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**Nationalism and Liberalism in Robert Burns, Samuel Taylor
Coleridge and William Wordsworth's Poems**

Stephen Hutchinson

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Supervisor: Cian Duffy

Abstract

Nationalism and liberalism are two predominant ideologies in modern politics that have had great significance since their embryonic stage during the Romantic era in the latter half of the 18th century. Nowadays, the majority would perceive nationalism and liberalism as two opposing ideologies that have very little in common. For citizens of the west after the second world war, nationalism would have connotations of totalitarianism and dictatorship whereas liberalism would be related to democracy and freedom. For the Romantics, the distinction between these two ideologies was not as clear. This essay investigates the connection between liberalism and nationalism during the Romantic era by analyzing specific works by the three influential British Romantic poets Robert Burns, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth. By comparing the poems with each other and comparing the poems to theories on nationalism and liberalism, this essay claims that the two ideologies were intertwined in their poetry. A central theme for the poets is the connection between landscape and national identity, displaying aesthetic nationalism. Another theme was the use of a common enemy to unite people in the name of the nation. Due to the political situation in Europe at the time, Britain associated their national pride with being a nation which venerates liberty and freedom. However, when analyzing nationalism, one must remember that it differs from country to country. German and British nationalism during the 19th century is a good example of two very different forms of nationalism.

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Introduction

The poems of the British Romantics frequently reflect British nationalistic tendencies. Some illuminate the essence of a unification between England, Scotland and Wales. Others emphasize the uniqueness of their own countries heritage. This essay will analyze the works of three British poets, detecting the nationalistic traits in their poems, arguing that their nationalism was intertwined with ideas of liberalism and liberty. Liberalism was a central idea for these poets, their works often being pastoral, commending the freedom of man and landscape. One might wonder how nationalism and liberalism can be combined when they are now commonly seen as opposing ideologies. The reason is the social and economic situation in 18th-century Britain, which gave space for free-thinkers due to the rise of the bourgeoisie. This contributed to a shift into national pride, identity and moral virtue. The benefits of the industrial revolution and a higher literacy level across the country led to the rise of the middle class, who wanted to separate themselves from aristocratic profligate and internationalism and awaken a sense of Britishness. The progression in Britain and the rise of the middle-class were key factors in the rise of national identity. According to Newman,

The ideology of English nationalism becomes the vehicle through which those excluded from aristocratic circles could claim their share of political power. Thus for Newman the rejection of France by Wordsworth and Coleridge after the French Revolution and their subsequent embrace of English nationalism signals not a retreat into conservatism, but rather an embrace of true socially progressive force of the age (in Kaiser 21).

Nationalism for these poets had become identified with liberalism and social progression something which they ardently wanted to defend.

With the rise of the middle class, a relatively democratic system developed compared to the autocracies in Europe. England, Scotland and Wales had perfect circumstances for liberal and nationalistic values to blossom. Britain's wars that were fought overseas gave rise to a patriotic pride in combat that lacked the negative concomitants that came with war in the motherland. With this out-of-mind, out-of-sight mentality, the French and Catholicism became the common enemy for the Britons, mainly due to the various wars that were fought against France. The fact that the wars were fought on foreign ground provided a higher living standard for the majority in Britain, which in turn created a love of the nation

and a possible voice against the conservative system (the aristocracy). The Government had to borrow money from a newly established middle class to fund for these wars, which put the government in debt to the lenders granting the lenders more power. Nationalism grew even stronger as Napoleon started to expand into Europe. Now even optimists about the French revolution had started taking to nationalism to unite the country against the tyrant that was France.

The three poets that this essay will focus on are Robert Burns (1759-1796), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) and William Wordsworth (1770-1850). The poems by Robert Burns that are going to be analyzed are 'Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation', 'Scots Wha Hae' and 'Does Haughty Gaul Invasion Threat'. The Poems by Samuel Taylor Coleridge are 'France: An Ode' and 'Fears in Solitude'. William Wordsworth's poems are 'Thoughts of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland', 'Britons and Freedom' and 'Written in London'. These poems were chosen because of the parallels found between landscape and national identity, between traditional national values compared to the current establishment and the enthusiasm to defend Britain's liberty. Naturally, there were other poets who wrote about related topics during the same period, inter alia, Sir Walter Scott, Robert Southley and a few years later the second generation of romantic poets such as Lord Byron, Percy Brysshe Shelley and John Keats. The reason I chose to focus on Robert Burns, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth was because they shared similar ideas yet grew up in different regional areas and came from different social backgrounds, which contributes to a more interesting analysis. The essay will begin by looking at the political situation in Britain and the rise of liberalism and nationalism in its different shapes and forms. It will then examine the rise of the bourgeoisie, the literate masses and the demand for vernacular language use and how these developments led to the rise of nationalism and liberalism. The final part of this essay will apply the turn of events to the poems proving that nationalism and liberalism were intertwined subjects for the poets.

