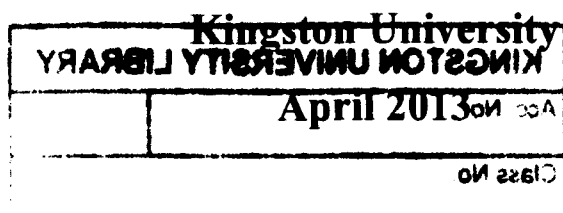# The Construction of National Identity in Northern Ireland and Scotland: Culture and Politics after Thatcher

## Anthony MAY

This thesis is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Politics.

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Figure 1 page 88

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# Abstract

This study examines the construction of cultural nationalism in Northern Ireland and Scotland post-1979. Two particularly significant processes and practices are selected for analysis; football and literature. The methodological approach taken is a synthesis of ethnosymbolism, modernism, and cultural materialism, and nations are discussed as cultural constructs. Nationalism produced at both the elite and popular levels is considered, to provide a greater level of insight into the construction of national identity. The different nationally defined identities discussed are Scottish nationalism, Irish nationalism, unionism, and two varieties of Northern Irish nationalism. One of these is ecumenical, and is largely produced by literary elites. The other is loyalist, and is produced at the popular level.

Scottish nationalism is produced through literature and through football, and is largely defined by working class values. As a consequence, literature has become a "popular" social practice in Scotland. Irish nationalism is also produced through literature and football; literature remains an elite practice in Northern Ireland, however. As well as fan groups, individual footballers play a key role in the production of Irish nationalism within Northern Ireland. The rejection of the Northern Ireland team by players of an Irish Catholic background, in favour of the team of the Republic of Ireland, is significant.

Irish and Scottish nationalism have often been seen as antagonistic; however, there is an increasingly positive relationship between the two. In the novels of Irvine Welsh, Irish and Scottish identities are mutually informative; the identities of many Celtic fans, including the influential fan group "the Green Brigade", are similarly constructed. Scottish and Irish nationalism are culturally "other" to unionism and loyalism, and are brought together by this common "enemy".

Most Rangers supporters consider themselves to be culturally unionist. Their identity is unlike that expressed by fans in other parts of the United Kingdom, and paradoxically appears nationalist as a consequence. The Northern Ireland national football team has become a symbol of loyalism, which is considered as a form of national identity because its rituals and symbolism are distinctively Northern Irish, not "British". In adopting a nationally defined team, loyalists demonstrate the importance of Northern Ireland to their identity, rather than the United Kingdom.

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# Introduction

## Aims and Focus

This study is an examination of contemporary cultural nationalism in Northern Ireland and Scotland. It consists of a detailed analysis of the ways in which national identities are developed through culture in two different territories of the United Kingdom. There are strong nationalist movements in both territories – Irish nationalists in Northern Ireland are commonly accepted to desire the partition of Ireland, which was introduced in 1920, to be removed. Scottish nationalists desire an independent, completely self-governing Scotland, divested of the influence of the British state. Unionists in Northern Ireland and Scotland wish for the territories to remain an integral part of the United Kingdom, and consider their primary identity to be British, although there are elements of their identity that are very different to that held by a majority of people within the United Kingdom. Another group to consider is the Ulster Loyalists, whose primary identity is Northern Irish rather than British, but who are often politically represented by unionist parties. The final group under consideration argue that Northern Ireland should become a separate, ecumenical state that is part of neither the United Kingdom nor Ireland.

Two separate territories will be analysed, and the similarities and differences between them discussed. Producing a study of this kind is particularly useful, as it allows for a deeper analysis of the context in which culture is being developed. One of the principal aims is to assess the ways in which nationalism develops in stateless nations, and another is to examine opposed nationalist movements and the interactions between them. For this reason, Northern Ireland and Scotland have been selected as there are a number of different nationalisms in the two territories which inform and influence each other. It would be remiss to consider one territory without reference to the other, as there are strong links between Ireland and Scotland.

The north of Ireland was settled by planters from Scotland in the late 1600s/early 1700s, eventually resulting in a large Protestant community. Northern Ireland was, in large part, the result of the objections of this community to governance by the Catholics of Ireland. The culture that informs unionism in both Northern Ireland and Scotland has many similarities, and the Scottish element of Ulster Protestant identity is very

significant to contemporary unionist culture. In the 1800s and early 1900s, there was large-scale Irish migration to Scotland in the wake of famine. This has led to a strong Irish influence in Scotland. As this study will demonstrate, the links between the two are very significant in determining contemporary culture, and it is very difficult to consider one territory without examining the influence of the other.

The examination of culture in this study will focus on two different, but closely inter-related meanings of the term. "Culture" can mean many things; this study will examine culture, in the sense of social practices and intellectual endeavours, and analyse the effects of these upon contemporary society. Cultural production is often designed to have a deliberate effect and to make a deliberate statement about the society in which it has been developed. Given that this is a study of nationalism, it seems reasonable to focus upon elements of culture that make a particularly strong statement about national identity. The elements examined will all be considered in terms of their contribution to cultural nationalism; this is best defined as the effort to advance the claims of a nation to a separate national identity through methods which are not restricted to the political sphere.

Cultural nationalism encompasses any attempt to differentiate one national group from another through artistic endeavours, and also through rituals, traditions, and symbols which celebrate cultural difference. Hutchinson (1994, p.124) outlines the fact that there is a difference between political and cultural nationalism. Political nationalists aim to achieve 'a representative national state that will guarantee to its members uniform citizenship rights' by working along 'legal-rational lines', organising pressure groups, committees, and political parties to make their claims. Cultural nationalists, according to Hutchinson (1994, p.124), aim to advance the claims of their 'distinctive national civilisation' by stressing the differences between their nation and all others. They work to identify elements of national culture that are different to those found in other cultures, and they strive to differentiate the national community from other communities.

This study will focus upon the efforts of cultural nationalists to construct identity within the contemporary era. In so doing, it will also determine the ways in which cultural nationalism has informed the arguments of political nationalists. Cultural nationalists work to produce an environment in which political nationalism can thrive. There is considerable interplay between the two forms of nationalism, and it is difficult for

political nationalism to gain popular acceptance without support from the cultural arena. Political debate is increasingly informed by arguments that are made about culture. In both Northern Ireland and Scotland, nationalist parties utilise identity politics to advance their claims. The separate culture of each nation is continually discussed as a political variable, and it is often argued that it is impossible for that culture to flourish within the British state. In order for culture to truly thrive, cultural nationalists generally argue that they need their own political state which is fully understanding and accepting of the needs of that culture.

Cultural nationalism has many different elements, and it would be difficult to examine a high number of these without losing vital levels of detail. As nationalism in Northern Ireland and Scotland is often defined by popular culture, and developed from the "bottom-up", this will be an area that this study will particularly focus upon. It is often the case that the contribution of popular culture to the construction of nationalism is undervalued, and this study represents a step towards that balance being redressed. Nationalism also develops through elite culture, and this will be examined to provide a more balanced and detailed overview of the ways that cultural nationalism is constructed in the contemporary era. As Guibernau (2001) argues, cultural elites play an important role in producing cultural nationalism. They develop ideas about the culture of the nation, and disseminate them in order to influence the way in which the nation is perceived. In assessing the impact of both popular and elite culture, a more detailed judgement can be made regarding the relative impact of each form.

The two particular social processes that are examined in this study are football and literature. The reasons for choosing these components of cultural nationalism are manifold; however, it is particularly important that both are pursuits whose appeal is wide-ranging and crosses traditional community boundaries. Examining two elements in detail will provide the necessary level of detail and produce a clearer picture of the way that culture is utilised to promote and develop national identities. Football is a participatory activity in which culture is demonstrated and affirmed through rituals, while literature provides a reflective experience, in which ideas about culture are considered, absorbed, or rejected. The consideration of cultural elements that affect people in different ways allows for a stronger comparative analysis of the way that cultural nationalism is developed.

Football is acknowledged to be the most popular pastime in both Northern Ireland and Scotland. It has a particularly strong popular resonance, and analysis of the rituals and symbols related to football can offer an insight into the way in which culture is developed through working-class traditions, from the bottom-up. It is of course the case that not everyone is interested in sports, and therefore the processes associated with sport do not have an effect upon every member of any nation. It is unfortunate but in some ways inevitable that any examination of the type attempted in this study will not be applicable to every citizen; however, as the most significant popular pastime (increasingly, for both men and women) has been selected for analysis, it is at least fair to argue that the study will be applicable and relevant to more than a small minority of people. In Northern Ireland and Scotland, sport, and especially football, does play a key role in defining the different national identities that exist, and therefore it is a particularly suitable choice for a study of this kind.

Existing studies into cultural traditions in Northern Ireland tend to focus upon one community – examinations of the cultural significance of Orange parades, or the activities of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) are certainly useful but they do not necessarily allow for a comparative analysis, which can produce a broader picture of the relationships between communities and the attitudes that they hold. Football is one of the few cultural pastimes which members of Irish nationalist, unionist, and loyalist communities all participate in. An examination of the way in which football is perceived and utilised by communities in Northern Ireland can produce a detailed, comparative picture of the way that differences between those communities manifest themselves.

Many of the most authoritative studies that analyse Scottish football, and examine the relationship between the largely Irish Catholic fanbase of Celtic, and the avowedly Protestant and unionist club, Rangers, are now between fifteen and twenty years old.[1] Many of the assertions made require updating, taking cultural and political changes into account. Importantly for this study, in recent times only fairly limited attempts have been made to examine the relationship between the two Glasgow teams and the national football team. It is usually argued that national football teams act as a unifying factor in

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[1] The Grant Jarvie and Graham Walker edited (1994) *Scottish Sport in the Making of the Nation: Ninety Minute Patriots?* represents a landmark in this field of exploration. The work of Joseph M. Bradley is also significant in providing a "Celtic-Minded" (the author's own term) examination of the sociology of Scottish football.

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culturally disparate nations – this is not the case in Scotland. The national football team has competition as a symbol of national identity from two clubs which compete in the domestic leagues, but attract a following who express their identity through nationalistic rituals which are not defined by Scottishness.

Celtic's supporters are known for their displays of Irish nationalism, and "Irishness" is commonly perceived to be more important to their identity than anything else. Rangers have become perhaps the most effective and high-profile cultural vehicle for hardline unionism in Scotland. Both have become symbols of nationalism which is not Scottish, despite both clubs competing in the Scottish leagues. In the light of the upcoming (2014) referendum on Scottish independence, an up-to-date analysis of the relative cultural significance of the Scottish national team, as compared to that of Celtic and Rangers, offers a particularly useful insight into differing attitudes to Scottish nationalism in contemporary Scotland.

Literature has been chosen for analysis because it is the most influential "reflective" artistic means of cultural production in contemporary Northern Ireland and Scotland. Neither territory currently makes as strong a contribution to the worlds of film, photography, television, or visual arts as to literature; by way of example, arguably the most culturally important films produced about Scotland during the last twenty years are *Trainspotting* and *Braveheart*. The novel upon which *Trainspotting* was based will be considered at length in this study. However, the film was directed by an Englishman, Danny Boyle, and differs from the novel in many ways. It is hard to argue that it represents a definitively Scottish example of cultural production without getting lost in semantics. The same is true of *Braveheart;* it is a vision of Scotland produced by an Australian, Mel Gibson. It is very hard to argue convincingly that it is a true example of Scottish cultural production.

Ideas about the nation discussed in any novel are often described as being disseminated from the "top-down", from elites to "the masses". The extent to which this is truly the case will be considered in detail, as it is largely dependent on the circumstances in which the literature in question is produced. In Northern Ireland, it is certainly the case that the majority of successful authors originate from a middle-class background, and are considered to be "elite" by many Northern Irish working-class people. The consequences of this will be fully addressed in the third chapter of this study. However,

in Scotland, the majority of successful authors in the contemporary era have emerged from a working-class background.

The two authors whose work is primarily examined in the fourth chapter of this study, Irvine Welsh and James Kelman, have deliberately taken the stance of producing working-class fiction and discussing Scottish working-class lifestyles. As a consequence, it is harder to argue that they have emerged from an elite group, and their work aims to defy the idea that literature is an elite concern. A great deal of contemporary Scottish literature is a direct response to the cultural and political policies of successive Westminster governments. This study will argue that in certain circumstances it is possible to view literature as a "bottom-up" cultural practice, emerging from the views, opinions, and traditions of working-class people. It is certainly also possible to consider literature as a "top-down" practice when it primarily emerges from, and discusses the concerns of, what are perceived to be elite groups. The approach taken is not dogmatic and is dependent on the circumstances in which the work is produced. This will avoid the problems that can be caused by insisting upon an overarching theory that does not fit the results of close analysis.

The novels that have been chosen for examination deliberately promote a certain vision of national identity, and are influenced by nationalist ideals. It is by no means the case that all literature (or indeed any form of culture) inevitably promotes nationalist viewpoints; indeed, many leading authors in other nations take a primarily local, post-national or transnational perspective.[2] However, in Northern Ireland and Scotland, the fact that contemporary culture most commonly promotes nationalist ideals cannot be ignored. It is not the purpose of this study to argue that nationalism always defines the context in which cultural production takes place, or that it is superior to all other ideals. Similarly, it is not uncritically argued that nationalism inevitably defines identity; however, the people whose work and actions are examined in this study have *actively* chosen to promote visions of society that are nationalist, as will be proven.

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[2] Cultural production in England is far less defined by *active* nationalism, and to argue otherwise would be extremely difficult without taking a somewhat instrumentalist viewpoint. Many theorists (including Michael Billig and Timothy Edensor) argue that nationalism is more significant than other "identity-styles" (Billig's term) and that it is reinforced through the very fibre of everyday life, although this is not the same as arguing that it is actively reinforced within cultural production, or that people knowingly and willingly produce nationalism, as will be further explained in the second chapter of this study.

## Why study contemporary Northern Ireland and Scotland?

One of the main aims of this study is to demonstrate the ways in which new contributions to culture alter existing perceptions of, and make new contributions to, national identity. In both Northern Ireland and Scotland, national identity is rapidly changing and public culture is playing a vital role in this. Both territories provide extremely fertile ground for examining the effects of culture upon the political landscape. There is a close relationship between culture and politics, and the two have become intertwined to a large extent. Smith (2010, p.81) argues that in the contemporary era:

> 'Nationalism cannot be confined within the political, or any other domain, and to oppose "politics" to "culture" [...] does not help to advance understanding of complex phenomena such as nations and nationalism'.

Culture and politics are closely related and the interplay between them plays a key part in producing the identity of any nation. Nationalism is not just a political ideology; in order to understand the politics of a nation, it is essential to also understand that nation's culture.

The United Kingdom is a political state consisting of four separate territories – three of these, Scotland, Wales, and England, are historical nations. In this study, Scotland will be referred to as a nation. Northern Ireland was created by the partition of Ireland in 1920, and the subsequent secession of the Irish Free State (now Republic of Ireland) in 1922. It is difficult to argue that Northern Ireland is definitively a nation because it does not have many of the elements that nations are often considered to possess. Smith (1991, p.9) argues that a nation can be defined as 'a definite social space [and] a fairly well demarcated and bounded territory, with which the members identify and to which they feel they belong'. While Northern Ireland does consist of a well demarcated territory, it cannot be argued that a majority of the people who live there identify with it as a nation, although aspects of loyalist culture are certainly redolent of nationalism.

The terms of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement (1998) confirm that Northern Ireland's continued existence is dependent on the will of the people – if a future referendum confirms that it is the will of the people to live in a united Ireland, the territory will cease to exist. For these reasons, within this study Northern Ireland will not be referred to as a nation, but as a territory. The term "territory" is used

dispassionately and avoids more politically loaded ways of referring to Northern Ireland. Other terms are commonly used for Northern Ireland, and these often refer to the Irish Province of Ulster. As three of the nine counties of the Province of Ulster are in the Republic of Ireland, this is not an accurate way of referring to the political entity that is Northern Ireland.

The advent of devolved parliaments in Northern Ireland and Scotland is particularly significant. These have provided new opportunities for Irish nationalist parties and for the Scottish National Party (SNP) to progress their own ideas, and gain a measure of power and control over policy. Sinn Fein are the second largest party in the Northern Irish assembly, with the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) the third largest. The SNP have made considerable gains since the Scottish parliament was re-introduced in 1999, and have been in overall control of the parliament since the last Scottish parliamentary elections in May 2011.

Devolved government has allowed nationalist parties to become parties of government, rather than remaining parties of perpetual opposition at Westminster. Every opportunity to extol the virtues of government outside the British state continues to be taken. The popularity of nationalist parties in devolved government has contributed to the sense that the United Kingdom, as a political entity, is not as important as it once was. This is often interpreted as a threat to the future of the British state as a whole. The future of the United Kingdom is commonly questioned in Northern Ireland and Scotland, and the idea that there is a British cultural identity is continually interrogated throughout the British state. A large group in Northern Ireland, the Ulster British, mostly consider their primary identity to be British, with Northern Irish identity of secondary importance. The "British" element of their identity is disputed, and is unlike versions produced by a majority of people in mainland Britain.

The political role of the United Kingdom is consistently discussed in cultural terms. Its failure to produce a unified and cohesive cultural identity is portrayed as a political problem. Nationalists in Northern Ireland and Scotland have continually encouraged this idea, a phenomenon which will be discussed throughout this study. There is a great deal of debate about whether there is a "British" identity. Many books, articles, and column inches have been devoted to discussing the issue, and there is not space within this study to examine the myriad arguments made for and against "Britishness" as a

concept.[3] Reports such as *Reclaiming Britishness* (2001), commissioned by the Foreign Policy Centre (an independent "think-tank" focusing on national and international policy), have also tried to pinpoint distinctively "British" values and ideals in order to take the identity forward into the new century.

The title of the report itself suggests that "Britishness" is an identity that cannot be claimed by everybody who is resident within the United Kingdom. The report was commissioned during the period in which Tony Blair was Prime Minister (1997-2007), and writing within it Philip Dodd (2001, p.2) suggests that upon coming to power 'Blair needed to tell a new story about what being British [meant] in order to make sense of a country and its people, both to themselves and to others'. The very fact that this report was deemed necessary is, in and of itself, indicative of the fact that "Britishness" is not a clear concept. The report presents many different kinds of "Britishness", and its contributors are unable to reach any consensus about what the identity might be constituted by. They also fail to agree on exactly who may claim a British identity in the twenty-first century.

This further suggests that as a cultural identity, "Britishness" is very difficult to define. The difficulties involved in defending a British cultural identity are, this study will argue, affecting the way in which the British political identity is perceived. While the cultural integrity of "Britishness" is openly questioned, the three largest political parties at Westminster all remain committed to maintaining the political integrity of the United Kingdom. They are also committed to promoting a "British" identity, despite the difficulties involved in defining exactly what such an identity is constituted by. During his period as Prime Minister, Gordon Brown tried to introduce ideas celebrating "Britishness" in an attempt to solidify what a British identity might be (Daily Telegraph 2008). These ideas, such as an oath of allegiance to the state and a "British Day", where

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[3] Containing a basic overview of the arguments made, Storry and Childs' *British Cultural Identities* (2007) is a useful text. At over 200 pages, it is hard to condense its findings here. Many hundreds of articles, books, and government reports have been written, all of which attempt to define "Britishness". This has become something of an industry in its own right, with academics, journalists, novelists, and other cultural practitioners attempting to discover whether there is indeed a British cultural identity. Good examples of this phenomenon include Andrew Marr's *The Day Britain Died* (2000), and the 2003 re-issue of Tom Nairn's *The Break-up of Britain*. A number of commentators have concluded that there is not a British cultural identity, and this has led to speculation on the strength of English identity relative to that of the other nations within the United Kingdom. Jeremy Paxman's (2007) *The English* is a best-selling example of this. Kate Fox's (2005) *Watching the English: the hidden rules of English behaviour* is another popular text on this subject.

people come together to celebrate their nationality, were largely met with public disdain, and were eventually dropped from official policy.

There has always been opposition to the British state's presence in Northern Ireland. However, political opposition in Scotland to membership of the United Kingdom continues to grow and is at its strongest for many years. One of the central pillars of this study is the contention that the growth in numbers of those who identify principally as culturally Scottish has had a positive effect upon the growth of Scottish nationalism in its political form. One of the prevailing trends in both Northern Ireland and Scotland is the 'acculturation of politics' (Bean, 2007, p.167). Nationalist parties have gained considerable ground through the use of identity politics, emphasising the differences between their nation and others. This is particularly prevalent in nations that currently form part of a wider state.

Nationalists in Northern Ireland and Scotland have used 'the wider debates about the nature of Britishness' to their advantage, by emphasising the fact that this debate suggests a weakness within the United Kingdom (Bean, 2007, p.247). If people possess different cultures and different ideals, how then can they be successfully governed by one central authority? How can the disparate ideas and cultures of separate nations be unified within a political state? Nationalists argue that this is not possible, and this can be considered a somewhat persuasive argument among voters, as nationalist parties have made considerable electoral gains in recent years.

It has been argued (by Nic Craith, 2003, Bean, 2007, and McAuley and Spencer, 2011) that Irish nationalists in Northern Ireland consider culture to be a particularly useful tool in their argument for the reunification of Ireland. Irish culture in Northern Ireland is similar to that expressed by people in the Republic of Ireland, and the strength and "richness" of Irish culture is particularly useful to Irish nationalists when compared to that of unionists in Northern Ireland. The very existence of Britishness as a cultural identity is continually questioned, and the debate about what constitutes "British" culture generally 'finds no place for the values and traditions identified by Ulster Unionists as "British" (Bean, 2007, p.247).

This leaves unionists at a distinct disadvantage in any debate about culture, and therefore Irish nationalists continue to stress the importance of cultural identity, relative to political identity. It is argued that the latter should be informed by the former, rather

than being primarily formed by ideas about the economy, justice system, education, and other standard areas of political debate. That Irish nationalists in Northern Ireland utilise culture to their advantage is generally accepted, to the extent that Nic Craith (2003, p.24) argues that 'culture wars have replaced the physical violence' that constituted the main interface between opposed communities during the Troubles. However, the way in which Irish nationalists in Northern Ireland utilise both football and literature has not been discussed in the detail that one might expect, given their level of cultural significance. This is a situation that this study will redress. The responses to Irish cultural nationalism made by unionists and loyalists, principally through the medium of the Northern Irish football team, are also significant and will be discussed in detail.

The SNP have utilised Scottish culture to their advantage, and the party is allied to sympathetic cultural practitioners such as the author Irvine Welsh, as this study will examine. That the SNP have benefitted from considerable cultural changes in Scotland has been partly acknowledged in studies by Hearn (2000) and Pittock (2008). However, most studies of the rise of the SNP focus upon the party's policies in regard to justice, education, and taxation, amongst others. These are, of course, germane to the success of the SNP, but analyses that focus solely on the party's political activities do not pay enough attention to the conditions that have allowed the party to flourish. As will be discussed in detail in the fourth chapter of this study, the election of Margaret Thatcher was the catalyst for a wealth of cultural production that emphasises the significance of Scottish, rather than British identity. Politics, economics, and culture are interlinked, and all play an important role in the development of nationalism. The SNP have been able to utilise the rise in cultural nationalism to both develop and maintain their position of relative strength in Scottish politics. This element of the party's success has received less attention than it warrants.

For any study of contemporary Scotland, 1979 is the best starting point. The Thatcher government brought about a fundamental change in the way that "Britishness" was perceived. This is also important to the identity of one of Northern Ireland's two opposed communities, and has a vital effect upon the territory as a whole. The "Troubles" of the 1970s cast a long shadow over Northern Irish culture and politics, and are impossible to ignore. However, changes in British government policy on Northern Ireland's constitutional status during the 1980s and 1990s are also of great significance, and the effect of these upon cultural production and nationalism will be analysed in

detail. The focus of the study will end in Autumn 2012 for reasons of expediency; it is difficult to write a study which needs to be constantly updated as it is written. There have been some useful studies of both Northern Ireland and Scotland which examine this time period, but none that effectively compare the two territories. There has also only been a limited focus upon cultural nationalism, and political nationalism has been the main focus of most studies – this study aims to redress the balance a little.

## Theoretical Background

This is primarily a study of nationalism. The elements analysed within it are always discussed in terms of their contribution to cultural nationalism. It is useful to determine exactly what is meant by the term "culture", and therefore a discussion of the way in which this term is utilised is important. This is not a study of culture per se, and the intention is not to engage in a sociological, anthropological or philosophical discussion of the history and application of "culture" as a theoretical construct. However, in recognition of the fact that the term "culture" has been applied in many different ways, the exact way in which the term is understood will be discussed at the start of the second chapter. Williams' work on Cultural Materialism will also be examined in detail in the second chapter, as this has influenced the analysis of culture contained in the later chapters. The position of the work undertaken in this study within the field of nationalism studies will also be discussed.

The analysis of culture in the following chapters is the result of the applied synthesis of several different, but related, theories of nationalism. Of particular influence is Hutchinson's work upon cultural nationalism. Hutchinson is generally acknowledged to be an ethnosymbolist, and this approach has a measure of influence over the analysis contained within this study. Ethnosymbolists argue that nationalism is a popular phenomenon that develops out of the culture of any given territory. By contrast to theorists from the modernist school, such as John Breuilly, who argue that nationalism is primarily a political ideology dictated by elites, ethnosymbolists see nationalism as a result of social processes.

It is useful to stress at this stage that not every element of the general approach taken by ethnosymbolists will be utilised in this study; there will be no detailed examination of the way in which the Scottish or Irish nation developed ethnically, for example. Nor will there be a focus upon the distant history of either Northern Ireland or Scotland;

such studies have already been carried out in detail and similar work is not necessary. Instead, this study will examine the way in which contemporary culture affects nationalism in a tangible way. Contemporary history exerts a strong influence upon the way that nations are perceived by their citizens. The time period studied in detail will be 1979-2012; as will be proven, the advent of the Thatcher government in the United Kingdom marked a fundamental change in the way that the political state was perceived. This is especially the case in Scotland, but the policies of the Thatcher government also had a significant impact upon Northern Ireland.

Alongside the influence of ethnosymbolism, the work of the modernist theorist Benedict Anderson (2006) upon the concept of the "imagined community" is also important. Anderson argues that national communities are fundamentally imagined because people cannot know every member of their community; nevertheless, people do imagine themselves as being members of a nation. The imagined community develops as a result of the stimuli that people receive. These stimuli come from many different cultural practices and are received in different ways. This study will examine practices that are participatory and ritualised; it will also analyse practices that are symbolic and reflective. In this way a more rounded explanation of the way the popular imagination is affected can be achieved.

Anderson (2006) describes the nation as a cultural artefact which is built and maintained by the people of any given nation. This idea is particularly important for this study. Smith (2009, p.13) has stated that 'ethnosymbolists are at one with those modernists who conceive of nations as dynamic, purposive communities of action'; however, the two schools of thought are often seen as incompatible because they take differing perspectives regarding the way in which nationalism initially emerged. This study breaks through such (sometimes dogmatically held) ideas about the compatibility of modernist and ethnosymbolist approaches. Smith, Hutchinson, and Anderson all assert that nationalism is a cultural phenomenon. It seems unreasonable, therefore, to treat theories as incompatible because of certain disagreements about the history of nationalism.

Identities are affected by the way in which people imagine themselves and their communities, and this does not take place compartmentally; the imagined community develops in many different ways. The cultural processes that are involved in the

production and consumption of literature, and the symbolism and rituals involved in sports, both contribute to a national imagined community. The work of Durkheim on the significance of rituals and symbols to the development, and maintenance of identity is particularly influential. Football teams are a key symbol of the community that they represent, and the rituals involved in supporting a team contribute to a sense of being active within that community. Giulianotti (2005, p.5) states that 'sport and nationalism may be viewed as mutually complimentary forces that strengthen and organise solidarity' between individuals. This is achieved through the collective imagination.

This is not a traditional study of literature. The novels analysed will be treated as cultural documents, and examined principally for their content. Very often, traditional studies of literature examine the form that novels take, rather than their function. This has been the case in certain recent studies of literature from both Northern Ireland and Scotland. By way of example, the literary critic Drew Milne (2007, p.106) contends that the main issue to consider when reading a novel like James Kelman's *A Disaffection* or *How Late It Was, How Late*" is 'the literary modernism of Kelman's work' which would be clouded by any 'critical emphases on its Scottishness'. The comments that such novels make upon contemporary life in Scotland are, according to Milne, less important than the form in which they are produced. Rather than analysing novels in terms of their relation to other literary works, this study contends that novels should be examined as a form of culture that influences identity. Kelman's work has a resonance outside of the field of literary criticism and this study seeks to examine the importance of literary production as a process within the development of cultural nationalism.

This involves examining literature in terms of what it can tell us about the place in which it is set. It also requires an examination of the socio-political background that the novels being analysed are set within. Novels act as a form of cultural history, offering descriptions of events and also explanations for them. They are not created in a vacuum and they can tell us a great deal about the society that they are produced within. When examined within the wider context of the culture that has formed them, they can also reveal details about that culture and offer a window into the study of a society. Novels, when studied from a socio-cultural rather than simply a literary perspective, act as cultural documents offering rich, high quality cultural analysis. To study literature solely in terms of form is to miss out on a vast amount of data on the society that is being described.

To summarise; this is a study of contemporary cultural nationalism in Northern Ireland and Scotland. The rise of identity politics in both these constituent parts of the United Kingdom will be examined in detail, through analysis of the way in which cultural nationalism is expressed in literature, and produced through the rituals, symbols, and social processes related to football. The nation is an imagined community which develops through culture. Cultural production influences the way in which people imagine their nation, and nationalism is the expression of cultural difference that arises from this production. The methodological approach taken involves a synthesis of cultural materialism, ethnosymbolism, and modernism. In order to elucidate and clarify the methodology used within this study, the next chapter will focus upon the theories and ideas that have most influenced this study, and discuss the way that they will be applied in the investigative chapters that follow.

# Methodology

This chapter consists of an in-depth discussion of the theories and ideas that have influenced the analysis of culture contained within the following chapters of this study. A number of different theories are applied in a synthesis of cultural materialism, ethnosymbolism, and modernism. While elements of the latter two theoretical approaches have been fused together in previous studies, the addition of cultural materialist theories breaks new ground in the study of nationalism. The contribution made by this study to the fields of literary analysis and the sociology of sport also represents new territory for academic study, as the links between the two (and the differences) are seldom discussed. This is not a traditional study of nationalism, nor is it a traditional study of culture. It is therefore useful to present a discussion of the methodological approach taken, in order to clarify exactly what this study will contribute to its field. This will begin by clarifying the ways in which the term "culture" will be used, before moving on to examine the theory and application of cultural materialism, and the differences between elite and popular culture.

## Culture: "The shaping of societies and the shaping of human minds"

"Culture" is a term that can be used in several different ways and possesses a number of different, contextually defined meanings. As Edensor (2002, p.12) states, 'discussions about culture have been bedevilled by an inability for theorists to agree upon a common definition, for it remains a fluid term'. Inglis (2005) makes a similar point, suggesting that there are over one hundred possible ways in which the term "culture" can be used. Further to this, Nic Craith (2003, p.2) states that 'culture is a fluid concept' because the ways in which culture has been discussed have changed over time, and the labels placed upon culture in various theoretical traditions still remain in place. As a consequence, culture is a term which has many different meanings. In studies of nationalism, these are often used interchangeably and it is taken as read that the meaning implied will be understood depending on the context in which the word is used. However, in a study that places culture at the centre of its analysis, it is important to be as clear and precise as possible about what is meant when the term is discussed.

Edensor (2002, p.12) states that 'culture continues to suggest a host of overlapping meanings'. The most significant of these he defines as:

1) Being "cultured" in a sophisticated and knowledgeable fashion.

2) A collective noun to describe the works of recognised artistic and intellectual endeavour hierarchically adjudged to have attained a particular level of value.

3) A range of practical orientations in relatively circumscribed social spheres.

4) A common, particular way of life.

The first meaning ascribed to "culture" by Edensor is not relevant to this study, as the value judgements involved in deciding what constitutes a "cultured" approach are not suitable for academic work. The third meaning is also less relevant to this study, as it tends to refer directly to subcultures; the term "subculture" should be used whenever it is relevant. However, the second and fourth usages of the term "culture" are particularly germane to this study. Culture encompasses both 'the shaping of societies and the shaping of human minds'; the latter is a process that informs the former (Williams, 1979, p.17). This study utilises "culture", in the sense of social practices and processes, in order to examine "culture", in the sense of the social order in which social practices are produced and to which they contribute. It is inevitable that there will be some overlap of the two terms, but wherever possible this will be kept to a minimum, and the context in which they are used will be clearly defined. In this way, it is hoped that clarity will be maintained and confusion avoided.

**Cultural Materialism**

"Culture" is a term that can be used to refer to the 'signifying system' which is 'essentially involved in all forms of social activity' and is the means through which 'a social order is communicated, experienced, reproduced, and explored' (Williams, 1981, p.13). Williams argues that the identity of any society is the result of all social processes within a given territory, rather than just those that directly relate to political, legal, or economic processes. All social processes are important; culture should not be treated as an abstract concept, free from the influence of politics, and nor should politics be treated as if it were fundamentally separate from culture. The relationship between culture and politics in both Northern Ireland and Scotland is complex, and events in the political sphere continually inspire cultural production. This is especially clear in Scotland, where a great deal of contemporary cultural production was originally inspired by the election of Margaret Thatcher. Many of the ideals expressed in contemporary literature

result from a change in the way that Scotland's role within the United Kingdom has been perceived since 1979.

In turn, culture influences politics; the actions of individual actors and groups within the cultural sphere have become the subject of political debate, and influenced attitudes to politics in both territories analysed. This will be examined in detail in the empirical chapters that follow. Williams (1979, p.114) acknowledges the power of culture to transform societies; indeed, he argues that 'the most interesting and difficult part of any cultural analysis' is to uncover the 'transformational processes' set in motion by culture. The essence of this study is to carry out this kind of analysis. While Williams' work does not primarily examine nationalism, it does argue that the social processes through which culture develops are particularly influential upon the development of political power. Analysis of the way that this occurs is fundamental to this study.

Williams' cultural materialist theories offer a useful schema for understanding the relationship between political and cultural processes. Williams is often described as a Marxist; this study is not committed to Marxism, in the sense that it does not seek to promote a Marxist grand narrative. However, many elements of contemporary Marxist cultural analysis are very useful in explaining the way in which nations are shaped by culture. There is a fundamental difference between the cultural materialism of Williams and traditional Marxist cultural theory which is, as Williams (1979), Eagleton (1977) and Barry (2000) discuss, beholden to the idea that social conditions are produced by the economic "base". Everything that is not directly related to capital belongs in the "superstructure"; this is the realm of culture, ideas, beliefs and customs. These are seen as having no direct effect upon the material conditions which determine the nature of any society, and are treated as secondary.

Cultural materialists argue that this approach is the result of a misunderstanding of the work of Marx and Engels. One of the fundamental elements of cultural materialist theory is that "base" and "superstructure" are inextricably linked and should not be separated out from each other. Further to this, all social processes should be seen as material, according to Williams (1979), rather than just those that relate to the production of capital. Social processes should not be abstracted from the society that produced them, and all processes play a role in the construction of culture. No one

process is dominant in the production of a society, and people have agency over all the processes that play a role in the construction of social consciousness.

Further to this, Williams (1979, p.91) states that 'we produce ourselves and our societies'. Imagination and thought are described as social processes leading to the production of culture, which is crucial for this study. Imagination is linked to social conditions, but equally, social conditions are linked to the way in which we imagine our society. As all social processes are involved in the construction of societies, then it is not useful to ascribe a greater or lesser importance to certain processes. This study repudiates the idea that some processes are less significant than others, a notion that has formed the basis of theoretical traditions which favour the study of what has been termed "high" culture over the serious study of popular culture.

## Popular and elite cultural forms

"High" culture tends to emerge from elite social groups; the literary critic F.R. Leavis argued that it is possible to place a value upon culture depending on the form that it takes (Edensor, 2002). Classical music, fine art, and "canonical" literature are all considered (by those who accept the term) to be "high" culture. Canonical literature is that which is deemed to be concerned with questions of "universal" morality; in a sense, the attribution of these terms is entirely down to value judgement. The movement with which F.R. Leavis is associated, liberal humanism, has fallen out of favour, but the argument that "high" culture exists remains influential. Such arguments tend to have a basis in issues of class; "high" culture tends to be produced by those of a middle or upper class background.

Popular culture, as Edensor (2002) states, is perceived to be that of "the masses". F.R. Leavis argued that "mass" culture was inherently harmful to those who produce it and receive it, and that as such, it was worthy of study only in order to ascertain the level of harm it was doing to society in general. This is an approach that has pervaded many studies of nationalism. In existing studies that analyse the way that culture impacts upon national identity, it is frequently the case that only "high" or elite culture is considered to be significant. As Edensor (2002) states, theorists such as Ernest Gellner and Anthony D. Smith only tend to look at culture which is either deemed to be "high" or "official".

Smith's work, which emphasises the significance of culture to the development of nationalism, is an important influence upon this study. However, the culture that he deems to be significant usually derives from elite groups, rather than his work containing analyses of social processes on both the elite and popular levels. Smith tends to ascribe the generation of symbols, rituals, and ideology of the nation solely to elite intellectuals. This is in large part because Smith's concern is with historical processes in which popular or "mass" culture is deemed to play a less significant role. He does not analyse contemporary culture in any detail, and in a study such as this one, a different paradigm is required than that generally utilised within studies of "historical" nationalism.

This study is in general agreement with Edensor (2002) that in studies of contemporary societies, the separation of cultural production into "high" and "mass" categories has hindered attempts to examine the social processes involved. This is because the bias towards those processes most commonly engaged in by members of social elites, and against those of the "masses", has tended to provide a false picture of the society being examined. While this study does not deny that elites play a key role in the construction of nationalism, and indeed will analyse literature as an elite expression of identity in chapter three, studies that only consider "high" culture leave large gaps in knowledge. Rather than only examining elite culture, therefore, this study will also examine culture that is "popular" in the sense that it is participated in and enjoyed by large numbers of people. This is especially relevant for the two territories being examined, in which the culture of working-class people is vital to the social and political identities expressed in the contemporary era.

Billig (1995) and Edensor (2002) both examine "everyday" or banal nationalism and its effects upon society, and their work upon the ways in which nationalism is reinforced by common processes is useful. Both theorists argue that cultural identity is produced by these processes and as a result is in a state of constant development, and the idea that culture alters as a result of continuous input is very useful. However, the principal focus in their work, especially that of Edensor (2002, p.28), is upon what is termed nationalism as 'second nature'. It is argued that identity is primarily the result of a 'barely conscious set of assumptions about the way we think and act' (Edensor, 2002, p.28).

This approach to the study of nationalism does not focus upon the active production of culture. Edensor and Billig both argue that people receive ideas about their cultural identity from rituals, physical geography, the media, and the arts, and this is useful; however, people are often portrayed as uncritical and passive, rather than active in the production of identity. This study will examine active attempts to influence culture, rather than the passive acceptance of "cultural norms". As Nic Craith (2003, p.3) argues, there can be 'no culture without creativity'. This study will focus upon social processes in which the participants knowingly project a certain vision of society, and make deliberate efforts to affect the way in which other people perceive it. It is not denied that people do receive their ideas about the nation through culture; indeed, this is an important part of the argument made in in this study. However, rather than solely examining the way in which people receive ideas, the main aim of this study is to illustrate some of the ways in which people produce these ideas.

Despite this, the reception of ideas will be discussed to an extent, especially within the chapters which examine literature. This is largely in relation to the use of ideas within the political sphere that have been produced within the cultural sphere. The effect that those ideas have had in the wider culture of the territories under discussion will also be considered. It is very difficult to determine the extent to which a work of literature has an effect upon the reading public, but in the case of novels that have become politically and culturally significant, this task becomes easier. Once novels and authors attain a level of cultural visibility and significance outside the field of literary studies, it is fair to say that the ideas they discuss have reached a wide enough audience to have had an effect upon the wider culture in which they were produced. Rather than attempting to determine the effect of novels upon individual members of a disparate and often global audience, therefore, the aim of this study is to examine novels that have had an effect on the wider culture of the territory in which they were produced.

For this reason, the novels chosen for examination have been selected precisely because they, and the authors that produced them, can be deemed to have cultural, rather than solely literary importance. They also make solid claims about nationalism, and have a clear vision of the nation that they discuss. When looking for strong, clear claims about the nation, analysing prose is more useful than analysing poetry because the latter form is often reliant upon imagery and allusion, rather than sustained discussion. The authors chosen for discussion have been selected because of their prominence not just in

literature, but in the wider cultural sphere. The novels that have been selected for examination are those which make the strongest nationalist statements; perhaps not coincidentally, these are also the novels which have attracted the most popular interest.

Whilst it is acknowledged that selecting lesser-known authors may have produced different results, one of the aims of this study is to examine the ways in which literature has influenced the political process. It would be difficult to make that kind of assessment if the novels and novelists examined have not had any tangible influence due to their relative obscurity. It is the case that the novelists chosen make strong claims about the nation; this perhaps indicates that such claims do resonate with reading publics, or at least provoke their interest. Novels that ignore questions of nationality do not seem to be as popular as those which discuss it directly. This may be due to the prominence of debates about national identity in the wider cultural and political spheres of the territories discussed. If novels did not examine questions of nationality directly, it would be difficult to carry out a study of this kind. There has been no need to "read between the lines" or examine residual effects of "everyday" nationalism; ideas about identity are made strongly and consistently in all the novels examined. To ignore this would result in a skewed analysis, and in many ways, the prominence of nationalist arguments in contemporary literature makes this element of their production impossible to ignore.

New ideas can enter the public domain when they are written and discussed by what Habermas (1989) termed "public intellectuals"; the novelists whose work is examined in this study will be discussed in the light of this argument. In Northern Ireland, Glenn Patterson, Robert McLiam Wilson, and Eoin McNamee are all figures who have become an important part of Northern Ireland's public sphere. McNamee and Wilson have had their work adapted into other popular media, most notably films and television dramas. Patterson is particularly well known as a political activist, and also a journalist. With regards to Scotland, Irvine Welsh is a highly successful and culturally visible author; *Trainspotting* is particularly important to his profile, and the novel was adapted into a highly successful film. Paget (1999) argues that *Trainspotting*, in both novel and film format, is one of the most significant cultural products of the twentieth century in

terms of impact and influence. James Kelman has a lower level of global fame, but he is nevertheless well known and extremely well respected in Scottish cultural circles.[4]

The production and reception of literature is often deemed an "elite" concern. Northern Irish fiction is still largely dominated by upper middle-class authors, and the consequences of this will be analysed in detail. An examination of the work of Northern Irish authors can help to reveal the contribution of social elites to the culture of Northern Irish communities. However, literature can also have popular resonance in two senses: the first sense is applicable when it is produced by members of a non-elite class and describes life as it is lived by working-class people. The second sense is applicable when it achieves a level of commercial success and is read by a large number of people.

In Scotland, working-class authors are well represented and have achieved a great deal of success. As a consequence, recognisably working-class culture is disseminated to a wide readership. The second cultural element to be explored, football, is certainly a popular, non-elite activity; it is participated in by large numbers of people around the world and is the most commonly played and watched sport in both Northern Ireland and Scotland. Those who participate in the rituals associated with football are, this study will demonstrate, knowingly projecting a certain vision of society and a well-defined version of culture.

The involvement of elite groups in the production of identity is not denied, and will be examined within this study. However, revealing the extent to which non-elite groups also produce identity will add a new layer of knowledge to that which already exists. For this reason, the study of literature can produce a multi-layered analysis, and this is particularly useful in a study of this kind. It is possible to argue that culture has counter-hegemonic potential, and literature can be analysed in this light, especially novels which deliberately aim to argue against "official" accounts and also against government policy. Hegemony is not something that is inevitably the tool of political elites, as Williams (1979) discusses. This study accepts Gramsci's concept of "alternative hegemonies" which develop primarily from the culture of working class people in

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[4] In some senses, it is also possible to determine the significance of the authors examined through the impact they have had within academic studies. This study aims to provide a new way of examining the cultural significance of authors that have been studied in a different way in the past. While it is hoped that this study will have a level of significance outside the confines of academia, it is nevertheless an academic work, which has relevance to other works produced within the same sphere. It therefore seems reasonable, to an extent at least, to determine the importance of the authors examined through their high level of visibility within existing academic studies.

opposition to middle and upper-class hegemonies. Such formations emerge directly from the way in which people live and interact and are not imposed from above. Cultural activities play a key role in the spread of alternative hegemonies, chiefly because the political process is very often dominated by those with an interest in maintaining the "official" hegemony of any society.

Both Northern Ireland and Scotland possess counter-hegemonic cultures, and the way in which they impact upon and effect the dominant hegemony of the United Kingdom will be examined in detail. Hegemony is often examined as if it is always limited by the needs of the dominant political group in any society, but this is not the case. Society is always changing and is the result of a continual process, not a monolith governed by economic forces over which there is little popular control. Cultural practices are 'among the basic processes' (Williams, 1979, p.111) that form society, rather than a relatively insignificant sideshow to the main event, which is often primarily seen as either economic (in the work of "vulgar" Marxists) or political. Culture should not be abstracted from social conditions and studied in isolation.

## The position of this thesis within the field of Nationalism studies: Nations as cultural constructs

Most theorists agree that there is a 'tripartite division' between the main three schools of thought on nationalism (Ozkirimli, 2010, p.200). These are the primordialist, modernist, and ethnosymbolist perspectives. As Ozkirimli (2010, p.200) states, the labelling of individual theorists as belonging to a certain school of thought can be misleading, and 'it is indicative that few of the theorists concerned accept the labels used to describe their work'. Ideas about what nationalism actually is also differ between theorists, and providing an overarching and definitive theory of nationalism is a very difficult task; Ozkirimli (2010) dismisses the possibility of providing such a theory but nevertheless, many influential theorists have attempted this task and they have tended to take their position within one of three separate camps.

The elements of each of these theoretical perspectives with the greatest significance to this study will be explained within this section, in order to clarify the position occupied within the field of study undertaken. The purpose of this section is not to provide an exhaustive history of theories of nationalism; rather, it is useful to place this study within its theoretical context. This study will not be taking a dogmatic approach and is

not rooted solely within one theoretical tradition. The main approach taken is ethnosymbolist, in that this is a study of the way that culture affects nationalism. One of the central pillars of the ethnosymbolist approach is that nationalism is a phenomenon that grows from public culture.

However, elements of some modernist approaches to nationalism will also be utilised, principally those of theorists who stress the importance of secularisation, language, and literature to the growth of nationalism. It is not the purpose of this study to discuss the roots of nationalism, and so the debate between ethnosymbolists and modernists about the timescale through which nationalism emerged will not be specifically addressed.[5] As a general principle, however, the idea that nationalism emerged solely as a result of political expediency (the position of Ernest Gellner and John Breuilly) is rejected.

## Primordialism and Ethnosymbolism: The construction of nations through culture

Primordialists tend to argue that 'nations have existed since time immemorial' and take the view that the nation is fundamental to the socio-political categorisation of the world (Ozkirimli, 2010, p.49). Perhaps the classic primordialist argument is provided by Pfaff (1993). In *The Wrath of Nations*, Pfaff (1993, p.233) argues that the appeal of nationalism is that it is based on unique elements in each individual nation, and therefore it relates to what he sees as 'the roots of being' which are 'a given earth and clan' and 'primordial attachments' to a certain piece of land and the inhabitants of it. Contrary to this position, this study will argue that nationalism is engendered by the people of any territory, and national identity changes over time. The approach taken by some primordialists that 'nationality is a natural part of human beings' is rejected (Ozkirimli, 2010, p.49). It is not innate and it does not occur without popular input. For Pfaff, nationalism has its roots in a naturally occurring element of human character. In a sense, such an argument constitutes what Ozkirimli (2010, p.49) terms the 'layman's view' of nationalism.

This vision of what nationalism is further contains the notion that it is 'profoundly rooted in the human necessity for identity and connection' to a recognisably similar group of people. Pfaff's (1993, p.237) argument is that there is a 'moral constancy and

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[5] Anthony D. Smith has produced several excellent texts examining this debate. *When Was the Nation* (2004), edited by Atsuko Ichijo and Gordana Uzelac, is also a useful text as it contains essays by many of the principal figures within the debate.

continuity of man through the millennia' and that man's essential character and needs have not changed over time, and nor will they change in the future. This is often a key element of the more virulent strains of political nationalism, as practiced by extreme right-wing parties. Unreconstructed primordialism represents a somewhat uncritical view of the way that nationalism develops, and is useful for those who wish to argue that a certain territory has a fixed and immutable character which is not open to those from outside the territory in question.

