WELSHNESS POLITICIZED, WELSHNESS SUBMERGED:
THE POLITICS OF ‘POLITICS’
AND THE PRAGMATICS OF LANGUAGE COMMUNITY
IN NORTH-WEST WALES

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the normative construction of a politics of language and community in north-west Wales (United Kingdom). It is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted primarily between January 2007 and April 2008, with central participant-observation settings in primary-level state schools and in the teaching-spaces and hallways of a university. Its primary finding is an account of the gap between the national visibility and the cultural (in)visibility communities of speakers of the indigenous language of Wales (Cymraeg, or “Welsh”). With one exception, no public discourse has yet emerged in Wales that provides an explicit framework or vocabulary for describing the cultural community that is anchored in Cymraeg. One has to live those meanings even to know about them. The range of social categories for living those meanings tends to be constructed in ordinary conversations as some form of nationalism, whether political, cultural, or language nationalism. Further, the negatively valenced category of nationalism current in English-speaking Britain is in tension with the positively valenced category of nationalism current among many who move within Cymraeg-speaking communities. Thus, the very politics of identity are themselves political since the line between what is political and what is not, is itself subject to controversy. The result is what I call the “submergence” of Cymraeg-oriented cultural communities: People who would say Cymraeg is an essential part of their personality and communities mark out cultural space for their sense of continuity (to the past, to others) in ways that do not require or enable them to make any substantive cultural claims.

Within these settings of a modalized Welsh culture—always only partially expressed—indigeneity and ethnic difference are symbolized by the emblematic and lived importance of Cymraeg, while the significance of Cymraeg tends to be implicitly conveyed by means of overt references to “Welshness”. This cultural submergence of the resources for Cymraeg-centered identity seems motivated and sustained by the fact that it produces a haven from holiday-goers and English patriots who do not value Welsh cultural features as highly as do those who take pride in the Cymraeg-centered cultural community. In light of these features of local life, I suggest several terms of art—including “language demesne” and “language corridor”—because they are more fitting of local politics than is the idea of a (global) language community.

This dissertation also contributes a theoretical basis for examining the pragmatics of language communities, which requires differentiating phenomenal-level semiotic analyses from
investigations of the dynamics of cultural discourse. The “obvious” empirical situation in Wales—as analyzed using a Peircean-phenomenological semiotics—runs contrary to the relatively opaque and counter-empirical cultural dynamics in Wales. As a result, this account of the tensions between semiotic descriptions and cultural dynamics signals a wrinkle in received theories of metapragmatics. Conventionally, metapragmatics makes sense of the text–discourse relation, but not the relations between discourse and consciousness because theories of metapragmatics apply only to the former. Unless the relationship of text-and-discourse to consciousness is explicated at the epistemological level of analysis, ethnographic descriptions of locales within language communities—particularly those rife with language politics—can take on the appearance of an ontology of human kinds. Given this condition, any broad account of the cultural dynamics of language and community must take an analytic position regarding the relationship between the surface-level of semiotics and the historical and cultural processes of community constitution.

My approach engages directly with the neglected conflict between the strategy of primordialist essentialism and that of constructivism. The analytic strategy and theoretical perspective of this dissertation avoids the scholarly tendency to treat certain local conceptions as misconstruals of sociocultural life. Instead, they are treated as locally valid and proper constitutings of divisible community. Academics would be no less inclined to reject analogous conceptual entailments in their cultural worlds despite their commitment to the view that sociocultural realities are constructed. The position adopted here underwrites an account that denaturalizes without denaturing the essentializing claims (e.g., of language activists) in north-west Wales.

In engaging with current analytic strategies in linguistic anthropology, my “inferentialist” and pragmatistic strategy frames the politicizing of language and community in north-west Wales using an alternative to linguistic indexes or icons, which are grounded in an empirical sense of necessity. The framework adopted here envisions an empirical field organized not only by necessary principles of Welsh belonging that are practiced or not, but by tensions among many different “modal” types of constraints—normative principles that are inferable from community-specific ways of enacting belonging to a particular sociocultural imaginary that owes its coherence to language affinity. Consequently, this dissertation treats languages themselves as inhabitable and provides a theoretical justification for doing so.
FOR

Gwyneth

and

Duncan

One of whom came into this world
and the other went out
during the writing of this work.

Each lent immeasurable meaning and purpose
to this research
in a comparably short period of time.
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to do with the structured data, what I learned from each of these three professors cannot fit in a single chapter.