The Political Background in Britain from 1779

Optimism, hopefulness, fear and terror spread quickly throughout Europe in the aftermath of the French revolution which paved the way for political ideas such as liberalism, conservatism, nationalism and even socialism to really gain significant power. The masses were formerly seen as subjects to sovereignty, but they now felt they had the right to become citizens of a state, seeking suffrage and the possibility to make a change. Burns, Coleridge and Wordsworth shared positive feelings about the French Revolution which are reflected in

their poetry. This can be seen in Coleridge's poem 'France: An Ode' and Wordsworth's poem 'French Revolution'. According to Harvie, the Burns poem 'Scotts wha' hae' was inspired by the French revolution and "had obvious contemporary implications" (485). The poets' optimism towards revolutionary France changed over time, when it became apparent that the French had become tyrants and usurpers, transitioning from a previous monarchical autocracy to a dictatorship. This transition is presented in Coleridge's poems 'Fears in Solitude' and 'France: An Ode' and Wordsworth's poem 'Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland' which like Coleridge's 'Ode' focuses on the expansion of France into Switzerland. The poets read about the revolution in newspaper articles and political journals. Wordsworth had travelled around France in 1790 and lived there from 1791 until returning to England in 1793. When living in France, Wordsworth gained first-hand knowledge of the prospects that pervaded in the country.

Alongside optimism and hopefulness, the French Revolution spread fear and terror. The establishment in Britain eventually became worried about the radical thoughts of revolution reaching Britain. Thomas Paine's reflections on the French Revolution in *Rights of Man* instigated controversy amongst Britons from the bottom to the top of the class system. According to Navickas the second half of *Rights of Man* had messages of social levelling which contributed to the Royal proclamation against seditious writings in November 1792. Thomas Paine was burned in effigy, ritually tried and executed across the country (35-36). Navickas also refers to Frank O'Gorman and Nicholas Rogers who describe the burnings of Thomas Paine in effigy as "vulgar conservatism", promoted by local elites and the rituals being a form of civic patriotism. The burning was as such a popular ritual since the burnings of Guy Fawkes and the military music band and procession could be described as patriotic (Navickas 36). The prohibition of Thomas Paine's texts and the flaming effigy were ways to unite people against the French and to retain calmness and the status quo. The attempt to unite Britons against ideas of social levelling and outlandish, liberal notions from the French Revolution is perceived as conservative nationalism which differs from the nationalistic traits found in the selected poems in this essay.

The Act of Union of 1707 put Britain in a politically unique situation in terms of uniting three culturally different nations into one political unit. A common cultural background is considered a key contributor to unified national identity and therefore nationalism. According to Kaiser a common culture is "shared historical and social cultural practices centered around a common language, literature, ethnic practices, religion, and even

race insofar as it is tied to the former” (19). So how did British nationalism arrive? Black states that the sense of Britishness came about as an aversion towards a distinct differentness from outside of Britain, namely Catholicism and continental autocracy (166), whilst Colley argues that Britain “was an invention forged above all by war. Time and time again, war with France brought Britons collectively against it [...] They defined themselves against the French as they imagined them to be, superstitious, decadent and unfree” (5). But this can still make one wonder how Britain got a national identity when there was a lack of common history. In fact, historically England and Scotland had been enemies, warring with each other for hundreds of years over religion and monarchical power. Crocco argues that

... Britain is an ‘imagined community’ forged into being by various political and cultural acts of union that nominally joined a population of English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish otherwise divided by the normative markers of nationality- ethnicity, language, custom, religion, and dynastic affiliation- as well as by class. The objective of this unification process was to produce an entity that could field and maintain an empire of trade and colonies, and the primary agents and beneficiaries of this imperial project were the landed and monied elites- drawn unevenly between the English, Scottish, and Welsh upper classes- who stood to profit most from this new imperial configuration. While it lasted, the empire was able to solidify a sense of exclusive national community and patriotic loyalty to the state by affording average Britons opportunities for material success in the colonies and by fomenting a them-and-us attitude whereby nominal Britons, who were divided by ethnic and class antagonisms, came to identify with each other and the state contra colonized others and imperial rivals. (8)

Thus, Crocco manifests the unification of the three nations, with distinctively diverse cultural heritages and no common history, as being of political interest. Profit was to be made as allies instead of being at loggerheads, at least for the upper classes. Furthermore, a unified army posed a stronger threat to the rest of Europe and made it less likely to get invaded, which created a sense of strength in unity. According to Cricket, Colley’s thesis in *Britons: Forging a Nation*, is problematic (408). Colley proposes that British nationalism was enjoyed by all Britons because it played on two great fears that were shared from all social classes: first, the threat of a foreign invasion most likely by France; and second, the expansion of Catholicism. Cricket agrees with Colley that British patriotism grew stronger in response to the common

fear of the French and Catholicism but that “the situation is surely better conceived not as the victory or forging of a new nation of Britons, but as the growth of a sense of dual nationality” (408). Cricket also emphasizes the notion of dual nationalism being more associated with Scotland and Britain, as opposed to Scotland and England, and with Wales and Britain as opposed to Wales and England, thus providing a distinction between the “general cultures” of England, Scotland and Wales and “a specifically political culture” that is Britain (407-408).