However, there are also more nuanced and complex arguments which fall under the umbrella of primordialism, and describe nationalism as neither ethnically defined nor a naturally occurring phenomena; it is instead discussed as a constantly changing artefact produced by the culture of any given territory. Clifford Geertz' work examines the cultural factors behind the formation of ethnic groups and argues that 'blood, language, religion, and certain social practices' play a key role (Ozkirimli, discussing the work of Geertz, 2010, p.55). However, Geertz (1993) does not argue that such factors are biologically determined; rather, the strength of the ties that are produced by these factors comes from the fact that people assume that they are a 'given' within their society. Nations and national groups are maintained by the perception of similarity between individuals, but this similarity is not solely ethnic or racial.

In Geertz's (1993) conception of the growth and maintenance of group ties, what matters is the importance that is attributed to cultural factors. Attachments 'seem to flow' from a 'sense of natural affinity'. This is not a biological process; rather, its strength is derived from people believing it to be one (Geertz, 1993, cited in Ozkirimli, 2010, p.57). Geertz is not necessarily arguing that nationalism is the result of primordial attachments, but it is partly the result of people believing in the strength of such an explanation. A similar argument is made by Connor:

> 'To those who would object that national and ethnic groups are not closely
> related kin […] it is not the fact, but the perception that matters' (Connor, cited
> in Hearn, 2006, p.28)

Connor (1994b, p.93) further argues that when analysing nationalism, 'what ultimately matters is not what is but what people *believe* is. A subconscious belief in the group's separate origin and evolution is an important ingredient of national psychology'.

The explanation offered in the arguments of both Geertz and Connor is not that nationalism is natural to humans, but that many people believe nationalism to be a natural part of the human condition. The theorists themselves are not primordialists, but they do believe that a majority of people are, and that nations appear natural as a result of this. As a consequence of this generally held belief in the "natural" condition that is the division of the world into bounded territories, the nation has become the prevalent unit of governance available in the modern world. It is possible to speak of "national imagination" or "the national character" because people subscribe to the idea that such things exist.

In essence, people who believe in the nationalist project also believe that they themselves are a product of history. This is one of the tenets of ethnosymbolism, which is, generally speaking, the examination of culture as a driver for nationalism. It involves:

> 'Analysing communities, ideologies and sense of identity in terms of their constituent symbolic resources; that is, the traditions, memories, values, myths and symbols that compose the accumulated heritage of cultural units of population' (Smith, 2009, p.15-16)

Ethnosymbolists believe that history is particularly important to the development of both nations and nationalism. This sense of history is not abstract, however, and it is related to the specific history of an ethnic group; Smith labels these groups 'ethnies'. An ethnie is 'a named and self-defined human community whose members possess a myth of common ancestry, shared memories, one or more elements of common culture, including a link with a territory, and a measure of solidarity' (Smith, 2009, p.27). Ethnosymbolists, especially Smith, argue that nationalism in its modern form has emerged out of the culture of pre-existing ethnies. In this they are not dissimilar to those who have been placed in the primordialist school, such as Geertz.

Ethnosymbolists do not argue, however, that modern nations are culturally identical to the ethnic communities that preceded them. The culture of pre-existing ethnic communities forms the basis of the culture of any given nation, but the nation develops over time, integrating ideals, symbols, and other cultural components to form what Smith (2010, p.13) labels a 'public culture'. This is a culture to which the people of the nation contribute and it is this culture that binds people together. Smith (2010, p.21) does not feel that nations comprise 'a simple aggregate of individuals who share certain

traits or who live together' in a politically defined unit; instead, nationalism develops as a result of the way that people feel about their nation. In discussing 'the various cultural, social and psychological elements of emotion, will, symbol, memory and felt kinship', ethnosymbolists examine variables which are not easy to define (Smith, 2010, p.77). These variables also do not lend themselves to instrumentalist analyses or grand narratives because they change, sometimes over a long period of time, but sometimes suddenly due to a particularly significant event.

Smith (2009, p.21) argues that 'although nations may be partly forged by political institutions, over the long-term they require ethno-cultural resources to create a solidary community, mainly because of the critical importance for a sense of national identity of subjective dimensions'. In certain cases, political leaders may play a role in the creation of a nation. However, for a nation to survive, its people must believe in and contribute to the project. With this in mind, Leoussi and Grosby (2007, p.2) argue that the most important factor in the continued existence of a nation is 'its meaning to its members'; this is notably similar to the argument made by Geertz.

The approach taken within this study is in broad agreement with the ethnosymbolist project as defined by Smith (2009, p.19), which is that theorists of nationalism should concern themselves with 'exploring how popular beliefs, memories and cultures have influenced the views and actions of the [political] elites'. However, this study will contribute something new to the ethnosymbolist project in that it will analyse popular culture in the contemporary era, rather than focussing primarily upon culture in a defined historical period. There seems to be no reason why popular culture should be less significant than elite culture, especially to a theory whose central pillar is the belief that nationalism develops out of a common, public culture.

A key element of this study is that nationalism is developed by the cultural processes through which nations develop an identity which has both persistence and resonance, and it cannot succeed in the long-term if it is *solely* an elite movement. Culture is not simply a tool in the hands of elites, and cannot be reduced down to one element, such as a shared language. It is instead a result of what is produced by the people themselves; the values that they hold, cultural artefacts that they produce, and the rituals and traditions that they create and celebrate, all contribute to national identity directly. The concentration on popular *and* elite cultures differentiates the work carried out from that

of Anthony D. Smith, but the idea that nations are culturally constructed is influenced by his work.

There also seems to be no clear reason why relatively recent history should be less significant than the history of the 18th or 19th century, by way of example, especially in territories that are undergoing rapid change such as Northern Ireland and Scotland. Often, ethnosymbolists examine historical events from many hundreds of years ago, and attempt to ascribe the meaning of those events to contemporary nationalism. The identities held by people in both Scotland and Northern Ireland have been fundamentally altered by recent events, as will be demonstrated, and while this study is influenced by ethnosymbolism, its focus on recent history is a significant difference from the classic ethnosymbolist analysis.

The method utilised in this study does not examine historical events as monoliths whose meaning does not change over time; the chapters that examine literature will clearly demonstrate that historical events have no one fixed meaning, and that dominant ideas about those events are constantly under challenge from competing descriptions. The novels examined attempt to alter the way in which historical events are understood in order to bring about a new paradigm. The analysis of interpretations of recent history will clearly demonstrate that cultural practitioners attempt to influence the way that history is interpreted within society. History does play an important role in the construction and maintenance of nationalism, but it is always mediated by cultural production.

By challenging predominant ideas about history, cultural practitioners can alter the way in which people understand themselves and the "story" of their nation. In some ways, this process is easier when the resonance of the events described is still being felt. The novels examined in this study all attempt to affect the way that recent history is understood, in order to promote a certain view of these events and ensure that this becomes a dominant discourse. This study, therefore, does take the general approach shared by most theorists of the ethnosymbolist school, but its focus upon recent history makes it somewhat individual. As the following chapters will establish, the United Kingdom as a whole underwent a critical change following the election of Margaret Thatcher. This is at odds with the element of ethnosymbolism which stresses the

importance of distant history, but it is at one with Hutchinson's (2001) theory which states that nations develop at times of great crisis.

Northern Ireland was altered greatly by the Troubles of the 1970s, and the Belfast Agreement of 1998. However, Northern Ireland's constitutional and social identity was also strongly affected during the Thatcher era, without which the Belfast Agreement may never have been made. The seeds were sewn for the current political arrangement during the 1980s, and in November 1990, the Northern Ireland secretary Peter Brooke said that the United Kingdom has no "selfish strategic or economic interest" in Northern Ireland and would accept unification if it was the will of a majority of the people (BBC Special Report, 27th January 2006).

Northern Ireland's status as a conditional, rather than essential, element of the United Kingdom was first brought about during the 1980s and early 1990s, and was eventually made clear in the Downing Street declaration of 1993, in which the British government accepted that Northern Ireland will become a part of a unified Irish state if a majority of citizens vote for this outcome. This had a strong effect upon unionist and loyalist thinking, as discussed in chapters two and three. It also resulted in Irish nationalists becoming increasingly involved in peaceful political and cultural processes, rather than taking a more violent approach. This has resulted in many changes within Northern Ireland, which will also be addressed in the second and third chapters of this study. In the context of Northern Ireland, the strongest effects of Thatcher era were contained within constitutional policy.

The cultural balance within the United Kingdom was also fundamentally altered by Thatcher's attack on "consensus" politics. While Northern Ireland was affected by neo-liberal policy, the effects of the Thatcher era on Scotland were particularly strong, and the nation's political and cultural identities underwent a fundamental crisis as a direct result of Thatcherism. This has had a greater effect on Scotland than any other event since the Act of Union. British government policies are often negatively represented in Scottish culture, especially those of the Thatcher era. Negative attitudes expressed towards Thatcherism have played a key role in the construction of Scottish cultural nationalism since the 1980s. One of the main arguments within this study is that the consistent portrayal of British government policies under Thatcher as aggressive and

violent has significantly aided the growth of Scottish nationalism. This will be examined in detail in chapters four and five.

### Modernist approaches to nationalism: The emergence and significance of secularised, literary cultures

The idea that nationalism is a cultural construct is also inspired by theories that have emerged from the modernist school of thought. Ozkirimli (2010) divides modernist theories into three categories, which are:

> 1) Theories that emphasise the importance of economic transformations in the modern era.
>
> 2) Theories that emphasise the significance of political change.
>
> 3) Theories that stress the importance of cultural and social changes in the growth of nationalism.

Of these three broad theoretical approaches, this study has most interest in the latter category. This is not to dismiss the first two elements of modernist theory out of hand; however, it is not within the scope of this study to offer a detailed examination of theories regarding economic and political change in the 18th and 19th centuries.[6] As this is a study of cultural change, it makes most sense to focus on those ideas that have direct relevance to the topic at hand.

While modernist approaches to nationalism are by no means homogenous and theoretically unified, nations are generally perceived as having emerged through 'specifically modern processes like capitalism, industrialisation, urbanisation, secularism, and the emergence of the modern bureaucratic state' (Ozkirimli, 2010, p.72). Of these processes (whose significance to the development of nationalism is especially contested by primordialists), secularisation is the most important for this study. In both Northern Ireland and Scotland, conflict that was once believed to be primarily religious is now best understood within the context of nationalism. As Regis Debray (cited in Brennan, 1989, p.27) argues, in modern, Western society, 'nationalist doctrine takes over religion's social role' as a force that unites people behind a common cause.

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[6] Gellner's (2006) *Nations and Nationalism* and Breuilly's (1982) *Nationalism and the State* should be the first port of call for anyone looking for this kind of examination.

Nationalism involves the belief that the nation is in some sense "sacred" and worthy of devotion, and this developed from earlier societies which developed through the rituals associated with religion (Anderson, 2006). Society is built around a structure which developed through collective belief, and the comparative decline of religion has not signalled a concomitant decline in that structure because it is necessary in order for society to function. As Durkheim (2003) argues, religion [was] the original source of the structure of modern society, but nationalism is now more significant. Durkheim (2003) rejects the idea that religion was primarily concerned with 'supernatural beings or gods'; rather, 'religious beliefs express the character of the social totality' (Giddens, 1978, p.81). Nationalism now plays the primary role in defining the character of communities, and keeping those communities intact. While many people hold religious identities to be important, on a wider, societal level, everyday life is organised around the idea of the nation.

According to Durkheim (2003), religion's primary function is to provide a set of rules and a sense of community through which a society can develop. When nationalism emerged as the dominant ideology around which societies in the Western world are based, it developed in the same way that religious belief had. Symbols and rituals provided (and continue to provide) common ground through which societies connect. Rather than celebrating deities, however, in the contemporary era such rituals and symbols commonly celebrate a bounded territory and the people that live within it. While religious observance continues to decline across much of Europe, the structure of a society that was built around religious belief remains intact. This idea is particularly significant in Northern Ireland and Scotland, where communities are often referred to by their predominant religious denominations. In the contemporary era, the rituals and ideals that have developed within those communities are now of greater significance than the religious beliefs that once defined them.

Anderson (2006) argues that secularisation was a consequence of the construction of a shared literary culture in various nations of western Europe; nationalism is seen as having developed out of this process. In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson (2006, p.36) argues that what he calls 'print-capitalism' changed the way in which people understood the world. *Imagined Communities* suggests that the decline of Christianity in Europe, in addition to an associated decline in Latin as the main language of communication and

instruction, and the less clearly associated decline in absolute monarchy as a system of governance, created a void which the ideas found within printed materials filled.

There was, Anderson (2006) argues, a fundamental change in the way in which people understood their world after the collapse of the monarchical and sacred systems. There is a strong cognitive element to Anderson's work, which distinguishes his theories from the work of other modernists; he argues that the way in which people thought about the world was altered by the collapse of existing systems. This paved the way for new ideas to take hold; the growth of a cheap and relatively unrestricted publishing industry, formed after the invention and development of the printing press, allowed for the dissemination of ideals and theories within a popular format. Anderson has been labelled a modernist (chiefly by Anthony D. Smith, and also by Adrian Hastings) because his work pinpoints a particular development as a key factor in the growth of nationalism. It suggests that nationalism emerged through the combined forces of secularisation and capitalism, and that both of these were driven by the development of literature as a social force. However, many modernist theories suggest that nationalism developed as a consequence of the needs of political states; Anderson suggests that political states were themselves developed through cultural production.

Anderson (2006) argues that modern nations develop as a result of people being brought together by a *shared literary culture*. This argument is particularly significant, as it describes nations as the result of what people do, rather than solely defined by what members of an elite commercial and political class do to people. Despite primarily focusing upon nationalism as a state-driven, top-down process, Ernest Gellner (2006, p.62) similarly argues that 'the vastly increased importance of a shared, literary-dependent culture' was, and remains, central to the growth and maintenance of national identities. Gellner (2006, p. 49) argues that what he describes as 'cultivated cultures' are essential for nationalism to succeed; cultivated cultures are produced by the work of 'specialised personnel' such as novelists and journalists.

These cultural practitioners take on the role of describing society to "the masses", and setting the boundaries of the national imagination. The adoption of a standardised language, and the production of written works describing events, both factual and fictional, allows people to imagine a widened community; before standardised languages people may only have thought of "their" community as consisting of the

number of people that they could easily talk to and be understood by. It is this that gives the advent of shared languages particular cultural significance.

Gellner (2006), however, also argues that it is essential for modern societies to have a shared, homogenous language because they need to be able to educate their citizens in a similarly homogenised system. Through the education system, the values of society are instilled in every educated individual. This is related to the needs of capitalist societies; in order to fit into the workplace, every member of an industrialised society needs to have the clerical ability to understand their peers and carry out clear instructions, and therefore a homogenised language is essential. Gellner argues that the acquisition of a standardised language (which was less common in agrarian societies) contributes a considerable amount to the homogeneity of culture.

In Gellner's (2006, p.36) model of national development,

> 'Men acquire the skills and sensibilities which make them acceptable to their fellows, which fit them to assume places in society, and which make them "what they are", by being handed over by their kin groups to an educational machine which alone is capable of providing the wide range of training required for the generic cultural base'.

Knowledge, which is acquired through language, is similar enough in all citizens to bring about a situation in which nationalism is the inevitable result of a learned cultural homogeneity. Anderson (2006, p.44) places much less emphasis than Gellner upon the necessity of linguistic homogeneity for industrial growth, and argues that 'economic interests' did not play a major role in the development of nations. In fact, Anderson (2006, p.144) states that the nation itself is 'interestless' and all the more powerful for this. Nationalism is seen as developing from the "bottom-up", through the contributions of citizens, rather than from the "top-down", through the promptings of a centralised state education and industrial system. This idea is central to this study.

Perhaps the most enduring of all Anderson's ideas is that of the "imagined community" itself. As any given individual will, in all likelihood, never meet the vast majority of the other people who make up their national community, such communities are always a concept that require a certain amount of acquiescence from their members. This idea has been an influence on the developing theoretical school of "Everyday Nationalism". There is a great deal of literature on the way that nationalism develops through the everyday, "banal" events that structure our lives. The way that we think, it is argued by

Billig (1995), Edensor (2002) and Inglis (2005) amongst others, is conditioned so that the importance of the nation as a political and cultural concept is continually reinforced.

Such ideas are useful, and the lack of focus on them in this study is not an oversight, or intended as a denigration of the valuable research that has been carried out into "everyday nationalism". However, as the focus of this study is on active cultural nationalism, that is knowingly produced, it does not make good sense to focus too closely on theories that discuss nationalism as passively accepted and lacking a certain amount of agency. Within this study, people are perceived to be *actively* and deliberately involved in the production of nationalism, rather than accepting it at a sub-conscious level. This is because the notion of living in any kind of community is dependent upon the active imagining of large numbers of other people, who will in all probability never meet and will therefore never know each other on a personal level.

In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson (2006, p.4) describes the nation as a 'cultural artefact' which is produced and developed by all its citizens. Nationalism is, therefore, discussed as a popular movement. People imagine themselves to be members of a nation, and that nation is the sum of the culture which develops within it. This is an active process because culture is the result of what people contribute to it. This is very significant for this study; the idea that nations are cultural constructs clearly crosses theoretical traditions. Ethnosymbolists also argue that nations are produced by culture, as discussed, and boundaries between theoretical traditions are not as clear as they are often portrayed to be. Anderson, Anthony D. Smith, and John Hutchinson all argue that nations are the result of cultural processes rather than being solely political entities. As Smith argues, elite culture plays a role in developing nationalism, but as Anderson suggests, there is also a strong popular influence on national identity. A synthesis of the most relevant modernist and ethnosymbolist theories offers a powerful schema for explaining how culture helps to define national identity.

## Cultural Nationalism

Cultural nationalism is based upon the argument that 'an authentic national politics derives not from rationalist constitutions but from a united community shaped by its history, beliefs, customs, industries and habitat' (Hutchinson, 1994, p.125). A nation is not only defined by the mechanisms of the political state through which it is governed; rather, the nation is the sum of its culture. Nations grow out of the culture of a distinctly

separate geographic locale and cannot be created solely through political settlements and machinations. In support of his assertion that nationalism can be understood as a popular movement, Hutchinson (2001, p.78) argues that it has two main strands. The first of these is political nationalism, which attempts to advance the claims of a nation to sovereignty from within the politico-legal system. The second of these, and the most significant for this study, is cultural nationalism which 'can create a counter-cultural centre against the state' by mobilising non-state movements in support of the nationalist project (Hutchison, 2001, p.78).

Cultural nationalism is, broadly speaking, the expression of nationalist ideals outside the political sphere. It takes many forms and can involve the production and re-production of nationalist ideas and myths within art, as this study will explore in its analysis of literary nationalism in Northern Ireland and Scotland. It can also involve the expression of nationalism through rituals and symbols; this will also be examined in detail in the analysis of the significance of football to nationalist movements. By looking at expressions of counter-hegemonic nationalism in both artistic and ritual/symbolic spheres, two of the main ways in which such nationalism is produced are examined in detail. This gives a fuller picture of nationalism than would be provided if only one of these spheres was analysed.

For Guibernau (2001, p.135), cultural nationalism is essential in nations that lack a state, and such nations are reliant upon the continuation and development of their culture in the absence of sovereign political representation. Guibernau (2001) argues that cultural nationalists 'legitimise' nationalism in nations that are not sovereign. Their work provides the context that political nationalists operate within, and cultural nationalists provide 'the values, beliefs, customs, conventions, habits, languages, and practices' that are vital if the nation is to survive. Nationalists that operate within the cultural sphere tend to begin their careers as a subversive influence and they provide 'an alternative elite' whose work produces 'cultural, historical, political, and economic arguments to foster and sustain the distinctive character' of the nation (Guibernau, 2001, p.134). This is particularly true of the novelists whose work will be examined in chapters three and four. While the "alternative elite" are certainly significant, nationalism is also developed by individuals operating within popular practices; the actions of individual sportsmen in promoting nationalism will be considered in chapter two, in relation to Northern Ireland.

In separating political and cultural nationalism into different spheres, Hutchinson is not arguing that cultural nationalists are apolitical. Rather, it is the case that cultural nationalism is political in character, but is not solely restricted to politico-legal mechanisms. The idea that cultural nationalism is politically significant, but not confined to the political arena, is particularly important. Hutchinson (2001, p.75) argues that some theorists (chiefly Gellner, and also Breuilly) tend to present national cultures as homogenous because they see them as being under the control of the state; this approach 'neglects the persistence of cultural divisions within many nations whose recurring contestations offer rival directions as to how the community should develop'. In both Northern Ireland and Scotland, the hegemony of the Westminster government lacks influence; indeed, in Northern Ireland it is fair to argue that any party of government of the British state (be that Conservative, Labour, Liberal, or "Coalition") has never attracted even a low level of popular support.

Approaches to nationalism that attribute all its power to the political state itself are clearly inadequate for the study of national identity in nations that lack a state. This is the case because such explanations ascribe the development of nationalism to various state apparatuses. The persistence of nationalism in nations that lack a state clearly demonstrates that the state is not the sole arbiter of national identity. Hutchinson (2001, p.74) suggests that those who see economics and politics as 'superior forces' which construct nationalism are mistaken, just as Raymond Williams (1979) does. Such theories require acceptance of the notion that 'the masses [are] simply a tabula rasa, waiting for the nationalist messages of their rulers to be inscribed on their minds and hearts' (Hutchinson, cited in Smith, 2010, p.88). This study will provide a body of evidence contrary to this idea; culture has a significant effect upon nationalism and shapes the ways in which people understand their nation. The existence of nationalisms that run contrary to the hegemony of the British state strongly suggests that views of nationalism that attribute all its power to the state are fundamentally incorrect.

Similarly to Hutchinson, Smith (2010, p.37) argues that for nationalisms to succeed and take root within any given unit of population, 'the cultural nation must become the political nation, with public culture the mould and measure of society and polity'. Individual and group contributions to public culture will be considered in the light of this. Smith suggests that if political nationalism expresses very different values to those found within the prevailing trends of cultural nationalism, attempts to impose hegemony

through political nationalism may struggle to find popular support. The same author also argues that:

> 'cultural nationalisms are primarily concerned with issues of cultural identity, social harmony and moral purpose, and these are concerns which for them are prior to, and independent of any political action or expression' (Smith, 2010, p.81).

Smith also separates cultural nationalism from political nationalism and suggests that the initial concern of cultural nationalists is with moral and social rather than territorial issues. However, this changes over time, according to Smith (2010, p.81), so that 'political and cultural forms of nationalism often succeed one another'.

Cultural nationalists mould the character of the nation, and political nationalists use this material to build their claims to sovereignty. Smith (2010) also argues that despite the different spheres in which they operate, to separate "culture" from "politics" is to make a conceptual error. This study will argue that cultural and political nationalisms have a symbiotic relationship, with each being reliant on the other for both meaning and stimulus. Hutchinson (2001, p.78) argues that 'cultural nationalism [forms] socio-political movements at times of collective crisis'. This is the case in both Northern Ireland and Scotland, and this study will establish this in further detail. Cultural nationalism tends to develop its greatest level of significance when the political character of the nation itself is under question. Since 1979, the perception of the United Kingdom in Northern Ireland and Scotland has significantly changed (especially in the latter), opening the way for nationalism in a state that was once more stable than it is today.

Cultural nationalism is growing in significance in the era of identity politics. It is not just political institutions, but ideas that nations are built around, and it is ideas that make a nation "legitimate" in the eyes of those who live within them. The nation is best described as a 'cultural community', while the state is a 'political institution'; nations develop through culture. The state provides political sovereignty for a nation but it does not define the identity of the nation in question. Cultural nationalism is vital for any nation, but in nations that lack a state, culture takes on a special significance as both the repository of ideas about the nation, and the engine that drives change. Culture is developed by both elite groups and "the masses", and cultural nationalism is not just the preserve of a relatively small group of activists. The imagined community of any nation

is developed and maintained through many different elements. The importance of the two elements under discussion in this study will now be discussed in further detail.

## Why football? Why literature? The role of two important elements within the development of cultural nationalism

### Football and cultural nationalism: Football teams and footballers as symbols of communal identity

Football is a vitally important tool for building and sustaining national identity. As Hobsbawm (1996, p.143) famously noted, 'the imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people' than in virtually any other manifestation. This is because most people involved in a national football fixture, from the players to the fans, have a similar aim, and supporters are able to project their national identity on to those who represent them. Football 'is an important location for working out and expressing ideas and identities not because it is a metaphor, but because it is a mechanism' (Robinson, 2008, p.221). It is useful to examine the ways in which football reflects conditions within the society it is played within, but just as worthwhile to analyse what it contributes to the identities that exist in that society.

Sport plays a vital role in the development of communal identities in both Northern Ireland and Scotland. This is not an uncommon scenario; Bale (quoted in Cronin, 1999, p.51) argues that:

> 'Sport is, after war, probably the principal means of collective identification in modern life. It provides one of the few occasions when large, complex, impersonal and functionally bonded units can unite as a whole'.

As Cronin (1999, p.59) states, 'sporting events are loaded with symbolism' – at international competitions, national anthems are played, national flags are flown, and national colours worn. It is not only those on the pitch who represent the nation, but anyone who actively supports the national team. Those who support any team play an active role in the production of culture. Roche (1998, p.4) argues that sport plays a 'formative rather than simply an expressive role in relation to human identity at the personal and collective levels'. Sport does not exist within a cultural vacuum and the old cliché that "sport and politics do not mix" can be, as Cronin (1999) and Bairner (2001) suggest, summarily rejected. The importance of football teams as symbols of nationalistic communities will be examined in detail.

Communities are brought together through support for a shared symbol, and this is of particular significance. The football team itself is real, but everything related to the support of that team is imagined – it is necessary to imagine that the players are coterminous to the nation itself, and also necessary to imagine that other people are committed to supporting the team. The concept of the "imagined community" is vitally important to understanding the way that sporting communities are constructed. As Crawford (2004) asserts, it is not possible for supporters of all but the smallest, local league team to know every supporter of that team. Nevertheless, it is possible for people to imagine that they are similar to each other, based upon a mutual interest in the same team.

It is generally accepted that supporters of sports teams are able to associate themselves with several different communities. Larger teams with global support attract a nationally disparate community of supporters, and the community associated with a team like Manchester United, which has huge support around the world, is certainly not coterminous with Manchester itself. Crawford (2004) argues that fans have agency in selecting the team that they support, and this means that a fan community is both organic and dynamic. This concept will be examined in chapters two and five. A team becomes symbolic of a wider set of values and interests, and analysis of the ways in which sports team symbolise communities and their culture is central to this study.

Crawford (2004, p.38) defines supporters as "consumers"; this is somewhat confusing and actually detracts from his key argument, which is that 'fans are not the product of what they consume, but active participants in its production and utilisation'. Far from being passive consumers, supporters are active in the creation and maintenance of their community. Becoming a supporter of any team involves beginning a 'social career' which is built and maintained through continued participation in rituals that involve the sports team (Crawford, 2004, p.38). It is sometimes presented as inevitable that football supporters will celebrate the culture and ideals of the nation that they live in, but this is not the case. Many fans do not support any national team at all, choosing instead to solely follow a club team. It is not the intention of this study to argue that fans of all clubs inevitably produce nationalistic culture.

It is, however, the case that nationalism strongly influences the dynamics of domestic team support in Northern Ireland and Scotland. This study will demonstrate that there

are conflicting identities and nationalisms at work in Northern Ireland and Scotland, and supporters actively choose to ally themselves to teams that both reflect and shape their cultural identities. Football is one of the most significant and visible ways in which people are able to express their national identity, and also to express opposition to other forms of identity. In contemporary society, football provides one of the most significant contexts for the production of ideas about the nation. This will be further discussed in chapters three and five; many football fans in Northern Ireland and Scotland feel that the political process currently excludes their ideals and beliefs, and therefore football becomes a mechanism for the expression of opposition to events in the political sphere. Such opposition is often missed within studies that only analyse what may be termed "conventional" politics, and it can be the case that a false picture of society is produced, or at least that the ideals of those who consider themselves to be "outside" the political process are not fully considered.

The way in which belief in nationalism is expressed is particularly important to this study because it is often the case that nations exist, in their most tangible form, on the football field. This is certainly the case for Northern Ireland, where the football team was for many years the most visibly independent representative of the territory, while political power was transferred directly to Westminster. Football supporters in Scotland are also able to express their belief in the importance of the ideals of their community, as discussed further in chapter five. Football has been a significant social process in the United Kingdom for over a hundred years, and it is a vehicle for direct political and cultural statements to be made at the popular level. As with the study of literature, it is fair to say that analysis of another cultural element may produce different results. However, it is also fair to argue that as football is the most popular participatory sport in both Northern Ireland and Scotland, analysis of other cultural elements may prove to be less representative, and offer a less sound basis for discussion of the effects of culture on national identity.[7]

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[7] Rugby union, hockey, cricket and shinty are all relatively popular sporting pursuits in Northern Ireland and Scotland. However, they are participated in by much lower numbers of people, and as a consequence they have been used less as a vehicle for nationalistic statements due to the limited impact that they have on society as a whole. Gaelic football is a different matter, as this has been a vehicle for cultural nationalism in Ireland for over a century. However, as this is a comparative study, it would be difficult to justify examining Gaelic football as the effects that the sport has had on Scotland are negligible. The work of Alan Bairner and David Hassan on Gaelic football provides a useful insight into the effects of the sport upon the island of Ireland.

The analysis of football in this study is informed to an extent by the idea of football as a kind of "civil religion". The work of Emile Durkheim is an especially strong influence upon the way in which sporting communities have been analysed in many previous studies. Durkheim (2003, p.118) argues that 'an emblem can be useful as a rallying point for any sort of group'. Over the past century and more, sports teams have become emblematic and symbolic of communities. People are able to express their identity through visible support of an entity that represents a named community of individuals; Durkheim (2003, p.118) suggests that 'by themselves, individual consciousnesses are actually closed to one another, and they can communicate only by means of signs' which appear in 'a communion'. Communities are formed and maintained by 'the fusion of all the individual feelings into a common one' – this occurs partly through common participation in ritual, which is facilitated by a recognisable symbol of a given community. Durkheim primarily discussed religion and religious communities in his work, but his ideas are applicable to any community that coalesces around shared experience.

As society in Western Europe has become increasingly secularised, it is now common, particularly within the field of sociology, for theorists to apply Durkheim's ideas to analysis of the way that communities develop through culture, including sport. This is particularly important for this study because support for a football team is a particularly visible and significant method of demonstrating membership of a community, and support for its ideals. Giulianotti (2005) states that the rituals associated with supporting a sports team are very similar to the religious traditions described by Durkheim. Sports, and especially team sports, often involve 'integrative and quasi-religious practices' because of the number of rituals that are involved, not just in playing a sport like football, but in watching matches (Giulianotti, 2005, p.5). These rituals usually promote communities which are related to specific teams, and therefore the supporters of football teams imagine themselves to be representative of a community.

Discussing Durkheim's work, Giddens (1978, p.93) argues that 'public ceremonials' are vital in the life of a community. There are two separate phases of 'social activity' which differ markedly from each other. While 'day-to-day' activities related to work and domestic life are routine, ceremonies and rituals are 'highly intense and emotional in character'. Those who regularly attend football matches, both at the stadium or in other social environments like public houses and clubs, will often join in with ritualised

chanting which shows support for one team over another. Opponents are often denigrated in song in order to reinforce the primacy of the team that is being supported. The community expresses its faith in its team and states that the team, and therefore the community, will overcome its opponents both through ability and through communal support, which is stronger than that of its opponents. The nature of these rituals ensures that 'the collectivity impresses itself most overwhelmingly on the individual'; the individual is encouraged to see themselves as a part of 'the sacred' as well as 'the profane' world of everyday activity (Giddens, 1978, p.93).

Giulianotti (2005, p.7) describes sports as 'civil religions' which should be afforded the same level of importance in society as religion itself; Piskurek (2010) goes further, and states that sport now plays a more significant role than religion in constructing communal identities, particularly within a national context. There is a clear link between the way that sporting communities develop, and the way that national communities are constructed, and for this reason, sport and nationalism are often analysed in terms of their mutual relationship. At sporting contests, the crowd 'worships itself' as a community and therefore promotes the idea that it exists as a homogenous entity with shared goals and ideals. As discussed earlier in this chapter, nationalism has developed along very similar structural lines.

Most sports involve participation in events such as the Olympics, the Commonwealth Games, and the European Championships. Football has a number of major international tournaments, the most significant of which is the World Cup. Other competitions are organised along continental lines and are also very prestigious. All of these tournaments involve national teams, which are represented by the elite players from each nation. This reinforces the idea that representing the nation is an important achievement for any sportsperson, and it also promotes the idea that the ultimate level of identity is national. As Bairner (2001, p.2) notes, the rituals to be found at such events demonstrate the willingness of supporters to engage in an active brand of nationalism, where the supremacy of the nation is proclaimed, and, ideally, proved upon the field of play. This is a dynamic type of cultural nationalism, in which supporters of the national football team willingly participate in rituals that promote the supremacy of the nation.

However, this study will not primarily examine the ways that rituals are produced; rather, the focus will be upon what they contribute to the meaning of football teams at

the symbolic level. This study will analyse some rituals that have not been studied before, and contribute to knowledge in the process. However, previous studies have provided detailed analysis of the processes involved in the construction of football fan rituals, and as a consequence there is a useful base for the significance of rituals to be interpreted at the symbolic level.[8] The meaning of rituals is not fixed; rather, it is determined by the condition of the wider society in which they are produced. It is the contention of this study that the meaning of rituals that have existed for decades in Northern Ireland and Scotland is rapidly changing, and this is caused by the altered cultural and political context in which the rituals are produced. While existing studies discuss rituals that are still participated within, the meaning of some of these has changed since the studies were carried out. Rather than conducting a new analysis of fan rituals in Northern Ireland and Scotland, it is instead more useful to reinterpret their meaning in the light of rapid social change.

Another significant element of the analysis contained within this study is that the role of individual footballers within the promotion of cultural nationalism will also be analysed in detail, particularly with relation to Northern Ireland. Culture is not solely developed and promoted by elite intellectuals, and this study will demonstrate that footballers play an important role in constructing and promoting cultural identities. This is important because the role of individuals, operating at the popular level, in promoting nationalism is seldom analysed. Durkheim (2003) argues that there are two separate spheres, the collective and the individual; however, the two are interlinked. Participation in sporting rituals, on both a local and national level, helps to reinforce the idea that the individual is part of a wider community, and that this communal identity should be venerated. However, individuals also play a role in promoting communal identities and in determining the nature and scope of those identities. In a departure from the normal application of the Durkheimian paradigm, this study will examine the ways in which individual footballers have promoted particular visions of national identity in Northern Ireland, which have become significant on a communal level.

Football, like all cultural practices and processes, has a meaning that is dependent upon the conditions in which it is participated within and observed. As Sugden and Tomlinson (1998, p.186) suggest:

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[8] The work of Alan Bairner, Richard Giulianotti, and Joseph M.Bradley on fan rituals in Northern Ireland and Scotland is especially significant.

'Football cultures contribute in myriad ways to forms of personal, cultural, social and national identity, but never regardless of the social structure and relations of the society'.

Within this study football will be analysed as a contributory factor in the production of cultural nationalism, and also in terms of its significance within political nationalism, in order to gauge the overall importance of nationalism that is expressed through sport. It is not the intention of this study to deny that political states attempt to influence the meanings of sport to their benefit, sometimes successfully. The political motivations of various state actors within the island of Ireland will be discussed in detail in chapter two, as politics and sport have become inextricably linked within the context of Irish nationalism. However, in analysing the way in which the cultural meanings of football are constructed from the "bottom-up" as well as from the "top-down", this study will provide a more complete picture of the social processes it describes.

The meanings of sport to national communities are often popularly constructed, and are not solely prescribed by politicians. This is not to say that political groups do not try to utilise the appeal of sport to their own advantage, however. It is very significant that football supporters in Northern Ireland and Scotland do not necessarily identify with the team of the territory that they live in, as in many small nations, the national football team has become a rallying point for politicians, who utilise the success of the team to emphasise the strength of the nation or state involved. This process can be seen in a number of different European nations, as identity politics becomes the increasingly dominant mode across the continent. Especially strong examples of this process can be found in the Balkan republics, where nationalist doctrines have been built and maintained by politicians who have invoked the national football team as an example of success achieved through patriotic feelings.

In Croatia, the success of the national team has served to 'advertis[e] the bright new nation to the world' (Wilson, 2006, p.146). Croatia's first president, Franjo Tudjman, recognised that the Croatian national team was particularly gifted and his regime promoted the idea that football should be seen as 'a powerful symbol of the new Croatia' (Wilson, 2006, p.146). The Croatian people were encouraged to see themselves as a part of the national team's success, both by Tudjman and the players themselves. Patriotism and success became indivisible in Tudjman's ideology. Similarly, the populist Italian politician and former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi named his party

"Forza Italia", after a football chant. He took this name in the knowledge that people often associate Italian football with success, and utilised the iconography associated with Italian football in order to suggest that his party, which was entirely new, had a historical basis in the qualities that are associated with Italian football.

It is also the case that nations without states utilise sporting achievement when they promote the cause of independence. This is particularly significant for this study; Northern Ireland and Scotland both lack truly autonomous representation in nearly every sphere. Only football truly offers the chance for people in both territories to support a completely autonomous entity.[9] Similar nations without a state do not have this opportunity; by way of example, it is currently the case that Catalonia and the Basque Country have representative teams, but these teams are not allowed to participate in FIFA-sanctioned events and therefore are strictly limited in the fixtures that they can play (Federacio Catalana de Futbol, 2012, Euskadiko Futbol Federakundea, 2012)

Instead of using a national team for the purposes of promoting Catalonia's separate identity, the independence movement makes much of the success of FC Barcelona. The club reciprocate this by promoting Catalonia as a separate entity that exists outside of Spain. The club's official website states that 'FC Barcelona is "more than a club" in Catalonia because it is the sports club that most represents the country and is also one of its greatest ambassadors' (FC Barcelona, 2012). Nations without states often use successful football clubs as a vehicle to expound their views, and the clubs are happy to be utilised in this way. FC Barcelona positively encourage the view that they represent Catalan aspirations for independence. Similarly, Athletic Club de Bilbao have become a de facto Basque national team, because they only select players born in the Basque country or with parental links to Bizkaia and the surrounding provinces, which are considered to be Basque by the club (Athletic Club de Bilbao, 2012). It is generally accepted that, in the absence of national teams that compete in sanctioned tournaments, both FC Barcelona and Athletic Club de Bilbao take on the role of national representatives.

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[9] Scotland has an autonomous Rugby Union team. However, international rugby is played on an all-Ireland basis, and therefore there is no Northern Ireland team.

In Spain, Athletic Club de Bilbao and Barcelona present a challenge to the values of many supporters of the national team, because they represent aspirant national communities and have willingly taken on an ambassadorial role on behalf of Basque and Catalan nationalists. In Northern Ireland, domestic teams have also become symbolic of ideals which often challenge the hegemony of the national team. Clubs affiliated with the Irish nationalist community promote an Irish identity which stands against the loyalism that is associated with the Northern Irish national team. In Scotland, Rangers' supporters particularly challenge the idea of Scotland becoming an independent state, which is the opposite ideal to that expressed by supporters of Barcelona and Athletic Club de Bilbao within the Spanish state. Scotland represents a unique and interesting case in this regard, especially when the unionism that is expressed within football is analysed in the light of the growth of Scottish nationalism in other cultural practices.

Studies of sport rarely, if ever, compare the tangible effects of sport to the effects that other forms of culture have upon nationalism. One of the most significant elements of this study is that it offers a comparison of the ways in which both participatory and non-participatory cultural elements contribute to the development of nationalism. Most studies tend to compare examples from different nations, giving only a sport-specific window into nationalism. This study will attempt to widen the frame of reference for studies of both sport and literature, by comparing the ways in which the two contribute to nationalism. This means that it makes an original contribution to knowledge within three fields; the study of nationalism, the study of sport, and the study of literature, as will now be discussed.

Nation and narrative: The role of literature in the construction of nationalism

Despite the widespread influence of Benedict Anderson's work, relatively few attempts have been made to illustrate exactly how nationalism develops through literature. This is certainly fair to say in relation to Northern Ireland and Scotland, as will be demonstrated in chapters three and four. In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson himself only provides a cursory example of the way that literature contributes to nationalism, and has not truly developed the theory with sustained examinations of contemporary nations. This study will demonstrate the extent to which literary culture affects the identity of two contemporary nations. In doing so, it will not argue from the perspective

that all nations are essentially coterminous, or that the influence of literature is always the same in all nations. Instead, the argument made is that the extent to which nations are the product of their literary culture is dependent upon a number of interrelated factors. Literature is just one cultural element of many that are involved in the production of the nation, although it is a particularly significant one.

Literary production is a social practice in which ideas about the nation can be advanced. It has been said that 'novels often attempt to assemble the fragments of a national life and give them a final shape. They become documents designed to prove national consciousness, with multiple, myriad components that display an active communal life' (Brennan, 1991, p.61). The novel, Anderson (2006) argues, is a strong vehicle for the expression of nationalism because its classic structure is so similar to that given to nations in the classic nationalist argument. As Anderson (2006, p.26) puts it, 'the idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogenous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation'. The protagonist(s) in a novel move forward (traditionally, at least) in a linear fashion, but events from their past shape the events in their future. Meanwhile, events in the present also affect their lives in a way that is clearly defined. This is very significant, but as well as mirroring the narrative surrounding the way in which nations are depicted, the novel has other functions which make literary production a key process in the development and propagation of nationalism.

The novel is often designed so that a reader can empathise and feel some sort of connection with the protagonist(s). It is highly significant that 'novels represent people as living in societies' rather than as isolated individuals; this is achieved by describing protagonists in such a way that elements of their lives are recognisable to the intended audience (Anderson, 2006, p.25). Anderson (2006, p.30) describes the classic novel as being concerned with 'the movement of a solitary hero through a sociological landscape of a fixity that fuses the world inside the novel with the world outside'; while the novel is a work of the imagination, it usually contains elements that tie it decisively to a certain community and to a certain conception of social, cultural, and material history.

Nationalism is, in large part, a "bottom up" phenomenon deriving from the collective imagination, which is influenced by ideas that derive from both popular and elite sources. This fact will be examined at length in chapters three and four in specific

relation to literature. It is vital that ideas about the nation resonate if they are to have an influence upon culture; the novel plays a significant role in the development of nationalism because it is a vehicle through which the nation can be described, discussed, and critiqued. In describing life "as it is lived" in a strictly bounded territory, literary works such as novels allow people to empathise with others and feel that they are in some way similar to their fellow citizens. Brennan (1991, p.61) argues that 'fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality', and that the novel is a powerful tool on which an individual's perception of the national community can be built. The novel can take themes and recognisable strands from everyday experience, and then introduce them into new situations, expanding conceptions of life within a given culture. It can, in this way, expand knowledge without the necessity of individual experience, heightening a sense of empathy with other people.

In the classic nationalist argument, nations are shaped by events in the past even if they did not formally exist at that time. Nationalism utilises history and the nation is portrayed as an entity which is the result of past events. This argument is made most clearly by ethnosymbolists such as Smith and Hutchinson. Similarly, history affects the lives of the protagonists within any novel, even if they do not experience the influential events directly. The protagonists are not just the product of their own experiences but of events in the past, and it is made clear that these events, plus the experiences of the protagonists, will influence those of others in the future. This is analogous to the way that nations are affected and shaped by history even if the nation took a different form in the past.

While nations may not have always existed in real terms, the contemporary imagination views them as the product of history. This relates to the arguments of both Geertz and Connor; nationalism is the product of what people believe to be in some sense true. This contention is at the heart of this study – the production of nationalism is strongly influenced by what people feel about their nation, and therefore "bottom-up" processes play a key role in the construction of national identities. The novels discussed in this study directly attempt to influence the way that recent history is understood; Irvine Welsh is particularly aware of his status as a cultural historian, and makes references to this in a number of his novels, including *Trainspotting*, *Porno*, and *Glue*.

Welsh is acutely conscious of the fact that his work is an attempt to influence people's understanding of the history and culture of Scotland. His work makes reference to the role of novelists both as producers of new cultural products, and mediators of history. In *Porno*, for example, Welsh's character Spud Murphy resolves to write a social and cultural history of Leith, which is now a district of Edinburgh. The characters that he discusses are very similar to those Welsh creates, as is the methodology and writing style. As Spud sends his work to a traditional publisher of history, the manuscript is rejected. In this, and similar episodes which take place in other novels as mentioned, Welsh can be understood to be making a knowing reference to his role as an "unofficial" yet influential mediator of history. He suggests that the role he plays is misunderstood by those who value a more traditional approach; this is also the contention of this study. It is of course the case that Welsh's novels outsell "traditional" histories, and therefore are more influential at the popular level. The incident discussed above is a satirical acknowledgement of this situation.

## "Theory about Theory"?: Addressing issues within contemporary modes of examining Scottish and Northern Irish literature

Postcolonial theory can be a useful method of examining counter-hegemonic cultural production. It is often used by sport sociologists to analyse the 'use of sport by submerged nations to promote their ambitions' towards national sovereignty (Bairner, 2003a, p.159). When applied to this end, postcolonial theory offers a serviceable path towards the analysis of nationalism in stateless nations, and opens up the possibility of studying counter-hegemonic but *nationally defined* activities. It is curious that the application of postcolonialism with relation to sport is both more useful and somewhat different to modes commonly used in the study of literature. With relation to the latter, strands of postcolonial theory often attempt to apply a "post-national" or transnational reading of practices and processes, and for a study of nationalism, these elements of postcolonialism are certainly less useful.

Many aspects of postcolonial theory aim towards promoting a post-national world; as Billig (1995) argues, some postcolonialists write as if the change that they hope for is inevitable. However, the current trend across Europe is for the proliferation of the nation-state, and it seems fair to agree with Anderson (2006, p.3) that 'the end of the era of nationalism, so long prophesied, is not remotely in sight'. As Simon During (1991,

p.139) argues, 'the nation-state is, for better or worse, the political institution that has most efficacy and legitimacy in the world as it is', and therefore 'to reject nationalism absolutely is to accede to a way of thought by which intellectuals cut themselves off from effective political action'. If culture in Northern Ireland and Scotland was primarily directed towards promoting a post-national or transnational vision of the world, then it would make sense to analyse it in this light. However, it is clear that particularist brands of nationalism have a powerful effect on cultural production in both territories, and to ignore this fact would be rather contrary and ultimately counter-productive. This certainly does not mean that all postcolonial theory is unhelpful, but those strands that argue for a transnational reading of culture are less applicable, as will be examined.

In many ways, the breadth of theoretical approaches that are placed under the umbrella term "postcolonialism" is problematic, because the term now refers to so many conflicting approaches (with contradictory aims) that it has lost a certain amount of analytical power. The aim of this section, therefore, is to examine both the uses and the issues associated with the postcolonial mode, especially as it is applied to literature, as its application within this field of investigation is most problematic. In essence, the position taken in this study is not that all postcolonial theory lacks value; rather, it can be counter-productive to utilise elements of postcolonialism that aim towards instrumentalist, "broad-brush" explanations and arguments.

Many recent attempts to examine Scottish and Northern Irish literature have taken an approach that is influenced by postcolonial theories (a good example of this can be found in Farred's (2004) work on *Trainspotting*). The study of literary postcolonialism is a disparate field, but as a general rule its proponents examine literature that has been produced within former colonies in an attempt to ascertain firstly the character of that literature, and secondly the extent to which that character has been defined by the period in which the nation was colonised. As McLeod (2000) discusses, postcolonial theorists often argue that it is possible to analyse literature from Northern Ireland and Scotland in the same way that one might examine texts from Barbados, Nigeria, Bangladesh, or any other nation that was once a part of the British Empire. The theory behind this is that the collapse of the British Empire has affected all nations who were once a part of it. This is problematic because it ascribes a broadly transnational and instrumentalist theoretical

construct to disparate nations, which are defined by contemporary events as well as any historical colonial experience.

There is a tendency amongst postcolonial theorists operating within the field of literature to view all former colonies as essentially the same. The experience of being colonised was not the same for all nations but in attempting to provide an overarching theory of the effects of colonisation, many theorists discuss former colonies as if they were a homogenous mass. This is a phenomenon that can be seen in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's (1989) collection *The Empire Writes Back*, which remains a highly influential text. Essentially, *The Empire Writes Back* argues that the primary function of literature produced in former colonies is to produce new modes of representation by altering Standard English into localised forms of language.

