spectacular pre-French monarchical meltdown, after a century of Dutch influence, followed by a successful Dutch invasion.

Iain Hampsher-Monk sketches the (mis)fortunes of 'citizen' in British political discourse over a sizeable stretch of time (1600-1850). One of his central claims is that the language of citizenship was applied primarily to

city dwellers (as in 'citizens of London') and that the more common term is 'freeman'; a 'citizen', indeed, is a freeman who resides in a city. Hobbes invokes in *De Cive* and accepts the old republican distinction between those who are servile and dependent — slaves, most notably — and 'free citizens': "In every commonwealth and household where there are slaves what the free citizens and children of the family have more than the slaves is that they perform more honourable services in commonwealth and family, and enjoy more luxuries. And this is where the difference lies between a free citizen and a slave, that the FREE MAN is one who serves only the commonwealth, while the SLAVE serves also his fellow citizen." (On the Citizen, eds. R. Tuck and M. Silverthorne, Cambridge UP, 1998, pp. 111-12; Hobbes's emphasis). Even English writers who don't use the word 'citizen' seem nonetheless to use or have recourse to the concept. In John Locke's Second Treatise — to cite a particularly prominent example — he asks what makes a man a full 'member' of civil society. And he answers that merely living in a country 'makes not a Man a Member of that Society' (para. 122; Locke's emphasis). It is only, he continues, 'by positive Engagement, and express Promise and Compact' that one becomes a real 'member' of a 'Commonwealth'. Locke here is speaking the language of citizenship, albeit without using the word 'citizen'. The existence of citizenship as a feature of agents' civic self-image, reflected in renaissance inspired treatises, is a different way of conceiving of the existence of a concept of citizenship than the way in which widespread office-holding (without any accompanying ideological underpinning) embodies a concept of citizenship. Markku Peltonen has recently tried to draw these two together by demonstrating the pervasive use of rhetorical textbooks with a self-conscious civic content in Grammar Schools. But the argument from office-holding reaches social strata well below those who were taught in such institutions, so it does not altogether integrate those who had available to them the category 'citizen' and those who were engaged in activities which we, with hindsight, might regard as civic. By 1794, with the first treason trials of reformers

following the National Convention in Edinburgh, the London Corresponding Society addressed their pamphlets simply to 'Citizens!!', and not just as the main heading but at the head of each paragraph. In the repressive atmosphere of the mid 1790s, and especially with the increasingly republican example of France across the channel, 'citizen' became a loaded term. Uttering the very word was an act of clearly political import.

Having explored the evolution of lexical families and more extended semantic fields around 'fatherland/patriotism', we move on to the gendering of these concepts. As is shown here by Annie Jourdan, and earlier in the issue by Brian Cummings, even the grammatical gender of terms is not unimportant. The fact that 'la patrie' is of feminine gender has had consequences for the conceptualising of 'la patrie' in France. Discursive personalisation was easier to realise. The French 'fatherland' could be conceived as mother, as 'mère nourrissante', but also as a woman in need of (male) protection by fathers, brothers, or sons. All sorts of family dramas could be fought out: Sons accusing the father (the King) of not having protected mother ('la patrie') against the enemy; fathers accusing sons of having deserted her etc. etc. With a grammatically neutral 'Vaterland' or 'vaderland' (or non-existent grammatical genders, as in English) such family stories were more difficult to tell, remained more abstract and had less emotional appeal. On the pictorial level, female figures could fulfill similar functions. Jourdan explores the conceptual changes during and after the French revolution.

Rachel Hammersley argues that in France, as elsewhere, citizenship has always been an exclusive category. Citizens were defined in relation to those who were not citizens. Among the latter were included women, slaves, and resident aliens. She notes the important and original criticisms of the exclusion of women by Condorcet and Olympe de Gouges. Gouges was also active in the anti-slavery movement. More important still, her argument relies almost exclusively on clear and insightful explications of

texts by Rousseau, Bodin, and other francophone writers. What struck us by its absence was any discussion of French colonialism and of royalist and republican France's extensive economic reliance on slave labour in the Caribbean, and what connection this might have to increasing calls to extend citizenship to include the downtrodden and outcast *sans culottes* and, more rarely, women of all classes. In France the new excluded 'other' now included colonial subjects and slaves, and this left 'social space' for the rise of resident outcasts to the status of *citoyen*.

The French Revolution — and especially the reaction to it in adjoining countries — had a profound effect on the language of citizenship. For those sympathetic to the Revolution the terms 'citizen' or *citoyen* had a positive valence. As Iain Hampsher-Monk notes earlier, British orators and pamphleteers were wont to address their fellows as 'citizens!' (sometimes with more than one exclamation mark). For those who were hostile to the Revolution the very word 'citizen' took on a subversive cast. Dutch critics of the French Revolution called sympathizers who spoke of citizenship (and especially those who wanted to extend citizenship to the lower orders) as 'Dutch Jacobins' — hardly a friendly appellation — and for British critics the language of citizen and citizenship was scarcely less suspect.

Lucian Hoelscher argues that the concept of 'Vaterland' played an important role in the process of nation building in Germany in the 18th century. Since Patriotismus/Naterlandsliebe was defined as an essential feature of a nation in the new republican sense, the concept described the emotional ground of all public life. There was a general agreement about the fact that without Vaterlandsliebe no constitution, based on the public and private consent of all citizens, could be established. As an effect of the split political landscape in general the call for national union and the feeling of belonging together was much more developed than the call for individual freedom and republican democracy. The rather non-political concept of Vaterland was highly effective to express this kind of public longing: It left open the question of the political constitution, but stressed the cultural unity of Germany. Holscher sketches a great change in the political semantics of the late 18th century, when the fatherland was imagined as an acting person. Instead of the sons appealing to the father it now turned to the father to appeal to the sons. After the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire

in 1806 imperial patriotism had lost its object for more than half a century. This made regional concepts of patriotism popular again for a while, and nourished a broad variety of hostile and competitive forms of patriotism in Germany. He then writes elaborately about the new hostility to the 'Vaterland' concept in the 20th Century.

Most historians would agree with the interpretation that the German bourgeoisie at the end of the 18th and the very beginning of the 19th century — compared to the English "middle-class" or the French "bourgeoisie" — had to face serious problems in conquering a position of primacy in contemporary society. Moreover, the aristocratic stratas were then able to re-establish their privileged social and political status, only partially called into question during the restoration period. Hans Boedeker argues in this article that if the social formation "bourgeoisie" ("Burgertum") has neither a distinctive conception of itself nor does it dispose of criteria to demarcate itself from other stratas or classes, it lacks the necessary prerequisites to successfully persist and act in politics and society.

This essay thus first presents a draft of the institutional constellation, in which the modern German bourgeois stratas emerged, established themselves and started to act on their own. Then a short investigation into the self-descriptions of these stratas would be needed, in order to finally analyse its political ambitions as well as its will and its competence to perform politically.

Authors' affiliations :

Karin Tilmans

Max Weber
Programme Villa
La Fonte
Via Delle Fontanelle, 10
1-50014 San Domenico di Fiesole (F1)
Italy
Karin.Tilmans@EUI.eu

Wyger Velema

Department of
History University
of Amsterdam
Spuistraat 134
1012VB Amsterdam
The Netherlands
wre.velema@uva.nl wre.velema@wxs.nl

Brian Cummings
Department of English
University of Sussex
Falmer
Brighton
BN1 9SH
United Kingdom
B.A.Cummings@sussex.ac.uk

Jonathan Scott
Department of History
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142 NEW ZEALAND

jonathan.scott@auckland.ac.nz

Iain Hampsher-Monk
Department of Politics
University of Exeter
Amory Building
Rennes Drive
EX4 4RJ Exeter

United Kingdom

I.W.Hampsher-Monk@exeter.ac.uk

Annie Jourdan European Studies University of
Amsterdam

Spuistraat 134 1012VB Amsterdam

The Netherlands

A.R.M.Jourdan@uva.nl

Rachel Hammersley
School of Historical Studies
Armstrong Building
Newcastle University
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
NE1 7RU

United Kingdom

Rachel.hammersley@newcastle.ac.uk

Lucian Holscher University of Bochum Faculty of History D-
44780 Bochum Germany

Lucian.hoelscher@rub.de

Hans Boedeker
Max-Planck-Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte Thomas Dehler Weg 16
D-37075 Göttingen
Germany

Boedeker@mpi-g.gwdg.de

*WHY THE ENGLISH DO NOT SAY 'FATHERLAND': CONCEPTS, NON-CONCEPTS, AND THE
CONCEPTUAL HISTORY OF 'NATION', 1535-1945*

Brian Cummings

University of Sussex

An English-speaking person hearing the word 'fatherland' immediately experiences a curious linguistic phenomenon of recognizing a word in her own language that nonetheless feels intuitively unidiomatic, even foreign or alien. It sounds as if it has been imported or transliterated from somewhere else, as if it is not quite *native* or *indigenous*, not part of what we call 'the mother tongue'. More specifically, indeed, to an English ear, the word 'fatherland' appears to be a German word, and brings with it inevitable associations with the Nazi era. 'We all know that this epithet is used by at least one European country', wrote Lieutenant-Colonel R.C.O. Parker to *The Times* in November 1936, 'but surely it is entirely foreign to England'.¹ Quoting approvingly from Kennedy's *Shorter Latin Primer*, Parker cites a mnemonic every English schoolboy knows from his Latin:

A Woman, Island, Country, Tree,
And City, Feminine we see.²

The Romans and the British understand that a nation is female; it is somehow barbaric to imagine one's country as a man. Even today, over sixty years after the end of the Second World War, unless particular care is taken in using the word – for instance in citing it as a usage in many other languages around the world – it will be taken for granted that it is Germany, and probably Nazi Germany, that is being referred to.

The ambiguous obsession of the English with negative associations in German history, language and culture is well documented and has recently been re-examined by Simon Winder in his book *Germania*.³ In the case of the word 'fatherland', however, there is a more specific reason for this correlation of a favourite national scapegoat with linguistic jingoism. The identification of 'Das Vaterland' with an alien and suspicious form of ideology was a deliberate act of internal English propaganda during the Second World War. Following from Nazi usage itself, the English word 'fatherland' featured strongly in news reports and

domestic anti-Nazi vilification of enemy culture. As early as August 1939, a report in *The Times* used Hitler's refusal to allow the South Tyrolese to 'rejoin the Fatherland' to cast doubt on the probity of definitions of 'German Land and Folk'.⁴ In June 1941, the German-born (and former member of the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*) Prince Bernhard, Consort of Princess Juliana of the Netherlands, now in exile on a visit to the USA, declared that 'there was nothing but bitterness in his heart for his former fatherland'. Described by *The Times* with deliberate edge as 'a German of Germans', Prince Bernhard was quoted as thinking there was no chance of the old Germany coming back: it was a nation now lost to itself.⁵

At greater length, and with some philosophical sophistication, a *Times* editorial in February 1943 used the word to articulate a complex argument distinguishing different concepts of European patriotism. Goebbels is chided for drawing on 'the mystical and gory memories and motives' of the *Nibelungenlied* in turning Stalingrad into a German Thermopylae, a sacrificial defence of the 'fatherland'. *The Times* leader quotes Heine with relish (from his essay on German romantic literature), contrasting the concept of patriotism in France and Germany – where, in the latter case, the word meant 'contracting the heart, hating foreigners, ceasing to be European and cosmopolitan'.⁶ How times have changed, we might think, coming across a *Times* leader quoting from Heine and basking in a sense of English Europeanness and cosmopolitan ideals. However, through this connotation of 'fatherland' with a specifically German (or even un-English) concept of patriotism, the word acquired a far more common English resonance in the 1930s and 1940s than at any time in the previous history of the language. Nonetheless, as I will show in due course, the word in English is much older than this, and possesses a long history of assimilation and denial in relation to comparable concepts of national self-definition.

I

However, as a preliminary answer to the question of what the English context is for an international comparison of the Dutch concept 'Vaderland', it is possible to state, in a strict sense, that 'Fatherland' is not an English concept. (A fact that might make this contribution very short.) Yet even this brief outline shows that the case is not so simple. If it is true that, on the one hand, (1) 'fatherland is not an English concept of nationhood', we also have to

add a second, more problematic axiom, that (2) ‘fatherland is an English word that is used to describe an *alien* concept of nationhood’. This is much more interesting than the mere non-existence of a word. The word is English and yet not quite English, and the concept in English is not quite a concept. It registers some kind of dissent from another way of imagining nationhood, a nationhood that is implicitly rejected or even repudiated, but which is also alienated and possibly demonized as belonging to some other race. ‘Fatherland’ denotes an excessive attachment to nation, an overt and dangerous form of nationalism, a fixation with national and perhaps racial superiority.

Yet it is also, of course, itself a word used as a shorthand for national stereotyping and a way of corralling a specifically English form of anti-German sentiment. Something of this ambiguity is found in the novel by Robert Harris, *Fatherland* (1993). Harris imagines a different ending to the Second World War. The novel is playful with English concepts of nation as it conjures into being an imaginary ‘fatherland’ of an alternative future past. The foreign, but also propagandist, sound of ‘fatherland’ is part of this fiction. Or recall that very double-edged moment in Bob Fosse’s film *Cabaret* (1970) based on Christopher Isherwood’s novel set in the Berlin of the 1930s. Towards the end a German boy begins singing the beautiful lyric, “Tomorrow belongs to me”, at first against the background of a serene countryside, like a hymn praising the beauty and harmony of nature. As the audience of the film hears the words, “Oh Fatherland, Fatherland, Show us the sign/ Your children have waited to see”, it is first encouraged to feel a swell of sympathetic emotion; only gradually does it realize that it is participating in a Nazi anthem. Using the word ‘fatherland’ in English reflects at one and the same time an ironic distancing from an alternative, more nationalist and authoritarian form of national identification, while also claiming some kind of national pride in that ironic resistance. One of the things that makes the English so ineffably and insufferably superior is that they think that they do not suffer from the overt nationalism that afflicts other cultures. ‘Thank God we are not bigoted’, the English say with the Pharisee, ‘that is such a *foreign* thing to be’.

This essay is not concerned only with this one word. It is also a reflection on some central historiographical analyses of *Begriffsgeschichte* in the work of Reinhart Koselleck. There are three different dimensions to this here. One is a question of temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*). The idea of ‘fatherland’ intersects with other concepts of nation and patriotism in complex ways, and it does so in different ways at different times. I refer here to what Koselleck calls ‘die

zeitlichen Differenzen, Brechungen oder Spannungen' ('the temporal differences, refractions or tensions') that 'die Tendenz zu einem neuen Realitätsgefüge ausdrücken können' ('can express the trend toward a new structuring of reality'.⁷ No single modality can explain a whole structure of reality: meaning itself is 'temporalized', refracted in non-identical temporal layers.⁸ English words for the concept of a native land – such as 'country', 'people' or 'nation' itself – develop against each other over centuries, and layer with each other in semantic groupings that further complicate the conceptual field. Among these familiar words exist other words which from time to time have grown up to compete with them, or in some cases have died an early death. 'Fatherland' in English is an example of what we might call an 'untimely' concept: one that has a traceable moment of emergence, which might have come fully into being, but for which for some reason becomes suppressed. Other words come to be preferred in English over time: but the act of denial (in this case) has interesting reasons, which themselves have a history, and indeed affect our sense of other histories of 'nationhood'. I will examine this over more than one phase of time: in addition to the twentieth-century history of 'fatherland' as effectively a foreign-language concept, there is an earlier abortive history of 'fatherland' as an English word, when a native idiom for such a concept was tried out and rejected, against the background of another form of cultural and conceptual exchange, this time Anglo-Dutch in the seventeenth century.

Secondly, 'fatherland' is a good example of the way that concepts acquire an emotional resonance way beyond their apparent cognitive content. One important resonance in this word, for instance, is the presence of gender. The country is imagined in either male or female terms, in ways which have obscure but palpable psychological and social effects. 'Fatherland' is clearly in this sense an *affective* term. Indeed it is doubly so: for it contains not only a personification (or more liminally, a *prosopopoeia*) of a figure sometimes masculine and sometimes feminine, but it is also a figure of lineage and blood. What do I owe my father that is different from what I owe my mother? How do I feel about them? Perhaps conventionally we are taught to think that because the idea of nation is so emotive this colours the vocabularies we use about it. Yet Koselleck's methodology teaches us that the words we use just as much affect the ideas we employ.

Koselleck's essays in temporality and in the social *affect* of semantics are well-known and have placed deep roots in subsequent work, not least in this volume of essays. On the first point, I will argue that 'fatherland' fulfils exactly the paradoxical relationship of time to

history which Koselleck is at pains to emphasize. Past and future intersect in new ways within the word, and relocate historical energy as a result.⁹ On the second point, the constitutional and institutional burdens that a nation may place on its citizens or subjects are not identical with the emotive practices and habits that its people feel towards it:

Die Redewendungen eines Liebespaares gehen nicht in der Liebe auf, die zwei Menschen erfahren. Die schriftlichen Organisationsregeln oder ihre gesprochenen Vollzugsweisen sind nicht identisch mit dem Handeln und der Wirksamkeit der Organisation selber.

[‘Lovers’ figures of speech are not resolved in the love that two people experience. The written rules of organization or their spoken modes of performance are not identical with an organization’s acts.’]¹⁰

The gendered and familial ties of nation are a profound example of this. I will turn here to the emotive origins of the word ‘fatherland’ in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when early modern England wrestled with an affective language of patriarchy, which was refracted through the Reformation and its reorganization of domestic institutions, and also through the political theology of monarchy, itself, of course, a primary icon of paternity and of blood ties.¹¹ The nation almost acquired a father, but did not quite do so; indeed it rejected one in 1649 with Oedipal violence. After the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 the ambiguous legacy of patriarchal politics and imagery was never far away. The imperial imaginary of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries preferred (for reasons which are equally significant) to return to mother. This maternalization of national feeling in turn has its part to play in the antipathy easily aroused in *The Times* (and elsewhere) to German ideology from 1914 to 1945.

My third reflection on Koselleck, however, is rather less obvious, and may be felt to be quixotic or even an aberration. For I am also interested in the idea of ‘fatherland’ in English as having a non-history, or perhaps a repressed history. This is not mere non-existence, far from it. It exists as a return of the repressed, or else as an ideology in negative relief. There are moments in Koselleck when he shows himself fascinated by such hauntings of the social imagination. Indeed at one point he plays with the concept of *der Unbegriff* (the ‘non-concept’): ‘Die Geschichtlichkeit setzt die Relativität gleichsam absolut, wenn man diesen Unbegriff einmal verwenden darf’ (‘Historicity absolutizes relativity, as it were, if I may use this non-concept’).¹² His glancing reference to Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit* at this point is significant: Heidegger, he implies, has left behind a lacuna in historical discourse, between

Geschichtlichkeit and *Zeitlichkeit*. A superficial concept of ‘historicity’ has been allowed by historians to supersede the problem of relativity. This has obscured the true ‘temporality’ which Heidegger ascribed to every mode of being. History, Koselleck argues, must return to such a condition of temporality, even if it means embracing lacunae in meaning and experience. The peculiar English non-word ‘fatherland’ is an example of such a productive lacuna: a space where a different way of imagining exists in potential but is not quite realized as an entity.

I am arguing that ‘fatherland’ is a kind of *Unbegriff* or non-concept. Yet in the way that a non-concept is also (always? or potentially?) a concept, the non-concept ‘fatherland’ palpably exists, and has a history. It is a word which is not in general use but which is nonetheless immediately meaningful (it is neither a neologism nor a nonce-word). It acts as an equivalent to other concepts outside English, in the sense that it translates non-English words such as *patria* or *vaterland*. It also takes its place within a pattern of synonymous concepts in English, in that it can be used to compare different senses such as ‘country’, ‘nation’, ‘people’, ‘patriotism’, ‘native land’ (or ‘motherland’). All of these factors give it a semantic life which means that the world would be encountered ever so slightly differently if it simply did not exist. This has special significance when we are dealing with a period or periods where the conceptual landscape of ‘nationhood’ is changing or emerging in new ways – such as, we might readily say, in the seventeenth, or eighteenth, or twentieth centuries.

More simply, though, we can also see the semantics of ‘fatherland’ in English as having a social dynamic. Just as important as the words we use are the words we choose not to use. In areas of strong social tension or taboo – particularly observable in discourses of gender, sexuality, the family, ethnicity and race – *suppressed* vocabularies are part of the conceptual framework. Koselleck’s intricate accounts of the philology and metaphoricity of words – the political unconscious of words, perhaps – extends to the etymologies that we ward off or resist, even as we choose others. The English repudiation of ‘fatherland’ in the 1940s is more than a semantic accident, it shows how a language of nation can embody a form of implicit polemic and ideological rebuke. To say that as a political philosophy it is only half-formed is to miss the point. It is as much a register of affiliation as the word that is chosen in its place.

II

It will be immediately obvious that I am interested here in something more than a political theory of nationhood. I am interested in the peculiar and often contradictory pressures of national identity, and especially national identity through language. There has been much recent interest in this, for instance (in English) in the work of Richard Helgerson on the sixteenth century and Linda Colley on the eighteenth.¹³ More precisely, why do the English *not* use the word ‘fatherland’, and what words do the English use instead? More paradoxically, can we say that there is some kind of history to this non-usage of the word?

Already we can observe that it is not true to say that the English just *happen not to* use this word. The English *don’t* use the word quite self-consciously, even smugly. Why might this be the case? A survey of languages around Europe shows an intriguing divergence in the masculinization of terms for common heritage. Italian and Spanish, including Latin America, following Latin, routinely use *patria* to mean ‘country’, all based on the Latin for ‘father’. The French, similarly, say ‘la patrie’. All of these Romance references have their root in Greek, where the modern word is still *patrida*. Germanic languages use various cognates of *Vaterland*, as of course in Dutch, and also in Danish, Norwegian and Swedish. In Swedish, however, *fäderneslandet* is not as common as *fosterlandet*, which has a rather different resonance. As we go further afield I rely entirely on dictionaries. A metaphor of fatherhood is present in equivalent words for ‘country’ in Slavic languages, in Serbo-Croat and Czech, for instance, and also in other languages such as Finnish, Lithuanian, or among Armenians and the Kazakhs.

In Russian, however, while there is a word for fatherland, *Rodina* or ‘motherland’ is, we tellingly recall, much more familiar. (This is the opposite from Polish, where there is a word for motherland which is hardly used, in favour of *Ojczyzna*.) Many European languages, including all the Germanic ones, have alternative words for ‘motherland’ as well as ‘fatherland’. Sometimes this means something different from ‘fatherland’, though; it means the mother country in contrast to its colonies, or else the place of racial origin rather than the place of current dwelling. This is a point to which I will return. It is a word used by expats (as by the Dutch in Australia) or immigrants or tourists when longing for home or denigrating foreign food or beer. It is rather different, as in Russian, and also in Hungarian and in Turkish, when the main word for referring to one’s nation is maternal rather than

parternal. When a centre-right party was founded in Turkey in 1983, it took the name *Anavatan Partisi*, the Motherland Party.

English is a famously mixed language but on every etymological precedent it is clear from this survey that ‘fatherland’ is the natural word for the English to use. How this comes not to be the case is obviously the story I am going to try to tell. Yet first I should perhaps clear up a few more prejudices. I don’t want it to seem as if I am implying in some crude sense that referring to a nation as a mother is intrinsically more loving or liberal. Gendering in language is much more subtle and complex than that. First of all, of course, there is the question of grammar (something else the English often forget, since it is a language which does not use gender in relation to nouns). In Greek and Latin, and hence in Italian, French and Spanish, *patria* and its variants are all feminine nouns, even though it identifies the nation in the name of the father. Thus all these language-speakers refer to their country as a ‘she’. (German, we note, is neuter on this issue, as is Dutch, although the distinction between ‘de’ and ‘het’ is less one of gender than that between ‘der’ and ‘das’.) Yet while I am not wanting to be crude here, nor am I saying that grammar does not matter. Clearly it makes a difference, a huge difference, that in Romance languages the nation is imagined as, addressed as, sung to and longed for, as a woman. And yet that woman is also, technically, a ‘father’. There is an unresolved tension often in the emotional appeal of the personification of nationhood. Allegorical figures for the nation – *Britannia*, *Marianne*, *Batavia* – are commonly female. Yet they are also often sexually polyvalent: martial, ferocious, armed for battle. Politically, too, they are associated with the liberties of the people as well as with nation and empire.

III

Part of what I am concerned in examining here is what Koselleck called ‘der Vorgeschichte’ (the ‘prehistory’) of a concept.¹⁴ Koselleck was intrigued by ‘die Genese des neuen Begriffs’ (S.172; the ‘genesis of a new concept’) – and by the ancillary question of what precedes such a concept. He traces, for example, how the word *der Fortschritt* (‘progress’) first came into the German language in the late eighteenth century and how its meaning was formalized by

Kant. Before this there was a variety of different words in use with similar meanings, but none with the same generalizable quality.

That concepts of nation, nationhood and national identity were in a state of flux in the early modern period is a commonplace among historians. It is one of the most frequently cited debates in the emergence of modernity: so much so that some historians dispute whether a conspicuous sense of nationhood only emerges after the French Revolution.¹⁵ There is not space here for a full review of such arguments. I am concerned instead with the available vocabularies at work in English to describe such a concept. Adrian Hastings, taking on (in a frontal attack) the assumption of the modernity of nation and nationalism in E.J. Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson, traces the progress of the word ‘nacioun’ and ‘nation’ from the fourteenth century onwards.¹⁶ A celebrated passage in the prologue to *Cursor Mundi* (composed between 1275 and 1325) champions the cause ‘Of Inghland the nacioun’.¹⁷ Hastings points to a religious context for the promulgation of concepts of ‘nation’ which was largely ignored by Hobsbawm. From the Wyclifite translations of the Bible in the late fourteenth century, a biblical store of references to ‘the nations’ was established via the literal translation of the word *natio* in the Vulgate. A fourteenth-century vernacular Apocalypse refers to the world as one of ‘all kyndes & tunges & folks & naciouns’.¹⁸ Hastings argues that an English idiom of ‘nation’ in the Vulgate sense of a population distinguished according to ‘language, laws, habits, modes of judgement and customs’ (to use the definition offered by Bernard, Bishop of St David’s in 1140) was clearly in use throughout the later middle ages.¹⁹

Once the English Bible became regularly disseminated after the Reformation in church via the Book of Common Prayer from 1549 onwards, this biblical concept was part of the regular diet of language. Hastings admits, however, that the Vulgate use of *natio* (and its English equivalent) is not as common as the words *gens* and *populus*. A sense of ‘nation’ as a unifying term of identity and especially as a word with an emotional resonance of incorporation and affiliation similar to the Dutch concept of *vaderland* is much harder to uncover in medieval usage. The more likely word here is ‘country’. A ‘contree’ in the fourteenth century can refer to ‘any politically organized area’, including, routinely, England, but also to the different parts of England, such as Kent, Dorset and so on.²⁰ More precisely, it can also mean a person’s ‘native country or district; homeland, fatherland’.²¹ Thus the poet John Gower in the autobiographical section of his *Confessio Amantis* talks of ‘The contre wher as I was bore’.²²

It is this vernacular word which is closest to the Latin *patria*. Indeed, in two of the earliest English-Latin wordbooks, both from the fifteenth century, the *Promptorium Parvulorum* (c.1440) and the *Catholicon Anglicum* (c.1475), ‘cuntre’ is in each case given as the equivalent for *patria*.²³ How far such terms were available for generalized ideological use is open to debate. The possible emergence of ‘country’ as a concept comparable to *vaderland* is perhaps most easily observed in the development of translations of Cicero in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Nicholas Grimalde in his version of Cicero’s *De officiis* of 1556 translates Cicero’s famous definition of human society by means of *gentis, nationis, linguae* as ‘To bee of one countrie, of one nation, of one language’.²⁴ The *Oxford English Dictionary* uses this citation as an important early witness to what it calls a sense of ‘The territory or land of a nation; usually an independent state, or a region once independent and still distinct in race, language, institutions, or historical memories’.²⁵ ‘Country’ also conveys at the same period the land of a person’s birth, and the wider sense of a native land, a place of common heritage. Edward Hall’s *Chronicle* is a ready source for such phrases as ‘The final destruction of your native countrey and naturall region’.²⁶ It is in such terms that King Henry enjoins a patriotic fervour among the assembled lords and people in Shakespeare’s *Henry V*:

If we are marked to die, we are enough

To do our country loss.²⁷

In *1 Henry VI*, as Joan of Arc is betrayed, the Duke of Burgundy is heard to appeal:

Forgive me, country, and sweet countrymen.²⁸

It is nonetheless an ambiguous register of sentiment. As soon as Burgundy closes his mouth, Joan interjects to the audience:

Done like a Frenchman: turn and turn again (3.3.85).

The *Oxford English Dictionary* confidently asserts this last citation of ‘country’ in Burgundy’s speech as an example of an English sense of ‘Native land, fatherland’. It sees Shakespeare here in a line that leads directly to the emotion of a ‘love of country’ in Tennyson’s 1852 ‘Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington’. Yet the conceptual pathway is not so clear as this implies. Perhaps, indeed, the recourse the dictionary makes to the non-English word ‘fatherland’ in order to make its point itself shows the conceptual conundrum. The truth is that there is no *single* word in English that conveys the meaning of the Latin *patria* or the Germanic words grouped round *Vaterland*. Nor is there a single phrasal equivalent, although ‘love of country’ is clearly part of the equation. What a forage in

the dictionary also shows is that an uncertainty of word-use is particularly prevalent in the early modern period, in line with Koselleck's sense of the conditions of an 'emergent' concept.

While Grimalde in 1556 adopts the phrase 'To bee of one countrie' to translate Cicero's sense of a patriotic identity, this is not yet a standard practice. Indeed, comparing versions of *De officiis* shows that the Ciceronian vocabulary of *gens*, *natio* and *patria* is by no means settled in its English equivalents at this period. The 1616 version, which advertised itself as more literal and grammatically exact than its predecessor, translates the phrase *gentis, nationis, linguae* as 'To bee of the same stocke, nation, [and] language'.²⁹ When later in the same chapter Cicero argues that of all social relations, *nulla carior quam ea, quae cum re publica est uni cuique nostrum*, Grimalde renders this 'of all felouships ther is none more acceptable, nor derer, than the same, which euerie one of vs hath with the commonweale'; the 1616 text also uses 'Common-weale'.³⁰ Our parents, children, relatives and friends are dear to us, Cicero continues, but *omnes omnium caritates patria una complexa est*. In the English of Grimalde this becomes, 'our countrey conteines in it alone all the dere loue of them all', and in 1616 again 'our Countrey'. In an earlier chapter, quoting from Plato, Cicero avers that *non nobis solum nati sumus ortusque nostri partem patria vindicat, partem amici*. Grimalde translates: 'we be borne not for our selues alone: but somedeal of our birth our countrey, ... somedeal our frendes do claime'; the 1616 text likewise rendering 'countrey' for *patria*.³¹

Yet the word 'country', while providing a translator with an easy solution to the word *patria* in such contexts, is also too vague to create the kind of political and philosophical specificity an emergent concept of nation appeared to yearn for. 'Country', like the Germanic *Land*, can apply to many other kinds of social value, such as any local district, or else, alternatively, the countryside as opposed to the town. In German, *Land* and *Vaterland* are two distinct things; in English, 'country' can never do quite the same work as 'fatherland'. Sometimes, we might say, it means *more*, and sometimes *less*, than that. English uncertainty on this question is shown by the fact that the 1913 Loeb translation finds 'country' not to be accurate enough in relation to *De officiis*: in place of Cicero's single word *patria*, it gives (even within the same sentence) sometimes 'country', sometimes 'native land', sometimes – most significantly for our discussion – even 'fatherland'.³²

IV

This is what brings me to my claim that ‘fatherland’, even in a ghostly half-existent state, occupies part of the English territory suggested by the concept of *vaderland*. Indeed, within the terminological ambiguity of the period 1600-1800, it was for a time possible that ‘fatherland’ might have become the current English word for the concept. Here we arrive at the history, or pre-history, or proto-history, of the English word ‘fatherland’ itself. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* the word ‘fatherland’ in English dates to the seventeenth century. Indeed, it finds that a major strain in the word is as a translation of the Germanic terms *vaderland* and *Vaterland*. As if in anticipation of the theme of this essay, the *Oxford English Dictionary* cites Sir William Temple in his *Essay on Governement* of 1672, ‘The Dutch... instead of our Country, say our Father-land’.³³ A search using the as yet incomplete database of *Early English Books Online* yields just over twenty hits for ‘fatherland’ and its variants (whether using a hyphen or a final ‘-e’) up to 1700.³⁴

However tentative such evidence must be, the sample provided by *Early English Books Online* suggests the *Oxford English Dictionary* is hasty both in dating the word only to the mid-seventeenth century and in attributing its origin to a translation of German or Dutch. A hundred years before, Miles Coverdale coined the word as a translation for Jacob’s homeland in Genesis 31: ‘And the LORDE sayde vnto him: Departe agayne to thy fatherlande, and to thy kynred, I wyll be with the’.³⁵ This was an invention of Coverdale’s; William Tyndale’s Genesis of 1530 rendered the Hebrew more literally by using the genitive expression ‘the land of thy fathers’. The Great Bible of 1540 and the Bishops’ Bible of 1568 preferred Tyndale’s reading which passed thence into the Authorized Version of 1611. We can speculate that if the word had entered the English biblical lexicon more completely it might have passed into the mainstream of the language.

Perhaps we can gain some sense of how this might have happened through a work by Thomas Odell printed in 1635. The title page reads: *A brief and short treatise, called the Christians pilgrimage to his fatherland / Sheweth the troubles that he shall meete withall in passing this world as a wilderness, to the heavenly Canaan, which is the true Christians fatherland*. As in Coverdale, the ‘fatherland’ refers to the land of Canaan, yet it also refers allegorically to the heavenly Canaan, a visionary world beyond this world, which the godly can expect to enter after the travail of their earthly pilgrimage. The ‘fatherland’ is in this sense not only the original

homeland of the Hebrew patriarchs but also the eternally promised land of the godly English nation. As with Puritan language more generally, the word thus resonates both in a theological and in a political sphere. The ‘fatherland’ signifies the true home of the Christian people, above and beyond any allegiance to the earthly and temporal realm of king and country.

If this rather precise biblical and Hebraic register of the word ‘fatherland’ suggests an alternative history to the rather simple narrative offered by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, nonetheless it is a still-born development. Odell’s word is not taken up with any enthusiasm by other writers. Odell’s work was printed in Amsterdam, and it is via Dutch that we can see the word attempting to cling on to an anglicized life in the first half of the seventeenth century. Leonard Busher emigrated to the Netherlands shortly after 1606, where he embraced Anabaptist views.³⁶ His classic case for religious toleration, *Religions Peace, or, A Reconciliation, between Princes & Peoples, & Nations*, published in Amsterdam in 1614, avowed the principle that no sovereign or bishop can compel conscience. Here he refers to persecuted Christians:

Thirdly, because the poore distressed Christians (now bannished and dispersed out of their Fatherland, over the face of the earth) wilbe redeemed from greate misery and bondage, wherein now (no doubt) they live and abide, because they wil not be in bondage to any other spiritual lord or head, then the lord Iesus Messiah alone.³⁷

Exile from the ‘Fatherland’ is the fate of persecuted religious groups throughout history, Busher asserts. There is an interesting emotional register here, because he is clearly also referring to himself. As an Englishman in the process of naturalizing himself as a Dutchman, he expresses his longing for his country using a Dutch word modulated in an English dialect. In the opposite direction, Dutch works are translated into English and printed in London, using the word ‘fatherland’ as a synonym for *vaderland*. An example is the Dutch historian Lieuwe van Aitzema’s *Notable revolutions beeing a true relation of what hap'ned in the United Provinces of the Netherlands in the years MDCL and MDCLI somewhat before and after the death of the late Prince of Orange* (London: William Dugard, 1653). This routinely adopts an English idiom of ‘fatherland’ in a familiar Dutch way. It is, of course, immediately accessible to an English reader as a recognizable term, however unfamiliar the sound may be from the point of view of linguistic register.

The only other trace I can find of ‘fatherland’ entering an idiomatic realm is in another writer whose first language is not English, Gerard Malynes’s *Lex Mercatoria* of 1622. Also, interestingly, the reference is in relation to dual nationality: ‘if a stranger Naturalized (after many yeares that hee hath inhabited the same) bee desirous to returne to his fatherland or natie countrey, he may surrender his Letters Pattents, and bee discharged of his oath’.³⁸

If ‘country’ appears too vague, and ‘fatherland’ fails to convince, we might assume on this basis that English followed the alternative linguistic root and united around a ‘motherland’ or ‘mother country’. Modern speakers of the language often take for granted that English takes the side of the mother and not the father. Yet this is not at all the case. Indeed, the first known usage of ‘motherland’ post-dates that of ‘fatherland’. It first survives in written record in 1561 in Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville’s bloodthirsty tragedy *Gorboduc*: ‘Ne suffre you against the rules of kinde / Your Mother Lande to serue a Forreine Prince’.³⁹ ‘Mother country’ is dated by the *Oxford English Dictionary* to the same decade, when it is used by Arthur Golding in his version of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* in 1567. He uses ‘mother country’ to translate the Latin phrase *antiquam matrem*: ‘They went too Phebus Oracle, which willed them too go/ Untoo theyr mooother countrey’. There are similar patriotic associations in Samuel Daniel’s *Civil Warres* of 1595: ‘Thy mother countrey, whence thy selfe didst spring’. Staying among literary references, Philip Massinger’s play *Unnatural Combats* of 1631 appeals to a love of mother country in forbidding armed civil combat within the nation. In another classical citation, Prestwich’s 1651 translation of Seneca’s *Hippolytus* gives ‘mother country’ for the Latin phrase *regna materna*.

These references should not be confused with the modern sense of ‘mother country’, which has come to sound so natural to English ears. This latter sense arises only in the eighteenth century, such as in a sermon by George Berkeley in 1732: ‘No fashions are so much followed by our Colonies as those of the mother-country’. The conclusion we ought to come to about the relation between Dutch or German *Vaderland*/ *Vaterland* and the English ‘mother country’ is therefore the direct opposite of what we might (from an English point of view) have expected. The English did not come *not* to say ‘fatherland’ (as the Russians and the Turks did) because they already preferred to refer to the ‘motherland’. The maternal association of patriotic feeling is something that only arises with the coming of the British Empire. Linda Colley’s *Captives* shows how the term is used in complex ways,

sometimes with romantic longing by the colonizers, sometimes with ironic distance by the colonized. This occurs in the eighteenth century as wide apart as North America and India.⁴⁰ The ‘mother country’ becomes in nineteenth-century English a routine point of reference against which to compare life from Canada to Australia to South Africa.

In this sense, far from representing a kind of opposition between Anglo-Saxon and Germanic sensibilities, ‘mother country’ has more or less the same resonance as *das Mutterland*. For the ‘motherland’ is not a semantic alternative to ‘fatherland’ but strictly a different concept, with a distinctive *Begriffsgeschichte*. If ‘fatherland’ is an internal concept, how a nation views itself from the inside, a ‘motherland’ is external: it is a nation viewed from afar. It is the sense of ‘a country in relation to its colonies or dependencies; the country from which the founders of a colony came’.⁴¹ This is just as much a Dutch concept as an English one. Queen Wilhelmina in 1941 illustrates the point perfectly: rallying her people to the call of ‘the Fatherland’, on which she asks God’s blessing; while enjoining those in the Netherlands Indies, Surinam and Curaçao to feel ‘unity and spirit of identity with the Motherland’.⁴²

There is no sense, then, that a matriarchal imagination of national affiliation is incompatible with a parallel identification with a father figure. To understand why this does not take place in English we require a much more specific form of philological history. For long before the twentieth century and the anti-German rejection of the connotation of ‘fatherland’ in *The Times* and elsewhere, an English sense of ‘fatherland’ was not so much accidentally omitted as consciously rejected. Indeed, as early as the late seventeenth century ‘fatherland’ became associated with a foreign way of speaking. This can be dated fairly precisely, and the immediate cause is once more a war.

The origins of a hostility to the concept of ‘fatherland’ can be located in the Anglo-Dutch wars, more particularly the Third Dutch War of 1672 to 1674. In Henry Stubbe’s *Justification of the Present War* published in 1673, he is able to use the word ‘fatherland’ to denote a specifically Dutch way of thinking, an inflection that is antipathetic to the English:

Grotius and *Hogherbet* were imprisoned in *Louvestein*-house, near *Gorcum*, and so was *de Wit* together with the other *five Lords* in 1650. This faction hath always been enemies unto *England*; and although *Olden-Barnevelt* did prefer the protection of the *English* before that of *France*, it was rather out of *interest* than *affection*, and with a design upon all *occasions* to impose upon and cozen the *Queen*. The which he did *sundry ways*,

whereof he boasts in his *Apology*, as of so many services rendered unto his *Fatherland*. He was perpetually averse from *K. James*, and hated him for his opposition to *Arminius*: In the several Treaties betwixt that *King* and the *States* about the *Fishing*, and *East-India* trade, he it was, and his *faction* that first disputed the *Sovereignty of the Seas*, and from that *Cabal* did issue the *Mare liberum*, entituled unto *Grotius*.⁴³

‘Services rendered unto his *Fatherland*’ can be intuitively assumed to be services to an alien country. A ‘fatherland’ is semantically a foreign land. It is also during the Third Anglo-Dutch War that Sir William Temple observed (as cited in the *Oxford English Dictionary*), that ‘The Dutch... instead of our Country, say our *Father-land*’. Yet the context of Temple’s aphorism forecloses a much more complex and significant discussion than the mere citation implies. Temple had been ambassador to the United Netherlands and a leading proponent of a Dutch alliance up until his removal a year before, when Charles II changed policy and prepared for war. This begins to take us out of a narrow area of philology into a prototype ideology of nationhood. It also shows that the assimilation of nationhood with fatherhood is anything but incidental.

Temple’s use of the word comes from a treatise on the different types of government. In the same year, indeed, he produced his celebrated *Observations Upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands*, which justified the idea of alliance with the Dutch against France and which also endeavoured (stylishly and with sympathetic humour) to explain the idiosyncrasies of Dutch behaviour and customs to their sceptical English brethren and neighbours. In the *Essay on Government*, he explicitly disavowed a Hobbesian model of government as social contract in favour of what seemed by the 1670s to be a decidedly old-fashioned characterization of the nation as a kind of extended natural family:

the Governour or King of a Nation, ... is indeed a *Pater patriae*, as the best Kings are, and as all should be; and as those which are not, are yet content to be called. Thus the peculiar compellation of the Kings in France, is by the name of *Sire*, which in their ancient language is nothing else but Father, and denotes the Prince to be the Father of the Nation. For a Nation properly signifies a great number of Families, derived from the same Blood, born in the same Countrey, and living under the same Government and Civil Constitutions: As *Patria* does the land of our Father; and so the *Dutch* by expressions of deerness, instead of our Countrey, say our *Father-land*. With such Nations we find in Scripture all the Lands of *Judea*, and the adjacent Territories, were

planted of old. With such the many several Provinces of *Greece* and *Italy*, when they began first to appear upon the Records of Ancient Story or Tradition. And with such was the main Land of *Gaul* inhabited in the time of *Caesar*, and *Germany* in that of Tacitus. Such were the many Branches of the old *British* Nation.⁴⁴

A nation in Temple's terms is a form of extended family. It does not primarily describe a geographical unit or a convenience of political arrangement although both of these principles are adumbrated within it; it describes a blood-line or common ancestry, and a mutual loyalty based on family ties. This principle Temple identifies as universal to human societies, whether ancient or modern, Christian, Jewish or pagan.

