

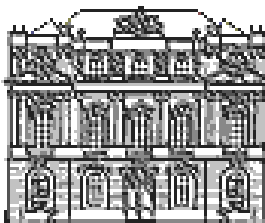


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Recognition & Ressentiment: On Accommodating National Differences
within Multinational States

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“Our future is not written, it is not certain: we have awakened from a long sleep, and we have seen that the human condition is incompatible with certainty.” Primo Levi “Eclipse of the Prophet”

In writing this paper, the author has sought to go beyond certain accepted verities when it comes to the study of national differences, especially within multinational states. By multinational states, I am referring to countries like Belgium, Canada, Spain, and the United Kingdom where there are two or more linguistic or cultural communities that can lay claim to constituting nationalities.

One verity would hold that national differences can be transcended by focusing on those characteristics of citizenship - civic and public in character - that the subjects/citizens of such states share, irrespective of cultural attributes that divide them. As holders of civic rights and political freedoms under a clearly prescribed set of constitutional and institutional norms, citizens, whatever their linguistic or cultural background, ought to be able to transcend the more particularistic loyalties that retrograde nationalists seek to foster. Let me call verity I the view which looks to a single, untrammelled vision of nation and country.

A second verity would hold that national differences are unavoidable in multinational states. In particular, the members of minority nationalities, or nationalities who feel that their identities are threatened within the larger ensemble, are prone to insist on recognition of their national identities as part of the price of maintaining the unity of the larger state to which they belong. It is for the members of majority nationalities to make the requisite concessions and to re-think the institutions of the shared state along multinational lines. Let me call a belief in verity II the politics of recognition, to use a term which Charles Taylor was the first to popularize in contemporary debates about nationalism and multiculturalism.¹

Then there are the practitioners of federalism in its many forms, who without always concerning themselves with the finer points of national or multinational identities, look to a functional division of powers as between central and regional/local levels of authority as the solution to the problems of linguistically or culturally divided states. There is, of course, a wide gamut of views that can be encompassed under the rubric of federalism, from centre-dominated to sub-centre-dominated federations, from strictly symmetrical to quite asymmetrical types of arrangements. But verity III is associated with some form of federal-type arrangements.

* Spanish translation published in Ramon Maiz, ed., *Construcción de Europa, Democracia y Globalización*, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela. 2001, vol. 2, pp. 865-881; English version forthcoming in Ferran Requejo, ed., *Democracy, Nationalism, Europeanism*, London: Frank Cass, 2003

¹ Cf. Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and “The Politics of Recognition,”* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992; *Reconciling the Solitudes: Essays on Canadian Federalism and Nationalism*, Montreal: McGill Queen’s University Press, 1993.

Many of the participants in this workshop are probably proponents of verities II and III; many of their co-nationals are supporters of verity I and possibly verity III. What is much less common, however, is to find people who take seriously both verities I and II. These can be seen as implicitly incompatible, since belief in the overriding unity of a single nation-state and its national identity inevitably trumps any emphasis on multinational differences, and vice versa.

What I want to do in this paper is probe more deeply into the differences between the proponents of verities I and II. I want to do this as dispassionately as possible, acknowledging from the start that neither verity I nor verity II quite captures the reality of multinational states. I am interested in uncovering the underlying logic that leads the proponents of these two rival viewpoints to advance the positions that they take. For it is this underlying logic that both bars fruitful dialogue and that potentially may unlock the door to a better understanding of the challenges that states like Belgium, Canada, Spain, and the United Kingdom face. And, by extension, it may also allow us to better understand the dilemmas facing attempts to construct transnational forms of political organization such as the European Union.

Let me spell out the underlying argument that this paper will advance. There is a logic of recognition at work, where national communities are concerned. But it is a logic that can be as true for majority nationalities as for minority ones. There is also a logic of resentment that is at work, and this too can be as true for majority nationalities as for minority ones. It is only when we see recognition and resentment in all their complexity, as twin forces so to speak that define both majority and minority nationalities and that, in a sometimes perverse sort of way, feed off each other that we can begin to make sense of what is really happening within multinational-type states.

One of the great errors committed by students of multinational-type states is to focus undue attention on the aggrieved nationalities within such ensembles. Usually, in cases such as Canada, Spain, and the United Kingdom, these are minority nationalities, hence the proliferation of works and studies over recent decades on Quebec, aboriginal or first nations, Catalan, Basque, Scottish, and Welsh nationalism; it is only in the Belgian case, where the aggrieved nationality has been a majority nationality, but with some of the complexes of a previously repressed minority, that the focus has been primarily on the Flemish case.

Yet surely it is as important, from the theoretical and practical points of view, to look at majority nationalities as at the minority ones; at those whose identity is caught up with the institutions of the larger ensemble as at those who are arguing for recognition of their own particular space within - or in some cases outside - such ensembles. The states I have been referring to in this paper have been around for well over a century in the Belgian and Canadian cases; for close to three centuries in the British; for a little over five centuries in the Spanish. Is it surprising that questions of identity and recognition, when raised with respect to nationalities within the borders of such states, should simultaneously raise acute questions about the long-term viability of the larger state and about the national identities of its other inhabitants?