Nationalism, Liberalism, Literature and the Bourgeoisie of Britain

Anderson explains how nationalism could only ever arise when the axiomatic grasp of three important cultural concepts had lost their power. The three cultural concepts are: firstly, the power of a specific script language that provided Christian sodality on an international sphere and ontological truth, secondly the notion that monarchs were chosen by god and therefore naturally above humans and thirdly that the origins of the world and man came from the same place. The combination of these three notions gave a certain amount of meaning to everyday life and solace in death and disasters (36). So, when these factors lost their significance nationalism emerged, providing a sense of unity that had been missing. The breaking up of religious script occurred centuries before the Romantic era when the Bible started being translated into other languages than Latin. Religion then split into different forms in Britain, the two major ones being Protestantism and Catholicism. Thus, as time went by Protestantism became the eminent religious force of Britain and became a nationalistic symbol of Britishness contra otherness.

Literature and nationalism were inextricably intertwined during the 18th century in Britain. There was the shift from Enlightenment cosmopolitanism to “the Romantic preoccupation with localism and patriotism” (Simpson 42) which marks the beginning of nationalism in literature. The growth of nationalism in literature was mostly due to the rise of a literate population, the bourgeoisie, which paved the way for a rise in demand for vernacular language usage and vernacular cultural texts. Anderson emphasizes the importance of the “expanding vernacular print-market being created by capitalism” (40) to the growth of nationalism, and Crocco points out the promotion of a vernacular national canon over the traditional Latin or European canon (10-11). The transition from the Latin or European literary canon to an English vernacular canon reflects middle-class Britons distancing themselves from the aristocratic customs of internationalism and the usage of Latin. Debauchery and profligate behaviour were associated with internationalism and the aristocracy. The bourgeoisie started seeing these mores as neither morally viable nor reflecting

the disposition of a good citizen to the motherland. Leerssen states “[i]t was a privilege of the upper classes and the nobility to have international contacts and to engage in foreign travel; and it was a matter of conspicuous wealth display to buy foreign produce and affect foreign manners” (93). A cultural change was emerging where bourgeois values became the prevailing values of the time. Aristocratic values were even denounced and ridiculed in popular culture, especially in contemporary theatre (Leerssen 94-95). The detachment of aristocratic values was subsumed by vernacular poetry. The poets now wanted their poetry to communicate to the common man, to be enjoyed by as many fellow countrymen as possible on a national level instead of an international level. As Wordsworth himself puts it “to chuse incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as possible, in a selection of language really used by men” (qtd. in Crocco 63). Wordsworth’s quote discloses a conscious focus on the national sphere and a detachment from internationalism and the aristocracy; the quote is also applicable to the works of Coleridge and Burns.

Vernacular script and language usage came forth from a range of economic and social factors that made its uprising possible. Crocco gives a list of reasons to the arrival of vernacular literature, starting with,

the invention of stereotyping print technologies that made cheap reprints commercially viable; the liberation of copyright law; the growth of a literary marketplace in response to the growing demand for vernacular literature issuing from the nation’s rising middle class; increased competition between publishing houses, which drove down costs and engendered elaborate marketing schemes; the founding of free public libraries; and the rise of English studies programs that promulgated a canon of vernacular literature for the nation (10-11).

The explanation given by Crocco unveils essences of both liberalism and nationalism. The liberal free market provided affordable books for more people whilst the public library became a national investment in common-people which enhanced the demand of vernacular usage as opposed to Latin. The economic factors of print technology advancements, liberation of copyright law and increase in competition combined with the social factors of public library funding and a growth in a literary mass made it possible for a demand in vernacular language usage to grow. As opposed to David Hume, who claimed that “British liberty is [...] argued as working against the emergence of national character” (qtd. in Simpson 42), British liberty rather created a demand for national unity through common language and literature.

The rise of literary national figures is also related to the rise of nationalism. National heroes were used to push forward a national agenda and build a national character. The glorification of historical patriots or patronesses, such as Queen Boadicea who had according to Leerssen become “the iconography of Britannia” (47) is an example of such a heroine. Boadicea represented the virtues of the bourgeoisie as a chaste and virtuous woman yet a brave and bold warrior that was brought into battle because she wanted “to avenge the outraged honour of her daughters, raped by Romans” (Leerssen 47). The revival of Shakespeare was brought forward during this period as to counteract the aristocratic values which were considered French, or international. According to Leerssen, Shakespeare’s plays *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* were glorified in being anti-French because they were “written in ignorance of the rules of neo-Aristotelian classicism” (95). So, there was a sense of pride in being anti-aristocrat and in so being anti-international. The core of British, or English, middle-class character can be seen in Coleridge’s description of a “gentleman” stating that this figure is “frequent in England, rare in France, ... while in Germany is almost unknown” (qtd. in Simpson 41). The essence of Britishness came to be associated with the gentleman figure who was virtues, honest, hard-working and loved the motherland.