This point of view is influenced by structuralism. This movement was very influential for a period beginning in the 1960s and its resonance is still felt in some academic circles today. One of the key ideas within structuralism is that the world is understood through language; words are "signs" with what they actually describe being what is signified. Structuralists often argue that because an individual's experience of the world is defined by language, the language in which they learn is central to the way in which they organise the world and the values that they hold. *The Empire Writes Back* argues that in using Standard English, people from former colonies submit to the ways of describing and understanding the world that were taught during the colonial period. For this reason, creating ruptures in language is seen as challenging the colonial worldview and provides a mechanism for a localised worldview to be expressed.

Certain elements of this approach can be useful, and it is certainly fair to argue that language does play a key role in the production of nationalism. However, it is problematic that its exponents often deem "postcolonial fiction" to be defined by language strategy alone. Literature that uses local idioms rather than Standard English is seen as "postcolonial" no matter where it is produced. For this reason, the work of Irvine Welsh and James Kelman has been examined as "postcolonial" despite its dissimilarity to work by, for example, African or Caribbean writers. There is a tendency within postcolonial theory to ascribe the same overarching purpose to novels produced in different locations, and with very different ideals, which is ultimately somewhat reductive. It is certainly profitable to think of the use of local idioms and dialect as a

way of locating the text within a specific nation, and this approach will be utilised in this study. It is not the intention of this study to dismiss or reject all the strategies utilised by postcolonial theorists, if they offer a useful method of analysis.

However, it is not worthwhile to dogmatically argue that literary production in one nation is essentially the same as that which is produced in other nations, solely because it uses one similar narrative strategy. Postcolonial theory, when utilised in this way, denies that nations are culturally different because its exponents are often guilty of attempting to provide one overarching grand narrative that fits all former colonial nations. Theories of this kind are also reductive in that they argue that literature has only one central function, which is to challenge any and all residual effects of colonialism. Such an approach is not always nuanced enough to be useful for any study that aims to uncover specific cultural differences, both between and within national groups.

These issues are significant to any study of nationalism, but of special relevance here is the fact that it is especially difficult to apply this approach to any nation within the United Kingdom. This is the case because these nations played a key role within the colonial project, and experienced colonialism differently to African, Caribbean, and Asian colonies. Scottish enthusiasm for imperialism and the colonial era has dissipated in recent times and, as this study will explore, there are those who feel that Scotland is in fact a colony itself within the United Kingdom. However, there are also those who feel an enthusiasm for the days of the British Empire, and venerate its symbols. To argue that Scotland is a postcolonial nation is very difficult without denigrating the ideals of unionists who feel that it has never been a colony at all.

This is also the case with respect to Northern Ireland. It is difficult to apply postcolonial theory to Northern Irish culture without being perceived as taking a very definite political position on the side of Irish nationalism. Some Irish nationalists argue that those Protestants who settled in the north of Ireland in the 1600s and 1700s were a colonising force. Describing Northern Ireland in postcolonial terms is certainly a politically charged approach which could be considered inappropriate for the study of Scottish and Northern Irish literature, given the different experiences of, and attitudes to, colonialism to be found within these territories. This is also the case for sport within the context of Ireland, as Bairner (2003a) asserts. Many postcolonial theorists take the

position that the values held within the "colonial" period have been rejected in the present day. This is not universally the case in either Scotland or Northern Ireland. It is not the purpose of this study to produce a partisan argument about the colonial status of Northern Ireland or Scotland; the aim is to discuss and illuminate nationalist arguments, rather than unequivocally endorse them. For this reason, postcolonial theory will be applied when appropriate, but with a certain amount of caution.

Aside from the version of postcolonialism prescribed in *The Empire Writes Back*, there is another which has grown out of the scholarship of theorists such as Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak. The theories posited are essentially postmodern and poststructuralist, and relate chiefly to written texts; Bhabha argues that as we are now able to see the way in which language is constructed, it is possible to also see the way in which all ideologies are constructed through language. Once this knowledge is gained, it is possible to see the way in which ideologies interpellate individuals. According to Bhabha, once one is aware that the nation is reproduced through certain cultural devices, especially literature, it is no longer possible to see the nation as a permanent or even semi-permanent entity. Bhabha (1991, p.300) argues that in all nations 'the image of cultural authority may be ambivalent because it is caught, uncertainly, in the act of "composing" its powerful image', and this ambivalence is a fatal weakness.

In essence, Bhabha follows the poststructuralist mode of thought which is that all ideologies are constructed, and therefore can also be deconstructed. This means that all value systems are impermanent and open to challenge on this basis. Bhabha sees the nation as being defined by its political framework rather than by its people, and in this his views are similar to modernist theorists of nationalism. He refers to people as 'the historical objects of a nationalist pedagogy' and he believes that the people of any nation will become interpellated by the political authorities that exist within it (Bhabha, 1991, p.297). Not only does Bhabha (1991, p.297) view people as "objects", but he also sees them as the:

> 'subjects of a process of signification that must erase any prior or originary presence of the nation-people to demonstrate the prodigious, living principle of the people as that continual process by which the national life is redeemed and signified as a repeating and reproductive process'.

Essentially, Bhabha argues that because the nation is written and rewritten according to the needs of the authorities that govern the state, then there can be no sense in which the

nation exists as a continual expression of a set of cultural values. Without a shared culture, a nation is simply a political unit that can be altered and removed.

However, for Bhabha, as Ahmad (1994, p.70) suggests, the only value that appears to last through political change is that of the importance of 'power'. Bhabha writes about power as the only 'universal and immutable' concept in a poststructuralist world where all knowledge, ideology and values are supposedly 'partial' and open to change. While other values can be altered, power remains the most important factor at the heart of governance. Bhabha writes as if "power" is an independent variable over which human agency has not even a slight measure of control. This belief in power as the only concept that cannot be seen as anything other than permanent weakens Bhabha's ideological position. If one concept can survive the poststructuralist attempt to textualise and deconstruct politics and ideology, then why might others not do the same?

It does seem to contradict Bhabha's poststructuralist position that he also argues that "power" may survive where all other concepts fall. This leaves his work open to critical scrutiny, as it firstly sets itself in opposition to what may be termed "grand narratives" of universal, lasting values, and then appears to accept that one concept may indeed be universal, despite all the rhetoric suggesting the contrary. Bhabha's work cannot just be criticised on the grounds of ideological inconsistency, however. Both Loomba (1998) and McLeod (2000) point out that poststructuralist conceptions of nationalism rarely, if ever, discuss the political and economic realities that shape a nation's day-to-day existence. Loomba (1998, p.17) also suggests that it is possible to criticise poststructuralists for 'shifting the focus from locations and institutions to individuals and their subjectivities'. This means that their methodology is completely unsuitable for a study of common culture in a specific geographic location, such as this one.

A great deal of contemporary criticism from the postcolonial school has been influenced by poststructuralism, with Bhabha the most influential figure. Loomba (1998) highlights the fact that much of the work that has been carried out lacks reference to an objective political reality. In focusing principally upon individuals, postcolonialists often ignore the place of those individuals within an existing society in order to discuss their position in a new and purely theoretical realm. McLeod (2000) points out that a great deal of the criticism emerging from the postcolonial school is self-referential and very often

constitutes "theory about theory". While this is not true of all postcolonial theory, it is hard to make a case for utilising the theories of Bhabha and Spivak when examining political and cultural arguments about the recent history of Northern Ireland and Scotland, which are defined by nationalism rather than post-nationalism or transnationalism.

## The ways that literature will be analysed in this study: Substance over style

The modes of postcolonial thought related to the promotion of transnationalism are not suitable for a study such as this one for several reasons, but principally because this study seeks to relate its findings to an objective political reality; that is, the continued existence of an order of nations. This study also rejects the still-pervasive influence of Liberal Humanism, an approach that posits that the specific place in which a work of fiction is set should have little or no impact on the way that it is analysed. Instead, supposedly universal 'moral preoccupations relevant to people of all times and places' should be the focus of analysis (McLeod, 2000, p.15).

It is of course the case that texts may have resonance for people who live outside the locale in which the text is set, and that novels do discuss ideas and ideals which cross borders. However, to deny the importance of location to a text's reception is somewhat reductive, especially in the case of texts such as those which will be discussed within this study, which analyse life within a strictly defined area and aim to make political and cultural statements about that area. Examining novels as cultural artefacts necessarily involves examining their relevance to the location (s) discussed within them.

To look for the universal within a novel which discusses conditions within an explicitly stated and closely bounded locale can mean missing a vital aspect of that text. There is no attempt within this study to "prove" the worth of an overarching grand narrative or promote a fixed theoretical position about literature. The focus is instead upon examining the differing conditions within separate nations. Rather than taking the instrumentalist approach of attempting to make a theory fit each individual nation, this study accepts the fact that nations have developed in different ways due to different cultural practices. Nations are not homogenous; in preference to applying theories whose value is principally relative to other theories, rather than to any objective measure of political reality, this study will utilise theories that attempt to ascertain the contribution of literature to the culture of contemporary societies.

The approach taken is influenced by Williams' work, in which literature is seen as a cultural practice that contributes to the way society is perceived and constructed. Cultures are constructed by the social processes and practices that take place within them, and any assessment of the role played by these elements involves examining the political situation in each territory examined, and then analysing responses to that situation. It also involves looking at deliberate attempts to construct a certain vision of the nation; this is active cultural nationalism. All the novels examined do project a deliberately constructed image of the nation described. The third component of the analysis is to examine the potential and actual benefits that political nationalists have gained from the actions and words of cultural nationalists. This is an attempt to provide an objective examination of contemporary culture, rather than a subjective attempt to prove the value of a literary theory.

Anderson (2006) describes the novel as playing a key role in the way that the nation is constructed. Works of literature contribute to the way in which societies are imagined. Statements about the nation that are made within novels enter the public consciousness and can shape and alter the way in nations are perceived. The nature of the "imagined community" described in fiction is often a cultural and political statement about the community discussed; this is certainly the case in all the novels examined within this study. The boundaries that are set, and the kinds of people that are excluded from the community described, is also very revealing. The absence of people who value a "British" identity within both Scottish and Northern Irish fiction is very significant, and the reasons for this will be discussed in detail.

While the study of literary style and structure is certainly valuable, in a study that primarily examines the content, rather than the style of the novels discussed, such discussion is only worthwhile when it is strictly relevant. The adoption of dialect words within a narrative, rather than the use of Standard English, does make a cultural statement in setting the limits of the "imagined community" to those who use those idioms. Analysis of the motivation for this is germane to the main aims of this study. Those elements of structure and style that are less relevant to the overall cultural statements made will not be discussed.

The aim is not truly to discuss the "literary merit" of the novels under examination (which has been established in other studies), but to analyse what they actually say

about the nation they describe. By way of example, the literary postmodernism of the Northern Irish author Eoin McNamee is not, in and of itself, particularly significant to this study; what is important are the claims he makes about the behaviour of British security forces in Northern Ireland. This is not a study about style; rather, it is a study that examines content and tries to ascertain the intent of the author wherever possible. What the authors actually say about their nation is more important than the way that they say it.

## Summary

Nationalism is the result of the culture of any given territory. Culture develops through social practices and processes; these involve the contribution of the people that live within any given unit of population. The people of any nation are often brought together through collective rituals designed to both replicate and replace earlier, religious ceremonies. These rituals are usually based around various symbols of the nation; key amongst these symbols are national sports teams. Through participation in the same collective process, people are able to imagine that they are similar to others from the same territory. The dissemination of ideas in written form is also vitally important, as this allows people to understand and empathise with others from the same territory. Nations develop through a literary culture and this process is continuous.

Cultural nationalism is the result of deliberate attempts to influence culture through social processes. Certain ideas about the nation are disseminated in an attempt to affect the way in which people imagine that nation. This study involves analysis of two important social processes in order to examine the effects of cultural nationalism. Through literature, cultural practitioners can make statements and discuss their ideas about the nation. The rituals related to supporting a sports team promote a certain way of thinking about the nation. Both of these processes relate to, and are affected by, political reality. They are also an attempt to affect the way in which people perceive political issues.

A synthesis of the most useful and appropriate elements of cultural materialism, modernism, and ethnosymbolism provides an effective methodological basis for the study of nations. This is especially the case for those nations whose contemporary history demonstrates rapid and continual changes in attitude, both to the nation and to the state in which that nation is contained. Culture cannot be abstracted from politics

and the two are inextricably linked. This is demonstrated by the growing importance of identity politics within the United Kingdom. In studying culture, it is possible to explain political change; the reverse is also true. Nations are built through both cultural and political processes and understanding the relationship between the two is the key to understanding the contemporary condition of any society. The study of both participatory and reflective social processes ensures a more balanced and informative analysis than can be achieved through the study of just one element. The processes being examined are interrelated and it is important to consider them in relation to culture as a whole, rather than as isolated elements.

## The culture and politics of football in contemporary Northern Ireland

This chapter will provide an examination of the way in which cultural nationalism is expressed through the rituals and symbolism associated with football in Northern Ireland. Football is a mechanism that allows for the expression and development of national identity from the "bottom-up"; in Northern Ireland, two opposed groups use that mechanism for the purpose of promoting their own vision of the territory. The sport is a popular pursuit that allows players and supporters to make statements about the territory that they live in, and this chapter will examine some of the ways that football rituals and symbols have been used to promote different cultural identities in Northern Ireland. The main intention of this chapter is to examine the production of identity through the symbols and rituals of fandom, and also through the actions of individual footballers. However, where issues of governance are relevant to the ways in which identity develops, these will also be addressed in order to maintain clarity and provide a necessary level of political context.

Before commencing the examination of the way in which cultural nationalism is constructed through football in Northern Ireland, it is first useful to provide a brief discussion of the cultural and political background to that examination. This will form the basis of the first and second sections of this chapter; the first discusses the different cultural groups that are present within Northern Ireland, and looks at the political positions that these groups typically hold. The second section examines the growth of identity politics in Northern Ireland, and discusses the role that culture plays within contemporary political strategies. These two sections are designed to provide the background to the main discussion sections which follow them.

## A brief introduction to the politics and culture of Northern Ireland

Northern Irish political and cultural life is affected by a division between culturally opposed communities. Northern Ireland was brought into being when the Irish Free State was given home rule in 1922. The leaders of the majority Protestant community in the north did not wish to join the new state in the south, and their wishes were acquiesced to by the British government. This resulted in the island of Ireland being partitioned and separate governments formed. The Irish Free State eventually became the Republic of Ireland, which has a strong Catholic majority in most of its 26 counties.

Northern Ireland was formed from six of the nine counties that comprise the Province of Ulster.

Essentially, the partition was born out of differing religious affiliations, and these have retained a certain level of importance. However, in line with general trends in Western Europe, Northern Ireland has become increasingly secular. The communities that were formed by religious belief remain largely intact, but they are not now solely defined by that belief. As in the rest of Western Europe, communities are now primarily defined by national, rather than religious identity. In Northern Ireland, the once solely religious terms "Catholic" and "Protestant" are now loaded with a number of other cultural expectations. By way of example, it is generally accepted that Catholics in Northern Ireland favour the reunification of Ireland; the term "Nationalist" is also used for the same community, and has become interchangeable with "Catholic". Given that this study will examine many different forms of nationalism, the term "Irish nationalist" will be used to refer to this community, in order to avoid confusion.

Terms with a basis in religion no longer just refer to membership of that group; the "Catholic community" has developed a wider culture, in which active religious worship plays a part, but is not the sole marker of membership. The same is true of the Ulster Protestant community. Increasingly, political aspirations and social processes play a more important role than active religious worship in defining the culture of Northern Irish communities. The discussion of cultural nationalism in this study is informed by this fact. In discussing "Ulster Protestant" culture, this study understands such culture to be anything that is produced by the community that has developed from membership of the Protestant faith in Northern Ireland.

As Cordner (2005) asserts, the term "Ulster Protestant" can be applied to anyone from Northern Ireland whose background is Protestant. Not all of the people to whom the term applies are active worshippers. As McAuley and Spencer (2011) confirm, church attendance is continuing to fall in Protestant areas. Going to church on a Sunday is seen by many as the preserve of the elderly and the very young. One theory that has been posited in relation to the Ulster Protestant community is that because its culture is so dependent on the Bible for its imagery and ideology, there is no room for the development of a literary (or any other reflective form of) culture (Nairn, 1977). However, while Bible Protestantism and its associated rhetoric are still influential,

religion is by no means the only significant cultural element absorbed by its adherents. The cultural divide in Northern Ireland is not simply religious, and understanding the conflict between communities solely in this way is rather reductive. Religious affiliations are important, but it is national identities that are more significant.

Throughout Northern Ireland's history, a majority within the Protestant community have wished to maintain the supremacy of their cultural group as the most common and important in Northern Ireland. For this reason Ulster Protestantism and political unionism have become interlinked, because union with the rest of the United Kingdom is perceived to be a way of safeguarding supremacy within the north of Ireland. As a consequence, the position of most unionists is that 'the constitutional link between Northern Ireland and the rest of Britain' should be maintained by retaining the integrity of Northern Ireland as a partly self-governing territory within the United Kingdom (Bairner 2003, p.518).

Tonge (2005, p.86) argues that Northern Ireland is 'a sectarian entity in terms of the rationale for its existence, a contrived unionist majority dwelling within an artificial territorial enclave on the island of Ireland'. The fear that within the context of a united Ireland, Catholicism would become the dominant belief system within the north of Ireland is a driving factor behind unionism, particularly in the modes expressed by the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), many of whose members are also active within the Free Presbyterian Church (Cochrane, 1997, Dixon, 2001). Union with the British state and the maintenance of territorial boundaries between Northern Ireland and the Republic means that the Ulster Protestant community have been able to maintain a position as a majority group. Unification with the Republic of Ireland would mean that the community would become a minority within Ireland as a whole, rather than a majority within the smaller territory of Northern Ireland. This means that unionism is an ideology that has often been driven by the fear of what Bairner and Shirlow (1998, p.167) describe as 'the menace' of the 'Republican-Nationalist communities of Ireland'.

It is generally understood that a sizeable, largely Catholic, Irish nationalist minority in Northern Ireland would prefer to live in a united Ireland. The defining characteristic of the Irish nationalist community is usually held to be 'the desire to [...] unite the six counties that presently constitute Northern Ireland with the rest of Ireland'; generally speaking, members of this community feel that they are culturally Irish and that their

interests would be best served by unity with the Republic of Ireland (Bairner 2003, p.518). However, Bairner (2003, pp.159-160) also argues that 'there is no such thing as a single Irish national identity', suggesting instead that there are 'multiple versions of Irishness'. On an individual level, this is certainly the case; however, while it is important to consider that "Irishness" is by no means a homogenous movement, the aim of this study is not necessarily to uncover exactly which versions of Irishness exist at the micro-level. Instead, the aim is to analyse what many commentators consider to be the most significant points of convergence between these multiple visions.

Bairner (2003) and Hassan (2002) have both suggested that due to the different contexts in which Irish identity is produced, the variant produced in Northern Ireland is different to that produced in the Republic of Ireland. Whilst acknowledging that the history of Northern Ireland and the Republic has been very different since 1920, Nic Craith (2003, Tonge (2005), and Bean (2007) all argue that the idea of "northern nationalism" is somewhat problematic. The vision of Irish nationalism produced in Northern Ireland is not confined to the territory, and is still aimed towards constructing a unified Irish identity (McGrattan, 2009). It is not specific to Northern Ireland, and much of it remains directed towards achieving a united political state on the island of Ireland.

In the context of the continued political aim of a united Ireland pursued by Irish nationalist parties in Northern Ireland, Bean's (2007, 2011) argument that "northern nationalism" should be principally considered as an element of a wider Irish nationalism is particularly cogent, and informs the theoretical approach taken in this study. Politically, the Irish nationalist community are represented by the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and Sinn Fein. Both of these parties maintain a commitment to the reunification of Ireland. However, Sinn Fein are perceived to be the more hardline of the two, partly as a result of the party's links to armed republican groups during the Troubles. The term "Irish Republicanism" is sometimes used in reference to the political aim of a united Irish state. However, many political scientists now only use it to refer to the armed struggle for this aim, rather than the cultural and political elements of Irish nationalism. For this reason, the term will not be used in this study, in order to

avoid confusion, and also to avoid the frequently argued but questionable idea that nationalism and violence are intrinsically linked.[10]

Most members of the Irish nationalist community share similar political ideals and also share a relatively similar culture. This is not always the case within the Ulster Protestant community. Todd's (1987) frequently cited and enduring schema identifies the existence of two principal groups of Ulster Protestants; these are the "Ulster British" and the "Ulster Loyalists". Ulster Protestant culture and politics are by no means homogenous, and the differences between the two groups are becoming more marked in the contemporary era. This has an effect upon the production and reception of culture within the wider Ulster Protestant community. The differences between the Ulster British and the Ulster Loyalists are manifold; it has been difficult for the two groups to find common ground and as a result it cannot be said that Ulster Protestants possess an homogenous ideological system. The only common ground shared by many within the Ulster Protestant community is opposition to a united Ireland. Loyalism is more than a variant of unionism; rather, it is a cultural and political movement in its own right. There are links between unionism and loyalism, but the two are not fundamentally the same.

Those who can be identified as being "Ulster British" express a political ideology which involves 'a primary loyalty to the imagined community of Greater Britain and a secondary, regional patriotism for Northern Ireland' (Bairner, 2003, p.523). For those who believe that citizenship of the British state is the most important factor in their cultural and political identity, the notion of Northern Irish nationalism is less appealing. This school of thought is traditionally prevalent within the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and those who adhere to 'Ulster British' ways of imagining Northern Ireland tend to view it as a region of the United Kingdom which is not dissimilar to any other (Cochrane, 1997). The position of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom is often thought of in purely legal terms, and unionism itself as more of a politico-legal position than a cultural identity (Nic Craith 2003, Farrington 2006).

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[10] In the context of Ireland, every political term comes loaded with a set of contested meanings. It is inevitable that some disagreement will occur over the use of terminology, but "Irish nationalism" is the most commonly used term for the phenomenon under discussion, and has been chosen partly for this reason.

The Ulster British have, historically speaking, not valued the creation of a distinctive culture, and for this reason they have failed to develop one (Nic Craith 2003, Farrington 2006). Cultural production is, historically speaking, not a significant element of unionist, Ulster British culture. Porter (1996) argues that this is due to a long-held perception that the production of a distinctive culture would actually weaken the unionist argument, by highlighting the fact that Northern Ireland is dissimilar to the other nations that form the United Kingdom. Insofar as unionists have attempted to develop a culture, what they have developed stresses the links between Northern Ireland and mainland Britain, specifically Scotland. There are no elements within unionist culture that are distinctly and solely Northern Irish.

The ideology of the second cultural and political tendency within the Ulster Protestant community is 'defined by a primary imagined community of Northern Irish Protestants and a secondary, conditional loyalty to the British state' (Bairner, 2003, p.253). Ulster Loyalists are most notably represented politically by the more militant members of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP); despite this party's name, many within the DUP promote a recognisably loyalist viewpoint. For loyalists, the continued primacy of the culture that has been developed and maintained by the rituals of the Ulster Protestant community is the most important factor in their commitment to the United Kingdom. Loyalists have a primary identity that is defined in terms of an 'imagined community of Northern Protestants' (Hennessey, 2011, p.20). While loyalists do value Northern Ireland's position within the United Kingdom, this is conditional upon the continued perception that the British state is acting in the interests of Ulster Protestants.

Given that loyalism is not a state-based culture, and that loyalists promote a cultural vision in which the territory of Northern Ireland is central, it can be considered (following the theories of Hutchinson on cultural nationalism) that loyalism is a brand of nationalism within which a separate and distinctly Northern Irish culture is developed and strongly promoted. This culture is of course not inclusive of all the people of Northern Ireland, and is strongly influenced by Protestantism. The significance of Northern Ireland as a place in which Protestantism can flourish has become central to loyalist thinking, and it is now the case that the cultural vision promoted by loyalists is territorially defined and seldom seen outside Northern Ireland.

The primary interest of many loyalists is that their community should be protected. Membership of the British state is the means through which this is currently achieved, rather than the main element in their cultural identity. Loyalist culture places a particular significance on loyalty to the British crown, rather than to the British government or to a British identity (Miller 2007). This conception of the relationship between a symbol of Britishness, and a distinct group of people, is notably different to that held by any other group within the United Kingdom. In making the distinction between the British Crown and any other aspect of Britishness, loyalists have been able to develop a separate identity whilst retaining a link to a symbol of Britishness. This way of thinking is especially significant for the loyalist community, as it has been used as a justification for action against the British government on occasions when loyalists feel that the existence of Northern Ireland is under threat. It is also significant because it allows for a non-British identity to be developed, whilst fealty to the British monarch is maintained.

As their first loyalty is to what they see as the separate culture of Ulster rather than to the British state, at times when it has seemed the British government have supported a future unification with the Republic of Ireland, many loyalists (including the former leader of the DUP, Dr Ian Paisley) have advocated Northern Irish independence from either the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland (Cochrane, 1997). The identity held by many Ulster Protestants is not similar to that held by most people within mainland Britain and it cannot be said that the culture they have developed is definitively British. Many loyalists recognise this, and they also recognise that the unique political and social conditions to be found within Northern Ireland have produced a separate sense of identity to that held by most people on the British mainland (Cochrane, 1997, McAuley and Spencer, 2011).

**The acculturation of Northern Irish politics**

The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement of 1998 has resulted in great changes in Northern Irish culture and politics. In contrast to the unionist-dominated Northern Irish parliament that existed until 1972, state institutions now accept members of the Irish nationalist community as equal partners in the governance of Northern Ireland. The Northern Irish Assembly at Stormont (NIA) now contains members of the SDLP and Sinn Fein, in addition to members from the DUP and UUP. The power-sharing

government has a certain amount of devolved responsibility, and Sinn Fein has Cabinet members in charge of the areas of Education, Agriculture and Rural Development, and most significantly for this study, Culture, the Arts, and Leisure.

This has had an effect on the rhetoric used by Irish nationalist politicians, and it cannot be said that they retain all of the political views which defined the Irish nationalist movement during the 1970s and 1980s. Armed struggle has been abandoned, as paramilitary groups have decommissioned their weapons and announced lasting ceasefires. However, this does not mean that the commitment to a united Ireland within the Irish nationalist community itself has altered. Sinn Fein has become the most popular Irish nationalist party in Northern Ireland, making consistent electoral gains since the Good Friday agreement was signed. McGrattan (2009) notes that despite Sinn Fein moderating their approach to politics by abandoning armed struggle, the aim of the party is the same; a united Ireland is the ultimate goal of Sinn Fein's leadership and support. The SDLP's aims have not fundamentally changed either, and Irish nationalist politics must be understood in terms of the end goal behind every policy, which is a united Ireland and the end of Northern Ireland as a political entity (SDLP, 2011, Sinn Fein 2011, McGrattan, 2009).

The decision to participate in Northern Irish political life has been seen by some (notably Hassan, 2006) as a concession of the validity of Northern Ireland as a separate territory to the Republic of Ireland. However, neither Irish nationalist party has abandoned the goal of reunification with the Republic and the new policy of participation at Stormont 'proceeds from calculated assumptions by the [Irish nationalist] community as to how best to maximise their political standing and power' (McGrattan, 2009, p.149). Many people in Northern Ireland believe that despite initial reports that Sinn Fein and Irish nationalism as a movement had "lost", the Good Friday agreement actually benefits the Irish nationalist community to a greater extent than it does the Ulster British and Ulster Loyalist communities (Elliott, 2009). This is because it institutionalises the Irish nationalist community's beliefs and values and gives them a legitimate platform for political expression.

The terms of the Good Friday agreement allow for reunification if the people of Northern Ireland vote for it in a referendum. Sinn Fein believe that there will be an Irish

nationalist majority in Northern Ireland in the relatively near future (Tonge, 2005). The party also believes that:

> As old allegiances change and people from loyalist backgrounds consider voting for a republican party because it best represents their social and economic interests, the potential for dialogue with those from the unionist community about their place in a united Ireland becomes possible (Sinn Fein, 2011).

Opinion varies on this matter, and the increased voting share for the resolutely anti-unification DUP does not suggest that many loyalists are likely to vote for Sinn Fein. However, the policies of both Sinn Fein and the SDLP are best understood as part of an 'incremental strategy', which is designed to manoeuvre the Irish nationalist community into the best possible position within Northern Ireland so that its political parties can take advantage of the 'inevitable' majority that they will one day hold (McGrattan, 2009, p.148).

As Tonge (2005) suggests, one of the key elements of Irish nationalist political strategy in Northern Ireland is to continually discuss Ireland as a single, culturally unified entity. Irish nationalists in Northern Ireland tend to argue that the cultures of the Republic and of Northern Ireland are fundamentally the same. The cultural argument for a united Ireland is constantly reinforced, particularly by Sinn Fein, to the extent that 'culture and politics have become inextricably linked in Northern Ireland' (Nic Craith, 2003, p.24). Politicians routinely highlight elements of culture that are jointly held by the Irish nationalist community in the north of Ireland and those who live in the Republic of Ireland. They also promote the power of all-Ireland authorities and support them wherever possible. The majority of such bodies are cultural rather than political, and several of these bodies govern various sports on the island of Ireland. This chapter will examine the ways in which football has been used to promote the sense of a unified Irish culture and populace.

The promotion of culture as a political tool is somewhat inevitable given the direction that politics has taken not just in Northern Ireland, but in states across the Western world. Identity politics, based upon the celebration of cultural difference and diversity, has become a dominant mode of political engagement in many territories, including those discussed within this study. Bean (2007, p.173) argues that in the contemporary era 'great ideologies grounded in universal principles are in disarray, whilst the essentialist and particularist politics of difference have become predominant'. This

means that cultural nationalism, which celebrates the particularity of culture and identity, now has a key role within the political process in Northern Ireland.

It is fair to say that unionists, particularly the Ulster British in the UUP, are disadvantaged by the acculturation of Northern Irish politics. By contrast, loyalists, at least those within the DUP, have gained a little from the acculturation of politics, as those elements of Ulster Protestant culture that have significant popular resonance have increasingly come to be associated with loyalism. Orange parades and band culture are increasingly seen as expressions of loyalism (Smithey, 2011). In the relatively recent past, the Orange Order was formally associated with the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), but the latter's growing concern over the sectarian and triumphalist overtones of many elements of Orangeism led to a severing of this association in 2005 (Farrington, 2006).

This has led to a position where the UUP has been disassociated with the culture that once supported it. The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) has benefitted from this, and has worked to create links with the Orange Order and similar Ulster Protestant institutions (Farrington, 2006). The DUP has also worked to create links with the Irish Football Association and to promote the importance of the Northern Ireland national football team, as these are staunchly loyalist cultural institutions which promote the idea of a separate Northern Irish culture. For this reason amongst others, this chapter will contain a detailed examination of the significance of football to loyalism as a cultural movement.

## Why study football in particular?

Many previous studies of sport which examine the cultural significance of "all-Ireland" teams and events have focused upon the activities of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). As Bairner (1998), Sugden and Bairner (1994) and Fulton and Bairner (2007) discuss, the GAA has played a key role in promoting and maintaining the sense that in order to hold an Irish identity, one must reject British influences. Until very recently, the GAA did not permit members of the security forces in Northern Ireland to play Gaelic games (hurling, Gaelic football, and camogie) and the overwhelming majority of participants in Gaelic games are from the Irish nationalist community. For this reason, Gaelic games have a limited cross-community appeal, and analysis of their cultural significance is of limited use in a study that focuses on more than one of Northern Ireland's different communities.

Another sport that is governed by an all-Ireland body is rugby union. In Northern Ireland, rugby union is a sport played most commonly by members of the unionist/Ulster British community and participants are overwhelmingly middle class (Bairner, 2003). It has been asserted that it is easier for middle-class unionists to represent an all-Ireland team because they are 'more likely to have grown up in areas less affected by political violence and the extreme ideologies that have flourished in such areas' (Bairner, 2003, p.529). The Irish nationalist community in Northern Ireland seldom participate in rugby union (although Bairner (2002) argues that this is slowly changing due to the growth of the Catholic middle class) and therefore rugby's potential to unite communities in both Northern Ireland and the Republic is somewhat limited. Rugby union does present the unusual scenario of unionist players representing an all-Ireland team, but due to the limited appeal of rugby union and the relatively small class base that plays the sport, the Irish rugby union team has never become symbolic of Irish unity.

Class plays an important role in Northern Irish politics and culture, and the political parties that are currently in the ascendancy have a strong working class identity and electoral base. The SDLP and UUP are both identified as parties supported by middle-class voters, and their influence has waned considerably since the Good Friday agreement (Tonge, 2005). The SDLP are currently the third-largest party in the Northern Ireland assembly, and the UUP, once the most powerful party in Northern Irish politics, are now the fourth largest. The SDLP have three seats at Westminster, while the UUP do not have any, and the party's decision to form an alliance with the Conservative party at the 2010 General Election was disastrous. The "Ulster Conservatives and Unionists – New Force" failed to return a single MP, and the UUP actually lost its only previous MP; Lady Sylvia Hermon left the party due to her refusal to stand on a Conservative ticket, and retained Down North as an independent (BBC News, 12th May 2010).

Initial opposition to the Belfast agreement, and fear of its results, has led to members of the Ulster Protestant community voting for the DUP, which was initially anti-agreement, in increasing numbers. As Tonge (2005, p.199) states, the 'Protestant working class [became] less enamoured with the Good Friday Agreement as it was operationalised' and the UUP lost support as a result. At the present time, the most significant movements in Northern Irish politics have their roots in the working class

members of both communities. For this reason, in order to gain an understanding of contemporary Northern Ireland, it is essential to examine the working class cultures of the territory. Nationalism is not imposed by political parties or by the British state. It clearly develops from the bottom-up, and Northern Ireland is host to several particularly politicised working-class identities.

Football is certainly the most popular sport within Northern Ireland, and it is especially popular with working class people (Sugden and Harvie, 1995, Bairner, 2003). In a territory that is so clearly culturally divided, it is one of the few activities which unionists, loyalists, and Irish nationalists regularly participate in, and which offers the opportunity for communities to mix. The potential of football to unite divided communities has been examined in some detail and a task force was set up in an attempt to foster better relations between them (the processes that they carried out and the reasoning behind the founding of the task force are examined in Bairner's (2004) paper 'Creating a Soccer Strategy for Northern Ireland').

In many European nations, football has been utilised by politicians as a social force that can unite disparate groups of people behind a common cause. The national football teams of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia, and Croatia have become a visible symbol of the strength and potential of those nations. However, the potential of the Northern Ireland international team to gain similar results is limited by inter-community cultural and political tension which shapes the way in which Northern Irish football functions. The cultural divide that is present in Northern Ireland is particularly clear within the rituals produced by football supporters. Northern Irish football teams are often supported by members of only one community, which they have become symbolic of.

Football supporters in Northern Ireland are commonly members of at least two inter-related communities. One of these communities is directly related to the club supported, and the rituals through which membership of this community is expressed and reinforced are designed to aggrandise the achievements and qualities that have become associated with the club over the course of its history. There is also a strong element of denigration of other clubs; fan identity is essentially built through rivalry. The second community is wider and is linked to the society which the club plays within; football is a significant social process through which it is possible for people to express ideas about the governance of Northern Ireland, and also about the cultural and political

future of the territory. It is mainly this latter community that will be focused upon in this study.

Active attempts are made to promote a vision which is dominated by the culture of the community involved; these often involve expressions of virulent and sustained opposition to the values of other communities. Football matches are opportunities to make cultural and political statements, and clubs affiliated with the Irish nationalist community demonstrate their support for a united Ireland through songs, banners, flags, and rituals. The Irish tricolour is commonly displayed, and football grounds are often seen as territory within which it is possible to be a member of an Irish cultural community, rather than a citizen of the United Kingdom within Northern Ireland.

In the Northern Irish league, Cliftonville and Donegal Celtic (both from Belfast) are the two most popular Irish nationalist clubs. Clubs in Northern Ireland tend to attract support predominantly from their local area, and therefore the cultural background of the people who live near to their local football stadium tends to strongly influence the affiliation of their local club. Cliftonville, for example, were not formed as a definitively Irish nationalist team, but during the Troubles, the character of the area that they are based within (the Ardoyne) altered as people from the unionist and loyalist communities moved to areas that were perceived to be safer for them (Bairner and Shirlow, 2000). As a consequence, Cliftonville's support was drawn largely from the remaining community, and the club have a strong Irish nationalist following.

It is highly significant and indicative of the divisions that are present in Northern Irish football that the most successful and well-supported club with a strong Irish nationalist support, Derry City, do not play in the Northern Irish league, preferring to play in the league of the Republic of Ireland. It is absolutely unique in European football that arguably the strongest club side in one jurisdiction play in the league of another jurisdiction for reasons of cultural aspiration, and also due to prejudice expressed against that club by members of a rival community.[11] In the late 1970s, Derry City were voted out of Northern Irish football by the sport's governing body, the Irish Football Association (IFA), and the club believe that this was due to their affiliation with the Irish nationalist community.

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[11] Welsh clubs compete in the English league system, but this is solely due to sporting expediency.

Upon reforming, Derry City opted to play outside Northern Ireland, partly as a reflection of their identity as a culturally Irish, rather than Northern Irish, club. Football has become a process whereby the Irish nationalist community in Derry can express their preference to be part of Irish culture. Other Irish nationalist-affiliated clubs in Northern Ireland have also attempted to play in the league of the Republic of Ireland. Donegal Celtic (who are in fact based in Andersonstown) were refused entry to the League of Ireland due to security fears for teams travelling from the Republic to Northern Ireland. Officials of Donegal Celtic felt that they were subject to prejudice from fans and officials of many Northern Irish teams, and attempted to join the league of the Republic, believing that they would meet with less prejudice in that jurisdiction. They were supported in this by the SDLP and Sinn Fein, both of which have repeatedly argued that the club were (and remain) subject to discrimination on the basis of cultural affiliation (SDLP, 2008, Sinn Fein, 2008).

Despite the existence of Irish nationalist-affiliated clubs, most clubs in Northern Ireland attract supporters with an affiliation to the Ulster Protestant community. This affiliation is also expressed through the rituals of fandom; supporters commonly display flags, although these are Union Jacks and Red Hand banners rather than tricolours. Popular loyalist songs such as "the Sash" are also sung, alongside songs which denigrate the Irish nationalist community, and also Catholicism. The culture that is expressed at Northern Irish football matches can be considered to be much more loyalist than unionist/Ulster British in character; this is because it often stresses that Northern Ireland is a separate place to mainland Britain, with a different culture to that held by most other people who live in the United Kingdom. Linfield are the most popular team within the loyalist community, although Glentoran, Portadown, Crusaders (all from Belfast), Glenavon (from Lurgan), and Coleraine also have a very strong loyalist following (Bairner, 2003).

Football allows for the production of strong cultural nationalist statements, on one hand supporting the existence of a separate Northern Irish culture, and on the other, a unified Irish culture which encompasses both the north and south of Ireland. This does not just affect football at club level; the supporters of the Northern Irish national team are generally drawn from the Ulster Protestant community, and the team is often seen as a Protestant-only institution. The rituals associated with support for the team demonstrate strong anti-Irish nationalist sentiments, and as a consequence Irish nationalists in

Northern Ireland tend not to support the Northern Irish team at all, favouring the team of the Republic of Ireland instead. Footballers from the Irish nationalist community are also choosing to represent the Republic in increasingly large numbers, and the consequences of this will be examined in detail, as this phenomenon is one of the most significant displays of Irish cultural nationalism (within Northern Ireland) in the contemporary era.

This chapter will now proceed with analysis within two separate sections – the first of these will focus upon the ways in which football has become a significant element of loyalist culture. The second section will examine the meanings of football to Irish nationalists in Northern Ireland. Sport has always played a key role in the production of cross-border Irish nationalism, traditionally in the context of the GAA. Football also plays a significant role in the production of contemporary Irish nationalism, and its cultural importance is worthy of detailed examination. Football both highlights and reinforces the cultural divide in Northern Ireland, and this chapter will focus on the ways that opposing visions of the territory are promoted through the popular processes associated with the sport.

**Northern Irish Nationalism? Loyalism and football in Northern Ireland**

Linfield FC: A loyalist club

Linfield are the best-supported club in Northern Ireland. There are two main reasons for this; the first is the level of success of the club, which has won 50 league titles in the 125 years since it formed (Linfield FC, 2012). The second reason for Linfield's popularity is its long-standing insistence on cultural exclusivity; the club did not knowingly employ a Catholic in any capacity for over forty years from the early 1950s (Bairner and Walker, 2001). This mirrors the policy of Rangers during the same period and was only altered in the 1990s. Bairner and Walker (2001, p.83) note that in British football 'only Linfield has (sic) successfully competed with Rangers in terms of acquiring a reputation for ethnic exclusivity' and this history of exclusivity has led Linfield to become very popular within the loyalist community. The belief that Linfield are 'a Protestant club for Protestant people' attracts many supporters to the club, just as it repels others who are opposed to Linfield's sectarian reputation (Bairner and Walker, 2001, p.84).

Linfield's similarity with Rangers also extends to the rituals of the club's supporters, who are well known for 'the sectarian chanting and violence that are frequently generated' at both home and away fixtures. This has not altered since the club changed its selection policy – Bairner and Walker (2001, p.85) contend that the singing of songs that are offensive to Catholics is a specific response to the Catholic players in the Linfield team as well as a more general assertion of the loyalist tendencies of the majority of Linfield's supporters. Linfield are a club that is 'associated within [Irish] nationalist consciousness as a club that is the very embodiment of sectarianism, anti-Catholicism and atavistic violence' and as a result they have become a totem for those who are resistant to cross-community reconciliation in the post-Good Friday agreement era (Bairner and Walker, 2001, p.85). In many senses, Linfield and Rangers are very similar clubs and the two are considered to have had a 'close bond' throughout their history (Linfield FC, 2012).

The rituals associated with loyalist support for Linfield and the Northern Ireland national team, and those associated with hardline unionist support for Rangers in Scotland, are very similar. The two communities have a very similar ethos and in some ways the adoption of loyalist rituals by Rangers supporters means that loyalism is not an entirely unique cultural phenomenon. However, in the context of the United Kingdom as a whole, hardline Scottish unionists form only a small group. When considered in relation to Northern Irish unionism, which tends to stress Northern Ireland's similarity to the rest of the United Kingdom, loyalists can still be seen as promoting an identity which is not held by a vast majority on the British mainland.

Despite the many similarities between loyalism and hardline Scottish unionism, there is an important difference between Linfield and Rangers which lies in the relationship of the supporters and officials of the two clubs to their respective national teams. The Northern Irish media are generally 'regarded as being well disposed' to Linfield, and this perceived bias has added to the club's unpopularity outside the bounds of their own support (Bairner and Walker, 2001, p.84). Linfield are 'perceived as having a close relationship with the football establishment' in Northern Ireland, particularly because Northern Ireland's international fixtures are played at the club's Windsor Park stadium (Bairner and Walker, 2001, p.83). Whilst many Rangers fans now feel that they are alienated from the Scots who follow the Scottish national side, Linfield remain at the very centre of the Northern Irish national team's support. This means that Northern

Ireland matches are the backdrop for the displays of sectarian ritual and symbolism which are also seen at Linfield matches.

The Irish Football Association (IFA) are perceived to be tacitly supportive of such displays because of their close bond with Linfield. Over the last ten years, Linfield have made a considerable profit from Northern Ireland matches. Up until May 2011, 15% of the IFA's annual revenue was paid to Linfield for the use of Windsor Park; this sum has been estimated at around £600,000 (The Independent, 23rd October 2009). Tasked with building a stadium with the potential for cross-community usage, the IFA instead backed the redevelopment of Windsor Park, and they were supported in this by the former minister for Culture, Arts, and Leisure, Nelson McCausland of the DUP. Hassan et al (2009, p.748) argue that 'political pressure on the IFA' was a factor in the Windsor Park decision; that Linfield have been the only beneficiary of the government funds that were made available for a new stadium is indicative of their favoured position within the DUP and the IFA.

This situation is indicative of the differing levels which sectarianism operates within in the two nations being considered. In Scotland, sectarianism is now a cultural phenomenon which is officially opposed within Scottish institutions, and by new legislation, although it is still present as the Hugh Dallas case proves. Those who harbour sectarian opinions tend to see themselves as in opposition to Scotland's main governing bodies. In Northern Ireland, sectarian opinions and rituals are not so strongly opposed and those who propagate sectarianism can often find powerful allies within Northern Irish institutions. It can no longer be argued with any certainty as Hassan (2006) does that football culture is defined by prevailing attitudes expressed by the political elite in the Northern Irish assembly; rather, football in Northern Ireland often acts as a home for those who are resistant to cross-community cooperation.

The Northern Ireland national team: A loyalist institution?

The Northern Ireland national football team is one of the very few definitively Northern Irish institutions and those who follow the team are supporting a nation in international competition, rather simply supporting the team of a territory within a wider state. The national football team is one of the 'few visible indicators of Northern Ireland as a separate place' to the Republic of Ireland, and also the United Kingdom. This is one of the reasons why it attracts the majority of its support from the loyalist element of the

Protestant-affiliated community (Baimer, 1998, p.169). As the Northern Irish team is a "national" team, football has helped to create a sense that elements of the culture expressed at Northern Ireland matches are national. Rather than being based on citizenship of the British state, the identity expressed by supporters of the Northern Ireland team is, by definition, bounded within the territory itself.

Given that there is not a British football team to support in international competitions, it is very difficult to definitively say how many fans of the Northern Irish team would support that team, either in preference to, or in addition to Northern Ireland. The only British representative team recently selected took part in the 2012 Olympic Games; no Northern Irish players played for that team, and the IFA expressed their opposition to Northern Irish players being selected. This was partly due to a longstanding fear that the governing body for world football, FIFA, may use the team as a reason to withdraw separate representation for the "home nations" and enforce the advent of one United Kingdom team in international competition. This decision was not met with a great deal of public protest, and it is clear that the Northern Ireland team attracts a high level of popular support due to the fact that it represents the territory itself. British identity may be secondary for supporters of the Northern Ireland team, but it is clearly not primary.[12]

Northern Ireland international matches are increasingly attended solely by members of the Ulster Protestant community, and they have become the focus for expressions of loyalist defiance to the peace process, primarily in the form of banners and songs. It is fair to say that 'in Northern Ireland association football emerged during the troubles to become the symbol of Ulster Loyalist identity' (Aughey, cited in Cronin, 2000, p.77). Baimer (2003, p.527) feels that loyalist sporting culture is in many ways 'national in character', particularly the culture that relates to football. Loyalist ideals are expressed at football matches and they are increasingly different from the power-sharing ideals often expressed within the Northern Irish assembly. They are also very different to the values of the British government, which is committed to the success of cross-community governance. Power-sharing agreements and increased rights for the Irish nationalist community have not met with the approval of many members of the unionist and loyalist communities, and it is fair to say that there are a large number of people

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[12] The extent to which Northern Ireland football supporters identify with a secondary "British" identity would in itself be an interesting and useful area of further study.

who attend Northern Ireland football matches who feel that their traditions are under threat from political and social changes which they do not welcome.

The Northern Irish football team is the most important symbol of loyalist culture, perhaps outwith the Orange Order. Young supporters become socialised in loyalist culture through attendance at international matches, while older fans can reaffirm their cultural background at Northern Ireland games. One of the most popular slogans used by Northern Ireland supporters is simply "we exist";[13] that this needs to be continually reaffirmed is indicative of the negotiable status of Northern Ireland. Bairner (1998, p.173) has stated that 'the imagined community of Ulster as a Protestant place becomes more real for young loyalists as they express their affiliation at Windsor Park'; the IFA are keen to protect Windsor Park's status because it has become so totemic for loyalists. Northern Ireland's existence as a separate territory, defined by culture and not just by a negotiable political settlement, is, Bairner (1998) argues, more tangible at Windsor Park than at any other place in Northern Ireland.

Windsor Park is in the heart of the strongly loyalist Village area of Belfast and it is not perceived to be a place where Irish nationalists are safe (Bairner, 2004, Hassan et al, 2009). Bairner (1998, p.172) states that the image that has been created by those who attend matches at Windsor Park is that it is 'a Protestant place for Protestant people, and Catholics require special dispensation to be there'. Events within Windsor Park support the assertion that it is not a safe or comfortable place for Irish nationalists to be. As well as singing sectarian songs and displaying banners, some followers of the Northern Ireland national team have become increasingly hostile towards Catholic footballers who have chosen to play for Northern Ireland.