There is something of a zero-sum game involved in the relationships between the national communities that make up these states. If recognition by English-speaking Canadians of Quebec's distinct national character may in fact be the thin end of the wedge leading to the disintegration of the Canadian state as a whole, what might that spell in terms of the national identity and survival of a post-Quebec Canadian nation-state? Where might it leave other Canadian provinces? If the logic of Basque or Catalan nationalism were to lead to the wholesale weakening of the Spanish state, where would that leave non-Basque and non-Catalan Spaniards? Where would it leave the other Spanish regions? What about English identity in a United Kingdom where Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, but not England itself, achieve forms of devolution and self-rule? What about regions such as Northwest England, East Anglia, or

Cornwall?² And then there is the Belgian case, where the wholesale devolution of powers to the regions and national communities has, for the adherents of a Belgian identity, hollowed out the central institutions to a point that seriously threatens the survival of the country.

The point I want to make is that those who identify with the institutions of an ongoing state structure usually do so in the name of national identity as well. They are as committed to a Belgian, British, Canadian, or Spanish identity as others may be to a Flemish, Scottish, Quebecois, or Basque one. They may accept the logic of regional identities, but not competing national ones that undermine the viability of the larger state. And they fail to find, on the part of the adherents of competing national identities, much recognition of the deep stake they have in the survival of the country whose nationality their opponents eschew.

Minority-type nationalists (I shall be using this term to encompass the proponents of minority nationalisms in Canada, Spain, and the United Kingdom and of Flemish nationalism in the case of Belgium) may say that it is none of their business worrying about the identities of majority-type nationalists (I shall be using this term to refer to the proponents of Belgian, British, Canadian, and Spanish national identities.) After all, there is a history of domination and repression attached to the operations of the centralized state institutions with which majority-type nationalists identify. If there are victims in the piece, it is the minority-type nationalists who fit the bill, and it is their claims for recognition, not those of their majority counterparts, that need to be acknowledged. The resentment that the adherents of minority-type nationalisms generally feel towards the institutions and practices of the central state makes them less than friendly to the claims for recognition by majority-type nationalists.

Majority-type nationalists, however, may well feel a resentment of their own. There may be a feeling that members of minority-type nationalities did not pull their weight in moments of national crisis, e.g. French-Canadian opposition to conscription during two world wars, greater Flemish than Walloon collaboration with the Nazi occupiers during World War II; chagrin about Scottish over-representation in British parliamentary institutions or over higher British per capita state expenditures in Scotland as compared to England; anger about ongoing Basque terrorism in the decades that have followed the transition to democracy in Spain. Such resentment can translate into a sentiment that goes something as follows: minority-type nationalists are only interested in recognition for themselves; they are not prepared to extend the same recognition to others. They are not prepared to take the common shared interests - political, economic, existential - of all the inhabitants of the larger state ensemble, threatened by powerful external forces in the era of globalization, into account in their ceaseless demands for greater power for themselves. Nor are they prepared to recognize that the inhabitants of other provinces or regions may have distinct identities of their own that are being ignored, while inordinate attention is focused on their own nationality claims.³

Needless to say, there is little basis for dialogue between proponents of opposing points of view when resentment is the prevailing sentiment on each side. Resentment in the mutual relationships between the nationalities making up multinational-type states such as the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia had a lot to do with their break-up in the 1990s, accompanied in the first two cases by no small degree of bloodshed. Between Azeri and Armenian or Chechen and Russian, between Serb and Croat or Moslem, the only kind of recognition that seemed to matter was associated with the barrel of the gun. This hardly

² Cf. The contributions by David Marquand, Bernard Crick, and Christopher Harvie to Bernard Crick, ed., *National Identities: The Constitution of the United Kingdom*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991 for some reflections on such questions.

³ For an example of this in the Canadian context, cf. the author's forthcoming *The Politics of Resentment: British Columbia Regionalism and Canadian Unity*, Vancouver/Montreal: University of British Columbia Press/Institute for Research in Public Policy, 2000.

constitutes the basis for a liberal democratic type of coexistence, for shared federal or confederal institutions, or for the wholesale flourishing of minority rights.

It is easy for those of us living in western societies to pooh-pooh the behaviour of our less civilized brethren in the Balkans, the Fertile Crescent, the Caucasus, South and Southeast Asia, the Great Lakes region of Africa, or Central America. But we would be less than honest not to acknowledge that some of the same emotions colour the behaviour of many of our own compatriots. It is not all love and kisses as between Flemish and Walloons, Quebecois and other Canadians, Basques or Catalans and other Spaniards, English and Scots. And it is not well-disposed academics like our little group here in Santiago de Compostela, all of a liberal-democratic persuasion and with varying degrees of commitment to cosmopolitan and pluralist values, who are necessarily the best interpreters of such sentiments.