Temple also, a dozen years after the restoration of his own King Charles, re-establishes the monarch as the head of this family. The Dutch expression '*Father-land*', then, while not itself English, confirms by its etymology an English system of government and an English national spirit. The ties of blood and filial duty make this national identity and political structure a law of nature not of theory or election. Temple's citation of the Dutch word *vaderland* thus takes us into some of the most complex and controversial aspects of seventeenth-century English political thought. In particular, of course, Temple's discussion connects directly with the famous work by Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha: The Naturall Power of Kings defended against the Unnatural Liberty of the People*. Although first published in 1680, it predates Hobbes's *Leviathan*; Johann Sommerville dates one manuscript to before 1631 and the other to 1635-42. Because of its late printing date, it acquired wide currency among supporters of royal authority in the 1680s and 1690s; John Locke spent a large part of his *First Treatise of Government* refuting it. The first chapter, however, Sommerville surmises may have been written in the 1620s. It is one of the most unapologetic statements of absolute monarchy in English, and at the same time an astonishingly frank assertion of patriarchal thinking, which of course has brought it renewed attention in recent years with the rise of feminist history.

Filmer makes the most fulsome possible assertion of the order of fatherhood in his definition of political authority and of the nation:

In all Kingdoms or Commonwealths in the World, whether the Prince be the Supreme Father of the People, or but the true Heir of such a Father, or whether he come to the Crown by Usurpation, or by Election of the Nobles, or of the People, or by any other way whatsoever; or whether some Few or a Multitude govern the Commonwealth: yet

still the Authority that is in any One, or in Many, or in All these, is the only Right and Natural Authority of a Supreme Father. There is and always shall be continued to the End of the World, a Natural Right of a Supreme Father over every Multitude⁴⁵

It is an odd assertion, as it asserts a ‘natural right’ while denaturalizing the circumstances of that right. A king rules as a father even when he is not a father or even a single individual. Locke scoffed that of course a natural father has no such absolute power, as he is a mere subject.⁴⁶ The king’s powers derive from a principle in nature, which transcends nature itself.

This sets up a profound problem of metaphor in the idea of the father of the nation. Filmer denies the idea that he is being merely literal here. He agrees that ‘It may seem absurd to maintain that Kings now are the Fathers of their People, since Experience shews the contrary. It is true, all Kings be not the Natural Parents of their Subjects’.⁴⁷ But fatherly rule, while not to be taken literally, acts with more force than a metaphor. The prince has the same rights in the real world as a natural father has over his children. In such a way a prince is allowed to act against the ordinary rules of the natural world, and has authority over his elders. Indeed, he says, ‘many a Child, by succeeding a King, hath the Right of a Father over many a Gray-headed Multitude, and hath the Title of *Pater Patriae*’ (p.20).

V

The ancient title of *pater patriae* takes us into the heart of the nexus of the concept of ‘fatherland’. It also reveals the complex reasons why the metaphor of fatherhood came to be so problematic for an English sentiment of nationhood. In classical Rome it was an honorific title, first bestowed on Cicero during his consulate in 63 CE, because of his part in the suppression of Catiline’s conspiracy. It was conferred on Julius Caesar and then on Augustus, but while thereafter it was often granted to emperor it was not part of the office of state. Rather it implied a special status, perhaps after a long reign or as a mark of esteem, as an elder statesman or venerable ruler. In Renaissance Europe it was used by Cosimo de’ Medici in Florence. It hardly needs adding within this volume that it was translated into Dutch for the benefit of William the Silent as the *vader des vaderlands*. It was used on occasion in England of Henry VIII and later adopted, at times aggressively, by the Stuart kings before and after the Restoration.

The wonderful tautology that is so evident in the Dutch language is something that Filmer is clearly trying to borrow from Latin in his own argument. The word *patria* does not always make its etymology obvious, but it is still there, lurking as a buried metaphor. The *patria* is the land of our fathers, or is like a father to us. It bears us, nurtures us, looks after us, but also rules us and punishes us if we do wrong. In Dutch (and German) the phrase *vader des vaderlands* is a tautology. In Latin it works more like a pun: there is a happy coincidence between the role of the ruler as a *pater* and the nation as a *patria*. In English, however, lacking an available natural idiom of ‘fatherland’, the connection either has to be forced or else brought in via a foreign language.

I hope it will by now be clear that I think there is an important connection to be made here between the metaphors of the vocabulary of nationhood and fatherland and the parameters of political theory and ideology surrounding them. Filmer uses the analogy of fatherhood not only to enforce a principle of natural authority of rule, but also to counter an alternative theory of liberty or of choice in the selection of government. In the first page of his treatise he rebuts the notion that:

Mankind is naturally endowed and born with Freedom from all Subjection, and at liberty to choose what Form of Government it please: And that the Power which any one Man hath over others, was at first bestowed according to the discretion of the Multitude. (p.2)

Naturally, he says, this idea is popular with the common people, and most especially ‘the meanest of the multitude’, because of its ‘prodigal’ distribution of rights and freedoms to all. Filmer’s repudiation is based first of all on holy scripture: those who regard liberty as ‘the height of human felicity’ have obviously forgotten the example of our common father Adam, for whom ‘the desire of liberty was the cause of the fall’. This argument from scripture is backed up by a reading of history, which shows that the idea of liberty of choice contradicts the practice of all the ancient monarchies. Yet behind all of Filmer’s argument lies a conviction even stronger, that his understanding of political theory is written into the very ‘law of nature’. Parental rights underscore political rights, and guarantee the rule of law and the chain of authority. Giving the people the liberty of choosing their ruler is like giving a child the choice of her own parents, it is an impossibility. Deriving the power of a ruler from its investment in the will of the people is similarly tantamount to allowing a child the right to choose who will rule him, a thing equally ridiculous in nature. This is not only

unnatural but also insane. 'It is hard to say', Filmer concludes, 'whether it be more erroneous in divinity or dangerous in policy'.

As if to clinch his case Filmer attributes the erroneous opinion to Catholics and Calvinists. On the basis of the argument from liberty, 'both Jesuits and some over zealous favourers of the Geneva discipline', he writes with horror, have argued for the right of the multitude to 'punish' their prince or 'deprive' [him from power], if he transgresses the laws of the kingdom. He cites Robert Persons from *A Conference about the next Succession to the Crown of England* (of 1594) and George Buchanan from *De Iure regni apud Scotos*. Further evidence of such seditious support of resistance theory is adduced from Bellarmine and Calvin. These references to the Jesuits and Calvinists, however, as well as shoring up Filmer's orthodoxy in relation to the Stuart kings, also show the vulnerability of his argument to a theological counter-attack from both wings. It is always wise to remember, as Jonathan Scott has recently reinforced, how much of seventeenth-century English political thought needs to be understood in the context of radical religion, even when expressed by someone religiously conformist.⁴⁸ This also shows us some of the reasons why, despite Filmer's assertiveness, the figure of the father and an incipient English concept of 'fatherland' were prone to ambiguity and controversy. Indeed, Filmer's assertiveness may itself be a symptom of the difficulty of establishing these notions within an English-speaking idiom.

A Calvinist resistance to the image of fatherhood in an ideological formation of nationhood pre-dates the Stuart kings. This can be the case even when the author is a pronounced monarchist. Let us take the example of Sir Fulke Greville. Greville is better known to literary than intellectual historians, because most of his writing is in verse. Yet he wrote political and theological treatises as well as lyric poems, and also several political dramas designed not for the public stage but for private dissemination in manuscript or as closet dramas among an aristocratic audience. Greville was a courtier who enjoyed minor success in obtaining office in Elizabeth's reign and was knighted at the accession of King James in 1603. Later, after the death of Sir Robert Cecil, he rose to be Chancellor of the Exchequer and a Privy Councillor. Yet his writings attest to a continuous resistance to political conformity and especially to absolutist ideas. Greville instead combined an attachment to Roman stoic political values (notably Tacitus and Seneca) and an increasingly pessimistic version of Calvinist predestinarianism. These traits made him wary of printed publication. Although much of his work was published after his death in a collected works in

1633, his so-called 'life' of Sir Philip Sidney had to await the interregnum for his critique of Elizabethan and Stuart policy to become acceptable, and his treatises of Monarchy and of Religion until after the Restoration.

His dramas gave Greville's the rein for a covert exposition of the vicissitudes of English political circumstances. *Mustapha*, which may have been started in the late 1590s but was revised later, is able to conceal a radical political and religious message because it is set in the sixteenth-century Islamic court of Soliman the Magnificent. Among other things, the play is a savage satire on divine right theory and particularly on the patriarchalist model. Soliman has a pathological paranoia that his son Mustapha is conspiring to murder him. Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, Soliman will not believe his eyes but instead gives into a filicidal jealousy; ironically, the death of his son gives rise immediately to an attempted rebellion. Some of the most interesting passages in the play concern Soliman's discourses on fatherhood and kingship with his judicious counsellor Achmat.

Soliman's debates on fatherhood and kingship read at times like a parody of the version of monarchy epitomized by king James in his *Trew Lawe of Free Monarchies*, written while he was still king only of Scotland in 1598. There, James extolled the care of a king for his subjects as identical to 'the naturall love' of a father to his children.⁴⁹ Monarchical rule is based on the power of his emotional connection with his people, a kind of triumph of empathy (on a scale not seen again in British politics until Tony Blair). The king feels the same 'toile and paine', he foresees 'all inconueniences and dangers that may arise towards his children' and, without any consideration of personal safety, like a parent he forestalls every threat or anxiety that his offspring encounters.⁵⁰ By the same token, when his people err and stray from the path of virtue, the kingly father adjusts his empathetic emotion accordingly, and feels instead 'wrath and correction' (p.65). But his emotions never let him down; like a God who feels anger or jealousy, his feelings are a direct reflection of the true state of things.

Soliman has the same certainty about his emotions, he just gets them spectacularly wrong. Just as James said that 'Kings are called Gods' (p.64), a view discussed at still greater length in his *Basilicon Doron*, so Soliman refers to his judgements in terms of divine intuitions:⁵¹

*Thought is with God an Act: Kings cannot see
Th'intents of mischief, but with Iealousie.*⁵²

Just as God's speech acts eliminate the gap between saying and doing, so God's emotional instincts eradicate any distinction between feeling and acting. If the king feels jealous, the object of his jealousy must be planning assassination or sedition. Soliman's suspicions of his son are de facto evidence of his son's intentions towards rebellion. In a strange reversal of the logic of patriarchal monarchy, which is also its logical apotheosis, Soliman reasons that he must abandon his natural feelings of parental love towards Mustapha in favour of his divine intuition of danger:

And shall Loue be a chaine, tyed to my Crowne,
 Either to helpe him vp, or pull me downe?
 No, No: This *Father*-language fits not Kings,
 Whose publike, vniuersall prouidence
 Of *Things*, not *Persons*, alwayes must haue sense.⁵³

To be a good king he must relinquish the desire to be a good father. The personal life must be abandoned for the public good. Yet this is a contradiction, because as a good king he is applying the feelings that a good father normally has for his child, only projected now onto the people his subjects at large. The public good is based on the fatherly instincts of the king.

At some level, then, Greville exposes the patriarchal conception of kingship as contradictory. In the process he also exposes it as dangerous and violent. If James felt that the dangers of the state could be averted by mirroring family life within the practice of the state, Greville finds this emotional symmetry the greatest danger of all. *Mustapha* the play manifests not so much a triumph of empathy as a tyranny of empathy. A rule of authority based on this principle seems to him not to follow the 'law of nature' as Filmer later expressed it, but on the contrary a descent into the realm of the arbitrary whims of desire and the passions.

Since James developed his idea of kingship partly in express repudiation of the emerging political theory of the Puritans both in his native Scotland and in England, it is not surprising to see the Calvinist Greville at odds with this idea.⁵⁴ His works of political theology, *Of Monarchy* and *Of Religion* - which were not printed until 1670 - show the same sense of recoil from an idealization of fatherhood:

And though they serve Ambitious Princes use,
 While they protect them like a nursing Father...

Yet mark the end of false combined trust,
It will divide, and smart the people must.⁵⁵

Yet Greville was also a principled monarchist and not an overt defender of resistance theory. His position on kingship and on authority is notably conservative. What I am interested in here is not in identifying different factional or even philosophical positions on these issues but on the way in which Greville formulates a suspicion of and reluctance for what he dubs ‘father-language’. This applies, I think, to a ‘father-language’ of nation as well as of monarchy. This reflects interestingly on what (later in the century) Temple, who was certainly no Puritan, remarks about the Dutch term *vaderland*. He reports that ‘the Dutch by expression of deerness, instead of our Countrey, say our *Father-Land*’. It is this ‘expression of deerness’ that appears to sound foreign to an English ear. By some reflex of political distrust or even resistance, born of the disastrous consequences of too literal an interpretation of the language of fatherly kingship under James and Charles, Temple like Greville rejects a ‘father-language’.

This represents something interesting about the developing vocabulary of nation in the English language. As we saw earlier, in the fourteenth century the word ‘nacioun’, while in common usage, does not mean a quasi-sovereign political ‘state’ but instead a concept of blood ties, family or lineage. This is still evident in the sixteenth century, where ‘nation’ commonly implies something to do with birth or blood, rather in the way that the ‘nations’ in a university collected together the family of a particular national grouping rather than any political jurisdiction. Seventeenth-century English often uses the same range of words as medieval English – ‘nation’, ‘people’, ‘folk’, ‘country’ – but begins to give them a different inflection. In doing so it consciously rejects some of the alternative idiomatic resonance of ‘fatherland’. Interestingly, while the *Oxford English Dictionary* registers ‘country’ as synonymous with ‘nation’ in the sense of blood or lineage throughout the middle ages, it finds what appears to be the modern sense of ‘The people of a district or state; the nation’ much more common from the sixteenth century on.⁵⁶ At this point, ‘country’ comes to be the nearest equivalent for that Dutch and German sense of *vaderland* or fatherland, as Temple suggests. Such a sense of ‘country’ is found in the Digger Gerard Winstanley, ‘Every one is ready to say, They fight for their Country, and what they do, they do it for the good of their Country’.⁵⁷ At the opposite end of the political spectrum, it is just as easy to find the

word used in the same sense a year earlier in Hobbes's *Leviathan*, when he refers to 'love of a mans *Country*'.⁵⁸

What we might notice here in both cases is that while Winstanley and Hobbes are unabashed in their attribution of 'deerness' or 'love' to the nation, the metaphor that underlies it is one not of person or family but of place. Winstanley and Hobbes in their very different ways refer naturally to a love of a land, of a particularity or familiarity of landscape or countryside. This conforms with an identification in the *Oxford English Dictionary* of what happens to the word 'nation':

In early examples notions of race and common descent predominate. In later use notions of territory, political unity, and independence are more prominent, although some writers still make a pointed distinction between nation and state.⁵⁹

Part of this change, once again, occurs in relation to biblical usage, which from Coverdale onwards referred to the Jewish 'nation'. For instance in *Leviathan*, as late as 1651, a third of all usages of the word 'nation' are in relation to the Israelites in particular. Winstanley, interestingly, is still reluctant to use the word 'nation' as a signifier of a 'political unity' in this sense. But there is a place in radical writing in the 1650s where the word is used unabashedly in its modern sense. Intriguingly, it is in a work which mounts a full-scale attack on the image of the king as father of the nation: Milton's *Eikonoklastes*.

Here the 'nation' refers to a body above and beyond the king, which indeed includes the king indifferently as just one of its members, and certainly not the head. Milton brings in the resonance of the people of Israel by referring to 'this afflicted nation'.⁶⁰ He also gives political identity to this group by describing it in distinction to the king; indeed it discovers its own collective identity even as the king's corrupt actions are made 'manifest and visible to the whole Nation'.⁶¹ The nation is the body of people who are coterminous with the scope and extent of the country they inhabit, and who are bound by the same laws within it. In Milton's terms, of course, at least in 1650, this means investing in Parliament the corporate identity previously expressed in the King:

for if the Parlament represent the whole Kingdom, as is sure enough they doe, then doth the King represent onely himself; and if a King without his Kingdom be in a civil sense nothing, then without or against the Representative of his whole Kingdom he himself represents nothing, and by consequence his judgement and his negative is as good as nothing; and though we should allow him to be something, yet not equivalent,

or comparable to the whole Kingdom, and so neither to them who represent it: much less that one syllable of his breath putt into the scales should be more ponderous then the joynt voice and efficacy of a whole Parliament, assembl'd by election, and indu'd with the plenipotence of a free Nation, to make Laws.⁶²

The sacred image of the *pater patriae* is deconstructed by Milton as merely 'the king's person', and set against an alternative source of authority. Indeed he repudiates the king's former title as a fiction: 'he at that time could be no way esteem'd the *Father of his Country*, but the destroyer; nor had he ever before merited that former title'.⁶³ The father is ceremoniously disowned. The denuded body of the king is removed from its throne and replaced with the body of the nation. This Milton defines in corporate and communal terms: 'we live and are a Nation of men joynd in society'.⁶⁴ It is a body as broad as the plenitude of the land as a whole, and no longer is derived from the singularity of a single human father. While Milton's larger political project ended in spectacular failure, in this respect his political instincts were entirely in line with the future.

¹ "Our Beloved Fatherland", Letter To the Editor of *The Times*, 10 November 1936, p.17, *The Times Digital Archive, 1785-1985*, <http://archive.timesonline.co.uk/tol/archive/> [Accessed, 5 March 2010].

² *Kennedy's Revised Latin Primer*, new edition (London: Longmans, 1962), p.221 (Appendix IV, Memorial Lines on the Gender of Latin Substantives'. Through the idle exercise of pen and ink during dreary winter afternoons, the book is commonly known as *The Shortbread Eating Primer*.

³ Winder describes these attitudes as a kind of cultural 'quarantine': *Germania: A Personal History of Germans Ancient and Modern* (London: Picador, 2010), p.2; on ideas of 'nationalism', see pp.301-7.

⁴ *The Times*, 16 August 1939, p.11, *The Times Digital Archive, 1785-1985*, <http://archive.timesonline.co.uk/tol/archive/> [Accessed, 5 March 2010].

⁵ *The Times*, 14 June 1941, p.3, *The Times Digital Archive, 1785-1985*, <http://archive.timesonline.co.uk/tol/archive/> [Accessed, 5 March 2010].

⁶ *The Times*, 10 February 1943, p.5, *The Times Digital Archive, 1785-1985*, <http://archive.timesonline.co.uk/tol/archive/> [Accessed, 5 March 2010].

⁷ Reinhart Koselleck, 'Über die Theoriebedürftigkeit der Geschichtswissenschaft', in Theodor Schieder and Kurt Gräubig, ed., *Theorieprobleme der Geschichtswissenschaft* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977), S.37-59 (S. 47) [originally published in: Werner Conze, ed., *Theorie der Geschichtswissenschaft und Praxis des Geschichtsunterrichts* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1972), S. 10-28]; Eng. Tr. 'On the Need for Theory in the Discipline of History', in *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, tr. Todd Samuel Presner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002, p.9.

⁸ 'Die Entsubstanzialisierung unserer Kategorien führt zu einer Verzeitlichung ihrer Bedeutung'; Koselleck, 'Über die Theoriebedürftigkeit der Geschichtswissenschaft', S.47.

⁹ *Vergangene Zukunft - Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1979); Eng. Tr. *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

¹⁰ 'Die Sozialgeschichte und die Begriffsgeschichte', in Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten: Studien zur Semantik und Pragmatik der politischen und sozialen Sprache* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), S.15; Eng. tr. 'Social History and Conceptual History', in *Practice of Conceptual History*, pp.24-5.

¹¹ On the imagery of monarchy see Kevin Sharpe, in a series of volumes beginning with *Selling the Tudor Monarchy: Authority and Image in Sixteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009) and continued in *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010).

¹² 'Über die Theoriebedürftigkeit der Geschichtswissenschaft', S.38; Eng. tr. 'On the Need for Theory in the Discipline of History', in *Practice of Conceptual History*, p.2.

¹³ Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994).

¹⁴ *Begriffsgeschichten*, S.172-3; tr. in "'Progress" and "Decline": an Appendix to the History of Two Concepts', in *Practice of Conceptual History*, p.229. Koselleck here is referring to the history of the concept of *der Fortschritt* ('progress').

¹⁵ The most frequently cited works in this area in English language studies are Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev.ed.

(London: Verso, 1991), first published 1983; and E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹⁶ *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.15-18.

¹⁷ *The Southern Version of Cursor Mundi*, vol. 5, ed. Laurence M. Eldredge and Anne L. Klinck (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2000), p.14.

¹⁸ 'An English Fourteenth Century Apocalypse Version with a Prose Commentary', ed. E. Fridner, p.40; cited in *The Middle English Dictionary*, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/> [accessed 9 March 2010], NACIOUN, 1.

¹⁹ Hastings, *Construction of Nationhood*, p.17.

²⁰ *Middle English Dictionary*, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/> [accessed 9 March 2010], CONTRE(E), 2.

²¹ MED, CONTRE(E), 3.

²² *Confessio Amantis*, in *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. G. C. Macaulay, 2 vols., Early English Text Society, 81-2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1900-1), book VIII, line 744.

²³ *Promptorium Parvulorum*, ed. A. L. Mayhew, EETS, 102 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1908 ; *Catholicon Anglicum: An English-Latin Wordbook*, eds. S. J. H. Herrtage and H. B. Wheatley, EETS, 75 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1881).

²⁴ *De officiis*, I, 17, ed. Walter Miller, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913), p.56; Nicholas Grimalde, *Marcus Tullius Ciceroes thre bokes of duties to Marcus his sonne, turned out of latine into english* (London: Richard Tottel, 1556), fol, 22^r.

²⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://dictionary.oed.com> [accessed 9 March, 2010], COUNTRY, 3.

²⁶ *Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://dictionary.oed.com> [accessed 9 March, 2010], COUNTRY, 4.

²⁷ *Henry V*, 4.3.19-20; ed. T. W. Craik (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1995), p.285.

²⁸ *1 Henry VI*, 3.3.81; ed. Edward Burns (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2000), p.219.

²⁹ *De officiis*, I, 17, ed. Miller, p.56; *The first book of Tullies Offices translated grammatically* (London: H. Lownes, 1616), p.114.

³⁰ *De officiis*, I, 17, ed. Miller, p.58; Grimalde, *Ciceroes thre bokes of duties*, fol.23^r; *The first book of Tullies Offices*, p.120.

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- ³¹ *De officiis*, I, 7, ed. Miller, p.22; Grimalde, *Ciceroes thre bokes of duties*, fol.9^v; *The first booke of Tullies Offices*, p.48.
- ³² *De officiis*, I, 7, ed. Miller, p.61;
- ³³ *An Essay Upon the Original and Nature of Government* (1672), in *Miscellanea* (1680)
- ³⁴ Early English Books Online <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home> [accessed 4 March 2010].
The statistical value of this figure is limited since EEBO has digitized only between 10% and 20% of the available corpus as yet, so the sample must be viewed as very incomplete.
- ³⁵ [Miles Coverdale], *Biblia: the Byble, that is, the holy Scripture of the Olde and New Testament, faithfully translated in to Englyshe* (1535), f.14r (Genesis 31:3).
- ³⁶ Richard L. Greaves, 'Busher, Leonard (*bap.* 1573, *d.* in or after 1651)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4164>, accessed 5 March 2010].
- ³⁷ *Religions peace or A reconciliation, between princes & peoples, & nations* (Amsterdam: n.p., 1614), sig.D2v. See also D4r.
- ³⁸ *Consuetudo, vel lex mercatoria, or The ancient law-merchant Diuided into three parts: according to the essentiall parts of trafficke. Necessarye for all statesmen, iudges, magistrates, temporall and ciuile lawyers, mint-men, merchants, marriners, and all others negotiating in all places of the world. By Gerard Malynes merchant* (1622), p.442.
- ³⁹ *The tragidie of Ferrex and Porrex set forth without any addition or alteration but altogether as the same was shewed on stage before the Queenes Maiestie, about nine yeares past, vꝝ. the xviij. day of Ianuarie. 1561. by the gentlemen of the Inner Temple. Seene and allowed* (1561), sig. Eiiiv (*Gorboduc*, V. ii).
- ⁴⁰ *Captives: Britain, Empire and the world, 1600-1850* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002)
- ⁴¹ OED, MOTHER COUNTRY, 2.
- ⁴² 'The Unconquerable Netherlands', *The Times*, 2 September 1941, p.2, *The Times Digital Archive, 1785-1985*, <http://archive.timesonline.co.uk/tol/archive/> [Accessed, 5 March 2010].
- ⁴³ Henry Stubbe, *A further iustification of the present war against the United Netherlands illustrated with several sculptures* (1673), sig.C1r-v.
- ⁴⁴ Temple, *Miscellanea ... by a person of honour* (1680), p.66.
- ⁴⁵ Cited here using capitalization following the printed ed. of *Patriarcha* (1680), p.22-3; see also the MS text in Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Writings*, ed. Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.11.

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- ⁴⁶ *Selected Political Writings*, ed. Paul E. Sigmund (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), p.11.
- ⁴⁷ *Patriarcha* (1680), p.19; ed. Sommerville, p.10.
- ⁴⁸ *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.229-45.
- ⁴⁹ King James VI and I, *Political Writings*, ed. Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.78.
- ⁵⁰ *Political Writings*, ed. Sommerville, p.65.
- ⁵¹ See also *Basilicon Doron*, in *Political Writings*, ed. Sommerville, p.1.
- ⁵² Fulke Greville, *Mustapha* (first printed 1609), Act 2, scene 1. The text survives in two distinct versions; citations here from the revised text in *Certaine learned and elegant vorkes of the Right Honorable Fulke Lord Brooke written in his youth, and familiar exercise with Sir Philip Sidney. The seuerall names of which workes the following page doth declare* (1633), p.102.
- ⁵³ *Certaine learned and elegant vorkes*, p.101.
- ⁵⁴ James's reply to the 'Puritanes' comes in *Basilicon Doron*, in *Political Writings*, ed. Sommerville, p.5-6.
- ⁵⁵ *Of Religion*, in *The remains of Sir Fulke Grevill Lord Brooke being poems of monarchy and religion* (London: Henry Herringman, 1670), stanza 31.
- ⁵⁶ OED, COUNTRY, 6.a. See also COUNTRY, 3. and 4.
- ⁵⁷ 'Epistle to the Reader', *The law of freedom in a platform: or, True magistracy restored Humbly presented to Oliver Cromwel, General of the Common-wealths army in England* (1652), p.16.
- ⁵⁸ *Leviathan, or, The matter, forme, and power of a common wealth, ecclesiasticall and civil* (1651), p.41.
- ⁵⁹ OED, NATION, 1.a.
- ⁶⁰ *EIKONΩKΛΑΣΤΕΣ in answer to a book intitl'd Eikon basilike the portrature His Sacred Majesty in his solitudes and sufferings the author J.M.* (1650), sig. A2v.
- ⁶¹ *Eikonoklastes*, sig. B2v.
- ⁶² *Eikonoklastes*, sig. I2r-v.
- ⁶³ *Eikonoklastes*, sig. 2A4r.
- ⁶⁴ *Eikonoklastes*, sig. 2G3r.

The English/British concept of Liberty c.1600-1850

From the standpoint of the seventeenth century, Hanoverian Britain's fame for liberty invites skepticism. I find the claimed special relationship to roast beef easier to swallow. What a distance yawns between the political life of an eighteenth century institutional super-state and the ambitions informing an earlier revolution resulting from institutional collapse! Sometimes this distance can be measured. "Three thousand miles of ocean lie between you and them...Seas roll, and months pass....[T]he people of the colonies", Edmund Burke continued, "are descendants of Englishmen. England, Sir, is a nation, which still I hope respects, and formerly adored, her freedom. The colonists emigrated from you when this part of your character was most predominant."¹

Formerly adored! Now only respects! Accompanying this feeling, a lukewarmness verging upon torpor, is a baffling rhetorical ubiquity. Eighteenth century reformers claimed to be defending against arbitrary power that "civil and religious liberty...which...[is] the glorious inheritance of Freeborn Englishmen".² Conservative Whigs claimed the defence of "our liberties and properties" as unique accomplishments of the constitution of 1689 and succeeding European wars.³ Even the French – or one French person - described England as the "one nation in the world whose constitution has political liberty for its direct purpose".⁴ The Scot David Hume, a sceptic upon all other subjects, attributed to "our mixed form of government" a degree of personal and political liberty unique in Europe.⁵ One resident of Virginia lauded what is "by the confession of the wisest men in Europe, the freest and the noblest government on the records of

history”.⁶ Another denounced the word ‘Britain’ as an unfortunate “Scotticism...What chance can England or America have for a continuance of their liberty or independence when not only the principles, but phraseology of that accursed country is prevalent every where?”⁷ Burke “love[d] a manly, moral, regulated liberty as well as any gentleman of that society” addressed by Richard Price.⁸ A century earlier, in the House of Commons in 1678 Colonel Silius Titus had responded to an appeal for moderation by noting that a person riding their horse moderately when being pursued by bandits would be “knocked on the head...No man advises you to love your wife and children moderately, or to serve God moderately.”⁹ Nobody responded: “I feel a manly and well regulated love for my wife”.

As Wyger Velema has shown, eighteenth century Britain shared with the United Provinces the reputation of a free state during a period when the counter-example was France. But was the United Kingdom of Great Britain (from 1707) a parliamentary monarchy or crowned republic? Looking at the constitution, who had won the civil war? If this was, in party terms, infinitely arguable that was the point. This point could be made by calling the state a mixed constitution. If it was either a monarchy or a republic it was very different from its seventeenth century predecessors. Formally, of course, while the United Provinces was a republic England remained a monarchy. Yet this monarchy was no longer a government of men but of laws. Institutional structures regulated the economy, the state and their relationship. This was the only monarchy in Europe with a legislatively governed national bank. Dynastic continuity was subordinated to

confessional and military security. This was Montesquieu's republic disguised as a monarchy.

Thus if eighteenth century Britain was free then this was held to owe something to the constitutional mechanism by which England's seventeenth century troubles had been ended. This view was not universal: it would be ridiculed by Paine for whom that constitution was a sad relic of more than one kind of tyranny. But there was there was no seventeenth century equivalent to the role played by institutions in eighteenth century political, economic and military life. More importantly, during the early seventeenth century the role and value of liberty, like much else in public life, was contested. The struggle which led to war in three kingdoms, was, in the first place, one for the reformed religion which was not initially articulated as involving liberty, even if, in the words of Oliver Cromwell, "God brought it to that at the last". This, Martin van Gelderen's paper reminds us, was one difference from the earlier and parallel Dutch struggle, fought from the beginning for religious as well as political freedom.

Certainly English parliamentarians described themselves as guardians of "divers rights and liberties...inherited" by custom and/or "enacted" by earlier legislation. These were either native to part of the island ("those laws in the government of the Saxons...of that vigour and force as to overlive the Conquest")¹⁰ or inherited from a larger European cultural area, whether classical republican or 'gothic'.¹¹ By the 1640s these languages of liberty were joined, and to some extent eclipsed by another – that of natural law. This was to a significant extent, as Sir Robert Filmer noted, an English circle around Grotius. In all

of these respects the Dutch parallel was closer, and also the French. Self-identification by the English elite with the United Provinces was particularly strong. This reflected geographic proximity, cultural and economic ties, and a common religious cause against Spain. It resulted in English intervention in the Dutch revolt, and later Dutch intervention in English politics, first indirect and then direct.

In one Anglo-Dutch year of crisis, 1585, England's relationship to its history (the author's word was "antiquity") was explored by William Camden's Britannia. Although often quoted as describing "this Isle...as a second world, sequestered from the other, to delight mankind withal", Camden was here discussing the earlier accounts of Virgil ("And Britans people quite disjoin'd from all the world") and Claudian ("Britaine, a land...severed from this our [Romane] world").¹² In fact it was the purpose of Camden's own text, composed in Latin at the request of Abraham Ortelius, "to restore...to Britaine" its European geography and history.¹³

Thus "between the said Fore-land of Kent and Calais in France...the sea, is so streited, that some thinke the land there was pierced thorow, and received the seas into it, which before-time had been excluded".¹⁴ We find the suggestion that the narrow seas were a recent development in other texts with an Anglo-Dutch context like More's Utopia and Temple's Observations. As one of Europe's many islands, says Camden, and one within sight of 'the maine', Britain had been known to the seafaring Greeks ("And...better knowen...than either to Plinie or to any Romane").¹⁵ He firmly rebutted the suggestion that "the first inhabitants...were...borne in the land", or that they descended from a

single progenitor like “Brutus a Trojane borne”.¹⁶ On the contrary Britain shared the migration history of Europe’s islands.

“For the world was not all together and at once inhabited; but...the countries nearer adjoining unto the mountains of Armenia, (where the Arke rested after the flood...) were peopled before others; and namely Asia the lesse, and Greece before Italy, Italy before Gaule, and Gaul before Britaine. The consideration whereof is most delectable, in that the highest Creator, hath joined regions, and withal dispersed the Ilands so, as there is no such great distance betweene any of them, but that even those which lie farthest off, may from some one neere adjoining, be seene & plainly...discerned by the eie.”¹⁷

In this context Britons ought

“to be perswaded, that the ancient Gomerians of Gaule (now France)...came over first into this Ile, which from the continent they were able to kenne. And it stands to verie good reason...that everie countrie received the first inhabitants from places neere bordering, rather than from such as were most disjoind. For, who would not thinke, that Cyprus had the first inhabitants out of Asia next unto it, Crete and Sicilie out of Greece neereby...Corsica out of Italy a neighbour countrie: and...Zeland out of Germanie the nearest unto it...In like maner, why should not we thinke that our Britaine was inhabited first by the Gaules their neighbours, rather than either by the Trojans or Italians, the Albans and Brutians, so farre distant and remove?’¹⁸

This was confirmed by the fact that “the ancient Gauls and our Britans used one and the self same language”.¹⁹ That the next invaders were the Romans was a logical military outgrowth of their conquest of Gaul.²⁰ Following the collapse of ‘the Romane Empire...Britaine’ found itself “destitute of all protection...exposed...to the greedy and gaping jaws of Nations confining upon her”.²¹ In particular “the Saxons...they wholly disseised the poore wretched Britans of the more fruitful part of the Iland.”²² That “we Englishmen are sprung from the[se] Germanes”, who came from the Low Countries, was shown by the fact that “the later and more moderne names of our townes end in Burrow, Berry, Ham, Steed, Ford, Thorp, and Wich, which carry a just and equall correspondence unto the terminations of the Dutch townes; Burg, Berg, Heim, Stadt, Furdt, Dorp, and Wic”.²³ Whether these invaders brought with them Saxon parish republicanism we are not told. In 1622 Thomas Scott cited Camden while claiming that Dutch ‘freedome’ and commonwealth-mindedness were in England’s blood.²⁴

The Elizabethan and early Stuart articulation of English liberties was also humanist. In the words of Thomas Smith, the English “common wealth is...a society...of free men collected together and united by common accord and covenantes...for the conservation of themselves aswell in peace as in warre”.²⁵ As Iain Hampsher-Monk points out, recent research has illuminated the contexts which enabled Elizabeth’s ‘subjects’ to understand themselves simultaneously as citizens. One was the city of London, with 50,000 inhabitants in 1550 and 550,000 in 1700. The emergence between these dates of something called a free polity owed much to the sometimes violent reshaping of the state by its capital city. Another factor was the impact of half a century of female monarchy in

helping to incubate a (male) conciliar political culture. One reason why, as Brian Cummings here shows, Fulke Greville could not accept 'Father-language' in the mouth of Kings was that he was one of these Elizabethan courtiers. When the Stuarts floated their boat on a sea of patriarchalism, two subsequent shipwrecks (in 1649 and 1689) sent that rhetoric down to Davy Jones' locker. There followed mother country, mother of parliaments and of colonies, and even an Empress of India.

All of England's seventeenth century troubles related to times when, in Smith's words "conservation of the commonwealth, in peace as in warre" seemed in jeopardy. Under these circumstances loyalty to a monarch and citizenship of a confessional commonwealth could come into tension. It was during Charles I's Personal Rule that Peter Heylin wrote: "I have before heard of a free people, and of free states, but never till of late of a free subject; nor know I any way to create free subjects, but by releasing them of all obedience to their princes".²⁶ Attacking those "who magnify liberty as if the height of human felicity were only to be found in it – never remembering that the desire of liberty was the cause of the fall of Adam", Robert Filmer emphasized the natural subjection of man, to fathers as well as kings.²⁷ Thomas Hobbes described the destructive political impact of a bogus idea of liberty derived from Aristotle and copied by Cicero which taught men to "favour...tumults' and 'hate Monarchy".²⁸ At least Hobbes, however, would argue that subjects could be free, and on the scaffold in 1649 Charles I agreed. That "freedom consists in having...laws by which their life and goods may be most their own. It is not for having a share in government, Sir, that is nothing pertaining to them. A subject and a sovereign are clear different things".²⁹

In the Netherlands, rebels facing a vigorous imperial monarchy had had to create a rival military-fiscal structure. That this took the form of a federated republic reflected the urban demography as well as the provincial political structures of the North. It was the opinion of Sir William Temple that within the resulting “Confederacy of Seven Sovereign Provinces” which “cannot properly be stiled a Commonwealth”, “the Freedom of the Cities” amounted to an “Oligarchy...very different from a Popular Government”.³⁰ Moreover “though they retain’d the Name of a Free People, yet they soon lost the ease of the Liberties they contended for, by the absoluteness of their Magistrates in the several Cities and Provinces, and by the extream pressure of their Taxes, which so long a War with so mighty an Enemy made necessary”. Even after the war, Temple explained, “at Amsterdam...when, in a Tavern, a certain Dish of Fish is eaten with the usual Sawce, above thirty several Excises are paid”.³¹ This did not prevent him admiring the military result, or the commercial prosperity of the republic, or the moral achievement of a political elite committed to public service, and a society relieved of ‘oppression of conscience’ so that “Men live together like Citizens of the World”.³²

In England by contrast, politically speaking at least, there were neither several provinces nor several cities. Allying with London, it was a fragment of Charles I’s last parliament which modernized the military-fiscal state, borrowing in the process from the very Dutch taxes (in particular excise) lamented by Temple. Into the constitutional dustbin were swept monarchy, parliaments and the church. On the eve of this revolution the rhetoric of liberty was appropriated by non-state actors to contest the post-war settlement. Resulting

demands included liberty of conscience, liberty from unrepresentative parliaments as well as kings, liberty from the oppressive government of the City. Following the first known demands for universal manhood suffrage, as well as more venerable appeals for the abolition of private property it is perhaps not surprising that the first power to reconstitute the state – that of the English republic of 1649-53 - put the lid back on. But was it properly on, or even the same lid?

When David Starkey once told me that he had secured hundreds of thousands of pounds to make a television history series I asked him what it would be called. He replied: “British monarchy”. What are you going to do during the Interregnum, I asked: put on a test pattern with the message ‘normal transmission will be resumed as soon as possible?’ I have underlined elsewhere, against the view of Blair Worden, the abundant evidence documenting the Rump parliament’s understanding and presentation of itself as a republican Free State.³³ It was during this period that Dutch influences became most visible. This was true not only of the abolition of monarchy, establishment of liberty of conscience, and levying of Dutch taxes, but the enactment of maritime and mercantile economic policies accompanied by a dramatic transformation of English naval, mercantile and colonial power. Whereas during wartime Charles I had built one or two new ships a year the English republic built tens and dozens – twenty two in 1654. Whereas it had taken the early Stuart crown a year to plan “a peaceful summer cruise in the narrow seas” the republic patrolled the channel, Mediterranean and Caribbean simultaneously.³⁴ In mid 1651 a Venetian observer reported:

“Owing to the care of parliament they have 80 men of war, which are certainly the finest now afloat, whether for construction, armament, or crews. They can increase these numbers with incredible facility to 150, 200 or more sail...[In addition] trade...has made great strides for some time past, and is now improved by the protection it receives from parliament, the government of the commonwealth and that of its trade being exercised by the same individuals”.³⁵

These policies were accompanied by a proposal for Anglo-Dutch political union in 1651, then the first Navigation Act, and finally an Anglo-Dutch war animated by these developments. According to the English government the Dutch started the war despite owing both “their Libertie and Exercise of the Protestant Religion” to England. When “the Spaniard...was breaking in upon them like the breach of the sea...the People of England...willingly espoused their Quarrel, [and] undertook their Protection”. Now that England was a republic “From whom could they expect any affections, but from the Dutch?...being themselves a Commonwealth, but even now torne out of the Jawes of Monarchy through a sea of Blood, and millions of Treasure”.³⁶

However ‘Interest’ was “the true Zenith of every State and Person, according to which they may certainly be understood, though clothed never so much with the most specious disguise...for Actions are the effects of Interests, from whom they proceed, and to whom they tend naturally as the stone doth downward”.³⁷ Now that England had become ‘a Commonwealth well ordered’ the Dutch “knew that” it would recognize and defend its interests as ably as the United Provinces themselves, instead of selling them for private bribes. Secondly, “concerning the Interest of the Protestant Religion: True it is, that...[the

United Provinces] have been a place of Refuge to many precious Saints”. (23). However this toleration was extended to all religions, not only the “Protestant”, and “upon a State principle of advantage” rather than godly zeal. Finally,

“For the Interests of Libertie, it is [also] true, they are in a condition of a Free State; but so far from establishing others in the same condition, who have groaned under the sad oppression of Tyrants...it is known to Europe, how their great designe hath been to be Free Men themselves, and to make the world (as far as they are able) their slaves and vassals. So far have they been from the true Principles of Freedom, which is ready to make others as free as itself.”³⁸

It was the most striking contrast between Dutch and English republican accounts of liberty that the latter were morally universal and militarily expansive. From the moment of its foundation the English republic was, and was building, an empire. “And...we of this Nation of England, do believe that there is such a Cause of God this day amongst us, that wil take off the Burthen and the Yoak, and cause Justice to be administred equally to all...and that God his will herein, will cause to be declared, and to proceed to other Nations, till the whole Creation that is now groaning under the exorbitant and wicked lusts of Kings and great ones, whether in Monarchies or States, be delivered into freedom”.³⁹

In English republican writing this imperial strain had apocalyptic and Machiavellian variants. In 1652 the Venetian ambassador to France, Michiel Morosini, reported to his government: “The opportunity enjoyed by the English of going yearly to Bordeaux in

order to ship wines, has given them ample means...of impressing their own opinions on the inhabitants of that city...This seems to have led to speeches in favour of liberty, advocating the expulsion of the parliament and the forming of a more popular one, and, in short governing themselves”.⁴⁰

This perception of liberty as self-government – what Charles I had said it was not – itself had two primary variants. The first, explored by Milton, Sidney and Vane, stressed the disciplined self-government of the person, as well as of the state. The resulting moral philosophy of politics was intertwined with a protestant commitment to reformation of manners, and a Christian humanist metaphysics indebted to Plato and Aristotle. This was a long way from Nedham and Harrington’s sceptical interest of state, and equally from Dutch republicanism in its post Cartesian and Hobbesian form. However with Dutch thought before 1650 as described by Martin van Gelderen it has much in common.⁴¹ This reminds us of the Erasmian nature of English Christian humanism (still evident, for instance, in Milton’s Of Christian Doctrine) and of Sidney’s identification of Grotius as one of the two the most important contemporary influences on his political thought.