According to Leerssen British politics was a constant battle of power between crown and parliament from the middle of the 17th century onwards, creating a civil war and ten years of the commonwealth after the execution of Charles I (48). Bearing in mind that the absolute power of the monarchy was temporarily abolished and returned with significantly less power one can start to understand why some British nationalists were liberals. Britain’s fight for liberty had been embedded in British culture before the rest of Europe, dating back to The Magna Carta (1215) and was an ongoing progress. Black also describes Britain as a country which strove for liberty: “[t]he quest for freedom, the defence of liberty, and the respect for both law and individual rights do not provide the entire thrust of British history, yet they do characterize important episodes of which the British are most proud” (169). Britain’s endeavourment towards political freedom and freedom for the individual, from the Magna Carta (1215) up until the 1800s, became a nationalistic trait, hence intertwining liberalism and nationalism. The next section will analyze the connections made by the poets between nationalism and liberalism.

Robert Burns

“Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation”

This section will focus on three poems by Robert Burns. These poems all have traits of nationalism, both Scottish and British, and liberalism. “Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation” is most likely a reaction to the Act of Union of 1707 between England and Scotland. The speaker is in despair over the fact that Scotland has sold itself to a bunch of “rogues in a nation”. The nationalism in this poem has no affiliation with Britain but is instead an appeal to be proud of the uniqueness of Scotland with hope that it will not sell itself out to Englishness. This is most prominent in lines 5-8 in the second stanza: “Now Sark rins over Solway sands,/ An´ Tweed rins to the ocean,/ To mark where England’s province stands-/ Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!”. Sark is a word used in Scotland and Northern England for a shirt and tweed is a Scottish woollen cloth used to make cloths and hence both signal a distinct form of Scottishness. Sark and Tweed are also two rivers that lie on the borders between England and Scotland. The river Tweed runs out to the North Sea but could also be symbolic of the possible loss of Scottish tradition with the fabric tweed resembling something very Scottish that is being lost, running out into the sea.

In the second verse the speaker describes Scotland’s bravery throughout history that they could not be subdued by “force or guile” (l.9) though now they have sold themselves “by a coward few,/ For hireling traitor’s wages” (ll.11-12). This is a clear mark of nationalism, when referring to a common history for Scotsmen of bravery and war that will arouse a sense of patriotism. It also reflects the speaker’s disappointment with the current rulers of Scotland who sell themselves to England and go against what it is to be Scottish. The speaker further explains what he believes to be the reason for the unification: “But English gold has been our bane-/ Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!” (ll.15-16). English gold had been the bane of Scotland, making it possible to be bought and sold. Burns uses another historical reference as a nationalistic tool, the mention of King Robert VIII the Bruce in the third verse, who freed Scotland from English rule after winning the Battle of Bannockburn and Sir William Wallace, who was one of Scotland’s greatest heroes, leading the Scottish resistance forces during the first years of the struggle to free Scotland from England. The glorification of national heroes is an attempt to bring forward national pride which is also a technique that Wordsworth uses when he refers to Milton and Shakespeare in ‘Written in London’. The approbation of Sir William Wallace and King Robert VIII the Bruce is a way to portray Scottish identity as being brave and courageous as opposed to the current aristocrats

who have sold the pride of Scotland to the English. Burns alludes to Scottish heroes again in the next poem 'Scotts Wha Hae'.

“Scotts Wha Hae”

The central theme of this poem is liberty but it also engages with nationalism. The poet uses the two Scottish heroes Wallace and Bruce in the first two lines, which confirms the poem is going to be centered on Scottishness. The whole poem is an attempt to enhance a will to fight for a more liberal Scotland: “See approach proud Edward’s power/ Chains and slavery” (ll.7-8) is a reference to the English King, Edward II and his arrival at Bannockburn where the Battle of Bannockburn (1314) is about to commence. The battle has great significance in Scottish history because it had expanded Scottish territory and enhanced Robert I’s influence. The Scottish nationalism is intensified further by condemning those who do not wish to fight as traitor and knaves: “Wha will be a traitor knave? Wha can fill a coward’s grave?” (ll.9-10) which would probably spread fear leading people into compliance.