It could be argued, if you allow me to play devil's advocate for a moment, that too much of the recent analysis of nationalism in the academic world has been anodyne, cerebral, and ideologically misconceived. If we look at the most frequently cited literature, we could easily come to the conclusion that liberal nationalism, constitutional patriotism, and multicultural recognition were the name of the game, and that *homo occidentalis* was committed to Rawlsian first principles, Habermasian dialogue, and Taylorian deep diversity. Yet nothing could be further from the truth.

We may not be purely Schmittian men and women, ideologically wedded to the friend-enemy distinction and the wholesale destruction of our adversaries.⁴ But there is a great deal of adversarial behaviour in our economic, no less than political, undertakings, and a thick Hobbesian undercoating of self-interest and self-aggrandizement that all too frequently overrides everything else. In people's interactions with those of different linguistic, cultural, or racial backgrounds, a willingness to acknowledge the other usually takes a distinctly second place to the affirmation of one's own group. This is certainly the case where the members of majority-type and minority-type nationalities that I have been discussing is concerned.

So if the affirmation of one's own identity seems to be one postulate of collective social behaviour and a tendency to resent what may be taken to be the excessive or undue claims for recognition by the other a second postulate, what openings, if any, does this provide for multinational coexistence or federal-type arrangements? Should we, after our pleasant few days together in Santiago de Compostela, disperse to our respective bailiwicks lamenting the follies of human nature and the inextricable character of national conflicts? Should we content ourselves with seeking the minimal possible basis for coexistence between the constituent nationalities of multinational-type states, conscious of the dangers that lurk behind any wholesale attempt to shift the constitutional or institutional goal-posts? Should we simply call it quits, accepting the fact that fault-lines of language, culture, and sentiment are too deep to paper over and that the concept of a common Belgian, British, Canadian, or Spanish state is little more than an artefact handed down from some earlier ice-age? Should we become the missionaries of asymmetrical federal or confederal arrangements, convinced that human rationality, despite the cruelty and violence on display in so many corners of the globe, can yet construct institutions that will allow different national communities both to flourish and co-exist within a single state?

Let me suggest a slightly different tack. Perhaps we need to explore more carefully the underpinnings of resentment that characterize the proponents both of majority- and minority-type nationalisms. We need to ask ourselves not just what they want by way of recognition for

⁴ Cf. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1976. That Schmitt needs to be taken seriously, even by those who see themselves on the political left, is reflected in a recent anthology, Chantal Mouffe, ed., *The Challenge of Carl Schmitt*, London: Verso, 1999.

themselves, but what they find most threatening in the behaviour of the nationality(ies) with which they interact. We need then to discern whether there is a basis for addressing their most basic fears and, if so, what this might entail by way of reciprocal behaviour. I emphasize reciprocal for a very simple reason: there can be no satisfactory resolution to the sort of challenges that multinational-type states face unless there is a feeling on each side that its vital concerns have been addressed. And perhaps the most vital concern of all, to put things negatively, is that its worst fears not be realized.

What is the worst fear that minority-type nationalities can experience? It is probably the fear of assimilation, the fear that its language, culture, or identity, very much a minority or dominated one as the historical record would attest, not vanish from the earth. It is that it not be subordinate to or dependent on the good-will of its co-citizens within the larger state, when it comes to key elements of its own national identity. This fear is, if anything, reinforced in this new era of globalization that sweeps some of the traditional powers of the nation-state aside, opening societies around the world to intensive penetration from outside. The result is a reinforced desire to vest control on important matters, especially broadly-defined cultural ones, in one's own national community.

These fears are grounded in real historical events. It is a fact that Quebec became a British colony in the aftermath of the Conquest of 1759; that there were palpable proposals for assimilation of French Canadians advanced at the time of the Durham Report; that in more than one instance in the aftermath of Canadian Confederation the French Canadian minority found its wishes over-ruled by the larger English Canadian majority. It is also a fact that until recent times it was anglophones, economically speaking, who dominated in Quebec.

In much the same fashion, Basques and Catalans can point to domination from Madrid; Scots to domination from London - whatever their own by no means secondary role in forging and administrating the British empire⁵; the Flemish, to domination by francophones during the century or so that followed on the creation of Belgium.⁶

Ressentiment about past domination can easily give way to ever-escalating demands for greater powers vis-à-vis the central state. It is not surprising that Catalans and Basques, whose autonomy had been totally suppressed under the Franco regime, should have pressed for considerably greater powers, under the constitution of 1978. Or that its political representatives should feel that their status as nationalities requires a heightened form of recognition as compared to regions recognized under Spain's Status of Autonomy. For some Scottish nationalists, the Declaration of Arbroath might as well have been drafted yesterday - not in 1320. There is a clear sense that something vital was lost with the Act of Union of 1707 and a resentment of English domination over Great Britain that in the modern era has led to demands for devolution of powers to Scotland or for out-and-out independence. In the words of a contemporary critic, "The 20th century produced the 'Scottish cringe' and the unappetizing politics of grievance."⁷ Similarly the Flemish, having come to be politically and economically in the ascendant in post-World War II Belgium, have been more interested in creating Flemish political institutions they themselves can control than in operating within the structures of the old unitary Belgian state.