The other English republican understanding of self government was legal and constitutional. This had its core in the formula, ultimately derived from Plato’s Laws, that a commonwealth was a government of laws and not of men. This became the seventeenth century alternative to failed governments of dynasty, patriarchy, and heredity. Constitutionally this idea too bifurcated. The first distinction concerned the type of constitution by which liberty was best secured. Here the main contenders became a

democratic unicameralism adapted from Machiavelli and argued by Marchamont Nedham and John Streater; and a mixed constitution, also indebted to Machiavelli, and sent in different directions by (Nedham) again, Harrington, and later Sidney. Beyond such constitutional distinctions, however, emerged another more striking polarity animating the struggle between Harringtonians and anti-Harringtonians between 1659 and 1660. This juxtaposed purveyors of commonwealth principles, including Milton, Vane and Sidney, for whom constitutions were adaptable to strengthen the rational against the passionate part of the soul, to Harringtonians for whom, as “reason is nothing but interest” so the function of constitutions was to supply the public interestedness which could not be expected from the selfish actions of individual persons.⁴²

This sceptical constitutionalism had an echo in the post-1660 United Provinces, not least in the writings of the brothers de la Court, for whom politics was a matter of public (republican) or private (monarchical) self-interest. This was in line with the earlier interest theory of Nedham and also drew upon Hobbes. Later it also furnished a context for Hume’s understanding of the virtues of the Hanoverian constitution. This understanding was Harringtonian not only in the sense that it was mixed – and before 1650 Dutch republicans also had understood their state as a mixed constitution. It was Harringtonian in the more fundamental sense that in Hume’s opinion Britain owed its liberty not to the moral accomplishments of its citizens but to the constitution itself.⁴³ As for the other English republican constitutional model, it was to have its own no less important afterlife. Pioneered by Nedham not in a republican newspaper but in a series of anonymous Leveller pamphlets, this took shape as an attack, not on monarchy, but upon

parliamentarian oligarchy. A republic was free, Nedham insisted, not when dominated by its senate, but only when the people had most power. For this argument Nedham used Machiavelli's account of Roman history, with particular emphasis upon the role of tribunes, and more remarkably the example of democratic Athens. Later he emphasised the popular right to change governments; the importance of frequent elections; and non-extension and rotation of office.⁴⁴

The result was, in Nedham's The Excellencie of a Free State (1656) a popular account of the constitutional essence of liberty. As Rachel Hammersley has shown, this was subsequently translated during the French revolution and read by citizens committed to a democratic republicanism.⁴⁵ It is therefore not surprising that in the contemporary English account of liberty by Joseph Priestley, excoriated by Burke, and defended by Paine, we find a lot of Nedham. This includes the people's 'natural rights' (and Nedham uses that word, despite his Machiavellianism) to "chang[e]...or even punish...their governors, that is their servants...or...alter...the whole form of government".⁴⁶ When Wyger Velema in the present volume describes the development, during the 1780s, of a Dutch Patriot concept of liberty hinging upon the constant control of representatives by a sovereign people this also sounds very like Nedham.⁴⁷

Let me repeat that the origins of this populist ideology lay not in the English republican period but in the prior years of Leveller agitation. It was visible almost a year before Colonel Rainsborough's famous demand for universal manhood suffrage at Putney church in an anonymous pamphlet which may have been written by Nedham.⁴⁸ The

Leveller content of English republicanism was arguably far more important than its Harringtonian content. Only the latter, and Pocock's work on it, allowed Jonathan Israel to distinguish between an English republicanism which was agrarian and aristocratic and a radical, urban Dutch alternative which influenced the French revolution.⁴⁹ Given the later stature of Harrington, and the revival of English aristocracy which he failed to predict, it is easy to forget that most seventeenth century English radicalism was also urban (preoccupied by the freedoms and rights of Londoners) and anti-aristocratic as well as anti-monarchical.

No less important was Nedham's insistence upon the right to change. "What if England will change yet seven times more? What is that to Scotland? It being a Right inherent in every Nation, to alter their particular Governments, as often as they judge it necessary for the publick weal and safety."⁵⁰ This was one theme developed by Algernon Sidney in response to Filmer's Patriarcha: "If men are not obliged to live in caves and hollow trees, to eat acorns, and to go naked, why should they be forever obliged to continue under the same form of government that their ancestors happened to set up in the time of their ignorance?"⁵¹ For the prominence of this argument within later eighteenth century republicanism, especially that of Paine, no reason was more important than an unresolvable tension between the asserted liberty to change the constitution and ascription of Britain's liberty to that constitution.

Before 1689 the issue could hardly have been presented in these terms. There was no agreement about the constitution, or at least about how to make it work. There was no

agreement about liberty, either where it was, or what it was, or how important it was. For what seventeenth century England lacked was not liberty but stability. Eighteenth century stability, which made it possible to disagree peacefully, at least internally, about liberty and many other things, was a by-product of military and fiscal security. In the words of Montesquieu again, 'Political liberty consists in security or, at least, in the opinion one has of one's security'.⁵²

It was only when its citizens could achieve 'the conservation of the realm, in peace and war' that a commonwealth existed. If the Stuarts had failed in war, the English republic flunked what Milton called the more demanding moral warfare of peace. Yet the republic's military-fiscal achievements were undeniable. That these had a powerful eighteenth century legacy owed something to their co-option, as far as possible, by Charles II. But it owed more to the exploitation of the last and worst Stuart military failure, that of 1688, by the United Provinces rather than France. What this helped to make defensible, and then militarily formidable, was a unique confessional and legal state. And what funded the European war concerned was not only money voted in unprecedented amounts by English parliaments, but Dutch inspired mechanisms of public credit drawing upon loans provided by the increasingly international protestant merchant community in the capital of a growing British empire.

Socially, in contrast to the United Provinces, eighteenth century Britain was an aristocracy. But in European terms this aristocracy was unusual in its management of a mercantile, and eventually industrial, economy. When William Temple had discussed

Dutch trade he had noted the frequency with which, in history, such states had been “Commonwealths”. However, he added, the prosperity of Bruges and Antwerp under the House of Burgundy showed that trade could also thrive “under...legal monarchies”. What was fatal was arbitrary power, which ‘extinguishes Industry, whilst men are in doubt of enjoying themselves what they get’.⁵³ When Hume returned to this issue he repeated that “If we trace commerce in its progress through TYRE, ATHENS, SYRACUSE, CARTHAGE, VENICE, FLORENCE, GENOA, ANTWERP, HOLLAND, ENGLAND etc we shall always find it to have fixed its seat in free governments. The three greatest trading towns now in the world, are LONDON, AMSTERDAM, and HAMBURGH; all free cities, and protestant cities; that is, enjoying a double liberty”. According to Hume, however, the reason “Commerce...is apt to decay in absolute governments, [is] not because it is there less secure, but because it is less honourable. A subordination of ranks is absolutely necessary to...monarchy. Birth, titles, and place, must be honoured above industry and riches”.⁵⁴ Thus if Britain was an aristocracy it was not one equipped with this political and social code of honour.

The United Provinces had emerged from a society not only highly urbanized, but within which no city had initial predominance. England, at the same time, had been one of the least urbanized areas of Europe, but now had one super-city. The result was not a state with a capital city, but a capital city with a state. The economic and political consequences had been worked out first during the period 1642-60 and then again from 1689. As countries the United Provinces and England were chalk and cheese. However in the alternative context sketched by Hume, of protestant and mercantile cities, London

was part of a cultural as well as economic region, and phenomenon. In relation to this the most important fact about British geography was not that the country was an island. It was the location of the Thames estuary opposite those of the Scheldt, the Maas and the Rhine, creating a single maritime zone of cultural, economic and military interaction.⁵⁵ When Jonathan Israel said of the radical Enlightenment that this “was not inspired by any single nation, be it France, England, or the Netherlands, but rather had its centre of gravity in north-western Europe and particularly in the inner circuit linking Amsterdam...Paris, London, Hamburg and Berlin” he was describing one cultural outgrowth of this situation.⁵⁶ Militarily, the ‘glorious revolution’ was another. Thus whether or not England was a monarchy, London was, as Hume put it, doubly free.

In 1700, in contrast to the United Provinces, England had a monarchy, an aristocracy, and a predominantly rural society and economy. Yet to an extent belied by these realities, and without European parallel in relation to them, its political commonwealth was commercial, legal and urban (as well as protestant). This was what you might expect to arise from the ashes of the most spectacular pre-French monarchical meltdown after a century of Dutch influence followed by a successful Dutch invasion. This was not the way admirers of eighteenth century British liberty put it to themselves. Rather they explained it not only by association with what was unique (the constitution) but with at least two other things that were not (geography and empire).

The first was the geography of an island nation achieved by the legislative union of England and Scotland. As Camden had explained, far from being unique, islands were in

fact a striking feature of European geography in general. But the idea of an island nation became an irresistible device for distinguishing Britain from France, and later ‘the continent’. Thus William Falconer (a Scot) quoted Montesquieu to the effect that “The inhabitants of islands...have a higher relish for liberty than those of a continent”. In fact Montesquieu’s remark that in the case of “island peoples...the sea separates them from great empires, and tyranny cannot reach them”⁵⁷ bore at least as plausibly on the relationship of islands to empire, as to liberty, but to this we will come. Falconer went on to argue that in the Mediterranean the Sardinians, Corsicans, Sicilians, and islanders of the Aegean had successfully resisted Athens, Carthage and Rome. The same was true of “the East Indian islands; which still remain mostly under the dominion of the original inhabitants, whilst the continent has always been, and still is, a prey to every invader”. There were many reasons for this: islands did not conquer and were not conquered (“conquerors are stopped by the sea”); the surrounding seas rendered islands temperate, and so the people “less timid indolent and servile”; on an island a standing army (“always necessary to the support of a despotism”) was impractical, and the people on the contrary “employed on fleets and a maritime force”, a circumstance favourable to liberty, as in Holland, Venice and Athens.⁵⁸ Moreover “What has been said of islands, may in great measure be applied to countries that approach islands in their situation”. Falconer went on, drawing from Aristotle (‘Aristotle advises to chuse a situation for a city, if possible adjacent to the sea’) to posit an inverse relationship between sea water and barbarism.

“Thriving and independent nations were accordingly scattered on the banks of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans; they surrounded the Red-sea, the Mediterranean, and the Baltic;

whilst (a few tribes excepted, who retire among mountains bordering on India and Persia, or who have found some rude establishment among the creeks and shores of the Caspian and Euxine seas) there is scarcely a people in the vast continent of Asia that deserves the name of nation.”⁵⁹

This last passage Falconer lifted without acknowledgement from Adam Ferguson’s An Essay on the History of Civil Society, first published in 1767. Its context lay in the revival of an ancient maritime orientalism by means of which Athens had once distinguished itself from Sparta (and claimed credit for defeating Persia).⁶⁰ The purpose now was to appropriate for Western Europe what Athens had seen in itself: cultural superiority based on a relationship to the ocean. Quoting Xenophon to the effect that had Athens really been an island, instead of simply allowing Pericles to persuade it to think of itself as one, it might have kept its liberty and power indefinitely, he added: “One would imagine, says Mr. Montesquieu, that Xenophon was speaking of England”.⁶¹

There was, however, a problem with the suggestion that sea separated islands from great empires. It was sea which had enabled the establishment of early modern European empires, of which eighteenth century Britain’s was among the largest. What made the crisis in America so painful was not only that it resulted in secession, as seven Dutch provinces had two centuries earlier seceded from the Spanish empire. It was that the Thirteen Colonies erected the flag of their independence upon the British moral high ground of liberty itself.

Thus for another Scots proponent of maritime orientalism, James Dunbar, empire and civilization (“refinement and the liberal arts”) were “repugnant” to one another.⁶² To be imperial was to be continental; and to be continental was to be uncivilized and unfree. In the ancient Near East, the Arabic and Ottoman Middle East, and Tartary, the open spaces of Asia had set the scene for despotism.

“The voice of liberty will be heard no more...The monarch of a great empire sits secure upon the throne, and sets at defiance the murmuring of the people...Such consequences then may be traced to a geographical source...The torrent which covered the plains rolls on with increasing violence, and the best fenced territories are no longer able to resist its progress. Nations...whose frontiers seem little exposed to external annoyance, may have these advantages more than balanced by a dangerous vicinity to a growing empire”.⁶³

For their cultural achievements civilized nations could thank their limited territorial scope. “Happy, in this respect, were the governments of antient Greece. Happy, on a larger scale, the governments of modern Europe”.⁶⁴ Thus Dunbar agreed with Ferguson and Gibbon that “The division of Europe into a number of independent states...is productive of the most beneficial consequences to the liberty of mankind”.⁶⁵ According to Dunbar, the question to be asked was not what had destroyed Rome’s empire? It was what had that empire destroyed? The answer was Rome’s liberty, its political culture, and eventually its power.

On this point, Iain Hampsher-Monk reminds us, Dunbar lined up with Richard Price.⁶⁶ Within this context Europe's discovery of America posed a grave danger. "The discovery of America has opened an immense field to the ambition of the states of Europe. Instead of augmenting their territorial possessions at home, they began, from that aera, to form distant establishments by conquest or colonization, and to erect, in another hemisphere, a new species of empire".⁶⁷ These empires, which were despotisms, undermined liberty and civility. Colonies were "regarded in the light of subordinate provinces, as appendages to government" when in fact the "relation of a colony to the antient country, rightly understood, is a relation of perfect equality...The one country is no more the mother, than it is the daughter. They are both the children of the same political parent, and that parent is the government to which they owe equal allegiance".⁶⁸

The government of this empire, as Brian Cummings has noted, was a mother, not a father. In colonies denied the appropriate filial status 'Jealousies ripen into disaffection. Political independency figures in the imagination, and is aspired after as an elevation of rank.' At that point the harassed single parent encountered three serious problems. Across the Atlantic 'distance from the seat of government affords singular advantages to provinces that meditate revolt.' Since the American continent had now become a theatre of European rivalry, attempts to mend relations were undermined by external enemies. Finally, divided into so many independent colonies, the outlook for American liberty was as good as had once been the case in Europe. "The geographical divisions of the American continent are certainly auspicious to civil liberty; and seem to oppose the establishment of such extended governments as have proved, in the antient hemisphere, a

source of the most destructive and debasing servitude”.⁶⁹ In any case, “to recal American allegiance by the power of our arms, if not an impracticable, is certainly a most hazardous attempt”.⁷⁰

The liberty of the eighteenth century British state, and constitution, was not that demanded between 1646 and 1649. The exceptions proving this rule were those most compatible with Dutch practice, including limited liberty of conscience, and an end to licensing of the press. The liberty in question was that achieved by the English republic, accompanied by military great power. To say that this was a government of laws and not of men is to remind ourselves of the crushing weight of those laws. For “though they retain’d the Name of a Free People, yet they soon lost the ease of the Liberties they contended for, by the absoluteness of their Magistrates...and...the extream pressure of their Taxes, which so long a War with so mighty an Enemy made necessary”.

This was not freedom from the state but through it. Whatever its military-fiscal context, between 1649 and 1653 this had entailed a moral and religious vision addressing the consequences of the fall. It placed a greatly augmented power of the state in the hands of politicians and soldiers with Jerusalem before their eyes. The oppression to be countered was that of sin. This memory haunted the United Provinces, which was on the receiving end between 1652 and 1654. And it haunted Britain because the English, Irish and Scots had been first, second and third for the chop.

Thus Burke associated the principles of the French revolution with “a predecessor of Dr. Price, the Rev. Hugh Peters, [who] made the vault of the king’s own chapel...ring with the honour and privilege of the saints, who, with the `high praises of God in their mouths, and a two-edged sword in their hands, were to execute judgement on the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron” .⁷¹

Given the ideological links between these revolutions he had a point. According to John Milton this republican experiment had failed. For “Liberty hath a sharp and double edge, fit only to be handled by virtuous men...[S]om secretly aspiring to rule, others adoring the name of liberty, yet so soon as they felt by proof the weight of what it was to govern well themselves, and what was wanting within them...the wisdom, the virtue, the labour...they soon shrunk more wretchedly under the burden of their own libertie, than before under a foren yoke”.⁷² By comparison with the breadth of the Atlantic, or the distance of a century and a half, London and Paris were close. Britain had the name of liberty, and it had felt by proof the weight. This time the lid stayed on and there – without an empire – it remains.

[7,522 words incl notes]

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Iain Hampsher-Monk (University of Exeter) The English concept of citizenship c 1600 – c1850

In March of this year the British Government, in one of their periodic worries about the state of British political culture suggested that some kind of formal citizenship ceremony should be instituted to mark the political coming of age of individuals. Amongst the elements of such a ceremony, it was suggested, would be an oath of loyalty to the Queen.

Whilst the (very) residual republican in me immediately irreverently suggested that an oath of fealty might be more appropriate in the circumstances, with my historical hat on I was reminding myself that 'it was ever thus.' This was of course entirely in keeping with English political culture, and should not be at all surprising. For whilst a self-consciously republican discourse distinguishes 'citizens' from 'subjects' it is not at all clear that such a distinction has been continuously or widely observed in English political discourse during the period. Part of my story will be to track when, and under what circumstances such a distinction became salient.

Being as I am, in the company of conceptual, rather than merely lexical, historians – I am very much aware tracking usage is not the same as delineating the history of a concept. I confess to still being uncertain as to how one might perform the latter, although I am clear that being aware of usage is part of the evidence for it. Part of my problem as I conceive it is that of identifying, as an object of historical investigation, something which is not necessarily present in the minds or language of historical actors without anachronistically imposing on them something of which they were unaware, and had no means of expressing. This is an old chestnut, and many of you will have heard me on it before, so I mention it only in parenthesis, before – as my brief requires me – venturing into a territory about which I am uncertain, and have my doubts, but which is as vast and uneven as is my knowledge of it.

If we were to try to identify a British *concept* of citizenship we could do worse than to look at T.H. Marshall's analysis. Marshall argued that citizenship possessed three dimensions which corresponded to three stages of aspirations to rights. A claim first of all to civil rights – rights at law, security of property and of person and of redress, then a claim to political rights – rights to vote and to hold office, and finally a claim to welfare rights – rights to education, health and social security. Modern citizenship comprised all three dimensions and the claim that they extended to the whole adult population. Accordingly, any (as it would be decidedly whiggish) history of the construction of this concept would require us to seek out the historical episodes and argumentative topoi where civil political and welfare rights were contested and asserted of all members.

There is, of course no reason to assume, and I shall argue that it is not in fact the case, that the historical process by which Marshall's modern concept of citizenship gathered its three dimensions should have taken place under the lexical label 'citizen.' We would thus immediately have two histories to tell – a history of the meanings of the term 'citizen' and its cognates, and a history of the formation of the concept 'citizenship' famously summarised by Marshall. These stories, although separate, cross one another's paths at some points. But it is also the case – or so I shall argue – that neither of these individual histories is a continuous or cumulative development. I have complained already about the amount of ground I have to cover, so I won't do so again, but it excuses the way I seek to proceed. I shall attempt to take three snapshots one around 1600, one during the English Civil War and another in the

1790s. But since my camera is a modern digital one it has a small video mode and I shall use it to try and fill in some of the gaps.

1. Around 1600

The earliest recorded uses of the term 'citizen' in England (1314 - citizenship is a much later coinage), in a way familiar in many European vernaculars, is to refer to the inhabitants of a town, and more especially those possessing the rights or privileges of the corporation of that town. The Town was characterised by its possession of a charter granting liberties or freedoms from feudal obligations and in particular the right to hold a market. Those rights were guarded and or exercised by the aldermen or burgesses appointed or elected under the charter. But the wider inhabitants of the town also enjoyed rights and privileges, which might include the right to stand for election or the right merely to elect those who did. Even those too lowly to qualify, nevertheless enjoyed some freedoms, for living in a town precluded being subject to the web of feudal obligations necessarily incurred by living off the land. The existence of wide, and narrow denotations of 'citizen' – to refer to officeholder in, as well as inhabitant of, a town thus had – in comparative terms – some reflection in real life. To enjoy either status was to be freer from Feudal obligations than those in the countryside or in non-chartered settlements, and there was some sense in lumping the two categories together. Indeed one longstanding conceptual opposition in English was between a 'citizen' and a 'countryman.' One curious feature (for moderns) of this tying of citizenship to cities, was that those who were most likely to be fully active agents of the national community (those who were lords, knights of the shire or County representatives - conceptually citizens in the modern sense) were far more likely to be NOT citizens in a lexical sense. For the Lords, Knights of the shire, and county representatives far outnumbered the representatives of the chartered urban seats towns in the parliament.

Fortunately we have a full formal treatise of the subject composed close to the start of our period. Sir Thomas Smith's *De Republica Anglorum*, subtitled 'A discourse on the commonwealth of England', was written in English in 1565, revised by the author up to his death in 1577 and published posthumously in 1583. In it we find these distinctions inscribed in the text. It starts by recognising Aristotle's tripartite classification of 'three kinds of government', and of each of their divisions into two just and unjust, and warns the reader that in practise these are often to be found mixed. However, despite this classical opening in which Smith shows off his Greek, the bulk of the book is concerned with the hugely gothic issue of status, and his conception of the polity and of politics is highly juridical, since the whole of the last two books, two and three are concerned with judicial structures and processes of one kind or another.

There are several points in the book where either the concept or the word 'citizen' occur. At 1.16 Smith points out that Aristotelian categories – households and families, villages, towns and freemen 'considered only as subjects and citizens of the commonwealth' are opposed to 'bondmen who can beare no rule nor jurisdiction over freemen, [and are] but instruments and the goods and possessions of others.' But he goes on to observe that these, as I take it, Aristotelian categories are 'not enough' but that the distinction amongst participants in the commonwealth is between 'them that beare office, and them that beare none: the first (he says) are called magistrates, the

second private men', but then, reviewing the practice of the Romans Greeks and French immediately goes on to say that 'we in England divide our men commonly into foure sortes, Gentlemen, citizens, yeomen artificers, and labourers.' (p.30 - 1). Having dealt with the Nobility, knights and squires who 'have the greatest charge and doings in the commonwealth Smith turns his attention to the Yeoman – a term he thinks derives from the Dutch Yonker (– a view not endorsed by the OED). Yeomen are 'freemen borne English, [who] may dispend of his owne free lande in yerely revenue to the sum of 40 shillings'[the qualification for the franchise in the counties] they 'confess themselves to be no gentlemen ... and yet they have a certaine preheminance and more estimation than labourers and artificers, and commonly live welthilie' Smith describes the upward mobility of these people who by working and trading hard, 'come to such wealth that they are able to buy the lands of unthrifite gentlemen' (p 43) and so send their sons to university, and leave them enough money as to make them gentlemen. Yeoman was next to gentleman and they distinguished themselves from the 'husbandmen labourers' and the lowest and rascall sort of people. Slipping briefly into classical mode Smith recalls that these were the people that Cato called the *Aratores*, and the *optimos cives* in *Republica*, and that Aristotle too had good things to say about this quiescent middling sort who 'tende their own businesse, come not to meddle in publike matters and judgments but when they are called, and glad when they are delivered thereof. However they are the backbone of the army – particularly in England where as archers, and footsoldiers generally, were the most successful part of the army.

At this point Smith seems to have reached the limit of the politically active inhabitants. For the next chapter is headed 'Of the fourth sort of men which doe not rule' who are immediately identified with the roman '*proletarii*'. They are those who have no free land, artificers – taylor, shoemakers, carpenters, brickmakers and layers. Such people 'have no voice or authoritie in our common wealth, and no account is made of them but onelie to be ruled not to rule other. This exclusion from ruling and being ruled by turn, the classic Aristotelian characterisation of citizenship is nevertheless curiously almost immediately contravened.

For 'yet' he goes on 'they be not altogether neglected. For in cities and corporate towns, for default of yeomen, enquests and juries are impaneled of such manner of people. And in villages they commonly made Churchwardens, alecunners, and ... constables which office toucheth more the the common wealth and at the first was not implied upon such lowe and base persons.' (46)

Despite the distinct tone of regret with which Smith reports the need for recourse to these 'mean and rascally' persons to fill lowly offices, he is quite clear that they do hold office, a fact that militates against his earlier clear division between those who do and do not beare office. Might then, all of these people be said to share in some sense in citizenship?

There is one group who may clearly not, and these are treated in the chapter 'Of Bondage and Bondmen' (bk 3 ch 8) Once again a classical analysis *segues* into a feudal background to modernity. Justinian's code recognises the classical slave, taken in war, bought or born into bondage, but also the emerging serf of the late classical latifundia, 'bond not to the person but to the manor or place'. Whilst English law recognises both categories, the first kind were unknown in the realm, and of the second so few 'that it is not worth the speaking' (p. 130) The influence of Christianity led men 'to have conscience to hold in captivity and such extreme bondage him whom they must acknowledge to be his brother' and so they were all manumitted.

As if anticipating an objection Smith recognises that villaine or servile tenure might be said to continue this status, but points out that in fact *all* land in England not technically held freely (alodially), since all land is held of the king. So to admit that land held in this way renders the tenant unfree would be to render servile even the lords and knights of the shire. (134)

Smith's account maps interestingly I think onto the arguments recently used by historians which we are about to encounter. And interestingly his admitted facts – which agree with theirs, continually tend to disconcert the categorical distinctions he initially makes between rulers and ruled. But it is clear that his terminology shifts once he moves, as he typically does between introducing a topic in classical categories, and its contemporary manifestation. Nowhere does he assert the *language* of citizenship or identify citizens, except as officeholders in cities. (ch 22) citizens and burgesses [are] such as not onely be free and received as officers within cities, but also be of some substance to beare the charges.' They serve only 'in their cities' and ' in the shires (countryside) they be of none accompt, save only in the common assembly of the realm to make lawes which is called the Parliament.' (42)

However not only did the lexical marker 'citizen' fail to fit onto the broader modern concept of citizen, there was competition as to how to designate the same character. For a far more English way of expressing the fact that someone was an officeholder or enfranchised in a corporate body of some kind was to say that someone was a 'freeman' of London, or Exeter, or Lincoln, and freeman also had this double meaning of being entitled to hold office, but also being free of the feudal nexus. There were thus, at this point two locutions in which to express what was one (but only one) undoubted source of the concept of citizenship – the possession of privileges resulting from inhabiting a city. And at this point one of these locutions was lexically identical with the term which denotes the concept we are interested in, although it was the other – freeman- which was far more commonly deployed.

As we enter the period under review something else has been found to have happened. Twenty years ago Patrick Collinson Regius Professor of History at Cambridge, published the seminal article : 'The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I' a piece which has generated a significant scholarly literature of its own. It's argument, and indeed its imagery recall Montesquieu's famous claim that in England a 'republic was disguised as a monarchy' (EdL x). In England, claimed Collinson 'citizens were concealed within subjects.' In that work Collinson challenged not only his predecessor's invention of 'Tudor Despotism', but, more germane to our concerns, challenged John Pocock's assertion that the idea of 'civic society as a ... republic of equal citizens' was 'something not to be found in England and [as yet] scarce imagined there, prior to 1642'. (MREME, p.2) Pocock, of course, was one of the champions of the recovery of a republican narrative in English – and British – history, but Collinson's differences with him pushed a 'republican' vision back to the second half of the previous century, and intimated a solution did something to solve the puzzle as to why and how full blown republican aspirations could have emerged with such celerity in the 1640s. Collinson's initial case rested on the presentation and interpretations of two social phenomena. The 'republic' of Elizabeth's privy councillors and members of parliament, beneficiaries of enough of a civic renaissance education to imagine themselves as virtuous citizens contributing not to a realm or a kingdom but to a commonwealth – the neologism although dating from the later fifteenth, becoming famously widespread in the sixteenth-century.(OED) Not only did they imagine themselves as citizens, they acted like them – the most famous

examples being the Bond of Association by which they pledged themselves to exclude by the authority 'residing in the body politic' from the throne anyone – including an otherwise legitimate successor – who might be the beneficiary of a violent act against the queen.(1584). And even more strikingly the Bill introduced by Lord Burghley providing for interim rule by the Privy Council and their choice of a successor, in the event of Elizabeth's sudden death. A move that has provoked evidently irresistible proleptic parallels with the events of 1688.(John Guy 'Monarchy and Counsel ..' in Collinson ed. *C16th*) So that, at the state level there were major actors who conceived of themselves in civic mode, as citizens – highly aristocratic citizens it is true but as citizens nevertheless. (DID they use the word?).

Collinson's other sketch – was of the other end of the social spectrum. A view of the village of Swallowfield, Wiltshire, a village – like many – without Gentry, where the local administration devolved on the common people. Hence 'countless English subjects, even those with modest incomes and no knowledge of Cicero, spoke in public meetings, voted on local issues, [raised and disposed of local taxes], and believed they had the standing and prerogatives to do so.(Shagan 'Two Republics, p.19). Collinson thus points to practice, at two levels in Tudor society where identifiably 'civic' activity is going on which, at least in one case is self-consciously identified as such.

At this point we should introduce a second seminal article to take up this theme. Mark Goldie's 'The Unacknowledged Republic: Officeholding in Early Modern England' (in Harris, *Politics of the Excluded*) Develops the theme of Collinson's Swallowfield. Whilst state officeholding was minimal (Court employed mere 1200 people) and confined to a narrow elite, Throughout E-M England, very lowly individuals held offices of public responsibility. These offices were sometimes formal and defined – taking one's turn as churchwarden – and sometimes occasional and serendipitous such as Sir Thomas Smith's claim that, in the absence of a paid police force 'every Englishman is a sergeant to take a thief'. (*De Rep Angl* cup p.107) – a claim which was enshrined in the statute of Westminster (1285) laying a duty on every householder to take their turn in patrolling the neighbourhood. But even limiting consideration to formal officeholding Goldie stressed how widespread officeholding was providing examples of brickmakers, tanners, bakers and soap-boilers (a proverbially lowly occupation). At the lowest, parish, level, there must have been 50,000 officeholders at any one time, which, by his calculation means that half the adult male population would have had to have held office in any given decade, a figure that is confirmed by detailed local studies such as that of Ian Archer's for Elizabethan London who found that one in three householders in Cornhill ward held office in any one year.(p. 163, Archer 1991). Moreover many offices were filled by lot or rotation rather than election – a much more democratic and 'governo largo' device. (166, 174) Although many of these offices were executive or judicial in character, the range of discretion available at the local level was considerable, reflecting the community's rather than the state's values. Grand Juries took it upon themselves to pronounce and even petition on aspects of local and sometimes national policy – and Daniel Defoe invoking Locke, 'declared in his *Original Power of the Collective Body of the People of England* that if the House of Commons should turn tyrant then grand juries should act in the people's defence' (168, Defoe) . Officeholding could not only be seriously burdensome – there are widespread records of complaints and attempted excuses – but could clearly stimulate wider political reflection: Nehemiah Wellington a London puritan carpenter, and freeman of the city,

juryman, churchwarden apparently left 2,600 pages of records and reflections on the relationship between his religious and political duties and loyalties.(167)

Not everyone of course saw this widespread participation in civic office as a good thing. That republican killjoy Thomas Hobbes argued that 'the great number of Corporations; which are as it were many lesser Common-wealths in the bowels of a greater, like worms in the entrails of a natural man'. *Leviathan* (tuck, p. 270)

Mark also invites us to consider four models of civic participation which enable us to considerably widen the catchment of what might be considered civic, or an element of citizenship. *Judicially* individuals were involved in the criminal processes from arrest to service on jury, but also in the more discursive process of dispute arbitration. The discretionary and local character of law enforcement, he reminds us, makes this judicial dimension more political than it might seem to moderns. There were (as we should remind ourselves there were in ancient republics – and as Rousseau would urge there should be in modern) *dramaturgical and theatrical* modes of civic participation – from the official – as in public hangings and burnings, royal and mayoral processions, through to the quasi condoned or endured parades, pageants, lords of misrule, chari-varis. Crowds, as EP Thompson famously argued, are often not just mobs, but enactments of a shared moral economy, a projection onto the political level of ethical values. Again at the *associational level* individuals could be involved in all manner of freestanding activities. Charitable foundations, schools, hospitals, churches, and as the period wears on, clubs and associations of all kinds, commemorative, promotional and devotional. These presaged the explicitly political associations of the eighteenth-century such as the Society for Constitutional Information and the Revolution Society, but the skill set of constructing and forming associations is – as the recent experience of confronting societies from which they had been banished reminds us – a vital seed-bed of any civic culture, or public sphere. Finally the most obvious dimension is that of *psephology* – voting. IT is the narrowness of voting rights that had always seemed to render implausible the idea or at least the range of early modern civism. Goldie's dimensions of civic participation is meant in part to overcome this. But even the psephological dimension is striking. Holmes (for 1714) and Hirst (for 1640) come up with figures of between 5 and 10 % of the adult male population as possessing the parliamentary franchise. It's true that by no means all seats were contested, and that selection and acclamation more accurately describe the electoral process than competitive voting. But then it may be that imposing a view of modern national competitive model on early modern voting is to misunderstand what is going on and 'concedes too much to the psephologist's conception of the political'. After all modern citizens' civic activity is, as he reminds us 'confined to the striking minimal act of periodically writing X on a ballot paper.' Pitched against this fact, rather than some idealised contemporary notions of citizenship early modern citizenship begins to look a plausible notion. Goldie concludes this section 'Early modern People participated in the political process not only by occasionally choosing who would represent them in parliament but by actually governing. They held office. By virtue of that their agency was not only 'out of doors' in the informal spaces of the streets, taverns and [eventually] coffee houses, but was also informal and institutional in the conduct of judicial, executive and legislative function in parish, town and county.' (UR pp.158-9)

These two seminal works have been taken up by many others – I might mention in particular Markku Peltonen's *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in England, 1570 – 1640* and David Norbrook's *Writing the English Republic Poetry*

Rhetoric and Politics 1627 – 1660 which seek to deepen the texture of civic language and sensibilities in the period, and who appeal, as Collinson was careful not to, to continuities between the civic self-image of the Elite of the 1580s and the republicanism emerging in the later 1640s. These fill out the claim of a submerged, practice-based, literary and unacknowledged republic in late sixteenth and seventeenth century English culture. The emergence of full blown republican aspirations during the English Civil war and Interregnum has always been something of an historical puzzle. Where did it come from? Although its impact was limited, it is nevertheless considerably more than might be expected from an entirely new ideology. The seeds of this relative success are now seen to lie in the republican literary culture of the late Elizabethan period and earlier seventeenth century. Here the renaissance of classical letters and the study of the art of rhetoric repeated its oft-performed historical role of importing a civic content under the guise of a formal and stylistic models. Renaissance – educated Elizabethan gentlemen it appears, to a man loyal – and very often country dwelling - subjects of the virgin queen, nevertheless happily styled themselves citizens of the commonwealth (another term with multiple, and not exclusively civic connotations).

Collinson's examples of the two different kinds of political association court and village level has provoked the suggestion that there are really 'two republics rather than one' as Shagan (in McDairmid) puts it. But Collinson's two exemplars appealed not only to two different social groups but – more worryingly for our concerns about the history of a concept - to two different kinds of evidence. The monarchichal or unacknowledged republic thesis is, we might say, two theses rather than one. The state-level thesis a description of the construction of an elite's civic self-image, the lowly officeholding theory is an ascription of civic, or republican status to traditional or long-extant activities whose civic qualities were only contingently apparent to those conducting them. The evidence for the Elite's civic identity rested largely but not entirely on the books and education to which they were exposed, the language they used and the self-descriptions they espoused, Norbrook's study (prior to 1640s) elaborates what he calls a republican literary culture exemplified in poetic and dramatic forms rather than as an active political ideology. It is a republican or civic aesthetic, not a programme. Indeed as Blair Worden reminds us 'constitutional collapse was the dread, not the hope of the class of lay intellectuals to which these writers belonged.' (EE in R, I, 310) SO whatever the concept of citizenship was in these writings, and however extensive the group to whom it could apply, it certainly wasn't a concept which exercised any dynamic or imperative in bringing about the state of affairs which it designated. What we seek in fact is evidence that imaginative literature fostered a desire for republican rule.' (EE in R. 309)

The other claim – about the widespread and civic character of officeholding – is one that rests on the evidence of practice, uncovered by social historians. The interesting conceptual question is how, if at all, these two conceptions of republic and the two conceptions of citizenship embedded in them fit together. By this I mean not only how does the elite and commonplace fit together, but how does the practice-story and the ideological story fit together, or how do we want to fit it together in order to construct a conceptual history?

The existence of citizenship as a feature of agents' civic self-image reflected out of renaissance inspired treatises, is a different way of conceiving of the existence of a concept of citizenship than the way in which widespread officeholding (without any accompanying ideological underpinning) embodies a concept of citizenship. Markku

Peltonen has recently tried to draw these two together by demonstrating the pervasive use of rhetorical textbooks with self-conscious civic content in Grammar Schools. (rhetoric & citizenship in McDairmid) But the argument from officeholding reaches social strata well below those who were taught in such institutions, so it does not altogether those who had available to them the category 'citizen' and those who were engaged in activities which we, with hindsight, might regard as civic.

Conal Condren questions whether we can say that these practices constitute citizenship when those engaged in them do not use the word. Peltonen has acknowledged the problem (EE in R, p.94-5) and although he cites some counter-examples, concedes that these really belong to the aristocratic or gentlemanly cast, the intended audience is the nobility and gentry rather than the yeoman, burgesses and lower office - holding groups.

There is moreover a completely different context in which to situate most of the *practice based* evidence for the monarchical republic, which refer, as Conal Condren and Blair Worden both point out, are in fact to longstanding medieval institutions and practices. Goldie concludes that in our excitement at discovering in EME towns classical and renaissance models and ideals being repeated and circulated and emulated, we may have ignored or underplayed another location – the village parish – with its own and independent ideological source the Anglo-saxon constitution, and he points to the persistent attempts over two or more centuries to celebrate and recover what he calls the pristine anglo saxon origins of juries, moots, hundredal courts, reeves and tithingmen. Scholars, he says 'have yet to recover what might be called the Saxon republicanism of early modern England.

So whilst we might want to say that just as speech can constitute action, actions can constitute a form of speech. That activity and practices have propositional content. That the practice of officeholding itself constituted what might be called a concept of citizenship. We might want to say all of that and yet it is not at all clear that these activities are securely linked in the minds of its actors to the explicit vocabulary of citizenship derived from renaissance ideas of republicanism. nor can we confidently tell a story about how these relate to the anti-monarchical experiments of the 1650s

The final point to stress about what I now want to call the unacknowledged and monarchical republic, then, is its *unacknowledgedness*. In terms of my project of mapping the development of the concept against what the word 'citizen' and cognates denotes, the evidence that the term 'citizen' is being used in a distinctive way to map onto these elements of citizenship is spotty and unclear. It is present in many of those literary sources – steeped as they were in those classical and renaissance texts which produced the second great wave of lexical borrowings from Latin and Greek. In these cases we might – with our French post-structuralist friends in mind – talk about the texts constructing the authors sense of themselves. Yet in the case of practice –based citizenship, the evidence – beyond the towns where officeholders were of course citizens in a clear and etymological sense – that officeholding led people to label themselves citizens is – as Goldie himself admits - slim indeed ('articulation of abstract principles ... is inevitably fugitive.' p. 176). Moreover the examples he and others cite is of individuals identifying their towns and cities, corporations, counties and parishes as 'little commonwealths' or 'small republics' *without* what seems to us the corollary claim that those participating in it were citizens. This is true even where the context seems to cry out for the word. It is the republic – and citizenship – 'that dare not speak its name.'

I think the best we can say in terms of what I think is an inevitably proleptic conceptual history is that a number of elements of the concept were in place here, the practice of self-reliant community decision-making, the idea of the responsible 'citizen', the idea of specific rights and privileges pertaining to the occupancy of a particular status. In terms of the conceptual relations and space occupied by the concept we might note that one important concept to which classical citizenship was often opposed – namely Monarchy – was not so opposed in English discourse. Secondly the space that practice designated was more lowly than the idealised literary model of citizenship. For, for the vast majority of those holding office – even within towns, the relevant unit was not the city, but the parish. Parish Humanism – a term I jokingly deployed several decades ago – doesn't have quite the same ring to it as civic humanism, but it does, it seems to me, catch important elements of the phenomena that Collinson, Goldie and those they inspired, have drawn our attention and which also might be said to delineate what I take to be its syntactic space. For, it was – unsurprisingly – at this very local level that officeholding was most widespread. Thirdly, and again contrary to a perhaps abstract conceptual (or backwardly projected) model of citizenship which would construe it in secular terms, that local level was an ecclesiastical and only secondarily a civil unit of administration. And finally inasmuch as the administration of the poor law was a major responsibility of parishes the social welfare aspect of Marshall's element of citizenship was already adumbrated here. Poor law is often presented as harsh and punitive, but it was a welfare measure and both access to it and administration of it were linked to local status. Many of these aspects of local organisation were to disappear or be seriously weakened by the advent of commercial, demographic and political modernity.

II The English Civil War

During the English Civil war all of these potentialities of the concept and the term were exploited to the full by a flowering of fully fledged classical republican thought, paradigmatically with James Harrington whose republican experience included not only a careful reading of Machiavelli but military service in the Netherlands and travel in Italy. But for all the excitement that Harrington and lesser lights generated amongst historians of political ideas, the failure of republicanism as a practical project suggests that the concept of citizenship on classical lines, as a category applicable at the level of the national state, struck no chord. Moreover, despite the regicide, it's not clear that a story about the gradual coincidence of those two explains the emergence of interregnum republicanism. Blair Worden for example thinks not. On his story there is no pervasive concept of Republicanism or attendant active citizenship which is performing any orchestrating role in the 1640s, or (except very marginally) in the 1650s. Those who executed the king in 1649 did not 'use the language of civic republicanism' nor 'did they 'execute the king in order to change the constitution' (RSEH, I, 315). As late as 1643 Henry Marten MP had been sent to the tower for suggesting kings were unnecessary) indeed they did not confront the constitutional question until after the act, and when they did, they did not introduce a republican constitution so much as 'merely eliminated those aspects of the old constitution against which they had turned or which had got in their way' (317) a feature of the regime distinctly if embarrassingly signalled for a while by the existence of the Rump (parliament). language' Moreover *real* republicans, such as

Harrington, inveighed against the 'kingless rule' by a parliamentary oligarchy, ignorant, or wilfully heedless of the principles under which alone liberty and freedom might flourish.