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PART I

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS
INTRODUCTION

LANGUAGE FOR WALES

Eu ner a volant       Their God they shall adore
Eu hiaith a gadwant    Their language they shall keep
Eu tir a gollant      Their land they shall lose
Ond gwyllt Walia.       Except wild Wales.¹

FINDING ONESelf IN NORTH-WEST WALES

National versus Cultural Visibility

This dissertation investigates the sociocultural conditions of how people express—and live—their sense of cultural belonging in the north-west part of the principality of Wales, in the United Kingdom (hereafter “UK”). Because this topic concerns normative forms of consciousness and action, and because the relevant sociocultural conditions are dominated by issues of language and community, I call this “the pragmatics of language community”. People throughout Wales accept, at least tacitly, that there are special resources of Welsh identity to be found in the indigenous complex of practices and cultural heritage. Many of the participants in certain cultural traditions of Wales derive their identity in great part from a cultural complex that is bound, through everyday banal practices, to the indigenous language (language code and associated forms of thinking and feeling). Those who do participate in that community largely by orientation to the indigenous language know in their heart of hearts that this community represents their national identity. Those who do not participate in it feel (we might say, in their

¹ In Wild Wales, published in 1862, travel writer Gorge Borrow quoted several verses in an epigraph. Borrow explicitly linked his book’s title to these verses by his use of that epigraph, where he identified these verses as part of “The Destiny of Britons”. In the fifth chapter of Wild Wales, Borrow also gave his own free translation of these verses (presented above). The actual song/poem is “Yr Awdl Fraith [Awdl of Varieties]” (an awdl is a highly respected lyrical form in Welsh literary traditions, sometimes glossed as an ode). It is typically attributed to the early medieval poet/bard, Taliesin; however, William F. Skene attributed it to the later, Tenth-Century figure of Jonas Athraw o Fynyw on p. 75 of volume XII (1866) of Archaeologia Cambrensis, Third Series, Number XLV.

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“head of heads”) that a focus on the source of identity in the daily practice within that community would, if taken as directly representative of an empirical Welsh identity, misrepresent and overdetermine perceptions of Welsh identity.

Wales presents particular challenges to the study of the sociocultural conditions of these ways of expressing and living a sense of Welsh cultural belonging. One of these is that people who do not seem to differ greatly from the English ethnic majority in the UK make claims to be fundamentally different from the English. Thus, while the expressions of identity in Wales involve powerful and deep claims, the context of comparison seems superficial. Second, to researchers from the US, Wales appears entirely familiar and not especially different from life in the US. This makes it difficult to identify what might be particularly Welsh features of life in Wales. In the particular institution of schooling in Wales, on which my dissertation research focused, teachers in Wales seem to follow more or less the same pedagogical and administrative principles teachers follow in California or Illinois (or Israel, see Golden 2006, whose descriptions resonate strongly with my experiences in Wales). The lack of noticeable cultural differences is accentuated by the formality of schooling. That formality makes schooling a special area of ethnography in anthropology that stands in contrast to the prototypical kinds of ethnographic investigation, where social interaction is less structured and events are much more open-ended, unfolding into novel arenas of social action.

These two ethnographic challenges are entwined in a more significant fact: most Welsh claims of difference are not well articulated. They tend to revolve around tokens of nationality, such as national symbols (e.g., flags, anthems, and costumes), sports, and the traditional religious conflict between England and Wales, which is mild compared to other political-religious
conflicts in the region. The Welsh national tokens do not make for great contrast to the comparable symbols and traditional religion of England.

A large minority in Wales, however, center their claims of difference in a language that they treat almost as a part of the natural world—as unchanging and as old as the rocks and mountains that form the landscapes of Wales. If one does not join such a language world, it is difficult to appreciate the substantiality of such an essential part of identity. Notably, in this connection, in my many conversations with cultural anthropologists and with linguistic anthropologists, many of the former found it hard to see how language identity in Wales could take on such sociopolitical significance. Linguistic anthropologists, however, recognized the phenomena in Wales as a general and familiar concept. Neither perspective left to Wales any claim to uniqueness, which is not surprising or alarming, but neither position lends itself to appreciation of particularity in Wales. This dissertation is concerned with the social reality of cultural and national belonging not as a trait shared by many cultural communities, but in the particularistic qualities of the claim to special, particular resources of identity. A cornerstone of such a social reality is the particularity of belonging “here in Wales”.