"A number of painful events . . . together with the contempt of the Francophones for the language of the Flemings seriously affected the credibility of the Belgian nation and a younger generation of Flemish intellectuals again began to doubt whether Flemish

⁵ Cf. on this point Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992, especially chapters 3 and 4.

⁶ Cf. Manu Ruys, *Les Flamands*, Lanoo, 1973; Theo Hermans, ed., with Louis Vos and Lode Wils, *The Flemish Movement: A Documentary History 1780-1990*, London: The Athlone Press, 1992.

⁷ Arnold Kemp, review of T.M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, in *The Guardian Weekly*, Nov. 3, 1999.

culture could indeed remain inextricably intertwined with Belgium. As a result, a new political Flemish nationalism began to emerge.”⁸

Ressentiment feeds a strong desire for recognition; and it can also feed - this is human nature, after all - a desire for revenge. So the new Quebec nationalism that followed on the Quiet Revolution placed enormous emphasis on language legislation and on ensuring the primacy of the French language. This entailed numerous restrictions on access to English language educational institutions and on the public place of English in Quebec. And in some of this one could detect a desire to pay back a minority which once had lorded it over the new majority, to ensure that anglophones would now come to experience what francophones had for so long endured. The politics behind Bill 101 and Bill 178 was in part, at least, driven by such sentiments.

The same is true where Flemish linguistic demands have been concerned. The sundering of the University of Louvain into two in the late 1960s and forced departure of francophone faculty and students who had been in Leuven since the Middle Ages to new quarters in Louvain-la-Neuve was in part at least a settling of old accounts. In the new linguistically-divided Belgium, the Flemish were not prepared to make the slightest concession on their side of the language line to francophones who had looked down on Flemish when they had been in control of Belgian higher education and the Belgian state. Grievances a century and two old would feed the politics of Flemish resentment.

And some of the more niggling features of nationalist politics, both in the Basque Country with its quasi-independentist nationalist government and in Catalonia under the restored Generalitat, are surely motivated by an element of revenge towards the haughty Spaniards who had for so long ruled over them. I am certain participants at this seminar could provide eloquent examples drawn from the past twenty or so years.

I do not want to be misunderstood. I am not arguing that the politics of minority-type nationalism is based on nothing more than resentment. That would be making light of the quite genuine desire for affirmation and recognition that has characterized all these nationalist movements in recent times. What I am arguing, however, is that a considerable element of resentment can colour such movements and shape the form that their self-affirmation takes. And I am also arguing that, in trying to understand such phenomena, a one-sided emphasis on recognition does not do justice to the more complex forces that are at work.

The same pattern can be found when we turn our attention to majority-type nationalities. For despite their long-term domination over established nation-states, the members of such nationalities have fears of their own. What might these be?

They have less reason to be fearful for their survival as linguistic or cultural communities, at least where the English or non-Catalan/non-Basque Spaniards are concerned. [English-speaking Canadians and Walloons are another matter, though it is less their language than their communal identity that may seem threatened.]

What majority-type nationalities are more likely to fear is for the survival of the state with which they have so long identified. Or to put it another way, they have reasons to wonder whether there will still be a Belgium, a Canada, a Spain or a United Kingdom if the more ardent forms of minority-type nationalism have their way.

Some of this may stem from simple geographical attachment. The idea of a Canada from sea to sea to sea is deeply implanted in popular sentiment in English Canada. The idea of an

⁸ Louis Vos, “The Flemish National Question,” in Kas Deprez & Louis Vos, eds., *Nationalism in Belgium: Shifting Identities, 1780-1995*, London: Macmillan, 1998, 83-95, p. 95.

independent Quebec is often seen as the surgical equivalent of the removal of a vital limb or body organ. It would involve the Pakistanization of Canada, with a foreign entity dividing the Atlantic provinces from the remainder of the country. How many non-Catalan/non-Basque Spaniards, for their part, would be comfortable with the idea of a Spain for which the Pyrenees no longer defined Spain's major international border? How many English would be comfortable to see the Act of Union completely undone and Great Britain ceasing to be an island-state? How many Belgians would like to see their tiny state splintered into two or three fragments?