Republican or not, the regimes of the interregnum placed little emphasis on active citizenship as an essential feature of constitutional arrangements. Given their increasing unpopularity, this is hardly surprising. But there is a conceptual as well as a practical reason for this. Citizenship, I have been at pains to point out, is a quality of those who live in cities – or even more localised communities. It is at the Civic scale that communities provide the opportunities for widespread political participation that civic republicanism requires. There is a real question – of which early moderns were well aware – as to how that kind of republicanism can be satisfactorily established at national level. I have argued elsewhere (*Founding and Federation*, forthcoming, ed Bodeker, Comparato and Larrere), that one of the reasons for the failure of English Republicanism, was the failure to effectively link the local (where activism must be practised) and the national where the republic is. Indeed, the *only* successful early modern republics, prior to the French Revolution – the Swiss, the Dutch and the Americans - were federal. Federalism and republicanism were intimately connected because it was only the federal form that could give citizenship a widespread forum in a state larger than a city, thus enabling the practice that the ideology proclaimed. Projecting a republican project onto a unified nation-state with no such practices strained the credibility of the ideology – and the concept of citizenship was where that strain most showed.

So much for the availability, usage or effectiveness of citizenship. But what about the shifts in content to the meaning available or used, even by those who were unsuccessful in achieving their aims.

After a previous meeting in Florence I travelled home with Blair Worden. We talked, as one does about seventeenth century political thought, and I mentioned at one point that I thought the Levellers prime exemplars of Republican thought and action. Blair was, I think, fairly shocked. Levellers were certainly not civic republicans. There is no trace in any of their writings that I have read, of awareness of the civic republican tradition, of the political uses to which renaissance or even classical sources could be put, nor certainly in their blunt or – in the case of Whispering William Walwyn – sometimes Bunyanesque prose, of the rhetorical skills so praised by the exponents of the republican politics. Yet however much they wavered on the franchise – the issue on which most attention has been focussed - The Levellers unswervingly championed an impeccable republican agenda over the fifteen years of their existence. In one of their last tracts published in the dying days of the Commonwealth they summarised their position in four strikingly phrased fundamental principles:

1 'The government of *England* ought to be by Laws and not by Men' ('The principles and maxims ... of those that are commonly called Levellers. 1659, in Levellers, 5, p. 426ff. And to this end judges should not hold office at the pleasure of political rulers.

2 They asserted the constituent and continuing legislative authority of the people, and the priority of the common good as an aim of legislation. 'all lawes, levies of Monies, War and Peace, ought to be made by the peoples deputies in parliament, to be chosen by them successively at certain periods of time, and that no Council table Orders or Ordinances or Court Proclamations...' and they denied the legality of any law, regulation or authority not issuing from the legislative assembly of the people.

3 Equality before the law: 'That every man of what Quallity or Condition Place or Office whatsoever ought to be equally subject to the Laws' nation, they reject

4 Citizen militia, and no mercenaries: 'the People ought to be formed into such a constant Military posture, by and under the commands of their Parliament that by their own strength they may be able to compel every man to be subject to the Laws and to defend their Country from forrainers and enforce right and Justice,' since 'no government can stand without the force of arms.' (428)

Moreover, the Levellers propounded an activist view of citizenship, getting 'the people' involved in petitioning, subscribing and agreeing, was a major and at times the only strategy available to them. The construction of a free, constitutional and self-governing republic (with or without a chief magistrate) was not, they insisted, 'our worke only, but every man's conscience must look to itselfe, and not dream out more seasons and opportunities.' (Agreement of the Free People of England Wolfe, p. 104)

But this one active popular movement that sought to promote a republican practice and to extend citizenship at the national level did not do so in terms of the language of classical – or any other – republicanism. Indeed it is extraordinary how they manage to conduct long reflections on the importance of self-governance in communities, the importance of active defence of rights, the unreliability of mercenaries and the importance of an indigenous soldiery, exemplified not only in England but in Rome, in Turkey, Netherlands – without once reaching for the vocabulary of citizenship. I don't find that there is evidence that they used the term 'citizens' except in the technical sense of members of, or electors of a city or town corporation – particularly London or Westminster where their power base was. As for example 'England's new chains discovered (1649) which was described as being presented by Lt John Lilburne and diverse other citizens of London and borough of Southwark.' A counter case at first sight seems to be. The 'Remonstrance of many thousand Citizens (1646) addressing as it does a national complaint to Parliament. But the full title is 'The remonstrance of many thousand citizens *and other freeborn people of England...*' Revealing that citizens were, for them a particular group amongst the freeborn, and not co-extensive with them. More commonly petitions and agreements are said to be from 'many thousands...' 'diverse well affected people'..., 'many thousands of well affected people' 'the freeborn people of England' and addressed to 'countrymen and fellow commoners' (gold treid in the fire Walwyn) Their agreements of the people were 'agreements of the free people of England' and The Levellers were, and saw themselves as, exponents of a continuous, if always threatened autochthonous tradition, ultimately Mark Goldie's Saxon republicanism. These principles, they claimed laid them open to no charges of novelty or inconsistency, 'the same fundamentals of Government having been claimed by our Ancestors as their right, for many hundred years. (429)

What the levellers sought were their freedoms. When they used the term citizen it was in the technical sense in which citizens were 'freemen' to urge the participation by Londoners in a movement to resist the actions of an unrepresentative corporation or parliament. It was a movement that their free status both entitled them and arguably, morally required them, to participate in. Wildman's late 'London's liberties' (1650) asserted the rights of the citizens of London to elect their officers, aldermen, lord mayor etc. Whenever he argues from positive law or precedent Wildman uses the term 'citizen' interchangeably with 'Free-man' – a legal status. When he argues as he does – although ultimately conceding not to press his case on

these grounds – in general terms he shifts to the term ‘people.’ Thus he expresses the aim of the petition to be ‘to have the ancient right of the Citizens of London restored to them. And again at one point: ‘I humbly propose no other end but to enforce the petition of the free men of this city.’ But he buttressed his claim to recover ancient right with a more general and abstract claim based on common and natural right which informs ‘the very first principles of just Government’. And here he drops the term citizen, referring instead to ‘the people’ – whose ‘just subjection under government, ought to proceed from consent.’ Officer[holders] are but trustees for the good of the people’. The original of all just power under God proceeds from the people.’ Before again switchin back to the specific case of London – the liberties of the citizens of which, appear more ancient than any charter of the city that’s visible to us.’ (*London’s liberties* (1650, repr Exeter, 1972)

But although Levellers often equated ‘citizen’ with freeman in the technical sense, they also used freeman (although not, as far as I can find, ‘citizen’) in an extended and rhetorically innovative sense, in a classic ideologically redescriptive move they also argued that *all* Englishmen were freemen – in the town-dwelling sense of being freed from feudal obligations. It was a freedom that pervaded the physical terrain of England – to the extent, Lilburn claimed (evidently with Harrison’s case in mind) that even a slave, should he set foot on English soil, would cease to be a slave. To not be a slave was admittedly not yet to be a citizen, but the Levellers also insisted that being free – all inhabitants had a right to the political privileges that undoubtedly protected those freedoms – foremost amongst which was the vote. As Rainborough, the soldiers’ representative at the extraordinarily preserved debates in Putney Church, famously put it when asked by the bullying Ireton why non-property owners should have a vote:

‘For really I think that the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as the greatest he, and therefore truly sir, I think its clear that every man that is to live under a government ought first by his own consent to put himself under that government; and I do think that the poorest man in England is not at all bound in a strict sense to that government that he has not had a voice to put himself under.’ (Sharp p.103).

This right is not merely, for the levellers, a right of self-protection. IT is informed by a sense of the common (collective) good. Where they give concessions on the extent of citizenship it can be seen that they are worried by the strength of the power relations that might force ‘some men to give their voices (votes) to their friends, landlords or the richest, weighing men’s merits by the pound or the acre.’ So Lilburne warns people to ‘have a care in your choices.’ Again Lilburne’s ghost 1659, warns the people to ‘be careful in their elections, to have an eye upon the publick and chuse such as have appeared most eminent and active in the Estbalishment of Love and Freedom. (LG, 1659 p. 9) that he should therefore have a voice in those laws under which he is to live.’

OF the more obvious republican writings of the period I have less to say, except to note, in relation to the parish humanism I identified earlier, that a consistent feature of English utopias or constitutional projects of this kind, from More’s Utopia through Harrington’s Oceana, to Hume’s Ideal commonwealth to Thomas Spence’s Crusonia in the 1790s, is the great emphasis placed on the parish as the fundamental unit of political membership and agency.

III Eighteenth Century

In the first part of the eighteenth-century the opportunities for urban officeholding increased dramatically. The explosion of charity boards, poor relief trusts, educational, mutual and friendly societies of one kind and another that we might now recognise as third sector agencies as well as canal, turnpike and highway, pavement and streetlighting, gaol and hosp trusts, which were to become the responsibilities of local and national government all emerged as voluntary associations and had to be managed by unpaid local committee members. Whilst not technically yet part of the state apparatus, they were undoubtedly civic, in the sense of relating to the management of the needs and activities of the civis or city. My colleague Jonathan Barry has written extensively about this phenomenon, coining the term 'bourgeois collectivism' as a way of challenging the notion of the archetypical bourgeois as individualist and self- rather than socially focussed. [Barry and Brooks, 1994] There is a sense in which this work can be seen as an extension of the Goldie thesis, that it is in the practice of office-holding that we should look for an understanding of the concept of citizenship. Philip Withington has made the case explicitly

England's towns and boroughs underwent two 'renaissances' over the course of the period: a 'civic renaissance' and the better-known 'urban renaissance'. The former was fashioned in the sixteenth century; however, its legacy continued to inform political thought and practice over 150 years later. Similarly, although the latter is generally associated with 'the long eighteenth century', its attributes can be traced to at least the Elizabethan era.

Yet the very diversity of these new opportunities surely gives pause for reconsideration. Citizenship is a status that overrides others, as, as Aristotle states, the political association overrides other associations. Citizenship is what all the members of a polity have in common with each other, indeed what gives them a common to have. Whilst the practice of officeholding in diverse forms of association looks like the kind of thing citizens do, and when done in pursuit of the city's increasingly divergent needs, might plausibly be called 'civic' their very diversity surely militates against the equality and uniformity presupposed by the bond of citizenship – as so often the separation of skills from the practice in which they were originally embedded proves problematic for the practice. The possession of 'citizenship skills' does not entail the possession of a shared civic identity.

Another aspect of this second urban renaissance is its tenuously political character. Jonathan Barry has written that its identity was *urbane* rather than civic. With corporations tending to become more oligarchic, and many towns modelling the 'urban' on the new West End of London and Bath, urban renewal (like the more recent arts-led renewal programmes of the late 20th C) was not linked to any specific political traditions, or citizen-ship roles. Although urban renaissance occurred *within* towns, it was largely dominated by landed elites, rentiers and mobile professionals whose uneasy relationship with true locals begins to be chronicled in the social novels of the time. Jonathan Barry writes:

'To participate, townspeople had to cast off their old civic particularism and dissociate themselves from the culture of their fellow townsfolk. Although a whole new world of association for leisure and cultural purposes developed, the associations involved were restricted to those who could afford to aspire to the values and life-styles of a refined elite.' (Barry p. 87)

In other words the opening up of the eighteenth – century public sphere, with its associational diversity, leisure and luxury sector, its commercial opportunities, and multiplicity of communities of concern and interest, in England, its increasing toleration of different devotional communities in the cities which cut across the old parishes, and the gradual replacement of the militia with professional armies – all of which were completed by the end of the period under discussion, point forward to a kind of modern citizen appropriate for Constant's modern liberty, they fragmented and were in competition with the salience of traditional offices and militate against the dominance of the individual's civic identity which was so much a part of the classical model and meaning of citizenship.

This process – much remarked on by Scottish enlightenment thinkers – ushered in a new understanding of the tension between monarchy and liberty, recognising the possibility of, or indeed championing of the free, limited and commercial monarchy. How then was one to describe its inhabitants? Adam Smith normally reserves 'citizens' for his discussion of the politically active members of classical Greece and Rome. (WON bk IV, p 556, V, 774ff) when talking of his contemporary Britain refers to 'the people' or sometimes the collective 'the public'. But his usage is very context sensitive, sensitive that is to his argumentative, rather than the descriptive context, and he seems happy to use citizen in quasi-judicial situations. For example in talking of gradations of social condition in Britain he refers to 'particular classes of citizens' (p. 21). In the *Lectures on Jurisprudence* his discussion of access to citizenship compares Athens, Rome, and modern Republics with England and other modern European monarchies, and the term citizen seems comfortable to him in discussing this legal position. But he uses subject and citizen interchangeably. For example:

In discussing 'Whether the sovereign may be guilty of crimes against the subjects' he finds himself having to discuss 'who are the subjects?' Here he immediately substitutes citizen for subject. he points out that smaller countries – where citizenship entitles one to particular privileges being descended from one who is a citizen' tends to be the rule IN countries of large population (such as England) 'Birth determines citizenship. There are he concludes, 'two foundations of citizenship in all countries; in the larger ones birth, in the smaller ones having one's father a citizen.' But this conclusion is true for subjects of monarchies as for members of republican regimes. (LJ, 306ff) , and in the report of 1766 version he concludes the same discussion of being a citizen, how one acquires citizenship etc etc. with the words 'Having thus considered who are properly the 'subjects of a state.' 433. For Smith the term citizen seems to be carrying no ideological freight – inasmuch as citizens and subjects seem almost interchangeable. The implications for the concept of citizenship of the modern commercial economy were ambiguous, Smith drew one implication which was to dissolve the distinction between citizen and subject into an amorphous 'member' of a state. Richard Hurd: (1754) seemed to want to hold onto the distinction whilst claiming the citizen's identity for England, for whilst 'in the more absolute monarchies of Europe, all are courtiers. In our freer monarchy all should be citizens'.

But I want to make my real focus in the eighteenth century on the response to the French Revolution. Whilst the initial response to the French Revolution had been in many cases a cautious if slightly condescending welcome to the French in accomplishing the kind of transition to a constitutionally limited monarchy that the

English had achieved in 1688, the issues rapidly became deeper and more contentious. The main ideological confrontation has traditionally been seen to be between Burke's defence of time –consecrated establishments and Paine's defence of natural rights. Paine's championship of universal suffrage – although allowing representation as the only way of combining popular government with an extensive state – is balanced by Burke's contempt for the 'swinish multitude' rumbustiously taken up in various demotic publications such as Spence and Eaton's 'Pigs Meat' and 'A salmagundy for Swine.'

To recal briefly Marshall's three sets of citizens rights, the civil, the political and the social. It is clear that the 1790s saw a fight for political rights, but these had already been adumbrated by the disabilities imposed on religious dissenters in the practice of their merely civil rights. Given this, thought Joseph Priestley, 'it was hardly possible that we should be other than friends to the civil liberty of our fellow citizens', and such liberty, as Paine argued, 'can only be preserved by giving each person an equal right in the exercise of power; for to deprive a man of the right to vote reduces him to the status of a slave since 'slavery consists in being subject to the will of another, and he that has not a vote in the election of representatives is in this case.' (ROM II, 579) But political liberty was not only a safeguard – it was also a principle in itself. Civic parallels were drawn as early as the war with America, Richard Price – whose *Observations on the nature of Civil Liberty* was reprinted fifteen times in the first year of its publication (1776) and many times more as one of *Two tracts on Civil Liberty* (1778) like most writers of this period comfortably combined the framework of natural rights with republican and sometimes civic-ly informed analysis. England, thought Price, evoked parallels with ancient Rome, which had 'sunk into slavery in consequence of enlarging its territories, becoming the centre of wealth ... and the seat of universal empire.' Without superhuman effort Britain too will 'go the round of other nations once free.', the simplicity of manners, independent yeomanry, and equality of property augured as well for American liberty as their absence threatened it in Britain. (*Two Tracts*, pp. 99-100, 208) For him the only way to safeguard civil liberty was to gain political rights. It is clear that at least one of the issues here relates to political inclusion and exclusion. But just as the officeholding republic of Elizabethan England had had a social rights dimension, so too did the discussion of the late eighteenth century. Price and Priestley are defenders of a liberal economy which they conceived would increase equality – economic inequality was perceived a function of Aristocratic privilege and greater equality would follow from the abolition of that monopoly. But later radicals had their doubts. Both Tom Paine and John Thelwall argued for a degree of economic security – particularly in old age - as well as political equality. These claims too were based on natural rights – a kind of lockean natural right to a portion of the earth. For agrarian radicals like Spence this literally meant a few acres and a cow. But Paine and Thelwall, (Paine, *Agrarian Justice*, Thelwall, *The Rights of Nature against the usurpations of establishments*, both 1795) both more cognisant of the new commercial and manufacturing economy, argued that on coming of age each new citizen had a right to an equivalent in value to the Lockean natural portion, plus a share in the increased value that civilisation had created, as a way of entry into society. These arguments certainly fed into the incipient socialism of the nineteenth century, and may ultimately feed into the Welfare rights of which Marshall spoke. The idea of welfare rights playing a role in the concept of citizenship, if we construe this widely enough, thus seems to me not a late, but a continuing feature of it in Britain from the Elizabethan parish responsibility to administer the poor law through to this latest concern of Paine and Thelwall's, even

though its full realisation at the national level had to await the twentieth century – but then that is true also of political rights. I have tried to distinguish the meanings, valencies and dimensions that the concept bears at various times from the range of its application or the success of its realisation.

The arguments of thinkers and theorists such as Price and Paine – if (as they both were) they are widely read – play a role in the life of concepts such as citizenship – but it cannot surely be reduced to such contributions – and I’ve tried in this paper to bring the history of political arguments about citizenship and what is for me the much less familiar material of social history together. I want finally to focus on, as it were, the street, where the argument was more sloganised, and where theory, social history, and indeed the word citizen finally come together as never before. Although the word citizen does little significant work in Paine’s *Rights of man*, in the political conflict within which that work was situated it assumes massive proportions.

The demotic political associations which agitated for political reform in the wake of French events represented the most activist expression of explicitly political agency from the lower orders since the Civil War. The most famous of these was the London Corresponding Society. (LCS, 1792 – 1799, 5 vols, London Pickering and Chatto, 2002) The LCS sought constitutional reform, not the abolition of the monarchy (although some of their number privately expressed a desire for a republican government) They revived elements of the Leveller programme, universal (male) suffrage and annual parliaments. This might for some, make them equivocal republicans but their conception of citizenship was decidedly active.

The society published addresses and appeals, records of its minutes and correspondence with other societies within and beyond the kingdom. Their adoption of the language of citizen was not immediate – their first few publications were addressed to ‘the inhabitants of Great Britain’ to ‘Friends and fellow Countrymen’ ‘Frenchmen! (to the national convention) Fellow Countrymen. The ‘Nation at Large’. However the vocabulary of citizenship soon began to be established. The regulations of the society which had become necessary as a result of its growth and need to divide and establish many branches were drawn up within a year of the society’s formation towards the end of 1792. These prescribe a series of formal processes for opening meetings, admitting new members etc. Here the salutation ‘Citizen!’ figures prominently in the prescribed forms of address to be used on these occasions. The civic vocabulary was, through such ceremonial, to be re-inscribed on the passive subject. Its public addresses appeal to a shared ‘duty to preserve inviolate the liberty of his fellow citizens (77)’, reminders that it is ‘no less the right than the duty of every citizen to keep a watchful eye on the Government of his country’ and do ensure that private interest is not substituted for Public Advantage. (78)

By 1794 with the first treason trials of reformers following the National Convention in Edinburgh the LCS addressed their pamphlets simply to ‘Citizens!!’ and not just at the head but at the head of each paragraph. In the repressive atmosphere of the mid 1790s – and especially with the increasingly republican example of France across the channel, ‘citizen’ became a loaded term. Uttering the very word was a speech-act of clearly political import. The radicals knew it and promoted it widely and brazenly as a consciousness-raising device for which they could scarcely be prosecuted. The Establishment knew it but found it hard to counter. Their newspaper *The Tribune* records how the Court official sent to arrest Thelwall and others for examination before the Privy Council ‘flew into a rage’ when they used the title ‘citizen’ in referring to each other. (*Tribune* 4 Apr. 1795). In the 1790s the

word 'citizen' did not merely re-emerge as a distinctive way of *referring* to active political agency, its very *use* was that agency.

In the absence of the possession of political rights themselves, and the decline of the parish as a unit of activity, the rise of the political association enabled ordinary men – and sometimes women too - to construct for themselves a forum in which they could practise and exhibit political activity, and hold office. Their internal business, no less than their mutual correspondence, was conducted with a self-conscious concern for appropriate procedures and record-keeping, which gives them the kind of portentous self-importantly bureaucratic air of a British Trades Union Congress ca 1980. They published not only direct appeals to the public, but also the records of their meetings and their correspondence as a way of demonstrating their earnestness, evading charges of unruliness, and showing that they could match the gravitas and formality of their political masters. This was not only a formal imitation of Parliamentary (or perhaps Conventional) procedures but a preparation for replacing it, for at times various of them suggested supplanting a corrupt parliament through a national convention of corresponding societies (Gerald, and see Jebb).

It is not merely the meeting, associating, and agitating, that is important, but the ostentatious publication of their having done so in records minutes, proceedings and so on which constitute effectively a new political genre (– albeit one with roots as far back as the Spectator itself). Their communicating the fact of their activity was dramaturgical – seeking to embolden and elicit similar actions and associations elsewhere – and the proliferation of corresponding societies across the country shows their success in doing so. Corresponding Societies acted out, as well as asserting a concept of citizenship on behalf of an excluded strata which aspired – although it never succeeded – to insert both within the state. In doing so they seem to me to have brought together, unequivocally, and for the first time in English history, the *concept* of active citizenship ascribed extensively to members of the state. not merely a town or city, - and the very word *citizen* itself.

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Annie Jourdan, University of Amsterdam

FRANCE, PATRIE, NATION

Figures de lutte et discours national (XVIe- XIXe siècles)¹

« *Le nationalisme prit la place de l'amour général Alors il fut permis de mépriser les étrangers, de les tromper, de les offenser. Cette vertu fut appelée patriotisme* ». Barruel, 1798.²

France, patrie, nation : ces trois concepts ont fait couler beaucoup d'encre, mais les historiens français et étrangers sont encore loin de s'accorder sur la date de leur naissance et sur leur impact.³ Certains d'entre eux, notamment Colette Beaune et Jacques Verrière, ont tendance à extrapoler d'un concept à l'autre, quand ils décèlent une 'nation' France, là où les acteurs de l'époque percevaient tout autre chose et usaient en conséquence d'autres termes.⁴ Il s'agira donc ici non seulement de restituer aux acteurs leurs véritables propos, mais encore d'étudier l'évolution des registres et les usages et les valeurs qui sont associés aux notions en question. Pour ce, l'histoire des concepts, sur la théorie de laquelle je ne reviendrai pas pour des raisons évidentes,⁵ sera abordée sous l'angle de la sémantique et de la sémiologie. C'est-à-dire que je prêterai attention à l'axe syntagmatique et à l'axe paradigmatique du discours, et partant au champ associatif. La période étudiée recouvrera quatre siècles - du XVIe au XIXe siècle, avec une attention marquée pour le XVIIIe, quand s'intensifie l'usage des trois notions, au centre de mon propos : France, patrie, nation. Intéressants et indispensables aussi sont les allers et venues entre la France et l'Europe, puisque les interactions sont légion en ces siècles et que, il

¹ Mes remerciements à Wyger Velema pour ses remarques et sa traduction et à Steven Englund pour ses commentaires et la lecture qu'il m'a permise de faire de son manuscrit sur le nation talk en France. Le terme de 'discours national' ou 'nation talk' lui est emprunté. Il permet de faire une distinction entre ce qui est proprement discursif et ce qui est une idéologie véritable, revendiquant avec force son nationalisme.

² Barruel, cité par Jacques Godechot, « Nation, patrie, nationalisme et patriotisme en France au XVIIIe siècle », in *Patriotisme et nationalisme en Europe à l'époque de la Révolution française et de Napoléon* (Paris, 1976), 26.

³ Pour un aperçu des enjeux et des interprétations, L. Scales & O. Zimmer eds. *Power and Nation in Europe* (Cambridge, 2005). Voir aussi Maurizio Viroli, *For Love of Country. An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism* (Oxford, 1995). David Bell, *The cult of the Nation in France. Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800* (Harvard, 2001) et Joep Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe. A cultural History* (Amsterdam, 2007).

⁴ Contre l'emploi abusif du terme, Steven Englund, « N'est pas national qui veut: Plaidoyer pour un usage plus rigoureux du nation-talk par l'historien », *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 53 (2006) : 165-181. Colette Beaune, *Naissance de la nation France* (Paris, 1985) et Jacques Verrière, *Genèse de la nation française* (Paris, 2000).

⁵ Je renvoie évidemment aux travaux de R. Kosseleck; de R. Reichardt; de M. Richter, de T. Ball, de J. Guilhaumou et de l'équipe d'Amsterdam. Cette dernière a publié notamment *Vaderland. Een geschiedenis vanaf de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940*, ed, Niek van Sas (Amsterdam, 1999). Voir aussi dans ce recueil les commentaires de Willibald Steinmetz.

n'est sans doute plus utile de le dire, l'identité d'un peuple se forge par opposition à ou en dialogue avec ses voisins.⁶

La Renaissance et les patriotes

Amorcer cette étude à la Renaissance a pour avantage de montrer les glissements dans la continuité ou les surgissements soudains suivis de reculs et de silences. Sous la Renaissance, on le sait, plusieurs facteurs réactualisent l'idée de patrie : la redécouverte des Anciens et par suite celle de *patria*; l'humanisme qui l'émancipe de l'Eglise ; les guerres de religion et les conflits internationaux, sans oublier l'animosité de l'Europe vis-à-vis des Italiens et du pape.⁷ Dans ce contexte de rivalités entre les divers peuples est notamment réactivée la théorie des caractères dits nationaux. En 1583, Jean Bodin introduit dans son fameux ouvrage sur la République une théorie inspirée d'Aristote et d'Hippocrate et tente de recenser la variété des hommes afin « d'accommoder la forme du gouvernement au naturel des peuples. »⁸ Dès lors, il esquisse une théorie des climats que parachèvera Montesquieu, quelques siècles plus tard. Dans ce contexte, il n'est pas inusité de trouver le terme de « nations », entendues comme des communautés d'hommes vivant sur un même territoire et sous les mêmes lois. La notion sert par ailleurs à distinguer les membres qui composent la faculté de Paris. Il y aurait là quatre nations : celle de France ; de Picardie ; de Normandie et celle d'Allemagne qui englobe toutes les nations étrangères (italienne, hollandaise ou anglaise).⁹ Le terme est donc strictement descriptif et identifie globalement un groupement humain par rapport à d'autres – il est, me semble-t-il, identificatoire (descriptif et distinctif) et non identitaire (constitutif et affectif).¹⁰ Dans l'univers propre à la Renaissance, le monde est donc peuplé de « nations », ayant chacune un caractère spécifique, découlant des climats et de la nature des lieux, mais aussi

⁶ On met souvent l'accent sur le conflit avec l'étranger. Mais l'identité se crée également dans un conflit de soi avec soi-même – avec ses compatriotes. David Bell rappelle aussi à juste titre (*The Cult of the Nation*, 44) que l'antipathie peut se muer en sympathie ou cohabiter avec elle. Il faut donc rendre aux hommes leur ambivalence, ce que nous aurons plus d'une fois l'occasion de faire.

⁷ Sur l'époque qui précède, où le terme de patrie est rare, voir Beaune, *Naissance de la nation France*, 324. Les Italiens traitent les Allemands de « bêtes » et les Français de « barbares ». Lucien Febvre, *Martin Luther, un destin* (Paris, 1928) 69-70 et Hubert Gillot, *La Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes en France* (Genève, 1968). En revanche, le mythe des origines est déjà à l'ordre du jour. Dans ce conflit entre civilisation et barbarie, tous se cherchent des origines prestigieuses.

⁸ Jean Bodin, *Les six livres de la République* (Paris, 1993) 407-427. Sur le mythe des origines qui entre aussi sur scène, voir Beaune, 19-54.

⁹ Sur la Hollande ancienne, K. Tilmans, « De ontwikkeling van het vaderland-begrip in de laat-middeleeuwse en vroeg-moderne geschiedschrijving van de Nederlanden », in *Vaderland*, 7-54.

¹⁰ Je me permets cette distinction. Identificatoire, étant à mes yeux, synonyme de signalisation neutre (descriptive ou distinctive); identitaire étant synonyme de constitutif d'une identité spécifique. VOOR WYGER : the first has to do with identification ; the latter with identity building and recognition.

d'une religion commune comme le sont la nation juive et la nation protestante. En ce siècle humaniste, tous ne partagent pourtant pas le déterminisme de Bodin. Erasme, par exemple, conçoit « qu'une nation possède certaines marques distinctives, mais c'est beaucoup plus caractéristique des mentalités individuelles. »¹¹ Notons que dès lors s'adjectivise le terme de nation : « national » entre ainsi sur scène dans une expression qui demeurera pendant longtemps figée : « caractère national ». La nation elle-même conserve une valeur neutre. Le registre demeure descriptif, et non affectif. Si affection il y a, comme il en va chez les humanistes ou les protestants, elle s'adresse à la patrie, cette douce mère. Exilé à Genève dans les années 1570, le protestant Hotman décrit la patrie comme « le pays où l'on se trouve bien », comme un ciel, un air, une terre qui nous a accueillis à notre naissance.¹² Avec les guerres de religion, elle en vient à être opprimée et demande à ses enfants aide et réconfort. C'est dire aussi que la souffrance des exilés ne saurait lui être imputée. Une mère ne maltraite pas ses enfants.

Une même affection recouvre l'entité France, qui acquiert sous la Renaissance une actualité jamais atteinte. Des *Regrets* de Du Bellay à *la Franciade* de Ronsard, la France est personnalisée et comparée à une mère aimante et nourricière.¹³ Or, cette mère aimante est en danger. Les Français divisés sont en train de causer sa perte, ce qui donne l'occasion à Ronsard de broser un portrait de la France, mais de façon négative – un peu comme ses adversaires réfugiés à Genève. Le poète s'en prend du reste au Huguenot, Théodore de Bèze.¹⁴ La France nourricière, c'est donc en réalité la mère patrie, menacée tout à la fois par les protestants, qui la déchirent et les Italiens, qui la méprisent, ainsi que le précisent les poètes de la Pléiade.¹⁵ S'ils usent et mésusent du terme emprunté au latin « patria », il y en a quelques-uns pour adopter le nom qui en dérive : patriote. Ainsi, chez Budé, les progrès seraient lents, en raison des « mauvais patriotes. »¹⁶ Dolet lui en appelle aux « patriotes ardents ». Dans ce contexte, notons-le, il est surtout question de gloire et d'honneur de la France monarchique. Mais le terme de patriote fait son entrée chez d'autres contemporains

¹¹ Jourdan, « La perception des Français aux Pays-Bas. De l'incompatibilité des caractères nationaux », in *L'Europe des politesses et le caractère des nations* (Paris, 1997) 153-176. Fontenelle réfute ces distinctions sous prétexte qu'en Europe, le climat n'est pas si différent. Pour lui les hommes se ressemblent et s'il y a quelques différences, elles proviennent du temps, des gouvernements, de l'état des affaires. Sur les caractères nationaux. Gillot, *Querelle*, 381. Voir aussi *Imagology. The cultural construction and literary representation of national characters*, M. Beller and J. Leerksen, eds. (Amsterdam, 2007).

¹² François Hotman, *Francogallia* (Cambridge, 1972) 1 et 3.

¹³ Du Bellay, *Les Regrets* (Paris, 2002) C'est lui qui écrit « France mère des arts, des armes et des lois, tu m'as nourri longtemps du lait de ta mamelle ... ».

¹⁴ Ronsard, *Discours des Misères de ce Temps* (Paris, 1949) 67-87

¹⁵ Sur l'emploi du terme « patrie » par Ronsard et du Bellay, voir aussi J. Lestocquoy, *Histoire du patriotisme en France* (Paris, 1968) 46-48.

dans une visée bien différente, puisqu'il s'agit là des opposants au roi de France. Chez les réformés, en effet, la patrie est en danger parce qu'elle est trahie par le gouvernement. Eux vont invoquer « l'amour de la patrie » contre le roi qui la déchire, en persécutant la religion réformée. Eux vont aussi se donner pour « patriotes ». Du *Franco Gallia* de François Hotman à la *Défense* de Philippe du Plessis Mornay ou au *Droit des magistrats* de Théodore de Bèze, les protestants actualisent également la « nation » en tant que « corps du peuple » – non point pour confier au « corps du peuple tout entier » le droit de résistance, lequel n'advient qu'à ses magistrats ou représentants.¹⁷ Dans ces écrits, où rares sont du reste les occurrences du terme, le peuple est l'équivalent de la nation entendue dans le sens d'une communauté d'hommes, l'antonyme étant le(s) particulier(s). « Nation » dans son sens fort ou absolu ne s'impose pas, contrairement à la patrie qu'il faut défendre et sauver. Au même moment, les Pays-Bas sont en révolte contre leur gouvernement espagnol. Les insurgés se donnent eux aussi pour patriotes et invoquent l'amour de la patrie, pour motiver leur combat contre l'autorité.¹⁸ En ce XVI^e siècle, le concept est manifestement réactivé dans un contexte de guerre civile et permet d'opposer au roi ou au prince une entité spirituelle, empruntée tout à la fois aux Anciens et au christianisme – comme l'était la « patrie céleste » de Saint Augustin. L'amour de la patrie inspire alors les plus beaux actes et sacrifices. Dans ce contexte oppositionnel, elle se sépare tout à la fois du Prince et de l'Eglise pour entrer dans le domaine séculier, tout en captant à son profit une aura de sacralité¹⁹ – due à l'élévation d'âme qu'elle provoque chez les hommes.

Chez les apologistes du roi de France, à l'inverse, la patrie se confond avec le royaume ou avec l'entité France. Là il s'agit de chanter les beautés et les vertus de la France, et pour ce, tout d'abord de les recenser. La Renaissance invente les attributs qui seront ceux de la patrie française plus qu'elle ne redéfinit le concept. Les auteurs tentent du reste de situer leur siècle synchroniquement et diachroniquement. Du Bellay entreprend ainsi de célébrer son pays et ses origines, afin de disqualifier la morgue italienne et, dans ce contexte, glorifie le présent et les progrès obtenus par rapport aux Anciens. Ici peuvent se lire un patriotisme vindicatif et une amorce de la querelle qui opposera au XVII^e siècle les Anciens et les Modernes. Rien de tel chez les protestants, qui eux critiquent le présent et recherchent dans

¹⁶ Budé et Dolet cités par Gillot, *Querelle*, 52.

¹⁷ Hotman parle de « l'assemblée du peuple et de conseil public de la nation ». Quentin Skinner, *Les fondements de la pensée politique moderne* (traduction française, Paris, 2001) 773-774. Dans une première version, il avait prévu de confier le pouvoir « au corps entier du peuple ».

¹⁸ S. Groenveld, «Natie en patria bij zestiende-eeuwse Nederlanders», in *Vaderland*, 55-81. Voir dans ce recueil l'article de Paul Knevel.

l'histoire et le droit naturel des arguments pour légitimer leur opposition au monarque.²⁰ Dans les deux camps, cependant, le terme de patrie est explicitement ou implicitement²¹ récurrent et recouvre des réalités ou des attentes différentes. Deux patriotismes sont aux prises : celui qui, fidèle au roi et au royaume, en célèbre les beautés et bontés et celui qui, contre le roi et son gouvernement répressif, revendique la tradition des Francs et des Gaulois *et* le retour aux vraies libertés, au nom de la patrie opprimée.

Le roi lui-même, quand il invoque la France, parle d'Etat ; d'empire ; de royaume, de maison ou de pays. Il peut évoquer ses sujets ou ses peuples, mais prononce rarement le terme de « patrie » ou de « nation ». Henri IV rappelle bien qu'il faut avant toute chose servir la patrie et s'attendrit à l'idée de sa «douce France », tandis que François Ier semble être le seul jusqu'à Louis XVI à parler de nation française. Encore François, prisonnier de Charles Quint, indique-t-il par ce terme (« ma nation ») son pays ou sa patrie.²² Autre exemple qui démontre que les hommes du XVI^e siècle ne parlent pas un langage figé : Ecartelé par les querelles entre humanistes, Erasme de Rotterdam se donne alternativement pour « citoyen du monde » ; « homo Batavus » ou bien « franc-celte ». Il se dit gaulois face à Budé et germain devant un interlocuteur allemand, et, pour qualifier l'Angleterre où il séjourne, il l'appelle « sa patrie spirituelle.»²³

Le siècle du Roi Soleil : Grandeur, gloire et honneur

Alors que les Huguenots ont défendu l'idée que le roi ne saurait posséder un *imperium indivis* et qu'il ne saurait se confondre avec la nation – ou « les Etats de la nation »²⁴ –, le souverain qui monte sur le trône de France en 1650 renoue avec la théorie moniste de Bodin et capte le pouvoir à son seul profit. Sous son règne disparaissent les allusions publiques à la patrie et à

¹⁹ Par sacralité, nous entendons ici spiritualité et non religion. Alphonse Dupront, « Du sentiment national », in *La France et les Français*, Encyclopédie de la Pléiade (Paris, 1972) 1423-1474.

²⁰ Skinner, *Fondements*, 770-790. Ne l'oublions pas : Grotius formule sa théorie du droit des gens dans ce contexte de guerre et d'opposition à l'Espagne.

²¹ Implicitement sous l'image de la France, mère nourricière commune, ainsi qu'est également définie la patrie dès la Renaissance.

²² *Les Pensées des Rois de France*, G. Boissy ed. (Paris, 1949) : 116, 118, 120-123 (pour Henri IV) et 77 et 80 (François Ier). Henri IV s'adresse à Monseigneur de Beaufort et aux Trois Etats. Notons que « patrie » a chez lui pour synonyme l'Etat.

²³ J.C. Margolin, « Erasme et la psychologie des peuples », *Ethnopsychologie*, 4 (1970) : 373-383 et D. van Damme, « Erasme et la France », *Annales du centre universitaire méditerranéen* (1957) : 400-460.

²⁴ Théodore De Bèze, *Du droit des magistrats* (Genève, 1971) : 24, 47, 49 et 55. La nation est en réalité une ellipse métonymique, puisque jusqu'au XVIII^e siècle, on trouve plus fréquemment « le corps du peuple de cette nation » ; le « conseil public de la nation » ; « le corps entier de la nation » ; les « Etats de la nation » etc.... C'est à cette origine que d'une part, la nation peut avoir un corps ; et que nation égale peuple, là où patrie demeure très abstraite, puisque c'est à la fois un territoire concret et idéal.

la nation. Seul prime Louis, dit bientôt le Grand, qui monopolise sur sa personne le culte rendu par les poètes du XVI^e à la France ou à la patrie. Dans ses écrits et mémoires, Louis XIV évite du reste d'user de ces termes.²⁵ Prédominent les occurrences au royaume ; au pays ; à l'Etat et à la raison d'Etat ; à « notre maison » ; aux sujets ou aux peuples. Les nations existent, mais ce sont celles qui environnent la France, ou telle ou telle nation particulière, comme dans les siècles antérieurs. Quant aux fins de sa politique, ce sont ni plus ni moins « la gloire et la grandeur de notre Etat » et « l'honneur du nom français ». Ici encore, ce n'est donc pas auprès du monarque qu'il faut chercher des allusions à des notions qui lui font déjà concurrence. Et c'est vers les opposants qu'il faut se tourner pour voir resurgir le concept.

Le plus célèbre parmi eux est sans nul doute Fénelon, qui dans les *Aventures de Télémaque* (1695) dresse le portrait idéal de la patrie et du citoyen. Le vocabulaire peut certes se motiver du fait que Fénelon emprunte son récit à Homère. On y trouve des héros en proie à la colère des dieux qui les éloignent de ou les arrachent à leur patrie et les contraignent pour un temps à vivre loin d'elle. Dans ce texte, la patrie n'est pas forcément un territoire fixe et définitif.²⁶ Le texte tout entier est un hymne à la patrie, vue comme synonyme de père et de mère, mais « plus chère qu'eux encore ». La patrie doit être servie, protégée, aimée. Elle est *objet* d'amour et de désir. Face à ce recours quasi sacré, Fénelon place de temps à autre la nation qui relève d'un autre registre : géopolitique et distinctif pour évoquer des nations spécifiques ou toutes les nations, ainsi que le faisaient ses prédécesseurs. Inédit en revanche est le fait que la nation soit ici de temps à autre personnifiée, puisqu'en proie au luxe, elle s'amollit, se corrompt ou se ruine. La nation devient ainsi *sujet* : sujet de décadence en particulier ; elle a un corps fragilisé par la dépense et le luxe – ce qui, sous la Renaissance était le propre de la France. Pour y remédier, il faut entretenir dans la nation une émulation de gloire et enseigner l'amour de la patrie. Le livre avait été dédié « au Roi, à l'Etat et à la patrie ». Mais on comprend que Louis XIV l'ait censuré. Il tendait trop à défendre des valeurs incompatibles avec la monarchie absolue que mettait en place le roi Soleil, d'où étaient exclus tant le peuple que ses représentants. Aussi n'est-il pas si surprenant qu'en 1710, Fénelon puisse affirmer que le roi s'est « séparé de la nation. »²⁷ La poigne de fer qui avait asservi les

²⁵ Louis XIV, *Mémoires* (Paris, 1978). On connaît sa petite phrase : « La nation ne fait pas corps en France. Elle réside tout entière dans la personne du roi ».

²⁶ Fénelon, *Les Aventures de Télémaque* (Paris, 1987), 228, 317-348 et 545-546. Un renversement se fait jour aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles, où l'on n'est pas forcément bien là où est la patrie, mais inversement, la patrie devrait être le lieu où l'on se sent bien. Hotman avait donc annoncé ce glissement.

²⁷ Ailleurs il parle du reste de « corps de la nation », pour en noter les changements d'âge en âge – et comme le faisaient donc les Huguenots. *Opuscules académiques* [1714] (Paris 1874) 96-98.

Grands et les moins grands avait aussi aliéné du souverain un grand nombre de Français qui eux pouvaient investir (mais en exil ou en secret) leurs espoirs dans une patrie idéale.

Les premiers furent évidemment les Huguenots du second Refuge, auxquels l'on doit des textes violemment polémiques sur la politique et la nature de la monarchie. Ce sont eux qui vont déconsidérer de leur exil en pays protestant la France et son roi. Plus intenses encore que sous la Renaissance resurgit la théorie des caractères nationaux, dont la typologie comparée s'est peaufinée dans les années 1640,²⁸ tandis que revient à l'ordre du jour la théorie du contrat.²⁹ Les autres opposants sont les jansénistes et les parlementaires, mais aussi la noblesse malmenée durant le trop long règne et qui n'a été apprivoisée qu'en surface. Leur opposition ne s'est pourtant pas exprimée ostentatoirement jusqu'à la mort de Louis XIV, si l'on excepte le clan autour du duc de Bourgogne.³⁰ Encore celui-ci a-t-il dû demeurer discret. Mais plus surprenant encore, les partisans catholiques du roi Soleil ne font pas moins en faveur de la liberté et de la patrie.³¹ Dans son *Histoire universelle*, Bossuet réactualise comme jamais les Grecs et les Romains, et par suite, leur républicanisme et leur amour de la liberté et de la patrie. Les Romains, écrit-il, aimaient cette dernière comme une mère et ont donné à leur peuple « une grande idée de leur commune patrie ». Dans la *Politique*, il en vient même à affirmer qu'il faut « être bon citoyen et sacrifier à sa patrie dans le besoin tout ce qu'on a, et sa propre vie. »³² De même, parmi les moralistes, La Bruyère a su trouver la petite phrase qui fera fortune : « il n'y a point de patrie dans le despotisme. »³³ A l'encontre des laudateurs du Grand Siècle, La Bruyère démythifie le patriotisme belliqueux et prône une saine critique.