Renato Rosaldo (1988, 1989) made an important observation when he famously excoriated the selective, unofficial use of the term, “culture”, by traditional anthropologists. The unofficial use of “culture” plots the variability of difference solely among communities of people who are not direct descendants of the western European legacy. This observation is particularly remarkable when it is set alongside Rosaldo’s note that these communities of non-European People of Culture do not include those Others who lack the “elaborate rituals, material culture” and complex subsistence practices of traditional ethnographic interest (Rosaldo 1988:80). In the
latter case, these people’s cultural features seem so irrelevant as to be invisible to the ethnographic gaze.\(^2\)

Rosaldo’s critique of a traditional concept of culture points to the problem of visible culture, an artifact of anthropological analysis that results from ethnographers’ invisible commitments. In some parts of the world, having culture according to the perspective Rosaldo critiqued can be dangerous. It can also be dangerous to be so anthropologically insignificant as to appear to lack it since these subalterns are exploited by those who do have it, as well as by powerful groups with imperial aspirations. In the national setting of Wales, and other cultural settings offer parallel cases for study—it might not be dangerous to be identified as a person of Welsh culture. It is, however, disadvantageous to be so identified in Wales. While many boldly display the Welsh national flag, few who identify with Welsh cultural traditions want to stand out or be put on display in association with the substantive features of “their” different culture (for reasons ranging from self-confident modesty to repressed shame).

National visibility differs from cultural visibility, then. Local people in north-west Wales who have an affinity for “indigenous” Wales do not value cultural visibility, especially. However, they do value an ongoing past—having something to carry on, traditions, including an “old, old language”. It is difficult to perform that particular script—to be Welsh by means of the substantive features of “their” different culture—let alone to make it explicit, in the absence of a common, widely intelligible language about things like culture and difference, which are lacking among laypersons and even, as Rosaldo observed, among academics.

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2 My reading of what Rosaldo (1988) called “anthropology’s informal filing system” is that it is a somewhat enlightened version of Lewis Henry Morgan’s (non-evolutionary) tripartite scheme of savages, barbarians, and civilized people. The civilized people, only recently becoming ethnographic subjects themselves, require no introduction: They are “us” (i.e., occupiers of the rhetorical subject-position from which any producer of authoritative knowledge speaks and from which most consumers of authoritative knowledge read). The analogous barbarians are the subjects (“cultures”) of interest to traditional anthropology, while the analogous savages are the anthropological subalterns.
During my fieldwork, I constantly reminded myself that even the notion of cultural difference is particular to the history and cultural resources of the people making such claims. By the end of this dissertation, I will have described a number of ways of imagining social realities of cultural and national belonging not as a trait shared by many cultural communities, but in the particularistic qualities of the claim to special, particular resources of identity. Of course, the imagination of differences among the Welsh relative to the prototypic ethnic group in Britain (i.e., the English) has had a long history—being imagined from a variety of perspectives. The English perspective has tended to accentuate the “wildness” of Wales. This is where I begin my introduction to Wales.

**Wild Wales**

Wales encompasses around eight thousand square miles in area, is home to about three million people, and is largely rural and mountainous. Wales’ capital, Cardiff, lies in the south-east of the nation, much as does the capital of England and the United Kingdom: London. English-language media have long projected an image of the north-west as a wild and untamed territory. This idea of Wales as wild and untamed, more generally, emerged due to the different cultural expectations of English persons who travelled from major cities in England to the rural north-west of Wales. This is largely due to the alienation that monolingual English-speaking people have felt in encountering others who carry out the activities of their lives in another “medium”. Urbanization of the south-east of Wales brought with it a linguistic Anglicization that the rural areas of Wales have resisted. The need to ferry Irish members of parliament to Britain in the early Twentieth Century instigated the building of roads all across the north of Wales from Holyhead to Chester. Were it not

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3 George Borrow gave a modern form to the idea of Wales as a remote place in his famous travel-journalistic account of his walking tour of “Wild Wales”, first published in 1862. In the epigraph, Borrow capitalized both ‘W’s of “Wild Wales”.
for that official demand for access, the north-west part of Wales might have remained “wild” for much longer.

North Wales offers many tourist resorts and has attracted many persons living in England who desire either a holiday home or a retirement location far from the busy cities of England. This attraction is aided by the fact that English persons perceive Wales as distant temporally, as well as spatially from those cities. I have heard the so-called “incomers” from England say that parts of north Wales seemed to them to be fifteen or even thirty years back in time, compared to places like

Figure 0.1: Fieldwork area and major roads in Wales. The cross-hatched region in the north-west is the area my research covered. The map gives a sense of the scope of traffic arteries; the winding A470 that runs north to south varies between a one- to three-lane road, the A5 in the north is a two-lane freeway for most of its length, while the M4 in the south resembles a landing strip with parallel lane markers and median barriers.
Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham. English informants mentioned a number of features of contemporary life in north-west Wales that evoked for them days of yore. These included the rural expanses and paucity of urban development, the large number of sheep and pastures, gas stations that close for the night, the low level of crime, an allegedly slower paced lifestyle, a sense of close-knit community, and nostalgic steam railway lines.