The speaker’s interpretation of the events in 1314 could also be applied to the contemporary situation of Burns’s time. As Harvie mentions ‘Scotts wha’ hae’ was inspired by the French revolution and “had obvious contemporary implications” (485). The speaker is not explicit though the implications to the French revolution are applicable: “By oppression’s woes and pains!/ By your sons in servile chains!/ We will draw our dearest veins,/ But they shall be free!” (ll.17-20). This could be a direct reference to the French revolution with the poet deciding not to be too explicit about his current political opinion but rather draw the parallel to an event in history as not to appear too much of a radical. “Tyrants fall at every foe!/ Liberty’s in every blow!/ Let us do or die!” (ll.22-24) displays explicit ardency for liberty. The speaker uses national heroes, again, to illustrate their will to die for freedom, therefore uniting liberalism and nationalism. The nationalistic aura shifts in the next poem to uniting Britain instead of focusing on the liberation of Scotland.

‘Does Haughty Gaul Invasion Threat’

Burns turns his disdain from the English to the French in this poem and uses nationalism to bring Britons together, so they can stand united against the French. “O let us not, like snarling curls,/ In wrangling be divided,” (ll.11-12) indicates the speaker’s believe that Britons should unite and set aside their differences because there are more important things to concentrate on. “Be Britain still to Britain true,/ Among ourselves united;/ For never but by British hands/ Maun British wrongs be righted!” (ll.15-18) is also a passage that emphasizes that the

differences between the nations of Britain should be set aside for now and should only be corrected by Britons themselves. In the last stanza, Burns proves to be a Scottish and a British patriot, a royalist and also a man of the people and in turn of liberty: “Who will not sing “God save the King,”/ Shall hang as high’s the steeple;/ But while we sing “God save the King,”/ We’ll ne’er forget The people!” (ll.37-40). The speaker combines nationalism and liberalism in this poem and also really shows his belief in liberty and how he deems it to be a cause worth fighting and dying for.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

‘France: An Ode’

This section will focus on Samuel Taylor Coleridge and how his poems reflect thoughts of liberalism and nationalism. For Coleridge a lot of his nationalism is connected to the landscape which also bear connotations of freedom and liberty. ‘France: An Ode’ consists of 105 lines and five verses. The first verse expresses the poet’s love for liberty. By personifying nature, the speaker speaks directly to the natural wonders, expressing his love of their freedom and that they only listen to eternal law. There are not any nationalistic tendencies that are connected to the British establishment, though the speaker’s love of the landscape is a connection to the nation, which is also a central concept in many of William Wordsworth’s poems. The expression of love for liberty and God makes the ambiance of the first verse optimistic. The last four lines of the first verse read “Yea, every thing that is and will be free / Bear witness for me, wheresoe’er ye be, / With what deep worship I have still adored / The spirit of divinest Liberty” (ll.18-21), which shows the speaker’s love of liberty.

In the second verse, the reader is presented with exultation over the French revolution and the denouncement Britain for trying to fight against the revolutionaries. Britain’s landscape is beautifully depicted and the speaker shows gratitude for his friendships and love life that has been within the British shores. The speaker uses aesthetic nationalism to praise his beloved country by connecting landscape to national character, but criticizes the British establishment. There is no mention of Britain in the rest of the poem, instead the poem rather takes a deeper interest in France and freedom. The speaker shows optimistic hope that France will lead the way, that the positivity of the revolution will spread throughout Europe: “Shall France compel the nations to be free, / Till Love and Joy look round, and call the earth their own” (ll.62-63). As the poem goes into the fourth verse, the speaker expresses his recantation of the French revolution and apologizes for his earlier hopes and dreams. In line

66 there is an allusion to Switzerland, Helvetia, and in the next line he refers to her “blood-stained streams” (l.67). This is a reference to the subjugation of Switzerland, a topic that Wordsworth dedicated a whole poem, ‘Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland’ which symbolizes the similarity in thought between the two writers of their disapproval of the subjugation. Coleridge finishes the fourth verse by accusing France of “insulting the shrine of Liberty” (l.83) and that the new French leaders had “to tempt and to betray” (l.84) freemen.

In Coleridge’s commentary of ‘France: An Ode’, Coleridge describes the fifth stanza as

[a]n address to liberty, in which the Poet expresses his conviction that those feelings and that grand *ideal* of Freedom which the mind attains by its contemplation of its individual nature, and of the sublime surrounding objects (see Stanza the First) do not belong to men, as a society, nor can possibly be either gratified or realized, under any form of human government; but belong to the individual man, so far as he is pure, and inflamed with the love and adoration of God in Nature (89)

Coleridge’s commentary on the fifth stanza shows his belief in freedom and his love of landscape which cannot be owned by any institution. The poem’s nationalistic disposition is the connection between landscape and nation, something that is also a central topic in the next poem ‘Fears in Solitude’.