Entre-temps, les Anglais eux aussi se souciaient de marquer leur spécificité et leur gloire dans des écrits qui retraceraient les annales de la « nation ». La « Grande Rébellion » avait fait surgir le concept de « patriote » et la certitude que la « nation anglaise n'était en rien inférieure aux autres pour ce qui était des actions honorables ». Auprès des Niveleurs et des Puritains, le patriotisme frisait l'emphase. Là abondent les récurrences à la « nation » et au

²⁸ See Pilet de la Mesnardière, cité par J. Leerssen, *Nationaal denken*, (Amsterdam, 1999) 30-31. Les stéréotypes nationaux sont bientôt traduits en images. *Krieg der Bilder. Druckgraphik als Medium politischer Auseinandersetzung im Europa des Absolutismus*, ed. Wolfgang Cillessen (Berlin, 1997).

²⁹ Dès les luttes du XVI^e siècle, les insurgés et les protestants invoquent le contrat et le droit de résistance. Martin van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt* (Cambridge, 1992).

³⁰ Autour du duc de Bourgogne, gravitent Fénelon, évêque de Cambrai en disgrâce ; le duc de Chevreuse ; Beauvillier et Colbert de Seignelay. Voir L. Rothkrug, *The Opposition to Louis XIV. The Political and Social Origins of the French Enlightenment* (Princeton, 1965).

³¹ On peut dire qu'il en va de même sous la Renaissance. Ronsard, par exemple, dans son « Institution pour l'adolescence du roi » réactualise les vertus romaines, propres aux républiques anciennes. Il emploie du reste le terme de république pour parler de la « chose publique ». Ronsard, *Discours*, 88-93.

³² Bossuet, *Œuvres Complètes* (Paris, 1961), 1471-1523. Et Lestocquoy, 64.

pouvoir du peuple – dans un sens politique. Là est approfondie ou menée à terme la théorie protestante du contrat, chère au continent depuis les guerres de religion. Ainsi, nous dit-on dès 1647, « tout pouvoir réside essentiellement et originairement dans le corps entier du peuple de cette nation. »³⁴ Les occurrences patriotiques entremêlent arguments jusnaturalistes et références bibliques, ce qui donne à la grande révolution anglaise son coloris particulier.³⁵ Ces fulgurances, on le sait, ont eu des échos en France, notamment à Bordeaux qui a failli se détacher du royaume et devenir elle-même république. Elles ont affaibli l'Europe absolutiste du XVII^e siècle, en dépit des velléités despotiques des rois.³⁶

En France, et contrairement à l'Angleterre, en effet, le pouvoir demeura indivis et c'est après la mort de Louis XIV seulement que le chancelier de France, le marquis d'Aguesseau se permet de critiquer le Grand Siècle au nom de la patrie ; il définit la voix du magistrat ou du Sénat comme étant celle de la « patrie », mais se demande par ailleurs si l'amour de la patrie est concevable dans une monarchie. Seul vrai glissement, le fait que le roi soit réduit au statut de « magistrat suprême. »³⁷ D'Aguesseau emprunte un concept à la mode, actualisé par les Huguenots, les réformateurs et Fénelon bien avant 1715. Il fait mieux : il prône l'amour de la patrie et de la vertu et incrimine l'égoïsme et le seul souci de soi. Est-ce là un élément novateur et un signe de rupture ? Pas vraiment, puisque Hotman et de Bèze en étaient venus à la même conclusion, tandis que Fénelon confiait au prince éclairé par ses soins le salut de la patrie et de la vertu publique. D'Aguesseau renoue donc tant avec les premiers qu'avec le second, tandis qu'il conteste implicitement le statut divin du monarque.³⁸

Lumières et patrie

³³ Il semblerait que La Bruyère se soit inspiré d'un Britannique, le premier à avoir traduit Théophraste. Inversement Steele et Addison se seraient inspirés de La Bruyère. L. van Delft, *Littérature et anthropologie. Nature humaine et caractère à l'ère classique*, (Paris, 1993).

³⁴ O. Lutaud, *Les deux Révolutions d'Angleterre. Documents politiques, sociaux, religieux* (Paris, 1978). Et L. Greenfeld, *Nationalism. Five Roads to Modernity* (Harvard, 1992) 52-77 : sur l'importance du protestantisme et de la Bible en anglais pour l'entrée sur scène du terme de nation et sur les références des révolutionnaires du temps de Cromwell.

³⁵ Comme les Gueux de Hollande du XVI^e siècle, les Levellers et Puritains se voient devant la porte d'une Nouvelle Israël. Sur les références, où est récurrente la notion de « nation », O. Lutaud, *Les deux Révolutions*, 276, 292, 298 et 346.

³⁶ J. Israël, *Les Lumières radicales*, trad. Française (Paris, 2005) 218-222, entre autres sur le Hollandais Van den Enden qui aurait été à l'origine d'une conjuration contre Louis XIV et pour la république.

³⁷ Par « magistrat », d'Aguesseau entend tout aussi bien le roi que le parlement. Il espère que les derniers mots de Louis XIV allumeront « dans l'âme du prince [Louis XV] un amour ardent pour la patrie ». Dès 1699, du reste, d'Aguesseau signalait que le magistrat était né pour la patrie beaucoup plus que pour lui-même. *Œuvres*, I (Paris, 1759), 205-213 et 55-57. Par magistrat, il entend donc soit le prince, soit le Parlement – « Sénat de citoyens ».

³⁸ On retrouve les mêmes attaques sous la plume de Boulainvilliers. Michel Foucault, *Il faut défendre la société*, (Paris, 1997) 101-124.

Nul doute, à la mort de Louis XIV, si la patrie est toujours à l'ordre du jour, la nation dans son sens absolu demeure dans l'ombre. Le terme reste donc synonyme de collectivité ou de communauté. Même si chez les protestants et chez Fénelon, il en vient à signifier «corps entier du peuple», «Etats» ou «conseil public [de la nation]», il ne remplit point un vide quel qu'il soit. La patrie, par contre, a opéré un retour en force, préparé par les guerres de religion. Mais c'est paradoxalement le siècle cosmopolite des Lumières qui rend à la patrie une place de choix au firmament des valeurs premières, tandis que la notion de nation va acquérir une dimension inconnue jusqu'alors.

Car c'est bien au cours du XVIII^e siècle, que s'opère une mutation sémantique qui permet au concept de nation d'acquérir définitivement une signification strictement politique – toujours dans le sens de «corps souverain». Un premier pas pourrait être dû à Emmerich de Vattel, qui dans son ouvrage sur le *Droit des gens* conçoit la patrie comme une aire de liberté, fondée sur l'adhésion de ses membres, sans aucune tyrannie. Chez le penseur suisse,³⁹ la nation coïncide ni plus ni moins avec le souverain. Ainsi, «toute nation qui se gouverne elle-même est un Etat souverain». Propos qui, à l'époque où ils ont été formulés ne pouvaient l'être que par des Suisses ou des Néerlandais – à savoir des protestants républicains.⁴⁰ En France, il était impensable de mettre sur le même plan souveraineté et nation.⁴¹

A la même époque, l'*Encyclopédie* de d'Alembert et Diderot formule des définitions sur la nation, peu originales en vérité. Celles-là mêmes que reprendra l'*Encyclopedia Britannica* : «une nation est un mot collectif pour exprimer une quantité considérable de peuple, qui habite une certaine étendue de pays, renfermée dans certaines limites et qui obéit au même gouvernement.»⁴² Chez Voltaire, la nation est une grande société d'hommes rassemblés sous les mêmes lois et parlant la même langue. Dans son dictionnaire, Samuel Johnson y ajoute une origine commune. Outre Atlantique, John Jay empruntera cette voie,

³⁹ Emmerich de Vattel est suisse d'origine, mais demeure à Neuchâtel, qui, comme on le sait, appartient au roi de Prusse. A la même date, le Suisse alémanique Zimmermann publie un *Nationstölz* (1758), qui sera traduit en anglais et en français. En Hollande, Engelberts donne en néerlandais une *Défense de l'honneur de la nation hollandaise* (1763), Van Sas, *Vaderland*, 279-281. Sur la France, voir D. Bell, ouvrage cité et J.M. Smith, *Nobility Reimagined. The Patriotic Nation in Eighteenth Century France* (Ithaca and London, 2005).

⁴⁰ E. de Vattel, *Droit des gens* (Leyde, 1758), 2-22 et 84-86. Pour Vattel, la nation est synonyme de Souverain ; d'Etat ; de société politique ou de peuple. Pour être une vraie nation, elle doit être souveraine et indépendante. Chez lui, la patrie est soit le lieu de naissance, soit l'Etat où l'on vit et auquel on doit être fidèle, 48.

⁴¹ L'ouvrage a d'abord été traduit en anglais en 1759, et n'a pas été publié à Paris avant la fin du XIX^e siècle. Ce qui dit bien qu'en Angleterre, l'association souveraineté et nation ne choquait personne. Le Parlement se voyait comme le représentant de la nation et du peuple. Vattel était du reste lyrique sur l'Angleterre et sa constitution (laquelle «répand partout cet esprit de vrai patriotisme qui s'occupe avec zèle du bien public»), Ibid, 14-15.

⁴² Voltaire écrivait qu'avant d'en venir à former un peuple ou une nation, il fallait une langue et c'était là le plus difficile. *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations* (Paris, 1990) I, 20-27. Dans le *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* figurait du reste dès 1694 cette définition, qui, contrairement à celle de Johnson, ne mentionne pas l'origine. Voir

mais ira plus loin encore quand, en 1787 il définit la nation comme « un peuple qui descend des mêmes ancêtres, parle la même langue ; professe la même religion ; un peuple attaché aux mêmes principes de gouvernement ; très similaire dans ses manières et usages et qui s'est battu côte à côte pour la liberté et l'indépendance .»⁴³ Définition curieuse, voire impropre pour qualifier un peuple qu'illustre plus correctement la devise : *E pluribus unum*. Le texte, il est vrai, était hautement stratégique : il s'agissait d'encourager les Américains à renforcer le pouvoir fédéral et à les convaincre qu'ils constituaient un seul et même peuple : *We the People*.⁴⁴ Mais il vaut la peine d'être noté en raison des éléments constitutifs qu'il inclut : origines ; religion ; langue ; us et coutumes, lois, mais aussi action émancipatrice et volonté d'être ensemble.⁴⁵ Nouvelle est aussi la définition donnée dès les années 1760 par Samuel Johnson du substantif ou adjectif « national » : serait national non seulement ce qui est public ou général, mais encore celui qui adore ou « bigotte » son pays d'origine.⁴⁶ Entre le « national », engoué à l'extrême de son propre pays et le « patriote » dont la passion dominante est l'amour de sa patrie, la différence est mince et Johnson ne s'aventure pas plus loin. Inversement le chevalier de Jaucourt décrit le patriotisme véritable comme le respect du genre humain et y lit « un patriotisme universel », n'en déplaie au paradoxe - sur lequel on reviendra.

Quand Rousseau prend la relève en 1762, il marche en somme sur les pas de Vattel, sans encore le rattraper. Le *Contrat social* en effet met l'accent sur l'Etat, la patrie, le souverain, voire sur la société civile ou l'ordre social. Rien de bien nouveau pour ce qui nous concerne. Trois ans plus tard, le *Projet sur la Corse* est plus audacieux. Rousseau y parle de la « nation corse », du « caractère national » et du « sol national ». L'adjectif national se généralise, mais pas de façon inédite, comme il en ira dans les *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne* de 1772. Là sont récurrentes les références adjectivales : « forme nationale », « institutions nationales », « physionomie nationale » ; « force nationale » ;

les entrées patrie et nation dans *Encyclopédie de d'Alembert et Diderot* (Paris, 1737) et dans *Encyclopedia Britannica* (London, 1771).

⁴³ *The Federalist* (London, 1992) no.2, 5-9.

⁴⁴ Sur le nationalisme en Amérique du Nord, Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 399-484. Voir aussi Jourdan, *La Révolution batave entre la France et l'Amérique* (Rennes, 2008) où nous mettons l'accent sur la 'nationalisation' de la patrie, précédant tout nationalisme véritablement moderne.

⁴⁵ Sur les éléments constitutifs du discours nationaliste, Stuart Woolf, « Nation, nations and Power in Italy, 1700-1915 » in *Power and the Nation*, 300. Woolf en distingue cinq : langue, mémoire historique, territoire, religion et origine commune. Inversement, Jay annonce la définition d'Ernest Renan sur la volonté d'être ensemble : « le plébiscite de tous les jours ». E. Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation ?*, ed. J. Leerssen (Leiden, 1994) 28.

⁴⁶ Samuel Johnson ajoute deux termes moins courants : « nationally », adverbe, qui concerne la nation et « nationalness », nom féminin, qui se réfère au peuple en général. Serait aussi patriote par ailleurs le troubleur d'ordre, le scélérat, qui s'oppose au gouvernement – par où il reconnaît la dimension politique et oppositionnelle du concept, *Dictionary of the English Language*, 5th edition (London, 1784).

« éducation nationale ». Et là s'opère donc un glissement important : désormais la nation a acquis un corps ; une volonté et une physionomie.⁴⁷ Le champ sémantique s'est considérablement élargi et inclut des associations inconnues jusqu'alors. La nation de Rousseau comme la France de la Pléiade est quasiment devenue une personne :⁴⁸ avec un corps ; des traits ; un habit ; des vœux. Elle agit ; elle a ; elle veut : c'est-à-dire qu'elle est devenue un sujet à part entière, contrairement à la patrie qui demeure un objet de désir et d'amour, lequel demande à être aimé ; protégé ; secouru. La patrie *est* : liberté ; amour ; beauté ; chose partagée ; égalité ou fraternité, voire communion. La nation, elle, *a et possède*. Ici me semble-t-il résider le décalage qui s'opère au cours du XVIII^e. Dans le premier cas, le rapport entre sujet et attributs est intrinsèque - consubstantiel ; dans le second, extrinsèque.⁴⁹ Le sacré réside exclusivement dans la première entité et non dans la seconde. Mais la nation entre-temps s'est anthropomorphisée. Elle prend corps. ce qui semble lui conférer une existence réelle et un rôle coupé sur une mesure nouvelle.

La perception nouvelle de Rousseau est aussi celle des parlementaires des années 1770. Les dates sont précises et ne laissent planer aucun doute.⁵⁰ Cela se fait en réaction au coup de Maupeou, par la voix du président du Parlement, Malesherbes, en 1771 et 1775. Pour la première fois, la nation ne se donne plus pour synonyme de collectivité ; d'Etat ou de royaume, ainsi qu'il en allait aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles,⁵¹ mais désigne, de manière conflictuelle, une instance de souveraineté distincte du roi. Louis XV réagira en conséquence quand il évoquera ce « corps imaginaire », qui ose se dresser contre le souverain légitime au nom des droits imprescriptibles du peuple français. Malesherbes invoque même le contrat entre peuple et prince et renoue là avec les protestants et les révoltés des deux siècles antérieurs.⁵²

⁴⁷ J.J. Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes* 3 (Paris, 1964), 254-259, 427, 534, 902-913, 943-944, 953-966, 980-992, 1013-1032.

⁴⁸ Chez Vattel, cela était déjà le cas, mais s'il lui conférait des « attributs », il ne mentionnait pas sa physionomie ; ses vœux ; sa volonté, etc.

⁴⁹ E. Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale* (Paris, 1966) 187-207.

⁵⁰ En principe la patrie *est*, comme Dieu. Théodore de Bèze les place ainsi tous deux sur le même plan : « devoir et serment dus à Dieu et à la patrie », De Bèze, 44. Les cahiers de doléances de 1789 mentionnent encore cette association : « Dieu et la patrie ». Sur la discontinuité dans l'usage des concepts, P.R. Campbell, « The Language of Patriotism in France, 1750-1770 », *e-France*, I (2007) 1-43.

⁵¹ Malesherbes adopte donc le terme de « nation » pour signaler une instance de pouvoir distincte du roi, et renverse ainsi l'interprétation de Louis XIV. Vattel avait préparé ce glissement vers un usage elliptique ou métonymique, puisqu'il voyait le roi comme une autorité publique, simple représentant du souverain suprême qu'était la nation. *Les Remontrances de Malesherbes*, E. Badinter ed. (Paris, 1985, 156-157 et 265.

⁵² Sur Louis XV, *Pensées des rois de France*, 275.

Entre Vattel, Rousseau et les parlementaires, ce n'est donc plus la patrie qui occupe seule l'espace qui n'est pas rempli par le roi, mais une entité qui fait concurrence à ce dernier sur le plan politique. Il y a plus. A lire les textes de Rousseau sur la Corse et la Pologne, patrie et nation sont indissociables, car il s'agit de construire une nation homogène et uniforme, fondée sur l'amour de la patrie. Mais là où le terme de nation acquiert dans les années 1770-1780 une signification toute politique, la patrie dont la liberté et la protection seraient le but même du contrat social, évolue encore dans le registre traditionnel.⁵³ Elle est la « terre où nous habitons », « la mère et la nourrice commune des hommes ». Les hommes y sont attachés parce qu'ils s'y sentent bien et qu'ils y jouissent de la liberté. Secondaire est donc la nation, par rapport à cette instance spirituelle pour la défense de laquelle les hommes sont prêts à verser leur sang et à sacrifier leur vie. Chez Rousseau, la nation en effet se constitue en vue de servir, défendre, protéger la patrie. Les révolutions du XVIIIe siècle demeurent proches de lui dans un premier temps.

Le patriotisme et l'universel

Outre le chevalier de Jaucourt, d'autres ténors des Lumières ont critiqué une vue trop étroite de la patrie et du patriotisme. Voltaire évidemment qui contestait que l'on puisse être bon patriote, sans être l'ennemi du genre humain. Lui percevait l'humanité comme uniforme et récusait la théorie de Montesquieu sur les caractères nationaux : « ainsi le fond est le même et la culture produit des fruits divers. »⁵⁴ Condorcet lui non plus ne concevait pas que le patriotisme s'oppose à l'universel : « La nature n'a pu vouloir fonder le bonheur d'un peuple sur le malheur de ses voisins, ni opposer l'une à l'autre deux vertus qu'elle inspire également : l'amour de la patrie et celui de l'humanité. »⁵⁵ Quant à Rousseau, il savait fort bien qu'il était homme avant que d'être citoyen, n'en déplaise à ses considérations très patriotiques sur le gouvernement de Pologne ou sur la Corse.⁵⁶ Ces convictions humanistes vont être remises en question par la Révolution française qui se fait tout à la fois au nom de la patrie et de la

⁵³ Sur ce point, voir M. Foucault, *Il faut défendre la société*, 21-36, sur le discours des opposants au pouvoir royal et 117 sur la nation, nouveau sujet d'histoire.

⁵⁴ Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs* II, 810.

⁵⁵ Cité par T. Todorov, *Nous et les Autres. La réflexion française sur la diversité humaine* (Paris, 1989) 213.

⁵⁶ On trouvera la remarque sur la primauté de l'homme sur le citoyen dans la première version du Contrat social et la lettre à Beaumont. Voir aussi Jourdan, « Rousseau et le pouvoir des signes », in *Rousseau, politique et nation* (Paris, 2001) 280-281.

nation.⁵⁷ Le ton est donné par l'abbé Sieyès dans son pamphlet sur les privilèges. Il y définit la nation comme étant la « généralité des citoyens » et la patrie comme « l'intérêt commun » ou le bien public et il ne sépare pas ou ne voit pas d'incompatibilité entre patrie et humanité ; il les confond même : « la véritable distinction est dans le service que vous avez rendu à la patrie, à l'humanité. »⁵⁸ Deux ans plus tard, par la voix du député Cazalès se fait jour un glissement important. Pour Cazalès, qui siège du côté droit, « la patrie doit être l'objet exclusif de notre amour ...quant à moi, je déclare que ce ne sont pas les Russes, les Allemands, les Anglais que j'aime ; ce sont les Français que je chéris. »⁵⁹ Le discours est accueilli par un murmure général. A la même époque, Robespierre proclame : « l'humanité consiste surtout à aimer la patrie », mais il ajoute « et à faire le bien des hommes. »⁶⁰ Et à plusieurs reprises, Robespierre invoque « le bien de la patrie et les intérêts de l'humanité » ou se donne pour le « défenseur de la cause du genre humain, »⁶¹ par où il prend place parmi les humanistes précédents. Dans son projet de constitution d'avril 1793, il prévoit même l'article suivant : « Les hommes de tous les pays sont frères et doivent s'entre-aider mutuellement ». Ce qui ne l'empêchera pas de fulminer contre les Anglais, les Hollandais ou contre le Prussien Cloots,⁶² lequel fait l'erreur de ne jamais être « le défenseur du peuple français mais celui du genre humain » ; lequel aime l'univers, excepté la France, ajoutera Saint-Just. Chez ce dernier se décèle la même ambiguïté. Il peut écrire : « la patrie d'un peuple libre est ouverte à tous les hommes de la terre » ou bien « l'amour de la patrie est exclusif » : « il immole tout » - notamment l'étranger corrupteur.⁶³ Jusqu'à leur mort, les deux chefs jacobins entremêlent les deux registres : celui de l'universel et celui du particulier – et ils applaudiront aux lois répressives et xénophobes des 26 germinal et 7 prairial an II ou à celle pire encore (et peu connue) du 16 messidor.⁶⁴ Ce n'est là qu'une des multiples contradictions de la Révolution

⁵⁷ Je renvoie évidemment aux nombreux travaux sur le sujet : Greenfeld ; Breuilly ; Hobsbawm ; Gellner ; Van Sas ; Leerssen, etc. qui confèrent à la Révolution française un rôle de déclencheur dans l'émergence de la nation et du nationalisme – entendu dans le sens anglo-saxon, à savoir celui de nationalisation.

⁵⁸ E. Sieyès, *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat ?* (Paris, 1989), 4, 31-33, 71-85.

⁵⁹ Robespierre renoue plus tard avec Cazalès pour invectiver les Anglais et afficher sa préférence nationale. *Œuvres Complètes* 10 (Paris, 1958-1967) X, 344-45. Pour Cazalès, Furet et Halévi, *Orateurs de la Révolution française* (Paris, 1989) 210.

⁶⁰ Dans ce contexte, Robespierre défend le général contre le particulier. Voir *OC*, VI, 514 et *Discours* (Paris, 1965) 261, 292 et 285.

⁶¹ *Discours*, 285.

⁶² Cloots proposait même de créer une république universelle où les citoyens prendraient le nom de « germains », mieux adapté selon lui pour atteindre la « véritable union fraternelle ». Saint-Just, *Œuvres Complètes* (Paris, 2004) 551 et 713.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 706 et 675.

⁶⁴ Le 16 messidor, Barère propose de décréter que les ennemis ne pourront capituler ; ils doivent se rendre dans les 24 heures, sous peine de mort et il ajoute : « il n'y a que les morts qui ne reviennent pas », *Le Moniteur* 21 (1794), 133-134. En prairial avait déjà été décrété qu'il ne serait pas fait de prisonniers anglais et hanovriens et

française, qui pourrait se motiver (mais pour une part seulement) par les multiples dangers auxquels elle est confrontée : guerre intérieure et guerre extérieure,⁶⁵ lesquelles montrent partout des ennemis et acerbent la tentation terroriste.⁶⁶

Que ce soit chez Desmoulins, Saint-Just ou Robespierre, le ton devient en vérité mystique, dès qu'il s'agit de l'entité spirituelle qu'est la patrie. Et d'évoquer les « cohortes sacrées de la patrie » ; « le feu sacré du patriotisme » ; ou « l'amour sacré de la patrie ». Avec cette sacralisation extrême de la patrie, dont témoigne l'autel qui lui est consacré au Champ de Mars et qui demeurera au centre des festivités républicaines jusqu'au 18 brumaire an VIII, resurgit aussi celle du sol de France : « au ciel si beau et au sol si fertile » qu'on ne peut s'empêcher de l'aimer, proclame Desmoulins ; cette « terre délicieuse où nous habitons et que la nature caresse avec prédilection est faite pour être le domaine de la liberté et du bonheur » renchérit Robespierre.⁶⁷ Entre-temps, nous sommes en mai 1794 et Robespierre s'attendrit donc à l'idée de cette patrie privilégiée des dieux, sur un ton que n'auraient pas désapprouvé Ronsard et Du Bellay. Entre-temps a aussi été conçue une hiérarchie en matière de patriotisme. Face aux amis et aux défenseurs de la patrie en effet se trouvent les ennemis ; les hypocrites ; les patriotes « tarés » ou les patriotes « d'industrie ». Au gré des dissensions entre factions, les révolutionnaires contestent à leurs adversaires le titre de patriote ou un quelconque amour de la patrie. Ceux qui ne sont pas de leur avis sont ainsi qualifiés de « tartuffes en patriotisme » (Saint-Just). Le patriotisme dès lors se pose en s'opposant : non pas tant à l'encontre d'un étranger ethnique ou d'un ennemi absolu que contre les mauvais patriotes, les corrompus et tous ceux qui trahiraient la révolution. Chez Robespierre, la patrie n'en reste pas moins « le pays où l'on est citoyen et membre du souverain », car « dans la démocratie seulement, l'Etat est véritablement la patrie. »⁶⁸ De la république à la démocratie,

en germinal, les étrangers, dont le gouvernement était ennemi de la France, devaient quitter sous dix jours leur pays d'accueil.

⁶⁵ On connaît les arguments des historiens. Les néo-jacobins attribuent aux circonstances la dérive révolutionnaire ; les révisionnistes l'attribuent à l'incapacité d'accepter la dissension ou à la primauté donnée à la volonté générale. Et puis, il y en a pour affirmer que la terreur et la dictature étaient nécessaires pour mettre en œuvre la liberté. S. Wahnich, *La liberté ou la mort. Essai sur la Terreur et le terrorisme* (Paris, 2003) qui déploie une rhétorique très spéciale, dans le but évident de réhabiliter les protagonistes.

⁶⁶ Un bel article de Gordon Wood explique bien, me semble-t-il, pourquoi la conspiration hante à tel point les esprits. G. Wood, « Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style : Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century », *William & Mary Quarterly*, 39 (1982) 402-441.

⁶⁷ Desmoulins, *Œuvres* 2 vol. (Paris, 1874) I, 78-79. Robespierre, *Discours*, 248-249.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 215. Nous qualifions ce patriotisme jacobin de patriotisme prescriptif ou normatif pour le distinguer du patriotisme d'un Arndt, par exemple, où entrent en compte la race et la langue allemandes. Notons encore que les catégories jacobines sont avant tout morales et politiques, et non biologiques ou ethniques.

le glissement est intéressant, mais les conséquences sont semblables : pour cette patrie, tous doivent être prêts à mourir. Le patriotisme jacobin s'avère être un patriotisme prescriptif.⁶⁹

Si, sous la Convention, la patrie conserve le devant de la scène, en revanche la nation est relativement peu invoquée. Dans *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-état* de 1788, Sieyès lui avait pourtant conféré une place de choix, quand il précisait que la nation, c'était « un corps d'associés vivant sous une loi commune et représentés par une législature commune ». La notion y demeurerait politique et peu éloigné de l'interprétation qu'en donnaient les parlementaires de 1771. A l'exception près qu'était exclue désormais la noblesse, laquelle serait une nation dans la Nation. Pour faire corps avec cette dernière, elle se doit d'abandonner ses prétentions. Sinon elle réintégrera les forêts de Franconie. Le ton est donné en direction d'une exclusion possible de ceux qui seraient « hors-nation. »⁷⁰ Pour le reste, et il faut le noter, c'est le terme de république qui, à partir de 1792, s'impose en France aux dépens de celui de « nation. »⁷¹ De 1792 à fin 1794, les occurrences du terme sont légion aux côtés de celles de patrie, de patriotisme, mais aussi de celle de peuple, entendu encore et toujours comme un corps politique souverain. Ainsi dans la déclaration des droits de 1793, l'émetteur souverain n'est plus la nation, comme en 1791, mais le peuple. Et c'est plutôt la forme adjectivale qui amorce une montée en force : tribune nationale ; garde nationale ; convention nationale ; trésorerie nationale ; surveillance nationale ; justice nationale ; intérêt national. « Tout est maintenant devenu national », se plaignait Mounier dès novembre 1789.⁷² Cela s'accroît sous la Convention, mais toujours dans un sens politique ou institutionnel.⁷³

Autre nation, autre modèle

Avant même la Révolution française, au Nord de la France, les patriotes néerlandais avaient eux aussi réactualisé le vocabulaire patriotique de leur Révolte du XVI^e siècle. Le premier d'entre eux, Johan Derk van der Capellen tot den Pol avait publié un écrit qui appelait « la

⁶⁹ Mieux que « nation » qui implique en principe d'autres nations, la patrie implique avant tout la défense du bien commun et le sacrifice des intérêts privés. Elle ne s'oppose pas automatiquement à l'Autre.

⁷⁰ Après Sieyès, *La France libre* de juillet 1789 annonce déjà en un sens l'évolution à venir. Desmoulins y proclame : « la Nation sera purgée, et les étrangers, les mauvais citoyens, tous ceux qui préfèrent leur intérêt particulier au bien général, en seront exterminés ». Desmoulins n'est pas là le paragon de la clémence qu'on a voulu faire de lui. *Œuvres* I, 78. Mais dans les deux cas, notons que l'étranger n'est ni plus ni moins qu'un *non patriote*.

⁷¹ Robespierre spécifie : « La république, c'est le gouvernement ; le souverain, c'est le peuple ». *OC*, IX, 566.

⁷² Furet et Halévi, *Orateurs*, 980.

⁷³ L'exclusion des étrangers ne s'opère toujours pas en tant que rejet ethnique, mais demeure circonstanciel et politique. Sont exclus ceux dont les gouvernements sont en guerre avec la France et devraient être exclus ceux dont les actes et intérêts ne sont pas compatibles avec le salut de la patrie, comme chez Rousseau, en somme.

nation tout entière », à savoir le peuple néerlandais, à recouvrer ses libertés et à mettre fin aux abus perpétrés par le prince d'Orange. Ce texte de 1781 est le plus radical de l'époque, en ce sens qu'il considère la république des Provinces-Unies comme une seule et unique nation, et non comme une fédération divisée par des intérêts particuliers et incompatibles. « La nation, c'est-à-dire le peuple » devait se réunir pour œuvrer au bonheur et à la prospérité de la patrie menacée. Dès lors, il était question de « chère patrie », de « patrie éplorée » ou « opprimée ». Les patriotes avaient pour devoir de la sauver. Dans ce texte, Van der Capellen se fonde sur la tradition native et les écrits de la Révolution américaine. Son registre est tout à la fois traditionnel et moderne. Il est vrai que Van der Capellen venait de traduire des textes de dissidents britanniques, tels que Price et Priestley, eux-mêmes influencés par la Révolution américaine, et qu'il connaissait les constitutions américaines réalisées entre 1776 et 1780, ainsi qu'en témoignent plusieurs passages sur les droits naturels et universels de l'homme. Cet ouvrage annonce le plus célèbre des textes patriotes, le *Grondwettige Herstelling van Nederlands Staatswezen*, publié entre 1784 et 1786, mais il le surpasse largement pour ce qui est du ton vindicatif et du vocabulaire révolutionnaire. Il est aussi le premier à parler le langage du national – liberté nationale ou enquête nationale – en vue de sauver la patrie en danger.⁷⁴

Les patriotes sont vaincus en 1787 et n'ont pu mener à bien les réformes nationales envisagées entre 1781 et 1787. Ils corrigent leur copie en exil, quand ils sont confrontés à la Révolution française, et surtout après janvier 1795, quand ils rentrent au pays pour participer à la Révolution batave. Le journal des séances de l'Assemblée nationale batave de 1796 à 1801 témoigne des aléas subis par la terminologie patriotique. Détrônée quelque peu en 1796 par nation et national, la patrie revient au premier plan entre 1799 et 1801.⁷⁵ « National » par contre opère une montée en flèche qui se maintient au cours de la Révolution, car tout devient national : le musée, l'enseignement, le timbre, le tribunal, la codification, l'institut, le crédit, voire le bonheur. Mais jamais le concept de nation n'acquerra en Hollande la dimension superlative et symbolique qu'elle recevra dans la France directoriale. La patrie y demeure un lieu abstrait et spirituel, tandis que ce qui touche à la nation se déploie dans un registre matériel et concret, à quelques exceptions près telles que « l'honneur de la nation » ou

⁷⁴ J. Derk van der Capellen tot den Pol, *Aan het Volk van Nederland* [1781] (Amsterdam, 1966), 44-49, 55-75, 102-115 et 129-131. *Grondwettige Herstelling van Nederlands Staatswezen* (Amsterdam, 1784-1786) 2 vol.

⁷⁵ Estimation établie à partir des sources électroniques de Full Text Nederlandstalige Tijdschriften. *Dagverhalen der Handelingen van de Nationale Vergadering repesenteerende het volk van Nederland* (The Hague, 1796-1798) et la série suivante (1798-1801). En 1796, les occurrences de nation s'élèvent à 95 pour le premier semestre ; à 100 pour le second, contre 95 et 100 pour 'patrie'. En 1799, 53 occurrences de patrie contre 29 pour

« l'esprit de la nation ». A titre d'exemple, quand la France invoque sa 'Grande Nation', la république batave lui rétorque fièrement en évoquant 'la chère petite patrie'.⁷⁶

Une grande nation ou la Grande Nation ?

Depuis les débuts de la Révolution française, des législateurs ou des publicistes ont souvent parlé d' « une grande nation » pour plaider en faveur de telle ou telle mesure. Barnave défend ainsi le gouvernement monarchique sous prétexte que, dans « une grande nation comme la nôtre », c'est le seul possible. Une grande nation, c'est-à-dire un vaste territoire et une population nombreuse. Et c'est chez les thermidoriens qu'entre en scène « une grande nation », non plus dans le sens littéral, mais figuré. Dès ventôse an III, par exemple, Boissy d'Anglas évoque les « sentiments généreux d'une grande nation ». Dans un discours conciliateur, Lindet, ci-devant membre du Comité de Salut public, déroule la logique à l'oeuvre quand il anthropomorphise la notion en question: « Nation, sois attentive à tes destinées qui s'accomplissent par tant de prodiges et de merveilles ».⁷⁷ Il est vrai qu'à la mort de Robespierre, une certaine emphase sur les succès de la Révolution permet de mieux faire silence sur les traumatismes vécus. En 1795, il importe avant tout de mettre l'accent sur les beaux souvenirs pour « effacer ce triste temps de la mémoire nationale ». Les thermidoriens s'y essaieront. Mais c'est sans nul doute la lettre de Bonaparte au directoire exécutif du 1^{er} août 1797 qui sonne l'entrée en usage de l'expression dans toute sa splendeur. Dans cette lettre, Bonaparte se réfère explicitement à « la grande nation. »⁷⁸ Ici plus de doute, le terme acquiert une valeur plus forte encore et entre dans le registre du « superlatif absolu » qui deviendra une des composantes du nationalisme moderne. « Une grande nation » conservait en effet un sens restrictif et ne revendiquait pas l'unique place au firmament des nations; avec « la grande nation », en revanche, la France se donne pour la première au monde ; l'unique et l'exception. Bientôt la Grande Nation se dote même de majuscules. Elle est sans égale dans le monde. Le poète Marie-Joseph Chénier ne s'y est pas trompé quand il célèbre « la Grande

'nation'. En 1801, la patrie l'emporte encore une fois sur 'nation' mais leurs occurrences respectives régressent, tandis que 'national' se maintient.

⁷⁶ En revanche on notera l'occurrence néerlandaise, inusitée en France, de « nationaux » pour native citizens. Les nationaux ont tels ou tels droits. Voir aussi notre « La Cigale et la fourmi : les discours bataves sur la Grande Nation », in *Du Directoire au Consulat II. L'intégration des citoyens dans la Grande Nation* (Lille, 2000) 107-120.

⁷⁷ *Le Moniteur* 23 (1794) 597-598. *La Décade philosophique* 3 (1798) 55.

⁷⁸ J.-Y. Guiomar, « Histoire et signification de la "Grande Nation" : problèmes d'interprétation, in *Du Directoire au Consulat I. Le lien politique local dans la Grande Nation* (Lille, 1999) 317-328. S. Englund, *Napoléon* (Paris, 2004) 141-178.

Nation à vaincre accoutumée » et « le grand général guidant la grande armée ». La grandeur est érigée en valeur première et trahit une prétendue supériorité de la France.⁷⁹ S'y ajoutent des synonymes eux aussi inventés par Bonaparte: « le grand peuple » ; la « première nation du monde » ou le « premier peuple de la terre ». Entendez les Français. Cette Grande Nation a évidemment « de grandes destinées à remplir » : mettre l'Europe à ses pieds.⁸⁰

L'entrée en force de la nation dans le vocabulaire de l'époque coïncide en effet avec les campagnes du Directoire et les victoires d'Italie. Le patriotisme adopte alors des accents triomphalistes et belliqueux. Mais la rupture entre l'an II et l'an IV n'est pas si radicale qu'elle ne le paraît au premier abord, car le Directoire entend également promouvoir le républicanisme et les vertus afférentes.⁸¹ Les références sont nombreuses qui louent le dévouement à la patrie, qui appellent à la régénération des mœurs et à l'amour des lois et de la liberté. Des institutions s'imposent pour faire *chérir* la république ; « la faire connaître et la faire aimer ». Le registre patriotique, de ce point de vue, ne se modifie pas fondamentalement. Lors des fêtes du 1^{er} vendémiaire, notamment, les législateurs insistent sur l'amour de la patrie, inséparable à leurs yeux de la République. Pour celle du 1^{er} vendémiaire an VII, le président du Conseil des Anciens adopte un ton mystique pour chanter la Patrie et la République : « célestes émanations de la divinité, vous êtes notre mère commune ». Et il n'oublie pas de mentionner que patrie et république sont une seule et même chose.⁸²

Les victoires prestigieuses de Bonaparte contribuent par ailleurs à renforcer le patriotisme des Français, d'autant que leur récit est fort bien diffusé dans la presse, mais, parallèlement elles ressuscitent des valeurs qui avaient fait fortune sous Louis XIV : gloire et grandeur. Le registre politique du Directoire est marqué également par ces valeurs. Le registre social en revanche demeure patriotique et républicain. Mais c'est surtout l'expression inventée par Bonaparte qui fait recette. Au gré des triomphes, elle va du reste s'enrichir d'un autre thème. Car, grâce aux victoires, la Grande Nation a conquis de nouvelles frontières, ce qui éveille d'une part l'idée d'une revanche des Gaulois sur leurs anciens conquérants et d'autre part celle d'un retour aux anciennes limites, décrites par Jules César. C'est l'heure

⁷⁹ On this topic, R. Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven and London, 1994) 112-165.

⁸⁰ *Le Moniteur* 23 (1795), 27, 31, 66, 82 et *Le Moniteur* 22 (1794), 25. Voir aussi le tome 29, 406 : Ode de Daunou à la France, aux armées et à Bonaparte.

⁸¹ A. Jainchill, *Reimagining Politics after the Terror. The Republican Origins of French Liberalism* (Ithaca and London, 2008) Jainchill is stressing the classical origins of this republicanism, whereas I prefer to distinguish a modern republicanism, which still stimulated patriotism and civic virtue, but did not exclude individual rights, private virtues and possessive individualism. *La Révolution batave*, 138-141, 226-233, 299-300 et 441-444. In contrast, Robespierre had such a predilection for civic virtue that he almost despised private virtues.

⁸² *Procès Verbaux du Conseil des Cinq Cents* (Paris, 1798-1799). En date des 1^{er} Vendémiaire an VI et an VII. *Le Moniteur* 29 (1799), 406-407

alors des discours lyriques du savant Monge ou de l'idéologue Daunou, qui évoquent « la Gaule rappelée à son antique unité » ; « les bornes du territoire posées aux lieux indiqués par la nature » ; et, évidemment, la Grande Nation. De fait, depuis le décret du 22 mai 1790, qui proclamait le droit des peuples à l'autodétermination, un glissement s'est fait jour quand sont advenues les premières victoires, où il est moins question de la liberté des peuples opprimés que de l'intérêt de la France.⁸³ De ce point de vue, l'universel a buté contre le patriotisme égoïste des législateurs – qu'ils soient girondins ou jacobins.⁸⁴ La préférence, c'est bien la France, ainsi qu'en témoigne la valeur affective, voire sacrale qui lui est conférée, que ce soit sous le nom de patrie ou de république. Sous le Directoire, la nation ou la Grande Nation leur font donc de plus en plus concurrence. L'usage croissant du concept de patrie dévoilait un patriotisme certain et a par ailleurs exacerbé la fierté des Français devant l'immense œuvre à accomplir, mais l'accent nouveau posé sur le concept de nation leur confère une identité valorisante. A célébrer à grand renfort d'hyperboles la Grande Nation – et le grand peuple qui la constitue – cette idée imprègne peu à peu le sentiment national – désormais justement nommé.⁸⁵ Et même si, durant la période révolutionnaire, il prédomine avant tout auprès des élites et des militaires.⁸⁶

Napoléon, France et nation

Les glissements à l'œuvre sous le Directoire suggèrent que, du point de vue conceptuel, le Consulat est moins une rupture qu'une continuité. Napoléon Bonaparte lui-même s'est longtemps donné pour patriote, notamment en Corse qu'il espérait rallier aux principes de la Révolution. Mais au rythme des victoires, son vocabulaire évolue et privilégie donc le registre de la gloire et de la grandeur. Les allusions en sont récurrentes durant l'Empire. S'ajoute la volonté de créer de « bons Français » au lieu de bons patriotes. L'évolution est subtile, mais significative. De fait, le registre napoléonien affectionne de plus en plus l'entité France, et de moins en moins la patrie. Quant à la nation, il l'entend non plus en tant que corps politique

⁸³ Sur cet impérialisme révolutionnaire, notamment auprès des néo-jacobins, Jourdan, *La Révolution, une exception française ?* (Paris, 2004), 246-252 ou J.-Y. Guiomar, *L'Invention de la guerre totale* (Paris, 2005).

⁸⁴ Sous le Directoire, c'est la tendance girondine qui revient au pouvoir. Or, la politique agressive de conquêtes ne se modifie pas, mais s'amplifie par rapport à la période montagnarde.

⁸⁵ Parmi les militaires et diplomates, par ailleurs, prévaut un patriotisme méprisant, qu'on pourrait qualifier de chauvinisme si le terme existait alors, ce qui n'était pas le cas. S. Woolf, « Napoleon and Europe revisited », *Modern and Contemporary France* 4 (2000) : 469-478 et AN AF III, 72.