The uneven presence of the new and the old in north Wales—the pastiche of previous eras and the current modern era—enables the perception of Wales as somehow less than modern. In other areas of Britain, the new and the old of modern industry are mixed together, so that by highlighting the new (e.g., new designs in architecture) and silently and selectively dismissing the old (e.g., manufacturing sites and their residential communities), people construct a coherent sense of modernity. While north-west Wales is known for farming, the terrain of north-west Wales is so mountainous that shepherding is the most common form of agriculture. At least half of the region falls within national park boundaries. Tokens of high modernity are rare; there are no skyscrapers, for example. The impression one receives is that of a rural form of life and even well-inhabited areas look like scenes of countryside, many of which are postcard perfect. As a result, the unevenness of the new and old in north-west Wales tends to emphasize the old.

As originally envisioned, my dissertation research was to be about this blending of the new and the old in Welsh people’s imagining of history; in particular, of teachers’ teaching of national identity to their students in public schools through a re-appropriation of the stage for telling such histories. During an eight-week preliminary research trip in 2002, I investigated the range of Welsh heritage-and-history instruction practices used by teachers at public schools in a county in north-west Wales: Gwynedd (pronounced /gwi.ɛð/; the double-d at the end is pronounced the same way as the voiced /th/ in “bother”). I examined how teachers had
chosen to respond to the devolution of educational policy (beginning in 1988)—the delegation of powers of the central government to regional administrations—and any concomitant changes in the cultural and educational climate. I anticipated finding that teachers’ creative capacities and personal desires would lead to a widespread practice in the county of teaching a particularly Welsh content for the subject of history. My conclusions, however, were largely negative. In order for me to express the alternative that emerged, some framework of Welsh history is useful.

**The Historical Geography of Wales**

It is telling that the ethnic label, “Welsh”, is derived from an Anglo-Saxon proper noun (*Wælisc*, from *Wealh*) meaning something like “the foreigners”, and today is the common self-identifying term for people of Wales. “Welsh”, in the European context, is comparable, then, to “Indian” in the US and Canadian contexts, but it has not been subject to reappropriation as the latter term has although it has a fairly non-political connotation. Of course, there is a native term for being “Welsh”; more than one, in fact. These include the plural form, “Cymry”; the masculine term for a Welsh person, “Cymro”; and the feminine, singular form, “Cymraes”. Similarly, the indigenous language is “Cymraeg”, a nominative form that, being singular, neglects regional variation.

In Cymraeg, one can also differentiate between Welshness [*cymreictod*], the name of the nation, “Cymru,” and the people of Wales, the “Cymry”. There is no convenient way in English to distinguish people whose family members have lived in Wales for generations and yet who do not or cannot speak the Cymraeg. Typically, such distinctions lie in background information and cultural knowledge. However, such expressions as “Cymro glan” [pure Welshman] and “Cymry-Cymraeg” [Cymraeg-speaking Welsh people] have an overtly ideological flavor that
indicates who the “real” Welsh are; and who are, by contrast, members of “Cymru-diGymraeg” [non-Cymraeg-speaking Wales]. In north-west Wales, the latter are often referred to as “Sais” [English], from “Sax(on)”, and they speak Saesneg [English].

Cymraeg belongs to the Brythonic group of the Celtic family of languages, which have the distinctive feature of initial consonantal mutations. Thus, the nominative-class lexical form CYMRAEG is expressed as “Gymraeg” when the preposition “yn” is added to it: “yn Gymraeg”.

There are three systems of mutations, affecting in total, nine consonants of the twenty-eight letters of the Cymraeg alphabet. Cymraeg is frequently associated with indigenous Wales in opposition to the immediate, culturally salient contrast of England and Englishness. Although, in English-language contexts, Cymraeg is typically called “Welsh” or “the Welsh language”, I do not follow this practice for reasons that I elaborate below—which is to take a unique political stand of my own.