More than geography is at work here. Strong historical sentiments are associated with state structures which have operated for long stretches of time. The imperial expansion which saw Spain and Britain achieve great heights laid the foundations for earlier forms of national identity. Wars of resistance and national survival, e.g. the Peninsular War for Spain or World War II for Britain, played their part, as, in a more equivocal fashion, did the 20th century experience of civil war in Spain or external occupation in Belgium. Major achievements in the arts and sciences are often associated with the nation-state as are economic accomplishments, e.g. the industrial revolution in Great Britain, successful settlement of a hard frontier in the Canadian case. The famous phrase in Renan about having done great things together and wanting to do so in the future speaks eloquently to this more emotional appeal of majority-type nationalism.⁹

It is the appeal to the emotions, after all, that makes nationalism so powerful a force in so many different situations. And one of the emotions that surfaces frequently in majority-type nationalism can be resentment. This can be expressed towards an outside power - by the British towards the French or Germans, by the Belgians towards their more powerful neighbours, by the Spanish towards richer northern Europeans, by Canadians towards the United States. But it can take an even stronger form when minority-type nationalism poses challenges from within.

In the Canadian case, for example, there has been a good deal of resentment by English Canadians about official bilingualism at the federal level, all the more when successive Quebec governments have been promoting French unilingualism within Quebec's own borders. There has been resentment over the refusal by many in Quebec, unlike their counterparts in Canada outside Quebec, to see federal institutions and symbols such as the Canadian flag as national ones. And there has been considerable resentment over the efforts by successive Parti Quebecois governments to secure the secession of Quebec through repeated referendums in which the would-be secessionists have set the question and the rest of Canada has had no say.¹⁰

In the Belgian case, it is not hard to imagine the resentment which the slogan of radical Flemish nationalists going back to the 1930s "Belgie vrast" i.e. "Belgium burst", must have evoked. Or how proponents of a Belgian identity would react to the claims of leading Flemish regionalists today that "Wallonia would do better believing in itself and building its place in Europe just as Flanders is doing. . . .The Belgian level is not necessary. . . I am certain that there is no future for Belgium."¹¹ Endless linguistic conflict in recent decades and constant challenges to the authority of central institutions may have bred their own resentment among Walloons and moderate Flemish alike. It is significant that a comprehensive 1991 public opinion study of both language communities found that

⁹ "To have common glories in the past, a common will in the present; to have accomplished great things together, to wish to do so again, that is the essential condition for being a nation." Ernest Renan, "Qu'est ce qu'une nation?" in John Hutchinson & Anthony D. Smith, eds., *Nationalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 17.

¹⁰ This helps explain the strong support in English Canadian public opinion for efforts by the Chretien government in late 1999 to lay down tough conditions to govern any future Quebec referendum. Cf. "86% in West want clear question," *The Globe and Mail*, Nov. 29, 1999, P. 1

¹¹ Patrick Vankrunkelsven, Co-President, Intergovernmental and Interparliamentary Conference on Constitutional Renewal, interviewed in *Liberation*, Paris, Nov. 11, 1999, my translation.

“90 per cent of the Flemish population rejects the idea of a separate Flemish nation, whilst in Wallonia there are hardly any proponents of separatism. . . There is a threat of a growing gap between a small Flemish-minded elite, of which the Flemish administration is now the backbone, and the majority of the population, which is out of tune with the rapidly evolving constitutional developments.”¹²

English national sentiment, for the moment, is more focused on the European Union than on Scottish or Welsh devolution. Yet the West Lothian question as it has been termed - i.e. the question of denying Scottish (or Welsh) MPs in Westminster a future say on matters affecting England, but not Scotland (or Wales), is almost certain to arise if major powers formerly administered from London are transferred to Edinburgh (or Cardiff). A sense of Englishness cannot but follow on the playing up of the Scottishness or Welshness of the other inhabitants of Britain,¹³ and with it comes an element of resentment towards them. As Simon Heffer observes: “Thanks to the cause being taken up by various English newspapers, increasing numbers of the English are now aware of what Scotland costs them, and that it has better parliamentary representation per head of the population than, say, Essex or Lancashire. . . Moreover, when they hear the likes of the leader of the Scottish Nationalist Party declaim his right to govern himself, they interpret him as voicing an anti-English sentiment. Something stirs in the blood of the English. The whole notion stimulates, and offends, their atavistic sense of fair play and decency.”¹⁴

The members of majority-type nationalities are not prepared to play the historical villains of the piece ad infinitum to suit the interests of radical minority-type nationalists. Nor are they prepared to engage in one-way games of recognition with minority-type nationalities. Not only must recognition go both ways, they would argue. There is a common interest that weaves Canadians and Quebecois, Spaniards and Catalans or Basques, English and Scots, Flemish and Walloons together - the ties of shared citizenship.

Citizenship introduces a further variable into our discussion. Like nationalism and nationality, it is a term with many meanings. For certain purposes, it can be seen as one and the same thing as national identity, as in the term “S/he is a Spanish national.” Yet for other purposes, it may well be possible to distinguish between nationality and citizenship, as in the phrase, “A Catalan is also a Spanish citizen.” Then there are other complexities that have entered into the debate, e.g. with the introduction of the concept of a European, alongside a Belgian, British, or Spanish citizenship.