⁸⁶ Dans le cadre de cette communication, nous n'avons pu aborder la récurrence des termes de nation ou de patrie auprès d'hommes plus humbles. En bref, avant la révolution, les humbles ne prononcent pas le terme de « nation » et rarement celui de « patrie ». Pour exemple, P. Goubert et M. Denis, eds. *Les Français ont la parole* (Paris, 1973) 68-70.

souverain, mais comme un corps social, qu'il veut uniformiser et organiser « en nation ». Certes, Napoléon se veut et se dit « national », ainsi que le fera son frère Louis en tant que roi de Hollande. National, il le serait parce qu'il a été élevé par le peuple, parce qu'il a œuvré à la réconciliation des Français et parce qu'il ne défend qu'une cause : celle de la France. Mais cette France, elle ne se trouve plus vraiment dans la nation concrète, mais dans Napoléon, devenu son incarnation : « La France est en moi », écrit-il, à la veille de partir en exil.⁸⁷ Les Français ne s'y sont pas trompés. A partir de 1815, ils associeront la nation à Napoléon, qui deviendra dans la mémoire collective « le héros national » et « l'homme de la nation. »⁸⁸

Sous l'Empire, la nation reste donc à l'ordre du jour, même s'il ne lui est pas permis de s'exprimer en ce nom. Comme l'a écrit Napoléon lui-même, sous son règne « la nation s'est reposée douze ans »,⁸⁹ mais le sentiment national des Français n'en est que plus vivace. Avivé par les conquêtes et par la lecture en chaire des *Bulletins de la Grande Armée*, il a été constamment stimulé et contrôlé par Napoléon. Ce faisant, il s'est diffusé auprès d'une majorité de Français, fiers des victoires de leur chef suprême et de l'hégémonie de la France en Europe. Inversement, les pays conquis ou annexés se plaignaient de ce que Napoléon tente de les « dénationaliser », ce qui évidemment a eu pour conséquences de réveiller en eux un sentiment national, ou pour le moins, un patriotisme exacerbé et revanchard. Les Hollandais, notamment, ont intériorisé ces sentiments qui n'ont pu éclater au grand jour qu'au moment de la libération de 1813. Encore les libellistes se plaignent-ils alors que leurs élites ne renoncent pas assez vite aux mœurs et manières importées de l'étranger et qu'il y ait trop peu de « Néerlandais néerlandais. »⁹⁰ Le nouveau roi des Pays-Bas réunis devra en tenir compte et bien que 'national pur sang', puisque prince d'Orange, il se voudra plus patriote que les patriotes.

Conclusion : discours national ou nationalisme ?

⁸⁷ Napoléon, *Œuvres* 1 (Bruxelles, 1821-1822), 302 (en date du 4 avril 1814).

⁸⁸ A ce sujet, voir *Mythes et légendes de Napoléon* (Toulouse, 2004), 40-45, notamment chez George Sand ou la comtesse de Boigne. Sur la difficulté de la Restauration à s'accaparer cette idéologie et son vocabulaire, E. de Waresquiel, *L'histoire à rebrousse-poil* (Paris, 2005). Voir aussi Englund, *Napoléon*, 401 et 515-516.

⁸⁹ Napoléon, *Vues politiques*. Adrien Dansette ed. (Paris, 1939) : 60.

⁹⁰ Voir la contribution de Niek van Sas. Sur le profond sommeil où les avait plongés Napoléon, *De Herkauwer*, I (1815) 143-148. Le journaliste attribue aussi à l'esprit de commerce le fait que le caractère national soit si peu développé : « notre néerlandicité est l'esprit de commerce », alors qu'en Angleterre, « l'esprit de commerce est ce qui fait l'anglicité », 150.

Pour conclure, aucun doute : France, nation, patrie connaissent entre 1789 et 1815 une actualité sans pareille.⁹¹ Mais ces concepts demeurent bien souvent restreints à un usage politique et ne sont pas figés. Si la nation n'est pas sacralisée en France, à partir de 1797, elle entre malgré tout dans le registre figuré – celui du superlatif absolu. La Grande Nation tiendrait en somme de l'affectation ; alors que la chère patrie ou la patrie bien-aimée, si souvent invoquée par les Bataves notamment, tient de l'affectif. Au registre de la grandeur – de l'hyperbole - privilégié par les Français s'oppose en effet la litote, en vigueur chez les Bataves, mais elle se double d'une émotion, inconnue à la France, qui découle pour une grande part d'un sentiment d'impuissance.⁹² A cette introversion affective qui serait le propre des Néerlandais s'oppose en un sens l'aversion allemande, qui n'est pas moins émotionnelle,⁹³ mais qui par ailleurs adopte le même raisonnement que Napoléon, fût-ce pour l'orienter dans un sens très spécifique. Fichte invoque ainsi la supériorité de sa patrie, mais pour la situer dans la race et la langue allemandes – et donc dans une essence, ce qui est tout à fait étranger tant à l'idéologie napoléonienne qu'à celle des Néerlandais. Le penseur allemand met certes tous ses espoirs dans l'éducation nationale et veut forger un « moi national, »⁹⁴ mais contre l'étranger ou l'épigone – là où Napoléon veut agglomérer pour mettre fin aux distinctions entre peuples.⁹⁵ A cette date, Louis Bonaparte lui-même soupçonne son frère de vouloir « dénationaliser » l'Europe et le déplore. Pour lui, à ce stade de l'évolution du monde, c'est une « nationalisation » qui s'impose – à comprendre comme une uniformisation et une étatisation poussées. Cette « nationalisation » diffère évidemment du nationalisme moderne, mais sans doute est-elle un préalable à sa naissance.

La grande différence entre le discours national de Napoléon et celui de Fichte réside dans le fait que les valeurs associées sont chez le second essentialistes et mystiques, alors que chez le premier, elles demeurent rationnelles et pragmatiques et qu'elles visent avant tout à

⁹¹ « France » connaît certes un recul sous la Révolution au profit de nation ; de patrie ; et surtout de République ou de Peuple. Napoléon la revalorise donc sous l'Empire, quand il renoue avec la tradition monarchique : « Élever la France au plus haut degré de la puissance guerrière [...] et y développer tous les travaux de la pensée sur une échelle qu'on n'a pas vue depuis Louis XIV », M. Villemain, *Napoléon et l'Europe* (Paris, 1947) 30.

⁹² Van Sas, *De metamorfose van Nederland*, 69-96. On retrouve le registre affectif chez Arndt, quand il évoque sa « chère patrie », mais il double celui-ci d'un registre agressif, centré sur le peuple allemand. Voir dans ce recueil les contributions néerlandaises et allemandes.

⁹³ Outre la Hollande, on peut aussi penser à la Suisse. O. Zimmer, *A Contested Nation. History, Memory and Nationalism in Switzerland, 1761-1891* (Cambridge, 2005) XIV. Toutes deux sont impuissantes à freiner l'ouragan napoléonien et se réfugient dans un patriotisme intériorisé – ce qui fait penser aux Huguenots opprimés des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles.

⁹⁴ « eine allgemeine und nationale Selbst », Fichte, *Reden aan die Deutsche Nation* (Leipzig, 1871) 11. Et la version française, *Discours à la nation allemande* (Paris, 1981).

⁹⁵ Mazzini, en revanche, est plus proche des révolutionnaires français et défend la patrie et la liberté contre une vision nationaliste étroite et exclusive. Viroli, *For Love of Country*, 144-153. Sur la remarque de Louis Bonaparte, *Documents historiques* 4 vol. (Paris, 1820) I, 256-265.

souder la France autour de l'Empereur. Chez Fichte, l'âge d'or est encore à venir ; chez Napoléon, l'âge d'or est celui qu'il incarne ; il réside dans le présent. A la France qui aurait une conception mécanique de la société, synonyme de mort, Fichte oppose la vie « absolue » : « une vie une, pure, divine ». En France, il faudra attendre Michelet et Quinet pour que la nation France soit vue « comme foi et comme religion » et Augustin Thierry pour que soit (ré)actualisée comme jamais la lutte des races.⁹⁶ Leur mystique n'est pas celle de Napoléon. Chez lui, il s'agissait de l'intérêt de la France et de sa grandeur – et par contrecoup de la sienne. Il s'agissait d'un francocentrisme (ou faut-il dire un égocentrisme ?) et non d'un ethnocentrisme comme chez Michelet et Quinet, qui ressuscitent du reste l'ancienne opposition entre peuples civilisés (la France) et barbares (la Russie) et qui voient le monde partagé entre races. Si Fichte n'a pas inventé le nationalisme exclusif et raciste,⁹⁷ qui envahira l'Europe au cours du XIXe siècle, il a forgé les instruments dont celui-ci pourrait se servir.⁹⁸ De ce danger Napoléon n'a pas pris conscience, contrairement à Benjamin Constant qui avait compris le tort que faisait aux Français et aux Européens l'uniformisation à l'œuvre sous l'Empire et qui lui reprochait de gommer péremptoirement les particularismes. A la variété, source de vie, selon Constant, Napoléon opposait l'uniformité, source de mort, et surtout, en leur ôtant tout sentiment de leur dignité, il réveillait la nostalgie des Européens pour leurs mœurs et usages ; pour leur passé et leur prétendue identité nationale. Bref, Constant lui reprochait d'avoir « tari la source naturelle du patriotisme », qu'étaient les intérêts, les mœurs et les coutumes des localités.⁹⁹ Dans ce vide spirituel, allait s'engouffrer le discours sur la nation et ses dérivés.

Par rapport à la Renaissance qui elle aussi connut un patriotisme revanchard, lequel se traduisait par une recherche d'origines prestigieuses et une revalorisation de la France, de sa langue et de sa culture, le début du XIXe siècle innove – en Allemagne, à cette date - en introduisant les déterminismes ethno-linguistiques et la notion de nation en tant que vie spirituelle ou essence de vie d'un peuple. La nation dès lors ne peut disparaître, n'en déplaie à l'étranger. Menacée matériellement, elle se perpétue spirituellement dans le peuple.¹⁰⁰ C'est

⁹⁶ Sur la guerre des deux races amorcée au début du XVIIIe siècle et sur Augustin Thierry, Foucault, 208-212.

⁹⁷ Mieux vaudrait parler de « racialisme », ainsi que le fait T. Todorov dans le livre cité. Sur Michelet, Todorov, 235-246.

⁹⁸ Et ils s'en servront, comme ils se servront de Herder, pour les trahir tous deux. Car, ni Fichte, ni Herder n'étaient de véritables nationalistes. Ils n'avaient pas non plus renié les valeurs universelles et l'amour de la patrie, au profit d'un nationalisme exclusif et haineux. Voir A. Renaut, « Logiques de la nation », in *Théories du nationalisme* (Paris, 1991) 29-46.

⁹⁹ B. Constant, *Ecrits politiques* (Paris, 1997) 164-171.

¹⁰⁰ Renan écrit aussi, ne l'oublions pas : « Une nation est une âme, un principe spirituel », cité par Godechot, 9. Or, c'est là même la définition de la patrie du XVIe au XVIIIe siècles, mais cela démontre bien qu'au cours du XIXe siècle, la nation a capté à son profit la sacralité autrefois réservée à la « mère commune ». On the

là la seule consolation pour les pays opprimés par l'impérialisme français. En Allemagne, la *nation-peuple* s'est donc peu à peu imposée aux dépens de la *patrie-liberté* révolutionnaire (et de la *nation-Etat* de Napoléon).¹⁰¹ Le discours national l'a emporté et, ce qui n'était pas donné d'avance, il en viendra à dominer l'Europe tout au long du XIXe siècle.

La sacralisation de la patrie participait d'une incitation à sacrifier l'intérêt privé au bien général, voire à l'humanité. Le patriotisme est en soi égalitaire et il ne présuppose pas automatiquement l'altérité, puisqu'il peut se borner à la défense du bien commun. Quand est en revanche sacralisé son propre peuple – sa propre nation – perçu dans des termes hyperboliques et des qualifications superlatives, le registre affectif se double d'un registre compétitif,¹⁰² dont les conséquences à cette date sont évidemment insondables.

Les divers registres et valeurs constitutifs utilisés par les pays en compétition ou en rivalité dans les années 1800-1810 disent pourtant à peu près la même chose : à savoir qu'il existe une entité spirituelle supérieure à laquelle les hommes tiennent plus qu'à tout : patrie ou « moi national ». En Suisse et en Hollande, la nostalgie, née de la perte de la liberté et de l'indépendance, se réfugie dans la « chère patrie », dans la « patrie opprimée »¹⁰³, mais en France et en Allemagne, c'est dans le discours national que s'investissent peu à peu les attentes. La nation se conjugue désormais avec *être* : elle *est* grande, glorieuse et supérieure (France) ou primitive, originelle et spirituelle (Allemagne). Et, à ce titre, elle est non plus seulement anthropomorphisée, mais quasiment sacralisée, comme le fut la patrie avant elle.¹⁰⁴ D'identificatoire qu'elle était, la nation se fait ou va se faire identitaire : un peuple élu ; une langue originelle ; une race primitive, et ce, en quête de l'Un¹⁰⁵. Au terme de ces années tumultueuses, la nation a donc capté à son profit la sacralité autrefois réservée à la

primordial golden age, M. Levinger and Paula Franklin Lytle, « Myth and Mobilisation : the triadic structure of nationalist rhetoric .» *Nations and Nationalism* 7 (2001) : 175-194.

¹⁰¹ En Suisse ou aux Pays-bas, donc, c'est la chère patrie qui est intériorisée, et non la nation, encore peu perceptible – ce que regrette l'auteur du *De Herkauwer*, Johannes Kinker, on l'a vu. Qui plus est, ce n'est pas une essence et un peuple qui sont là revendiqués, mais des actes et acquis qui démontrent une valeur indéniable, laquelle peut resurgir dans un temps meilleur. Voir J. M. Kemper, cité par Van Sas, *Metamorfose*, 157.

¹⁰² Si l'on suit l'interprétation de L. Boroumand, *La guerre des principes* (Paris, 1999) cette idéologie nationaliste serait déjà en vogue sous la Convention, chez les Jacobins. Or, on l'a dit, chez les Jacobins, sont exclus tous ceux (nationaux et étrangers) qui ne communient pas dans le même amour de la patrie. Il est difficile d'y voir un véritable nationalisme moderne. J'y vois un patriotisme normatif, qui exclut les mauvais patriotes.

¹⁰³ Comme l'a fort bien vu Niek van Sas dans l'article de ce recueil notamment. Interprétation corroborée par les écrits patriotiques de 1813-1816. Notamment *De Herkauwer*, qui entonne en fait le même air que Justus van Effen vers 1730 : à savoir que les Néerlandais doivent cesser d'imiter leurs voisins et acquérir un vrai caractère national.

¹⁰⁴ On ne connaît guère d'expressions figurées du style : une grande patrie ; une puissante patrie ; la plus grande patrie. Son registre n'est pas compétitif, mais affectif.

¹⁰⁵ Fichte, *Discours à la nation allemande*, 245 et 264.

« mère commune ». ¹⁰⁶ Pis. Au XIXe siècle, elle acquiert à la fois une âme et un corps. Du passé, elle conserve sa corporalité ; suite aux guerres et aux revendications nationales, elle acquiert sa spiritualité. Mais à la relation d'amour et de sacrifice qui était propre à la patrie, ¹⁰⁷ elle substitue un rapport de force et d'hostilité.

Tout cela ne veut pas dire bien sûr que l'ensemble des citoyens partageaient ces sentiments ou qu'ils les partageaient inconditionnellement. Pour que cela soit le cas, sans doute doit être achevée leur « nationalisation » par l'Etat. Aussi, dans la période qui nous préoccupe, la nation est-elle d'abord un sujet politique conçu dans un contexte de conflits internes, tandis que la patrie demeure un objet d'amour, à protéger contre ceux qui la menacent.

Force est en effet de constater pour ce qui concerne la période étudiée que patrie ou nation sont avant tout invoquées dans des périodes de lutte : lutte pour la reconnaissance des droits des dissidents ou contre ces dissidents justement, en faveur du roi ; luttes aristocratiques ou parlementaires ; lutte des factions ou des individus pour le pouvoir ou lutte des élites autochtones pour l'indépendance 'nationale'. Les deux concepts de patrie et de nation sont des arguments d'autorité, propres à conférer une légitimité à des actes ou à des projets. Bref, l'usage de ces notions trahit une volonté politique, même quand les valeurs associées sont culturelles et ethniques, comme chez Fichte. ¹⁰⁸ De là l'idée qu'il s'agit encore d'un discours national plus que d'un véritable nationalisme. Celui-ci ne saurait survenir qu'après qu'a été métaphorisée et sacralisée la nation *et* qu'ont été introduites des taxinomies nationales et raciales, fondées sur les pseudosciences propres au XIXe siècle: des lois sur l'hérédité à la craniologie, sans oublier le racisme d'Etat ¹⁰⁹ et surtout après que les peuples ou opinions publiques ont assimilé ces subtilités et ont consenti à entrer dans le cercle national. Une conséquence du conflit séculaire entre des adversaires en compétition, qui n'aurait pu voir le jour sans l'uniformisation et l'étatisation à l'œuvre depuis les XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles.

Quant au patriotisme, en faveur duquel plaide éloquentement Viroli, on a vu qu'il peut se doubler de bellicisme, d'impérialisme ou de « chauvinisme » – le patriotisme normatif et

¹⁰⁶ A propos de l'Allemagne, Fichte en vient même à parler de « nation-mère », ce qui avant aurait été inconcevable, *ibid.* 276.

¹⁰⁷ Et même si en période de conflits sérieux, le patriotisme devient agressif, comme sous la Renaissance ou sous la Révolution. Mais, on l'a dit, la patrie est aussi une entité spirituelle qui élève les hommes et qui suscite leur émulation. Notons encore que la nation n'a pas de diminutif affectif, contrairement à la « chère (petite) patrie ».

¹⁰⁸ Van Sas note à juste titre que la distinction entre nation-culture et nation-Etat est abusive. Les deux vont de pair. En 1815, *De Herkauwer* tente d'énumérer ce qui constitue le « volksaard » : lieu géographique, us et coutumes, langue et caractère national. Il va donc beaucoup moins loin que Jay, mais cela lui permet de croire en une union sincère entre Bataves et Belges (I, 35), puisqu'un des problèmes néerlandais de 1814-1815 était le rattachement de la Belgique catholique et francisée au royaume protestant des Pays-Bas.

¹⁰⁹ Sur le racisme d'Etat, Foucault, 76 et 227-229.

ambigu des Jacobins en est un exemple ; celui triomphaliste des Directoriaux en est un autre. Ainsi que le prouve fort bien Todorov, il n'est pas facile de mettre en œuvre le patriotisme universel, cher à Jaucourt et à Condorcet, car c'est quasiment une contradiction dans les termes. La Révolution française a été la première à devoir affronter ces apories et, après quelques hésitations, a choisi en définitive de privilégier l'intérêt de la France, tout en demeurant persuadée de l'universalité de ses principes.¹¹⁰ « La France d'abord », ce sera aussi le credo de Napoléon. A ces sentiments et priorités ; à ces usages et valeurs, qui pourraient passer pour « nationalistes », les acteurs de l'époque étaient peu pressés de conférer des étiquettes. Et quand ils l'ont fait, ils ont préféré celle plus respectable de patriotisme.¹¹¹ Il fallait être contre-révolutionnaire comme Barruel pour oser avancer le terme de nationalisme.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Todorov, 425-437. Sur le sujet, voir aussi Ch.J. Keitner, *The Paradoxes of Nationalism. The French Revolution and its meaning for Contemporary Nation Building* (New York, 2007) 87-119.

¹¹¹ Le concept de chauvinisme n'était pas encore inventé, mais il voit le jour justement durant cette période. Voir G. de Puymègue, « Le soldat Chauvin », in *Lieux de Mémoire. La Nation*, ed. P. Nora, III (Paris, 1988).

¹¹² Dans son livre à paraître sur le nation-talk, S. Englund souligne bien que le concept de « nationalisme » en tant qu'ambition ou idéologie n'est employé positivement qu'à partir de 1882 par Lavisse ; en 1889 par le journal *Le Petit Caporal* et en 1892 par Barrès.

Rachel Hammersley (Newcastle University)

Concepts of Citizenship in France c.1600-c.1850

Introduction

In France, the use and meaning of the term 'citoyen' was totally transformed between 1600 and 1850, and more especially during the course of the eighteenth century. The word itself was much more prevalent by the 1790s than it had been in the seventeenth century. Not only did its use in pamphlets and political documents increase, particularly during the second half of the eighteenth century, but by the mid-1790s it had even replaced 'Monsieur' as the common form of greeting. In addition, both the theory and practice of citizenship were transformed during this period.

Of course the French were not the only nation to experience this kind of transformation during the early modern period; the Dutch, English and American examples, in particular, are undoubtedly crucial in this respect. Yet it was perhaps in France that the transformation was most dramatic, and the implications of it most keenly felt and most fiercely debated.

As with so many of the cases discussed in this volume, there was not just one concept of citizenship in operation in France during the early modern period, but rather a number of interrelated understandings that vied against each other and became more or less dominant in relation to each other as the period progressed. In this chapter three distinct characterisations of the

concept will be explored – ancient citizenship, Bodinian citizenship and rights-based citizenship.

Ancient Citizenship

Like many European political concepts, 'citizenship' ('citoyenneté' in French) had its origins in the ancient world.¹ The ancient understanding of the concept combined two elements. In the first place, a citizen was an inhabitant of a city (both the English 'citizen' and the French 'citoyen' are derived from the Latin *civis*). However, to be a citizen in the ancient world required more than simply living in a particular place. Many other groups of people who were not classed as citizens lived in ancient Athens, Sparta and Rome – including children, women, slaves and foreign visitors. What therefore distinguished the citizens from the other inhabitants of the city-states was that they were eligible to participate in the political life of the city. As Aristotle put it: 'But the citizen whom we are seeking to define is a citizen in the strictest sense, against whom no such exception can be taken, and his special characteristic is that he shares in the administration of justice, and in offices.'² Though Aristotle was keen to make clear that citizenship differed under different forms of government, and that his definition 'is best adapted to the citizen of a democracy; but not necessarily to other states', it was the definition that endured.

¹ Richard Bellamy, following J. G. A. Pocock, distinguishes between two distinct versions of ancient citizenship – the Greek and the Imperial. It is the former that I am focusing on here, since it was the view of ancient citizenship that was prevalent in eighteenth-century France. R. Bellamy, *Citizenship: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 29.

² Aristotle, *The Politics*, translated by B. Jowitt, Book III, Part I.
<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.3.three.html> (06.06.08)

According to Charlotte Wells, this ancient concept of citizenship – filtered via Italian Renaissance theorists – was already being applied to France in the sixteenth century, by figures such as Jean Bacquet and René Choppin.³ Although it was eclipsed in the seventeenth century, Wells argues (somewhat controversially) that it was revived in the eighteenth century and went on to form the basis of the modern concept of citizenship that developed during the Enlightenment.

The ancient conception of citizenship was certainly commonplace in France during the eighteenth century. However, for the most part, it was presented as an historical concept – a feature of the ancient world. Thus many of the references to citizenship in the works of eighteenth-century authors (especially in the first half of the century) were concerned with the politically active inhabitants of ancient states. Moreover, definitions of the term ‘citoyen’ in dictionaries and works of reference usually included some discussion of Greek or Roman citizens. For example, in the 1702 edition of his *Dictionnaire royal, François et Anglois* Abel Boyer referred to ‘Les Citoyens de l’ancienne Rome’.⁴ Similarly, in his article ‘Citoyen’ in the *Encyclopédie* Denis Diderot devoted a considerable amount of space to discussing the requirements for citizenship in ancient Athens and Rome.⁵

³ C. C. Wells, *Law and Citizenship in Early Modern France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

⁴ A. Boyer, *Dictionnaire royal, François et Anglois* (The Hague, 1702), II, p. 114.

⁵ D. Diderot, ‘Citizen’, in *The Encyclopedia of Diderot and d’Alembert: Collaborative Translation Project*. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-index?c=did;cc=did;q1=citizen;rgn=main;view=text;idno=did2222.0000.070> (06.06.08)

It was also this concept of citizenship that was at the heart of Montesquieu's understanding of republican government in *De L'Esprit des Lois*. He famously defined republican government as '*that in which the people as a body, or only a part of the people, have sovereign power*'.⁶ He then went on to demonstrate that it was a form of government associated with the small city-states of the ancient world. The examples to which he referred to illustrate his account were almost all from Athens, Sparta or Rome.⁷ Moreover, he insisted that such a system of government was not compatible with large states or with other circumstances of the modern world.⁸

Of course, there were certain places within the modern world in which the ancient conception of citizenship supposedly still applied. Perhaps the most familiar for eighteenth-century French writers was Geneva. In his article on Geneva in the *Encyclopédie*, Jean d'Alembert distinguished between four different classes of inhabitants: the citizens, the bourgeois, the residents and the natives. Only the first two groups enjoyed any kind of political rights and only the former were truly citizens according to Aristotle's definition of the term:

the *citizens* who are the sons of bourgeois and were born in the city; they alone can become magistrates. The *bourgeois* who are the sons of bourgeois or of citizens but were born in a foreign country, or who are foreigners to whom the magistracy has granted the rights of bourgeois, which it has the power to do; these can be members of the

⁶ Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, ed. A. Cohler, B. Miller and H. Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 10.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 124 and 37.

General Council and even of the *Grand Conseil*, called the “Council of the Two Hundred”.⁹

Geneva also provided the model for Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s account of citizenship. In *Du Contrat Social* he emphasised both its city-state focus and its political component. For Rousseau the crucial role of a citizen was participation in the making of the laws and according to him it was the assembled citizen body that was responsible for enacting legislation:

The Sovereign, having no other force than the legislative power, acts only by means of the laws, and the laws being nothing but authentic acts of the general will, the Sovereign can act only when the people is assembled. The people assembled, it will be said! What a chimera! It is a chimera today, but it was not so two thousand years ago: Have men changed in nature?¹⁰

Of course, the term ‘citoyen’ also continued to be used in eighteenth-century France to refer to the inhabitants of cities that were not city-states – such as those within France itself. Thus, Boyer in his dictionary also used citizen as a synonym for ‘Bourgeois’, which he defined as, ‘habitant d’une Ville’, and alongside ‘*Les Citoyens de l’ancienne Rome*’ he also spoke of ‘*Les Citoyens de Londres*’.¹¹ Though this appellation probably did imply some kind of involvement in the political, economic or cultural life of the city, it clearly represented a dilution of the original ancient meaning of the term.

Bodinian Citizenship

⁹ J. D’Alembert, ‘Geneva’, in *The Encyclopedia of Diderot and d’Alembert: Collaborative Translation Project*. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=did:cc=did;q1=Geneva;rgn=main;view=text;idno=did2222.0000.150> (06.06.08).

¹⁰ J. J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, ed. V. Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 110.

¹¹ It is interesting to note that Boyer’s dictionary did not include an entry for ‘Citoyen’, though he did have an English entry ‘Citizen’ the French equivalent was ‘Bourgeois’.

An alternative to the ancient conception of citizenship was available from the end of the sixteenth century, courtesy of Jean Bodin. In his *Six Livres de la République* of 1576 Bodin had overturned both the city-focus and the political component of citizenship that were central to the ancient understanding. One of his aims in redefining the term had been precisely to shift the loyalties of the inhabitants of France from the local to the national.¹² Bodin was able to do this because he also drained citizenship of its political content. It is true that on Bodin's account the term 'citoyen' was used to describe the head of the household when he left his house and domestic affairs to enter the city and to engage in public affairs.¹³ However, the nature of that engagement was limited. Bodin explicitly challenged Aristotle's definition of a citizen as a 'partaker of the offices of government, of giving of voices in the consultations of the people, whether it be in matters of judgement, or affairs of the state'.¹⁴ Instead he defined a citizen as '*A free subject holding of the soveraigntie of another man*' and insisted that citizenship involved the mutual obligation between subject and sovereign – the obedience of the one in exchange for the protection of the other: 'everie Citisen is a subject, some small part of his libertie being diminished by the majestie of him to whome he oweth obeysance.'¹⁵

According to Rousseau, this apolitical, Bodinian conception of citizenship, which had been dominant during the seventeenth century, remained all too

¹² U. K. Preuss, 'The ambiguous meaning of citizenship', p. 7.
<http://ccc.uchicago.edu/docs/preuss.pdf> (06.06.08).

¹³ J. Bodin, *The Six Bookes of the Common-weale* (London, 1606), I, vi, p. 47.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I, vi, p. 53.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, I, vi, pp. 47 and 48.

prevalent in eighteenth-century France. In *Du Contrat Social* he reasserted the ancient political conception of the term against the Bodinian alternative:

The true sense of this word [City] is almost entirely effaced among the moderns; most take a city for a City, and a bourgeois for a Citizen. They do not know that houses make the city but Citizens make the City. This same error once cost the Carthaginians dear. I have not read that the subjects of any Prince were ever given the title *Cives*, not even the Macedonians in ancient times nor, in our days, the English, although they are closer to freedom than all the others. Only the French assume the name *Citizen* casually, because they have no genuine idea of it, as can be seen in their Dictionaries; otherwise they would be committing the crime of Lese-Majesty in usurping it: for them this name expresses a virtue and not a right. When Bodin wanted to speak of our Citizens and Bourgeois, he committed a bad blunder in taking the one for the other. M. d'Alembert made no mistake about it, and in his article *Geneva* he correctly distinguished the four orders of men (even five, if simple foreigners are included) there are in our city, and only two of which make up the Republic. No other French author has to my knowledge, understood the true meaning of the word *Citizen*.¹⁶

Yet, even after the publication of *Du Contrat Social*, the Bodinian concept remained popular – especially among those involved in governing France. As Louis XV made clear in 1766, in his response to attempts by the *Parlements* to exercise a role in legislation as representatives of the nation, sovereign power resided ultimately in him:

It is in my person alone that sovereign power resides ... it is from me alone that my courts hold their existence and their authority ... public order in its entirety emanates from me, and my people forms one with me, and the rights and interests of the nation, of which people are daring to make a body separate from the monarch, are necessarily united with mine and repose only in my hands.¹⁷

¹⁶ Rousseau, *Social Contract*, p. 51.

¹⁷ As quoted in C. Jones, *The Great Nation: France from Louis XV to Napoleon* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2002), p. 263.

In the course of the next decade or so, the prevailing attitude would be completely transformed. That transformation was the result of the development of a third conception of citizenship.

Rights-Based Citizenship

As the label would suggest, according to the rights-based conception of citizenship, citizens were defined as the possessors of certain rights. This conception shared something in common with the Bodinian version in that it too made it possible to conceive of citizens of a nation rather than just a city-state, and it did not necessarily require citizens to engage in political participation. However, the way in which it was developed in the eighteenth century often did involve a political component, and it can thus also be viewed as an attempt to make the ancient conception of citizenship workable in the large states of the modern world.¹⁸

Diderot enunciated the rights-based conception of citizenship in his *Encyclopédie* article 'Citoyen', in a way that brought out some of the ambiguities inherent in the concept. Though he made reference to citizenship in the ancient world – and even cited Aristotle's definition – Diderot also accepted that the word had a contemporary meaning and did not question the idea of citizenship on a national scale. His initial definition of the term centred on the idea of the possession of certain rights and freedoms:

¹⁸ This version of citizenship had its origins in the legal conception of citizenship that was developed in imperial Rome.

A citizen is someone who is a member of a free society with many families, who shares in the rights of this society, *and* who benefits from these freedoms ... Someone who has been divested of these rights and freedoms has stopped being a citizen. One accords the title to women, young children, and servants, only as family members of a citizen, ..., but they are not truly *citizens*.¹⁹

However, Diderot made no explicit mention of political rights and he went on to insist that Aristotle's strict political definition of the term was only applicable in pure democracies.

This idea that citizenship could involve the possession of civil, but not political rights, survived into the Revolution, and was even enacted by the National Assembly. According to a law passed in December 1789, men who were either under the age of 25 or who paid less than 3 *livres* a year in tax were to be labelled passive citizens. While they were to be entitled to the civil rights that had been set out in the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* they were not entitled to the political rights of voting in elections, being eligible for political office or participating in the National Guard. These passive citizens were distinguished from active citizens who did enjoy political rights. The origins of the revolutionary notion of active citizenship lay in the development, during the course of the eighteenth century, of a version of rights-based citizenship that did include a political dimension.

Reviving the Political Dimension of Citizenship

From the early seventeenth century France was an absolute monarchy and most of those outside the Court had no political role. Nonetheless, there were

¹⁹ Diderot, 'Citoyen', in *The Encyclopedia*.

those who believed that France's inhabitants ought to have a say in political affairs. Such arguments were most commonly associated with appeals back to an ancient French constitution and with calls for the resurrection of the Estates-General, which had not been convoked since 1614.²⁰ Though originally developed by sixteenth-century Huguenot resistance theorists such as François Hotman, the eighteenth-century version of ancient constitutionalism owed much to Henri de Boulainvilliers, and other advocates of the *thèse nobiliaire*, who wrote in the final years and immediate aftermath of Louis XIV's reign.

Boulainvilliers sought to demonstrate that the Franks, who had conquered Gaul at the time of the collapse of the Roman Empire, had been a free and equal warrior people who had chosen their kings and shared in rule with them.²¹ The system had been corrupted over time, but was restored under Charlemagne. Through this historical analysis, Boulainvilliers sought to demonstrate that absolutism had been a later innovation within the French polity. On this basis he argued that the nobility ought to reclaim their traditional role within the government and he argued for the restoration of the assemblies of the nation.

²⁰ On the uses made of the ancient constitution see J. K. Wright, 'The Idea of a Republican Constitution in Old Régime France', in M. van Gelderen and Q. Skinner (eds), *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage. Volume I: Republicanism and Constitutionalism in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 289-306.

²¹ H. de Boulainvilliers, *Histoire de l'ancien gouvernement de la France, avec XIV Lettres historiques sur les parlements où états généraux* (Amsterdam and The Hague, 1727). On Boulainvilliers see H. A. Ellis, *Boulainvilliers and the French Monarchy: Aristocratic Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988).

Though it was viewed as radical and dangerous at the time, Boulainvilliers's theory remained wedded to the aristocratic and corporatist conception of French society that prevailed in the late medieval and early modern periods. Boulainvilliers's 'citizens' were also nobles, and they were entitled to participate in politics not on the grounds of natural rights, but rather because of the privileges attached to their status. It was only in the mid-eighteenth century, in the works of writers like Gabriel Bonnot de Mably and Guillaume-Joseph Saige, that appeals to an ancient constitution, and calls for the revival of the Estates-General, were yoked to a notion of natural rights and applied to the nation as a whole.

Historical examples, and the theoretical arguments of Boulainvilliers, were not the only models on which those wanting to revive the political component of French citizenship could draw. There also existed a relevant eighteenth-century example. According to contemporary accounts, the form of government that had been imposed by the Franks in Gaul was very similar to that which had been established by the Saxons across the Channel in England. However, whereas in France it had been undermined by absolutism, in England it had evolved gradually into the parliamentary system. Though the English model had itself been threatened by absolutism in the seventeenth century, new life had been breathed into it with the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89.²² As Montesquieu put it in *De L'Esprit des Loïs*: 'If one wants to read

²² This was the view of the Real Whigs. See, for example, the 1721 edition of Robert Molesworth's English translation of Hotman's *Franco-gallia*. F. Hotman, *Franco-Gallia: or, an account of the ancient free state of France and most other parts of Europe, before the loss of their liberties*, 2nd edition (London, 1721). The same view was popularised in France through the works of viscount Bolingbroke.

the admirable work by Tacitus, *On the Mores of the Germans*, one will see that the English have taken their idea of political government from the Germans. This fine system was found in the forests.’²³

Mably was well aware of the British model and drew on it directly in his significantly named *Des Droits et des Devoirs du Citoyen*.²⁴ The work takes the form of a series of letters recalling conversations between their French author and an Englishman called Milord Stanhope, who is the embodiment of an eighteenth-century British commonwealthman.²⁵ In the first letter, the Frenchman notes that his ancestors had once enjoyed the same liberties as the English, but: ‘Our forefathers sold their liberty, gave it away, or allowed it to be destroyed.’²⁶ As the work goes on Stanhope gradually convinces his companion that the French could imitate and even surpass the English by reviving the Estates-General and reclaiming their political rights.²⁷

On one level, Mably’s notion of citizenship was very broad. As Stanhope explained: ‘Every man, with the exception of those who are insane or criminal,

²³ Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, pp. 165-6.

²⁴ For more detailed accounts of Mably’s work see K. M. Baker, ‘A script for a French Revolution: the political consciousness of the abbé Mably’, in K. M. Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 86-106; and J. K. Wright, *A Classical Republican in Eighteenth-Century France: The Political Thought of Mably* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

²⁵ C. A. Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1959, 1968, 1987). On French usage of British commonwealth ideas, including that of Mably, see: R. Hammersley, *The English Republican Tradition and Eighteenth-Century France: Between the Ancients and the Moderns* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).

²⁵ Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, pp. 165-6

²⁶ G. B. de Mably, *Des Droits et des Devoirs du Citoyen*, ed. J-L. Lecercle (Paris: Marcel Didier, 1972), p. 7. See also p. 122.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 151-2 and 162.

must be a citizen, when he lives among men who have laws.'²⁸ The implication was that in the absence of a formal political role, the rights and duties of the citizen consisted in watching over the government and taking action if it appeared to be operating contrary to the public interest. However, Mably also argued that part of France's problem was the lack of formal political engagement by the citizen body. In the course of the work he thus elaborated a richer sense of the political component of citizenship.

Mably's ideal form of government was a communal republic similar to that of ancient Sparta. He accepted, however, that such a system was not workable in a large, modern, nation such as Britain or France. Consequently, his aim in *Des Droits et des Devoirs du Citoyen* was to sketch out the best system of government that could be accommodated to those circumstances – and to describe the various stages of the 'révolution ménagée' by which the French might attain it.²⁹ He argued that the *Paris Parlement* ought to use the opportunity presented by one of its, now common, conflicts with the court, to spark the reform process by calling for the convocation of the Estates-General.

Mably believed that sovereign power originated with the people and his reform proposals were aimed at returning it to them.³⁰ This would ensure that the laws were wise and that they operated in the public interest.³¹ He thus

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

²⁹ Mably's account of the means by which this 'révolution ménagée' would occur is set out on pp. 152-178.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 102-3.

counselled that once the Estates-General had been revived it ought to seize legislative power for itself.³² While unlike Rousseau, Mably had no problem with the use of representatives to exercise legislative power on behalf of the people, he was concerned that in practice the executive might override the decisions of the legislature.³³ The solution to this problem was to hold regular meetings of both the national and provincial assemblies:

These general assemblies should meet at least once every three years, but [in addition] each province should have its own Estates that should meet annually and, if possible, at different times, so that the executive power is constantly under the surveillance of a powerful body that is ready, if need be, to sound the alarm.³⁴

Mably wrote *Des Droits et des Devoirs du Citoyen* before the publication of Rousseau's *Du Contrat Social* in 1762. Just over a decade later, Saïge produced his *Catéchisme du citoyen* in which he effectively amalgamated the political theory of Rousseau with the historical arguments found in Mably's work.³⁵ Written in the aftermath of Chancellor Maupeou's coup, which was widely seen as symbolising the despotic nature of Louis XV's government, Saïge's work took the form of a political catechism on 'le Droit Public Français'. Saïge adopted Rousseau's distinction between sovereignty and government and insisted that the former must reside in the body of the

³² *Ibid.*, p. 188.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 190-1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

³⁵ On Saïge see K. M. Baker, 'French political thought at the accession of Louis XVI' and 'A classical republican in eighteenth-century Bordeaux: Guillaume-Joseph Saïge', in Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, pp. 109-127 and 128-152.

people.³⁶ By contrast with Rousseau in *Du Contrat Social*, however, Saige insisted that popular sovereignty was workable in a large, nation state.³⁷

In fact, Rousseau had acknowledged this himself just a couple of years earlier. In 1772 he published his *Considérations sur le Gouvernement de Pologne*, in which he applied the theory set out in *Du Contrat Social* to that nation.³⁸ In this work, he explained how measures such as adopting a federal structure and introducing a system of binding mandates might be used to render popular sovereignty a reality even in a large, modern state such as Poland.

This was precisely the solution that Saige adopted for France. In Chapter Nine of *Catéchisme du citoyen*, he described the commons or Third Estate as being divided into a number of communes or little republics.³⁹ The citizens of each commune would gather together to legislate for their own community, to choose magistrates to exercise executive power within that community, and to elect deputies to represent them in the Estates-General. Moreover, like Rousseau, Saige also insisted that those deputies should be bound by the views of their constituents.⁴⁰

Just like Mably, Saige supported his claims not only with theoretical reasoning, but also with evidence drawn from French history: 'we learn [from

³⁶ G. J. Saige, *Catéchisme du Citoyen, ou Éléments du Droit Public Français. Par Demandes & Réponses* (Geneva, 1787), p. 9.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

³⁸ J. J. Rousseau, *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, in *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, pp. 177-260.

³⁹ Saige, *Catéchisme du Citoyen*, p. 105.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

Tacitus] that among the [Frankish] nations, legislative power lay in the body of the citizens, that their leaders only had the right to propose laws in the public assemblies and to execute those that had already been made'.⁴¹ This system, Saige acknowledged, had been corrupted over time as the Frankish kings and nobles had usurped the rights of the commons, but Charlemagne had restored the assemblies to their original form.⁴² It was at this point that the extent of the population and territory had necessitated the introduction of representation:

It was difficult, if not impossible, for all to gather together in the general council. Consequently, he established that each county or district of the monarchy would elect a certain number of deputies who would represent it and vote for it in the assembly of the *Champ-de-Mai*.⁴³

Later on the Estates-General had taken over the role of these assemblies, and it was this body that Saige wanted to see revived in his own time.

While, unlike Mably, Saige did not explicitly draw the English parallel in his work, there is evidence to suggest that he may have recognised it. Keith Baker claims that his use of the term 'commons' as a synonym for the Third Estate implied a parallel with the English House of Commons.⁴⁴ More explicit evidence exists in the correspondence of the historian Catharine Macaulay. In 1785, Saige proposed Macaulay as a corresponding member of the Musée de

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-6.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁴⁴ Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, p. 148.

Bordeaux, a local philosophical society to which he belonged.⁴⁵ In a letter that he wrote to her on 14 September of that year, to accompany her certificate of membership, he noted that the citizens of England were better off than those in France, in that they enjoyed both civil liberty and a larger portion of political liberty.⁴⁶

Along with his letter, Saige also sent Macaulay a copy of the second edition of his *Catéchisme du citoyen*, which he was about to publish.⁴⁷ It was not only Saige's work that appeared in the late 1780s. Though written much earlier, Mably's *Des Droits et des Devoirs du Citoyen* was published, for the first time, in 1789. It is, therefore, not surprising that the ideas concerning citizenship developed in these works found echoes during the Revolution.

Citizenship and the French Revolution

It was no coincidence that one of the first acts of the newly formed National Assembly was to draw up and proclaim the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*.⁴⁸ While the outbreak of the Revolution followed with uncanny accuracy the proposals for a 'révolution ménagée' outlined by Mably, the way in which citizenship was conceived by leading revolutionaries was more in line with Saige in its amalgamation of Rousseauian and traditional French

⁴⁵ The Gilder Lehrman Collection on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, The Catharine Macaulay Graham Papers (1763-1830), GLC 1794. 28 L'Abbé Sicard, 14 September 1785.