In legal terms, Wales is a principality of the sovereign world-state known as the UK. This classification marks a set of contrasts between Wales and the historical kingdom of England. There is no historiographic position outside presentism to justify the distinction between principality and kingdom. Nonetheless, during the Tudor Era, England became a world power that had established a history of relative stability and continuity, of which Wales was a backwoods territory (as seen from England). Wales did not and, one could argue, still has not established such an internal stability and continuity within the UK state. One kind of contrast between England and Wales, then, is the lesser military, economic, and population potential of Wales relative to England. Another kind of historical contrast is the indigenous Welsh social imaginary that privileges kinship relations, rather than a state. This importance of kinship is

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4 The fact that there are eight digraphs (ch, dd, ff, ng, ll, ph, rh, and th) causes orthographical conflicts in predominantly English contexts; thus, I capitalize both elements of each digraph in this dissertation when any digraph appears in the initial position—which happens to be an unusual practice.
illustrated in Wales’ indigenous legal traditions (codified in the Tenth Century) by the fact that the persons who are offended by a crime are the victim’s kin, rather than the local chief or ruler; and compensation is due to the former, not the latter.

The designation of “principality” is also a legacy of indigenous attempts to unify Wales under a ruler [tywysog]. The English politically equivalent term, “prince”, was shrewdly appropriated by the Norman-English King, Edward I. When England finally conquered Wales in the early 1280s, Edward invested his son as Prince of Wales, which marked the turning point in conquest from invasion to administration. Previously, princes of Wales came from the aristocracy in Wales, to which a significant amount of cultural labor was devoted in the form of genealogy and praise poetry. Edward II had no place in that aristocracy. Nonetheless, particularly because the title came to signify the heir apparent to the throne of England, it was a symbol of the kingdom’s dominance over the principality.

In physical terms, Wales is often called a double peninsula, bounded on three sides by ocean (composed of the Irish Sea, Saint George’s Canal, and the Bristol Canal). At the risk of reifying certain geographic constructs, Wales has long been connected by way of the conduit of ocean travel to the other “Celtic” countries: Ireland, Scotland, Cornwall, and the Isle of Man (The last two have far less significance in the current state context, but are significant in the terms of the contact eras of Anglo-Saxon, Viking, or Norman invasions prior to the Thirteenth Century, when Wales was conquered.). As a set of “nations” recognized in collective imagination, the core territory of today’s UK consists of England and the so-called Celtic fringe: Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

The formation of the UK in 1707 was the culmination of centuries of historical movement (at least, in retrospect) toward consolidating the contiguous territories of Wales, England, and Scotland. That history did not go away with the Act of Union of 1707, but constitutes part of the
UK’s unwritten traditions that make up its political constitution, as well as its intra-state tensions. At least since the 1700s, Wales has dealt with ethnic tension mainly via expressive culture—despite some minimal paramilitary organization and bombing events—and through a mode that might be connected to resources offered by Tenth-Century, codified Welsh law, involving the burning of property owned by English residents and government agencies. One of the products of this history is the Welsh emphasis on toleration of English persons in such state institutions as schools, while opposing England’s cultural and linguistic hegemony in these same institutions.

The histories of Wales and England have been entwined closely at least since the Twelfth Century and seldom have been free of mutual tensions. Wales’ distinctiveness relative to England, then, is a complex affair. When in Wales, it often does seem as if the world beyond one’s village or county consists only of England and the rest of Wales—partitioned and sequestered away from the rest of the world and even from Scotland and Northern Ireland. In ordinary conversations in many parts of Wales, the England and Wales relationship is the paramount one—and only seldom an antagonistic one. Welsh persons I encountered during my fieldwork in north Wales said they travel to England much more frequently than they do to Scotland or Northern Ireland (and even more than to the opposite end of Wales. It is only at roads going through part of England, when traveling from or to the north of Wales, to or from the south, that roads are straight, are more than two lanes wide, and consistently post high speed limits.

Besides England, the two constituent parts (to use the legal, constitutional phrase) of the UK that are most similar to Wales are Scotland and Northern Ireland. They feature in the Welsh imagination of the UK as discrete entities in relation to Wales most often in sports events, such as rugby competitions. While this experience-near aspect of everyday encounters with the internal and external borders of Wales is important in everyday cultural life, experience-far encounters of nations
tend to be conceived in terms of political and athletic distinctiveness. However, because “nation” and “country” are used differently in Great Britain than they are used in the United States, it is worth briefly describing the political economic aspects of the different nations of the UK to grasp how these differ from both world states (like Canada) and federal states (like Illinois).