This is because of the general perception that Catholics in Northern Ireland are supportive of a united Ireland. Footballers from a Catholic-affiliated background are increasingly seen as outsiders who support a different political ideal, and treated with suspicion as a consequence. Support for the Northern Irish national football team is largely monocultural, and in deciding to keep matches at Windsor Park, the IFA are aware that they are ensuring that most Catholics do not feel comfortable attending Northern Ireland international matches. The processes involved in support for the

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[13] This is a popular hashtag on the social networking site Twitter, and is also a "sign-off" on fan forums and message boards.

Northern Ireland team maintain the image associated with Windsor Park, and this is not challenged on an institutional level because the team is a prominent symbol of "resistance" to Irish nationalism. The team has a resonance and significance in Northern Irish society which is arguably stronger than its significance within international football itself. In global terms, the Northern Ireland team is not a strong contender, and the team's importance within the political sphere is not solely because of any recent sporting success. The team's very existence is enough to make it significant to those who imagine Northern Ireland as a separate place, not defined as solely Irish or British.

Historically, the Northern Ireland team has always selected players with Catholic backgrounds (most notably Martin O'Neill, Gerry Armstrong, and Pat Jennings), and this did not prove problematic until the Thatcher era. The reasons for the increased hostility towards Catholic footballers seem to come from a sense that the loyalist community in Northern Ireland is increasingly embattled (Gallaher, 2007). This sense has been growing since the early 1980s, and stems from the British government's assertion that Northern Ireland's constitutional status is negotiable, as previously discussed. The rituals seen at matches involving the Northern Ireland football team have been affected by the invocation of what Bairner (1998, p.173) calls the 'myth of siege', an ideology common to both unionists and loyalists, who feel that any concession made to the Irish nationalist community is an attack on their right to live in their 'contested domicile'.

Morrissey and Smyth (2002, p.22) state that 'the peace process was driven by elites' rather than by the members of the Northern Irish working class, and this is 'one of the problems facing the process of reconciliation'. It cannot be said that everybody in Northern Ireland is in favour of cross-community co-operation, and it is paradoxical that those who are chiefly opposed to it are members of the working class communities who were most affected by the violence of the Troubles. Many of the rituals involved in support for the Northern Irish national team are clearly influenced by the experience of the Troubles; the processes involved in the production of violence and the extreme rhetoric used during this period have seeped into culture in Northern Ireland, and are reproduced in a number of different spheres, including sports. It is fair to say that Northern Ireland is frequently imagined as a violent place, and since the ceasefire that followed the Belfast Agreement, the threat of violence is a cultural and political constant.

This is reflected in the actions of the more extreme elements amongst the supporters of the Northern Ireland national football team. Anti-Irish rhetoric has had a very negative impact on those from the Irish nationalist community who represent the team; since the ceasefire it is fair to argue that violence is less present on an everyday level, but the threat to high-profile symbols of cultural difference has not gone away. Celtic's current manager Neil Lennon is a good example of this; threats against his life before a 2001 fixture made by a person claiming to be a member of the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF), brought about the end of his Northern Ireland career. Lennon was due to become the first Celtic player to captain Northern Ireland and many were unable to accept this. An article written by Neil Mackay in the Sunday Herald newspaper (August 25th, 2002) suggests that this episode represents the occasion when Catholics in Northern Ireland stopped supporting the Northern Ireland national football team.

While it is perhaps too clear-cut to say that Catholics definitively stopped supporting Northern Ireland at one precise point in time, Mackay can be seen as fair in asking the question:

> 'what Catholic, after all, in their right mind, would willingly support a team that has supporters who would threaten to kill their co-religionists?' (Sunday Herald, 25th August 2002)

Despite the political beliefs of most members of the organisation, and despite the lack of support for the Northern Ireland team from the Irish nationalist community, the IFA have continued to select players of a Catholic background who are deemed to be good enough to play international football, and who are willing to represent the Northern Ireland team. They do this principally because there are not enough players of such quality who are qualified to play for Northern Ireland for them not to do so whilst remaining competitive. While many supporters of the national team accept the presence of Catholics, others do not, and this has led to widespread sectarian chanting and anti-Catholic rhetoric at matches.

With regards to the Catholic players who represent Northern Ireland, in the contemporary era the decision is usually taken for reasons of sporting expediency. In Darragh McGee and Alan Bairner's (2010) paper 'Transcending the borders of Irish identity? Narratives of northern nationalist footballers in Northern Ireland', the current international Niall McGinn admits to choosing to play for Northern Ireland because he thought it was unlikely that he would be considered good enough to represent the

Republic of Ireland. However, rather than being accepted as a member of the team who is willing to cross a cultural barrier, McGinn has met with extreme demonstrations of hate on the basis of his cultural background. The player has also admitted that he actually supports the Republic of Ireland rather than Northern Ireland, and this has added to the issues that he has faced (Sky Sports interview, 2011).

McGinn and his former Celtic team mate Patrick McCourt were sent bullets through the post during the 2010/11 season, mirroring the threats made against Neil Lennon ten years previously. McGinn believes that his decision to join Celtic was the prime motivation for the actions against him, stating:

> 'Obviously there's a lot of historical baggage and some quarters can't move with the times. I think Celtic as a club are very proud of our Irish heritage and the fans, both Irish and Scottish, are quick to let everyone know the club has strong ties with Ireland. It's evidently what makes our club special and should be celebrated not criticised' (Daily Record, June 2nd 2011).

As a prominent player with a Catholic background, representing a Catholic-affiliated club that attracts a high level of support in Northern Ireland (although they are based in Scotland), McGinn attracted opprobrium from hardline unionists and loyalists.

In many ways, the cultural nationalism that is engendered at Northern Irish national football matches is defined by its anti-Catholic and anti-Irish nationalist nature. While it is clear that not every supporter at Windsor Park engages in abuse, no other national football team in Europe has seen its captain and star player retire due to death threats made because of that player's cultural background. The culture engendered by the rituals of Northern Ireland supporters is not inclusive, and reinforces existing issues of cultural and social separation in the territory. It also influences attitudes to the Northern Ireland team amongst the Irish nationalist community, which are also becoming more hardline within the acculturated political environment of post Belfast Agreement Northern Ireland.

## Irish nationalism in Northern Irish football

Football has become an increasingly important element in Irish cultural nationalism, both in Northern Ireland and the Republic. There has been a significant increase in the number of players born in Northern Ireland but choosing to represent the Republic in recent years; players choose to play for the Republic for cultural and political reasons,

and their actions are nationalistic in character. Some commentators (notably Hassan, 2006 and 2009) play down the cultural significance of this phenomenon, arguing that it is only truly relevant within football itself. However, there can be no doubt that in publicly rejecting a powerful symbol of Northern Ireland, Irish nationalist footballers who choose the Republic are making a strong cultural statement about their values and ideals which has resonance across the culture and politics of Northern Ireland.

The decision taken by footballers who reject Northern Ireland reflects the dominant ideals within the Irish nationalist community, which they are members of. The decisions also ensure that within the team of the Republic of Ireland, which has become an increasingly powerful symbol of Irish culture, the Irish nationalist community of Northern Ireland has a strong level of representation. As Williams (1979) argues, culture is a result of the actions of those who construct and develop it. As a recognisably Irish cultural symbol is now increasingly associated with people from Northern Ireland, as well as the Republic, this extends the reach of Irish culture across current borders. The idea of a cross-border Irish culture has its basis in a long shared history, but since the partition of the island, visible symbols play a key role in reinforcing this idea. The actions of footballers clearly support the idea that "Irishness" encompasses people from across the island of Ireland, and this is very important.

There are only four players from the Irish nationalist community to have represented Northern Ireland in the last year,[14] and the chances of this number growing have been considerably diminished by a Federation Internationale de Football Association (henceforth to be referred to under the common acronym for the governing body of football worldwide, FIFA) ruling that any player from Northern Ireland with a passport for the Republic of Ireland is eligible to play for the Republic. FIFA have effectively allowed the selection of players on an all-Ireland basis, and this decision has a very high level of cultural and political significance in Ireland as a whole. The consequences of this ruling will now be examined, with special reference to the fact that it facilitates expressions of cultural nationalism by footballers born in Northern Ireland, but who wish to represent the Republic for cultural reasons.

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[14] Sammy Clingan, Niall McGinn, Patrick McCourt, and Shane Ferguson.

Active cultural nationalism amongst Northern Ireland's footballers

Under the terms of the Belfast (Good Friday) agreement of 1998, a citizen of Northern Ireland can claim an Irish passport should they wish to. Members of the Irish nationalist community who want to claim Irish citizenship have done so under this ruling. This particular element of the Good Friday agreement allows citizens of Northern Ireland to make a statement about their cultural and political identity. One individual who has chosen to do this is Daniel Kearns, the footballer whose appeal to FIFA brought the "Kearns Ruling" into being. The player had represented Northern Ireland at youth level, but had not been selected for the senior Northern Ireland team. A Catholic born in Belfast, Kearns felt a strong cultural affinity with the team of the Republic, and did not wish to represent Northern Ireland any longer. As he holds an Irish passport, Kearns believed that he was eligible to play for the Republic of Ireland. The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) agreed and selected Kearns for their under 21 representative squad. The IFA appealed against this decision but FIFA and the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) upheld the right of Kearns to play for the Republic of Ireland on the basis of his Irish citizenship (Press Association, 2009, BBC Sport, 2009, 2010).

The Kearns ruling served to formalise a process whereby Northern Irish footballers can elect to play for the Republic of Ireland even if they do not have direct family ties to the Republic. This had previously been a grey area, largely due to previous FIFA guidelines lacking clarity. FIFA's rules on national team selection are that a player can represent a national team as long as he fulfils one or more of the following criteria:

1) he was born on the territory of the relevant association;

2) his biological mother or biological father was born on the territory of the relevant association;

3) his grandmother or grandfather was born on the territory of the relevant association;

4) he has lived on the territory of the relevant association for at least two years without interruption (FIFA, 2011)

Article 15 of the FIFA constitution (2011) also allows that 'any person holding the nationality of a country is eligible to play for the representative teams of the Association of that country', and players may claim a second nationality in order to represent a different national team to the one of the nation in which they were born. The Republic of Ireland's constitution takes an unusual approach to citizenship, which has led to confusion regarding who is, or is not, an Irish citizen. Article three of the Irish constitution states that anyone with a parent who was or is an Irish citizen can claim Irish citizenship themselves. It also allows for people born outside the territory of the Republic of Ireland to register themselves as an Irish citizen in the "Foreign Births Register", providing the individual's parent had also registered as an Irish citizen. It is possible for individuals whose parents and grandparents have never even set foot on Irish soil to claim Irish citizenship providing their parents have registered themselves, and their parents have done so in turn. Long lines of descent can be maintained without any need for residency within the Republic itself. This unique approach to citizenship leaves the Republic of Ireland at a distinct advantage within the arena of international football when compared to Northern Ireland, even without the extra consideration of the Good Friday agreement.

The Kearns ruling formalised the unique case of Ireland in international football by confirming that the rules on citizenship confirmed within the Good Friday agreement are binding in international football competitions. As a result of the ruling, an increasing number of Northern Ireland's most talented footballers have chosen to play for the Republic; Everton's Darron Gibson is a particularly high profile example of this and until the Kearns ruling had been made, his situation as a footballer born in Northern Ireland, but wishing to represent the Republic of Ireland, was very difficult. Gibson is a member of Northern Ireland's Irish nationalist community, and as with Daniel Kearns, his decision to represent the Republic is an active display of cultural nationalism.

It is not only fans that have agency in promoting cultural ideals, but players too. In Gibson and Kearns' case, footballers have become symbolic of a wider set of cultural ideals in the same way that teams have. This demonstrates that individual examples of nationalist behaviour can become symbolic of a set of aspirations and beliefs. Gibson and Kearns' cases also illustrate the fact that important cultural nationalist statements do not solely emanate from elite intellectuals. Both cases are culturally and politically significant; it is relatively simple to assess the impact of the players' actions through an

examination of the political responses to them; the actions of Gibson and Kearns have become an important matter for government ministers in both Northern Ireland and the Republic, and this demonstrates the significance of football culture to politics in Ireland as a whole. The Kearns ruling also has great significance for the IFA, which strongly contested Kearns' and Gibson's right to play for the Republic of Ireland in the hope that FIFA would find in their favour, and thereby stop other players from choosing to play for the Republic.

The IFA argued that 'the Good Friday Agreement and passports [were] totally irrelevant' to Gibson's case because he was not born in the Republic.[15] The former IFA chief executive, Howard Wells, argued that 'the four points of eligibility are where the player was born, where his parents were born, where his grandparents were born and residency'; as Gibson, his parents, and his grandparents, were all born in Northern Ireland and had never been resident in the Republic, the IFA felt that they could legally prevent Gibson from representing the Republic (Derry Journal, 22nd August 2007). Their efforts to do this sparked angry protests from senior politicians in the Republic of Ireland; the then foreign affairs minister, Dermot Ahern, accused the IFA of questioning the validity of the Good Friday agreement.

Ahern laid out the Irish government's position, which was (and remains) that:

> 'Under the terms of the historic agreement anyone born on the island of Ireland can choose an Irish or British passport. In this instance the player has chosen an Irish passport and is fully qualified for to play for the Republic of Ireland under the Good Friday Agreement. There is no ambiguity in this issue (Derry Journal, 22nd August 2007).

In Northern Ireland itself, Sinn Fein politicians were also angered by the IFA's stance. The Assembly member for Foyle, Raymond McCartney, stated that 'the Good Friday Agreement recognises the right of Irish people living in the north to their identity [and] it is not up to the IFA to deny them that right'. He went on to suggest that 'the IFA must send out a clear message that it will respect the rights of Irish nationalists as Irish citizens in their own country' or risk being seen as 'anti-agreement unionists' (Derry

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[15] There was also a great deal of misunderstanding of Gibson's case both in media and academic circles – the Belfast Telegraph printed a number of articles which suggested Gibson was not eligible for the Republic of Ireland, whilst Hassan et al's 2009 paper "North or South? Darron Gibson and the issue of player eligibility within Irish soccer" also makes some errors related to the various FIFA articles pertaining to Gibson's case. Given that this paper was co-authored by an IFA employee, it is perhaps unsurprising that Gibson's case took a long time to resolve. Until the Kearns ruling verified what the player himself felt to be correct, Gibson was unable to represent his nation of choice.

Journal, 22nd August 2007). Gibson himself said that 'I consider myself as an Irish player and that is the way I see it. I want to play for the Republic of Ireland' (Derry Journal, 22nd August 2007). Gibson's choice to represent the Republic is a nationalist statement; in order to represent a truly Irish team, he felt that he had to play for the Republic.

The FIFA ruling which allows Irish nationalists from Northern Ireland to represent the Republic has been seen as (although perhaps not deliberately) supporting the position that the Republic of Ireland is the strongest, and indeed the only valid current representative of Irish culture. A number of other players born in Northern Ireland have followed Darron Gibson and Daniel Kearns in declaring for the Republic due to their cultural background. Shane Duffy, a defender who switched allegiance from Northern Ireland to the Republic in 2010, said: 'No disrespect to Northern Ireland, but I would rather be playing for my country' (Donegal Democrat, 19th May 2010). Marc Wilson, another defender who was born in County Antrim and represented Northern Ireland at youth level before declaring for the Republic, said: 'I have always seen myself as a Republic of Ireland player. I supported them when I was growing up [...] I would love to play for them. There is no way I would switch to Northern Ireland' (Daily Mail, 11th January 2012).[16]

The IFA's appointment of Michael O'Neill as manager of the Northern Irish national team is significant within the context of the player eligibility debate in Northern Ireland.[17] O'Neill has a Catholic background, and it is widely perceived that he was appointed partly in an attempt to persuade Catholic footballers to play for Northern Ireland rather than the Republic (BBC Sport 2011, The Independent 2011, Irish Times 2011, Culture Northern Ireland 2012). O'Neill's presence, it has been suggested, would make for a more welcoming environment for players who might be tempted to declare

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[16] Darragh McGee and Alan Bairner's (2010) paper 'Transcending the borders of Irish identity? Narratives of northern nationalist footballers in Northern Ireland' (*International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 2010, 46 (4), pp.436-455) analyses the decisions of several Irish Catholic footballers to represent the Republic of Ireland. The paper concludes that the perceived attitude of the IFA towards Irish Catholic players is a key factor in this decision, but also states that 'an intrinsic identification with the Irish Republic' is a significant issue (p.453).

[17] The appointment of O'Neill has been taken as a positive step by many in the Irish nationalist community, including people who are otherwise critical of the IFA. However, O'Neill's power is strictly limited to team selection; at boardroom level, the IFA remains a predominantly Protestant organisation. The governance of the IFA has not been altered in any way by O'Neill's appointment. The IFA are clearly willing to employ and utilise Catholic expertise, and this is certainly positive. However, the IFA are as yet unwilling to change their stance on many of the issues that make them appear sectarian to many Irish nationalists, including Windsor Park as detailed above.

for the Republic. The first player that O'Neill attempted to persuade to play for Northern Ireland was the former Derry City winger, James McClean (now a player for Sunderland). McClean rejected O'Neill's overtures, stating that Catholic players 'do not feel comfortable playing for Northern Ireland' due to the 'flags, songs, and chants' associated with the Northern Ireland team (Belfast Telegraph, 11th May 2012).

McClean has also suggested that the cultural divide affects the players themselves and does not lead to cohesion – he stated that 'as a Catholic in the squad, you don't feel part [of the team]. In response to these comments, McClean was sent death threats (Belfast Telegraph, 11th May 2012). McClean has received support for his stance from Northern Ireland's Culture, Arts, and Leisure minister, Sinn Fein's Caral Ni Chuilin. The minister argued that:

> 'at the minute there is still a reluctance within nationalist communities to play for the Northern Ireland team because of the association to things they wouldn't normally identify with' (Belfast Telegraph, 16th July 2012).

Aside from sectarian and anti-Irish banners and songs, another issue that is perceived to prevent players from the Irish nationalist community from feeling welcome in the Northern Ireland team is the playing of "God Save the Queen" before every Northern Ireland international fixture.

The IFA have decided that, in the absence of an official Northern Ireland national anthem, it is the best choice for their team. Figure 1 demonstrates the reaction of two current Catholic Northern Irish internationals to the anthem. Both Chris Baird (number 6) and Niall McGinn (8) have bowed their heads and have refused to sing. This is a standard response by players from the Irish nationalist community to "God Save the Queen". A former Northern Ireland international, Paul McVeigh, has suggested that 'it is a tough decision for some players to play at Windsor Park and stand before the English national anthem at Northern Ireland internationals'. McVeigh feels that until the anthem is changed and something more inclusive is selected, it will be 'difficult' for anyone from a Nationalist background 'to have heartfelt pride in the jersey' (Belfast Telegraph, 25th November 2011).

Figure 1: Chris Baird (number 6) and Niall McGinn (8) during the playing of God Save the Queen (photograph taken by Hamilton, 2011)

McVeigh, who has an Irish nationalist background himself, has revealed that there is a deep-seated unease at the playing of "God Save the Queen" and that the anthem has become an important issue. The former international said that:

> Fifty per cent of the people in Northern Ireland do not recognise it as their anthem and among that 50 per cent, quality footballers will emerge. By the time they do come through, they most likely will have had their minds made up for them by the IFA [about whether to play for Northern Ireland or not] (Belfast Telegraph, 25th November 2011).

The player has also pointed out that Wales and Scotland have their own anthems which are played before international fixtures, and feels that Northern Ireland should also have its own anthem which has cross-community appeal. He has stated that 'Northern Ireland, as long as it continues with [God Save The Queen], will not have an identity of its own' and that it is unlikely that any more Catholic footballers will choose to play for Northern Ireland.

Despite the positive step of appointing Michael O'Neill as Northern Ireland's first Catholic national team manager for over 50 years, the IFA are still perceived to be a sectarian body by many Irish nationalists. The playing of "God Save the Queen" is seen as a triumphal and deliberately divisive move which plays an active part in the decision-

making process for those players who have chosen the Republic of Ireland. Ultimately, however, it can be argued that the players who choose to switch from Northern Ireland to the Republic are doing so because they identify with the idea of a united Irish nation rather than the reality of the current, two-state Ireland. Hassan et al (2009, p.744) argue that this identification is aspirational and relates to 'a narrowly defined view of Irish identity, one that is free from the spectre of unionism, is essentially Catholic and at ease with its own constitution'. The Republic of Ireland is seen by many in Northern Ireland as the only truly Irish political and cultural entity because it has no formal political connection to the British state.

In 2006 Hassan (p.345) asserted that 'it is now expected' that young footballers with an Irish nationalist background 'would choose to play for Northern Ireland' rather than the Republic; this has been proven incorrect. The Irish nationalist community of Northern Ireland still look towards the Republic of Ireland for much of their cultural identity and the Kearns ruling has allowed this process to become more obvious than ever within sport in Northern Ireland. The actions of players who reject Northern Ireland make it clear that the territory does not have a secure or unified cultural identity. It is unique in world football for so many players from one jurisdiction to reject it altogether. As any society is the result of all the processes that take place within it, the resonance of these decisions is widely felt, particularly given the profile that they have attained within the political sphere.

It is not only players who reject the Northern Ireland team. In choosing to represent the Republic of Ireland, players such as Gibson, Kearns, and McClean are reflecting and reinforcing a social norm within the Irish nationalist community. As Hassan (2002, p.69) asserts, 'nationalist support for the Republic of Ireland team [is] widely held', and those players who have chosen to play for the Republic of Ireland have done so with the support of the vast majority of the Irish nationalist community. There are some who do at least 'accept the legitimacy of the Northern Ireland team' and others still who actively support Northern Ireland, but these are a distinct minority (Hassan, 2002, p.69). Football is a process which many in the Irish nationalist community use to express their support for a symbol of Irish culture, rather than a British or Northern Irish institution.

This highlights the disjuncture between political processes and cultural processes in Northern Ireland. While many Irish nationalists do actively participate and engage with

the political sphere, and in doing so vote for parties which have a commitment to the "peace process" set out within the Belfast Agreement, they do not support the idea of Northern Ireland as a separate cultural entity. When given the opportunity to participate within the construction of culture, and express commitment to a cultural identity, it is "Irishness" that is chosen. At the present time, Northern Ireland is a contested political entity, and it is fair to argue that it will remain that way. Nations are not solely political constructions, and culture plays a key role in their development. The contest between differing cultural identities in Northern Ireland both reflects and contributes to the sense that the territory is fundamentally divided.

This relates to the ongoing debate about the nature of Irish nationalism in Northern Ireland within the contemporary era. Hassan (2002) has argued that there are two kinds of nationalism in Northern Ireland; 'northern nationalism' and 'classic Irish nationalism'. The former, according to Hassan (2002, p.67), is principally concerned with 'the pursuit of justice and equality within Northern Ireland', while the latter 'places the cause of Irish freedom' from British rule 'above all other considerations'. Hassan believes that the latter ideal is the 'preserve of Irish republicans' and that the former is the more prevalent ideal to be found in Northern Ireland. This dichotomy seems rather instrumentalist in character, and does not ascribe enough significance to culture. The participation of Irish nationalists within Northern Irish politics is not definitive evidence of respect for Northern Ireland as a territory. The pursuit of equality within Northern Ireland is certainly an aim of Irish nationalists, but it is not the end of their ambitions; rather, it is often seen as an important step towards Irish unity (Bean, 2007).

On a cultural level, it is clear that many footballers and supporters reject Northern Ireland. This is certainly Irish nationalist in character, and it is also clear that the Republic of Ireland is valued as the best available repository of Irish identity in the contemporary era. Equality within football is not an aim for many Irish nationalists, although it is fair to argue that it is also not an aim for loyalists, and is therefore difficult to achieve in any case. The rituals associated with the Northern Ireland team stand against the very idea of inter-communal equality and co-operation. James McClean's explanation for his decision to represent the Republic demonstrates that cultural separation is increasingly the norm for players from Northern Ireland, especially at the highest level of football. While equality may be a desirable political aspiration, it is

clear that the pursuit of supremacy of one culture over another is still the prevailing norm in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland national football team has a political and cultural significance which players like Gibson, Kearns, and James McClean were aware of when they made their decisions. It cannot be argued that their cultural aspirations lie solely within Northern Ireland. It is also difficult to argue that any of the players are "political extremists", or that they have taken actions which go against the norms of their community. In fact, given the level of support for their actions from Irish nationalist politicians, it is clear that their decisions reflect the stated preference of those parties for a united Ireland. Equality within Northern Ireland is an aim of many Irish nationalists, but it is not their only aim. For this reason, it is fair to argue that "northern nationalism" is not a separate category within the territory; rather, its main elements represent a step within a longer process defined the aims of what Hassan terms "classic" Irish nationalism (Bean, 2007).

Despite arguing that a majority of Irish nationalists in Northern Ireland accept the territory's existence, Hassan (2002, p.69) also acknowledges that football 'acts as a vehicle by which Irish unity can be constructed in its "imagined" form'. This is the case because Irish nationalists in both states contained within the island of Ireland are able to feel united by the Republic of Ireland football team despite political borders still existing between them. It seems fair to say that what Hassan terms the classic ideal of Irish nationalists, that of a united, independent Ireland, is one that Irish nationalists can pursue and promote through cultural pursuits which take place on an all-Ireland basis, despite the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic. In choosing the Republic over Northern Ireland, Irish nationalists do not confirm Northern Ireland's importance to their cultural existence, and it is clear that the state in which they live is less important to them than the nationality that they claim as their own.

The political significance of the Kearns Ruling: An all-Ireland team?

As Williams (1979) argues, culture shapes society, just as politics and economics do. Arguably football's greatest significance as a social process (at least from a socio-political perspective) is that it serves to 'provide many with an opportunity to express their support for the idea of Irish reunification and engage in counter-hegemonic activity

against the Northern Ireland state' (Hassan, 2002, p.69).[18] Politics does not solely define the context that culture is produced within, and there is a clear interplay between the two in the recent events discussed. This is particularly significant because it demonstrates that nationalism is built from the bottom-up *and* the top-down, whilst also clarifying the fact that nationalists at elite and popular levels can have the same aim. In the case of Northern Ireland, there is a clear interplay between elite and popular nationalism, and the two levels can actually be engendered within and developed by the same cultural pursuit.

Recognising that elements of Northern Ireland's football culture support their aims, Irish nationalist politicians in Northern Ireland have made considerable capital out of the decisions of Gibson, Duffy, Wilson, Kearns, and various others.[19] This is an excellent example of decisions taken by non-elite, non-political actors having resonance within the political sphere. It has been repeatedly suggested that Irish citizenship, which is available to anyone resident within the island of Ireland, should be the basis of selection for one single all-Ireland team. This would mean that the Northern Ireland national football team would cease to exist, and those who choose not to take Irish citizenship would be left without representation in international football.

Sinn Fein's Pat Sheehan has supported this suggestion by making the not unfair assertion that an all-Ireland team would be stronger than the current team of the Republic or that of Northern Ireland, and therefore would be more likely to succeed in international tournaments (Sinn Fein, 2011). Caral Ni Chuilin has also publicly stated her support for an all-Ireland national football team, rather than there being a Northern Irish international team; this is consistent with Sinn Fein policy on Northern Irish institutions (Belfast Telegraph, 16th June 2011, Belfast Telegraph 16th July 2012). The other major Irish nationalist political party in Northern Ireland also take this stance; the SDLP spokesman on Sport, Pat Ramsey has stated that 'for many Nationalists, while we enjoy watching Northern Ireland and hope they win, because the players are local, we don't see it as a national team' (SDLP, 2007). The SDLP do not view Northern Ireland as a nation; rather they see it as a territory that is ultimately administered according to

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[18] The notion that Northern Ireland is a state is also open to question. As it is not independent, and its Assembly has only a limited jurisdiction, it certainly does not fit the classic profile of a state.
[19] Other players to have represented the Republic, despite being born in Northern Ireland include Tony Kane, Michael O'Connor, Paul George, James McClean, and Eunan O'Kane, as well as many younger players in age-group football.

the political will of the British government. For this reason, they feel that Northern Ireland should not have any sporting representation in international competitions. The SDLP also say that they 'see the Republic of Ireland team as representative of the Irish nation with an emphasis on Irish people rather than the territory of the Republic of Ireland or the island of Ireland' (SDLP, 2007).

In essence, the SDLP's position is that eligibility for the national team of the Republic of Ireland should be common for everyone who has claimed Irish citizenship. There is very little controversial about this in theory, because it ties in with selection practices which every national football team follows. The Republic of Ireland's laws on citizenship are more relaxed than those of many other nations, but that is not a situation that FIFA can challenge. Pat Ramsey was quite reasonable in his statement that 'it would be a ludicrous situation if a player born in Chicago with Irish citizenship could play for the Republic of Ireland, but a player born in Derry, Armagh or Belfast could not' (SDLP, 2007). However, the SDLP's motivation in opposing a motion which proposed a government appeal against the Kearns ruling is complex and is not a simple matter of supporting FIFA's rules. The political capital gained from high-profile footballers rejecting Northern Ireland, and asserting their cultural identity in a highly visible way, is very useful to Irish nationalist ambitions.

The advent of an all-Irish team would remove British and Northern Irish dimensions from international football on the island of Ireland. This is a scenario that Sinn Fein and the SDLP strongly desire to bring about as it would remove an important symbol of loyalism, and also a symbol of the wider Ulster Protestant identity. The Northern Ireland national team is, internationally speaking, one of the most visible symbols of the divide between northern and southern Ireland and the removal of this symbol would be a significant cultural step towards the overall aim of a united Ireland. In her position as minister with responsibility for sporting matters, Caral Ni Chuilin should, in theory, work closely with the IFA but this has not thus far been the case due to the differing political ideals of Sinn Fein and most leading members of the IFA. Ni Chuilin has acknowledged that the issue of player eligibility is difficult but has admitted it is unlikely that the IFA will ask her to assist them in the matter; the likelihood of the governors of a largely loyalist institution asking an Irish nationalist politician for support in a matter that concerns the Republic of Ireland is a remote one. Northern

Ireland represents an unusual case whereby some government ministers do not support the nation they live in and would rather see their institutions disbanded altogether.

The IFA have been forced to accept that the FAI are allowed a level of jurisdiction over Northern Irish players, and this is seen as a threat to the autonomy of Northern Irish football as a whole. The former minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure in Northern Ireland, Nelson McCausland of the DUP, has moved to criticise the FAI for its policy of selecting Catholic footballers for Republic of Ireland representative teams as per the FIFA ruling on the issue. He used his personal website to cite former Ireland rugby international Trevor Ringland, who has claimed that 'the FAI are in danger of making Northern Ireland a Protestant team - instead of a mixed team' (McCausland, 2011, citing Ringland in the Belfast Telegraph, 4th March 2011). Controversially, McCausland has suggested that the FAI's actions are motivated by sectarianism and seek to further divide the Irish nationalist, unionist, and loyalist communities of Northern Ireland.

McCausland's argument is that the FAI seek to utilise cultural nationalism in order to support the political aim of a united Ireland; this is controversial because at state level, the Republic of Ireland no longer makes a direct claim on Northern Ireland. Similar comments to those made by McCausland have also been made by followers of the Northern Irish national team; in an open letter to the press, the head of the Amalgamation of Northern Irish supporters clubs, Gary McAllister, described the FAI as seeking 'football apartheid in Ireland' (BBC Sport, 24th May 2011). Due to the likelihood of a negative reaction within their community, it is not expected that Northern Irish footballers with a unionist or loyalist background will switch to the Republic too.

Hassan et al (2009, p.743) argue that the nationalism engendered by the Republic of Ireland national team should be considered 'statist' because the FAI is an organisation that has traditionally limited its jurisdiction to the state of the Republic of Ireland; this can be compared to the openly nationalist Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) which administers Gaelic football and Hurling on an all-Ireland basis, and which is culturally "Irish" rather than "northern" or "southern". However, the recent actions by the FAI in admitting northern Irish Nationalists to Republic of Ireland representative teams en

masse can certainly be seen as encouraging the idea that "Irishness" is a national culture rather than something that is confined to the state of the Republic of Ireland.

The robust defence of those players who have chosen the Republic of Ireland by the Irish government also suggests that it is comfortable with the idea that Irish culture crosses borders and is not defined by existing state boundaries. In effect, the FAI has been supported by politicians in the Republic of Ireland in making a cultural claim on Irishness. The team of the Republic of Ireland is becoming increasingly nationalistic and can no longer be considered to solely function as the team of a political state. Due to the cultural background of the Northern Irish players that have been accepted into the Republic of Ireland team, the FAI (with the support of the Irish government) can be seen as tacitly encouraging the aspirations of those who believe that all of the island of Ireland is culturally Irish, and ought to be governed as such.

This must also be placed into context, however; the FAI have been just as happy to accept players who were born in England (such as Nottingham Forest's forward Simon Cox and Sunderland's goalkeeper Keiren Westwood) and there has been no suggestion from the English football association that a claim has been made over anything other than those individuals. The political sensitivity surrounding those players who have switched from Northern Ireland means that their cases have been considered in much more detail, however, and they do have a much greater cultural significance. Until recently, the FAI and the IFA had a 'gentleman's agreement' not to select players whose eligibility was contested; this affected the FAI to a far greater extent than it affected the IFA (Moorhouse, 1995). That the FAI has discarded this agreement can be seen as proof of their willingness to break previous promises in order to gain the widest possible pool of players. Given the nature of government support for the FAI, however, it can also be seen as a cultural claim on the northern Irish nationalist community as a whole.

It has been argued that choosing to play for the Republic of Ireland is 'as much a rejection of the social and political make up of Northern Ireland [...] as it is a reflection of sporting expediency' but this is not backed up by the facts of the Gibson, McClean, Wilson, Kearns, and Duffy cases (Hassan et al, 2009, p.745). All these players would be very likely to represent Northern Ireland had they chosen to, owing to the smaller pool of players that the IFA have at their disposal. Playing football regularly at international

level would almost certainly benefit each of the players in question far more than being named as a squad member for the Republic of Ireland. As yet, none of the players who have switched from Northern Ireland to the Republic have managed to hold down a regular place in their chosen national team.[20]

None of the players who have switched from Northern Ireland to the Republic appear to have done so for careerist reasons. The decisions of those players who have chosen the Republic of Ireland over Northern Ireland are driven by cultural factors; they see themselves first and foremost as Irish, and they see the Northern Irish team as culturally "other" to themselves. In making the decision to represent the Republic of Ireland, Irish nationalist footballers have the support of their community, a huge majority of whom also support the Republic as a symbol of a wider Irish culture. Their active nationalism demonstrates commitment to that Irish culture, and rejects the hegemonic ideals of the dominant group in Northern Irish football.

Given Caral Ni Chuilin's position on the Northern Ireland national team, it is perhaps to be expected that the IFA have dug their heels in to protect their position, with the support of the DUP. If Ni Chuilin were to be given a free hand, then both the IFA and the Northern Ireland national team could be abolished. The Kearns ruling has given fresh hope to those who desire one all-Ireland football team and both Sinn Fein and the SDLP have given voice to this desire. After many years of bias against the Irish nationalist community, both perceived and genuine, it is to be expected that those who oppose the IFA both as a governing body and a symbol would rally behind a decision which acknowledges the importance of Irish culture rather than Northern Irish territorial identity. The IFA's jurisdiction over footballers from the Irish nationalist community has been challenged and this has boosted the case of those who do not feel that Northern Ireland should have a national team at all.

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[20] Gibson's appearances for his former club team, Manchester United, were sporadic during both the 2010-11 and 2011-12 seasons, to the extent that he was deemed as surplus to requirements and sold to a smaller club, Everton. By contrast, Jonny Evans, the captain of the Northern Ireland team, is a regular in the Manchester United team. It cannot be argued that switching to the Republic of Ireland can automatically 'improve [a player's] earning potential by courting the attention of Europe's leading club sides' (Hassan et al, 2009, p.745). In fact, Gibson's decision seems to have had a negative impact on his career, at least in the short term.

## Conclusions

Football in Northern Ireland is more divided than it has ever been. The Kearns ruling has allowed Irish nationalist footballers to make it clear that their Irish cultural identity is more important to them than the Northern Irish territorial identity. Footballers from the Irish nationalist community are switching to the Republic of Ireland in ever-increasing numbers, in a powerful display of cultural nationalism which rejects Northern Ireland as a cultural and political entity. They are doing so with the support of the majority of the Irish nationalist community, who do not see the Northern Irish team as one which they have any cultural affinity to. This very visible show of support for the importance of Irish culture to the Irish nationalist community demonstrates the deep fissures that exist in Northern Irish society.

As footballers who have not already played for Northern Ireland in competitive fixtures are now able to represent the Republic of Ireland instead, it seems likely that the number of players from the Irish nationalist community in the Northern Ireland international team will remain low. Many Irish nationalist politicians are in favour of one all-Ireland national team being adopted, and the Kearns ruling has offered them encouragement that this aim may be achievable despite the opposition of the Ulster Protestant community. Decisions taken about a popular pursuit also have resonance at the level of elite governance. This demonstrates that nationalism can develop from the bottom-up, and also that there is an interplay between popular and elite expressions of nationalism. It also supports Williams' assertion that all social processes are significant in the development of culture. Of further significance is the fact that non-elite individuals can influence the political process and generate cultural nationalism, which is not solely developed by "intellectuals".

Equally, the Northern Ireland team is highly significant for loyalist culture, especially as this is largely produced at the popular level. As an institution which allows for the construction of loyalist cultural identity, the Northern Ireland team is only equalled by the Orange Order in terms of importance. The team competes at international level, reinforcing the idea of Northern Ireland as a separate territory from both mainland Britain and the Republic of Ireland. The advent of an all-Ireland team would remove a particularly powerful symbol of loyalism altogether. It would also remove a great deal of loyalist influence over football in Northern Ireland, weakening the overall position of

the Ulster Protestant community. An all-Ireland football team would be a powerful symbol of Irish cultural unity, and this would clearly be of benefit to the aims of Irish nationalists.

Northern Irish football at club level is also divided between communities with very different aspirations for the political and cultural future of the territory. Teams from both communities have the opportunity to play against each other, but this has not eased any of the tensions between the Irish nationalist and loyalist communities. The strongest and most successful club with a support that can be defined as Irish nationalist, Derry City, do not play in the Northern Irish league at all due to problems with supporters and officials of loyalist-affiliated clubs, as well as the IFA and the security forces. Linfield are the most popular club team within the loyalist community, and are seen as a bastion of sectarianism and anti-Irish nationalist opinion.

Overall, football is a social process through which cultural difference is promoted and reinforced in Northern Ireland. International footballers have discussed this divide, and the decision of players from the Irish nationalist community to reject Northern Ireland is reflective of a wider social norm. Supporters also reinforce this divide; those from the Irish nationalist community commonly support the Republic of Ireland. It cannot be said that the aims of Irish nationalism are solely contained with Northern Ireland, and demonstrations of cultural nationalism are clearly designed to promote Irish unity. By contrast, loyalists support the Northern Ireland team and aggressively attack the aims and ideals of Irish nationalism. The culture associated with the Northern Ireland team is largely loyalist because the team is a symbol of cultural difference; for this reason, it cannot truly be considered a unionist institution. As one of the few truly Northern Irish symbols in the territory, the team is vital for those who perceive there to be a separate Northern Irish culture.

# Expressions of cultural nationalism in contemporary Northern Irish literature

Having examined the contributions to nationalism produced by an element of culture which is a largely working-class concern in Northern Ireland, and which has a great deal of popular appeal, it is also profitable to study the contributions which are made by an element of elite culture. This will allow for a comparison between working-class and middle-class culture in Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland, literature is usually produced by middle-class intellectuals, and so it is possible to examine the contributions to nationalism made by members of this group to complement the analysis of contributions made by working class individuals within the framework of football. In addition to the divisions between communities on religious, political, and cultural lines, there is also a pronounced class divide in Northern Ireland, which affects the reception and impact of any social process. This is particularly significant for this study, because the examination of fiction produced in Northern Ireland allows for comparison between the contributions of elite intellectuals, and those of "the masses".

The social processes that relate to Northern Irish football are an excellent example of an active mass culture. The study of literature produces an important point of comparison regarding the relative impacts of cultural production in Northern Ireland. The comparison with Scotland is also very instructive. By contrast to the situation in Scotland, serious literary works produced in Northern Ireland are often considered to be the preserve of members of the middle-classes. This means that contemporary Northern Irish literature is rather different to that produced in Scotland, where literary production largely reflects working-class ideals and values, reinforcing the idea that the dominant mode in Scottish culture is left-wing, opposed to neoliberalism, and often opposed to continued membership of the United Kingdom.

Contemporary Northern Irish fiction is not dominated by one particular cultural and political viewpoint, and it has been argued that 'it isn't possible to speak of a "school" or "tradition"' of literary production in the territory (Kennedy-Andrews, 2003, p.7). However, there are certain recurring political and cultural positions which are defined by their uniquely Northern Irish elements. Two relatively common approaches can be identified; the first of these appears within what can be termed the "ecumenical/cosmopolitan novel", which argues that it is possible for individuals in Northern Ireland to find a balance between the political and cultural preferences

generally expressed by the territory's opposed communities. The term "ecumenical" refers to accommodation between different religious communities, and is used frequently in Robert McLiam Wilson's (1998) novel, *Eureka Street* in reference to people whose social lives and cultural preferences cross religious divides.

Given that communities in Northern Ireland are no longer defined solely by religious affiliation, Gallaher (2007) has adopted the term "cosmopolitanism" when discussing attempts to develop cross-community culture in Northern Ireland. Within this study, the two terms will be used interchangeably as they generally express the same spirit, with the bias being towards the former principally because it is used by novelists themselves. It is also the case the cosmopolitanism is generally a term applied on an international, rather than an inter-national level. Gallaher (2007) uses the term to refer solely to an accommodation between nationally defined groups within Northern Ireland itself. However, transnationalists such as Ignatieff (1994) have also used it to describe the movement towards a post-national future. To be clear, none of the novelists examined in this study present a post-national Northern Ireland as an achievable or even desirable outcome.

Novels in the ecumenical style argue that Northern Irish people can and should live together peacefully. The characters in such novels tend to argue against Northern Ireland's traditional political positions, and eschew the entrenched cultural and political viewpoints commonly associated with the territory. The work of Glenn Patterson and Robert McLiam Wilson can be placed within this approach to fiction, as will be explored. This is significant because Northern Irish political culture is generally dominated by the promotion of unionist, loyalist, and Irish nationalist viewpoints. Despite the work of the Alliance party, whose profile and share of the vote has grown in recent times, it is seldom argued that Northern Ireland can develop a separate and inclusive culture.

Alliance are generally understood to be a "soft unionist party", working within the existing political accommodation. Wilson and Patterson are both supportive of a new Northern Irish state, and while this argument is made in sections of Northern Irish fiction, it is seldom made elsewhere. This demonstrates that there is a divide between political culture, which is dominated by those parties who are perceived to represent the interests of working-class people in Northern Ireland, and literary culture. Rather than

showing support for the political solutions offered by the main four parties in Northern Ireland, members of the literary cultural elite often promote their own vision instead. As well as repudiating unionism and loyalism, this vision is usually dismissive of the rhetoric associated with Irish nationalism.

However, it is not the case that all Northern Irish fiction argues against the ideals of Irish nationalism. Another style that is commonly produced in Northern Irish fiction is the anti-British novel. Novels written in this style often examine events from Northern Ireland's past, and are demonstrably angry about the way in which the British state has actively shaped Northern Ireland's political landscape. The main exponent of this approach is Eoin McNamee – his novels *The Ultras* (2004) and *Resurrection Man* (1994) discuss British government policy, examining the killing of Northern Irish citizens by loyalist paramilitaries and British state forces. These novels display a high level of political commitment, and examine political and cultural issues from a perspective that is notably Irish nationalist. McNamee's work is particularly coruscating about the influence of the government of the United Kingdom in Northern Ireland, and condemns both Protestant doctrine and loyalist terrorism.

As Cordner (2005, p.48) has asserted, 'there is a dearth of [literary] material from the Protestant community in current publication'. As a consequence, there is a general absence of unionist and loyalist viewpoints in contemporary Northern Irish fiction. Some novels discuss a separate Northern Irish identity, but this is ecumenical, not Protestant, and dismissive of the importance of a continued link with the United Kingdom. Only Glenn Patterson can truly be regarded as a significant author whose cultural background is Protestant, and his work is largely ecumenical, repudiating Protestant religious dogma and any recognisably loyalist or unionist political doctrine. Patterson himself states that 'by birth, my religion is Protestant, but it has not defined who I am' (Patterson, in conversation with Claire Burgess, 2010). This chapter will not discuss unionist or loyalist fiction because there are no significant novels to examine. Instead, the reasons for this cultural absence will be examined in the following section.

The lack of literary production from the Ulster Protestant community means that neither unionist nor loyalist cultures are represented in the Northern Irish literary imagination. This is significant, principally because the groups that are most representative of Ulster Protestant views on Northern Ireland are unable to exert any influence on the way that

Northern Ireland is presented in one important element of culture. As Williams (1979) argues, society is the sum of the influences that people bring upon it. The absence of unionist and loyalist viewpoints from one particularly useful method of cultural communication is significant because other cultural ideals, which are not favourable to the aims of either unionism or loyalism, are being expressed in fiction without repudiation or counter-argument. In a territory whose identity is as strongly contested as Northern Ireland, this is important.

## Why have Ulster Protestants not produced a strong literary culture?

Unionists in Northern Ireland have developed only a very limited cultural presence. This is, in large part, due to the fact that unionism is often seen as a purely politico-legal argument, rather than a cultural movement (Farrington, 2006). Similarly to modernist theorists of nationalism (most notably John Breuilly), unionists have traditionally perceived there to be a separation between politics and culture, with the former being more important than the latter. Political power has been seen as a separate concept, unrelated to culture. Despite being a particularly conservative movement, unionists have in some ways adopted a similar perception of politics to "vulgar Marxists", with the "superstructure" of ideas, beliefs and customs having no direct influence upon material conditions.[21]

In developing economic, political, and legal arguments for remaining in the United Kingdom, unionists in Northern Ireland have traditionally neglected any cultural argument that can be made, perceiving this to be of little importance. Within academia, this is typified by the work of Arthur Aughey, in which unionism is defined as a pragmatic political movement based on what is perceived to be economic good sense. In simple terms, the subsidies given to Northern Ireland could not be replicated by the Irish government, and therefore Northern Ireland must remain in the United Kingdom as a matter of economic necessity.[22] Despite the prevalence of this kind of argument, in recent times, prominent unionists have also attempted to produce and develop a cultural presence in Northern Ireland, because the lack of a cultural argument for unionism has left them without a significant weapon in the increasingly acculturated political arena.

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[21] This is not to argue that unionists have consciously adopted a vulgar Marxist perspective, despite the parallels that can be drawn. Unionism is very much a right-wing movement.
[22] This argument does, of course, neglect what may be seen as economic good sense by the citizens living in the rest of the United Kingdom.

As Williams (1979) states, cultural and political arguments both play an important role in the development of society. The increasing acculturation of Northern Irish politics is testament to the veracity of this argument. In Northern Ireland, the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement (1998) has increased the significance of cultural arguments because its terms make it clear that British influence in Northern Ireland is officially conditional, and not a constitutional certainty. The agreement allows for Northern Ireland to leave the United Kingdom, providing that a majority of people in the territory vote for this eventuality in a referendum. This means that Northern Ireland's status within the United Kingdom is not solely defined within the political arena, and in the future, it will rest upon the will of the people of the territory.

This means that arguments made about the politico-legal status of Northern Ireland are weaker than they once were. Politicians alone will not decide Northern Ireland's future; instead, it will rest upon the popular will. The growth of identity politics has stemmed partly from this fact, as politicians look to utilise culture in order to influence arguments about whether the territory is fundamentally Irish, mostly Northern Irish, or defined by British influences. Recognising that the latter argument is particularly weak (partly because it has not been strongly made at the cultural level in the past), a number of senior figures in the Ulster Unionist Party were involved in the formation of the Ulster Society.[23] The main aim of this society was to provide a unionist cultural body which would work to challenge the many existing Irish nationalist institutions, including sports societies and teams, and also Irish language, music, and poetry societies.