⁴⁶ GLC 1794.29 Saige to Macaulay, 14 September 1785.

⁴⁷ It eventually appeared in 1787 and went through several editions during 1788.

⁴⁸ For discussion of some of the debates surrounding citizenship during the Revolution see R. Waldinger, P. Dawson and I. Woloch (eds), *The French Revolution and the Meaning of Citizenship* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993). On the Declaration of Rights itself see D. Van Kley, *The French Idea of Freedom: The Old Regime and the Declaration of Rights of 1789* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994) and Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, pp. 252-305.

practices. However, the revolutionaries took these ideas a step further by developing the notion that each of the deputies of the Third Estate represented the nation as a whole, not just their own constituents.

In his pamphlet *Vues sur les moyens* Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès began by defining citizenship in distinctly Rousseauian terms:

In general, any citizen deprived of the right to consult his own interests, to deliberate, and to impose laws upon himself is rightly taken to be a serf. It follows that the right to consult its own interests, to deliberate, and to impose laws upon itself must necessarily belong to the nation.⁴⁹

As this passage makes clear, Sieyès was concerned with a nation rather than a city-state. He was well aware of the problems involved in instituting this notion of citizenship in a large state: 'As the number of citizens increases it becomes difficult or impossible for them to assemble to hear each individual will and then reconcile their differences to form a general will.'⁵⁰ To solve the problem Sieyès, like Saige, began by proposing that the nation be divided into smaller units. As he explained: 'Since the totality of citizens either cannot, or will not, assemble together in a single place, the totality has to be divided into districts and each district has, by agreement, to nominate a proportional number of deputies.'⁵¹ Unlike Saige, however, Sieyès firmly rejected the idea of binding mandates:

⁴⁹ E. J. Sieyès, *Views of the Executive Means Available to the Representatives of France in 1789*, in *Sieyès: Political Writings*, ed. M. Sonenscher (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003), p. 9.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

it soon becomes clear that delegating a number of simple vote carriers is essentially vicious, because those selected as deputies, obliged to adhere scrupulously to the commission of those who mandated them, often find themselves unable to agree, making it impossible to extract a common will from the totality of votes....

All this leads the community to give its mandatories more confidence. It gives them a proxy enabling them to meet, to deliberate, to reconcile their views, and to come to a common will, so that it now has genuine representatives instead of simple vote carriers.⁵²

Thus Sieyès ended up dismissing Rousseau's hostility to representation, embracing it as the means of making the political aspect of citizenship workable in a large nation such as France.

As a leading revolutionary, Sieyès was in a position to turn his ideas into reality. Soon after he wrote *Vues sur les moyens* the elections to the Estates-General were held and France's inhabitants were given the opportunity to engage in political participation for the first time in a hundred and seventy-five years. However, despite the significance of the revival of the Estates-General it still embodied the old-fashioned corporatist conception of the French realm and the idea of deputies as delegates rather than representatives. The pamphlets that Sieyès published in early 1789 did much to counter these views. Both they and their author played a role in bringing about the establishment of the National Assembly on 17 June 1789, which transformed the practice of citizenship in France into something that was both national and political.⁵³

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

⁵³ Of course, as Michael Fitzsimmons notes, subsequent events also played a part in this transformation – not least the renunciation of privileges during the night of 4 August 1789 and the official abolition of orders within the National Assembly on 15 October 1789. M. P.

Not surprisingly, the implementation of a rights-based conception of citizenship in France raised a whole new set of problems. In particular, the emphasis on natural rights raised the question of who was to be included in, and excluded from, citizenship – and on what grounds. At the same time, the emphasis on the political component of citizenship raised the practical problem of how political participation could be rendered both meaningful and workable in the context of a large nation state.

Citizens and Non-Citizens

Citizenship had always been an exclusive category. Citizens were defined in relation to those who were not citizens and even in the ancient world only a small minority of the inhabitants of a city-state had been granted citizen status. This was related to the view of citizenship as a privilege. Aristotle, for example, had spoken in terms of the 'special characteristic' that distinguished citizens from other inhabitants of the state. In presenting citizenship as a right, rather than a privilege, the revolutionaries brought into question the grounds on which certain inhabitants could be excluded from it.

The elections to the Estates-General had involved a relatively wide franchise, by the standards of the day. Attendance at the Primary Assemblies for the election of deputies of the Third Estate was restricted to men over the age of 25, who were French (or had been naturalised) who lived locally and

were listed in the tax rolls.⁵⁴ The property qualification was upped slightly in December 1789 when the distinction between active and passive citizens was introduced and when further restrictions were placed on who could become a deputy in the National Assembly. Under the Constitution of 1791 the property qualification was increased further, but the *marc d'argent* qualification for deputies was dropped.

One of the few deputies to express unease at the proposed divisions within the citizen body, was Maximilien Robespierre. In a speech given to the National Assembly on 22 October 1789 he protested at the new 'conditions of eligibility' that were being proposed. Citing the *Déclaration des droits* and its assertion of an end to privileges, distinctions and exceptions, he insisted that: 'All citizens, whoever they are, have the right to aspire to all levels of office-holding.' He went on:

The Constitution establishes that sovereignty resides in the people, in all the individuals of the people. Each individual therefore has the right to participate in making the law which governs him and in the administration of the public good which is his own. If not, it is not true that all men are equal in rights, that every man is a citizen.⁵⁵

Though Robespierre was ignored at the time, his view eventually prevailed. The distinction between active and passive citizens was abolished on 11 August 1792. The elections to the National Convention that followed were conducted on the basis of the most extensive franchise ever. To vote in those

⁵⁴ Colin Jones has suggested that the effect of this property qualification was minimal. C. Jones, *The Longman Companion to the French Revolution* (London: Longman, 1988), p. 63.

⁵⁵ M. Robespierre, 'Speech of Robespierre Denouncing the New Conditions of Eligibility, October 22, 1789', in *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History*, ed. L. Hunt (Boston and New York: Bedford and St Martin's, 1996), p. 83.

elections one simply had to be male, over the age of 21, resident in France for at least a year, in work or living off a private income and not a servant. The franchise adopted in the Constitution of 1793 was similarly extensive. Had its implementation not been interrupted by the adoption of 'Revolutionary Government' it would have imposed universal manhood suffrage for all over the age of 21 who had been born and lived in France, as well as to foreigners who fulfilled certain conditions. Moreover, according to this Constitution not only did all citizens have the right to attend their local Primary Assembly, but they were also eligible for higher office.

The emphasis on rights-based citizenship not only prompted a questioning of the property qualification, but also led to challenges on behalf of other excluded groups. Protestants were granted full citizenship on 24 December 1789 and Sephardic Jews followed on 28 January 1790, though other Jewish groups had to wait until September 1791.⁵⁶

The question of female citizenship was also raised. The *Journal de la Société de 1789* for July 1790 included an article by the marquis de Condorcet entitled 'Sur l'Admission des femmes au droit de cité'. Condorcet insisted that the revolutionaries had violated their own principles in establishing the common rights of men, without also according those rights to

⁵⁶ S. M. Singham, 'Betwixt Cattle and Men: Jews, Blacks, and Women, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man', in Van Kley (ed.), *The French Idea of Freedom* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 118-22. The small Jewish community based in Avignon were also enfranchised in January 1790, but not the Ashkenazic communities in Alsace, Lorraine and Metz or those based in Paris.

women.⁵⁷ In order to justify their exclusion, Condorcet insisted, it was necessary to prove either that the rights of women were not the same as those of men, or that women were not capable of exercising them. He went on to argue that both these premises were false. The rights of men, he insisted, were based simply on their status as 'rational and sentient beings, susceptible of acquiring ideas of morality, and of reasoning concerning those ideas' women possessed exactly the same qualities, and therefore the same rights.⁵⁸ The argument that women were incapable of exercising the rights of citizenship was also difficult to sustain, unless a large proportion of the male population was also excluded from citizenship. Condorcet then refuted in turn each of the common arguments against assigning women political rights.

A year after Condorcet's article had appeared, Olympe de Gouges also put the case for female enfranchisement. Where Condorcet had emphasised the equality between women and men, her argument was based on the differences between the sexes.⁵⁹ Her *Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne*, echoed the format and language of the *Déclaration* of 1789, but corrected it by adding women to the picture.⁶⁰ In line with the official *Déclaration* she declared women to be born free and to be equal in rights to men. She then went on to accord them not just the civil, but also the political rights, granted to men in their declaration (Article 6). Elsewhere she highlighted the huge inequalities in the treatment of women: they could mount

⁵⁷ Condorcet, *On the Admission of Women to the Rights of Citizenship*, translated by A. Drysdale Vickery (Letchworth: Garden City Press, 1912), p. 5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁵⁹ Singham, 'Betwixt Cattle and Men', pp. 140-2.

⁶⁰ Olympe de Gouges, *The Rights of Women*, in *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795: Selected Documents Translated with notes and Commentary*, ed. D. Gay Levy, H. B. Applewhite, M. Durham Johnson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), pp. 87-96.

the scaffold, but not the rostrum (Article 10); they were expected to pay equal taxes, but did not have a right to hold political office (Article 13). Moreover, she added to Article 16 by stating: 'The constitution is null if the majority of individuals comprising the nation have not cooperated in drafting it'.

Both De Gouges and Condorcet also expressed concern about another group who were initially excluded from French citizenship. In her *Déclaration*, De Gouges drew a parallel between the treatment of women and that of slaves in the French colonies, and both she and Condorcet campaigned for the abolition of slavery.⁶¹ Not surprisingly the emphasis placed by the revolutionaries on the rights of man prompted a debate over this issue and led various colonial groups, including slaves, to voice their own claims for citizenship rights.⁶² A number of key figures, including Condorcet and his friend Jacques-Pierre Brissot, were already concerned about the incompatibility between slavery and Enlightenment values before the outbreak of the Revolution. The *Société des amis des noirs* was founded by Brissot in 1788 and slavery also figured in a number of the *cahiers* sent to the Estates-General, perhaps prompted by an essay by Condorcet on the subject that was sent out to electoral districts.⁶³ However, it was the arrival in Paris of a delegation of seventeen colonists from Saint-Domingue demanding admission

⁶¹ De Gouges, *The Rights of Women*. De Gouges had also written a play that dealt with the issue of slavery. It was performed at the Comédie Française in the autumn of 1789. Singham, 'Betwixt Cattle and Men', p. 137. Condorcet's best-known work on this subject was published under the name of M. Schwartz. [Condorcet], *Réflexions sur l'esclavage des nègres* (Paris, 1781).

⁶² L. Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipations in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

⁶³ L. Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press, 2004), p. 73. See also F. Richardson Keller, 'Introductory Essay', in A. J. Cooper, *Slavery and the French Revolutionists (1788-1805)*, (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), pp. 16-17.

to the Constituent Assembly that brought the issue of slavery (and the complex question of the rights of Saint-Domingue's various social groups) to the forefront of revolutionary concerns.⁶⁴ When nine of the delegates participated in the Tennis Court Oath, their right to representation was accepted in principle, but disagreement ensued over how many deputies the colony was entitled to send and this raised the controversial issue of whether the delegates represented just the white inhabitants of the island or the blacks as well.⁶⁵

The issue became more complicated on 22 October, when a delegation of freemen of colour arrived at the Constituent Assembly. Inspired by the debates taking place, they insisted that they too should be represented, a demand that was endorsed by the *Amis des noirs*. This group raised a particular issue for the Assembly, since many of them owned property and so could not be excluded from citizenship on the usual grounds of 'dependence'.⁶⁶ Legislation was eventually drawn up in March 1790, but its vagueness on the crucial question of whether free men of colour were to be included among the ranks of active citizens prompted an open debate on the question. By the autumn, the Constituent Assembly was seeking to avoid the issue, decreeing on 12 October that it was up to the colonial assemblies to request clear legislation on the status of persons within the colonies. Vacillation continued throughout 1791, but on 4 April 1792, under the new

⁶⁴ Cooper, *Slavery and the French Revolutionists*, p. 49.

⁶⁵ Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, pp. 74-5.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

Girondin Ministry, the Legislative Assembly declared equality of political rights for all men of colour and free blacks.⁶⁷

The slave revolt in Saint-Domingue brought further concessions. On 21 June 1793 Léger Félicité Sonthonax promised the insurgent slaves their liberty and citizenship if they would fight for the republican army and on 29 August he declared the end of slavery in the northern province. Following this on 23 September elections were held in which white, mulatto and black deputies were chosen.⁶⁸ The appearance of these deputies at the National Convention prompted the abolition of slavery in all French colonies on 4 February 1794. Significantly, slaves were not simply granted their liberty, but were also immediately to enjoy all the rights associated with French citizenship.⁶⁹

In his commentary on this paper, Terence Ball raised the interesting question of whether the rise of colonialism actually helped to bring about the move towards the enfranchisement of the lower orders in France by creating a new underclass – ensuring that the crucial distinction within society was no longer between different orders, but between citizens and slaves. Logical as this might seem, it does not appear to work in the French case since for the most part those who were in favour of extending political participation, were also advocates of the abolition of slavery. However, there is evidence of this

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 130. Men of colour, mulattoes and blacks within France itself had already been granted citizenship alongside the Ashkenazic Jews in September 1791. Singham, 'Betwixt Cattle and Men', p. 122.

⁶⁸ Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens*, p. 159.

⁶⁹ Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, pp. 163-5. However, in this case as in others, these rights and liberties were often restricted in practice. See, in particular, Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens*.

kind of logic operating in Saint-Domingue itself. In the elections held in February 1790 all blacks, including those who owned property, were excluded from the franchise. However, votes were granted to all whites who had lived in the colony for at least a year, a far more extensive suffrage than that enjoyed in France at the time. Laurent Dubois has suggestively described this as 'democratization based on racism'.⁷⁰

Political Participation in a Large Modern State

The other problem that arose out of the adoption of the rights-based conception of citizenship was how political participation could be made both meaningful and workable in the context of a large nation state. Not all revolutionaries were as comfortable as Sieyès about embracing representative government. For example, members of the Cordeliers Club recognised that adopting the representative system involved diluting the political content of citizenship to the extent that it no longer fulfilled its essential function (of allowing the citizen body direct involvement in the legislative process).⁷¹ Thus, while acknowledging that some element of representation was essential in a large state such as France, the Cordeliers sought means by which the actions and decisions of the representatives (or delegates as they preferred to call them) could be placed under the control of

⁷⁰ Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, p. 78.

⁷¹ For a more detailed discussion of the Cordeliers and their ideas on citizenship see R. Hammersley, *French Revolutionaries and English Republicans: The Cordeliers Club, 1790-1794* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2005), especially pp. 15-55.

the people. Following Rousseau, they called for binding mandates, but in addition they also advocated the popular ratification of laws.⁷²

As early as 1790 one of the leading members of the Club, Pierre-François Robert, put forward the idea of the popular ratification of laws in his pamphlet *Républicanisme adapté à la France*. Responding to the objection that the French nation was too large for such a system to work, Robert argued that with the division of France into departments, districts, cantons, municipalities and sections, it would be no more difficult to assemble people for the purpose of sanctioning laws than it was to assemble them to name their representatives.⁷³

The most detailed version of this proposal was René Girardin's *Discours sur la nécessité de la ratification de la loi, par la volonté générale*, which was delivered to the Club on 7 June 1791. Girardin presented the popular ratification of laws as necessary to the fulfilment of the *Déclaration des droits*:

In order for the law really to be the practical expression [of the general will], it is necessary that all the citizens can take part in its formation, following their inalienable right and solemnly proclaimed by article 6 of the declaration of the rights of man and of the citizen.

This precious right is, both the essence, and the very existence of sovereignty; the nation cannot therefore lose it, nor delegate it, without relinquishing its sovereignty too.

⁷² On binding mandates see C. Desmoulins, *Les Révolutions de France et de Brabant* (Paris, 1789-1791), VII, p. 109. The Cordeliers position offers a striking parallel to that of the Dutch patriots sketched by Wyger Velema in his contribution to this volume.

⁷³ P. F. Robert, *Le Républicanisme adapté à la France* (Paris, 1790), p. 88 and see also pp. 93-4.

The necessity of the ratification of the laws by the general will is, therefore, such a crucial point that it is precisely, gentlemen ... that it is absolutely the *ça ira* of the declaration of the rights of man and of the citizen.⁷⁴

In the second half of his speech Girardin demonstrated the means by which the popular ratification of laws might be rendered workable in France. The Cordeliers were so impressed that they called for the printing and distribution of the speech and the published version includes their endorsement of Girardin's proposal.⁷⁵ Of course, as with the idea of creating female citizens, this proposal was never considered by the National Assembly. Nonetheless, it is a measure of how far France had come since the reign of Louis XIV that such proposals were being publicly discussed by 1791.

From Napoleon to 1848

The transformation of theoretical understandings of French citizenship had effectively been enacted by the mid-1790s, but subsequently the practice of citizenship narrowed again. The Constitution of 1795 constituted a retrograde step, with the reintroduction of a property qualification and the inclusion (albeit without immediate effect) of a literacy requirement. During the early nineteenth century citizenship ebbed and flowed with the rise and fall of the various political regimes.

Under the rule of Napoleon, citizenship remained relatively extensive in theory, but became much more limited in practice. The Constitution of 1800

⁷⁴ R. Girardin, *Discours de René Girardin sur la nécessité de la ratification de la loi, par la volonté générale* (Paris, [1791]), p. 4.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

introduced a system of adult male suffrage, with just a one-year residence qualification, and the Civil Code of 1804 clearly set out the rights and duties of citizens on a whole host of matters and embodied both equality before the law and careers open to talent. However, in practice, the extent of popular participation was compromised by a system of indirect elections and electoral lists, and fresh elections were not held for over a year.⁷⁶ Even the seemingly democratic plebiscite used to ratify the new Constitution was fundamentally flawed.⁷⁷ In the judicial sphere too Bonaparte imposed his centralising and top-down approach to affairs – removing almost completely the practice of electing local officials.⁷⁸ Moreover in the case of women, the effect of the Civil Code was to reduce their legal rights and increase patriarchal power over them – particularly with regard to divorce.⁷⁹ Bonaparte was also responsible for the reintroduction of slavery in the French colonies with his decree of 20 March 1803.

Both the nature and extent of citizenship were restricted further under the Constitutional Charter of 1814.⁸⁰ It declared that all authority resided in the person of the king, who was granted executive power and shared legislative authority with the Chambers of Peers and Deputies. Electoral colleges in the departments were employed in the election of the lower house. Restrictive age and property qualifications operated both for the electors and for the deputies. Electors had to be over the age of 30 and pay direct tax of at least

⁷⁶ M. Lyons, *Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p. 61.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-7 and 71-2.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 94-102.

⁸⁰ http://www.napoleon-series.org/research/government/legislation/c_charter.html (08.02.10)

300 francs per year. Deputies had to be over the age of 40 and pay direct tax of 1,000 francs per year. The language of the document is also noteworthy. Almost without exception the terms 'subject' or 'Frenchman' were used in place of that of 'citizen'.

The changes brought by the Revolution of 1830 were minimal. According to the revised Charter, the age qualifications were lowered to 25 for electors and 30 for deputies. In further legislation, passed in 1831, the property qualification was also reduced. Electors were required to pay direct tax of at least 200 francs a year, deputies 500. In addition to those who qualified by wealth, others were also to be eligible on account of their professional role. The franchise was thus extended, but still only a tiny proportion of the population (0.5% rising to 0.7% in 1846) were eligible to vote in national elections.⁸¹ This was considerably less than the franchise in Britain at the time, which stood at 5% in 1831 and 7% after the Reform Act of 1832.

Following the overthrow of the Orléanist regime in 1848, the Provisional Government reinstituted universal manhood suffrage for those over 21 on 2 March. In addition, the Revolution of 1848 also brought the second abolition of slavery within the French colonies with the decree of 27 April.⁸² Not only were the slaves to be emancipated almost immediately, but again they were to be granted citizenship on the same grounds as their counterparts in France.

⁸¹ H. A. C. Collingham, *The July Monarchy: A Political History of France, 1830-1848* (Harlow: Longman, 1988), p. 71.

⁸² N. Schmidt, 'The Drafting of the 1848 Decrees: Immediate Application and Long-Term Consequences', in *The Abolitions of Slavery from L. F. Sonthonax to Victor Schoelcher, 1793, 1794, 1848* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books and UNESCO Publishing, 2003), pp. 305-13.

Conclusion

The history of French citizenship during this period is by no means a tale of gradual progress. As has been demonstrated, several competing understandings of the concept crystallized during the eighteenth century. The modern rights-based notion of citizenship eventually won out and remained dominant into the nineteenth century, but its application fluctuated with a sudden expansion after 1789 followed by the reintroduction of restrictions from the mid-1790s onwards. The numbers of people enjoying citizenship gradually increased again after 1830, but it was not until 1848 that universal manhood suffrage was reintroduced and it would be almost another hundred years before female suffrage would be established.

However, these facts should not obscure the huge transformation embodied in the development and application of the rights-based concept of citizenship. Though it has been challenged in theory, and undermined in practice since, it is this concept of citizenship that forms the basis of modern understandings – not just in France, but across the world.

FATHERLAND/VATERLAND/PATRIE – HISTORY OF THE GERMAN CONCEPT

By Lucian Hölscher (University of Bochum)

The word

The German word ‘Vaterland’ (up to the 16th century also ‘Vatterland’) dates from the 12th century, when it was created as a free translation of the Greek ‘he patris’ and Latin ‘patria’.¹ At the same time analogous words arose in the Netherlands (vaderland), Denmark (faedreland, föderneland), Sweden (fädernesland), but not in England, where the word ‘fatherland’ was seldom and introduced into the political discourse only by the early 19th century referring to the German Vaterland.² By that time the reference to the fatherland as something „German“ was well known in other countries, too, such as the Netherlands, Denmark and the USA.

Pointing to the father (pater) as someone who is responsible for protecting and subsisting the family, and to the soil where the family lives, the word originally stands for the place where someone comes from. What this implied in terms of protection and subsistence is a question of its concrete usage, i. e. open to various current arguments: Sometimes it pointed to the right to come back home and live there, in most cases it implied some kind of bond between the “son” and the “father” to care for one another. Already in the late middle ages it was used for pointing to the country, where somebody was born or lived for a long time. But sometimes it could be used for the place, too, where someone earned his living now. Hugo Grotius for instance, having fled from the Netherlands in 1621 and living in Paris, wrote in a report for the Swedish government, which financed him, now Sweden would be his ‘patria’ (“Suediae, quae nunc mihi patria est”).³ Similar to ‘Heimat’ the term ‘Vaterland’ very often pointed to the place where somebody felt at home.

In many arguments people referred to the ‘Vaterland’ as something they had lost or regained, i.e. as something, people were separated from. In other contexts people spoke of the duties they had to carry for the Vaterland, or the liberty, which they had to fight for. But observing this doesn’t mean that the etymological root justifies the ideology of ‘Vaterland’, as has been done in conceptual history so often:⁴ There is no implicit idea, incorporated in the concept of ‘Vaterland’, of being exclusively bound to the fatherland by birth, language, culture or fate, or vice versa. Rather this is the product of a certain reading of sources, which takes contingent aspects of widespread arguments for the essence of an “idea”. It is a danger of many works in conceptual history to read modern ideas back into the linguistic roots of their early usages.

Multilingual structure

Different from the Romanic languages the German, like the English, language disposes of two linguistic patterns, Latin and Germanic, to build concepts. Hence the German ‘Vaterland’ can be taken as translating the Latin ‘patria’, but also as a source of slightly differing associations. This became an argument when in 16th century humanism educated authors such as Ulrich von Hutten preferred to write German instead of Latin: “Latein ich vor geschrieben hab, Das war eim yeden nit bekandt. Yetzt schrey ich an das vatterlandt, Teütsch nation, in irer sprach Zu bringen disen dingen rach”.⁵

In early modern discourse to rely on German instead of Latin expressions could be suitable for various reasons: either for organising political support from the ordinary man as in Hut-

ten's case, or because the German language seemed to be more down to earth in reflecting the knowledge or the emotions of ordinary people. This latter was a reason for educated people in the 17th and 18th century, to replace the Latin by the German language in teaching at school or at the university. Latin was seen as the language of abstract theory and universal conversation, but German as the language of concrete experience and national identity. Hence it was not a question of political correctness but of scientific progress to develop German concepts, which could profit from the knowledge of ordinary people as much as from the theoretical tradition of their Latin originals.

So Latin and German were no equivalent moods of expression, but stood in a complex relation of mutual exclusion and substitution to one another: Social distinctions overlapped with institutional language policies and discursive patterns, which were bound to either Latin or German – or even to other languages such as French and English, which became influential in early modern Germany. However, these languages were not properly separated but intentionally mixed for certain purposes: To use a Latin word within a German discourse would mean to refer to ancient traditions and systematic approaches, clear definition and divine authority. To use German expressions would mean to rely on every day experience and the specific traditions of a certain place.

Concepts as relations of words and things

All this is true also for the terms 'patria' and 'Vaterland' in early modern political discourse. The term 'patria' was loaded with antique allusions, the duty to die for the fatherland or recollections of famous examples about heroes such as Mutius Scaevola, who in fighting for his fatherland demonstrated his bravery by putting forth his hand into an open flame. The German term 'Vaterland' was less determined by tradition, but also not more concrete than 'patria', even if we concede that it was often used with considerable emotional background. Only later, when in the 18th century the German language was preferred for political conversation, the term did adopt a national flavour, contrasting to analogue expressions in other vernaculars.

Also up to the 18th century both terms, 'patria' and 'Vaterland' were not at all determined to refer to a specific territory. It is true, in the 16th and 17th century in a broad sense they usually referred to the Holy Roman Empire or to the nation, i. e. to those who spoke German. But they may have referred as much to the country or even to the town or region, where someone came from or felt home; and in religious context to heaven as the true fatherland of all brave human beings.

Some scholars have taken this as reflecting the political strength of minor sovereigns such as princes and imperial cities in Germany and the weakness of the Holy Roman Empire, which was not able to represent the political identity of its inhabitants.⁶ But the same was said in France under the strong administration of absolutist kings, too, when the "Dictionnaire universel Latin et françois" in 1734 reported about the usage of the term 'patrie': "il se dit tant d'un lieu particulier, que de la province, et de l'empire ou de l'etat où l'on a pris naissance. Un François, qui s'en retourne des Indes en Europe, dit qu'il s'en retourne a sa patrie."⁷

Still, there is another, more theoretical point to be made: To attach questions such as the size and character of the territory to a term like 'patria' or 'Vaterland' means to overstress the status of concepts in early modern discourses: To take a word as a stable representation of certain contents (things) is a linguistic theory of the classical age and, even more important, outcome of the praxis of encyclopaedias. However, in early modern times a word could stand for many things and only very few were strictly defined in systematic discourses (most of which were written in Latin). There is no one-to-one relation between words and things resp. mean-

ings. Hence both, 'patria' and 'Vaterland' could be used in many different contexts, referring to very different things. This was a common practice all over Europe. Hence it doesn't make much sense to distinguish different concepts of 'patria' in various nations and languages.

Only by the mid-18th century encyclopaedias such as the "Philosophische Wörterbuch" of Johann Georg Walch (1st edition 1726) and the "Universal-Lexikon" of Zedler (1732-1750) in Germany, the "Encyclopédie" of Diderot and d'Alembert (1751-1780) in France or the "Encyclopaedia Britannica" (1771) in England began to establish concepts by labelling discourses about objects (such as institutions) with certain words. Now it became a general praxis to define words by long descriptions of what they stand for in reality. Under the entry of 'Vaterland' Zedler's "Universallexikon" for instance, after having given a short definition of the word and a report about some popular topoi such as that some authors had spoken of a natural love of the 'Vaterland', discussed the question in some length, whether this love was natural or habitual, and whether from this certain duties concerning the Vaterland could be derived.⁸

'Patria' and 'Vaterland' as part of political arguments in the 17th century

Nevertheless, there are contexts of political significance, in which the word 'patria' and 'Vaterland' played an important role in the 17th century, also in Germany. For understanding the argument it is crucial to go back to the antique sources, which gave the tone: Already in Roman times to appeal to the 'patria' was an argument for political actors to deny selfish motives. The classical example for this was Cicero's self-defence in his action against Catilina's conspiracy in 63 B.C. In his famous speeches before the Senate he treated the 'patria' as something all citizens had to care for. Being one of the consuls of this year he claimed a special duty for himself to defend the country against the aggressor.

Following Caesar's honour to be called 'pater patriae' many rulers of later centuries claimed the title, to have saved the country or the 'res publica'. To defend the country became a special attribute of the legitimate ruler. Hence it was in great demand and much disputed. However, in the 17th century, in Germany as much as in other European countries, the public dissent about who was entitled to call himself 'pater patriae' began to increase. Many disputes between princes and the estates were fought about this question. In such disputes both sides used to appeal to the 'patria' or 'Vaterland' as the subject of a common welfare, which they claimed to defend. The terms were reference points of public propaganda, legitimising political ambitions of various kinds.

A good indicator for such disputes was the usage of terms like 'public' and 'private': Since according to the tradition of the Roman law only 'public', not 'private persons' were allowed to care for the public weal, it was crucial for all political actors to define themselves as a public person. In the absolutist countries such as France this dispute very often ended with the definition of the prince as the only source of public authority. But in other countries such as England, the Netherlands and many German territories the estates succeeded in being included in the definition of public authority. Hence they were entitled, too, to care for the 'Vaterland' or 'patria'.⁹

By the end of the 17th century even the private persons began to claim the title of a public authority for themselves: In establishing new expressions of moral judgement such as 'public opinion', 'public esteem' etc. they reclaimed an indirect political influence, from which they were excluded by law, but not by moral arguments any longer.¹⁰ Hence the private person, too, was entitled to care for the 'patria' or 'Vaterland'. All this can be demonstrated by the conceptional change of the term 'patriote'.

‘Patriot’ und ‘Vaterlandsfreund’

In the course of the 17th century the term ‘patriote’ began to extend and to change its meaning: In classical antiquity the Greek word ‘ho patriotes’ (Latin ‘patriota’) did not stand for any political authority, especially not for the citizen (ho polites), but only for the fellow countryman: a person, who came from the same place or region. When by the late 16th century the term was adopted in the English and French discourse, it first was used in the same sense: According to the antique tradition for instance the dictionary of Randle Cotgrave described the ‘patriote’ as “ones countrey-man“. But just above this entry we find another definition: „Patriot (or Patriote): A father, or protector of the country, or Commonwealth“. ¹¹ Following the introduction of the Roman law the term had adopted the meaning of the ‘pater patriae’.

The term ‘patriot’ in this sense was first limited to the prince. But in the course of the 17th century it began to expand to other actors on the political stage such as representatives of the estates and other public authorities, who cared for the common weal. Finally, by the end of the century, even a private person could be called a ‘patriot’. This made it possible that by the early 18th century even a popular weekly such as the publication of the Hamburgian “Patriotische Gesellschaft”, published in 1724-1726, could be called “Der Patriot” – followed by many others with the same title in the following years.

In the course of the 18th century “the patriot” became a key figure of European enlightenment. Differing from England and other Western European countries in Germany the patriot originally was not conceived as a politically engaged person, but rather as somebody who had a common sense, who was a reasonable man. His model was not the citizen, but the ‘civis bonus’. ¹² But even in this role he began to compete with the sovereign for the title of the true ‘Vaterlandsfreund’, a term which came up in Germany at the End of the 17th century.

In the course of the following century slowly, but increasingly an at first moral and finally legal struggle about competences between private and public authorities, nobility and bourgeoisie began to undermine the political constitution. The article ‘Patriot’ in Hübner’s “Zeitungsllexikon” gives evidence to this semantic change: In the edition of 1737 the ‘Patriot’ still was defined as “ein rechtschaffener Landes-Freund, ein Mann, der Land und Leuten treu und redlich vorsteht (a man, who presides the country)“. In the edition of 1761, however, the definition had changed to „ein Mann, der es mit Land und Leuten treu und redlich meint“ (a man, who means it well with the country). ¹³ This meaning prevailed throughout the later 18th and the early 19th century. ¹⁴

Patriotism – the first “ideological” concept

Later than the term ‘patriot’ the term ‘patriotism’ was introduced. First verified in texts of the early 18th century ¹⁵ it was one of the first political concepts determined to express a political program or mentality. ¹⁶ That’s why ‘patriotism’, like all the other terms composed with –ism, was an essentially contested concept from the very beginning. First it was contested because of the open question, who had to be taken for being the “true” patriot: the prince, who was legitimized by law, or the ordinary man, who served his country by unselfish sacrifices?

Basically this was a question of the best constitution, which now was increasingly answered in favour of democracy. For Montesquieu for instance in his “Esprit des Lois” (1748) “l’amour des lois et de la patrie” was a virtue typical for democracy. In this he followed the tradition of French and English republicanism: To appeal to the ‘patria’ implied fundamental

political values such as the liberty of the citizens, their common care for the *res publica*, resistance against despotism etc. It is true, to repeat such ideals of the Roman republic was part of political struggles all over Europe throughout the middle ages and early modern times. But in the 18th century the appeal changed its character: Instead of defending all kinds of just governments, monarchies and aristocracies as much as democracies, against tyranny, it now began to argue in favour of democracy only. That's why the concept 'patria' could be taken as an argument for anti-monarchical demonstrations. By the time of the French revolution the concept forced people to take the part of the republic against the monarchy.

Immanuel Kant in 1793 took up the republican argument in claiming a patriotic, not a paternal government: „nicht eine väterliche, sondern eine vaterländische Regierung, imperium non paternale, sed patrioticum“.¹⁷ For Kant it was a crucial point to translate political concepts from the Latin tradition to German, even if they had another semantic tradition in Germany. It was part of his semantic policy, which was directed towards enlightened concepts. Part of this policy was to translate 'patrioticus' by 'vaterländisch', 'patriotism' by 'Vaterlandsliebe' – terms which had a slightly different semantic accent for other authors in late 18th century: For instance, when Joseph von Sonnenfels, an enlightened reformer in Austria, argued in 1771, that 'Vaterlandsliebe' was a proper mentality for any citizen, whether in a public office or as a private man, he encouraged ordinary people to care for public affairs. But he did not question the legitimate power of the monarch to do the same, and he would never have argued for a republic.¹⁸ However, when Kant asked for a patriotic government in 1793, he made use of the political tradition of political republicanism in France and England, of arguments such as the one of La Bruyère in late 17th century "Il n'a point de patrie dans le despotisme".¹⁹ He still argued for monarchy, but for a government bound to and by law and public consent. Both, 'patriotismus' and 'Vaterlandsliebe', were ideological concepts. But they sometimes had slightly different political implications: 'patriotism' stressing more the political, 'Vaterlandsliebe' more the cultural aspect of identity.

Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism

An even deeper ideological structure was implicit in the dialectics of patriotism and cosmopolitanism. In mid-18th century most enlightened authors would have agreed, that both concepts were designed to enforce the same political ideas, i. e. the basic rights of mankind. They would not have accepted a contradiction between patriotism and cosmopolitanism, because a true patriot would fight for nothing else than the cosmopolitan, only in his place. But already before the French revolution some authors like Jean Jacques Rousseau began to argue that only patriotism could be accepted as a political virtue, because the patriot did not fight for human rights in general like the cosmopolitan, but in favour of his neighbour citizen. He therefore was directed by pity, whereas the cosmopolitan by theory and abstract principles.²⁰

Still, many authors opposed him like Voltaire, who in 1764 declared: "Il est triste souvent, pour être un bon patriote, on soit l'ennemi du reste des hommes."²¹ But in the long run time worked for Rousseau's attitude. Soon the sun of the concept 'patriot' began to rise, that of 'cosmopolitanism' to decline. By the time of the French revolution the term 'patriote' became one of the key concepts of republican propaganda: At least 60 French revolutionary journals used titles composed with the term 'patriote', such as 'Le Patriote française' or 'Le Moniteur patriote'. From France the new catchword overleaped to neighbour countries such as Germany, where it for instance served the republic of Mainz as a shibboleth: One of its leaders was Georg Forster, who praised the French for having brought "the flame of true patriotism" to Germany.²²

But still, fighting for the Universalist principles of the revolution, collected in the Declaration of rights, in the 1790s ‘patriotism’ was almost a synonym to ‘cosmopolitanism’. Only after 1800, ‘patriotism’ and ‘cosmopolitanism’ began to diverge in the anti-Napoleonic wars. Since the French emperor argued, that the principles of the French revolution were ideals not for the French people only but for mankind as a whole, he produced a patriotic reaction in countries like Spain and Germany: Here cosmopolitanism was not any more seen as working in the same direction as patriotism, but rather as an aggressive ideology of French imperialism. The legitimizing ideology of republican patriotism turned into a tool of national suppression and supremacy.

But now the same could be said for the concept of German patriotism, too. While many German intellectuals after 1800 turned against cosmopolitanism as an anti-patriotic ideology,²³ they were inclined to describe German patriotism in cosmopolitan terms as a kind of German version of cosmopolitanism. One of them was the philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte, who, after the defeat of Jena and Auerstedt in 1806, had become an ardent Prussian patriot. In one of his popular reaction to the lost battle he argued, that true cosmopolitanism could only arise in Germany: Only the German “can be a patriot; only he can embrace the whole mankind” (“Nur der Deutsche kann Patriot sein; nur er kann die ganze Menschheit umfassen”).²⁴ Since cosmopolitanism had lost its neutral character, it could be presented as a kind of extended national worldview.

This German ideology of patriotic cosmopolitanism was not confined to national enemies of the French such as Fichte only, who showed little sensitivity for excessive nationalism. One of those, who were sensitive for the danger of narrow-minded and selfish patriotism in early 19th century Germany, but nevertheless used the term as positive concept, was Heinrich Heine: In one of his confessions he dreamed “von dieser Sendung und Universalherrschaft Deutschlands”, when “wir die Erlöser Gottes werden, wenn wir das arme, glückenterbte Volk und den verhöhten Genius und die geschändete Schönheit wieder in ihre Würde einsetzen”.²⁵

Being divided between national egoism and cosmopolitan imperialism the concept of patriotism had lost its philosophical background in enlightened republicanism.²⁶ It was separated from universalism but deeply interweaved with cosmological demands and arguments, which made patriotism to behave as a highly dangerous and ambiguous concept.

Patriotism and nation building

The concept of ‘Vaterland’ played an important role in the process of nation building in Germany in the 18th century. Since Patriotismus/Vaterlandsliebe was defined as an essential feature of a nation in the new republican sense, the concept described the emotional ground of all public life. There was a general agreement about the fact, that without Vaterlandsliebe no constitution, based on the public and private consent of all citizens, could be established. As an effect of the split political landscape in general the call for national union and the feeling of belonging together was much more developed than the call for individual freedom and republican democracy. The rather non-political concept of Vaterland was highly effective to express this kind of public longing: It left open the question of political constitution, but stressed the cultural unity of Germany.

A significant expression of this new public esteem for the Vaterland was the fact that the term now turned from being an object of individual desire and care to a subject of public demand for any citizen.²⁷ Being imagined as a person it also turned out to be important, which gender

this person had: the French ‘la patrie’ was female, the German ‘das Vaterland’ neutral. Both referred to the father as the central figure of public protection and love.²⁸ But the French ‘la patrie’ was usually portrayed as a female (Marianne) and also had an important incorporation found in a young female (Jeanne d’Arc), whereas Germany was portrayed in various shapes, sometimes as a female mother (Germania), sometimes as a young girl, which in German had a neutral gender (das Mädchen) and which was the object of intensive patriotic care and longing. But the later the more the fatherland was identified with male figures such as Charlemagne, Bismarck, Luther or “der deutsche Michel”.

One should not overstress the question of gender. There was an old iconographic tradition to give abstract ideas such as virtues or the muses and collectives such as countries (Germania, Prussia) and cities (Colonia) the shape and name of females. But males could represent political ideas and collectives as well, especially if they were founders of or great leaders of the country. What is important is the metaphorical usage made of these figures for political arguments. Here the personification of the fatherland was a tool to evoke emotional and religious bonds, as if all people were but members of a big family.

It was a great change in the political semantics of the late 18th century, that the fatherland was imagined as an acting person. Instead of the sons appealing to the father it now turned to the father to appeal to the sons. However, similar to the religious authority of God the father was not present, the fatherland but an abstract authority. Hence some of the sons claimed to appeal to the sons of the fatherland as being their brothers. In this specific constellation politics took the new shape of a quasi-religious interpretation of the will of the father. In terms of fatherland policy the German history of the 19th century can be told as a pathologic family drama – encompassing sons who were disappointed of, dispossessed and even killed by their father, fathers who were betrayed and blamed by their sons, of dishonoured mothers and disgraced daughters, of bastards and adopted children.

An early character in that play was that of the orphan. After Napoleon had conquered big parts of Germany and the Holy Roman Empire had collapsed in 1806 the German patriots used to speak of Germany as an orphaned fatherland. In the republican tradition this was still the consequence of despotism and illiberality. Friedrich Christian Laukhard, a German republican, in his Autobiography reported of a typical republican conversation at that time:

„Er: Die Deutschen sind Tyrannensklaven, so gut als die Spanier, die Holländer und die Piemontesen. – Ich: Gut, aber lass sie für ihre Freiheit, für ihr Vaterland erst einmal auftreten, und du sollst sehen, dass sie ihren Mann stellen. – Er: Aber nur nicht wie die Franzosen, *Foutre!* Die Deutschen sind Memmen und lassen sich von ihren Fürsten treiben und verkaufen wie das Schlachtvieh.“²⁹

In contrast to the German cowardice he had made the experience, how French soldiers could revel in warm love to their fatherland, “eine Liebe, die der Deutsche deswegen nicht kennt, weil er als Deutscher kein Vaterland mehr hat.“ At the eve of the battle of Jena he had heard Prussian soldiers singing: “Fürs Vaterland zu sterben ^[SEP]Wünscht mancher sich, ^[SEP]Zehntausend Taler erben, ^[SEP]Das wünsch' ich mich!/ Das Vaterland ist undankbar – ^[SEP]Und dafür sterben? – O du Narr!“³⁰

From the 1830s onwards the same role was performed by the authors of the “Junges Deutschland” (Karl Gutzkow, Heinrich Heine etc.) and the socialist journeymen, who were expelled from the German territories because of their democratic principles. Many of them claimed that they had lost their fatherland resp. were expelled from it. In the Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels picked up this topos in 1847: “Den Kommunisten ist ferner vorgeworfen worden, sie wollten das Vaterland, die Nationalität abschaffen. Die

Arbeiter haben kein Vaterland. Man kann ihnen nicht nehmen, was sie nicht haben.“

Bismarck and the conservative parties corresponded to this idea after 1870 by performing the patriotic drama the other way round: According to them the socialist workers had betrayed the fatherland by giving their loyalty to the Internationale. They called them “vaterlandslose Gesellen”, an expression, which remained a dirty word discrediting Social Democracy at least up to the First World War.³¹

But in social democracy the question, whether the socialist workers had a fatherland, was much disputed as well: The German party officially held to the parole, that the workers had no national fatherland. As a socialist handbook declared in 1903, the fatherland of the workers was not the nation, but the proletarian class.³² But Eduard Bernstein, a leading figure of the revisionist wing, disagreed: The sentence of the manifesto was without sense and out of date.