In addition to national claims to cultural distinctiveness (an issue I do not find pertinent here), Scotland is distinguished at the national level by its already having had strong political and economic institutions, which it maintained, when its sovereignty was replaced by that of the UK (as the “Kingdom of Great Britain”) at the significantly late date of 1707. These institutions helped Scotland to take full advantage of the Industrial Revolution (Davies 1989). Having developed these institutions at the center of the developing capitalist system in Britain, Scotland is widely thought to have produced a native elite (like England) that was well-positioned to enter the late-modern era, despite Scotland’s loss of autonomy.

Northern Ireland was joined to the (thereafter: United) Kingdom of Great Britain in 1801, and remained part of the UK after the Republic of Ireland gained independence in 1922. Yet, like Wales, it was part of an indigenous territory that was conquered well before the rise of modern agricultural capitalism. This Irish territory had been conquered by Normans, then expanded and made into an English kingdom by Henry VIII. Scholars tend to characterize Northern Ireland as being different from other parts of the UK, generally in two ways. One difference is Northern Ireland’s political division along religious lines—as connected to idealized conceptions of democracy from the Protestant perspective, and social forms of community and communication from the Catholic perspective (Kelleher 2003). Northern Ireland also stands out for the widespread use of retributive violence, as well as political actions, in the attempt to achieve a generally acceptable level of autonomy from the UK.
The Area of My Fieldwork

There is no question that history plays a major role in conceptions of national identity for people in Wales. Indeed, Appendix A elaborates on the interactions of historical narratives and the social imaginary related to a sense of community tied to Cymraeg. Nonetheless, when I began the fourteen-months of dissertation fieldwork between January 2007 and April 2008, I had already gathered enough data (fieldnotes, transcripts of recorded interviews with history teachers, government discussion papers, etc.) to allow me to see that questions about history instruction were not the central questions I should have been asking. Because I was concerned with the teaching of identity at state schools and because history instruction was not the primary locus for the teaching of national identity, this was probably the wrong region of questions for me to be asking. I only recognized this fully, and arrived at the “right” region of questions, after beginning the writing up of this dissertation. For me to convey how anyone could fail to recognize what are the right questions after preliminary fieldtrips requires that I provide my readers with a deeper appreciation of both the surface and the depths of cultural issues in north-west Wales. The message does not hinge as much on pedagogical practice as on the broader perception of the politics of language and cultural citizenship. The perspective I adopt in presenting these cultural surfaces and depths, itself draws on some of those depths in moving gradually from the cultural “surface” to the “deeper” sociocultural realities that I investigate in this dissertation. My first cultural surface is the local cultural history and geography of the region in which I carried out my fieldwork.

I had arrived in Wales on my fieldtrip devoted to principal dissertation research on January 1, 2007. In preliminary trips to north-west Wales in January and July 2005, I had
established an arrangement with the headteacher of a junior school (ages 3-11). This school was to be the anchor for my research. When arriving in Wales in January 2007, I understood (albeit inaccurately) that the arrangement still held. My more recent communication with him in late 2006 suggested that it did. Accordingly, I found housing in that school district (‘catchment area’) in the northwest corner of Wales.

This district lay within a small part of one of the unitary authorities of Wales, which is called Gwynedd [gwaɪnɛð] county. Gwynedd is populated by about 120,000 residents and encompasses nearly 1,000 square miles. To adopt the local or official reference frames in the context of this and adjacent counties could ultimately suggest to the informed reader which catchment area/school district it is in which this project was sited. To avoid identification of actual schools that were the sites of research in the service of maintaining privacy and confidentiality, I therefore drew arbitrary boundary lines around this area of north-west Wales (see Fig. 0.1 above). The area of north-west Wales in which my research was centered, cohered together according to present and historical occupational mobility, and could be studied adequately within a six to twelve month period.

This area forms a salient territory for my project because the area is, and has been since 1870, a confluence of labor-productive forces, apart from whatever linguistic, aesthetic-cultural, political, or social-affinitive factors overlap across and within the area. This fact has shaped settlement patterns over the last century and a half, with implications for north Wales’ recent history of religion, in particular, and its social history more generally. Between 1870 and 1950, laborers travelled for work toward the eastern edges of the area. During that time, this area was the industrial center for the north-west of Wales, being comprised of several quarry sites that produced the largest quantities of slate of any place in the world, an important commodity prior
to the introduction of plastics. Because of the pattern of human movement that resulted from the relationship between where people lived and where they worked, I came to call the part of north-west Wales in which my research was anchored, “Abergwaith” (meaning literally, “mouth of a river [aber], characterized by work [gwaith]”).