The stated goal of the Ulster Society was to promote and develop a distinctive Protestant culture, largely based upon the traditions of Scottish migrants to Ulster from the 1600s onwards (Nic Craith, 2003). The unionists who were involved in the Ulster Society recognised that culture would become a key battleground in Northern Irish politics after the Belfast Agreement. Their aim was to promote the idea that culture in Northern Ireland has been heavily influenced by links with mainland Britain, especially Scotland. This would have the effect of countering Irish nationalist claims about the strength and persistence of Irish culture in Northern Ireland. To the same end, the Ulster-Scots agency was formed in order to promote what its proponents describe as the

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[23] The most notable figure involved was the former leader of the UUP, David Trimble.

"language" of Ulster-Scots (also known as Ullans), which is based upon the linguistic traditions of Scottish migrants to Ulster.

The Ulster-Scots agency has received only a very limited level of support from many sections of the Ulster Protestant community. However, it has received funding as a result of being recognised in the Belfast agreement as a significant cultural body. The extent to which Ulster-Scots is used in everyday speech has been strongly questioned by critics of the agency. Whether Ulster-Scots can be called a language at all, or simply a dialect derived from patterns of speech used in the North Antrim area, has also come into question (Gallaher, 2007). There has not been a significant work of fiction produced in the contemporary era that utilises Ulster-Scots, nor is there an Ulster-Scots newspaper or a significant serial publication. This is strong evidence that despite serving a purpose at the level of elite governance, Ulster-Scots has little popular resonance.

The argument that Ulster Protestant culture is British because it is influenced by Scottish language and culture is weakened by the fact that a great deal of contemporary Scottish culture is anti-Union, and stresses its uniquely Scottish nature. In a sense, unionists are unfortunate that they chose to champion cultural links to Scotland at the very time that a great deal of Scottish culture has become increasingly nationalist and anti-Union. It is instructive that there is also an absence of a strong unionist literary and artistic culture in contemporary Scotland; Maxwell (1991) has asserted that this is due to "complacency" amongst members of the unionist middle class, although it is also due to the fact that unionism has traditionally been seen as a political idea, not a cultural movement.

The Ulster Society folded altogether due to a lack of popular interest, and the Ulster-Scots Agency has also failed to capture the public imagination. It may be too simplistic to argue that unionist intellectuals devoted their efforts to constructing a cultural presence through these methods, and neglected to develop a literary culture. In looking for factors in the failure to develop a literary culture, there are many possibilities. However, the relative lack of popular success for these two agencies for the promotion of Ulster Protestant culture is very revealing. Gallaher (2007) states that their development as instruments of "unionist elitism" is the main reason for their failure to gain a popular foothold. Those elements of unionism that are seen as belonging to the

middle-classes are declining in popularity; the relative failure of the UUP at recent elections is testament to that fact.

In the contemporary era, the "traditional" unionism promoted by the UUP is often seen as a middle-class movement, and the cultural production associated with members of the UUP is seen in a similar way. This can help to explain the failure of literary production, which is still an elite concern in Northern Ireland, to gain a foothold in "popular" culture. With regards to the reception of novels, it is very difficult to develop a literary culture within a narrow field of interested parties. It is also the case that there is no strong unionist literary tradition, and this is something that is very difficult to develop quickly, especially if the viewpoint that may be expounded in literature seems to be declining in terms of popular resonance. In Scotland, literature with a nationalist message continues to grow in popularity because the message itself is becoming increasingly accepted. In some ways, this is a circular process; it is difficult to promote a certain ideal while it lacks popular resonance, and it is similarly difficult to develop the popular resonance of an ideal without a suitable promotional medium.

It seems clear that literature is not a particularly suitable vehicle for the promotion of unionism. Aside from the reasons already discussed, this is also the case because popular culture amongst the Ulster Protestant community is largely participatory, rather than reflective. The increasing disassociation of the UUP and their "Ulster British" message from the Orange Order and from sporting culture does nothing to aid the development and promotion of their ideals and values. As explored in the previous chapter, the social processes through which Ulster Protestant culture develops are increasingly associated with loyalism. The split between loyalists and unionists is partly based on class; it is fair to say that class distinctions have been exacerbated by the different ways that communities experienced the Troubles. Living on the frontline of violence has hardened loyalist attitudes somewhat, as explored in the previous chapter, and unionists are perceived to have not had the same experience, being based in suburban and rural areas. The two groups have developed a different consciousness, partly as a consequence of only one group being consistently exposed to violence (Gallaher, 2007).

Another significant reason for the failure of the Ulster Protestant community to develop a literary culture is that Ulster Protestant culture values "hard work", and literary

production is not seen as commensurate with the self-image of many in the loyalist community in particular (Pelaschiar, 1998). There are both similarities and differences with the situation in Scotland. The growth of working-class fiction in Scotland was, in large part, a response to government policies which were perceived to attack Scottish culture; such policies included the de-industrialisation of the nation during the 1980s and 1990s. Many Scottish authors sought to both describe and defend Scottish working-class culture. There has not been a similar growth in Ulster Protestant working-class fiction. It is important to note that there is not a strong literary culture amongst the Scottish Protestant-affiliated community either. Although a strong literary working-class culture has developed in Scotland, this is often anti-British and is certainly not produced by members of the pro-Union community.

Literature plays an important role in developing ideas about any territory. The "imagined community" is partly defined by the way in which any nation is described within literature. In Northern Ireland, the contribution made by the Ulster Protestant community to the literary imagination is negligible. This allows ideas that run contrary to the preferences of the Ulster Protestant community to dominate. As demonstrated in Scotland, literary production can play a key role in defining contemporary culture. Ideas about the nation develop through literature and enter the popular consciousness. At the present time, one particularly useful method of disseminating ideas and values is not being utilised by either unionists or loyalists in Northern Ireland.

The absence of Ulster Protestant voices from literary fiction is both a symptom and a cause of a wider cultural insecurity. Gallaher (2007, p.88) states that 'most scholars agree that Protestants lack a secure identity' in post-Agreement Northern Ireland. The perception in Northern Ireland, argues Bean (2011, p.50) is that there is a stark difference between the 'disorientated, crisis-ridden [Protestant] community and a confident, advancing [Irish] nationalism'. The attitude of many of the Ulster Protestants interviewed by Gallaher (2007) and McAuley and Spencer (2011) is profoundly defeatist about the future for their culture. There is a great deal of pessimism about the possibility of the community's survival in the face of the gains made by Irish nationalists since 1998. Many of those who have discussed this matter feel that they are "under siege" and that the British government will not support them in the future.

This has been exacerbated by the perception that Ulster Protestants are being unfairly targeted by changes in employment in the wake of the Good Friday agreement. Many Ulster Protestants feel that they are now being unfairly discriminated against and excluded from work opportunities on the basis of cultural affiliation; a considerable irony given the decades of Protestant dominance over Catholics in the job market (Gallaher, 2007). Hard graft in technical and manual jobs, and a strong work ethic are central to the myth that Ulster Protestants create about their community (Pelaschiar, 1998). In contemporary Northern Ireland, opportunities for manual and engineering work have diminished, just as in Scotland. Many loyalists in particular now perceive themselves not to be working-class, but part of an unemployed underclass (Gallaher, 2007).[24] There is a sense of hopelessness that works against the production of strong statements about culture and politics.

Some of this stems from the perceived strength of Irish nationalist identity politics, as compared to that of both loyalists and unionists. The terms of engagement with the Irish nationalist community have changed, and this has left many Ulster Protestants in an uncomfortable position. There remains a great deal of loyalist and unionist opposition to the peace process in Northern Ireland, and Farrington (2006, p.128) argues that this has resulted in the feeling that 'much of the peace process does not belong to them'. As part of the peace process, Ulster Protestants have been forced to acknowledge the validity and equality of Irish Nationalist culture, as laid out in the terms of the Belfast Agreement. It is this that many unionists and loyalists object to (Gallaher, 2007).

This has served to reconfigure the context in which a great deal of loyalist and unionist rhetoric is produced. Quoting English (2005), Bean (2011, p.60) asserts that the age of bombs, shootings, and politically reactionary statements is over. The battle for Northern Ireland's future is now being fought in a different arena, and the territory is now engaged in a 'culture war' to define its identity (Bean, 2011, Nic Craith 2003, Gallaher 2007). This is a war in which one side lacks significant weaponry. Loyalist culture is often martial and can appear aggressive and unwelcoming. The perceived elitism of the efforts to devise a unionist culture has worked against popular acceptance of the Ulster Society and the Ulster-Scots Agency. The promotion of a language that is not spoken by

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[24] This in itself suggests that many in the community may not have learned the skills necessary for the production of literature. However, this would not apply to the whole community, and cannot be argued without a certain amount of speculation.

a vast majority of people in Northern Ireland, and whose status is questionable, does not have clear mass appeal.

The novel has the potential to explain and promote cultural ideals in a way that allows people to reflect upon the messages that are contained within it. The absence of a recognisably loyalist or unionist novel means that this significant method of reproducing and propagating cultural ideas has not been utilised. This can result in the perception that both loyalist and unionist beliefs are the preserve of the inarticulate, however untrue this may be in reality. By contrast, those groups who oppose the aims of loyalists and unionists are engaged in literary production. This means that their contribution to the "imagined community" in Northern Ireland is much stronger, and as a consequence members of these groups are able to disseminate their ideas through a particularly useful cultural vehicle. The following sections will examine the contribution to culture made by authors who produce very different visions of Northern Ireland, beginning with the Irish nationalist writer, Eoin McNamee.

## The Anti-British novel: The work of Eoin McNamee

McNamee's work represents a studied and sustained attack upon the actions of the British government and security forces in Northern Ireland during the 1970s. Both *The Ultras* (2004) and *Resurrection Man* (1994) make strong arguments against the way that the government of the United Kingdom has wielded its influence in Northern Ireland. British security forces are portrayed as treating the Northern Ireland conflict as an opportunity to play war games. They are also described as a colonial force, whose aim is to subjugate the local population. Their attitude to the Catholic citizens of Northern Ireland is portrayed as malignant, and they show scant regard for the lives of Northern Irish people from both communities. The British presence in Northern Ireland is described as a cause of conflict in itself, in that British forces act to both instigate and escalate the levels of violence. Responsibility for many of the worst atrocities of the Troubles is placed firmly at the door of the British state. McNamee (2004, p.216) alleges the existence of 'clandestine government' in Northern Ireland, and aims to expose what he describes as the 'dark polity' at the heart of the Troubles.

McNamee's work is also profoundly negative about the rhetoric and ideology of Ulster Protestantism. *Resurrection Man* contains a list of some of the many Protestant groups in Northern Ireland, before condemning their 'merciless theologies' which create

'congregations of the wrathful' (McNamee, 1994, p.9). The novel discusses propaganda which is alleged to have been covertly released by British authorities in Northern Ireland, containing pictures of injuries received at the hands of paramilitary groups. McNamee (1994, p.18) describes the 'reds and blues of exposed veins and mutilated fatty tissue' as being reminiscent of 'twelfth bunting'; the very colours of the British flag are linked with bloodshed and violent death. McNamee's work contains clear arguments against British involvement in Northern Ireland, and also against Ulster Protestant culture which is portrayed as being supported by the British presence. It is fair to state that McNamee produces Irish nationalist fiction, or, at least, fiction that is sympathetic towards the Irish nationalist cause.

While it is difficult to assess the exact reception of novels with individual readers, McNamee's work is critically successful, and a number of his novels have been adapted for television and film.[25] This has helped to develop his reputation, and he has become a public figure whose work has cultural significance. He has also become the subject of academic study, although not in the exact way utilised in this study. It is fair to say that, although he has not reached the level of fame and popular recognition achieved by Scotland's Irvine Welsh, McNamee is one of the most important figures in Northern Irish literary production. He has become a public intellectual whose work has resonance in fields outside of literature; this is certainly one way of quantifying the appeal of his novels.

McNamee has been chosen as a subject for this study because of his work has resonance in a number of different areas. The two novels specifically chosen were selected because they address and reinforce arguments made by Irish nationalists, and are strongly politicised. They demonstrate that literature, as an elite form of culture, can directly engage with the most significant political events of the day. McNamee's novels are also concerned with working-class lives, rather than focusing solely on members of the middle classes. This attempt to engage with lives of "the masses" is also significant, and it can be said that McNamee attempts to bridge the gap between elite culture and life at the more popular level. This is particularly important for the aims of this study.

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[25] *Resurrection Man* was adapted for film in 1998.

## Resurrection Man and "Ulsterisation": British involvement in loyalist killings

*Resurrection Man* (1994) is based upon the actions of a real life gang who became known as the Shankill Butchers. The gang killed over thirty people, most of whom were Catholics living in Belfast, during the period 1972-77. The novel was produced in the 1990s as a reflection on the way in which the British government were involved in the killings. The effect of the novel is to present the British government as fundamentally corrupt. Although the novel discusses events that occurred during the 1970s, it is not solely a historical narrative. As with any novel, *Resurrection Man* has a resonance in the time in which it is produced, and its context is as much the 1990s as the 1970s. It is significant that the British government are presented as corrupt in their dealings with the people of Northern Ireland, and complicit in the production of violence.

There is a strong political element to McNamee's work. *Resurrection Man* is a discussion of the effects of a British government policy known as 'Ulsterisation', which at operational level involved the gradual withdrawal of British troops, to be replaced in their "peace-keeping" role by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) (Mumford, 2012, p.109). The British government wished to avoid having its army engaged in conflict with the Irish Republican Army (IRA). This is partly because the conflict appeared to be one between nations, rather than one between a state and dissident citizens, and this perception of the situation offered support to the IRA's claim to be fighting a war of national freedom. Continued conflict in Northern Ireland that involved British state forces was a scenario 'with the potential for disapprobation from the international community' (Reimer, 2012, p.66).

A solution put forward to solve this problem was first posited in 1975, in a government document entitled "The Way Ahead" (Mumford, 2012). The process of Ulsterisation had the end-game of encouraging the idea that the conflict did not involve the British state; rather, the conflict was solely between two opposed communities, and confined to Northern Ireland. Reimer (2012) argues that despite existing violence between loyalist paramilitaries and the IRA, British security personnel actively worked to encourage further loyalist violence in order that the IRA would stop fighting the British army, and instead attack loyalists. In the context of a primarily inter-communal conflict, the British government would be able to intervene as a 'measured and neutral peacekeeper' (Reimer, 2012, p.66). This scenario would also allow the British state to maintain a

presence in Northern Ireland and give the appearance of being in a conflict management role, without being seen as actively involved in the violence. It would also remove the constitutional question from the debate, as the British government could argue that their first priority would be to stop the incipient violence before turning to the question of Northern Ireland's future.

The effects of the "Ulsterisation" policies addressed in the novel were felt throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and are presented as having caused the violence that marked that era. The novel condemns a policy that is depicted as having deliberately and unnecessarily extended the "Troubles" into the Thatcher era, and should be understood in terms of the context that it was released into; the presence of the British army had in many ways become "normalised", and the people of Northern Ireland did not have a parliament of their own. McNamee argues that this was a deliberate consequence of government policy, which aimed to entrench British influence in Northern Ireland using methods that date from the colonial era. *Resurrection Man* is an argument against the "normalisation" of the British presence in Northern Ireland, and an exposé of the way in which this situation was brought about.

McNamee's novel utilises Martin Dillon's (1989) investigative text *The Shankill Butchers* as its primary source of material. Using police records, and particularly the memories of the detective who led the investigation into the murders, Dillon's work is a chronological account of the work of Murphy and his gang between 1972 and 1977. Dillon also provides biographical details from Murphy's early life, many of which have been used by McNamee. Robert McLiam Wilson (interviewed by Mikowski, 2000, p.11) has accused McNamee of plagiarising Dillon's work, as many of the accounts of the murders are very similar. In many cases, all that has changed is the name of the characters involved.

However, there are also notable differences between McNamee's novel and Dillon's account of the lives of the Shankill Butchers. Of particular significance is the character of Billy McClure, a British agent who manipulates Victor Kelly for the benefit of the British state.[26] Dillon does not mention any British agent in his account, and does not

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[26] McNamee's character, Victor Kelly, closely figures the real life leader of the Shankill Butchers, Lenny Murphy. In the novel, Victor Kelly is teased about his surname, which is perceived by his schoolmates to be Irish, and therefore Catholic. Kelly's sensitivity about this is one of the reasons given for his descent

suggest at any stage that the security forces had contact with Lenny Murphy. McNamee's introduction of a British agent who orchestrates the violence carried out by Kelly and his gang reveals a great deal about his motivation in writing *Resurrection Man*. It suggests that the British security forces not only knew about the violence, but were at the heart of it.

McClure helps to facilitate the killing spree of the Resurrection Men, and is particularly involved in the life of Victor Kelly. Once Kelly has fulfilled his function for McClure, and killed a large number of Catholics in Belfast, McClure has no hesitation in assassinating Kelly. McClure has 'links with the British intelligence establishment' and is also 'active in Protestant paramilitary circles' (McNamee, 1994, p.154). His role is to persuade the latter to carry out operations so that the former can benefit from them. It is also stated that McClure has links with 'several right-wing headcase groups'; loyalism and unionism have long had links to the far right in mainland Britain (McNamee, 1994, p.154). McNamee highlights the racism and anti-Catholic bigotry involved in loyalist activities, and suggests that British operations in Northern Ireland also carry this taint.

McClure is also described as having a 'connection to incidents involving molestation at residents at several boys' homes' (McNamee, 1994, p.154). He is allowed to get away with these acts because he is useful to the British security forces. This makes a clear link between British agents and immoral behaviour, and suggests that British authorities in Northern Ireland ignored illegality if those who perpetrated it were fulfilling a useful function for them. It is particularly significant that it is McClure who declares that Ulster Protestants have a 'birthright' to Northern Ireland which justifies violence against Catholics (McNamee, 1994, p.151). Having this claim made by such an immoral character serves to illegitamise the statement; McNamee suggests that those who make this argument often have links to violent, immoral, and bigoted activities. The novel suggests that the Ulster Protestant claim to Northern Ireland is tainted by the activities of its paramilitaries.

The principal argument in *Resurrection Man* is that British security forces actively assisted loyalist paramilitary groups to attack Catholics. This is presented as fact by Reimer (2012) and Mumford (2012). It has also been suggested that loyalist

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into violence. He wishes to "prove" his Protestantism and stop other Protestants from threatening him. Dillon suggests that Lenny Murphy had similar motivations.

paramilitary groups were 'sponsored by the British state' and seen as useful to certain aims of the British government (MacGinty, 2011, p.38). McNamee represents the situation in this way through the figure of Billy McClure. The novel also states that 'accusations of army collusion with paramilitary groups were vehemently denied but the army continued to negotiate at ground level' (McNamee, 1994, p.24). Essentially, McNamee argues that the policy of Ulsterisation involved encouraging loyalist paramilitaries to kill Catholic civilians. The British government are presented as facilitating the actions of the Shankill Butchers, in order to make a political policy work.

McNamee presents British forces as not only unconcerned about the death of Catholic civilians, but actively involved in assisting those who carried out the killings. This is a particularly strong and condemnatory statement against the British government and security forces. Wilson discusses what he perceives to be McNamee's depiction of 'nice, intelligent, sensitive Catholic killers with consciences' and suggests that *Resurrection Man* 'almost claims that Catholic murder has a thesis, whereas Protestant murder is just savagery' (Wilson interviewed by Mikowski, Paradigme, 2000, p.11). *Resurrection Man* is condemnatory of both Protestant and British state violence, but largely silent on the issue of violence perpetrated by the IRA. However, "Protestant murder" is not presented as lacking context; it is fair to say that the Protestant killers in *Resurrection Man* do act savagely, but the context for their actions is provided for them by the British government.

*The Ultras*: British forces as the "authors" of conflict

*The Ultras* also discusses the role of the British security forces in Northern Ireland during the 1970s. Similarly to *Resurrection Man*, the novel argues that the British actively worked to prolong conflict for political gain. It also argues that British forces treated Northern Ireland as an opportunity to play war games and display the strength of the British military. Once again, context is important; those forces were still present at the time that the novel was published, and it is implicit that the motivations ascribed to senior members of the security forces are same in the 1990s as they were in the 1970s. As with *Resurrection Man*, the policies of the British government post 1979 are described as having been put in place during the 1970s. The criticism implicit in the novel is that rather than withdrawing troops, during the Thatcher era the British

government maintained a strong military presence. *The Ultras* is as much a reflection of government policy during the 1980s and 1990s as it is a condemnation of policy during the 1960s and 1970s.

This is an argument that is echoed by the work of experts on the conflict in Northern Ireland. Mumford (2012) argues that during the Troubles 'the army and their political masters [acted] with the detachment and heavy handedness of a reactionary colonial force' and applied methods wholly unsuited to a domestic conflict. The use of internment, informants, double agents, and army patrols was entirely inappropriate and disproportional, argues Mumford (2012), and served to enrage the Catholic population of Northern Ireland and increase the levels of violence. This, in essence, is the argument at the heart of McNamee's work.

Mumford (2012) describes the actions of British forces in Northern Ireland as a 'catalyst and not a retardant of violence'; this is the situation laid out in *The Ultras*, in which British intelligence operatives actively seek to increase the intensity of the conflict, and are involved in operations that target Catholic civilians. McNamee (2004, p.61) states that a primary aim of British security personnel was to 'spread unease in the civilian community', and in the novel they actively work to create an atmosphere of war in Northern Ireland. One operation discussed in the novel involves the use of a brothel which contains hidden cameras and bugging devices. The aim of this operation, which did operate as the "Gemini Health Club" in real life, was to gain information on possible paramilitary activity (Parker, 1999).

However, the information gathered could also be used to bribe and threaten ordinary civilians. In *The Ultras*, the operation is run by David Erskine, a character who closely figures the real life Fred Holroyd, a former member of the security forces and noted "whistleblower" (Parker, 1999). Erskine hires women from Eastern Europe as part of an attempt to evoke the atmosphere of the Cold War; informants, counter-agents, and conspiracies are all part of his everyday language. Erskine sees his role as promoting 'war as subtext'; conflict becomes quotidian, so that people become accustomed to fighting each other rather than questioning the role of the British state in Northern Ireland (McNamee, 2004, p.149).

As in *Resurrection Man*, British forces are portrayed as working alongside loyalist paramilitaries and of colluding with the latter group to achieve mutually agreeable aims.

This is illustrated by the way in which McNamee portrays the Miami Showband Massacre, an event which has sparked much debate and rancour in the years since it took place. The Miami were a popular band from the Republic of Ireland, who were travelling home to Dublin after a show in Northern Ireland. The band's bus was stopped by what they thought was a regular army patrol; this was in fact a bogus roadblock set up by the UVF with the purpose of placing a bomb on the band's bus. During the process of placing the bomb under the driver's seat, two UVF members (Harris Boyle and Wesley Somerville) accidentally triggered the device and were killed by the explosion, which blew the band's bus apart.

This led to chaos; the other paramilitaries involved began shooting at the members of the band, who had been lined up on the side of the road. Three of the five band members were killed by multiple bullet wounds. Another member, Des McAlea, was thrown into a hedge by the force of the explosion and lay unnoticed by the paramilitaries. He eventually escaped and raised the alarm at a nearby police station. The fifth band member involved, Stephen Travers, was shot, and as he was believed to be dead, was left lying in the field next to the road. However, despite suffering severe internal damage, Travers survived and eventually gave evidence against the UVF members involved in the massacre at a trial which took place the following year.

Travers (2007) has since written a book about the massacre. He states that an English officer directed proceedings and was clearly in charge of the operation. Fred Holroyd has consistently argued that this was Robert Nairac (Parker, 1999). This allegation was repeated in the House of Commons by Ken Livingstone MP, which brought the issue to wider prominence. In *The Ultras*, Nairac directs the operation and is portrayed as colluding with the UVF to kill the Miami. McNamee asserts that Nairac's primary aim was to kill Catholics in Ireland, and portrays him as being filled with an almost maniacal blood-lust. *The Ultras* presents Nairac as symbolic of the entire British security presence in Northern Ireland, which is portrayed as the primary catalyst for death and conflict. McNamee's work clearly presents British influence in Northern Ireland as profoundly negative.

Rather than policing the violence and attempting to stop it, British forces encourage it, are complicit in it, and often attempt to add new layers of complexity to it. They attempt to influence events so that everything is seen in terms of the 'language' of war

(McNamee, 2004, p.67). In *The Ultras*, British security personnel frequently discuss events in terms that are usually employed to describe works of fiction; they talk of the need to add darker elements to the existing plot, and at one point the British security operative Clyde Knox suggests that in Northern Ireland 'you need an atrocity to move things along' (McNamee, 2004, p.167). The British forces described in *The Ultras* seem to possess an awareness of their role as the authors of death, and they revel in this.

Smith (2005, p.267) perceptively argues that for the events that McNamee describes, 'the "official record" is suspect and it is the very suspect nature of that record that is one of the subjects being explored'. McNamee has deliberately chosen to examine the events related to the life of Robert Nairac and the Miami Showband Massacre because "official" accounts exonerate Nairac and his superiors. McNamee clearly presents Nairac as being responsible for the deaths of Catholic civilians, not just from Northern Ireland, but also the Republic. *The Ultras* can be seen as offering an Irish nationalist perspective on the Miami Showband Massacre, which argues against the "official" British account. Literature in this instance acts as a counter-hegemonic tool, which allows for the promotion of arguments which stand against official accounts. By reflecting and also developing relatively obscure anti-State accounts of the Massacre, McNamee adds to the audience that can receive these accounts.

Suggestions that McNamee "fictionalises" events do not adequately describe his approach; what he actually does is to utilise existing accounts (by Holroyd and Dillon) and arrange them to make an argument against British involvement in Northern Ireland. Discussing the production of literature, McNamee states that:

> 'The overlapping of fact and fiction is part of the public discourse. Every day people see their names in print or their street on the television news and find that they can recognise nothing of the life into which they have been placed. Basic details are wrong' (The Guardian, 30th April 2004).

Written accounts are always edited according to the bias of the editor and McNamee's work is no different. McNamee's novels argue that British forces tried to influence events in their favour; they acted as "narrators" to events, forcing them in the direction that they wanted to go. That this involved utilising loyalist paramilitaries and killing Catholic civilians is one of the principal elements that McNamee explores.

Discussing McNamee's work, Magennis (2005, p.177) suggests that 'there is a tension between his noir-soaked vision of contemporary Northern Ireland and the sociological realities of the situation'. Similarly, Smith (2005, p.269) argues that what McNamee does is alter 'actual historical events' in order to create a postmodern pastiche of the noir thriller.[27] The reader who looks for 'a grand narrative [or] the evidence of a conspiracy in these altered details' is mistaken, according to Smith; what is significant is simply the literary status of the novel as fiction. This account of what McNamee actually achieves is particularly inadequate for a serious discussion of the work of such a politically engaged author. It is also indicative of the inadequacies of some well-established approaches to literature which discuss literary texts as if they were produced in a cultural vacuum.

As a social process, literary production allows for ideas to enter the cultural life of any nation or territory. On an individual level, the reception of the novel in many ways depends on how persuasive the reader concerned finds the arguments contained within it. However, on the wider societal level, the novel makes a contribution whose effects can be considered in terms of their relation to other processes. The reception and effect of *The Ultras* on society can be quantified to an extent by the increasing "visibility" of the argument contained within it. Whether the individual agrees or disagrees is less important than the fact that the theory has been made more visible within culture. As the argument that Robert Nairac planned the Massacre has been discussed at state level (both in the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom) after the publication of *The Ultras*, and has entered the public sphere as a legitimate theory which is supported by the government of the Republic of Ireland, it can be said that the novel has had some effect on culture and politics in the island of Ireland as a whole (Travers 2007).

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[27] In light of these arguments, it is interesting to examine the account of the Miami Showband Massacre produced by Stephen Travers, who survived the massacre. Just as McNamee does, Travers (2007) argues that the responsibility for the massacre lies with the British security forces and the government who deployed them. Recalling his experience at the trial of two men who were convicted for their role in the massacre, Travers states that when he and Des McAlea described the English officer who directed events, they were told by the judge that they were mistaken, and not allowed to continue with their descriptions. Travers argues that the two convicted men (Thomas Crozier and James McDowell) were scapegoats, mere foot-soldiers who were sacrificed in order that those in charge of the operation could escape charge. A 'cap' was put on the investigation, and it was 'never satisfactorily explained why all of [those involved] were armed with standard issue British weapons and uniforms' (Travers and Fetherstonhaugh, 2007, p.240). At the end of the book, Travers and his co-author Neil Fetherstonhaugh meet a senior member of the UVF, who was active at the time of the massacre. He does not deny that the massacre was planned and carried out by UVF members under the command of Robert Nairac.

## The "imagined community" in McNamee's novels

The timing of *The Ultras* is significant; released after the Good Friday agreement, the novel is designed to argue that the British presence in Northern Ireland should be seen as the cause for the conflict rather than the solution to it. Through discussion of events that took place in the 1970s, McNamee argues that history should not be dismissed or ignored, as it was a cause of events in the 1980s and 1990s. In the case of Northern Ireland, the argument that attitudes to the British state changed after 1979 is more clear for unionists and loyalists than it is for Irish nationalists, whose attitudes to the British state did not alter. However, their methods have changed; McNamee's work is best understood as part of a wider cultural movement which argues against British involvement in Northern Ireland. This movement utilises the history of the territory, but also recasts this history using contemporary methodology, in order to acculturate the political arena. There is no doubt that McNamee's work is of use to Irish nationalists, especially given that unionists and loyalists are not currently producing any kind of counter argument in literature.

*The Ultras* is a clear statement against the way in which British forces have affected Northern Ireland. It also reminds people that loyalists were involved in killing Catholic citizens, with the support of the British government. As such, it must be considered as a statement against both British forces and loyalists, who are portrayed as being the primary catalysts for conflict in Northern Ireland. *Resurrection Man* is also a strong statement against British involvement in Northern Ireland. It describes the British state as being directly involved in the deaths of Catholic citizens.

The novel asserts that the British influence in Northern Ireland is the cause of conflict and death. In the wider context of Northern Irish politics and culture, this can only be understood as an Irish nationalist statement. McNamee's work is an excellent example of Irish cultural nationalism in an elite form. It engages with the political realities of Northern Ireland and utilises existing texts to make a strong argument for the withdrawal of the British state. As a result of McNamee's work, Irish nationalist ideas about Northern Ireland enter the cultural domain, fully-formed. McNamee dismisses the idea that there is one unified Northern Irish community; rather, there are opposed communities which are rent by violence.

Within McNamee's novels, the Ulster Protestant community is described as being violently opposed to both Catholicism and Irish nationalism. McNamee presents loyalism as being defined by the atavistic hatred of Catholics. The role of the British government is particularly important; the British state and military forces are described as being ultimately opposed to an equal accommodation between communities in Northern Ireland. Their bias towards one community, and violence towards another, presents Northern Ireland's current position within the United Kingdom as one that is defined by cultural imbalance. The possibility of Northern Ireland ever developing a shared sense of community is dismissed. McNamee presents not one imagined community in the territory, but fundamentally opposed communities.

McNamee's work serves to remind people that in order to reach the current political accommodation, thousands were killed due to membership of opposed communities. It also suggests that one of the parties that brokered the Belfast Agreement was responsible for the deaths of many citizens in Northern Ireland, rendering the agreement itself the work of an untrustworthy author. McNamee's novels demonstrate that Irish nationalist arguments are made through elite culture, as well as at the popular level discussed in the previous chapter. In many senses, this gives Irish nationalism an advantage over loyalism and unionism. Literature has a far greater scope and significance than the Ulster-Scots language, for example, on a territorial level, within Ireland as a whole, and within the United Kingdom. This ultimately means that Irish nationalist arguments reach more people and have more resonance within culture. The prevalence of Irish nationalism at both elite and popular levels of culture also gives arguments for a unified Ireland a greater significance with a wider cross-section of the population.

## The "Ecumenical novel"

McNamee's conception of two fundamentally opposed communities is the most common way of thinking within Northern Irish culture. It is relatively rare for cultural or political groups to promote the idea that there could be one unified and uniquely Northern Irish society. Most political rhetoric discusses the necessity of accommodation between communities, in which different cultural traditions and ideals are accepted by the differing communities. This is entrenched in Northern Irish political life; members of the Northern Irish assembly are asked to declare their cultural affiliation before they

take their seat. This leaves the Alliance party, who claim to be 'Northern Ireland's cross-community party', in a difficult position (Alliance Party of Northern Ireland, 2012).

The Alliance party (2012) argue that 'while Northern Ireland is a distinct society in many respects, it does not and should not exist in a self-contained bubble. It is part of a wider UK, all-island, European and international context.' The only other group to argue that Northern Ireland is a distinct society are the Ulster Loyalists; however, the aims and ideals of loyalists and of the Alliance party are not similar. Alliance (2012) argue that Northern Ireland would be best served by its cultural communities developing a shared future, and the party's manifesto states that it:

> 'rejects the notion of parallel societies, with so-called "separate, but equal" provision. An apartheid Northern Ireland cannot work and must be resisted. There is no such concept as "benign apartheid"'.

As discussed in the above sections, and in the previous chapter, the idea that Northern Ireland can and should develop a plural society is not generally supported by cultural nationalists operating within the territory. However, there is one cultural form in which this idea is actively promoted.

The aim of this section is to determine the kind of cultural support that exists for an ecumenical society in Northern Ireland. Through analysing the work of contemporary novelists who support this ideal, it is possible to develop a clearer picture of how arguments against the predominant political positions in Northern Ireland are being made through elite culture. The novel has a somewhat unique cultural function in Northern Ireland, in that it represents a space in which a unified (non-British, non-Irish) Northern Irish community is discussed and promoted as a cultural ideal. This is worthy of analysis because knowledge of this phenomenon makes a significant contribution to the wider study of culture in Northern Ireland.

While literary production is a process through which Irish nationalist ideas can enter culture, it is also a vehicle which allows another kind of counter-hegemonic idea to be discussed. It has been suggested that 'the most significant feature of [Northern Irish] fiction has been its resistance to, and liberation from, [political] orthodoxy and ideology' (Kennedy-Andrews, 2003, p.7). Northern Irish fiction often rejects the idea that Protestant and Catholic communities cannot co-exist peacefully. The role that such

fiction plays is to champion a cultural ideal that is not often expressed politically, other than by the Alliance party. Ideas are expressed within what can be termed "the ecumenical novel" that are seldom seen in other cultural contexts.

This is significant for many reasons. In the increasingly acculturated Northern Irish political arena, the existence of a cultural form that supports a political ideal is useful in itself. It indicates that some level of support exists for that ideal, and can act as a vehicle for its promotion. Ideas about any territory can develop within literature and enter the public imagination; within Northern Irish literature, unionist and loyalist ideals are not expressed, whereas ecumenical ideals are discussed and explicitly supported. It is important to note that there is evidence which suggests that the Alliance party's recent growth is a result of the party gaining votes from disaffected unionists (Electoral Commission 2010, 2011).[28] This is not solely due to the failure of unionist culture to engage fully with its target audience; however, the growth of ecumenical culture is indicative of a wider trend in Northern Ireland. The development of culture which supports some of the ideals of the Alliance party (although it promotes a different solution at state level) can help its growth, as demonstrated by the situation in Scotland, where the rise of the SNP was significantly aided by a sea-change in Scottish culture, which literature was at the forefront of.

## *The International*: the possibility of a cosmopolitan Northern Ireland

The first novel that will be discussed is Glenn Patterson's (1997) work, *The International*. The novel is actually set in 1967, and all the action takes place on the day before the formation of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association in the International hotel, Belfast. However, as with the other novels discussed, the context in which the novel was released is as important as the historical detail discussed, and analysis of this is, as far as this study is concerned, the most significant element. The idea that Northern Ireland was once more cosmopolitan than it is now is important; the Troubles have changed the way in which Northern Ireland's citizens understand the territory, but they are not fundamentally, primordially opposed. It is argued that the current political and social situation can be overcome in the right circumstances.

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[28] The Alliance party won 8 seats at the 2011 Northern Irish assembly elections, increasing its share of the vote by 2.5 percent in the process (Northern Ireland Assembly, 2011). The Ulster Unionists' share of the vote decreased by 1.7 percent.

The very name of the hotel is designed to produce an air of cosmopolitanism, although it can also be seen as a reference to the fact that people who feel that they belong to two separate nations use the hotel as a meeting place. The clientele of the hotel are mixed, and it is host to Protestants and Catholics alike; wedding parties and guests from both denominations use the hotel and the bar in which the narrator, Danny, works, with no inter-communal tension. There is an everyday unity between citizens which is presented as common in in other territories, but unusual in Northern Ireland. The novel represents Northern Ireland as possessing an environment that is both banal and highly politically aware at the same time. Celebrations occur in juxtaposition with political meetings and sectarian violence, but the latter is described as far less prevalent than the celebration. Those who propagate violent sectarianism are condemned, whilst quotidian events are celebrated.

There is no specific mention in the novel of either the Union with the United Kingdom, or unification with the Republic of Ireland. The events of the novel are solely contained within the context of Northern Ireland. In order to repudiate the idea that Catholics and Protestants cannot co-exist peacefully, Patterson presents an environment where this situation is the norm. The staff at the hotel are scrupulously ecumenical, and Danny fits perfectly into this environment; one of his parents is Catholic, the other Protestant, but both have completely rejected religious observance. He attends a Protestant school, which is usually a marker of identity in Northern Ireland, but denies that this has had any effect upon his character, arguing that it was simply the closest school to his house.

The novel is an expression of the author's political viewpoints. Patterson has said that his concern is with unity between people, rather than political union (Patterson, in conversation with Claire Burgess, 2010). As a cultural statement, *The International* champions the idea of unity between communities in Northern Ireland. Patterson is at pains to stress that his vision of unity should not be conflated with either "unionism" or "unification". He has stated that he would like to see a single unified Northern Irish community, but acknowledges that this is difficult given the predominant political ideologies present within the territory. Patterson argues that 'the rhetoric of politics is reductive', in that politicians try to monopolise certain ideas (Patterson, in conversation with Claire Burgess, 2010). In Northern Ireland, to say that you are in favour of union is usually assumed to mean one of two things; either you support the existing Union with the United Kingdom, or you are in favour of a unified Ireland. Union between Northern

Irish citizens is rarely discussed in the terms that Patterson uses, at least not by politicians.

The act of writing is, for Patterson, 'political', despite his work not supporting what he defines as the traditional 'party political' perspectives (Patterson, in conversation with Claire Burgess, 2010). Patterson is not committed to the viewpoints expressed by politicians of unionist, loyalist, or Irish nationalist parties. He is, however, committed to the political position that it is possible for Northern Irish citizens to exist peacefully as one community, regardless of religious beliefs. This is also the view taken in the next novel to be discussed, Robert McLiam Wilson's 1998 work, *Eureka Street*. Wilson primarily focuses on Belfast, and uses a common trope of Northern Irish fiction to argue that its citizens can co-exist peacefully and happily. Pelaschiar (1998, p.22) has described *Eureka Street* as 'one of the most overtly political novels ever written' about Northern Ireland. The novel is certainly a statement of cultural nationalism, albeit one that is opposed to both predominant political visions in Northern Ireland. The vision that Wilson promotes is defined by and contained within the territory of Northern Ireland, and can be considered radical because it suggests that a new brand of nationalism, rather than a transnational or post-national solution, presents the best chance of lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

*Eureka Street*: Ecumenicalism and anti-Irish nationalism

In many senses the narrative arc of *Eureka Street* is similar to a great deal of Northern Irish fiction produced since the late 1960s. As Cleary (cited in Kennedy-Andrews, 2003, p.31) states, the trope of 'romance-across-the-divide' has become a staple of Northern Irish literature. The two figures whose love stretches across the political divide are used to demonstrate that human emotion is stronger than political, religious, and cultural affiliations – Wilson certainly uses the trope in this way, and in *Eureka Street*, there are a number of such relationships. The relationship between the Catholic socialist lawyer Slat Sloane and the DUP organiser Wincey is just one example of many within the novel.

Wilson also extends this idea, however, and makes the central pillar of his novel the friendship between the nominally Catholic Jake Jackson, who was born in West Belfast, and Chuckie Lurgan, a Protestant who lives in the loyalist Sandy Row area of the city. Despite growing up in a staunchly Protestant area, Chuckie's friends are all Catholics,

and he takes an ecumenical approach to life in general. The roots of this approach can be found in Chuckie's veneration of celebrity; Chuckie prides himself on being possibly the only Protestant to attend Pope John Paul II's visit to the Republic of Ireland in 1979. His main reason for attending the visit was the fact that the Pope was a globally famous figure; Chuckie comes from a family who are preternaturally obsessed with fame. Having reasoned that the Pope cannot be bad, because he is famous, Chuckie goes on to touch the Pope's hand, and the photograph he has of this event is one of his prized possessions.

Jake Jackson also takes a largely ecumenical approach to life; he eschews the Irish nationalism of Aoirghe Jenkins, who in many ways is Jake's enemy throughout the novel. Aoirghe criticises Jake for his lack of political commitment; in turn, Jake verbally attacks Aoirghe for failing to condemn IRA bombings in Belfast. Aoirghe believes that Ireland will one day be a unified nation and is an active member of Sinn Fein, who are renamed as "Just Us" in the novel. Jake breaks the nose of a Just Us activist, and is thrown out of a poetry reading attended by the intriguing character Shague Ghinthoss, for verbally abusing the poets.

Ghinthoss is an amalgam of many different Irish poets, and Wilson has stated that in Ireland, 'poets and poetry are carcinogenic' (Interview with Sylvie Mikowski, 2000, p.82). This is because, in Wilson's view, they project a 'self-conscious nationalism' which is performative, and entirely conscious of the fact that it is constructed. Wilson is also constructing an entirely self-conscious nationalism in his work, and so his critique is clearly less about nationalism itself, and more about the kind of Irish nationalism produced by poets such as Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson. Wilson is very clearly opposed to Irish nationalism, despite being born into a Catholic family. This opposition is expressed continually and aggressively by Wilson's main protagonist, Jake.

The novel itself contains many arguments for a settlement in Northern Ireland that is ecumenical, in that it includes representatives of both sides of the cultural divide. It is stated that the people of neither the Irish nationalist nor the loyalist communities are recognisably similar to the people of mainland Britain, or of the Republic of Ireland. In fact, the novel suggests, they are only really similar to each other, despite their political and cultural differences. Wilson argues that over the last 90 years of partition, Northern Ireland has developed an identity that is neither inherently British nor Irish. The

experience of sustained conflict has shaped its citizens so that they resemble only each other, and not the citizens of the state or nation that many feel they belong to.

The experience of lasting conflict has produced a certain kind of citizen, characterised by Wilson as wary, but also ambivalent about the ever-present threat of violence. In an interview with Graham Spencer, the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) leader for south Belfast, Jackie McDonald, offers a similar description of Northern Ireland's, and especially Belfast's, citizenry. He characterises them as 'wary, observant, and cautious', and in possession of a 'sixth sense' regarding potential violence (McDonald, in conversation with Spencer, 2011, p.219). McDonald also argues that the experience of the Troubles means that Northern Ireland is not what he would call a 'normal society'. He feels that it could take 'another forty years' for Northern Irish people to feel that their situation is similar to that of people in other territories (McDonald, in conversation with Spencer, 2011, p.219).

McDonald's experience as a loyalist paramilitary does mean that, as he admits, he was living with the constant fear of being killed. However, the often random nature of paramilitary attacks on Northern Irish citizens meant that nobody was truly safe from the violence. *Eureka Street* contains a graphic and sustained description of a bomb attack on a sandwich shop in Belfast city centre. All the citizens who die in the attack are going about their daily business, and Wilson is careful to distance them from any suggestion that they may have been involved in paramilitary activity themselves. The unique atmosphere of the Troubles pervades the experience of living in Northern Ireland, as Wilson makes clear in his novel.

Despite the general focus upon content rather than style, there is one aspect of Wilson's style that is significant for a study of cultural nationalism. The majority of *Eureka Street* is written as a realist novel. However, in one particularly important chapter, Wilson describes Belfast as a "text" that is created by the actions of every individual within it. In Wilson's work, this is presented as a positive thing, because this takes responsibility for the identity of the city, and Northern Ireland as a whole, out of the hands of politicians. This feeds into ideas about the "imagined community"; if citizens can imagine their community to be integrated, co-operative, and peaceful, then there is more chance of this becoming a social reality. In describing Belfast in a positive way, Wilson is attempting to assist in the process of forging a new understanding amongst Northern

Irish citizens, similar to that between his Protestant and Catholic characters. In *Eureka Street*, Wilson (1998, p.215) writes that: 'The city is a repository of narratives, of stories. Present tense, past tense, or future. The city is a novel.'

People are described as narratives, endlessly changing and complex. The city is a result of what they do, what they say, how they think and how they feel. Responsibility for the city's identity rests solely with the citizenry of Belfast. This means that if they will it, conflict can end, and a new, peaceful culture can be created.

## Criticism of *Eureka Street* and wider ecumenical/cosmopolitan viewpoints in Northern Ireland: "Soft Unionism"?

In keeping with the general narrative scheme of *Eureka Street*, Jake and Aoirghe become a couple at the novel's denouement. Cleary (cited in Kennedy-Andrews, 2003, p.31) argues that the 'romance-across-the-divide' novel can 'only work if we suppress politics and accept the political and constitutional status quo in Ireland'. Despite arguing for an ecumenical solution to conflict in Northern Ireland, Wilson's work has been discussed as sympathetic to unionism because it does not accept the legitimacy of Irish nationalism as a political or cultural movement. Unionism is not described in the same terms, and in the highly sensitive environment of Northern Ireland, this can be seen as evidence of political bias. Ecumenicalism is often described as "soft unionism", largely because it is dismissive of the aims of Irish nationalism, whilst showing respect for religious difference. Often, the widely accepted link between religious affiliation and political belief is underplayed or argued against within the ecumenical novel, and this is certainly the case in *Eureka Street*.

Gallaher (2007) dismisses the possibility that Northern Ireland could develop an inclusive culture, and states that this idea is the preserve of middle-class cultural elites who misunderstand the link between religious affiliation and political ideals. It has to be noted that both Wilson and Patterson come from well-educated, middle-class backgrounds. Further to this, Gallaher (2007, p.86) argues that the idea of Northern Ireland developing an inclusive, ecumenical culture is 'more an expression of privilege than a workable alternative' to the current political situation, despite the growth of the Alliance party in recent times. Arguing that there is little popular appetite for a unified, inclusive, and recognisably Northern Irish culture, Gallaher (2007, p.86) suggests that 'the idea that cosmopolitanism can take root in Northern Ireland is naïve'. This is

largely because the experience of conflict has hardened attitudes within the working-class communities most affected by violence and paramilitary activity.

It also seems unlikely that Irish nationalists would abandon their attempts to promote Irish culture, given the successes that they have achieved since the Belfast Agreement was signed. For this reason, Cleary (quoted in Kennedy-Andrews, 2003, p.31) describes the idea that Northern Ireland can develop a separate state as 'an explicitly unionist wish-fantasy' because it would involve Irish nationalists failing to achieve their desire for a united Ireland. It is clear that a separate Northern Irish state would be preferable to many Ulster Protestants than a future within a united Ireland. For this reason, those who argue for a separate Northern Irish character tend to be Protestant, although Wilson can be seen as the exception that proves the rule. Alliance has mostly developed its vote through disaffected unionists, not from Irish nationalists.

Further to this, Wilson argues against the idea that the people of Northern Ireland and the Republic are culturally similar; this argument also tends to be the preserve of unionists. The ideas laid out in novels have to be understood in terms of the political context in which they appear. Arguments for a separate Northern Irish character are never made by Irish nationalists. As most ideas tend to be understood within the "two-community" model, those who do argue that it is possible to develop a separate Northern Irish identity tend to be seen as either unionist or loyalist (most commonly the latter), even if they do not consider themselves to belong to either tradition. The ecumenical viewpoint is growing in significance within Northern Irish politics, but is often understood as "soft unionism" by many voters. Alliance maintain a commitment to the United Kingdom providing a majority in Northern Ireland remain in favour of it, but it is not fundamental to the party's identity.

Within the constraints of the "two communities" model, the proponents of ecumenicalism/cosmopolitanism face a struggle to promote their ideas, and to have them understood as part of a new framework, rather than a softer version of an existing viewpoint. The novel represents a useful vehicle for the discussion of a Northern Ireland that is not defined by existing and well-defined political doctrines. The expression of ecumenical ideals within literature does mean that those ideals enter the popular imagination, which is significant. However, unlike the recognisably popular and strikingly nationalist novels currently being produced in Scotland, the extent to which

the ecumenical novel is representative of the wider political debate is limited. The role of novelists who utilise this approach is best described as to present a cultural ideal which has not yet found a political vehicle whose strength is equal to that of Irish nationalism, unionism, or loyalism. Relative to the popularity of ecumenical, cross-community politics, there is almost an over-representation of ecumenical viewpoints in fiction.