‘Fears in Solitude’

‘Fears in Solitude’ has traces of nationalism since it enamours the motherland’s nature and is also very liberal in the way it castigates Britain’s politics and aristocratic customs that oppose liberty. The speaker distinctly separates the establishment of Britain, which he contests, from the landscape and values of Britain, the values in which the ruling class deviate from. The poem, written in 1798, is the speaker’s reflections upon the possibility of an invasion from Napoleonic France. In this poem, the speaker provides two illustrations of Britain. The first illustration is of the beautiful country which he loves so dearly for the cherished memories that it has given him. The other is of current political situation of Britain which the speaker criticizes so immensely for its vices, inflictions and foreign policies. The speaker continues to criticize the British establishment when he describes “All individual dignity and power/ Engulfed in courts, committees, institutions,/ Associations and societies” (ll.54-56). These

committees and institutions are seen by the speaker as opposing to individual freedom, which displays similar thoughts to Wordsworth in his poem 'Written in London'. Thus, nationalism and liberalism are clearly conjoint themes in this poem. The nationalistic traits are, again mostly aesthetic, but can also be read as the love for the comparatively liberal country in which the poet has been brought up. The liberal country has given him the opportunity to become who he is today. Lamenting his dear Britain, the speaker says:

But, O dear Britain! O my Mother Isle!
How shouldst thou prove aught else but dear and holy
To me, who from thy lakes and mountain-hills,
Thy clouds, thy quiet dales, thy rocks and seas,
Have drunk in all my intellectual life [...]
O divine
And beautiful island! Thou hast been my sole
And most magnificent temple, in which
I walk with awe, and sing my stately songs,
Loving the God that made me! (ll.182-186 ll.193-197)

The bucolic scenery that is described has the same principle as many Wordsworth's poems in trying to depict the English countryside as the essence of Britain. An admiration for pastoral life as opposed to cosmopolitanism which is associated with internationalism and the aristocracy. The essence of nationalism for Coleridge and Wordsworth is the connection between landscape and nation.

The liberal side to the poem condemns the British establishment for its loss of morals and virtues, which are traits that are perceived to be British. Hence, the British establishment are going against being British. Coleridge denounces the British imperialistic expansion by saying "my countrymen! Have we gone forth/ And borne to distant tribes slavery and pangs,/ And, deadlier far, our vices, whose deep taint/ With slow perdition murders the whole man,/ His body and his soul!" (ll.49-53). Coleridge perceived the British enslavement of other peoples to be morally wrong as it went against his ideas of freedom, and

he did not just criticize Britain's foreign policies he also castigates Britain's homeland policies in lines 53-63:

Meanwhile, at home,
All individual dignity and power
Engulfed in courts, committees, institutions,
Associations and societies,
A vain. speech-mouthing, speech-reporting guild,
One benefit-club for mutual flattery,
We have drunk up, demure as at a grace,
Pollutions from the brimming cup of wealth;
Contemptuous of all honourable rule,
Yet bartering freedom and the poor man's life
For gold, as at a market!

In this passage, Coleridge manages to reflect the rise of the middle-class, who ardently tried to separate themselves from the aristocracy who lived a life of dissipation. The rich seemed to lack honour and respect for common citizens which led to the common citizens abandoning internationalism, which was associated with the aristocracy, and confiding in nationalism. This passage can also resemble the fear and apprehension of modernity and the loss of freedom. According to Kaiser both liberalism and cultural nationalism (a branch of nationalism where national culture constitutes a people instead of a people constituting the culture) were responses to modernity and the strife of self-determination, the main difference being that liberalism attempts to attain self-determination through the individual rather than through a whole people (18). Lines 53-63 in 'Fears in Solitude' offers a more liberal perspective considering his disdain towards institution, associations and committees that disempowers individual uniqueness.

Preparation for an invasion is something that Coleridge believed was missing in Britain, due to the absence of war fought within the British shores. When referring to his countrymen and their common view on war he writes in lines 86-94:

Thankless too for peace
(Peace long preserved by fleets and perilous seas)
Secure from actual warfare, we have loved
To swell the war-whoop, passionate for war!
Alas! For ages ignorant of all
Its ghastlier workings, (famine or blue plague,
Battle, or siege, or flight through wintry-snows,)
We, this whole people, have been clamorous
For war and bloodshed;

This description depicts the patriotic war-hungry Britons as being merely spectators of war and not being aware of the reality of war and its ghastly consequences. The growth of nationalism in Britain was being fortified by wars taking place abroad and the promised riches that were to be gained by British expansion. The speaker manages depicting a harsh reality that may or may not occur if an invasion were to take place in Britain and in doing so denouncing the patriotic Britons who glorify off-shore wars. In this sense, Coleridge can be perceived as anti-nationalistic, but it is rather an aversion to what the British establishment is currently propagating. By not advocating freedom and liberty, the speaker perceives their behaviour as not being in conjunction to what is British. The insinuation, which Coleridge makes, that the current establishment counteract traditional national values is also seen in 'Such a parcel of Rogues in a Nation'. Coleridge, in lines 171-176, mentions that he had been deemed as a traitor to his county: "Others, meanwhile,/ Dote with a mad idolatry; and all/ Who will not fall before their images,/ And yield them worship, they are enemies/ Even to their own country/ Such have I been deemed". So, criticizing the British political agenda could be perceived as being against one's own country.