The laborers in Abergwaith were largely Non-Conformist and this fact shaped the establishment of a large number of chapels. Non-Conformism was a bloc of Protestant denominations opposed to the institution of a state religion in Great Britain. Within Wales during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, Non-Conformism was the primary platform from which concepts and discourses about a national community of Wales were projected. The religious sites of Non-Conformism were chapels, whereas the established (i.e., state) religion was practiced, were achieved in churches. The terms of “church” and “chapel” took on symbolic meanings about personhood, community, and social values. These terms, in turn, came to hold separate relations to the British state (“church”) and the Welsh folk (“chapel”). The opposition of these terms, and the ways of life and cultural affiliation they imply,

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5 While this is a fictive and novel designation, there is a large number of ways, in Cymraeg, of making reference to land and of classifying land according to different uses. As with English, there are many options for saying that you have in mind some part of space on land. One may speak of a district (ardal) or a place (lle), each of which might be historically linked to English words. That is, the /pl/ combination might have been “transphonated” as the lateral fricative, /ll/, in “lle”, while “ardal” resembles “area” in certain phonal qualities. In particular, the consonant and vowel of the first syllable of “ardal” and “area”, along with the second-syllable vowel of both words, are the same; while the final consonantal value of “ardal” (an alveolar lateral approximant /l/) is very close to that of “area” (implied as an intrusive rhotic consonant in some British English pronunciations of “area”, as an alveolar approximant /ɹ/).

In addition, there are Celtic-derived words for a settlement (tref) and a village (pentref, a head settlement). One may also speak of the territory of a people (gwasg), the land or ground itself (iwr), a region amenable to settlement (bro), a neighborhood (cymdogaeth), a habitat or familiar place (cynfyn). But beyond this, place names contain a large number of affixes that indicate the adjectival root or stem refers to a place. For example, the house attached to the cottage in which I started my principal dissertation research is called Gwynfa, where “gwyn” means “blessed” or “white”, and “fa” means “place”.

Further, there are many local ways of dividing the land within contemporary unitary authorities (more or less, counties) and within the more particular area I am calling Abergwaith. These include early medieval groupings of settlements (“cantref”—literally, a hundred settlements), a cwmwd (sub-divisions of the cantrefi), abolished but not obsolete “civil parishes” defined by ecclesiastic territories established by the Church of England, subdivisions of national administrative units (i.e., borough, urban, and rural districts) established in 1894, and land units officially called “communities” as established by law in 1972.
was a highly charged ensemble. The building of chapels where Non-Conformists began to concentrate in Abergwaith as elsewhere in Wales in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, in material culture terms, meant the establishment of sites for the networked-construction of national identity, in ideational and social terms.

After World War Two, a reversal in the direction of movement from residence to labor center occurred. The cities of Bangor and Gwynedd’s county seat of Caernarfon generated the capacity to support economically greater numbers of urban dwellers, alongside other, rural, economic activities. After 1950, people whose family had settled in the eastern edges of the area travelled for work westerly into the north-west and south-west of the Abergwaith area. Today, professionals and others who work in the university town of Bangor or Caernarfon reside in the rural villages that lie on either side of the Menai Straits—separating Gwynedd and the island, Ynys Môn. The quarries are no longer worked and no longer supply most of the world’s supply of slate, as they did in the early-Twentieth Century.

**Keeping Warm and Busy in Abergwaith**

During my fieldwork, I and my wife lived in one of the many villages that formed in relation to the slate quarrying industry of north-west Wales. Many new homes have been built in the area in the last fifty years, including “council housing,” which is publicly subsidized and easily identified by the exteriors and the attached rows of flats. Housing in the area would have been prohibitively expensive for us, where even state housing, for which we were not eligible, was more than twice the University housing rental costs in Urbana, Illinois. My wife and I were lucky to find seasonal rental accommodation at less than welfare prices. For the bulk of our stay in Gwynedd, we lived alongside a home-owning family that had renovated a set of three, semi-attached quarrymen lodgings, with the
characteristic, three-foot wide walls of late Nineteenth-Century construction tradition. This was offered at a leasing rate we could afford because, as our next landlord suggested to us, the owners were likely not reporting taxes on our rent.

The renovated structure, of some 500 square feet, comprised one and one-half quarriers “cottages”. Our living room and kitchen once formed a single shelter during the week for several quarriers. The bedroom and bathroom formed the remaining half of an adjoining cottage. A farmhouse with an extension and a second story was built onto the other one and one-half cottage. Renovated cottages across north-west Wales and beyond offer some sense of nostalgic quaintness to tourists, but the use of such laborers’ cottages in the “self-catered” and “bed and breakfast” markets is less an issue of packaging than it is that these are the most common residential structures. It is clear, from the farmhouse I lived in, that most people try to modernize such structures to whatever extent feasible.

