

Excerpts from **Kidd, Colin. 'Integration: Patriotism and Nationalism'. *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Ed. H. T. Dickinson. Cornwall: Blackwell, 2002. 369-380.**

"The Britain of 1707, as cynical Irish observers recognized, was a freshly minted state which failed to inspire any emotional enthusiasm in its peoples and lacked any enduring *raison d'être*. Unsurprisingly, in 1713 there was a motion in the House of Lords to repeal the union, which failed by only four votes, and in 1715, after the Hanoverian succession had taken place, there were calls in Scotland for the union to be dissolved now that its principal objective had been achieved. Not only did Scots Jacobites oppose the union, in its early years there was also opposition from the Whiggish trading communities of Lowland Scotland where perceptions reigned that the union had done little to regenerate the Scottish economy. This low-intensity hostility to the union flared spectacularly in 1725 with the Shawfield Riots in Glasgow against the malt tax. If the union was seen, on both sides of the border, as an instrument of politics rather than an end in itself, how did Britain come to inspire such loyalty in its subjects, Scots as well as English, throughout the various wars of the eighteenth century?

Linda Colley believes that empire and the Franco-British warfare of the period provided a crucial part of the answer. Indeed, from the Reformation onwards a British imperial unionism had acted within Scottish political culture as a counter-current to the dominant discourse of assertive ethnocentric nationhood. More immediately, the failure of the Darien scheme indicated to Scots that their yearnings for overseas colonies were unlikely to be achieved in the absence of a partnership with a better-established power, a prospect realized in Article IV of the Union which granted Scots full access to England's overseas colonies and trade. Glasgow's merchants struck up a successful entrepôt trade in tobacco with the Chesapeake region, while also exporting Scottish-made goods, such as linen, to North America, and using the profits to diversify into other sectors of the Scottish economy. Ambitious Scots, such as Robert Hunter in New York, and Alexander Spotswood and Robert Dinwiddie in Virginia, also obtained governorships and lieutenant-governorships within the North American colonies. The loss of the thirteen colonies between 1776 and 1783 barely dented Scottish opportunities in the empire; for by then Scots had already infiltrated the East India Company, not least the officer corps of its army. The domination exercised by the Scots political manager Henry Dundas over the fledgling Board of Control for India (where he sat formally as president from 1793 to 1801) merely confirmed the Scots ascendancy in Indian affairs. The career of James Macpherson demonstrates most poignantly how the empire could neutralize and co-opt potentially nationalist sentiments. Macpherson, the patriotic mythmaker responsible for promoting his 'translations' of the supposedly ancient Gaelic epics of Ossian, was a proud Scoto-British imperialist who served as secretary to the governor of Pensacola, West Florida, and as London agent to the nawab of Arcot, while also figuring within an influential Highland 'mafia' that included Sir John Macpherson, the governor-general of India 1785–6, the son of the Reverend John Macpherson of Sleat, like James Macpherson another patriotic historian of Caledonian antiquity. Impecunious but educated, Scots were, perhaps, more willing than their English counterparts to risk death and disease in the far-flung corners of the empire. On balance, however, Scots manpower was not exploited in the cause of imperial expansion. The Scots, just as much as their English partners-in-empire, were oppressors of non-white ethnic groups. For example, a Scots connection from the Spey valley, Caithness and Glasgow – areas associated with the proprietors Grant, Oswald and Co. – dominated the management of the African slave entrepôt at Bance Island near the mouth of the Sierra Leone River. In addition, the empire offered Scots a number of creative outlets for self-expression. The Scottish enlightenment did not flourish only within Scotland's university towns, but its values were exported throughout the empire, as was the distinctive agrarian patriotism of the Scottish improvers.

Although, as Colley notes, a 'British' empire offered Scots parity of esteem, profits and the pecuniary rewards of office, it was warfare, above all, that superimposed a British national identity

on the peoples of England and Scotland. Contemporaries – most notably, the Scottish moral philosopher and former chaplain to the Black Watch regiment, Adam Ferguson – recognized that conflict with some external ‘Other’ helped to consolidate the domestic bonds that held a community together. Certainly, warfare encouraged a more vivid sense of Britain as an ‘imagined community’: news of British actions abroad and on the high seas constituted the staple information of newspapers and magazines, and led to a heightening of local interest in Westminster politics. By the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the achievements of Wolfe earlier, and then of Nelson and Wellington, had generated an authentic matter of Britain – an heroic history shared collectively by the nations of Britain, unlike the traditional histories of England, Scotland and Wales.