The concept of citizenship may help us to distinguish between those forms of minority-type nationalism that aim at the creation of self-standing nation-states and those that do not. To the degree that the Parti Quebecois aims at the establishment of a sovereign Quebec, the SNP at an independent Scotland, or EH at an independent Basque state, there can be little illusion that citizens of such states would for long retain their Canadian, British, or Spanish citizenships. Internationally recognized Quebec, Scottish, or Basque citizenship would mean, as surely as night follows day, that Quebec, Scotland, or the Basque Country, had become sovereign states. This is a lot more evident than a simple acknowledgement that the Quebecois, Basque, or Scots constitute nationalities within Canada, Spain, or the United Kingdom - without, however, their own exclusive forms of citizenship to match.

¹² Bart Maddens, Roeland Beerten, & Jaak Billiet, “The National Consciousness of the Flemings and the Walloons. An Empirical Investigation,” in Deprez & Vos., eds. *Nationalism in Belgium*, 198-208, pp. 206-7.

¹³ Cf. Bernard Crick, “The English and the British,” in Crick, ed., op. cit., pp. 90-104.

¹⁴ Simon Heffer, *Nor Shall My Sword: The Reinvention of England*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999, p. 10.

Survey data would suggest that it is only a minority of Quebecois, Catalans, Scots, or Flemish who actually desire the type of recognition associated with full-bodied citizenship.¹⁵ While a Quebecois or Catalan or Scottish or Flemish sentiment may be stronger than a Canadian, Spanish, British or Belgian one, it is also the case that many feel an attachment to both dimensions of their identity. Or to put it another way, most would like to retain their Canadian, Spanish, British, or Belgian citizenship, even while being recognized as Quebecois, Catalan, Scottish, or Flemish. Any constitutional arrangement which allows this to occur would almost certainly carry the day.

Where does this leave the possible relationship between majority- and minority-type nationalisms? If we peel away many of the other levels of majority national sentiment, the bottom line can probably be summarized as follows - the desire to maintain common citizenship and an ongoing state structure with the members of minority-type nationalities. Once this has been secured, much else may be possible. There may well be room for acknowledging the distinct national identities of Quebecois, Catalans, Scots, or Flemish - though some may be more reluctant to accept this than others; there may be a willingness to consider different kinds of institutional arrangements, though these would need to be carefully negotiated with clear trade-offs between majority and minority interests, between the need to maintain a central state with adequate powers to act for the larger ensemble and reasonable autonomy for the national and regional sub-units that make up that state.

Where minority nationalities are concerned, the bottom line can also be summarized in a simple statement - the desire for recognition for their distinct national identity. This can be best secured by restructuring the existent state to better take this into account. In the absence of such an option, the only alternative may well seem to be full-scale independence. Yet to secure this, hard-line nationalists will need to convince a significant element of moderate opinion within their own communities that there is no other viable option. And they will need to convince them that more is to be gained than to be lost by severing formal political ties with their fellow citizens of the larger state.

The dialectic of recognition and resentment as between majority- and minority-type nationalities, therefore, can ultimately be boiled down to the following two propositions: (I) for majority-type nationalists, an insistence on the preservation of common citizenship and an ongoing state structure and resentment of minority-type nationalism that seems to threaten the very foundations of the nation-state; (II) for minority-type nationalists, an insistence on recognition of their distinct national identity and resentment of demands by majority-type nationalists to subordinate that identity within some larger, all-encompassing nation-state.

Is there any way of surmounting this dialectic? The answer would seem to be NO, if one means by this establishing an institutional arrangement which reassures each side that its core concerns have been addressed once and for all and cements the relationships between the different nationalities for all time. But the answer could be YES, if one means by this achieving some kind of ongoing *modus vivendi* as between the interests of the nationalities involved. Let me explain.

¹⁵ Thus 59% of Quebec respondents in an Oct., 1995 poll agreed with the statement, "My country is the whole of Canada." 68% of Quebec respondents in an Oct., 1996 survey, stated that "they were profoundly attached to Canada." Cf. Maurice Pinard, Robert Bernier, & Vincent Lemieux, *Un combat inachevé*, Saint Foy: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1997, p. 340, Table 10.6. In Catalonia, only 10% of respondents in a 1992 poll favoured independence; by contrast, 41% wanted greater Catalan autonomy within Spain; 33% were content with the existing degree of autonomy; and 9% wanted less or no autonomy for Catalonia. Cf. Michael Keating, *Nations against the State: The New Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996, p. 132, Table 5.2.