This indicates a certain level of disconnection between elite literary culture and "the masses" in Northern Ireland. This is the same situation as in elite unionist culture, and it demonstrates the clear class divide that exists in the territory. However, the fact that ecumenical novels have become relatively popular does suggest an appetite for the arguments contained within them, and this is important. Political debate is still dominated by those who had first-hand experience of the Troubles, and those who did not experience conflict directly are often perceived to hold naïve opinions. Cultural nationalism, as expressed in ecumenical Northern Irish fiction, actually promotes a vision of Northern Ireland that has not yet found a great deal of popular support. It remains to be seen whether support for that vision will develop in future years.

## Conclusions

Given the acculturation of Northern Irish politics, cultural processes have become increasingly important in the contemporary era. The novel is an effective format for propagating cultural nationalism and engaging with political arguments about the future of Northern Ireland. Contemporary Northern Irish fiction generally promotes two different visions of the territory. Some novelists argue for a political and cultural accommodation between communities, in order to form a new and unified Northern Irish polity. Anti-British fiction is also produced, which argues against the continuation of British influence in Northern Ireland.

Cultural nationalism is produced which is either Irish nationalist, or arguing for a new vision of Northern Ireland. Unionist and loyalist viewpoints are generally absent; one strong explanation for this is that the former group have not yet developed a strong cultural presence which has popular resonance. Rather than utilising a reflective method of producing cultural nationalism, the latter primarily express their culture through participatory rituals and popular symbols, as discussed in the previous chapter. As unionist and loyalist viewpoints are generally absent from Northern Irish contemporary

fiction, this avenue for contributing to the "imagined community" is currently closed to these groups within the Ulster Protestant community.

Novelists like Eoin McNamee do present an Irish nationalist perspective on Northern Ireland's history and culture, however. The anti-British discourse in McNamee's work is recognisably close to positions taken by Irish nationalist politicians in Northern Ireland. McNamee produces profoundly political novels, which discuss incidents of British collusion with loyalist paramilitaries, and accuse British forces of involvement in the deaths of Catholic civilians in both Northern Ireland and the Republic. McNamee also presents Protestantism as inherently violent and describes it as a 'wrathful' creed. It is clear that McNamee's work is best considered as an elite expression of Irish nationalism.

The stark difference in perception between the work of McNamee, and that of Robert McLiam Wilson and Glenn Patterson, is symbolic of their wider political differences. Wilson and Patterson are positive about Belfast and Northern Ireland as a whole. Wilson describes the territory as belonging to its citizens, and argues that if they want a peaceful future, they can create it themselves. McNamee sees the hand of the British government and security forces behind every dark event of Northern Irish history. He argues that while there is an element of British control over Northern Ireland, the territory will remain dangerous, and conflict will remain unresolved. Both *Resurrection Man* and *The Ultras* argue that British forces have manipulated conflict in Northern Ireland for political advantage. McNamee's work is an attempt to redress the influence of British accounts of the Troubles.

The alternative viewpoint is not provided by either unionists or loyalists; rather, it comes from the middle-class authors responsible for creating the "ecumenical novel". These texts promote the idea of cross-community unity in Northern Ireland; this idea is largely absent from the political arena. As a result, novelists like Wilson and Patterson are best understood as promoting a kind of cultural nationalism that has yet to find a truly popular political vehicle. Literature in Northern Ireland is largely dominated by middle-class novelists, who cannot be said to have achieved the same popular resonance as authors in Scotland. As in the political arena, there are two principal ideas jostling for position in Northern Ireland. However, that one of these two ideas is ecumenical rather than unionist or loyalist demonstrates a certain fissure between Northern Irish politics,

and Northern Irish literary culture. Arguments for an ecumenical political accommodation in Northern Ireland remain the preserve of the middle-classes in contemporary culture and politics.

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# Contemporary Scottish literature and the production of a distinctively Scottish cultural identity

This chapter will examine the ways in which contemporary Scottish authors are involved in the production of Scottish cultural identity. It will analyse representations of Scottish identity, and the methods that are used to produce this sense of identity. Citing Galloway and Dunlop, the Scottish writer and artist Pat Kane (2011, p.211) states that 'culture implies the production and circulation of symbolic ideas'. These ideas are designed to enter the public arena and to permeate the popular consciousness. Leoussi and Grosby (2007, pp.1-2) suggest that culture is 'a shared, but changing complex of meanings' produced by 'the heterogenous pursuits of humanity'. Culture is a process, not a monolithic structure, and cultural identities change according to what is produced.

In describing life within a delineated socio-cultural space, authors produce artefacts that create a sense of commonality between people who will never meet. It does not necessarily follow that authors will produce works of fiction which describe a common national culture, as there are many different kinds of community. However, it is very significant that the most popular and successful authors of literary fiction within Scotland do discuss a community which is delineated by national boundaries. This chapter will discuss the work of two of these authors, Irvine Welsh and James Kelman, in order to demonstrate the ways in which they produce ideas about modern Scotland. These two authors have been chosen because they are the two of the most influential Scottish cultural practitioners in the contemporary era. Welsh is one of the best-known current writers of literary fiction, not just in Scotland or the United Kingdom, but across the globe.[29] Kelman is acknowledged to be highly influential, and has also produced a number of novels which have attained critical success and attracted academic scrutiny, although his contribution to nationalism is seldom examined.

It is particularly important that the community which they describe is definitively Scottish rather than British. Neither Welsh nor Kelman believe that the community that

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[29] Despite contending that literature can be a form of popular culture, this study accepts that there are often differences in intent between "literary" fiction and "genre" fiction, including detective novels, romance, and thrillers. Crucially for this study, in Scotland and Northern Ireland the former style is often very politicised, while the latter often engages with political realities only on a level that is too superficial to warrant sustained analysis. There are of course exceptions to this rule, and it is not the intention of this study to belittle genre fiction. It is simply the case that literary fiction produced in Scotland and Northern Ireland is politicised, while the most successful authors of genre fiction in the territories discussed are far less concerned with politics. A study of those forms of fiction would prove to be less useful and insightful, hence the decision to focus solely upon "literary" fiction.

they discuss has cultural commonality with people in other parts of Britain; this is especially the case with regards to England, as this chapter will examine in detail. As Eriksen (2004, p.47) states:

> 'The force of nationhood depends on the national ideology's ability to transfer the sentiments and commitments of citizens from their personal experience to that abstract and imagined community called the nation'.

The experiences that Welsh and Kelman's characters undergo are understood to be common to many other people in Scotland; they are certainly described in such terms and it is generally understood that people within the Scottish cultural community will recognise and empathise with the experiences of the characters. However, it is not held to be the case that people in England will feel the same level of recognition and England is frequently described as a cultural and political "other" to Scotland. This is vitally important because the limit of the community that is described is Scottish rather than British. The notion that Britishness is a part of Scottish identity is repudiated by both Welsh and Kelman, and this has both a cultural and a political significance.

## Scottish nationalism as a response to English culture and politics: The rejection of Thatcherism and neoliberalism in Scotland

Scottish nationalism, in both cultural and political forms, has become increasingly anti-Union since 1979. Anti-Thatcherite and anti-Conservative arguments are central to a number of novels that have been produced after 1979. Within *Trainspotting*, anti-Thatcherism is a constant presence, and this derives from Irvine Welsh's own views. Welsh has stated that:

> There's a political point of view that says being working-class in post-Thatcherite Britain is to be disenfranchised, and the additional factor of being Scottish within an English dominated union makes you doubly marginalised [...] After the 1979 devolution debacle, there was the feeling in Scotland that we had no voice. I don't think it's an entire coincidence that you suddenly had all these working-class writers emerging at this time (Welsh, in Peddie, 2007, p.133).

It is generally accepted that 1979 marks a watershed in Scottish history. Not only was Thatcher elected, but a referendum on a devolved parliament was defeated, albeit in circumstances that still rankle with Scottish nationalists.

Morace (2007, p.14) suggests that many people in Scotland feel that the changing of electoral procedure, so that over 40% of the eligible population had to have voted for

devolution for the vote to be binding, is an example of 'English treachery'. These events helped to animate a Scottish nationalism which is opposed to the Union. Welsh's (2012) novel "Skagboys" refers to this event as the beginning of a burgeoning unemployment and drug problem in Scotland. Through short, polemical chapters entitled "Notes on an epidemic", Welsh argues that Conservative government policy forced Scottish people into long-term unemployment, which in turn led to problems with mental and physical health for many Scots. Welsh makes clear his belief that the Conservative government deliberately and knowingly treated working-class Scots with disdain throughout the 1980s.

Kidd (2008) argues that before the election of Margaret Thatcher as British Prime Minister, Unionism maintained a relatively high level of popularity in Scotland and was not the polar opposite of nationalism; rather, there was space for a level of Scottish nationalism within Unionism because Scottish businesses and institutions were able to operate with a level of freedom from governmental interference. Further to this, Pittock (2008, p.39) argues that under previous administrations, 'the autonomy of the professions and much of the institutional economy of Scotland was seen as guaranteed by the Union, a kind of middle-class home rule'. However, under Thatcher, control over the Scottish economy was wrested away from Scotland and placed firmly in the south-east of England.

As Kidd (2008, p.4) suggests, 'Thatcherite Unionism upheld a stridently unitarist conception of the British state' with London at its centre. Under Thatcher, there was no doubt that power was concentrated in London and its environs, and Scotland was expected to conform to the values that the Thatcher government championed. Pittock (2008) suggests that the centralism of Thatcher's economic policies ran contrary to the approach that had been taken in the past and that increased control over the Scottish economy from Westminster undermined Scottish confidence in the Union. Hearn (2000, p.3) defines Thatcherism as chiefly being the belief in 'neoliberal social policies and radical free market agendas' and notes that Scotland 'has tended to oppose' such approaches. Further to this, Hearn (2000, p.3) also states that Scottish people are 'more inclined to support collectivist and redistributive policies on questions such as support for public education [and] nationalisation of industries', and so the values of the majority of Scottish people became diametrically opposed to those of the Westminster government during the 1980s.

Pittock (2008, p.78) argues that due to their increasing unpopularity in Scotland, in the 1980s and 1990s the Conservative party 'ceased to listen to views in Scotland which did not originate among their own supporters'. As this base became increasingly narrow, the views of ordinary Scots became increasingly unimportant to the government. As a consequence, the Conservatives chose to use Scotland as a testing ground for policies which they knew would be controversial. The decision to roll out the hugely unpopular Poll Tax in Scotland one year before England in a test of its efficacy is the event that many commentators feel finally destroyed any residual Scottish support for the Conservatives.

It is certainly the case that contemporary Scottish fiction describes Thatcherism in exceedingly negative terms. Welsh suggests in *Trainspotting* that because the Conservative government of the 1980s and 1990s had no real support within Scotland, they chose to ignore its needs. In *Trainspotting*, one of the main narrators, Mark Renton, argues that 'there's nae votes for the Government doon here (in West Granton); so why bother daein anything fir people whae urnae gaunnae support ye?' (Welsh, 1999, p.315). Renton further argues that the government have neglected their duty of care within Scotland, and this has exacerbated the social problems felt in "schemes" where jobs are already scarce and opportunities limited.

Contemporary Scottish nationalism is, at both the cultural and political levels, defined by its opposition to Thatcherism and the neoliberal government policy that it has inspired. It is clear that culture and "material" issues are closely linked, and that cultural production is particularly concerned with issues that many theorists incorrectly consider to be solely political, legal, or economic. Farred (2004, p.212) claims that Thatcherism 'evacuated Scottishness and destroyed any oppositional notion of the identity'; in reality, it did the reverse of this. As Kowalski (2004, p.71) argues, Thatcher can be seen as 'the saviour of the nationalist cause' in Scotland; by breaking the existing consensus and moving the balance of power to the south of England, Thatcher changed the terms in which the Union was understood in Scotland. The 1980s and 1990s saw a revival of interest in Scottish nationalism, as opposed to support for the British identity, and this has continued into the twenty-first century.

It is fair to say that the Scottish nationalist renaissance has its basis in culture. Kravitz (2012) has said that 'when the politics of a country run aground, the people look for

self-expression in culture'; this was certainly the case in Scotland during the 1980s and early 1990s. While the SNP floundered and failed to make any significant political gains, Scottish culture was undergoing a resurgence, with a large number of writers, artists and musicians emerging whose voice was distinctively Scottish and whose nationalism was explicit. Scottish literary fiction after 1979 is, for the most part, written about contemporary events rather than those of Scotland's past. This helps to create the sense that Scottish culture made a decisive shift after 1979; because much of the nation's past is defined by unionism and the Union, it was necessary to create a new culture which discusses Scotland solely as a separate nation whose culture is distinct from that to be found elsewhere.

Dixon (1996, p.18) states that Scotland has a 'coherent [and] alternative vision of cultural production' to that found in other nations. This both informs and reflects a 'cultural revolution' which 'has accompanied the remapping of the Scottish political scene'. Pittock (2008, p.123) concurs with this statement, arguing that:

> 'one of the features of the creation of a Scottish cultural agenda after 1979 was a determination to rid the country of the historical clichés, inferiorism and misunderstandings which it was believed by some had held Scotland back from devolution'.

Cultural nationalism in Scotland is powerful and influential, as this study will demonstrate. Scottish literature has played a particularly important role within the sphere of cultural nationalism, through the success of a number of Scottish authors. This study will examine the work of Irvine Welsh and James Kelman because these authors are popular in two separate senses; their work attempts to describe the experience of "the masses", and as a consequence, they have become very successful.

While the Thatcher era ended in 1992, the neoliberal policies that the Conservative party championed during the 1980s have continued to be the basis of government policy. This has been the case under the Conservative and Labour administrations that followed the Thatcher era, and during the tenure of the current government, which is a coalition of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties. Industries which were once nationalised are now privatised, the welfare state has been continually pruned, and there have been deep cuts to the public sector. The rhetoric of the coalition government has, in large part, related to reducing the United Kingdom's public debt (HM Treasury 2010, 2011, Office for Budget Responsibility 2011, 2012). This has resulted in policies which

involve cutting resources, jobs, and government funding to the public sector and National Health Service. Scotland's electorate, as many commentators (McCrone, 1992, and Hearn, 2006, amongst others) have discussed, generally value the public sector, and do not welcome its privatisation.

Keating (2009, p.54) argues that while there is opposition to neoliberalism across the United Kingdom, this 'has a territorial expression in Scotland'. This is particularly clear in novels such as Welsh's *Glue* (2002) and *Skagboys* (2012), and Kelman's *How Late It Was, How Late"* (1998), all of which strongly condemn cuts to the welfare state and argue that this leads to the dereliction and even death of Scottish citizens. Welsh's *Filth* (1998) also makes this argument; the novel's main protagonist, Bruce Robertson, suffers a mental breakdown and fails to receive proper aftercare due to cuts in the public health and social care budgets. As a consequence, his mental state deteriorates, he becomes an alcoholic, and eventually commits suicide. It is made clear that if he had received any kind of aftercare, he would not have died.

Within contemporary Scottish literature, it is often suggested that the values held by the people of Scotland, and the values of the mostly English electorate who voted for the parties within the coalition government, are fundamentally different. This argument has its basis in political reality. Despite only winning one seat in the whole of Scotland at the 2010 General Election, the Conservatives are the majority party within the governing coalition at Westminster and their policies continue to be implemented in Scotland despite a lack of mandate from the Scottish electorate. The party's result in Scotland was actually an improvement on the 2007 election, at which no Conservatives were returned in Scotland. The Scottish National Party (SNP) won six seats at the 2010 General Election, but the Labour Party won 41 seats, making them the most popular party in Scotland at that time (Electoral Commission 2010).

This does not tell the whole story, however, as there are two separate elections in Scotland. Since 1999, there has been a devolved Scottish parliament with responsibility for Health, Education, Rural Affairs, Housing, and Arts, Culture and Sport, amongst others. The Scottish parliament does not, however, have responsibility for key economic decisions, foreign affairs, or defence, and therefore it cannot be said that the Scottish government has full control over affairs which concern the Scottish people. This is particularly significant. The most recent Scottish Parliamentary Election was held in

May 2011, and for the first time in the parliament's history, one party took overall control of the Scottish government. The SNP won 69 seats, including 53 constituencies. Labour were second with 37 seats, but the party conceded 20 constituencies to the SNP. The Conservative party won 15 seats but only three constituencies, while the Liberal Democrats won only 5 seats, a loss of 12 on their result in 2007 (Electoral Commission 2011).

As a consequence, the two parties that control the government of the United Kingdom are the two least successful parties in the Scottish parliament. This clearly indicates a difference between the voting patterns of the United Kingdom as a whole, and those of Scotland. It is also indicative of the differences between English and Scottish political and cultural values, a fact that will be addressed in detail during this chapter. Pittock (2008, p.89) suggests that 'the trajectory of British policy will continue to increase the intensity of Scottishness' and support for the Union will continue to weaken. The SNP certainly hope that this sentiment is correct and have called for a referendum on outright independence from the United Kingdom. This is currently scheduled to take place in Autumn 2014 (Scottish Government 2012).

## The political role of cultural practitioners: The relationship between Scottish cultural and political nationalism

Hearn (2000, p.77) describes Scottish novelists as operating within the public sphere. This is an idea developed by Habermas which perceives intellectuals as being involved in 'a domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed' (Hearn, 2000, p.77). The ideas produced within works of fiction enter the public domain and provoke discussion. Despite Habermas' own misgivings about the ideas he initially developed, the notion of the public sphere remains an important component within political and social thought. Crossley and Roberts (2004, p.18) state that ideas about the public sphere have developed and the concept has been condensed so that 'the modern public sphere now comprises several arenas' in which 'printed materials dealing with matters of culture, information, and entertainment' play an essential role. Rather than people meeting in person to discuss and disseminate ideas about society as in Habermas' original formulation of the public sphere, discussions about the nature of any community take place through the written word. Novels can offer an in-depth

description of the community in which they are set. They also allow for arguments to be made about the future of that community.

Novelists such as Welsh and Kelman can be understood as attempting to progress political ideas within a cultural medium. Their work consistently makes the political point that Scotland would be best served by leaving the United Kingdom. Smith (2001, p.22) describes nationalism as 'a language and culture of human association'; nationalism is not a monolith, nor is it solely a political doctrine. Nationalism is fluid and changes with time, just as language and culture do. It is, as Hutchinson (2004, p.77) states, 'implausible' that nationalism is always something that is mobilised 'from above' by 'modernising' political forces. It is instead more reasonable to assert that 'non-state' forces can create the environment for popular nationalism to be politically expressed, as has been the case in Scotland.

Events within the political sphere initially created a reaction in the cultural sphere, as anti-Thatcher, pro-Scotland novelists began to discuss their opposition to neo-Liberal policy. This grew into a cultural movement which continues to exert a strong influence over identity in Scotland. Political nationalism in Scotland was at a low ebb during the period in which cultural nationalism came to the fore, but has grown in stature, which is in part due to the work of cultural nationalists. The relationship between culture and politics in Scotland is mutually informing and complex, but it is clear that the type of Scottish nationalism expressed within fiction plays an important role. Novelists influence debate about the nation and therefore they play a key role within it. This is particularly the case in nations that lack a state but aspire to attain one in the future, because they maintain that nation's presence as a separate cultural unit. The gap between cultural and political nationalism in Scotland is very narrow, and the two are mutually informative.

In nations that lack a political state, public intellectuals play a key role in maintaining the nation's presence as a separate cultural unit. Guibernau (2004, p.134) argues that in order for stateless nations to propagate their own culture, as opposed to that of the state in which the nation has become subsumed, 'an alternative elite' is required. The role of this elite group is to 'provide cultural, historical, political, and economic arguments to foster and sustain the distinctive character of the stateless nation and to legitimise its will to decide  upon a political future' (Guibernau, 2004, p.134). The work of Welsh

and Kelman provides cultural, political, and economic arguments for Scottish independence from the United Kingdom. Due to the fundamental change in Scottish identity after 1979, the significance of historical arguments has been greatly reduced. Using Guibernau's formulation, the authors can be seen as political actors whose work attempts to legitimise Scotland's separation from England.

However, it is less profitable to see contemporary Scottish authors as being part of a narrow cultural elite, than it is for authors in other nations and territories (notably Northern Ireland, as demonstrated, but also England). Scottish literature most commonly reflects "popular", working-class values and social processes, rather than elite cultural and political beliefs. In Scotland, the gap between elite and popular culture is very narrow, to the extent that a form of culture that is often considered to be "elite" has become "popular". The reasons for this are manifold, and will be examined in detail. It is generally acknowledged that Scotland has a strong working-class culture which is far more significant in the production of nationalism than the nation's largely residual middle-class culture (McCrone, 1992, Pittock, 2008).

The SNP have benefitted considerably from a sea-change within Scottish culture, in which Scotland is continually described as a separate nation which would be best served by leaving the United Kingdom. The SNP's message is that Scotland is different to the rest of the United Kingdom, and the fact that this message is a repeated trope within Scottish fiction has helped to normalise the idea of a separate Scottish consciousness in the present day. Literature has become a social process which has played a key role in promoting the idea of Scottish cultural difference. Many novels also cast unionists in the role of "other", and belittle their ideals and personalities; Irvine Welsh's work often depicts unionists as racist, sectarian bigots. This would have been far less likely before 1979, and in many ways reflects a wider dissatisfaction with the Union.

Contemporary Scottish fiction sets the limits of the experiences described as the border with England; English people are described as "other" and their experiences and beliefs as fundamentally different to those of Scottish people. In this way, the imagined community is limited to the nation rather than the political state of the United Kingdom, which clearly benefits those who wish Scotland to be perceived as a separate entity. It can be said that 'cultural nationalist movements can create a counter-cultural centre against the state' by mobilising popular feeling against government policies

(Hutchinson, 2001, p.78). As in Northern Ireland and the wider European Union, there has been an acculturation of politics in Scotland. The SNP have benefitted considerably from the presence of a cultural movement which shares the aim of promoting nationalism and attaining independence.

The SNP are certainly aware of the significance of Scottish literature; after Alex Salmond was appointed as the party's leader, the SNP started to improve its public relations by utilising the popularity of Scottish authors, most notably Irvine Welsh. In recognising the usefulness of culture that describes Scotland as fundamentally different to other nations, the SNP has made it clear that all processes, rather just those confined to politics, are useful in the production of a nationalist argument. The party has also acknowledged the importance of literary production to Scotland's modern identity by using the words of novelists in political broadcasts, and offering tax breaks in order to encourage writers and other artists to create more works which may help to bring Scotland to greater prominence in the cultural world (The Herald, 14th April 2007). Irvine Welsh has made his support for Salmond clear, stating:

> I am passionate about my country and am very tired of listening to politicians talking us down. I personally believe that Alex Salmond is the best person to take Scotland forward (The Herald, 14th April 2007).

In response to this, Salmond said that he is 'delighted to have Irvine's support and endorsement of the SNP's policies to support and invest in Scotland's creative sector. The SNP know how important artists like Irvine are in cultural terms' (The Herald, 14th April 2007).

## Contemporary Scottish fiction as an expression of working-class values

While literary production is often the preserve of cultural elites, this is less the case in Scotland than in any other nation or territory within the United Kingdom. It is fair to say that 'the working-class dominance of Scottish imaginative and interpretative literature [...] is the mirror image of the situation in England where middle-class character and context dominate and working-class experience is marginalised' (Maxwell, 1991, p.141). In Scottish fiction, different experiences and situations are explored and thus they seep into reality and become a part of national identity. The class identity held by those who contribute to Scottish culture is different to that held by those who write

about English culture, and this helps to emphasise the differences between the two nations.

The reasons for the differences between Scottish and English literary culture are manifold. Maxwell (1991, p.141) suggests that 'the Scottish working class has developed a keener sense of identity from its long record of struggle against harsh odds' than the Scottish middle class has; the experience of having to fight for every success and every minor recognition has moulded and hardened the Scottish working class identity into something powerful, and the literature that helps to define Scottish culture reflects this identity. Gallagher (1991, p.18) agrees, saying that there is 'a striking dearth of imaginative literature about the character and experience of the Scottish middle class which points to a remarkable absence of self-awareness' - the Scottish middle class are not, he says, particularly interested in producing fiction that represents their lives because their identities are the result of what has been termed the 'complacent enjoyment of provincial privilege' (Maxwell, 1991, p.141).

This affects the way that Scottish identity is perceived both within and outside the nation; the Scottish middle class identity may become marginalised in the way that the working class identity has in England due to their lack of representation in culture. McCrone (1992, p.159) goes as far as to suggest that this has already occurred. He argues that the Scottish middle-classes have largely left the nation, and there is no longer 'a sufficient social base left in Scotland to naturalise the Conservative message; this leaves the left-wing, working-class tradition to dominate Scotland both politically and culturally'. Welsh's work is typical of contemporary Scottish fiction in that it focuses upon the lives of working-class people and is rather disdainful of middle-class pursuits; by way of example, the characters in *Trainspotting* perceive the Edinburgh festival to be a culturally inauthentic event because it is patronised largely by middle-class people, many from England and the United States. As Pittock (2008, p.145) states, 'English nationality has always been inextricably linked with wealth and snobbery in Scottish stereotyping' and Welsh's work makes it clear that this attitude to the English persists in Scotland.

Welsh's fiction reflects the social reality of Scotland, which is that the working class culture of the central and western urban centres is now the basis for many of the ideals held by the nation's citizens. In order to avoid misunderstandings about what Scottish

culture is, authors have set about describing it in its minutiae so that their Scottish audience recognise and understand the similarities between their lives and the ones described in the fiction that they read. This process also involves proclaiming the importance of Scottish experience, in a form understood by the majority of the people of Scotland. Contemporary Scottish culture coalesces around working-class values and Scottish fiction plays a key role in this.

As Hearn (2000, p.11) states, 'national identity [...] has a tendency to be imagined in narrative forms' and the story that is told about Scotland in Welsh's fiction is that it is a largely working-class nation with working-class values which are the polar opposite to those held by the people of England. This representation ignores the fact that England does not have a homogenous culture, in order to mobilise Scottish people against their chief cultural "other". Eriksen (2004, p.57) suggests that in the production of national identity, 'having something in common doubtless helps, but there is nothing like a common enemy' for people to rally against. Literary production has become a process in which England is routinely cast as "the other". While this does draw upon a long history of enmity between the two nations, the frequency and virulence with which this idea has been discussed and reinforced since 1979 emphasises its importance within arguments for Scottish national independence.

Welsh's contemporary, James Kelman, has said that 'ninety-nine per cent of traditional English literature concerns people who never have to worry about money at all' and that his aim is to redress that balance and write about his 'own people' (Kelman, 2003, p.70). The fiction that Kelman produces presents urban Scotland as a place where life can be very tough and there is 'fuck all (work), unless you want to count Welwyn Garden City' as an option – it seems fair to say that this example has been chosen to demonstrate the difference between social conditions in run-down, working class Glasgow and stereotypically middle class southern English towns, which have largely thrived since the 1980s (Kelman, 2007, p.70). Kelman presents the stark choices available to many working class Scots and suggests that one reason for the decline of Scottish industry is that all the available work in the United Kingdom is deliberately concentrated in England. Kelman's work reflects the fact that 'Glasgow, once the most British of Scottish cities, has become more and more intensely Scottish [due to] its loss of control over its own industries' (Pittock, 2008, p.103). Resentment caused by

Westminster government policy has led many of the people of Glasgow to become increasingly nationalistic.

Kelman (2003, p.59) has stated that Scotland is currently an 'occupied country' and that 'a shorthand definition of Britain is "Greater England"'. Kelman feels that Scotland needs a greater level of political self-expression and the fiction that he produces represents Scotland as a nation that is suffering while it remains a part of the United Kingdom. As Pittock (2008, p.41) suggests, 'heavy industry was vital to the Scottish self-image'; Kelman's work examines the effect that the removal of most of Scotland's heavy industry during the 1980s and 1990s has had upon the nation. His characters are resentful of the lack of opportunities for them and mistrustful of those who are in positions of authority, largely because they are benefitting in some way from the social status quo.

Further to this, Kelman has stated that a 'shorthand definition of assimilation is someone who denies their culture', and his fiction demonstrates his unwillingness to assimilate by discussing very few of the dominant subject matters to be found within the majority of works of fiction produced in England (Kelman, 2003, p.59). One of the main effects of Thatcherism was to cement the English middle class as the dominant social group within the United Kingdom as a whole, and contemporary Scottish fiction is a reaction to this. The work of Welsh and Kelman insists upon Scotland as a separate cultural entity with very different interests and beliefs to those found in England.

In Scotland, literary cultural nationalism is commonly concerned with popular, rather than elite conceptions of the nation. This is different to England, and also different to Northern Ireland, as explored in the previous chapter. Working-class culture has come to dominate, partly due to the fact that Scotland, as long ago as 1992, has been perceived as a largely working-class nation whose middle-classes have largely left altogether (McCrone, 1992). Acknowledging this fact has been key to the SNP's rise; once known as the party of "Tartan Tories", the SNP made a strategic move to the left during the late 1980s and early 1990s, knowing that if they did not do this, they had no hope of making any significant electoral gains (Pittock 2008).

The distinction between elite and popular culture is more blurred in Scotland than anywhere else in the United Kingdom. Working-class values have come to dominate, in large part due to their continued expression in Scottish culture. Scottish cultural

nationalism is perhaps most clearly expressed in literature because the format allows for the production of a clear and sustained polemical argument. This is one particularly important reason for analysing literature, as opposed to visual images or music, whose reception is far more dependent upon personal interpretation. Whilst reflection does play a key role in the reception of literature, the political arguments that are made within literary fiction are clearly intended to sway audiences in a certain direction. This intention is less clear in other forms of culture.[30]

## The use of idiomatic speech as a nationalist cultural statement

There are also other ways of expressing nationalism through literature than polemic, and one of these is to use a form of speech which demonstrates cultural difference from other nations. Macaulay (2005, p.21) argues that there are two principal functions for the use of working class speech in Scotland. The first of these is 'to affirm Scottish identity and separateness from the English', and the second, and closely related function is 'to affirm working class loyalty and distance from middle class values'. As the work of both Welsh and Kelman is designed to assert that Scotland and England are fundamentally different, then it is to be expected that they would use working class vernacular speech in their fiction. The literary mode used by both Welsh and Kelman, and also a number of their contemporaries including Alan Warner, Alasdair Gray, and William McIlvanney, very clearly privileges Scottish dialect and colloquial idioms over the use of Standard English. This dimension of their work is very important because the nation can be seen as being 'conceived in language' (Anderson, 1991, p.36) and the political and cultural impact of the choice to write in colloquial language rather than Standard English cannot be underestimated.

Both Welsh and Kelman have transported colloquial methods of communication to the world outside Scotland and have therefore taken their culture to a wider audience who are now aware of Scottish idioms and the ways that life is lived in Edinburgh and Glasgow. However, it is the effect of their choice to use colloquial language upon the people of their own nation that this study will focus upon. Within Scottish literature, it

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[30] A good example is the track "George Square Thatcher Death Party" by the well-known Glasgow band Mogwai. While the title may seem to suggest a clear intent, the track itself has no lyrics. This leaves an audience to consider whether the band are in favour of such an event, or opposed to it. There are no such ambiguities in the sustained condemnation of Thatcherite policies contained within literature.

is not just the argument, but the whole process of production that is nationalist. When discussing the culture of post-colonial nations, Fanon (2001, p.180) argued that:

> The native intellectual who comes back to his people by way of cultural achievements behaves in fact like a foreigner. Sometimes he has no hesitation in using a dialect in order to show his will to be as near as possible to the people; but the ideas that he expresses and the ideas he is taken up with have no common yardstick to measure the real situation which the men and women of his country know.

In the post-colonial situation, Fanon suggests that only the use of a native language, rather than the language of the departed colonial power, is acceptable if the intellectual life of the nation is to truly represent the people that it purports to represent. However, what strategy can an author use to represent his or her own people if the nation that they are from shares a common language with the power that they wish to fight against? In the case of Scottish literature, the use of dialect serves as a tool to be used against the perceived English dominance of British culture and politics.

Kelman (2003, p.63) has said that his intention as an author was always 'to write as one of my own people', and for him this involves using their patterns of speech and dialect, otherwise the work lacks authenticity and has become compromised. One of the main ideals behind Kelman's fiction is that 'literature is a form of art that concern(s) the day-to-day existence of ordinary men and women' and as such it ought to reflect the ways that they interact with each other. The example that he gives is that of 'writing about a few men in a pub'; this is something he does fairly often in his fiction, which is usually set in recognisably domestic scenes such as public houses, schools, post offices, and the houses of working class people in Glasgow. Kelman (2003, p.65) has said that 'you can either write using the dialogue they might actually use or you can write using language they wouldn't use. If you do the latter then you end up censoring their whole existence'. Given that one of the aims of contemporary Scottish fiction is to stress that Scottish culture is not inferior to its English equivalent, to use a standard English idiom would be an act which would suggest that English culture is in fact the superior form.

Welsh (2007) has suggested that the use of the vernacular is a way of reclaiming fiction back from what Kelman (2003, p.65) has described as the English 'literary elite'. By producing fiction that is recognisably and distinctively Scottish in both style and content, Kelman can be seen as asserting that Scots are different from people in other parts of the United Kingdom, but especially from those in England who are a part of the

elite that he sees as damaging Scotland and its culture. Similarly, Welsh (cited in Kelly, 2004, p.16) has said that what he wanted to avoid in his fiction was to add to the kind of fiction where 'the middle-class voice' is used, producing a situation where 'every fucking male character is a derivation of the same white, male, aspirational, Cambridge-educated fucking James Bond' figure. This shows a clear concern with avoiding the production of particularly "English" characterisation.

In a continuation of this argument Welsh (cited in Peddie, 2007, p.137) states:

> Standard English is an Imperial language. I wanted something with more rhythm. I actually tried to write *Trainspotting* in Standard English and it sounded ridiculous and pretentious. The vernacular is the language in which we live and think. And it sounds better, much more real.

Welsh (2004, p.16) agrees with Aaron Kelly that 'the middle-class voice in literature tends to want to see itself as universal' and he states his opposition to what he identifies as the tendency to try to give 'a niche' to any literary work that does not use Standard English. One of the main aims of Welsh's fiction is to present Scottish working-class culture as a more valid alternative to English middle-class culture, and this is clearly a nationalistic approach.

The style of narration that Welsh and Kelman employ is a vehicle for nationalist sentiment within fiction. This is because it creates a specifically Scottish literature, in which characters express themselves in their own dialect, and in a sense, their own language. Fanon (2001, p.193) argued that:

> At the beginning the native intellectual used to produce his work to be read exclusively by the oppressor, with the intention of charming him or of denouncing him through ethnical or subjectivist means, now the native writer progressively takes on the habit of addressing his own people. It is only from that moment that we can speak of a national literature.

Welsh and Kelman have used dialect in order to address Scottish people specifically and therefore they can be seen as facilitators of national literature in Scotland. Contemporary Scottish fiction utilises and promotes what Ashcroft (2001, p.325) describes as 'one of the most potent weapons of discursive resistance: an adaptable and transformable language and the readership it brings with it'. Welsh and Kelman's work adapts the English language for use within a Scottish context in an attempt to free their literature of its "Imperial" connotations.

Ichijo (2004, p.16) correctly states that 'contemporary Scotland lacks the linguistic homogeneity that seems to be an essential element in binding other nations together'; unlike, for example, Welsh nationalism, Scottish nationalism is not defined by a shared language which cannot be found in other nations.[31] English, in its standard form, remains the official language of the nation. However, it can be said that contemporary Scottish literature presents an alternative use of the English language and attempts to define Scotland as linguistically different to England in terms of the idioms used within the nation, the patterns of speech employed, and in the use of many dialect words which are unique to Scotland. The promotion of dialect as a form with equal "validity" to Standard English has become a process through which national difference can be asserted. The work of Welsh, Kelman, and many of their contemporaries stresses the difference between Scotland and England and while many of the words and phrases are recognisable to an English audience, contemporary Scottish fiction goes as far as it can to present Scotland as linguistically different to other nations.

By creating literature which very deliberately excludes the dominant literary mode within English literature, and instead using a mode which is unmistakeably Scottish, contemporary Scottish authors set themselves in opposition to English literature. One of the most important cultural roles that contemporary Scottish literature plays is to make it clear that Scottish culture and English culture are not the same, and are in fact diametrically opposed. This helps to maintain and build the idea that a Scottish imagined community exists which is not only different to the English equivalent, but radically so. Hutchinson (2001, p.81) argues that 'there is a tension between renovating national intellectuals and existing traditions, and the former are drawn disproportionately from those outside the dominant culture who wish to reconstitute it'. In this case, the tension is between the dominant culture of the United Kingdom, which is English and middle class, and those from a working class Scottish background who wish their nation to leave the United Kingdom altogether.

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[31] Irish nationalism does utilise the Irish language as one of its many cultural elements. However, it cannot be said to be the central pillar of nationalism in the same way that language is for Welsh nationalists. Irish nationalist arguments made in the English language remain more significant (in Northern Ireland at least) than those made in Irish, in terms of audience reached.

## Negative representations of the Union in contemporary Scottish literature: Scotland as a colony of England

Given their opposition to the Union it is not surprising that many contemporary Scottish authors describe the Union and its supporters in profoundly negative terms. The most vivid descriptions of unionists can be found in Irvine Welsh's work, and negativity about the behaviour of unionists is a trope of the fiction he produces. Welsh's novels are often profoundly negative about the Scottish authorities, which he presents as being dominated by the Protestant Freemasonry movement. Perhaps the most extreme, and yet the most telling example of this is the main protagonist in *Filth*, Bruce Robertson. Welsh (2007, p.136) has stated that he wanted the character to be a 'kind of Scottish Bad Lieutenant', and that he designed Robertson to be 'a composite of almost everything bad [he] could think of'.

Robertson is a Protestant policeman who supports Edinburgh's Protestant-affiliated football team, Hearts, is a member of the Freemasons, routinely makes racist and sexist statements, and abuses his power continually. He forces an underage girl to give him sexual favours in exchange for his silence about her possession of drugs. He also purchases illegal and explicit pornography and routinely uses illegal drugs such as cocaine whilst carrying out his work. His hypocrisy is absolute and yet he is in a position of power, largely because all of his colleagues, with only one exception (a young female officer) share his opinions on race, religious equality, and gender issues, and perpetuate similar levels of hypocrisy themselves.

Welsh also attacks unionism by suggesting that those who hold unionist opinions are not truly capable of understanding the psyche of the nation, and this is illustrated by an example from *Porno*. The character of Nikki Fuller-Smith is a useful study because she is a middle class English woman trying, and by her own admission failing, to understand the motivations of the Scottish working class people that she surrounds herself with. She takes a Scottish Studies class, and the results of this are particularly instructive. The class is taught by a confirmed unionist who refers to himself as a 'North Briton' and the suggestion is that such a person can teach Nikki nothing about what it really means to be Scottish, as she says 'despite McClymont's Scottish Studies programme, I've come no closer to understanding the Scottish mentality or culture' (Welsh, 2002, p..

If it were impossible for anyone from outside the Scottish working class to understand the culture that Welsh writes about, then the reader of any Irvine Welsh novel, if they were not Scottish, would be reduced to taking the role of a voyeur, looking in on something that they cannot truly participate within. The suggestion within *Porno* is not that it is impossible to understand Scottish culture if you are not Scottish, but that it is impossible to understand Scottish culture if you learn about it from sources that see themselves as primarily "British" and not Scottish. The class that McClymont teaches focuses on Scottish achievements within the British Empire, and many nationalists want to move away from the idea that the Empire was a positive thing for Scotland.[32]

This critique of McClymont's class offers a very clear indication of Welsh's political leanings. Nikki learns nothing practical about Scottish culture from the class that she takes, and it leaves her ill-equipped to understand the actions and motivations of any of the working-class Scots that she befriends. McClymont's classes focus on Scotland's colonial past and he is keen to ensure that his students understand Scotland's role in spreading the hegemony of the British Empire around the world. Welsh makes it clear that those who focus on Scotland's imperial past do not understand its present or make a valid contribution to it. This is strongly anti-unionist, and also has resonances with the Irish nationalist novels of Eoin McNamee, in which the interventions of the British government (outside England) are consistently portrayed as aggressive, imperialistic, and unwelcome.

Scottish and Irish nationalist literature is alike in portraying the nations of the United Kingdom (other than England) as colonies rather than as equal partners within a political state. Welsh's fiction consistently represents Scotland's current political status as being a colony of England; In *Trainspotting*, Renton says that the Scots 'can't even pick a decent, healthy, vibrant culture to be colonised by' and that he hates his own countrymen for being 'servile' in their acceptance of being 'ruled by effete arseholes' (Welsh, 1999, p.78). Perhaps surprisingly given that Renton also describes the Scots as 'the lowest of the fuckin low, the scum of the earth [and] the most wretched, servile, miserable, pathetic trash that was ever shat into creation', the SNP have used the full text of Mark Renton's soliloquy regarding Scotland's "colonisation" in *Trainspotting* in their campaign literature (Welsh, 1998, p.78).

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[32] An excellent example of this is the Scottish nationalist academic Tom Nairn, whose (2007) "Union on the Rocks" is particularly scathing about the British Empire.

The SNP felt that, give or take some of the strong language, Renton's words summed up something that many Scots were feeling and they also felt that it had something that they could tap into. The Labour Party objected to the language and sentiments of the leaflet that the SNP produced, but the SNP defended its use, stating that while Scotland was governed from Westminster, the passages from Welsh's work were 'of direct relevance' (The Herald, 25th September 1996). This is perhaps because Renton states that 'it's nae good blaming it oan the English fir colonising us'; what is required is direct action to change the situation, rather than acceptance of English rule (Welsh, 1998, p.78).

Connell (2004) argues that because Scotland had a large part to play in the building of the British Empire, Scots cannot claim to be colonised by England. His argument largely ignores the material conditions of the contemporary era and focuses upon earlier historical factors. Pittock (2008, p.123) suggests that such reasoning is 'naïve' and outmoded because conditions within Scotland have fundamentally changed in recent times. It is the case that 'Scottish culture [is] increasingly being performed' by practitioners such as Welsh and Kelman, and ideas that are based upon the '"facts" of Scottish history' are increasingly irrelevant (Pittock, 2008, p.123 – inverted commas are Pittock's).

The idea that Scotland is a colony of England has taken hold because it resonates with those who wish Scotland to become independent. Connor (2004, p.45) states that 'identity does not draw its sustenance from facts but from perceptions: not from chronological/factual history but from sentient/felt history'; the perception that Scotland has become a colony of England is more significant to contemporary Scottish identity than the fact that Scottish people played a significant role in building the British Empire, and the SNP have judged that this perception has more resonance with the Scottish electorate than the bare facts of Scotland's past. The success of the party at the polling station suggests that they made the correct decision on this matter.

Nairn (2003, p.123) feels that the Union between Scotland and England was popular until the advent of Thatcherism because 'apparently sensible economic or career reasons [were] re-attired as the national interest' by unionists. After Scotland's public services and heavy industry had begun to decline, the Union appeared as a much less attractive proposition. Smith (1991, p.125) discusses a process that he calls 'internal colonialism',

whereby 'peripheral communities are economically and politically subordinated to core ethnies'. Welsh and Kelman both argue that the policies of successive Westminster governments since 1979 involve this exact practice. The closure of factories, the removal of decision-making powers from Scottish businesses, the cutting back of the public sector, and the centralism of the Thatcher years have all created the sense that Scotland has become a peripheral region with less importance than the south-east of England, where the political power of the United Kingdom is concentrated. Rather than the United Kingdom being a composite of the people of four separate nations, the middle-class English identity has become the core of British hegemony.

Devolution has not assuaged the sense that Scotland has little control over its own affairs because the Scottish parliament only has limited legislative powers. Nairn (2003, p.18) argues that the Scottish parliament is simply 'a form of enhanced local government' because it has no power over the economy. It is incapable of replacing the 'void' that the Union has created in the Scottish psyche because it operates within the Union as a satellite of the Westminster parliament (Nairn, 2007, p.6). In *Trainspotting* Mark Renton argues that 'power devolved is power retained' because the right to devolved power can be revoked at any time. Ultimately, power over Scotland is still held by Westminster despite the advent of devolved Scottish government. Any form of British control over Scotland is deemed to be unacceptable. In *The Bedroom Secrets of the Master Chefs*, Welsh's character Danny Skinner discusses 'our toytown parliament' which he says is 'like looking for a father and being presented with a guardian from the social work department' (Welsh, 2006, p.379).

Through this description, Welsh's work describes the Scottish parliament as a weak substitute for the real thing – it can do the same job but it is not possible to feel the same connection and sense of identity from the devolved parliament as it would be if the parliament was that of an independent nation. A guardian would of course be provided by the state, and while that guardian can do good work and have honourable intentions, for Skinner, a guardian is simply not as good as a real father on an emotional level. Further to this, Skinner says that Edinburgh is 'nominally a capital, but the major decisions for the lives of its citizens are still made miles away. All in all, perfect conditions for bouts of self-destructive heavy drinking' (Welsh, 2006, p.260). Essentially, that the Scots do not have the power to govern their own affairs in their own capital is portrayed as the root cause of destructive behaviour in Scotland. Rule from

Westminster is described as a cause of the heavy drinking that is present throughout Welsh's novels – this is very clearly a nationalist statement, and one that is also repeated throughout Welsh's (2012) novel *Skagboys*.

*The Bedroom Secrets of the Master Chefs* can be seen as an allegorical description of the relationship between England and Scotland. The novel mainly focuses on the characters of Danny Skinner and Brian Kibby, and it examines Skinner's search for his father and his obsession with Kibby, who he despises. Much of the novel is concerned with Skinner's search for his biological father and this is linked to the search for Scottish independence. Skinner feels that a crucial part of his identity is missing because he does not know who his father is. He frequently discusses the situation in Scottish politics, which he sees as similar to his own personal position. It lacks completion and he has been presented with a life that is functional but that he cannot feel any emotional resonance with. This is seen as a cause of social harm, as Skinner states 'the more things in your life that are unresolved, the more powerful yir anger is, the stronger the potential fir ye to do [...] harm' – he feels that the Scottish parliament is a stopgap before real independence and that power that is retained by the British state is a cause of anger (Welsh, 2006, p.392).

The novel also contains a reflection upon what can happen when people become obsessed with others. Skinner cannot control his interest in Brian Kibby and this eventually consumes both characters. It is suggested that somehow Scotland itself is the cause of this obsession and that such behaviour is endemic within the Scottish identity – Skinner says that his actions come from 'being here (in Scotland): it seems to lend itself to having strange, destructive obsessions with your neighbours, and you forget to get a life of your own' (Welsh, 2006, p.387). Scotland's most powerful neighbour is England and the two nations have a history that is intertwined; many Scots feel that this is to the detriment of their nation. The suggestion is that this concern with what the neighbours are up to can hold people back. It is also stated within the novel that 'a real enemy becomes like a wife, a child, or an elderly parent'; you have to look after and nurture the relationship and take a great deal of care over it – having a real enemy is hard work, and it is far better to have no relationship at all than a negative one (Welsh, 2006, p.260).

In Welsh's previous novels, characters such as Mark Renton had hinted at their preference for independence whilst making their distaste for rule by the British state

clear. Danny Skinner is more explicit about the effects that he feels British rule over Scotland has had and he makes it clear that these are profoundly negative – they lead to self-destruction, despair, and the heavy drinking that is described not so much as the cause but the symptom of the social problems described in Welsh's work. Skinner's eventual demise is linked to his obsession with Brian Kibby and to his inability to form a complete identity – Skinner represents Scotland in Welsh's allegorical novel, and it is clear that *The Bedroom Secrets of the Master Chefs* serves as a warning that Scotland must be allowed to go its own way or its people will continue to destroy themselves through heavy drinking and violence. It has been said that 'since the national factor cannot really be costed, it is easily caricatured as a question of soulful romanticism or delusion. However such common sense is itself philistine' – in this case, the "national factor" in Scotland is not referred to not just in monetary terms but also in terms of social health (Nairn, 2000, p.79).