William Wordsworth

'Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland'

This section will focus on Wordsworth's poems in the light of the ideas of nationalism and liberalism. Nationalism for Wordsworth was a love of British freedom, which should be revered and defended. The title of this poem explains what the poet is contemplating, but it

does not specifically point out who the subjugator is, though it would have been obvious at the time. Written in 1802 it is a reaction to the invasion of Switzerland by Napoleonic France in 1798 and the founding of the Helvetic republic.

Wordsworth, who was a great supporter of the revolution in France 1789, was now coming to terms with the results of the revolution not turning out the way he had expected. In the first stanza, it is made clear that the speaker is still a great advocate of liberty. "Two Voices are there; one is the sea,/ One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice:/ In both age to age though didst rejoice,/ They were thy chosen music, Liberty!" (ll.1-4). The depiction of Switzerland's natural environments having voices (though technically Switzerland does not border a sea though he might be referring to Lake Constance which borders Switzerland, Germany and Austria) illustrates the spirit and essence of the country in the eyes of the poet. The whole poem can be interpreted as metaphor, the personification of a country that has gone deaf and cannot enjoy "thy chosen music, Liberty" (l.4) since they have lost their ears. "Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft" (l.10) is the disclosure to the nation becoming deaf and the rest of the voices that the mountains and Oceans hold will not be heard or enjoyed by the Swiss. The use of natural wonders can allude to freedom and liberty because it is perceived as something that cannot be bought and becomes part of the nation. Wordsworth's choice of identifying the Swiss national character with the Swiss mountains symbolizes its people as a mighty, majestic and brave people, that had fought for liberty. The notion, of natural landscape identifying national character were central themes for both Coleridge and Wordsworths' poetry.

Wordsworth creates British nationalistic pride in this poem, though subtly, by identifying a common enemy who are now the usurper of freedom and liberty, the French. By identifying France as a country that has taken away freedom from the Swiss, the speaker delivers a furtive message of warning to Britons that Britain could be the next victim of the French expansion. The haughty title of the poem 'Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland' has implications of superiority and insinuates antipathy to such a subjugation or the loss of liberalism which suggests that Britain is a mighty fine nation that tends to liberty. Wordsworth's national pride is associated with the liberty that his country possesses. Wordsworth's disapproval of the French revolution did not withdraw into conservatism; it took instead nationalistic pride in the achievements that Britain had attained as a progressive force of the age (Kaiser 21), which is made clear in 'Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland' but possibly even more so in 'Britons and Freedom'. What is more, the usage

of “A Briton” is a direct unification of England, Scotland and Wales implying that each nation shared the same response to this subjugation thus strengthening a sense of British identity and identifying a common enemy, The French. In the next poem, Wordsworth continues to display his enamour for the liberty of Britain.

‘Britons and Freedom’

‘Britons and Freedom’, also known as ‘It is not to be Thought of’, is a patriotic poem that again tries to unite the people of Britain against the common enemy who is trying to claim their freedom. In this poem the speaker hails Britain as being free since old times, which can be related to Britain, or England, being the first country to move towards a modern democracy. The usage of historical figures such as Shakespeare and Milton also adds a sense of pride to be British: “We must be free or die, who speak the tongue/ That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold/ Which Milton held.- In everything we are sprung/ Of Earth’s first blood, have titles manifold.”(ll.11-14) Both these figures were and are English heroes but the English values were deemed to be the most dominant of the nations of Britain. The mentioning of these two literary masters also sets apart the essence of Britishness as something special and unique compared to the rest of the continent. “Of earths first blood” (l.14) the poet claims that Britons are the noblest on earth. Line 14 also reads: “have titles manifold” which sets another tone of pride towards what the country has achieved and that the greatness is too precious to be forfeited. Wordsworth’s blatant nationalism is an attempt to defend Britain from tyranny and stay true to the British values of freedom.

The speaker embraces his country for its liberty but also emphasizes that the path towards liberty had not always been smooth. The first stanza reads “It is not to be thought of that the Flood/ Of British freedom, which, to the open sea/ Of the world’s praise, from dark antiquity/ Hath flowed, `with pomp of waters, unwithstood” (ll.1-4) meaning that liberty and freedom have been ideologies fought for, and have not been achieved free from struggle. Also, in this stanza, the speaker takes for granted that the British way of living is a model to which the rest of the world should aspire, thus enhancing rhetorically the value of being British. That similar sensation of British haughtiness can be found in the title of Wordsworth’s ‘A Britons Thought on the Subjugation of Switzerland’. The two poems also share nationalistic pride of Britain being progressive force of the age that is worth defending. The next poem ‘Written in London’ does not display pride in British freedom, but instead demonstrates the middle-class’s unease to modernity and the angst of losing Britain’s tranquility.