One of the great mistakes of students of federalism, especially in multinational-type states, is to assume that there is some perfect mix of institutional arrangements that will resolve intra-national conflicts once and for all. The Canadian Fathers of Confederation may have thought that this was what they were doing in 1867; Pierre Trudeau may have thought the same at the time of the patriation of the Canadian constitution in 1980-2 and the introduction of the Charter of Rights; but the Quebec question, if I may call it that, has hardly gone away. The authors of the Spanish Constitution of 1978 may have assumed that Article 2 in conjunction with the Statute of Autonomy would allay the forces of Catalan and Basque nationalism once and for all. A generation later, many of the tensions remain unresolved. Belgians have been through at least four major constitutional revisions since 1970 in transforming their country into a highly federalized state¹⁶; yet as we enter the twenty-first century the survival of Belgium as a single entity remains uncertain. As for the United Kingdom, devolution has opened a new and important chapter in its institutional history. But will it put paid to the desire, in Scotland especially, for even more of the powers associated with the nation-state?¹⁷

We need to be realistic. The mobilizing power of minority-type nationalism may wax and wane, depending among other things on the actions of the central state. Minority-type nationalism may take different forms, e.g. an overwhelmingly ethnic one at an earlier stage, an increasingly civic one today.¹⁸ But minority-type nationalists are not about to roll over and play dead, even if federal institutions have been established, even if trans-national institutions like the European Union have made their appearance. Nor are they ever likely to see constitutional arrangements as frozen in stone, if what they take to be their deeper national interests are at stake. At best, they may be prepared to live with a particular set of arrangements for a finite period of time, reserving the right to challenge these all over again, should need arise in the future.

For their part, majority-type nationalists pine for certainty. They would like to know that institutional arrangements laboriously worked out in the past or revised in the present will survive unchallenged into the future, that a sense of common national identity will in fact come to trump the particularistic sentiments of minority-type nationalities. Inevitably majority-type nationalists set themselves up for disappointment. For there is no permanent closure in these matters, no iron-clad guarantee that what worked yesterday or works today will continue to work tomorrow. The fault-lines underlining the structures of federalized multinational states can lead to convulsions at any time, to political crises requiring recurrent attention. There can be no permanent solution to their problems.

We who live in multinational states must be content with second-best solutions. These rest on a form of trade-off between the demands of the two or more nationalities that compose such states. Majority-type nationalities must come to accept the fact that minority-type nationalities define themselves as different and that these differences will have to find institutional expression, if multinational-type states are to survive. Minority-type nationalities, for their part, must acknowledge certain limits to their quest for recognition, limits which the bounds of shared citizenship and a single state structure where the outside world is concerned dictate.

¹⁶ Cf. L'avenir des Belges: le fédéralisme à l'épreuve, *Le Soir*, Bruxelles, Special Supplement, 1998; Marc Verdussen, "Les traits constitutifs de l'État fédéral belge," *Revue Générale de Droit*, Vol. 29, 1998, pp. 61-77.

¹⁷ "It is now inevitable that a consensus will emerge in Scotland over the next couple of years that more powers should be devolved to Holyrood. The often-quoted 'settled will of the Scottish people' is nothing of the sort. Labour is about to discover that devolution isn't an event, it's a process." Kenny Farquharson, "Whitehall wakes to a devolution hangover," *The Times*, Jan. 2, 2000.

¹⁸ Cf. Philip Resnick, "Civic and Ethnic Nationalism: Reflections on the Canadian Case," in Ron Beiner & Wayne Norman, eds., *Canadian Political Philosophy*, Toronto: Oxford University Press, forthcoming, 2000.

Political battle-lines revolve around where the exact lines of demarcation between these two positions ought to lie.

Here the practices of different states can differ enormously. In the British case, for example, there has been relatively little hang-up over recognizing that, sociologically-speaking, the Scottish or Welsh constitute nations different from the English. As Lindsay Paterson observes: “The fight in Scotland is not over whether the nation exists - as it has been in Brittany, Quebec, Catalonia, the Basque country and Lombardy.”¹⁹ A good deal of energy in the Canadian, Spanish, or Belgian cases, by comparison, has been expended by minority-type nationalities to secure just such symbolic recognition - with varying results until now.

In the Canadian case, Quebec secured important jurisdictional and taxing powers from the very moment of the creation of the Canadian state. In the other three cases - Belgium, Spain, and the United Kingdom - minority-type nationalities in recent decades have sought some of the very powers which Quebec has long enjoyed. Yet this has hardly curbed the desire by Quebec governments ever since the 1960s for still greater powers vis-a-vis the federal government or, in the case of the Parti Québécois, for out-and-out sovereignty.