At a practical level, moreover, the growth of the fiscal-military state from the 1690s paved the way to fuller British integration. Indeed, the army was the first major British institution to be colonized by ambitious Scots, a process that had begun even before the Union of 1707, with a number of Scots soldiers winning renown under Marlborough. By 1752 Scots accounted for a quarter of the British officer corps. Certainly, the rise of Scots within the army – such as John Dalrymple, second earl of Stair, and John Campbell, fourth earl of Loudoun – provoked nothing like the degree of alarm associated with the ascent of Scots politicians and jurists to high civil office in London, most notably the storm over Lord Bute’s short-lived premiership of 1762–3 and the controversy that dogged the career of William Murray, first earl of Mansfield and lord chief justice from 1756 to 1788. Both were accused of importing a quasi-Jacobite Scottish authoritarianism into the laws of England. On the contrary, loyal military service also proved a stepping stone to diplomatic preferment for Scots, including Stair and Sir Robert Murray Keith, ambassador to Vienna from 1772 to 1792.

A growing recognition of the shared Anglo-Scottish values of Protestantism, liberty and constitutional government also emerged out of conflict with an alien, despotic and Roman Catholic France. Catholic Spain was another bugbear. The oppositional and imperialist cult of Admiral Vernon, the victor over the Spaniards at Porto Bello (1739), was to be celebrated across Lowland Scotland as well as throughout England between 1740 and 1742, as Kathleen Wilson has shown. The continent as a whole, with the odd exception, seemed to be a scene of tyranny and superstition, of absolutist kingcraft and popish priestcraft. Scots and English, for all their differences, it seemed, had much more in common with one another than they did with an alien and hostile continent. Some of the advocates of Anglo-Scottish union – which took place, of course, during the War of the Spanish Succession – emphasized the need for the limited monarchies of England and Scotland to unite in the face of Bourbon expansionism. French backing for the Jacobite uprising of 1745, itself a theatre of the War of the Austrian Succession, reinforced this impression of an authoritarian France conspiring to impose alien political values on a predominantly Whiggish Britain. By the time of the Seven Years’ War, this pan-British front against France was also fuelled by a popular imperialism. Scots played crucial roles in the Indian and North American theatres of the war. In India the officer corps of the East India Company already contained a high proportion of Scots, while in North America Highlanders played a heroic role in the conquest of Quebec.

The Seven Years’ War also led to a reiteration of the old francophobic stereotypes, though with the added force of warnings – most famously in the Reverend John Brown’s *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (1757) – that the spread of luxury threatened to weaken Britons’ moral fibre, turning sturdy liberty-loving John Bulls into effeminate Frenchmen. This argument later found elegant expression in *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771), an epistolary novel by the Scottish author Tobias Smollett which exploded conventional anti-Scottish prejudices and contrasted the manly virtues of North Britain – and rural Wales – with the corruption of the *beau monde* in Bath and London. Within the prevailing idiom of civic humanism, national characters were not conceived as immutable.

Rather, there was a widespread perception that the manners of a nation could easily lapse into luxury and corruption – of the sort which English chauvinists decried in France.

Anxieties of this sort serve as a reminder not to exaggerate the nature and degree of the gulf contemporaries perceived between free-born Britons and the benighted subjects of Catholic and absolutist France. Have historians such as Colley and Gerald Newman exaggerated the otherness of the Other? Whatever the xenophobic views of the public at large, the elites of Britain did not regard the French with contempt. The patriotic champions of England's Anglo-Saxon origins and Gothic inheritance of parliament and common law were keenly aware that other peoples had emerged from what was known as the Gothic 'hive of nations', including the Frankish ancestors of the French. The English and French nations, despite their considerable differences by the eighteenth century, stemmed from the same Gothic family tree. In the beginning, ran the historiographical consensus among eighteenth-century British commentators (Scots and Irish included), there must have been a close degree of similarity in the manners and institutions of the kindred Anglo-Saxons and Franks. The sharp contrast between English liberty and French despotism which became such a cliché of eighteenth-century English popular culture, not least in political caricatures, had arisen only from the later Middle Ages with the rise of the French monarchy relative to the nobility and the kingdom's historic institutions. Whereas the French estates-general had last met in 1614 – and would not meet again until the French Revolution – in England, so the argument ran, the powers of parliament had grown during the Reformation era, as the dissolution of the monasteries led to a wider distribution of land among the gentry, while the security England enjoyed through its maritime detachment from continental Europe had inhibited the expansion of a standing army. The intellectual leaders of British society perceived that the gulf between England and France was a recent, historical contingency; yet, at a popular level, they did little to discourage a politically useful francophobia. Although eighteenth-century wars were not the result of deep-seated antagonisms between nation-states, propaganda nevertheless assumed strikingly ethnocentric forms. It seems unlikely that francophobia provides an explanation for the cultural integration of Britain's elites. The Scottish philosopher David Hume, a proponent of British integration and critic of the solipsism which fuelled patriotic boasting and national prejudices, informed Englishmen that a modern civilized monarchy such as France was far from the oppressive state depicted in English Whig mythology. The cosmopolitan attractions of the Grand Tour further qualified British demonization of a French otherness. Nevertheless, as Gerald Newman has noted, during the second half of the eighteenth century a growing Evangelical sincerity gradually displaced this cosmopolitan outlook, a trend exacerbated with the French Revolution and the rise of radical irreligion."