Already in 1893 the national convent of the French socialist party had given a different answer: „Nein, der Internationalismus bedeutet keine Erniedrigung der Heimat oder die Aufgabe der Heimat. Als die ‚Vaterländer‘ entstanden, bildeten sie die erste und notwendige Etappe auf dem Weg zur einheitlichen Menschheit, der wir entgegen gehen... Allein die Internationalisten können sich Patrioten nennen, da sie die einzigen sind, die sich darüber Rechenschaft ablegen, in welchem Maße die Bedingungen verbessert werden müssen, unter denen die Zukunft und Größe des Vaterlandes und aller Vaterländer, die den Antagonismus durch die Solidarität unter einander ersetzt haben, garantiert werden kann und muss.“³³ After the First World War his position was taken up by Lenin and the communist movement.

The war in fact marked a turning point in the socialist attitude towards the concept of fatherland. Not only in countries, where socialist and communist parties came to power, the concept was accepted as a fundamental element of socialist as much as bourgeois constitutions. Going back to the combination of patriotism and cosmopolitanism, the official doctrine now proclaimed a mutual backing of socialist patriotism and internationalism. But of course, in the following decades this did not prevent socialist patriots from fighting against communist internationalism and vice versa.

New Hostility to the Vaterland in the 20th Century

After the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 imperial patriotism had lost its object for more than half a century. This made regional concepts of patriotism popular for a while again and nourished a broad variety of hostile and competitive patriotisms in Germany. But backed by the national democratic movement and party there was always a kind of patriotic longing present in all cultural activities of the first half of the century: patriotic literature and song-books, patriotic monuments and dictionaries, clubs and societies, congresses and economic reforms.

Being not restricted to a limited territory made the concept flexible for any extension as long as it was not transformed into a political program. The well-known verse of Freiligrath, composed in 1840 and adopted as the national hymn in 1919, “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles, über alles in der Welt”, with its scandalous extension of Germany from Denmark till Italy and from Poland till deep in France, just came into being at the dawn of this transformation. It was one of the last expression of cultural patriotism before the growing tensions with Denmark began to turn the character of German patriotism into aggressive nationalism.

What made patriotism in the following decades, especially after 1870 so dangerous, was the fact, that the German patriotic programs extended far beyond the political boundaries of the national state of Germany. There was a continuous gap between the actual stage and the Va-

terland proclaimed by nationalists, which included Germans living outside Germany. This was not unique for Germany, other European nations such as Russia and Greece were in the same situation. But it was a factor of constant political uncertainty, which was noticed by Germany's neighbours very growing anxiety.

The First World War brought a decisive turning point to this development. On the one side as in other countries the concept of fatherland was heavily stressed by the national propaganda and charged with quasi-religious claims to the efforts made by the army and home front. As soon as it became apparent that they would not help to win the war, the aggression of the soldiers turned against the inhuman ideology of those, who had caused the war. In terms of the metaphor the sons turned against the father, who was on the way to kill them and to extinguish the country. The term 'Vaterland' got a bitter flavour, many opponents of the war couldn't use it any more without irony and question-marks.

Also outside Germany the concept turned against Germany. In England the German term was introduced as expression of a German ideology already in the early 19th century. In the United States of America it still was a politically tolerated catch-word of the German emigrants, who gathered around the New York journal 'Vaterland'. But after 1914, under the impression of the German Vaterland-propaganda the term began to attract all negative associations of Germany. A highly ideological differentiation between (legitimate) patriotism and (illegitimate) Vaterlandsliebe began to undermine the cultural relations between Germany and its Western neighbours.

The defeat of 1918 did not stop this development, but even deepened it. As the 'Vaterlandspartei' had gathered all nationalist power in Germany in the last phase of the war, the concept 'Vaterland' now stood for a kind of existential resistance of the extreme right. It was difficult for the liberal and socialist parties in the Weimar republic to occupy the term for their own political program. Only in literature and their private correspondence liberal and left wing emigrants were able to use the concept in their sense. One of them is the verse of Masha Kaléko "Ich hatte einst ein schönes Vaterland..." In Germany it was one of the most difficult experiences for patriotic soldiers that the national appeal to honour and to the 'Vaterland' did not go together any more.

Hence after the Second World War it was difficult to rebuild a positive concept of patriotism and the Vaterland in Germany. In the German Democratic Republic the socialist concept offered a basis that seemed to carry such an idea free from nationalist associations. But in the Federal Republic the appeal to the Vaterland and to patriotism remained highly disputed. One of those who after decades appealed successfully to such a concept was Dolf Sternberger, professor of political science. In a speech delivered to the 30th anniversary of the constitution in 1979, he declared: „Das Nationalgefühl bleibt verwundet, wir leben nicht im ganzen Deutschland. Aber wir leben in einer ganzen Verfassung, in einem ganzen Verfassungsstaat, und das ist selbst eine Art von Vaterland“.³⁴ The formula 'Verfassungspatriotismus' became one of the few patriotic concepts, which were accepted in all parts of society.

Outlook

In the present stage of political development the concept of 'Vaterland' still seems to be much disputed. Occasionally some people hope to recover the concept, as in the peaceful Football World Cup of 2006, performed in Germany.³⁵ But in a time, when many new citizens have only recently immigrated to Germany, it remains risky to exploit such a concept. The danger of misuse is as big as the danger of misinterpretation. The image of a family with tender relations among its members has not been very helpful in the last century, to find a common platform for peaceful political action. In certain arguments such as the quest for bringing together

political tolerance with political engagement it may be helpful to underline the existence of many Vaterländer with equal rights, as Charles de Gaulle did in his concept of a “Europe des patries” (which was translated to German as “Europa der Vaterländer”, but to English as “Europe of nations”). But in the concept of the United Europe the appeal to the national Vaterland can be but a cultural element of future development, not a political vision any more.

¹ Duden, das Herkunftswörterbuch. Die Etymologie der deutschen Sprache, Mannheim 1963, p. 735.

² Trübners deutsches Wörterbuch, vol. 7, 1956, p. 366.

³ Hugo Grotius, Votum pro pace ecclesiastica, in: Opera Omnia Theologica, III, 662, a20.

⁴ Cf. Horst Zilleßen (ed.), Volk – Nation – Vaterland. Der deutsche Protestantismus und der Nationalismus, Gütersloh 1970, p. 15.

⁵ Ulrich von Hutten, Klag und vermanung gegen die gewalt des Bapsts, v. 262. Cf. Ibid.

⁶ Cf. Zilleßen, Volk (n. 4), p. 44.

⁷ Dictionnaire universel Latin et françois, vulgairement appelé Dictionnaire de Trevoux, vol. 4, Nancy 1735, p. 635.

⁸ Johan Heinrich Zedler, Großes vollständiges Universallexikon aller Wissenschaften und Künste, vol. x, xxxx, col. 737-739.

⁹ A lot of examples fort hese kind of public disputes are collected in Robert von Friedeburg (ed.), „Patria“ und „Patrioten“ vor dem Patriotismus, Wiesbaden 2005, p. 16 ff.

¹⁰ Cf. Reinhart Koselleck, Kritik und Krise. Zur Pathogenes der bürgerlichen Welt, Freiburg 1959.

¹¹ Randle Cotgrave, A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues, 1611.

¹² Cf. Wolfgang Martens, Die Botschaft der Tugend. Die Aufklärung im Spiegel der Moralischen Wochenschriften, Stuttgart 1968, p. 325.

¹³ Johan Hübner, Reales Staats-, Zeitungs- und Conversationslexikon, 1737, 1761 s.v. Patriot.

¹⁴ Cf. Johann Christoph Adelung, Wörterbuch der Hochdeutschen Mundart, 2nd edition, vol. 3, Leipzig 1798, col. 672.

¹⁵ Cf. N. Bailey, An universal etymological English dictionary, 3rd edition, London 1726, s.v.

¹⁶ Cf. Reinhart Koselleck, Patriotismus. Gründe und Grenzen eines neuzeitlichen Begriffs, in: Begriffsgeschichten. Studien zur Semantik und Pragmatik der politischen und sozialen Sprache, Frankfurt 2006, p. 216 ff.

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¹⁸ Cf. Josef von Sonnenfels, Über die Liebe des Vaterlandes, Wien 1771.

¹⁹ Jean de la Bruyère, Les caractères X, 4, in: Oeuvres complètes, ed. by J. Benda, Paris 1951, p. 289.

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²¹ Voltaire, Dictionnaire philosophique, ed. by Renée Pomeau, Paris 1964, p. 308.

²² Georg Forster, Rede bei der Errichtung des Freiheitsbaumes am 13. 1. 1793, in: C. Träger ed.), Mainz zwischen Rot und Schwarz, 1963, p. 348.

²³ As a classical example cf. Heinrich von Kleist, Katechismus der Deutschen II (1809): „Von der Liebe zum Vaterlande“, in: Sämtliche Werke, ed. by Sembdner, 6th ed., vol. 2, 1977, p. 351.

²⁴ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Der Patriotismus und sein Gegenteil (1807/07), ed. by H. Schulz, 1918, p. 10 f., 15 f.

²⁵ Heinrich Heine, Sämtliche Schriften ed. by K. Briegler, vol. 3, 1976, p. 15

²⁶ Cf. Koselleck, Patriotismus (n. 16)

²⁷ The title of Sonnenfels' article "Über die Liebe des Vaterlandes" of 1771 (n. 19) could be read in both ways, as a subject and as an object of love.

²⁸ The expression 'Mutterland', although sometimes quoted in 18th and 19th century texts, was only very seldom used. Cf. Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* ...

²⁹ Friedrich Christian Laukhard, Leben und Schicksale, ed. Victor Petersen, 3rd ed. vol. 2 (1908), chap. 17.

³⁰ Ibid. chap. 12.

³¹ Cf. Dieter Groh, Peter Brandt, Vaterlandslose Gesellen. Sozialdemokratie und Nation, 1860 - 1990. München 1992.

³² Cf. Handbuch für sozialdemokratische Wähler, 1903, p. 373.

³³ Cf. Hellmut Dressler etc (ed.): Proletarischer Internationalismus, sozialistischer Patriotismus, klassenmäßige Erziehung, Berlin 1973, p. 10.

³⁴ Cf. Dolf Sternberger, Verfassungspatriotismus, in: ders., *Schriften*, Bd. X: *Verfassungspatriotismus*, Frankfurt/M. 1990, p. 13.

³⁵ Cf. Volker Kronenberg: Patriotismus in Deutschland. Perspektiven für eine weltoffene Nation, 2nd ed. Wiesbaden 2006.

The German concept of citizenship, ca 1600 – ca 1850.*

I.

Most historians would agree to the interpretation that the German bourgeoisie at the end of the 18th and the very beginning of the 19th century – compared to the English "middle-class" or the French "bourgeoisie" – had to face serious problems in conquering a position of primacy in the contemporary society. Moreover, the aristocratic stratas were then able to re-establish their privileged social and political status, which was only partially called into question during the restoration period. It were the efforts of the well-trained magistrates of the bourgeois stratas to decisively contributed to establish the power of the bureaucratic monarchy. However, their expectations of achieving at political participation in the long run, of the liberation of the cultural sphere as well as economic freedom only partially realized. The majority of the educated bourgeois classes in German in fact acted as civil servants in the contemporary states; they were to a certain extent dependent on them. The differences with regard to both the interests as well as the distinctive mode of perception of social reality between the different stratas of the educated bourgeois classes, the liberal professions and the small group of men of business is quite obvious.

* First draft; not to be cited without the author's permission; all citations were translated by the author.

Due to the prevailing diverse legal systems the German society about 1800 was fragmented into different professional groups and interests unable of forming a unified space of experiences and of manoeuvring for a population formally enjoying equal rights. The German middle classes could only realize equal accessibility and standards against the nobles on a national level in terms of the educational system, in literature and in their modes of sociability.

The German bourgeois stratas, however, failed with regard to their political ambitions. In the 20s and 30s of the 19th century they were still hoping that in the long run they would be integrated into the political decision making processes as citizens. The revolution of 1848/50 was a decisive turning point for these expectations. The ambitions of the German bourgeoisie to establish itself as a unified national and political powerful class came to nothing when the revolution failed.

Since the middle of the 19th century the history of the German bourgeois stratas has been presented as a narration of lost opportunities.¹ After 1945 this interpretation was enhanced to the thesis of the German "Sonderweg".² Accordingly a deficiency of communality, of civil spirit and an exaggeration of subordination and adjustment of the middling ranks to the aristocratic classes pervaded German politics and society during the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries. However, the arguments for and against the thesis will not be discussed here. Rather, the focus of the paper is on

¹ Cf. Hans-Gerd Schumann, Spießbürger – Philister – Spätbürger. Kulturzerfall oder Dekadenz einer Klasse? in: Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 49 (1967), pp. 111-130 and Maria Roswitha Panzer, Bürgerlichkeit: Fehldeutungen des Bürgerbegriffs in der politischen Moderne, München 1989.

² Cf. quite recently Hartwin Spenkuch, Vergleichsweise besonders? Politisches System und Strukturen Preußens als Kern des "deutschen Sonderwegs", in: Geschichte und Gesellschaft 29 (2003), pp. 262-293.

the investigation which concepts, which phrases, which figures of speech those bourgeois stratas did have at their disposal in order to not only on one hand define themselves as a distinctive social formation but also on the other to hold out against rivalling social stratas such as the bureaucracy, the aristocratic classes or the emerging working classes.³ of the spaces of manoeuvring, the scope of action of the multiple bourgeois stratas in Germany about 1800. The paper focusses upon the question to what extent the scope of action of the bourgeois stratas were determined by their socio-political language they were exposing. Moreover, in this context language will be understood both as an element indicating historical processes as well as a moment of contributing to producing history. Language, in the terms of R. Koselleck, is understood both as indicator and as factor of history.

The paper's working hypothesis taking up an urgent of Willibald Steinmetz claims that if a social formation "bourgeoisie" ("Bürgertum") does neither have a distinctive conception of itself nor disposes of criteria to demarcate itself from other stratas or classes, it lacks the necessary prerequisites to successfully persist and act in politics and society.

This essay thus firstly presents a rough draft of the institutional constellation, in which the modern German bourgeois stratas emerged, established themselves and started to act on their own. Then a short investigation into the self-descriptions of these stratas is needed, in order to finally analyse its political ambitions as well as its will and its competence to perform politically.

II.

About 1800 the "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation" consisted of about 2,000 independent lordships of different kinds. Only some of them could be defined as "states" in the modern parlance.⁴ Hence the majority of contemporaries severely criticized the Old Empire as outdated. The Reich was, of course, an agrarian society. The nobles were still the most powerful group within a multifarious hierarchy of estates in the countryside. The overwhelming majority of the cities had since long lost its innovative vigour. At the end of the 18th century, however, the prevailing patrician system was heavily questioned, in some towns even politically attacked.

The Old Empire did not at all experience a period of stagnation in the 18th century. Due to an increase in population a social dynamic emerged in the Old Empire. Larger territorial states such as Prussia or Austria but also the smaller ones such as the margraviate Baden succeeded in developing and expanding the state formation in terms of the political reforms of the so-called "enlightened absolutism". Coincidentally these reforms brought about certain rights and liberties of the subjects, such as religious liberty, economic freedom or individual legal liberties. Above all, a group of enlightened and politically interested educated bourgeois emerged. These "educated classes", of both bourgeois as well as noble origins, were to a large extent civil servants, state officials. They met in the multiple associations and societies and they decisively contributed to the emerging publicity and to "public opinion".

⁴ Cf. Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, vol. 2, München 1987 and James John Sheehan, *German History, 1770-1866*, Oxford et al 1989, Lothar Gall, *Von der ständischen zur bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, München 1993, Lothar Gall (ed.), *Vom alten zum neuen Bürgertum. Die mitteleuropäische Stadt im Umbruch*, München 1991.

One of the most decisive results of the French Revolution within the German territories was the thorough going reduction of the numerous lordships. About thirty states did finally emerge from these processes. The South German states such as Bavaria, Württemberg, and Baden benefited the most from these processes, which disposed of the obsolete tiny domains. Hence the prerequisites to modern state formation were established. In terms of state formation the ending of the "Holy German Empire of the German Nation" seems to have a distinctive consistency.

For the first two decades of the 19th century three different areas of reforms can be discerned, in which extensive reforms of a modernisation of state, society and economy were initiated with different centres of gravity respectively:

firstly the so-called "model states" in the areas occupied by the French Revolutionary armies; secondly the South German as well as central German states, the so-called formally independent states of the "Rheinbund", which, however, had to experience multifarious interventions of the French Revolutionary government, and finally the Prussian state, which was reduced to the territories east of the river Elbe.

The inhabitants of the "model states" Berg and the right banks of the river Rhein and Westphalia, located between the river Weser and the river Elbe, did not at all come into the enjoyment of "liberty" and "equality" in terms of the French Revolution.⁵

These states, moreover established a program of a legitimate claim to civil liberty (bürgerliche Freiheit) and equality in the sense of legal protection and entitlement to equality before the law. Political liberty, the title to vote as well as the concept of sovereignty were consciously excluded. The "model states" also avoided to interfere

⁵ Cf. Helmut Berding, Napoleonische Herrschafts- und Gesellschaftspolitik im Königreich Westfalen 1807-1823, Göttingen 1973.

into the prevailing social structures. Both "model states" worked in a similar mode with regard to their reform programmes as the other German states.

Bayern, Württemberg, and Baden, the states of the Rheinbund, profited most from the repercussions of the French Revolution.⁶ They emerged from these processes as sovereign middle-sized states. They had to integrate new heterogeneous areas into their territories, to establish homogeneous administrative structures and last but not least to import to the population a new feeling of solidarity, a new "conscious of the state". Because of the political pressures of the French Revolutionary government, the reforms of the Rheinbund states were very much down to earth. However, due to its ideological underpinnings both the tradition of the enlightened despotism and the Enlightenment proper as well as parts of the programme of the French Revolution the Rheinbund reforms were much more than pure reorganisation of the state. The different strands of political arguments for reforms are difficult to separate.⁷

The Bavarian constitution, announced in May 1808, which was shaped on the Westphalian one and the constitution of the other states of the Rheinbund did explicitly focus on the formation of the state, the passage of the traditional patrimonial jurisdiction into a modern state and the interpenetration of the population with a new moral in order to establish a homogeneous society ("Staatsgesellschaft"). The planned "national representation" modelled on the French example, never ever

⁶ Cf. Eberhard Weis (ed.), *Reformen im rheinländischen Deutschland*, München 1984.

⁷ Cf. Gerhard Schuck, *Rheinbundpatriotismus und politische Öffentlichkeit zwischen Aufklärung und Frühliberalismus. Kontinuitätsdenken und Diskontinuitätserfahrung in den Staatsrechts- und Verfassungsdebatten der Rheinbundpublizistik*, Stuttgart 1994.

assembled, though it had been marked out in the constitutions. The inauguration of the constitution of Bavaria (1818), Baden (1818), and Württemberg (1819) did close the South German reforms. A relatively modern parliamentary system was to emerge in these parts of Germany. Finally the state bureaucracy even did to a limited extent yield the "political liberty", the right to vote to a small part of the population, the very moment it thought it beneficial.

The Prussian differed distinctively from those of the model states as well as the Rheinbund states, although all of them aimed at stimulating change by reforms, initiated and administered by the bureaucracy, instead of a revolution.⁸ The decisive impact of the French Revolution on the Prussian reformers cannot be denied. By contrast to the reforms of the states of the Rheinbund, Prussian reformers were able to establish a more coherent and independent political programme of reforms. Although this program aimed at marking off from the revolutionary ideas and concepts, it still defined itself in relation to those ideas.

For the overwhelming majority of Prussian reformers on the different levels of the state bureaucracy, the French Revolution had in fact "artificially" established a new state. However, for them, as the philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte stated in his "Speeches to the German nation" in 1807/08, the task of "the formation of an accomplished human being" had to be solved, before one could dare to establish the

⁸ Cf. Reinhart Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution*, Barbara Vogel, *Allgemeine Gewerbefreiheit. Die Reformpolitik des preußischen Staatskanzlers Hardenberg (1810-1820)*, Göttingen 1983, Paul Nolte, *Staatsbildung als Gesellschaftsreform*, Frankfurt 1990 and Karl-Ernst Jeismann, *Die Entstehung des Gymnasiums als Schule des Staates und der Gebildeten, 1787-1817*, 2nd edition, Stuttgart, 1996.

"perfect state".⁹ This concept of education was at the core of the comprehensive educational reform initiated in Prussia. The idea of a "nation" was the central motive of Prussian reformers during the period of state secretary Stein as well as in the époque of chancellor Hardenberg. It was the high state official Altenstein who stated the classical wording of the concept of a "revolution from above", commonly shared by the Prussian reformers, in September 1807: "... that the state itself should conduce an interior revolution so that all positive results of such a revolution are brought to action without the painful being seized with grievousness as is the case on occasion of a revolution moulded on its own."¹⁰ Hardenberg himself did require on purpose a "revolution in its best meaning" and he shared the target to obtain "liberty and equality" for the educated parts of the population.¹¹

This concept of liberty should include "personal liberty" as well as the freedom of property and of economic activities. Insofar the agrarian reforms and the reforms of trade and commerce were to become crucial subjects in the Prussian reforms as a moment in the strategy of state induced modernisation. The Prussian reforms conceived of the socio-economic transformation as a prerequisite to civil liberty in the sense of legal as well as political emancipation. The Prussian reformers did think in terms of a society of property owners, which was at the same time a market society not only in the cities but also in the countryside. The liberation of peasant from feudal

⁹ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1807/08), cit. after Alfred Stern, *Der Einfluß der Französischen Revolution auf das deutsche Geistesleben*, Berlin 1928, p. 219.

¹⁰ Rigaer Denkschrift Altensteins (11.09.1807), in: Georg Winter (ed.), *Die Reorganisation des preußischen Staates und Stein und Hardenberg*, Leipzig 1931, vol. I, pp. 364-566, p. 396.

¹¹ Rigaer Denkschrift Hardenbergs (12.09.1807), in: *ibid.* pp. 302-364, p. 306, p. 313.

servitude however did only gradually progress; it dragged on for decades and, in fact, in the very end the landowning aristocracy was restored.

These ambiguities were typical for the Prussian reforming efforts around 1800. It was also true for the "Städteordnung" of 1808 which should become a decisive step-in establishing a mode of government in the Prussian cities. By contrast, in the countryside, where the majority of the Prussian population still lived, this reformatory efforts to self-government totally failed. Likewise, all projects and designs to install a constitution modelled on the French and South German example failed. Precisely because the prevailing idea, which was thought of as inevitable, first to cultivate the subjects into morally mature and economically independent citizens before a constitution could emerge all constitutional schemes and projects failed. This mental framework obstructed the establishing of a constitution as part and parcel of the state formation. The self-conscious attempt of the Prussian reformers to oppose themselves to the revolutionary process in France went to pieces about 1820, not at least because of its ambivalences.

Notwithstanding, the Germany of 1815/20 differed fundamentally from the German pre-Revolutionary ancient regime due to an acceleration of an economic and social development. According to Lothar Gall, the German estate society did experience since the middle of the 18th century a dramatic change, "whose dynamics did lead to a fundamental change of the society's appearance." Gall also stated, that those "transitions proceeded at the same time on different layers of the society", and "these layers influenced one another reciprocally, so that a one-dimensional scholarly approach would miss the specific and distinctive dynamics of these processes."¹² M.

¹² Lothar Gall, *Von der ständischen zur bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, p. 12.

Botzenhart had rightly stated, that by the reforms in Prussia and in the Rheinbund "the civil society of the 19th century took shape." "The already fragile legal bounds of the estate society were abolished; and insofar this époque was the turning point for the foundation of the modern Germany."¹³ It was the political issue that stamped these reforming processes. They singled out decisive moments of a bureaucratic influence upon the transition of the society.

III.

The German notion "Bürger" (citizen, bourgeois and so on) and its compounds can by contrast to other European vernaculars not only be interpreted differently but also be used in rivalling political patterns of arguments. The single lexeme "Bürger" embraces by contrast to the other European vernaculars divergent meanings.¹⁴

According to the European tradition "Bürger" is first and foremost a legal term. In the 18th and 19th centuries "Bürger" labels precisely defined social stratas, which in general lived in cities. In these cities the "Stadtbürger" (privileged inhabitant of a city) who enjoyed civic rights of the freedom of the city, were marked off from the mere

¹³ Manfred Botzenhart, *Wandlungen der ständischen Gesellschaft im Deutschland der preußischen und der rheinbündischen Reformen*, in: *Von der ständischen zur bürgerlichen Gleichheit*, Berlin 1980, pp. 55-75, p. 75.

¹⁴ Cf. Manfred Riedel, Art. "Bürger", in: Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, Reinhart Koselleck (eds.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 1, Stuttgart, pp. 672-725, Manfred Riedel Art. "Gesellschaft, bürgerliche", in: *ibid.*, vol. 2, Stuttgart 1975, pp. 719-800, Michael Stolleis, *Untertan – Bürger – Staatsbürger. Bemerkungen zur juristischen Terminologie im späten 18. Jahrhundert*, in: Rudolf Vierhaus (ed.), *Bürger und Bürgerlichkeit im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, Heidelberg 1981, pp. 65-99 and Paul Ludwig Wehnacht, "Staatsbürger". *Zur Geschichte und Kritik eines politischen Begriffs*, in: *Der Staat*, 8 (1969), pp. 41-63.

inhabitants of these cities, the denizens, persons without full citizenship. Moreover, these "Stadtbürger" marked themselves off from the nobles, the peasants as well as from clerics, civil servants, and soldiers, social formations which enjoyed distinctive privileges. However these "Stadtbürger" differed fundamentally from the "Bürgertum" (citizenship, bourgeoisie and so on) in a modern parlance.

Alongside the meaning of "Stadtbürger" the legal concept "Bürger" exposed a supplementary legal implication, namely "none-noble". This distinctive signification was articulated by contemporaries in terms of the adjective "bürgerlich" or they used it as a noun: i.e. "die Bürgerlichen". In theory this meaning embraced the peasants, too. "Roturier" would be the French equivalent of "der Bürgerliche". "Bourgeois" would be the correct translation of "privileged inhabitant of a city" (Stadtbürger). The English equivalents would be either "burgess" or "freeman". The German notion "Bürger" thus exposed a twofold meaning already within the tradition of the laws of the estate society.

This semantic configuration became more intricate because "Bürger" in the German vernacular could also qualify the member of the *societas civilis*, which then was not marked off from the state. German contemporaries did translate the Latin term "civis" of the tracts in political theory as well as in the sources and the commentaries of the public law of the Holy Roman Empire by "Bürger". Then even the aristocratic stratas living in the countryside could be qualified as "Bürger" in the sense of the member of the *societas civilis*. However, this usage of the term Bürger confined to the legal discourse; it did not at all enter into the public discourse. Seen from the perspective of the numerous German sovereigns, "Bürger" in the very end signified "subject". The bourgeois educated classes, however, were no longer willing to accept this equation of "Bürger" and "subject". They were thoroughly acquainted with the participatory

moment of the concepts "societas civilis" und "civis". In the German political discussions since the 1780s, which were stamped by the "younger natural jurisprudence" (D. Klippel), the concept "Bürger" little by little gathered political momentum could then be brought to the fore in using the concept "Bürger", for instance the idea of a virtuous citizen, or the ideal of a patriotic engagement for the common wheel and by degrees already before the French revolution the demand for political liberty for the right to vote.

This politicisation of the concept "Bürger" took place in France and England, too. By contrast to the German vernacular in the French and the English languages respectively the notions "citoyen" and "citizen" respectively, which go back to the Latin term "civis" did articulate the political dimension of the concept. "Bourgeois" and "burgess" as well as other designations – only signified the privileged and educated inhabitant of a city. After the ending of the French estate society "bourgeois" and "bourgeoisie" could function as criteria in order to depict the contemporary society, whose origins in the estate society soon was forgotten. The received terms to denote the inhabitants of cities lost their implication in the English language in the political reforms of the 1830s. In the German language however, the considerable politicisation of the concept "Bürger" in the sense of the right to vote was integrated into the given concept "Bürger". Hence it became more difficult to use "Bürger" as a category to circumscribe and to define the middling social stratas of educated, talented and propertied persons. The concept "Bürger" and its compounds available to the contemporaries could at any time be restricted in terms of an estate society – for example by the usage of "estate of citizens" (Bürgerstand) – or could be

extended, universalized – for example by using the concept of citizen (Staatsbürger) or cosmopolitan (Weltbürger).¹⁵

About 1800, "Bürger" meant firstly the privileged inhabitant of a city, a person with the right of a city; secondly the non-noble persons; thirdly the subject of an absolute sovereign; and fourthly the "Bürger" as citizen denoting his right to political participation.¹⁶ The ideologisation brought about by the French Revolution did not at all alter these configurations of meanings. However, the concept "Staatsbürger" in terms of "citoyen", "citizen" in addition has emerged.¹⁷ This concept, which could easily make its way in the juridical language, did not at all improve the fundamental problems in using the concept "Bürger" for the German contemporaries, since the term "Staatsbürger" did also include both the meaning of "subject" as well as the meaning of the enfranchised citizen. None of these different meanings of "Bürger" got lost in the very beginning of the 19th century. The incompatible, contesting meanings of "Bürger" continued to be used in the political discourse of the reformed period of the early 19th century.

Hence, the concept of "Bürger" which could be used in diverging political patterns of arguments for different purposes, could not be used neither to define and circumscribe the multiple German bourgeois stratas nor as category for the

¹⁵ Cf. Walther Dieckmann (ed.), *Reichtum und Armut deutscher Sprache*, pp. 113 ss.

¹⁶ Cf. Johann Christoph Adelung, *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der Hochdeutschen Mundart mit beständiger Vergleichung der übrigen Mundarten, besonders aber der Oberdeutschen*, 4 vols. 2nd edition Leipzig 1793-1801 (Reprint Hildesheim, New York 1970) vol. 1, pp. 1262 ff.

¹⁷ Cf. Johann Heinrich Campe, *Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, 5 vols., Braunschweig 1807-1811 (Reprint Hildesheim, New York 1979), vol. 1, p. 651.

bourgeoisie's attempt to assert itself against the bureaucracy, the aristocracy and the emerging working classes.

IV.

The context of communication among the educated classes expanded at the end of the 18th century until, ultimately, the world of society and the state was seized upon as subject for discussion.¹⁸ The period witnessed a growth of a new reading, writing, and reasoning educated public which subsequently became a factor in politics, and was seen as such, especially by itself. The emergent press – newspapers and journals – also saw the "educated classes" as expressing the moods, thoughts and views of its readership, and as the source of social organisations such as reading circles and societies. The dialectical process of discovering their identity in theory and organising themselves in practice produced a patriotic awareness among the educated classes. Thus was born a political public which called for the right of political participation.

The politicisation of the "educated classes", encompassing both social history and the history of mentalities, was not solely a process of theory-building. On the contrary it involved a change in perceptual ability and a new capacity to express opinions and objectives. Politicisation was not a condition, but a social activity. The development of political awareness was accelerated by theoretical changes as well as by a number

¹⁸ Cf. for the argument Hans Erich Bödeker, Die "gebildeten Stände" im späten 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert: Zugehörigkeiten und Abgrenzungen. Mentalitäten und Handlungspotentiale, in: Jürgen Kocka (ed.), Bildungsbürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert. Teil IV: Politischer Einfluß und gesellschaftliche Formation, Stuttgart 1989, pp. 21-52, pp. 41 ss.

socio-political conditions and causes connected with the processes by which traditional estate society was transformed into modern society. The new social dynamic, which was difficult to evaluate, increasingly attracted the attention of educated contemporaries. Similarly, political changes made the form of the state a highly topical problem in the context of the conflict between Prussia and Austria, the American War of Independence and the establishment of the republic, unrest in Geneva and the Netherlands, and above all, the revolutionary process in France and its impact on Germany and Europe. Finally, domestic policies aiming for administrative, financial, legal and economic reforms in individual German states in the late 18th and early 19th centuries stimulated expectations, discussions and suggestions, especially on the increasingly wide-spread notion that social conditions were susceptible of improvement. It is true that late absolute reforms were primarily intending to increase the state's resources and improve administrative efficiency. However, enlightened political objectives also entered into these reforms, mostly by the agency of the "educated classes" in state service, and gave them a degree of cohesion.

The politicisation process among the "educated classes" shifted into a new gear in the 1770s. Not until then Germany had anything that can be called a political press. The German Enlightenment produced no significant political journals until the 1770s, when several began to represent public discussion and opinion.¹⁹ The number of politically orientated journals rose constantly, and they were published in every larger print runs. Instead of merely providing the material for political discussion, they became protagonist in this discussion. In articles and commentaries, journalists took more notice than ever before of current political, social and economic issues. A

¹⁹ Cf. Hubert Max, *Wesen und Gestalt der politischen Zeitschrift*, Essen 1942.

fundamental change in consciousness led the "educated classes" to bring into the open opinions and subjects which had previously been politically taboo and which would in most cases have been bent by the censor. The "educated classes" did this with growing competence, great self-confidence and in a critical tone. Writers demanded the right to publish reviews and suggestions for reforms, along with the usual factual reports. They wanted to create "publicity", to shape "public opinion". The permanent critical dialogue which journalists and editors set up between the journals was an important factor in this politicisation process.

At the same time, what had been a diffused desire, fed largely by curiosity, merely to accumulate knowledge gave way among the "educated classes" to a specific manner of dealing critically with opinions and information. Reading societies, the "real protectors" for political journals, reflected this change.²⁰ The members were no longer simply collecting information; they also discussed and criticised what they had read. Reading societies strengthened the political and social self-confidence of the "educated classes", and promoted the development of the new awareness among them. They became more discerning and knowledgeable. The self-organisation of reading societies among the "educated classes" and the discursive practise developed in them were prerequisites for the process of politicisation, and they also accelerated it. They made it possible to talk about new, interesting topics, and to find new forms of discussions and reasoning.²¹ A striking feature of the politicisation of the educated classes was the development of the notion of individual social and political responsibility. This commitment was typical of a new type of relationship

²⁰ Cf. Wolfgang Hardtwig, *Genossenschaft, Sekte, Verein*, pp. 285 ss.

²¹ Cf. Horst Dippel (ed.), *Die Anfänge des Konstitutionalismus in Deutschland. Texte deutscher Verfassungsentwürfe am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt am Main 1994.

between the individual and state. It could be expressed within the association movement, but not yet through representative bodies nor in the bureaucracy.

In their discussions of public affairs, societies ultimately did have an impact on the political sphere. But generally restricting themselves to rational discourse, to thinking and talking in the societies, the "educated classes" found it possible both to cooperate with their social and political environment, and to oppose it.²² The explicitly reformist orientation of the patriotic societies was an expression of this political engagement. In their desire to reform their world, the members of patriotic societies wanted to change society. Their declared political objective, however, was cooperation with "gute Policey", not criticism of it. Nevertheless, patriotic societies differed from the urban-oligarchic or territorial-absolutist system with which they cooperated in that they accepted "any civilised Bürger" and paid heed neither to precedence nor rank. Most important was that in calling for political participation, "patriots" blurred the lines separating civics and official state activities. The initiatives of the "educated classes" – more often theoretically than practical – gained in significance by being routed through associations.

Those members of the "educated classes" who believed in the traditional society and the traditional élites were able and willing to reform themselves did not turn their associations into instruments of political opposition. In fact they regarded the more overtly political societies (between 1790 and 1820) as "informal action group", as "political discussion circles", and "political support groups" for voluntary

²² Cf. Wolfgang Bonß, Norbert Schindler, *Praktische Aufklärung – Ökonomische Sozialitäten in Süddeutschland und Österreich im 18. Jahrhundert*, in: Rudolf Vierhaus (ed.), *Deutsche Patriotische und Gemeinnützige Gesellschaften*, München 1980, pp. 255 ss., hier pp. 311 ss.

engagement.²³ In their direct demands for political participation some forms of association were clearly the precursors of political parties – for example, the Prussian Tugendbund, the Turner, the Deutsche Gesellschaften (including the Hoffmann'sche Bund) which sprang up in the Rhein-Main area from 1814 on, and of course the Burschenschaften, political organisations of German students. After the era of reform, however, all claims for political participation were rejected and suppressed. The enforced restrictions of the societies' to unpolitical and purely social matters resulted in a depoliticisation and simultaneously crypto-politicisation of the association movement. Although the "educated classes" had no political or material power, they gained a great deal of influence of a public opinion. They regarded their writing – almost every educated German contributor to journals at some time or other – as a political act. Despite continuing censorship, journal editors and journalists wanted to strengthen and disseminate the process of politicisation. Their aim was to institutionalise "public opinion".

The fact that they tried to establish a public voice as "public opinion" indicates that the "educated classes" believed that the decisions of princess. in principle, bear rational examination. Thus the governing classes lost their "monopoly of reason". For the "educated classes", "public opinion" acquired the character of practical politics. As far as they were concerned, communicating with those in power via "public opinion" was participating in power to the extent that their arguments might influence the decisions made by the ruling powers. Only those who had a voice could hope to exercise any influence. Thus the struggle by writers to establish and secure "public opinion" as a corrective became a struggle for freedom of the press.

²³ Cf. Otto Dann, Die Anfänge politischer Vereinsbildung in Deutschland, in: Soziale Bewegung und politische Vereinsbildung in Deutschland, in: Soziale Bewegung und politische Verfassung. Festschrift für Werner Conze, Stuttgart 1976, pp. 197 ss.

The "educated classes" expected and hoped that "public opinion" would have a direct moral and political impact. They expected to exert political pressure with those in power would, in the long term, ignore, only at the risk of losing their authority. Their almost unlimited trust in the public as a political authority and in its supposed influence was based on the knowledge that they could influence "public opinion". They saw themselves as "magistrates" or "delegates" of "public opinion". Such statements cannot be dismissed as political exaggerations. They expressed the ambitious self-confidence of the "educated classes".

It became more and more common to see the "political public" as an institution which relentlessly kept a check on the authorities. Scrutinising the government was regarded as the task of the press, and "public opinion" came to consider the "educated classes" as an anti-governmental power which could discuss politics and provide a forum for the development of political objectives. The "educated classes" wanted to have an effect on state and society via "public opinion"; they wanted to "participate" in the state. It is true that they often regarded the controlling and checking function of the public as more important than a constitutionally guaranteed limitation of political power, or the demands for political participation, perhaps anchored in law.²⁴ The majority of the "educated classes" were in the service of the state or in official positions which were connected with and financially dependent upon the territorial states. As a social substratum of emergent "public opinion", they

²⁴ Cf. Eckart Hellmuth, *Aufklärung und Pressefreiheit. Zur Debatte der Berliner Mittwochsgesellschaft während der Jahre 1783 und 1784*, in: *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 9 (1982) pp. 316 ss. and Jörn Garber, *Politisch-soziale Partizipationstheorien im Übergang vom Ancien régime zur bürgerlichen Gesellschaft (1750-1800)*, in: Peter Steinbach (ed.), *Probleme politischer Partizipation im Modernisierungsprozeß*, Stuttgart 1982, pp. 23-56.

did not simply oppose the state, for they believed that the bureaucratic, authoritarian state was capable of reforming itself – with their help, of course. The emergent "bourgeois public" which initiated "public debate" was drawn from the sphere of private people who assembled to form a public, but we must not overlook the fact that in their provisional lives these private citizens were "servants of the state".²⁵ They were office-holders, and saw the areas in which they worked as providing scope for action. The close connection between officials and the existing institutional system signified dependence on the one hand, and on the other, the opportunity to get things done. It is true that at first the "educated classes" could develop only within a prescribed framework, in conformity with their employers' intentions and to a large extent fulfilling them. However, there was always a chance that through the advice they gave or the actions they took in a professional capacity, they could introduce their ideas and interest, or even translate them into reality. Within the limits imposed by the official contracts and the directives of those in power, they were capable of taking independent decisions. During the course of the 18th century, they stopped being "servants of the prince", and became "servants of the state".²⁶ This change in consciousness was gradually matched by the professionalisation of the bureaucracy. In the higher ranks in particular, educated officials could have considerable influence. They participated in making decisions, and perhaps in carrying them out. This shaped the way in which they saw themselves, and influenced their political awareness. They regarded themselves as a "universal order", whose expertise was

²⁵ Cf. Wilhelm Bleek, *Von der Kameralausbildung zum Juristenprivileg. Studium, Prüfung und Ausbildung der höheren Beamten des allgemeinen Verwaltungsdienstes in Deutschland im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1972.

²⁶ Cf. Johann August Eberhard, *Über die Rechte der Menschheit in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft. In Beziehung auf das bekannte Dekret der französischen Nationalversammlung*, in: *Philosophisches Journal* 3 (1991), pp. 377 ss., p. 389.

in the use of reason – and in some ways, they were. They felt themselves to be a new aristocracy of experts, a meritocracy, vis-à-vis the traditional aristocracy, the economic bourgeoisie, and the Volk. Officials who took part in the political discussion, and were able and willing to implement the discourse about possible improvements and reforms in their working practice influenced the reforms of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Since the late 18th century, middle-ranking and higher officials had been increasingly prepared to make use of, and indeed expand, the opportunities offered by their professional worlds. They stopped being mere administrators; they wanted to improve things. Groups of open-minded and active officials enthusiastically pursuing reforms were to be found in most German states 1820, although their objectives differed. After the end of the reform era, however, they were put under growing pressure, and governmental discipline considerably restricted their scope for action.

In an age when political objectives were being developed, the "educated classes" were protagonists and supporters of a programme for political and social reforms which they aimed to realise by means of legislation, administration and education. Although they did not have a single, unifying program, a large degree of common ground existed. The "educated classes" were firmly convinced that the state should shape and preserve the social order. They wanted to sweep away the authoritarian state. "Participation" in the state, which they considered necessary and desirable, was initially understood in the limited sense of taking part in the process of forming opinion. Together with legislative measures to dismantle feudal-corporatists obstacles to development, this was intended to create a liberal society of citizens, equal in law, in which the "educated classes", as a "universal order" would interpret the need of the population and protect the welfare and rights of the citizens. Their

rejection of democracy and fear revolution and despotism would have been accommodated by a constitutional monarchy in a state governed by a rule of law. "They believed that political participation should be restricted to property owners and the "educated classes", while the mass of the population still had a long process of education to go through. Consequently, they rejected universal suffrage. Freedom of opinion, of speech and of the press seemed more important to them than the franchise, because they believed that the process of gaining freedom had to begin with and awareness of freedom. And because they saw chances for social advancement as well as political activity within a limited monarchy, they did not want revolutionise the state, but to impose their political ideas upon its agencies and institutions. They wanted to reform it from within. They wantedto make it a legal institution of bourgeois society and a guarantor of its security".²⁷

²⁷ Rudolf Vierhaus, *Umriss einer Sozialgeschichte der Gebildeten in Deutschland*, in: *Quellen und Forschungen* 60 (1980), pp. 396 ss., p. 397; cf. the study of H. H. Gerth, *Bürgerliche Intelligenz um 1800. Zur Soziologie des deutschen Frühliberalismus*, ed. by U. Herrmann, Göttingen 1976.