Asymmetrical arrangements may be one solution that appeals to the proponents of minority-type nationalism. Under certain circumstances such arrangements may be acceptable to the adherents of majority-type nationalism as well. But such arrangements require carefully negotiated trade-offs and would result in a degree of complexity that may pose problems, both for politicians and public opinion.²⁰ They also presuppose multiple identities rather than the single one associated with the traditional nation-state. This may well be the direction in which the world is heading - the European Union for example. Yet European citizenship, as students of the European Union know full well, takes a distinct second place to the primary loyalty citizens still give to their country of citizenship.²¹ We should not assume that multiple loyalties come easily to most people - intellectuals with their cosmopolitan values just like capitalists with their transnational interests are not necessarily representative of public opinion as a whole. So that asymmetrical federalism with de facto special status for national communities such as Catalonia, Quebec, or Scotland would require a serious commitment by elites from both majority and minority-type nationalities to bring the rest of the population along - no small undertaking in an age of constitutional gridlock and of suspicion towards elected politicians by the citizens of liberal democratic states.

Confederal arrangements have a simplicity to them, when compared to asymmetrical federal ones. But they are even less likely to appeal to majority-type nationalities than asymmetrical federalism. The larger units of multinational states, e.g. provinces like Ontario or British Columbia or regions like Andalusia or Valencia, are not likely to take well to the one-on-one arrangements which Quebec or Catalonia would secure in any confederal scheme vis-a-vis the rest of Canada or Spain. They would insist on equality of treatment and would adamantly oppose any veto power for the smaller member(s) of a confederal arrangement. Nor would loose confederations easily survive the periodic crises that might arise because of conflicting interests

¹⁹ Lindsay Paterson, *The Autonomy of Modern Scotland*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994, p. 24.

²⁰ Cf. Philip Resnick, “Towards a Multinational Federalism: Asymmetrical and Confederal Alternatives,” in Leslie Seidle, ed., *Seeking a New Canadian Partnership*, Montreal: Institute for Research in Public Policy, 1994, pp. 71-89; Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity*, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997, chap. 10; Ferran Requejo, *Zoom politic: Democracia, federalisme i nacionalisme des d’una Catalunya europea*, Barcelona: Edicions Proa, 1998, Section 3 “Federalisme e Estat de las autonomies.”

²¹ Cf. A. Bosans and E. Antola, eds., *A Citizens’ Europe*, London: Sage, 1995, especially Hans Ulrich Jessurun d’Oliveira, s chapter, “Union citizenship: pie in the sky.”

between majority and minority nationalities. With little common sentiment to cement them, they are unlikely to endure.²²

So we may find ourselves stuck with verity 3, federal-type arrangements as the only way of trying to reconcile the conflicting interests of the different nationalities. Yet federal-type arrangements, in cases like Canada, Belgium, and Spain, combine territorial and national-type units. They may thus allow neither for unambiguous recognition of national differences on the one hand, nor for the absolutely equal treatment of the different units on the other. As a result, neither the believers in verity 1 nor verity II are likely to be completely satisfied. Perhaps that is the best that we can hope for, and intellectual endeavours to go beyond this, like that of mathematicians through the centuries to square the circle, are doomed to failure.²³

Let me conclude with the following observation. Ressentiment does not provide a satisfactory basis for living together. Multinational states need to go beyond the politics of resentment on both sides - though they can not do so unless they first acknowledge that it has been and is an important factor in the underlying dynamics of its citizens. The task multinational states face is to win a better understanding between the adherents of verities 1 and 2 for each other's positions, with some variant of federalism providing the ballast for this to occur. Such understanding, in turn, means recognizing that there is a threshold beyond which neither side can go - renunciation of shared citizenship where majority-type nationalities are concerned, renunciation of national differences where minority-type nationalities are concerned. The only kind of nationalist sentiment that can work in multinational states, or in the European Union for that matter, is a self-limiting one, prepared to take into account the interest of the other party(ies), of minorities, etc. But for self-limiting nationalism to work, the more moderate forms of nationalism within each camp - the majority-type, no less than the minority-type - must be able to contain more militant forms of nationalist sentiment.

A tall order when we think about it, easier to agree to under fair-weather conditions than under foul. Easier perhaps to agree to at a colloquium in Santiago de Compostela where the spirit of the third millennium is in the air than in the somewhat less inspired conditions that characterize our fractious collective lives. So maybe we need a sense of heightened time, of the vision of the Travertine Sybil: "The years will be as short as months, the months as weeks, the weeks as days and the days as hours."²⁴ The clock is ticking for those who take the challenges facing multinational states to heart.

²² "What is clear is that dyadic and triadic federal (including confederal) partnerships are almost always prone to particularly serious tension. Rarely has it been possible following a secession or breakup of a union or federation to establish an alternative form of economic or political partnership for a considerable time thereafter because of the polarization and hardening of attitudes that is usually around in the process of separation." Ron Watts, "Examples of Partnership," in Roger Gibbins & Guy Laforest, eds., *Beyond the Impasse*, Montreal: Institute for Research in Public Policy, 1998, pp. 389-390.

²³ Cf. in this regard the majority of the essays in the Gibbins & Laforest volume referred to in the previous footnote.

²⁴ Reinhart Koselleck, cited by Norberto Bobbio, *The Age of Rights*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996, p. 70.