The way that Scotland is portrayed in contemporary literature presents a new area of investigation for scholars of colonisation and the post-colonial world. In *National Identity*, Smith (1991) identifies two routes that can be taken in the formation of a nation. The first route applies to what he terms an 'imperial' nation and it involves a unit that is 'formally sovereign and independent' prior to its conversion to "nation" status. What is required in such a nation is 'not a movement of liberation from alien rule but rather a transformation of its political system and self-definition'; this is because the nation involved in this example is changing from "Empire" status – the examples given include Russia and Japan (Smith, 1991, p.101). Of the second route, Smith (1991, p.100) says 'not only must a new cultural identity be forged, but also the unit, as a dependent colony, requires to be liberated from rule by alien powers and become independent and sovereign'. Further to this, Smith (1991, p.108) suggests that all colonies require new identities, and he takes the position that while "Western" nations have nationalisms that have a culture that is 'continuous' from their "birth", Asian and African nations have a nationalism that was a 'creation' of their colonial masters.

Smith (1991, p.108) goes on to suggest that because colonial nationalisms are 'imitative' of the conceptions of the nation introduced by colonisers, 'all colonial nationalisms are still-born'. Scotland is a Western nation with what can be described as a "continuous" rather than an engendered nationalism, and yet it is described by some of

its most prominent cultural practitioners as a colony.[33] Were it to gain independence, it would not need to forge a new identity because its citizens already perceive themselves as a national community. The perceptions of Scotland's current political status discussed in Scottish fiction offer a challenge to the idea that colonies only exist in the third world. These perceptions also offer a challenge to the theories of Fanon (2001, p.197), who said that 'the first necessity is the re-establishment of the nation in order to give life to national culture'. In the case of Scotland, it is possible to argue that national culture, in the form of literature, brings new life to the politics of the nation and progresses discussions of independence and self-government. It is not essential for those within the political sphere to give life to the cultural sphere; rather, Scottish culture is currently vibrant, popular, and strongly nationalist in tone.

## The growing support for Scottish independence amongst Scots of Irish Catholic Descent

Welsh portrays Protestantism and power as going hand in hand, and represents the abuse of power as endemic within Scotland. He also suggests that popular Protestant movements such as the Orange Order are violent and racist. In the chapter "Na Na and other Nazis" in his first novel, *Trainspotting*, Welsh describes a gathering of Orange Order members in an Edinburgh pub. Amongst their number are skinheads and neo-Nazis wearing t-shirts that proclaim "Ulster is British". This is another link between Scottish and Irish nationalist fiction; while McNamee has a paedophile make this assertion, Welsh chooses a neo-Nazi. Both authors deliberately choose an unsavoury character to make the assertion that Northern Ireland should have British influence, with the intention of invalidating that assertion and suggesting that it is the preserve of racists, perverts, and criminals.

Spud, whose background is Irish Catholic, and his uncle Dode, who is black, enter the pub and the men who have come for the Orange march start abusing them, singing 'there ain't no black in the Union Jack' and calling Dode a 'nigger' (Welsh, 1999, p.128). A fight breaks out and Dode is stabbed, ending up in hospital. The Orange Order is portrayed by Welsh as a cause of anti-Irish violence, racism, and sectarianism in Scotland. Spud is referred to as a 'fenyin bastard' and while some of the Orangemen are

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[33] Hugh Seton-Watson describes Scotland as an 'old' nation whose existence predates modernity (Seton-Watson, cited in Ichijo (2004, p.26).

uneasy about the skinheads who have come to march with them, Spud reports that 'maist ay the Orange bastards present are lapping [them] up' (Welsh, 1999, p.128).

It is interesting that within the novels discussed in this study, the strongest condemnation of Orange culture can actually be found in a Scottish novel. McNamee chooses to represent this culture as being supported by the British state, rather than having the power to cause harm in and of itself. The suggestion in his work is that the Orange Order would become a peaceful and less divisive organisation in a united Ireland, where its activities would not be supported by the state, either implicitly or explicitly. Welsh also depicts the Orange Order as being supported by the British state (most notably in *Filth* (1998)), but to a lesser extent than McNamee does. Nevertheless, it is significant that a popular manifestation of unionist culture is described in very negative terms.

Mark Renton's brother and father are also present and while they eventually help Spud, they do not prevent the violence from taking place. Mark Renton says that his brother's sectarian beliefs were his main reason for joining the British Army, and he makes it clear that he despises both his brother's ideals and the British Army itself. Billy Renton, according to his brother, 'died an ignorant victim of imperialism'; Mark describes the place where his brother is killed as 'Crossmaglen in Ireland, the part under British rule' (Welsh, 1999, p.210). He is against the British government's involvement in Northern Ireland and his reaction to the Union Flag being draped across his brother's coffin (he 'seethes') clearly shows that he harbours a great deal of animosity towards the notion of British imperial power (Welsh, 1999, p.210). Northern Ireland is currently a part of the United Kingdom, but Renton rejects the idea that this is in any way 'natural'. He sees Northern Ireland and Scotland as very similar places, and does not accept the authority of the British government in either of them (Welsh, 1999, p.210).

Within Welsh's work, continued membership of the British state is portrayed as hugely problematic for Scotland, and those who display "British" sympathies are vilified. Unionism is portrayed as a corrupt, morally bankrupt political code whose adherents are frequently racist, sexist, and violent. Most of Welsh's characters are involved in such behaviour at some point, but all those of a non-unionist background, even the seemingly psychopathic Begbie, are afforded the opportunity to explain the motivations for their behaviour. While Mark Renton is a pivotal character in Welsh's work, his brother Billy

is a minor character whose unionism is given as the explanation for all of his behaviour. Welsh's fiction describes a Scotland in which a cultural divide is an everyday reality, and nearly all the people on one side of that divide are portrayed negatively.

In Welsh's fiction, the Union is presented as the root cause of most social ills in Scotland. This is also the case in the Irish nationalist fiction produced by Eoin McNamee, as previously discussed. Both authors can be seen as having the same aim, which is to argue that the Union is a cause of social ill and violence in the nations that they discuss. In offering a defence for the violent acts committed by members of only one social group, but leaving the other group without a voice, both Welsh and McNamee clearly favour one group over the other. This link between the processes through which both Scottish and Irish nationalism are promoted is significant, as it brings the two forms closer together through condemnation of a "common enemy".

Most of Welsh's main protagonists have a Catholic background, and many of the cultural affiliations traditionally held by Catholics in Scotland are sympathetically presented, including Irish nationalism. Part of the ritual at the New Year's parties that Mark Renton and his friends attend is to sing Irish republican songs such as "The Boys of the Old Brigade" and "James Connolly". The titular hero of the latter song is described as 'a fuckin great rebel, a fuckin great socialist and a fuckin great Hibby' by one of the characters (Connolly was born in Edinburgh and is known to have supported Hibernian FC), and it is clear that these three qualities are those that many of Welsh's characters aspire to (Welsh, 1999, p.45).

None of Welsh's characters claim an Irish identity in preference to a Scottish one however, and as Welsh's career has progressed the characters that he creates have altered slightly, so that their Scottish identities have come to the fore and their family heritage has become less of a focus in his novels. The exceptions to that are Danny Skinner in *The Bedroom Secrets of the Master Chefs*, who does not know who his father is and therefore spends much of the novel searching for him, and Sick Boy in *Trainspotting* and *Porno*, whose mother is Italian, leading him to create a stereotypically Italian persona for himself based upon the character traits of Italian-Americans in gangster film and fiction.

None of Welsh's characters claim that their primary identity is Irish rather than Scottish, and perhaps the strongest expression of their Irish heritage is that many are against

unionism in Northern Ireland as well as in Scotland. Hussain and Miller (2006) argue that Welsh's novels portray the prevailing trend in Scotland because most people from the "Catholic" community now regard their national identity as their primary identity, with their religious identity being of secondary importance. That primary national identity is, according to Hussain and Miller (2006, p.68), Scottish, and those with an Irish family background have 'mutated' any Irish sympathies into a Scottish nationalism which is now more accepting of those with a Catholic background.

Within Welsh's fiction, Irish nationalism is portrayed as a model for Scottish nationalism rather than a competitor to it. Unionism is the true "other" for many Scots of Irish descent, and Hussain and Miller (2006) argue that one of the qualities that is transferable between Irish and Scottish nationalism is a dislike for union with England. It is suggested that it is easy for those of Irish Catholic descent in Scotland to become Scottish nationalists because dislike for England is a key part of both Scottish and Irish identities. As religious identity becomes residual and direct links to Ireland several generations distant, Scottish identity becomes the primary national identity.

Pittock (2008, p.51) argues that the positive attitude towards Scottish independence to be found in Welsh's fiction is typical of the adherents of Catholicism in contemporary Scotland, which has 'an open and positive - if coded and cautious – attitude' towards leaving the United Kingdom. Similarly, Hearn (2000, p.4) states that 'Catholics tend to be more supportive of devolution than Protestants'. One of the key factors in the rise of the SNP is the party's success in attracting those who traditionally voted for the Labour Party. The Labour vote in Scotland has traditionally been strongest amongst the Catholic community, but this has changed in recent times (Hussain and Miller, 2006).

Non-religious people of an Irish background are increasingly attracted to Scottish nationalism, as demonstrated by the work of Gallagher (2000) and Hussain and Miller (2006). However, those who remain observant Catholics may equally be swayed by the fact that the leadership of the Catholic Church in Scotland has consistently shown support for Scottish independence since the late 1990s. This support is more significant than it may have been in earlier decades because the decline of Presbyterianism and the values associated with it has meant that the Catholic church has become 'the major clerical voice' in Scotland (Pittock, 2008, p.51).

The leader of the Catholic church in Scotland, Cardinal Keith O'Brien, has said:

In my travels I have had much experience of small countries and I have seen what benefits independence can bring. I felt [in 2006] that there was some frustration among the Scots about the say they have over what happens here, and that was part of what was pushing the independence movement. I still feel this is the case. It is also true that the Catholic Church in Scotland has a distinct and internationally recognised position so it would be difficult to argue that ecclesiastical independence is acceptable but political independence is not (The Guardian, 11th October 2011).

Another former leader of the Catholic church, Cardinal Thomas Winning, also demonstrated a measure of support for SNP policies over those of Labour, principally because the SNP offered fiscal support to Catholic schools at a time when local councils with a Labour majority were closing such schools (Gallagher, 2000). The social policies of the SNP have proved to be more popular with Catholic voters and leaders than those of Labour, and this is clearly demonstrated by the result of the 2011 Scottish parliamentary election. Gallagher (2000) prophesied the rise in the SNP vote amongst Catholics, describing it as 'the political equivalent of escaping from the ghetto and making one's way in mainstream society'. The mainstream of Scottish society is now working-class and so it is much easier for those from a traditional working-class Catholic background to feel that they have common ground with other citizens of Scotland. Labour's move to the right and the SNP's move into the territory vacated by the Labour Party have helped this process considerably.

Welsh is representative of a modern phenomenon in Scotland in that he is a supporter of Scottish independence whose novels are far more sympathetic to Catholicism than Protestantism. His characters are also broadly supportive of Irish nationalism; Mark Renton admires the people of the Republic of Ireland and feels an affinity with them. He states:

'some say that the Irish are the trash ay Europe. That's shite. It's the Scots. The Irish hud the bottle tae win their country back, or at least maist ay it' (Welsh, 1999, p.190).

MacLeod (2008, p.100) argues that Renton actually wishes he was Irish, as 'Irishness offers the "oppositional notion of identity" Scottishness cannot', but the position is more complex than this.

Scots with a Catholic, and especially an Irish Catholic background are increasingly persuaded by Scottish nationalism and the independence movement because Scottish independence would further, and perhaps terminally, weaken the influence of those

forces within Scottish society that remain opposed to Catholicism and Irishness. Kidd (2008, p.14) argues that 'unionism was inescapably linked to Protestant sectarianism' and anti-Catholic prejudice in Scotland; this remains the case although Protestantism and unionism are somewhat weakened. This weakness is of increasing significance; Pittock (2008, p.52) states that 'the decline of the Union institutions – including the Kirk – has opened a role for the Irish example in Scotland'. Following this example would involve independence, the end of the Union, and the further decline of unionism and its associated religious movements. Many Scots find this a desirable outcome, and the characters in Welsh's fiction who are pro-Irish and anti-Union are good examples of this.

As will be discussed in the next chapter, however, not all those of Irish descent in Scotland are as openly supportive of Scottish nationalism as Irvine Welsh is. Many people still express Irish nationalism as a part of their primary identity, and so it is not always the case that Scottishness replaces or supplants Irishness. The significance of this will be examined throughout the next chapter, as the existence of Irish nationalism in Scotland is often seen as a barrier to the creation of a unified Scottish identity. Nevertheless, within Welsh's work there is a progression from characters expressing a cautious but clear Irish identity in *Trainspotting*, to the main protagonists expressing a primary Scottish identity in *The Bedroom Secrets of the Master Chefs*, and many sociologists and political theorists argue that this is representative of the dominant pattern in Scotland.

## The links between football and literature in Scotland

Welsh's novels frequently suggest that unionism, sectarian opinions, and racism are all interlinked, and that the kind of extreme unionism expressed by Rangers supporters and followers of Edinburgh's Heart of Midlothian club commonly leads to violence. In *Trainspotting, Porno*, and *Glue*, Welsh employs "Rangers supporter" or "Hearts fan" as an insult; support for either club is frequently described as a driver for bigoted or racist behaviour. It is suggested that fans are socialised in an environment which inculcates them with certain ideals; these include support for the Union, and hatred for people of Irish descent. It is not through politics that these values are constructed in contemporary Scotland, but through culture. Welsh presents culture as having both positive and negative potential, depending upon the types of processes that are involved. The idea of

Rangers' Ibrox Park and Hearts' Tynecastle stadium being "Protestant places" is strongly reinforced, and they are described as playing a similar role to Windsor Park in Northern Ireland.

The discussion of football as a social process for the expression and construction of identity is a particularly important element of contemporary Scottish literature. This is especially the case within Irvine Welsh's work, which often uses examples from football to examine social issues in Scotland.[34] However, the most consistent use of football within Welsh's work is to attack the values and behaviour of unionists. In *Filth*, a senior football referee discusses his bias towards Rangers, with particular reference to an incident in which he denies the visiting team at Rangers' Ibrox Park stadium a clear penalty, allowing Rangers to win the league title. He describes the day as being characterised by a 'gala atmosphere' with 'everyone singing "we're up to our knees in Fenian blood"' (Welsh, 1998, p.190). This refers to an issue that will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter; it is often contended by supporters of Celtic and Hibernian that Scottish football officials are biased towards unionist-affiliated teams.

Alongside this, the "1690 scam" in *Porno* (2002) is a particularly instructive episode, as it illustrates the disdain that Welsh shows for unionists. The genesis of the scam revolves around an acquaintance of Spud's, Cousin Dode (not the same Dode who appears in *Trainspotting*). This particular character is a Rangers supporter and a Protestant supremacist. He suggests that his healthy bank balance is the result of his strong work ethic, and is symbolic of the difference between the 'enterprising Proddy and the feckless Pape'; Spud is angered by this triumphalism and states that if you 'act aw high and mighty, somebody'll cut ye doon tae size' (Welsh, 2002, p.115).

Spud finds himself wishing that he knew Dode's pin number so he could steal the money from his account, and shortly after this Dode removes his jacket, revealing two tattoos. One of these is a lion, the symbol of Rangers and also a symbol of the United Kingdom (particularly of sports teams that represent the whole of the United Kingdom, such as the British Lions rugby union team), and the other is a representation of King William of Orange ("King Billy"), with "1690" written underneath it. Spud realises that

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[34] James Kelman also discusses football as a mechanism for the development of identity. However, this process is discussed in a less overtly politicised way than in Welsh's work; essentially, Kelman primarily presents football as a process through which talented individuals can escape the limitations of the deprived area in which they live, especially in *A Chancer* (2007).

1690 must be Dode's pin number, as his bank allows its clients to select their own number, and Dode will have chosen something that is significant to him. This leads to an incident in which Spud and Sick Boy invite Dode out for drinks, and then drug Dode so that he is rendered briefly unconscious. They steal his bank card and, guessing his pin number correctly, completely empty his account before putting the card back in Dode's pocket.

Spud is satisfied at his gains from this, but Sick Boy realises that a much bigger scam is possible. He bribes an employee of the Clydesdale Bank to give them a list of all of the account holders in his central Glasgow branch. It is then a matter of finding the season ticket holders who bank in central Glasgow, and then getting into their online bank accounts. 182 Rangers supporters bank at the branch that Sick Boy targets; of these, 137 have 1690 as their pin number. Sick Boy and Mark Renton eventually steal thousands of pounds from these accounts. This is designed to depict Rangers fans as overtly triumphalist and also stupid; picking a pin number that is so easy to guess is designed to indicate a collective lack of intelligence. Welsh represents Rangers supporters as deserving targets of the scam; it is particularly telling that Welsh's characters choose to attack the totem of the unionist community, whose supporters are described as 'morons' (Welsh, 2002, p.332).

Celtic supporters are similarly described by Sick Boy, but ultimately it is Rangers supporters who are the target of the scam. Welsh's work rarely criticises Celtic supporters in the same way that it attacks Rangers fans, largely because Celtic and Welsh's own favoured team, Hibernian, both represent Irish Catholic communities. MacLeod (2008, p.98) notes that 'every sympathetic character in [*Trainspotting*] is a Hibernian supporter', but stops short of analysing why this might be the case, declaring that he has 'no particular desire to defend football violence or to establish one side of an athletic/sectarian divide as morally superior to the other'. Welsh's novels do make a distinction between Protestant, Orange, 'Nazi' (Welsh, 1999, p.133) Rangers and Hearts supporters and fans of Edinburgh's Hibernian club, who are depicted as both pro-Irish and pro-Scottish.

It is not just in *Trainspotting* that Welsh's most sympathetic protagonists are Hibernian supporters, but in every one of his novels except *Crime*. The values associated with support for Hibernian are generally positive; while Rangers and Hearts fans are

portrayed as 'servile' and lacking in intelligence, Hibernian fans such as Mark Renton are independent and intelligent thinkers. Hibernian are portrayed as a club whose fanbase is commonly working class, socialist, and pro-independence (in many different senses). Socialisation in the rituals of support for Hibernian is depicted positively; essentially, the club are the opposite of Rangers and Hearts, and this is part of their appeal for Welsh, who is a confirmed Hibernian supporter. In many ways, the imagined community that Welsh develops around Hibernian is representative of his "ideal type" for Scotland as a whole; anti-union, pro-Irish, pro-independence, socialist, and largely working class in background and outlook.

The strong links between football, literature, politics, and nationalism are significant because they demonstrate the level of cultural interplay at work in Scotland. They also illustrate the fact that culture is not developed in a vacuum, and cultural practices and processes feed into each other. One of the reasons for literary production becoming a popular, rather than solely an elite process in Scotland, is that novelists often make reference to other popular forms of culture such as football (and also action films and dance music), rather than to elite forms. The kind of background knowledge required in order to understand Scottish literature is different to that required to understand English or Northern Irish literature; by way of example, Robert McLiam Wilson's work contains frequent classical allusions and references to French philosophy. Literary production has a greater popular resonance in Scotland partly because Scottish novelists focus on issues and practices that are accessible and relevant to "the masses".

## Conclusions

In the Scottish case, cultural and political nationalism mutually inform each other and cannot be considered as wholly separate entities. Political events, in the form of the failure of the 1979 devolution vote and the election of Margaret Thatcher, brought about a cultural movement which expresses a distinctly Scottish, rather than British identity. This occurred at a time when political forms of Scottish nationalism were at a low ebb. A politicised cultural movement has helped to revive the fortunes of Scottish nationalism, and this has occurred from the bottom-up. The SNP have benefitted considerably from this cultural movement and have allied themselves to some of the key players within it, including Irvine Welsh. Novelists play a key role in driving forward the culture of nations, and this is particularly significant in nations without states where

they can help to sustain and develop the separate character of the nation, outwith the state in which it has been subsumed. This has certainly happened in Scotland, where contemporary literature represents Scotland as a nation that would be best served by leaving the United Kingdom.

Irvine Welsh and James Kelman produce strong examples of Scottish cultural nationalism. Within the novels and stories that they have written, Scotland is described as a nation with a very different culture to England in particular. This culture is politically left-wing and is based upon what have been described by McCrone (1992), Pittock (2008), and many other theorists, as traditional working class values. It is also rooted in a deep dislike of the policies of consecutive Westminster governments, which have encouraged free market capitalism whilst cutting funds to the public and manufacturing sectors which retain their importance to Scottish identity. Both authors studied describe the perception that when new jobs are created, these have been deliberately concentrated in and around London, making this area more economically powerful whilst decreasing the quality of life of people who choose to remain in Scotland.

Both Welsh and Kelman believe that Scotland should leave the United Kingdom and become an independent nation. Prior to 1979, Scotland was perceived to be more of an equal partner within the United Kingdom, but after the advent of Thatcherism, successive governments have taken decisions which are perceived to have reduced Scotland's status considerably. Being a part of the British state is portrayed as the cause of mental harm to Scotland's people, because they feel impotent at not being able to manage their own affairs as they see fit. Welsh's work in particular suggests that violence and drug abuse are the symptom of Scotland's social problems, rather than the cause. Scotland is portrayed as a colony of England under the nation's current political conditions. The devolved parliament is described as inadequate because all the important decisions regarding finance and foreign policy are still made at Westminster.

The idea that Scotland is a colony is particularly important because current thinking on colonialism and the post-colonial world suggests that colonies are largely a thing of the past. Smith (1992) suggests that colonies do not and did not exist in Western Europe, but Scottish literature argues differently. The SNP have used Welsh's words regarding the colonised condition of Scotland and have endorsed his work, demonstrating Welsh's

political importance. The SNP have recognised that culture and politics are not mutually exclusive spheres and have benefitted considerably from the support for independence to be found in contemporary Scottish culture.

Ideas expressed in literature become a part of the way in which society is perceived; the imagined community within Welsh and Kelman's work is Scottish, and there are no positive British elements within the community that they describe. The national boundary between Scotland and England is continually reinforced within contemporary literature; expressions of dislike for English culture and politics, particularly those which are perceived to be held by the English middle classes, reinforce the idea that Scottish and English people are culturally different. Literary production is an important social process that contributes to ideas about Scotland; it is very significant that these ideas are nationalist in character.

There are links between Irish and Scottish identity in Welsh's work, and this means that elements of "Irishness" influence the primary Scottish identity of his characters. Welsh's novels are both anti-Union and anti-unionist, and display a significant level of opposition to movements such as the Orange Order, and to unionist institutions such as Rangers. While Kelman's characters are all working-class Scots of an undefined religious background, Welsh's are very often from Irish and Catholic families. It is significant that his characters usually claim Scottishness as their primary identity, and express support for Scottish independence. This is in keeping with what Hussain and Miller (2006) and Pittock (2008) describe as the prevailing trend in Scotland, as people of Irish descent are supporting the independence movement in increasing numbers. The opportunity to supplant unionism is central to this trend.

# The types of cultural nationalism expressed by football supporters in Scotland

Scotland currently lacks a political state, and football is one of the few national arenas in which Scotland has completely autonomous representation. The 'crucial importance of football for sustaining a sense of patriotism within the Scottish working class' (Gallagher, 1991, p.106) has been discussed in many studies into the relationship between Scottish sport and Scottish national identity, and football is, in many ways, central to the Scottish psyche. In terms of both participation and support, football is hugely popular in Scotland; Pittock (2008, p.45) reports that 'every weekend, two percent of the entire population of Scotland are at a football match'. This is merely indicative of the cultural significance of football, and the full figures of those engaged with football on a weekly basis are far higher; while two percent are actively attending a game, many thousands more are watching football on television. By way of example, the Scottish Premier League reported that an average audience of over 800,000 people watched each of the four televised Celtic vs Rangers league matches during the 2010-11 season. The cumulative audience for televised matches during the season was 6,306,288 from a total of 40 live broadcasts (Scottish Premier League, 2011).

Existing studies of the social significance of football often examine national football teams as those that most appeal to people's sense of identity. The Scottish national football team is certainly very culturally significant, and some of the rituals involved in support for the team will be examined in order to gain an insight into the identity that is expressed at national team matches. The national team is not the only important cultural symbol within Scottish football, however; Scotland's most successful and well supported teams, Celtic and Rangers, are also very important on a cultural level, and the identities expressed by many supporters of these clubs run counter to the idea that Scottish football inevitably engenders and supports Scottish nationalism, as will be explored in detail during this chapter.

It is possible to argue that Celtic and Rangers are of equal cultural importance to the Scottish national team. The two clubs certainly appeal to as many people as the Scottish team does, is demonstrated by the size of their respective followings. Both Celtic and Rangers attract a large number of supporters: Celtic's average home attendance during the 2010/11 season was 48,968, while Rangers' was 45,304. The next highest average attendance belonged to the Edinburgh club Heart of Midlothian, who attracted an

average of 14,184 supporters per match, just under a third of Rangers' average (Celtic, 2011, Rangers, 2011, Heart of Midlothian, 2011). The two clubs' history of success is a factor in this; the last time that the Scottish championship was won by neither Rangers nor Celtic was the 1984/1985 season.[35]

Active support for the national football team, in terms of attendance, is often lower than that for both Celtic and Rangers. Only 37,050 attended Scotland's 2010 European Championship qualifier against Liechtenstein at the national stadium, Hampden Park, while just 25,064 attended Scotland's home fixture against the Faroe Islands, which was played at Aberdeen's Pittodrie stadium (BBC Sport, 7th September 2010, 16th November 2010). A comparison with the average attendances at Celtic and Rangers indicates that both clubs are now as fervently and consistently supported as the Scottish national football team. The role of the national football team as a symbol of cultural nationalism is being challenged by the hegemonies of the two Glasgow clubs, and the cultural practices and ideals of Celtic and Rangers run counter to the hegemony currently associated with support for the Scottish national team.

Rather than solely through mainstream politics, it is also 'at major sporting events that modern men proclaim their loyalties' (Bairner 1994, p.11) in Scotland; these loyalties remain sharply defined and often aggressively defended, and this causes fissure between Scotland's various cultural groups. The sharply defined cultural divergence between hardline unionists and other Scots is prominently displayed at football matches, and demonstrates the existence of separate national identities in Scotland. Likewise, the expression of Irish, as opposed to Scottish identities appears to challenge the Scottish nationalist ideal of Scotland as a culturally united nation. The cultural nationalism expressed through football in Scotland often appears to be directed in not one, but three ways – to Scotland, to a particular vision of the United Kingdom, and to Ireland. As a consequence of this, it is difficult for Scottish nationalists to utilise football as a vehicle for cultural nationalism without meeting strongly opposed arguments.

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[35] During 2012, Rangers went into administration and the "oldco" version of the club (owned by Craig Whyte) was replaced by a "newco" owned by Charles Green. Rangers were placed into the Scottish Third Division, and it appears likely that the club will have to play for at least three seasons without facing Celtic in a league fixture. The liquidation of the "oldco" has had no tangible effect on the size of the club's support, and attendances have thus far remained consistent with those the club enjoyed in the Scottish Premier League. Rangers also have the same level of media visibility. At the time of writing, it seems fair to say that Rangers have maintained the same level of cultural significance as the club had before its enforced relegation.

The two Glasgow teams have become the most obvious representatives of a cultural divide in Scotland, the roots of which lie in sectarianism, but are now primarily defined by differing national identities. Celtic have been a Catholic-affiliated team since their formation in 1888, and Rangers have been supported by the Protestant community since the late 1800s (Finn and Giulianotti 2000). It is often argued that Scottish football is affected by sectarianism, and there is conflict between the two opposed social groups who support Celtic and Rangers, and whose origins lie in different religious affiliations. The nature of this conflict, and the extent to which it affects Scottish society and culture as a whole, will be analysed, and its effects explored.

However, the situation is complex, and the tension that exists between Celtic and Rangers supporters is not just defined by religion. Just as in Northern Ireland, there is conflict between groups whose origins lie in religious affiliation, but whose identities are now defined by a number of different but inter-related cultural practices and political beliefs, which manifest themselves in cultural nationalism. This conflict is by no means as violent in Scotland as it is in Northern Ireland, and it is not the intention of this study to claim otherwise. There is, nevertheless, a clear tension between people who claim different national identities and affiliations, and this is obvious within the context of football. This chapter will examine the ways that the attitudes and beliefs expressed at football matches in Scotland reflect the competing cultural and nationally defined identities that are present in the nation.

The rivalry between Rangers and Celtic was once simply based on supporters, officials, and players belonging to different denominations of the Christian church. In the contemporary era, the cultural affiliations associated with these denominations have come to the fore. It is generally accepted that identities in Scotland and Ireland are becoming increasingly secularised, and religious affiliations are often understood to be a strong marker of national identity, rather than providing their own separate context (Ranc, 2011). While religious identities are still important to many people in Scotland, it is fair to argue that conflict which was once primarily religious is now based on the existence of different national identities. Religious observance is no longer the sole marker for membership in a certain community, and although it does have some significance, religious belief is now less central to many people's identity than nationalism is (Anderson, 2006).

Essentially, the people of the west of Scotland have maintained a longstanding conflict, and growing secularisation has changed the points of reference of this. In the absence of the strongly unionist and Irish nationalist political parties to be found in Northern Ireland, Scottish football provides a suitably competitive forum for arguments about cultural difference to be played out. This difference is now predominantly defined by national identities, rather than simply being a conflict based on differences in religious observance. Piskurek (2010, p.109) argues that, as religious observance in Scotland has declined, 'the once culturally dominant issue of belonging to different denominations has become residual, and its symbolic function has been taken over by the emergent cultural form of football fandom' within which the promotion of national identities plays a central role. It can be argued that differences between communities, rather than being enforced by religious leaders or extremist politicians in Scotland, are in part maintained by the social importance of sporting rivalry. Historical differences are important but they are being rewritten and reinforced every weekend in a context that is primarily defined by nationalism.

## Celtic: Irish cultural nationalism in Scotland

Celtic's support derives from two major factors. The club's continual success certainly helps to make the club an appealing proposition for supporters, but the club's cultural identity is of greater significance. Through Celtic, those of Irish Catholic descent are able to celebrate their origins and their sense of identity. Catholicism and "Irishness" have become so intertwined that the two are often understood as part of the same overarching identity. Sectarian abuse is usually felt to contain a strong anti-Irish element, and for this reason sectarianism can be seen as an expression of national difference, as well as religious difference (Bradley 1998a, MacMillan 1999). This is the context in which it will be examined in this chapter.

It is true to say that in Scotland:

> 'For many Catholics of Irish extraction, football provides an environment in which to make known otherwise repressed or unarticulated political attitudes, cultural affinities, national allegiances and prejudices. The prestige afforded by victories in the football arena cannot be underestimated in terms of their value for many in that community' (Bradley, 1998a, p.142).

The successes of Celtic are perceived as not simply sporting, but cultural. There is a strong historic link between Ireland and Scotland, and Celtic were formed as a club for

Irish immigrants to Scotland. The club's Irish heritage has been maintained and is celebrated at Celtic Park in displays of Irish cultural nationalism. Such displays are not limited to the island of Ireland, and there is a strong relationship between events in Northern Ireland, and events in Scotland.

The support expressed by Celtic supporters for the unification of Ireland has attracted particular attention, and the symbols and rituals repeated during every game played at Celtic Park are contentious. Sections of the club's support sing in support of the Irish Republican Army, which is perhaps the most controversial of all the rituals at Celtic Park. The group that is often deemed to be responsible for these chants is commonly known as "the Green Brigade". The Green Brigade are a self-styled "Ultras" group; despite voicing support for the political violence of others, they are not a "hooligan" group, and bear little resemblance to the "Casuals" movement examined by various theorists during the 1980s and 1990s, including Giulianotti (1989). The Green Brigade do not engage in violence, and are overtly political. They are keenly aware of their role within the stadium and their wider position within Scottish society.

The group's website states that the Green Brigade 'will continue to retain our proud Irish identity within Scotland, whilst strongly supporting Scotland's right to independence and self determination separate from the United Kingdom'. The Green Brigade also 'expresses solidarity with Irish republican politicians and activists in their efforts to reunite the six occupied counties with the republic' (Green Brigade, 2012). This is particularly significant, and offers support for the idea that in the contemporary era, displays of Irish nationalism are designed to express opposition to the British state, and not the Scottish nation. Despite being small in terms of active members, the group is able to organise displays of support for hardline Irish nationalism that cover an entire stand or more, and other Celtic fans often participate in activities organised by the Green Brigade.

The club themselves do not dispute that this happens, but do not actively support this activity and have spoken against it on a number of occasions (The Herald, 8th November 2010, The Herald, 6th December 2011, Daily Telegraph 16th December 2011). Despite this, it is clear that the football club acts a conduit for the expression of Irish nationalist beliefs which have long been regarded as controversial in Scotland. This chapter will mostly examine expressions of nationalism in Scotland, but it will not consider these

expressions in isolation. The links between the island of Ireland, and nationalism in Scotland, are strong and it is particularly useful to consider these.

It has been argued that Celtic matches 'provide the social setting and set of symbolic processes and representations through which the [Irish-descended] community's sense of its own identity and difference from the indigenous community is sustained' (Bradley, 1998a, p.143). Bradley's implicit suggestion that the 'indigenous community' of Scotland is a homogenous mass can certainly be challenged, but it is still the case that Celtic matches are key to the maintenance of a strong sense of identity amongst the club's supporters. Celtic Park is festooned with Irish tricolours on matchday and it has been argued (principally by Bradley, 1998a, but also by Piskurek, 2010) that many supporters feel that Ireland, rather than Scotland, is the nation to which they belong.

This runs counter to the theories discussed in the previous chapter, which suggest that those of Irish descent in Scotland feel increasingly comfortable with expressions of Scottish nationalism, and, in fact, demonstrate support for Scottish nationalism themselves. A number of theorists who have written about Celtic in the past have argued that the club's affiliations with the island of Ireland prevent it from fully integrating into Scottish society (this statement has been made most notably by MacMillan (1999), but also by Finn (1994 and 1999), Bradley (1998a and b), and Boyle (2000). It is clear that sociologists disagree on whether those of Irish descent in Scotland are culturally integrated, and this study argues that this is because there are different expressions of Irish and Scottish identity operating within different cultural processes. One of the major advantages of a comparative study is that these can be analysed within a wider cultural context than a study that only focuses on football can provide.

Bearing in mind the increasing levels of integration for those of Irish descent living in Scotland, it appears possible that expressions of Irish nationalism in Scottish football are largely performative, and are designed to counter increasingly aggressive expressions of support for unionism made by supporters of Rangers. The activities of the Green Brigade certainly support this reading. Expressions of Irish nationalism relate primarily to Northern Ireland, and are designed to show support for the cause of a united Ireland. This is comparable with the expressions of Irish nationalism in Irvine Welsh's fiction; Welsh's characters have Scottish identities and his novels promote

Scottish nationalism. They also promote Irish nationalism and the cause of a united Ireland, and the two are inter-related. At Celtic Park, Irish nationalism appears to be primary and Scottish nationalism secondary, and this is important. However, the two forms of nationalism cannot always be considered to be oppositional in the contemporary era. As explored in the previous chapter, many people of Irish descent within Scotland are increasingly supportive of Scottish independence, and are generally comfortable with the rise in Scottish nationalism. This is, in part at least, because Scottish nationalism stands against British state influence in Scotland, just as Irish nationalism stands against British influence in Northern Ireland. There are strong links not just between Celtic and the Republic of Ireland, but also between Celtic and the Irish nationalist community in Northern Ireland. Celtic attract a large following in Northern Ireland, because the club has become symbolic of Irish nationalism outside the Republic of Ireland itself. This is arguably the club's most significant cultural function in the 21$^{st}$ century.

Despite the increasing levels of integration between Irish and Scottish nationalism at the popular level, it is often argued, both by Celtic's management and their supporters, that Scottish football is governed by people who are biased against them because of the culture that they represent. At an institutional level, it is often felt that anti-Irish and anti-Catholic feeling is still prevalent, and that processes that work from the top-down actively attempt to create barriers to integration. James MacMillan's 1999 speech "Scotland's Shame" argued that sectarianism and anti-Irish sentiment are linked, and are still a major issue in Scotland; the speech represents something of a watershed moment in recent Scottish history. MacMillan's words sparked a great deal of debate and some of this, on an academic level, resulted in the production of an edited book entitled *Scotland's Shame* (2000). Many of the articles within this text (including those by Gerry P.T. Finn and Patrick Reilly) also suggest that sectarianism and anti-Irish sentiments are closely linked, with the former being inspired by the latter in many cases.

In "Scotland's Shame", James MacMillan stated that when he goes abroad he is often asked about 'the extreme nature of [Scotland's] anti-Catholic past and rumours of a still prevalent sour anti-Catholicism' (MacMillan, 1999, p.14). He revealed that these questions were usually 'sparked by the activities of [Scotland's] referees and sporting bodies'. There are relatively recent examples of an apparent hostility to Catholicism expressed by football referees; in 1996, the Partick Thistle player Rod McDonald was

booked for blessing himself in front of a stand filled with Rangers supporters. The incident was reported to the referee by one of his assistants, and McDonald was then booked for making an inflammatory gesture. McDonald later received a second yellow card for a foul and so the incident actually led to him being sent from the field of play. Rangers' supporters also reported the incident to the police as offensive, although the police took no action against the player (The Herald, 6th February 1996).

Perhaps more seriously, in 2006 the Celtic goalkeeper Artur Boruc was given a police caution for inciting Rangers supporters during a game. Boruc was alleged to have made a number of gestures "towards" a stand containing Rangers supporters, but the focus of the Scottish press and particularly the Catholic Church was fixed upon the fact that Boruc appeared to have been cautioned for blessing himself (BBC News, 26th August 2006). The Crown Office was forced to deny that the caution had been given to Boruc for blessing himself, but the incident was damaging for the police and the Procurator Fiscal because they did not confirm what Boruc was actually being cautioned for. Despite the eventual denial that Boruc was cautioned for blessing himself, many in Scotland still believe that this was the reason for his caution.

MacMillan's allegations of bias within the Scottish football authorities have most recently been given credence by the actions of Hugh Dallas, the former head of Referee Development in Scotland. Dallas was removed from his post because he was found guilty of sending an offensive email about the Pope's 2010 visit to Scotland, which related to wider allegations of child abuse within the Catholic Church (BBC Sport, 27th November 2010). The email was forwarded to Dallas from another employee at the Scottish Football Association (SFA) and the Catholic Church was moved to issue a demand that Scottish authorities act against bigotry in football. Peter Kearney, the press officer for the Catholic Church, said that Dallas' behaviour was:

> 'totally unprofessional, gratuitously insulting to the Pope, deeply offensive to the Catholic community of Scotland, and an incitement to anti-Catholic sectarianism' (The Scotsman, 27th November 2010).

He also demanded that Dallas be removed from his post because the email was sent from an official SFA account. Dallas was one of five SFA employees sacked for sending the email to colleagues and external recipients. Three were later reinstated to their posts, while Dallas settled an unfair dismissal claim out of court (BBC Sport, 25th July 2011).

Figure Two: Hugh Dallas, left, and the image contained in the email that he sent (BBC Sport, 25th July 2011)

It is fair to say that the behaviour of Hugh Dallas did little to quell existing beliefs about the neutrality and objectivity of Scottish officials. Given that the apparent expression of hostility towards Catholicism sent by Dallas had emanated from within the SFA itself, which was initially unwilling to act, it is perhaps unsurprising that many people of Irish Catholic descent do not identify readily with Scottish football institutions. MacMillan is just one example of a Celtic supporter who does not have faith in the SFA; his words are acknowledged to have resonance with many other supporters (Finn, 2000, Bradley 2000). One popular fansite for Celtic supporters is entitled "Celtic Paranoia"; the aim of the authors of this website is to prove institutional bias against their club. There are also books published on this subject; Campbell's (2001) *Celtic Paranoia...all in the mind?* is a good example of this, amongst many other similar volumes. The proliferation of literature about the perceived institutional bias against Celtic demonstrates the popular acceptance of the phenomenon amongst Celtic supporters. It appears possible to argue that while links between Scottish and Irish identities are becoming closer at the popular, bottom-up level, there is a perception that this process is being opposed within institutions that govern from the top-down.

As a result of this, many Celtic fans prefer to remain within an environment that unequivocally welcomes their ideals and cultural affiliation, and as a consequence the cultural nationalism expressed by many fans at Celtic Park often appears to be directed towards building an Irish, rather than a Scottish identity. Notably, this is the same scenario as in Northern Ireland, where the national football association and law and order organisations are perceived to have acted (and indeed on many occasions have acted) with bias against those who express an Irish and/or Catholic identity. The SFA have not acted to prevent teams with a strong Catholic support from competing in their

leagues, and they do not hold international matches in areas that are unwelcoming to Catholics. By comparison, the actions of the SFA are very mild compared to those of the IFA. Nevertheless, there have been enough incidents in which the SFA and its employees have demonstrated what are perceived to be anti-Catholic sentiments to prevent some Celtic supporters from feeling that they can support the Scottish national team, in large part due to the team's links with the SFA.

Despite the lack of confidence that some people in Scotland have in the institutions that govern them, Moorhouse (1994, p.193) nevertheless contends that Scotland's identity is based upon:

> 'the local and national state, political parties, the football authorities, the legal system, and an education system that is divided at the wish of the Catholic church'.

In taking a top-down view of the building of national identity, Moorhouse suggests that institutions themselves are more important than the people who form them. Similarly to Moorhouse, McCrone (1992, p.172-173) argues that the Scottish identity is based upon 'the nationalised industries, the education system, local government, [and] the public sector generally'. For both commentators, culture is not popular; rather, it is enforced by the diktats of political and economic systems. However, while these elements are important, it is attitudes towards them, rather than the institutions themselves, that are truly significant.

It is clear that, in the case of the football authorities, Celtic fans often do not have faith in the ability of Scottish institutions to behave fairly towards those of Irish and/or Catholic descent. Rather than the football authorities themselves dictating the way that nationalism develops, attitudes towards those authorities are a more important factor. Bruce (2005) argues that economic and political forces have greater importance than cultural institutions in shaping identities; this does not seem to be the case for many people in Scotland. As Giulianotti (2007, p.259) states, in contemporary Scottish society, 'individuals formulate their personal and social identities increasingly within the cultural rather than within the strict socio-economic realm'. Football is a process which allows alternative and competing identities to find expression.

Bradley (1998a, p.144) argues that in the Scottish media there has traditionally been 'criticism levelled at the many Celtic supporters who do not give allegiance to the

Scottish team'. At the heart of the criticism discussed is the contention that everyone who lives in Scotland should support the Scottish national team. Many Celtic fans feel a 'lack of affinity' with the Scottish national football team for the reasons outlined above, preferring to follow the Republic of Ireland instead (Bradley, 1998a, p.144). However, it is also common for fans to simply support Celtic, as the club has taken on the role of representing the beliefs, ideals and socio-cultural preferences of a significant percentage of Scotland's Irish Catholic-affiliated community.

Football fan identities, and indeed the construction and development of identity in general, are developed from the bottom-up rather than being enforced from the top-down as McCrone (1992) and Moorhouse (1994) contend. Many football fans choose to take an existing national identity, but the way in which this identity is understood changes over time, as with the Irish identity in Scotland. Cultural identities are not primordially given, nor solely dictated by economics and politics; rather, they are an organic process which develops according to many different and interrelated factors. This is clear when rapidly changing attitudes to cultural and political unionism in Scotland are considered.

## Rangers: Protestantism and unionism in Scotland

Rangers attract the bulk of their support from Scotland's shrinking Protestant-affiliated community. Graham Walker (2001) uses the terms "Protestant" and "unionist" interchangeably, in the same spirit as "Catholic" and "Irish" have come to be used. Protestant sectarianism and unionism have become strongly linked within Scottish culture, and this in part due to the activities of Rangers, a powerful symbol of unionism that is widely known for a long history of sectarian selection policies. Celtic have never discriminated about the religious affiliation of the players that represent them, and as a result, it has been argued that 'Rangers, in the Scottish Protestant tradition, have always been seen as the more wholeheartedly sectarian side' (O'Loan, Poulter, McMenemy 2005, p.32). Sectarianism in Scotland has often been understood through the prism of football, and Rangers have become symbolic of a process of religious discrimination at the popular level.

This is partly due to Rangers' selection and recruitment policies. Until 1989, Rangers had never knowingly signed a Catholic footballer. This approach only changed when

Maurice Johnston signed for the club in a particularly controversial transfer.[36] The break with tradition paved the way for other Catholics to sign for Rangers and the club has since been represented by a number of footballers from predominantly Catholic nations.[37] This suggests that religion is no longer the primary factor within Rangers' club policies. Despite breaking their sectarian policies in order to sign Catholics from mainland Europe, however, Rangers have never employed a Northern Irish Catholic player or any senior player from the Republic of Ireland. In the contemporary era, it is not Catholicism that the club and its supporters primarily see themselves as standing against, but Irishness. They are the only club to have competed in the Scottish Premier division with this record; every team in the English Premier League and Football League Championship has also employed at least one Irish footballer. In 2010 Rangers did sign a young Irish goalkeeper, Alan Smith, but the player has, according to Rangers' own records, never played a minute of competitive football for the club (Rangers FC, 2012).

Accusations of sectarianism by Rangers supporters are widespread and the club have been fined twice by UEFA because of offensive chanting at Champions League and UEFA Cup matches (The Guardian, 28th April 2011).[38] Within Scotland itself, Strathclyde Police have stated that if Rangers fans sing the particularly inflammatory "Famine Song" they will be arrested for a breach of the peace (BBC News, 16th December 2008).[39] One Rangers fan, William Allison, was convicted of a breach of the peace for singing the song; his appeal was turned down on the grounds that the song is racist (BBC News, 19th June 2009). Allison also lost his job and was banned from

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[36] Johnston had previously played for Celtic, and before his transfer to Rangers, it was widely expected that he was to rejoin Celtic from the French club Nantes.

[37] Some prominent examples include the Spaniards Nacho Novo and Mikel Arteta, the Italians Gennaro Gattuso, Lorenzo Amoruso, and Marco Negri, and the Croatian Nikica Jelavic.

[38] For Celtic's part, the continued support expressed by some of the club's fanbase for the IRA has been condemned by the Scottish media. However, Celtic have not been sanctioned by any European football authority for the activities of their fans, and were in fact praised by UEFA for the exemplary behaviour of their supporters at the 2003 UEFA Cup final (UEFA, 2003). Just as in Northern Ireland, the most aggressive displays emanate from those football followers who are opposed to Irish nationalism. That is not to argue that Celtic's supporters do not engage in aggressive behaviour; football matches can be a highly charged environment, and this generally develops through the activities of both sets of supporters. Nevertheless, it would not be accurate to argue that Celtic supporters have met with the same sanctions as Rangers'.

[39] Sung to the tune of the Beach Boys' "Sloop John B", the song's chorus runs "Why don't you go home, why don't you go home? The famine's over, why don't you go home?". The song has become popular with loyalist marching bands in Northern Ireland, demonstrating the links between Scottish unionist and Ulster loyalist culture. It was recently played in front of a Catholic church in Belfast during the "marching season", resulting in violent incidents and anger within the Irish nationalist community (BBC News, 13th July 2012)

Rangers matches for an indefinite period. Despite the undoubtedly offensive nature of this song, it must be pointed out that its sentiments are not definitively anti-Catholic, but are certainly anti-Irish. Sectarianism and anti-Irishness are linked, but it is the latter sentiment that appears to be more significant in the 21$^{st}$ century.[40]

This is strongly linked to Rangers' role within the promotion of "British" identity, which is now commonly opposed not just to Irish identity, but to Scottish identity also. As a result of the strong links that exist between Protestantism and unionism, Rangers have become a totemic symbol for those in Scotland who wish to remain a part of the United Kingdom (MacMillan, 1999). It is no longer the case that Scottish and British nationhood are automatically connected as one and the same thing, and formulations such as that used by Bradley (1998a and b) that see the two as interchangeable are challenged by the political and cultural changes that have occurred in Scotland over the last thirty years. Walker (2001, p.52) suggests that in the past, dominant ideas about Scotland were based upon 'confident notions of a nation infused by Presbyterian rectitude exerting influence out of proportion to its size in the context of the Union and the Empire'. The British Empire is long gone, and Scottish influence in the Union has waned; the importance of the Church of Scotland has also declined, and its membership has dropped to below 500,000, just under half of what it was in the 1950s (The Herald, 8th May 2008).