‘Written in London’

When first reading this poem one might find it hard to detect nationalistic inclinations seeing that it denounces the way of life in London, the capital of England and the epicenter of British politics. On the other hand, one must bear in mind that London was perceived by common Britons, or middle-class Britons, as a city full of foreign influence and aristocratic mores from which the new liberal-nationalist middle-class wanted to separate themselves from.

Wordsworth clearly states his disdain towards aristocratic values when he observes, in his despair, that “life is only drest for show” (l.4) and further indicates a fear of cordial values being lost when he states that “no grandeur now in nature and book/ Delight us. Rapine, avarice, expense,/ This is idoltry: and these we adore:” (ll.10-12). This depiction of London as a dissipated and immoral place indicates the speaker’s angst towards the lack virtues that has come with modernity.

Wordsworth’s disdain towards London is not a disdain towards Britain, but rather a thought of London not being traditionally British, or English. Although Crocco is referring to Wordsworth’s *Lyrical Ballads*, his argument is still valid and can be applied to ‘Written in London’ when he says that “Wordsworth symbolically recenters the English countryside [...] at the heart of the nation as the “real” Britain [...] that idealized the common peasantry and village life, presenting them as emblems of national culture over and against urban cosmopolitanism” (64). The connection between national landscape and national character is presented in this poem by the speaker’s contempt towards cosmopolitanism. Crocco further argues that the “socially mobile urban middle-class Britons [...] though they relied on the opportunities afforded by urban life, they also rejected the identification of urban culture, which they viewed with fear, suspicion and hostility” (67). ‘Written in London’ depicts the thought of London as a suspicious place. It also displays the fear of change that is taking place and the alienation of the middle-class as they seek a new identity. Kaiser claims both nationalism and liberalism came as a reaction to autonomy, subjectivity and self-determination which were consequences of modernity (18), modernity which had discombobulated the majority leaving them in a state of limbo.

In comparison with this poem that castigates London, one might recall one of Wordsworth’s best-known poems ‘Composed Upon Westminster Bridge’ which has a line depicting London as the finest place on earth “Earth has not anything to show so fair” (‘Composed Upon Westminster Bridge l.158). But the speaker’s description of London in ‘Composed upon Westminster Bridge’ is aesthetic and not political, depicting London as a

natural space instead of an urban space. This representation of London displays a connection between landscape and national character which is found in the poems 'France: An Ode' and 'Fears in Solitude' by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Conclusion

When religious texts lost their axiomatic truth to ontology, along with the literate power of Latin in conjunction with the loss of divine monarchical power, there arose a deprivation of unity and a lack of belonging among the masses. As Anderson points out it was only then that nationalism could flourish (36). By the time of the French Revolution in 1789, these accepted truths had lost their axiomatic truth and gave way to the rise of nationalism in Britain. The economic situation at the time also gave rise to an increase of middle-class people, who benefitted financially from the industrial revolution and as money lenders from the wars that Britain fought abroad. The foreign wars created a keen sense of patriotism since it lacked the negative consequences of war in the motherland. The new established middle-class sought to separate themselves from the aristocracy who were associated with international ties. Aristocratic lifestyle of debauchery and profligate started to become looked down upon and seen as not British. Britons began instead taking pride in being virtuous and good citizens to the motherland.

A higher literate mass, improved printing techniques and a liberation of copyright laws contributed towards the increase of vernacular language being used in literature. The liberal free market made it possible for publishing houses to compete and drive down the costs of books. Funded public libraries also made it easier for common people to gain access to literature. The liberal state had created a national unity in the form of vernacular language usage in print. This led to a canon of vernacular literature replacing the Latin or European one in Britain which showed a significant shift from internationalism to nationalism.

As this essay tries to prove, nationalism was intertwined with liberalism. The poems that have been analyzed present qualities of nationalism and liberalism. In 'Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation', 'Fears in Solitude' and 'Written in London', the speakers show their disdain towards the current establishment that go against national traditions. For the speaker in 'Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation' the establishment has gone against the Scottish value of being proud of its heritage and selling itself to England; whilst the speakers in 'Written in London' and 'Fears in Solitude' react to the current establishment for going

against the national value of freedom by setting up committees which restrain people's freedom. When reflecting upon the expansion of Napoleonic France all three poets try to celebrate British liberty as a progressive force through nationalism. The speaker in 'Does Haughty Gaul Invasion Threat' tries to unite the nations of Britain against the common enemy France, as does the speaker in 'Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland' and 'Fears in Solitude'. The connection between landscape and national identity is something seen in the poems by Coleridge and Wordsworth. 'Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland' describes the people of Switzerland as majestic through the descriptions of mountains whilst 'Fears in Solitude' and 'France: An Ode' alludes to the bucolic scenery as the essence of Britishness. Landscape depicts a sense of freedom and liberty which is connected to the nation.

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