It is fair to say that 'many people in Scotland today feel a sense of disorientation regarding the passing of certain ways of life and the discrediting of certain ideas of Scottishness' (Walker, 2001, p.52). As Giulianotti's (2007) work confirms, many who support Rangers still value Scotland's place in Britain and Scotland's role in the British Empire, and they are now in a distinct minority. For this reason, Rangers' matches play a very significant role within the promotion of unionist ideals, because they provide an opportunity for the club's supporters to proclaim their allegiance to the British state. Rangers' fans achieve this by festooning their stadium with Union flags and singing pro-British songs such as "Rule Britannia", expressing support for the continued

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[40] Despite this, in 2012 the Scottish government introduced the "Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act". The act is widely perceived to target sectarianism, and this has been the major focus of the comment that it has provoked. Theoretically, it also targets anti-Irish chanting, but the most high-profile arrests so far have been for offences of a religious nature. The act has been criticised for not going far enough in terms of legislative power, and only targeting a limited number of offences. A fuller assessment is contained within this author's "Scotland's new anti-sectarian laws: An analysis of the background to the introduction of the "Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act" (forthcoming).

existence of the United Kingdom in aggressive displays. It is true to say that 'sporting passions can reflect prevailing political moods' (Jarvie and Walker, 1994, p.2), but they can also highlight a disconnection between politics and culture. Football provides a process through which counter-hegemonic ideals can be expressed; in Scotland, and especially within the context of football, unionist ideals are residual rather than dominant.

The political viewpoint that Rangers fans expound has declined in popularity in Scotland over the last thirty years, and fans who hold unionist views believe themselves to be in the minority (Giulianotti, 2007). As a result, they display their allegiances ever more prominently in an attempt to defend what is commonly seen as an "embattled" position. This mirrors the situation in Northern Ireland, where members of the Ulster Protestant community invoke the "myth of siege". Giulianotti (2007, p.278) reports that 'Rangers fans complain that no suitable political movement accords with their particular identity'; the unionist Rangers fans that Giulianotti interviewed feel that they are increasingly marginalised in Scotland's current political climate.

A number of Rangers fans have stated that 'the problem [...] in Scotland is you don't have a unionist party, you have a Conservative and unionist party', which is unacceptable to Scots with what Giulianotti (2007, p.278) terms 'a natural preference for any left-of-centre candidates'. The Scottish Conservative party have recently considered changing their name back to the Scottish Unionist party (The Scotsman, 5th July, 2010) but such a move has previously been rejected 'over sensitivity to the sectarian connotations it carries' (Seawright, 2002, p.8).The most popular political party in Scotland that has a commitment to the Union is the Labour Party, but historical connections to the Irish Catholic community in Scotland (McCrone, 1992, Bradley 1998b, Walker, 2001, Giulianotti, 2007) mean that some Rangers fans do not vote for the Labour party. The cultural identity expressed by many Rangers supporters is not reflected by any of the main political parties in Scotland.

Walker (2001, p.53) has described the 'belligerent Unionism' of many Rangers fans as 'an anomaly' which is 'at odds with majority Scottish opinion'. In many ways, the displays of Rangers fans represent cultural nationalist defiance in an era of change. Cultural nationalism is not only a tool in the development of identities, but also an element in the defence of existing ideals. Unionism is seldom examined as a form of

nationalism, but in the case of Rangers fans, many of the rituals and the symbolism involved are the same as those used in the promotion of national, rather than state identities. The fact that they are alone (in Scotland, at least) in using this symbolism highlights the counter-hegemonic nature of their beliefs within a Scottish context, and renders the Union far less banal than it is in England. That the future of the United Kingdom is contested is at its clearest within Scotland and Northern Ireland. In Scotland, expressions of unionism find less support within the media than in Northern Ireland; one of the respondents to Giulianotti's (2007, p.272) survey suggested that Rangers fans were frequently 'demonised' by the Scottish media for holding a British identity to be important. This further demonstrates the increasingly embattled nature of Unionism within Scottish culture.

Cosgrove (cited in Giulianotti and Gerrard, 2001, p.35) states that 'Scotland is not a concept that Rangers are entirely comfortable with…at times it seems like they are living in exile within a foreign country'. Rangers usually play in red, white and blue, in opposition to Celtic's green and white, and their choice of colours is seen as symbolic of the club's support for the Union. Rangers' decision to introduce an orange away shirt for the 2001/2 season was particularly controversial as it was seen as a demonstration of the club's well documented support for both the Orange Order and Ulster Loyalism (E. Kelly 2003, O'Loan, Poulter, McMenemy 2005). Just as there is a connection between Irish nationalist communities in Northern Ireland and Scotland, there is also a link between the Ulster loyalist and Scottish unionist communities. Rangers have a large following in Northern Ireland, and attract this support predominantly from the loyalist community.

The values and ideals of both communities are notably similar, with both emerging from the working-classes of their respective territories. Rangers have strong links with the loyalist-affiliated club Linfield, as explored in the second chapter of this study. The culture expressed at Rangers matches is inspired by Ulster loyalism, and the social processes involved in loyalism, such as membership of the Orange Order, are a strong influence on hardline unionism in Scotland. Many of the rituals associated with support for Rangers can also be seen at Windsor Park, and the identities expressed by fans of Rangers, Linfield, and the Northern Irish national team all involve the display of red hand banners, and singing anti-Irish songs. The connection between Northern Irish

loyalism and Rangers strongly influences the rhetoric expressed by supporters of the Glasgow club, as acknowledged by respondents to Giulianotti's (2007) survey of the political beliefs of Rangers fans. Enthusiasm for the union is strongly influenced by the fact that it maintains a formal political link between Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Just as in Northern Ireland, support for the continuation of the union finds its most powerful cultural expression through the popular culture associated with football, and for this reason it is reasonable to argue that unionist ideals are often promoted and constructed from the bottom-up. It is fair to say that unionism lacks a strong elite culture in Scotland, just as it does in Northern Ireland. The middle classes that sustained unionism at the polls have largely left Scotland, and the Presbyterian Church is also waning in influence (McCrone, 1992). The perception that unionism is enforced through the activities of Scottish institutions remains, but it is still the case that Rangers are the most powerful symbol of unionism to be found in contemporary Scotland, and certainly the strongest with popular appeal.

## The Scottish national team: Its role as a symbol of cultural nationalism, and the factors that prevent it unifying the nation

It has been argued (by Bradley, 1998a, p.130) that in Scotland, 'the fans of all clubs other than Celtic are similar in terms of their attachment to the [Scottish] national team'; Bradley includes Rangers in this assessment even though their symbolism celebrates a British rather than a Scottish identity. This assessment may have been reasonable in earlier decades but it is no longer the case that Rangers supporters automatically feel an attachment to the Scottish national team. The cultural and political difference between Rangers supporters, and supporters of other clubs, has led Rangers' supporters to report that they feel increasingly separate from the fans of other clubs in Scotland (O'Loan, Poulter, McMenemy 2005). It has been reported that a significant number 'are less likely to lend full support to the national team than had been apparent before the mid-1980s' (Giulianotti, 2007, p.276). This is partly due to the changing status of unionism within Scotland.

Nevertheless, the Scottish national football team has been a strong symbol of Scotland for decades, partly because it has represented the cultural separation of the nation from the rest of the United Kingdom during periods when Scotland had no separate parliament and few autonomous institutions. As a process which involves constructing

national identity from the bottom up, football has traditionally played a central role in the development of "Scottishness". Holt (1994, p.65) asserts that because Scotland is 'lacking other popular national institutions – the Law, the Church of Scotland, and the Civil Service could hardly be called popular – football, especially the Scotland side, [has] just had to bear too much of the weight of national pride'. In many other small nations the successes of the national football team has contributed to nationalist feelings, but in modern Scotland this is not always the case. Despite being one of the few institutions in which Scotland has truly independent representation, Scottish football is often a divisive influence. This is not solely due to the existence of competing nationalisms, but also due to the performance of the team itself.

Holt (1994, p.65) argues that football is 'too culturally important' to a unified Scottish identity, stating that the sport has become too significant to the national psyche. Failures in international football have traditionally taken on a level of significance that Holt feels is somewhat disproportionate. Scotland have not qualified for the finals of an international tournament since 1998, and are currently ranked 70th in the FIFA World rankings, behind nations such as Albania, Gabon, Georgia, and Panama, who are not known for their successes at international level (FIFA, 2012). This lack of success makes it more difficult for Scottish politicians to utilise football for the purpose of promoting nationalism, a process that has become common across Europe in the contemporary era.

There is a strong sense that Scotland has a separate culture which should be celebrated, while Englishness is repudiated. This has long been hegemonic amongst supporters of the Scotland national football team.[41] The two nations have a long tradition of enmity, which manifests itself at sporting contests. Hobsbawm (1996) argues that a nation's most powerful manifestation is through its football team; the dislike for the English team in Scotland can certainly be seen as a powerful representation of Scottish national feeling towards England. While the Scottish national team is representative of many different elements of national identity, in keeping with the comparative theme of this

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[41]An excellent recent example is the commercial success of T-shirts proclaiming "ABE – Anyone But England" during the 2010 World Cup (BBC, 14th June 2010). Stuart Whigham's (2012) article "'Anyone But England?' Exploring Anti-English Sentiment as part of Scottish National Identity in Sport' (*International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, [Online] pp.1-23) examines this phenomenon, concluding that political matters do not have a significant effect on the production of anti-English sentiment in football. However, this conclusion was drawn from interviews with a very limited sample (13 participants), and as such it is difficult to apply these findings to the wider populace, especially as these participants lived in England at the time of their interviews.

study, the following section will focus on the expression of opposition to England that is associated with the national team's support. It is important to note that fans of the Scottish national team do not engage in anti-Irish chants and symbolism; this is indicative of the fact that in the contemporary era England, not Ireland, is perceived to be the most significant cultural "other" by the majority of Scots.

Anti-England sentiment is 'uniquely uninhibited' (Hussain and Miller, 2006, p.69) in Scotland and this is because it is widely considered to be socially acceptable. Expressions of anti-England rhetoric at Scotland football internationals have grown since the 1980s and this is, in large part, due to the political situation in the United Kingdom as a whole. It is, however, not the case that England's influence over the governance of Scotland, and English people, are discussed in exactly the same way. This is demonstrated by the reaction of Scotland national team supporters to English-born players who represent Scotland. Watson (cited in Hussain and Miller, 2006, p.69) cautions against confusing anti-Englishness with what he calls 'anti-Englandness'. His argument is that many Scots do not actively dislike English people, but they do dislike the role that England plays within the United Kingdom, and the power that English politicians have over Scottish affairs.

Until relatively recently, the Scottish national football team was of equal ability with the English team, and the rivalry has remained strong. The selection of English-born players (who have not been deemed good enough to represent England) is symptomatic of the malaise currently affecting Scotland's national football team. There are simply not enough Scottish-born players of the quality needed to compete towards the top end of qualifying groups. There are now a number of English-born players in the Scottish national squad. Players from the English League system such as Jordan Rhodes, Phil Bardsley, Jamie Mackie, James Morrison, and Russell Martin all represented Scotland during the 2011/12 season; in total, eight English born footballers represented Scotland during that season, to no negative reaction. All the players discussed have utilised FIFA rulings on eligibility, and all have parents or grandparents who were born in Scotland. There are no contemporary instances of a player having chosen to represent England over Scotland and so it is not possible to judge the reaction that may take place in such an event.

There is a stark contrast between the reaction of Scottish fans to English-born players, and the reactions of Northern Ireland national team supporters to players with a Catholic background. The English-born players are not treated as "other" by Scottish supporters. The positive reaction of Scottish supporters to English-born footballers does suggest that there is a willingness to accept anybody who is willing to "become" Scottish. There remains an antipathy towards the English national football team, however; it is symbols of England and English identity, rather than all English people, that Scottish football supporters primarily disparage. Anti-English sentiment is much less virulent at football matches than it is within a great deal of the literature examined in the previous chapter.

Despite this, Giulianotti's study into the beliefs and habits of modern Rangers supporters found that 'Rangers fans are offended by the Tartan Army's perceived anti-English identity' (2007, p.277). These fans consider their ties with England to be a key part of the British identity. The fact that a substantial element within the Tartan Army profess a dislike of England has led to criticism that these supporters are xenophobic. This criticism usually comes from within Scotland itself rather than from outside the nation; the French academic Civardi's view is that 'Scottish football fans abroad steer clear away from the provocatively racist and xenophobic behaviour of some of their English counterparts' (2003, p.165) and as a result they have a far better reputation amongst other nations.

The supporters of the Scottish national team are characterised as 'not pro-Scottish, [but] anti-English' (Giulianotti, 2007, p.277) by some Rangers supporters. This response to the question of Scottish football identity is defensive, in that it questions why supposed anti-Englishness is deemed to be acceptable by the Scottish media but anti-Irishness is not. Giulianotti and Gerrard (2001, p.34) suggest that the use of English signifiers by Rangers fans serves to redouble their 'sense of embattlement' against other people within Scotland. This also demonstrates that many Rangers supporters hold a different conception of what Scottish identity is and should be than those in the mainstream of Scottish national supporters. Those supporters who complain about anti-English chanting and iconography feel that it is also anti-Union on many levels, and so they find it unacceptable.

The antipathy is generally one-way, within football at least: Rangers' players have also played for Scotland, and have generally not received any criticism from Scotland

supporters for doing so. Supporters of Rangers are especially unwilling to "assimilate" to the hegemonic ideology of the Scottish national football team, and choose to take part in rituals and display symbols that demonstrate allegiance to unionism. Civardi has nevertheless asserted that 'Scotland, like France (but unlike England?[42]) is an assimilationist rather than integrationist society' (2003, p.163). He claims that Scotland follows the French model whereby such formulations as "French-Senegalese" or "French-Reunionese" do not really exist, and by extension, suggests that "Scots-Irish" and "Scottish unionist" could be deemed equally unacceptable terms.

The evidence that Civardi provides for his assertion that Scotland is an assimilationist society is largely anecdotal, and relates to his experience as a French teenager living in Scotland. He felt that racism was largely absent in his life because young people had assimilated to the local culture; this involved either identifying as a Protestant unionist or an Irish Catholic. Civardi (2003) does not see this expectation as problematic because his main concern is with racism rather than sectarianism or nationalism. It is often asserted that Scotland has less problems than England regarding racial tolerance; Civardi half-jokes that this is because Scottish people are too preoccupied with religious and national affiliation to care about race.

In France, footballers such as Patrick Vieira, Marcel Desailly or Zinedine Zidane are seen as 'Frenchmen who happen to be black, rather than the standard bearers of a particular community – which they would be expected to be in Britain, at least by some academics' (2003, p.164). Civardi feels that multiculturalism is a kind of tokenism that prevents the cohesion of any national community; the bracketing of footballers and indeed any citizens of the nation into racial or ethnic groups is unhelpful because it encourages cultural separation. Assimilation into one national ideal and one identity is the preferred scenario for Civardi. However, even if this were a universally desirable outcome, assimilation into Scottish culture would be very difficult due to the many contested elements of identity in Scotland.

In the past, Irish immigrants, and those of Irish descent, were expected to assimilate to a culture in which unionism was generally accepted as a part of the dominant hegemony. Many unionists still believe that assimilation into Scottish culture involves accepting unionism as dominant; this contributes to the conflicts described within this study. The

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[42] The brackets and question mark are both Civardi's.

difficulty for those who desire assimilation to "Scottishness" is that the old certainties that once existed in Scotland have long gone. Scotland contains a number of competing identities, and it is very difficult for politicians in Scotland to use football as a tool for engendering patriotic feeling which could provide further support for the independence movement, largely because football highlights this fact more clearly than any other social process.

## Conclusions

The rituals of football fandom are a social process through which cultural identities can develop and be expressed; the cultural nationalism to be found within the rituals and symbols of Scottish football is directed towards three different entities, Scotland, Ireland, and a particular vision of the United Kingdom. Jim Sillars, the former leader of the SNP, once lamented that 'Scotland has too many ninety minute patriots whose nationalist outpourings are expressed only at major sporting events' (The Herald, 24th of April 1992, p.1, citation taken from Jarvie and Walker, 1994, p.1); the problem for Scottish nationalists, is arguably, in fact, that there are too few. Football clubs in Scotland are symbolic of more than one type of nationalism, and this presents a challenge to the possibility of the Scottish national team acting as a unifying symbol of Scottish nationalism. It is fair to say that in modern Scotland, there are many different types of identity and that held by many supporters of the Scottish national team is just one strand of Scottishness. The possible unitary power of the team is somewhat negated by the opposed national identities that are present in Scotland.

It has been suggested that 'the problem of sectarianism [...] arguably does more than anything else to undermine Scottish football's capacity to forge a unified national consciousness' (Bairner, 1994, pp.16-17). However, the culture that is expressed at football matches is not solely sectarian, but has taken on a number of other cultural meanings within the context of nationalism. Football allows for displays of loyalty to ideals that stand outside the Scottish cultural and political mainstream. In many previous studies, it has been suggested that the Irish nationalist identity expressed by many Celtic supporters presents the main challenge to Scottish nationalism. However, in the contemporary era, Scottish and Irish nationalism are not necessarily opposed; in many ways, the two have become closely linked through their opposition to the ideals of unionism, which has become the "common enemy" of Scottish and Irish nationalists.

Rangers' matches have become the main forum through which unionists are able to express their cultural preferences. Aggressive displays of enthusiasm for the British state and Scotland's continued place within it are increasingly rare in Scotland, and Rangers matches allow unionists to celebrate their commitment to a vision of Scotland which is rooted in the past. As such, Rangers are a cultural institution that stands at odds with much of mainstream Scottish thought. It is clear that it is difficult for many unionist and pro-British Rangers fans to commit to supporting the Scottish national team, and therefore the possible unitary power of the national team is somewhat negated.

Celtic matches provide an opportunity for supporters with an Irish Catholic heritage to celebrate this without fear of the kind of violent reprisals described by MacMillan. Many Celtic supporters also find it difficult to support the Scottish national team, often because of the (perceived) bigoted actions of the Scottish Football Association which governs the team, rather than due to any major issues with the ideals expressed by supporters of the Scottish team. In Scotland, as in Northern Ireland, football is a social process in which cultural differences are thrown into stark relief, and therefore the sport is often a divisive rather than a unifying factor. Given the size of the support of Celtic and Rangers, a significant number of Scots can be said to not support the Scottish national team for ideological and cultural reasons.

# Conclusions

Cultural nationalism involves social processes and practices which differentiate one national group from another. This is achieved through artistic production, and also through rituals, traditions, and symbols in which cultural difference is celebrated. Cultural nationalists have political aims, and their work has political significance. However, their work is not confined within the politico-legal sphere. As Hutchinson (1994) argues, nations are not simply produced within the political process; rather, they are the sum of their continually developing culture. Further to this, as Williams (1979, 1981) argues, all social processes play a role in the development of identity. This study demonstrates that within Northern Ireland and Scotland, identities are maintained and constructed not just by forces related to politics and economics, but also those related to culture.

The study of cultural nationalism has a strong practical application, as culture becomes increasingly significant within the political process in nations and states across Europe. In recent years, there has been what Bean (2007, p.167) terms an 'acculturation of politics', and nationalist parties have made significant gains through the use of particularist identity politics. Nationalists work to emphasise the cultural differences between their nation and others, and argue that the nation requires a political state for its culture to flourish. For this reason, the study of cultural nationalism is essential for an understanding of the contemporary political situation in Europe, but especially in those nations and territories which currently lack a separate political institution.

If the mechanisms of political states were solely responsible for the production of nationalism, one might reasonably expect Scottish nationalism, for example, to have been replaced by a British state nationalism. That this has not occurred is testament to the power of cultural nationalism to sustain separate national identities. Nationalists operating within the political sphere have become increasingly reliant upon cultural arguments, alongside those that focus upon policy. In both Northern Ireland and Scotland, cultural nationalism is at the heart of the identity politics that are increasingly significant within both these constituent parts of the United Kingdom, and plays a key role in developing, defining, and promoting nationalist ideals. It is clear that there are close links between political and cultural nationalism, with exponents of the latter exerting an increasing level of influence on political policy. The use of cultural

nationalism within the political arena is one of the primary areas of analysis within this study, and this concluding chapter will summarise the relationship between the two spheres of nationalism in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

The examination of cultural nationalism in this study is informed not just by ethnosymbolist ideas, but also by cultural materialist theories and aims; this thesis is a sustained examination of the transformational potential of culture, which Williams (1979) recommends as the ideal type of analytical study. Benedict Anderson's concept of the "imagined community" is also central to the methodological approach taken. Nations are seen as developing as a consequence of the cultural input of citizens, and communities are imagined in different ways depending on the cultural materials which are produced and consumed, and the processes which are participated in and observed. The elements of culture examined are considered in terms of the contribution made to the way in which people imagine the nation. This synthesis of cultural materialist, ethnosymbolist, and modernist ideas provides an adaptable framework for the analysis of cultural nationalism.

This study demonstrates that elite and popular cultural processes both play a role in the production of cultural nationalism, and this is one of the key contributions that it makes to its field of analysis. Existing studies of nationalism tend to only focus upon elite contributions, perceiving the production of identity to be mainly dictated by intellectuals working in strictly defined fields. While elite contributions to cultural nationalism are significant, contributions made by individuals and groups operating at the popular level are equally important. Examining the ways that culture is constructed from the "bottom-up" as well as the "top-down" allows for a more detailed picture of the way that cultural nationalism develops.

This study identifies and examines the different kinds of cultural nationalism which currently exist in Northern Ireland and Scotland. In both territories, there are in fact competing forms of cultural nationalism which overlap and play a key role in defining the relationships between different communities. This concluding chapter will summarise the nature of these relationships, as well as situating the findings of the study within the wider fields to which they contribute. The detailed examination of cultural nationalism in Northern Ireland and Scotland allows for wider and more comprehensive conclusions to be drawn. The connections between the expressions of cultural

nationalism that have been examined in the preceding chapters will be discussed, as well as the differences between them.

## The connections between expressions of cultural nationalism in Northern Ireland and Scotland

Due to a long history of migration between the two, Irish nationalism is present in both Northern Ireland and Scotland. In the former territory, the aim of most Irish nationalists is that Ireland should become one unified political state, containing the current territories of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This is the stated goal of the largest Irish nationalist political parties in Northern Ireland, Sinn Fein and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). It is also the ultimate ideal of the cultural nationalists examined within this study. Irish nationalists typically argue that there is a shared culture which is present in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and which binds the people of both territories together. The position that this shared culture can only truly thrive within a unified Irish state is in many ways the classic argument of nationalists, as discussed by Smith (1991, 2009). The Irish cultural nationalism produced in Scotland is also generally supportive of a united Ireland, and the aims of Irish nationalists are relatively consistent, despite the different contexts in which nationalism is produced.

Irish nationalists promote Irish cultural pursuits in making the argument for a united Ireland (Nic Craith, 2003, Bean, 2007, 2011). The shared cultural heritage of people who primarily identify as Irish has become a useful tool because it unites people across the island of Ireland. Nationalists are able to argue that through culture, the people of the Republic and of Northern Ireland are fundamentally similar. The Irish language, Irish music, and Gaelic games (which are organised on an all-Ireland basis) have long been significant cultural tools for Irish nationalists to utilise. As this study has demonstrated, football has also become a significant element of Irish cultural nationalism in recent years, and the sport allows for players and fans to express an allegiance to the Irish nation, rather than to Northern Ireland. It is clear that in Northern Ireland, football is a process that allows for the differences between communities to be reinforced.

The "Kearns ruling" (2010), made by football's global governing body (FIFA) allows any player with an Irish passport to represent the Republic of Ireland. Footballers from

the Catholic community in Northern Ireland who have chosen to take an Irish passport under the terms of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement (1998) are opting to represent the Republic of Ireland in increasingly large numbers. This is because the team of the Republic has become, with the support of both the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) and the Irish government, a truly national team, representing all people who primarily identify themselves as Irish, rather than just those who live within the Republic of Ireland. The team has become a strong symbol of Irishness, and in choosing to play for it, footballers from Northern Ireland affirm that their Irish cultural identity is very significant.

These players also explicitly reject the team of Northern Ireland, as this has become a symbol of the Ulster Protestant community, and of Northern Ireland's separate status within the island of Ireland. In so doing, they have the support of the vast majority of the Catholic-affiliated community in Northern Ireland. Support for the national team of the Republic of Ireland is common, and the Northern Ireland team is seen as "other". The process through which the Northern Ireland team is rejected has become more obvious than ever in recent years, and it is now commonplace for players and fans to explicitly repudiate the idea that living in Northern Ireland plays any significant role in the construction of their cultural identities. It is the Irish nation, rather than the political territory of Northern Ireland, that is important.

These displays of cultural nationalism have a tangible political significance. Politicians have utilised this rejection of Northern Ireland in making renewed and sustained calls for an all-Ireland national football team. This would replicate the arrangement in other less popular sports such as rugby union. The current minister for Culture, the Arts, and Leisure in Northern Ireland, Sinn Fein's Caral ni Chuilin, has made repeated calls for an all-Ireland team to be introduced. The SDLP's Pat Ramsey has also argued that such a team should be brought into existence, replacing the current Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland teams. Were this to happen, a prominent symbol of Northern Ireland's separate status would be removed, and replaced with a symbol of Irish unity. That nationalist politicians are actively pressing for this to happen demonstrates the significance of football as an element of cultural nationalism in Northern Ireland.

Football is also central to the expression of Irish cultural nationalism in Scotland. Celtic football club have become the most important symbol of Irish nationalism in Scotland,

and the club's supporters display their allegiance to an imagined Irish community through flags, songs, and banners. Irish tricolours are always on prominent display at Celtic Park, and supporters of the club sing Irish rebel songs. A section of the club's support also voice support for the activities of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). The culture expressed at Celtic matches, and also those of the club's main rival, Rangers, is heavily influenced by events in Northern Ireland. Both clubs attract strong support from the territory, and as Giulianotti (2007) states, supporters from Northern Ireland exert a strong influence over the rituals observed at the club's matches.

It is the contention of this study that displays of Irish nationalism at Celtic Park are primarily intended to demonstrate support for a united Ireland, and an end to British state influence in Northern Ireland. In previous academic studies, most notably those of Joseph M. Bradley (1998a, 2006), it has been argued that the displays of Irish cultural nationalism at Celtic matches are designed to demonstrate opposition to Scottish nationalism. However, it is increasingly the case that these displays show opposition to the unionist displays of Rangers' supporters and to unionism more generally, rather than to Scottish nationalism. The nationalism expressed at Celtic Park is pro-Ireland, but that does not mean it is by definition anti-Scottish. The most significant organised Celtic fan group, the "Green Brigade", are explicitly supportive of both Irish and Scottish nationalism, and their rhetoric sees the two as linked together by a common aim, and also by a common enemy.

The nationalism expressed by Scotland supporters is also anti-unionist, and this means that there is a point of convergence between the cultural expressions of Scotland fans, and those of Celtic, in that both are opposed to the unionism of Rangers' supporters. The rituals associated with support for the Scottish national football team are also traditionally associated with anti-English rhetoric (Bairner, 1994). However, it is the contention of this study that this rhetoric is more "anti-England", as the dominant political partner in an increasingly unpopular union, than it is anti-English. As Hussain and Miller (2006) argue, symbols of England, as a nation that is perceived to have political dominance over Scotland, are targets of abuse. The English national football team is a good example of this. However, individuals born in England are not targeted, and it is symbols of the Union, rather than individuals, that attract the strongest opprobrium.

While the rituals of Rangers fans that proclaim their unionist ideals certainly run contrary to the hegemony of the Scottish national team's supporters, the Irish nationalist rituals of Celtic fans are often perceived to be less antagonistic towards Scottish nationalism than they were hitherto. As discussed by Pittock (2008), many people in Scotland now view the aims of Irish and Scottish nationalism as being broadly the same. Irish and Scottish nationalists share a desire for an end to British state influence in territories that they claim are defined by national identities, rather than any British or unionist identity. Sympathy for Scottish nationalism amongst those of Irish descent in Scotland has grown in recent years. As argued by Gallagher (2000), Hearn (2000), Hussain and Miller (2006) and Pittock (2008), Catholics of Irish descent in Scotland are now far more inclined to support the aims and ideals of Scottish nationalism than are people from the Protestant-affiliated unionist community. In addition, the Irish nationalism expressed by Celtic supporters is now viewed more sympathetically by many Scottish nationalists, and, as Pittock (2008, p.52) argues, the 'Irish example' of pursuing and maintaining an independent state is now seen in a much more positive light than it was hitherto.

This phenomenon is clearly demonstrated in Scottish literature, within which a secondary Irish nationalism is often expressed, alongside a primary Scottish nationalism. This phenomenon is most clearly demonstrated in the novels of Irvine Welsh. The main protagonists in Welsh's work tend to hold a primary Scottish identity, with an Irish and/or Catholic background strongly informing their attitude to the United Kingdom as a political entity. There is a positive relationship between Scottish nationalism and an Irish and/or Catholic background in Welsh's work. There is also a high level of anti-British and anti-unionist rhetoric, matching that expressed by Celtic supporters.

There is a link between football and literature throughout Welsh's novels; most of Welsh's protagonists support Edinburgh's Irish Catholic-affiliated team, Hibernian, and their identities are informed by the anti-British elements of Irish nationalism. As the Union declines in popularity in Scotland, sympathy for other identities that are opposed to British influence has grown. As a consequence, there is a much stronger alignment between Irish nationalism and Scottish nationalism than there was before the 1980s. This is an effect of the Thatcher era and the neo-liberal governments that followed it;

the values of these governments were perceived to be fundamentally opposed to those held by a majority of people in Scotland.

Literature is not solely an elite pursuit in Scotland, reflecting the wider situation within Scottish society, the culture of which is increasingly dominated by the traditional hegemonic ideals of the working-classes. In the contemporary Scottish literature analysed in this study, neo-liberalism is repudiated and communal values celebrated, particularly those related to working-class solidarity. Both Irvine Welsh and James Kelman write novels which are profoundly negative about the effects of British government policy on the welfare state, de-industrialisation, wealth and employment distribution, education, and criminal justice. The plot of their novels often demonstrates the ill effects caused by neo-liberal policies. In *Trainspotting* (1999) and *The Bedroom Secrets of the Master Chefs* (2007), and also *Skagboys* (2012), Welsh makes the argument that British government policy since 1979 is the root cause of increased unemployment. This has led to a sharp increase in substance abuse, and a decrease in the self-worth of Scotland's citizens.

Kelman makes a similar argument about the effects of British government policy in many of his novels and short stories, but particularly in *A Chancer* (2007) and *A Disaffection* (1990). *A Chancer* discusses the perception that since 1979, the balance of power within the United Kingdom has shifted to the south-east of England, leading to disenfranchisement in other areas. One of the main effects of Thatcherism was to make the English middle class the dominant social group within the United Kingdom, and Scottish literature is representative of the negative reaction to this in Scotland as a whole. In *A Chancer*, the characters are forced to either leave Scotland or embark upon a life of crime to make money, as all the available jobs are concentrated in the south east of England.

Both Welsh and Kelman argue that due to the subordination of Scottish interests to those of England, as discussed in the work of Hearn (2000) and Pittock (2008), Scotland has effectively become a colony of England. Kelman (2003) makes this argument in *And the Judges Said...*, and demonstrates the effects of this in *A Chancer*. Welsh's best-known protagonist, Mark Renton, makes a strong statement on the colonisation of Scotland in *Trainspotting*. He argues that Scotland has been 'colonised by wankers' (Welsh, 1998, p.78). The text of this argument has been used by the Scottish National

Party in their campaign literature, in a good example of the party utilising cultural materials to make its political argument. This demonstrates the strong popular and political resonance of Welsh's work.

The perception that Scotland has become a colony demonstrates a strong disaffection with the way that the British state has been governed since 1979. Scotland's separate culture is often promoted through comparison with that of its nearest neighbour and long-time rival, England, which both Welsh and Kelman depict as a colonial power, exerting political control over Scotland. In contemporary literature, English culture is discussed as fundamentally different to that of the majority of people in Scotland. England is described as Scotland's "other", and the two nations are portrayed as opposed to each other in terms of values and political ideals.

Scotland's difference from England is also emphasised by the use of working-class vernacular and speech patterns in contemporary literature. This has the effect of setting the boundaries of the community described to those who use similar modes of speech. Both Welsh and Kelman have described Standard English as an "imperial" language, and have argued that to use it in Scottish literature would be an act of assimilation to the middle-class values expressed in a great deal of literature produced in England. Welsh and Kelman both argue against the idea that as Scotland participated in building the British Empire, the nation still benefits from this in the present day.

This is consistent with ideas expressed by other prominent Scottish nationalists, most notably Tom Nairn in his later work, especially *Union on the Rocks* (2007). The ideals expressed within contemporary Scottish literature are strongly opposed to unionism, and there is no serious work of contemporary Scottish literature which discusses the United Kingdom in positive terms. This is also the case within Northern Irish literature, and this is a particularly important similarity between contemporary literature produced in Scotland, and novels produced in Northern Ireland. The argument that Northern Ireland should not be governed by the British state is clearly made in the novels of Eoin McNamee, which promote the cause of Irish nationalism directly. *The Ultras* (2004) and *Resurrection Man* (1994) both depict the British government and British security forces as being actively involved in the deaths of Catholic civilians in Northern Ireland. They also depict the British army and security forces as colluding with terrorists in order to kill Catholics from both Northern Ireland and the Republic.

The work of McNamee is anti-British and anti-loyalist, and also describes Protestantism in exceedingly negative terms. In discussing the recent history of Northern Ireland, which has been defined by the conflict between Catholic and Protestant-affiliated communities, McNamee's novels describe Northern Ireland as a fundamentally divided territory, and portray the Troubles as primarily the consequence of the actions of British state forces and loyalists. The policies pursued by the British government in the 1980s and 1990s are also portrayed as an attempt to maintain a pseudo-colonial presence, the character of which McNamee suggests is defined by deliberate and targeted acts of violence. Irish nationalist violence is not discussed in any great detail, and the focus is solely upon the deadly actions of those who are opposed to a united Ireland. For this reason, it is fair to describe McNamee's work as supportive of the main aims of Irish nationalism in Northern Ireland, in that it only focuses upon the lethal actions of those who are opposed to it.

In addition to the Irish nationalist literature produced by McNamee, there is also a proliferation of arguments for one unified Northern Irish community, which is defined by a shared culture which is neither Irish nor British. Authors such as Robert McLiam Wilson and Glenn Patterson produce novels that argue that Northern Ireland possesses a unique culture. In Wilson's *Eureka Street* (1994), it is argued that the experience of conflict in the Troubles has created a society unlike any other, and so it is possible to understand Northern Ireland as unique, and develop a society out of this shared experience. The fact that communities were opposed (and remain opposed) is less important, Wilson argues, than the notion that they are now less similar to Ireland or to mainland Britain than they are to each other.

In *The International* (1999), Patterson presents a society which is also uniquely Northern Irish, and not defined by membership of the British state, or by cultural connections to the Republic of Ireland. The novel's main protagonist rejects the notion of a cultural divide in Northern Ireland, preferring to think of himself, and the territory as a whole, as "international", a composite of the cultural influence of two separate entities, Britain and Ireland. Contrary to the expectations of many post-colonial critics, the vision of Northern Ireland produced by Wilson and Patterson is defined by nationalism. It is recognised that a post-national future is unlikely to materialise, and so political action towards a separate Northern Irish state is promoted. It is unusual for this to occur outside the confines of loyalism, and therefore the argument made within

literature is somewhat unique. The closest political arguments to this are made by the Alliance party, but the approach taken by the party is much less radical, and is often understood as "soft unionism" in its acceptance of the status quo.

The idea that a shared culture can develop in Northern Ireland is often described as a uniquely middle class concern. Cosmopolitanism or ecumenicalism, argues Gallaher (2007), are unlikely to appeal to a majority of people in Northern Ireland due to the territory's past. Nevertheless, within contemporary literature there is cultural support for the idea of a shared Northern Irish society. The characters and settings within *Eureka Street* and *The International* are defined by their Northern Irish character, and the main protagonists do not express support for belonging either to the British state or to a united Ireland. The novels discussed in this study represent a form of Northern Irish cultural nationalism which is designed to be cross-communal. One of the most interesting functions of contemporary literature in Northern Ireland is that it acts as a conduit for the expression of a kind of nationalism which is rarely seen in the territory. This demonstrates the power of literature as a method of promoting new ideas and alternative national identities.

However, in some ways this also highlights the disjuncture between elite and popular culture in Northern Ireland. Literary production represents a good example of Irish cultural nationalism operating at an elite level in Northern Ireland. Within the territory, literature is dominated by upper middle-class voices, and there are very few significant working class authors. This does negatively affect the reception of literature, and limit the potential audience for the arguments made in novels. Working-class culture in Northern Ireland is set in opposition to anything that is seen as a form of "elitism", and as literature is still the preserve of members of the cultural elite in the territory, this is one reason for the idea of an ecumenical, state-based future failing to attract more popular support.

## Unionist and loyalist culture in Northern Ireland and Scotland

As well as a long history of Irish migration to Scotland, there is also a history of Scottish Protestant migration to the north of Ireland. This has resulted in strong links between the cultural and political values expressed by the Protestant-affiliated communities in Northern Ireland and Scotland. Both groups are broadly supportive of the continued integrity of the United Kingdom, as this is seen as the best way of

maintaining a level of hegemony over opposed nationalist groups within their respective territories. However, within Northern Ireland, the Ulster Protestant community does not possess a unified culture; Todd's (1987) schema outlines the existence of two principal groups, the "Ulster British", and Ulster Loyalists.

The Ulster British tend to perceive their cultural and political identity to be defined by membership of the British state, and any attachment to Northern Ireland is seen as secondary. Ulster Loyalists also support the continued status of Northern Ireland as a territory within the United Kingdom, but this is dependent upon the way in which the British state is perceived to treat the wider Ulster Protestant community. In expressing loyalty to the British crown rather than the British government, loyalists possess a political and cultural outlook which is unlike that of any group on the British mainland. Loyalists tend to have a primary Northern Irish identity, and as Tonge (2005) argues, they primarily think of their cultural group in terms of an imagined community of Northern Irish Protestants.

Those elements of Ulster Protestant culture that are distinct and not engaged within by the majority of people in mainland Britain tend to be seen as loyalist. Politically, loyalists are represented by the more hardline members of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), particularly its founder and former leader, Dr Ian Paisley. Despite the DUP's nomenclature, at times when the party has perceived that the British government has behaved in a way that is detrimental to the Ulster Protestant community, its leaders have expressed their support for an independent Northern Irish state. This is indicative of the primary aim of loyalism, which is to protect the primacy of a narrowly defined community within a nationally defined area.

Cultural expressions that are recognisably working-class have become more significant since the Thatcher era. This is because Ulster Protestant identity as a whole has become increasingly embattled, due to the fact that Northern Ireland's political status is now officially conditional (as a consequence of the 1993 Downing Street declaration on the future of Northern Ireland, a Thatcher policy eventually carried out by her successor John Major), and dependent upon the will of a majority to remain within the United Kingdom. This has resulted in an increasingly hardline culture, within which loyalism plays an important role. By contrast to loyalists, unionists have tended to actively resist

the development of a distinctive culture, as it would run counter to their main argument regarding the similarity between mainland Britain and Northern Ireland.

As a consequence of this, unionism has developed to be seen a politico-legal position, rather than as the expression of the values of a cultural group, and this has had a strong negative effect upon the production of a distinctly unionist culture (Nic Craith, 2003, Farrington, 2006). The value of developing a culturally defined brand of nationalism has not been acknowledged by unionists until very recently, and in fact has been seen by many as counter-productive. Unionist attempts to develop a cultural presence in the contemporary era have largely been a failure, as they have not resonated with the masses in Northern Ireland. This is partly because the methods used have largely been seen as elitist, and have only referred to the cultural interests of a small number of people. They have also failed because they stress a cultural link to Scotland (through the disputed and much derided "language" of Ulster-Scots), at the very time when Scotland's place in the United Kingdom is being strongly challenged.

Unionists in Northern Ireland lack a strong culture with which to defend their political ideals in the increasingly acculturated Northern Irish political environment, and this had a negative effect upon the reception of unionism in recent years. Despite the fact that those within the unionist movement are often seen as members of a cultural and political elite, unionists are largely absent from culturally significant literary production. Efforts continue to be concentrated in other areas, and it seems unlikely that literature will become a more popular form of culture as it does not resonate with loyalists either. Many loyalists feel that literary production is not commensurate with the hegemonic values of their group, which are based around "hard work" and participation in communal rituals, rather than solitary, reflective pursuits (Gallaher, 2007).

Scottish unionist culture is not strongly expressed through literary production, and this situation is similar to that with Northern Irish unionist and loyalist culture. Maxwell (1991) argues that those members of the Scottish middle-class who might have developed a literary culture that is favourable to unionism never actually valued literary expression. Further to this, McCrone (1992) goes as far as to argue that there was little chance of this developing in the contemporary era because most of the Scottish middle-classes have left the nation altogether. Whilst unionism is still a political and cultural force in Scotland, its popularity has declined over the last thirty years. This is reflected

by the very low level at which unionist ideals are expressed within cultural production in Scotland.

The remaining working-class unionists in Scotland have developed a culture that is more participatory than reflective, and is centred on the rituals related to support for Rangers, a club that is now the strongest symbol of unionism to be found in Scottish popular culture. The rituals of the club's supporters offer particularly strong opposition to the hegemonic ideals associated with support for the Scottish national team, and Rangers' matches are seen as opportunities to display support for the continuation of the Union. It is the contention of this study that Rangers, as one of the most prominent symbols of unionism in Scotland, have become the most significant and popular cultural site for the expression of opposition to Scottish nationalism. The club have also become a prominent site for those who oppose the political and cultural ideals of Irish nationalism; this is true for people from both Northern Ireland and Scotland.

The culture at Rangers' home stadium, Ibrox Park, is notably similar to that found at Windsor Park in matches involving the Northern Ireland national football team. Red hand banners and anti-Irish songs have become commonplace in both stadiums. Supporters of Rangers, and supporters of Northern Ireland, have been accused of sectarianism, and the rituals involved with support for both teams involve aggressively proclaiming the supremacy of communities that are affiliated with Protestantism. However, in the contemporary era it is the national communities that have become associated with religious affiliation, rather than religious traditions themselves, that are the main cause of enmity between communities in both Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Football is also central to the cultural nationalism expressed by many members of the Ulster Protestant community, and so the sport is a key component within the rival cultural nationalist movements in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland national football team has become associated with loyalism, partly because the team is a symbol of the territory's separate status within international competition. Supporters participate in the popular rituals that have turned the Northern Ireland national team into a strong symbol of Ulster Protestant identity. The practices associated with supporting the team result in the expression of a separate Northern Irish identity which cannot solely be defined as British. In the process, the team and its supporters have become symbolic of loyalist culture.

In addition to this, The Irish Football Association (IFA), which governs football in Northern Ireland, is not a British organisation. It is definitively Northern Irish, and its ideals are much more loyalist than unionist. Northern Irish football is governed by an elite group who share the same political and cultural aims as the mainly working-class people who support the national team, and this is an excellent example of an elite governing body and a popular group combining for a common purpose. Just as Irish nationalist politicians support the idea of an all-Ireland team, loyalist and hardline unionist politicians such as the DUP's Nelson McCausland have become high profile supporters of the Northern Ireland team. In speaking out against players who have chosen to play for the Republic of Ireland rather than Northern Ireland, McCausland has demonstrated the significance of the Northern Ireland team as one the few symbols of Northern Irish autonomy.

The ways in which Scottish unionists express their cultural preferences are closer to the methods utilised by loyalists. This demonstrates that there are some similarities between working-class groups with Protestant affiliations in Northern Ireland and Scotland. Despite this, the ideals expressed are not always the same, especially as Scottish unionists do not take any position other than that Scotland should continue to be a constituent part of the United Kingdom. Loyalists also prefer that Northern Ireland should remain in the United Kingdom, but they have an identity that is not defined solely by Britishness. The primary aim of loyalists is that their community should be protected, and they support Northern Irish institutions that promote loyalist culture. While the processes through which cultural nationalism is developed are the same, the ideals expressed are different. This is significant, as it is fair to say of all the varieties of nationalism examined in this study.

## The competing and complimentary national identities present in Northern Ireland and Scotland

It can be contended that all the identities that have been analysed in this study are nationalist. This is clearly the case for expressions of Scottish nationalism; despite currently being a part of the United Kingdom, Scotland is clearly defined by a land border which has existed for centuries. Scottish nationalism also has a long tradition, although it is now more virulently anti-union and anti-England than it was before 1979. Through literature, the limits of the Scottish national imagination are set at the border

with England, and the latter nation is consistently described as "other" to the Scottish experience. Football supporters also aim to express Scotland's difference to England, and it is this nation, rather than Ireland, that is the true "other" to Scotland in the contemporary era.

Irish nationalism, despite existing in different national and state territories, is also relatively unified. This is certainly true of the expressions of identity analysed in this study, which all suggest that there is a common Irish cultural identity which crosses current borders and resonates in Scotland as well as on the island of Ireland. The Irish cultural nation is demonstrably more important to many people than Northern Ireland, as a politically defined entity, is. The idea that "Irishness" is common to all those who feel culturally Irish is supported by the findings of this study. By contrast, it is not clear that that there is an Irish nationalism which is particular to the north of Ireland. The expressions of nationalism examined suggest that Irishness is common to all those who claim it, rather than there being a particular brand of northern Irish nationalism which does not exist elsewhere.

Loyalism is also nationalistic in character; despite loyalists currently expressing support for the continued status of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom, this is clearly negotiable and dependent on the perceived attitude of the British government towards Northern Ireland. In constructing an identity which is not present in other territories, loyalists have developed a brand of nationalism. The rituals and symbols through which loyalism is constructed are not aimed towards reinforcing the importance of a "British" identity. Loyalism is unique to Northern Ireland, and has become an identity constructed along nationalistic lines, rather than a regional or local identity. The Northern Ireland national football team has played a central role in this, and is highly significant to loyalist culture.

A separate Northern Irish identity is also promoted through contemporary literature, although this identity is very different to that expressed by loyalists. Novelists discuss an identity which is cross-communal and involves all the people of Northern Ireland. This is nationalist rather than post-nationalist; Wilson and Patterson both suggest that Northern Ireland has developed a unique character which is unlike that to be found anywhere else, including the Republic of Ireland or mainland Britain. Both novelists promote a vision of a culturally inclusive, but also politically separate Northern Ireland.

As yet, this vision does not have a great deal of popular support, as it has emanated from an elite group whose impact upon Northern Irish culture is strongly impacted by class differences. It also does not have a great deal of political support, although the Alliance party do share some of the principles expressed within *Eureka Street* and *The International*.

Of all the identities examined in this study, unionism is the most problematic to categorise. It is nationalistic, in that it is committed to a certain place (the United Kingdom). It cannot be argued that the United Kingdom is a political state that transcends nationalism; it is clear that the integrity of the United Kingdom is threatened by the aims of nationalists operating within its borders. As a consequence, those opposed to the aims of Irish or Scottish nationalism have tried to construct a unionist identity through culture rather than solely through politics. In Northern Ireland, these efforts have largely failed to resonate, and unionism at the elite level has become increasingly marginalised.

In Scotland, unionism does exist at the popular level through the activities of Rangers supporters. However, the aggressive attitude adopted by many Rangers fans towards Scottish and Irish nationalism is indicative of the declining status of unionism in Scotland. Attempts to develop a unionist culture from the bottom-up are very problematic because unionists in different territories do not seem to possess the same ideas about what unionism is. The rituals used by Rangers fans are actually closer to loyalism than to elite unionism, and it is ironic that in attempting to present "Britishness" as important, these rituals actually demonstrate the dis-unity within unionism. The visions of the United Kingdom held by unionists in Northern Ireland and Scotland are not similar each other, or to those held within other parts of the United Kingdom, and in attempting to promote a "British" culture, unionists somewhat paradoxically reinforce the fact that there is no unified British cultural identity.

Cultural nationalism allows for the expression of competing identities in Northern Ireland and Scotland. It has become an increasingly significant element within the production of nationalism as a whole, and it is clear that although "top-down" mechanisms are important, nationalism is not solely engendered within the political, economic, and legal spheres. It is essential for any study of nationalism to consider the ways that identity develops from the "bottom-up" through culture, as this sphere

becomes increasingly significant to the political process. The existence of complex, non-state national identities in Northern Ireland and Scotland demonstrates that nationalism is constructed and reproduced through cultural practices and processes. These are developed through the contributions of intellectuals and groups operating at an "elite" level, but since 1979, cultural nationalism that is developed at the popular level has become especially significant in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

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