New energy regulations require owners to make some changes to improve energy efficiency. Our own cottage, however, was furnished with a solid fuel burner and the property owners supplied coal for burning.

Before my principal dissertation research, I had stayed longer than ten days in Wales only during the warmer, summer months. Coming from the United States, the use of coal and its olfactory effects stood out as a prominent and distinctive feature of Wales although the scent of coal is just as likely to be found on cold days in Liverpool, Birmingham, and London. I found the sooty, almost tangy odor of coal smoke in the winter to be one of my most visceral experiences of north-west Wales. It is a part of post-Victorian-era life that cannot be reproduced in readings of, say, Dickens. It has to be experienced. One smells the coal fumes everywhere when walking along the rows of houses in the villages of north-west Wales that sprang up as residential areas for laborers in slate
quarrying (or the related shipping industry)—especially in Gwynedd county. A few of the former slate quarrying villages in Gwynedd, such as Llanberis and Betws-y-Coed, are now supported by the tourism industry. Even today, coal is necessary to heat many of the homes in these villages. This is not so much evidence for a choice made between heating fuels, as it is due to the fact that the costs of overhauling houses to update them to central air or even radiated heating would be too costly a trade-off (or simply prohibitive) for most people, even for many professionals within Wales.

During my fieldwork in Abergwath, I would shovel the pieces of coal into a bucket from a pile in the coal shed and bring it into our cottage, knocking the goose droppings off of my shoes at the threshold. My wife would return soon after dusk from an archaeological dig near the coast where she spent weekdays in the cold, gale force winds that came off the sea, while I worked to gain entry to schools for my research. As it got dark, I (or she) would spend three-quarters of an hour lighting the coal fire in our stove—even longer if I had not planned ahead and procured paraffin blocks to expedite the deep burning of the coal. The paraffin “firelighter” blocks, which served a purpose similar to lighter fluid for barbecues in the US, were indispensible. Like the coal smoke, the paraffin invaded one’s senses, but with a smell resembling turpentine, which remains on the hands after washing. Both of these evoked the persistent, tangible, but elusive quality of Welsh identity that I was studying.

In the early months of dissertation research, building the coal fire in evenings was more than a metaphor for identity. Along with preparing and cooking dinner, these evening tasks fell to me if for no other reason than to balance my partner’s contribution in subsidizing my research by her earning of wages in British currency—much more valuable than US currency, in which my grants were issued. However, it was also true that I was not able, on those evening, to write
up research notes from observations in schools because I had not yet gained access to classrooms.

After arriving in Wales in January 2007, I came to understand over weeks and then months of attempts to arrange school visits that the agreement I had with my anchoring junior school and its headteacher no longer held. He gave me access to classrooms only in partial, non-contiguous days and I eventually saw a pattern. The access he gave me was to events in which he was the primary organizer—school assemblies, field trips—and yet even these were few and far between. As it turned out, the teachers I hoped to learn from and in whose classes I wanted to gather data, were highly protective against the intrusion of observers—giving grudging admittance to school inspectors every few years and the occasional teacher in training. This background fact and the limited time in Wales I could obtain had already led to my usual methods of seeking access, which were rather unusual for the social context of educational institutions in Wales.

During my early research, I did not courteous ly follow norms in the initial stages of school ethnography, such as telephoning in order to schedule interviews. I found telephone and scheduling usually met with less success that appearing “on the doorstep”. Upon eventually receiving permission to visit schools, I stayed for a longer period of observation than the usual one, two, or (rare except for student teachers) three days. Once “inside” schools, I did try to maintain the implied restrictions as well as I could (e.g., not demanding hours of teachers’ time beyond their regular hours of work), which limited the scope of my research, perhaps, but seemed to me to be necessary in establishing and maintaining the grounds of mutual respect between teachers and researcher. On the other hand, if I had not visited schools in-person—and, in one case, if I had not “hound ed” a headteacher who had previously given me approval for a
year-long visit, but would not be held to that agreement—I would never have gained access to schools.

In the latter case, it might be that the headteacher promised something that he thought at some level he might not have to deliver on and, eventually, was not as eager to act as broker with his teachers on the request. By contrast, I did not press the point with another headteacher at a different school who had pledged support, but then withdrew; in the latter case, there were concrete, internal political circumstances that she could and would not articulate to an outsider, but which were not locked away from village gossip. When I did gain that access, my project shifted from history instruction to language identity. The following section explains why.

**WHITHER HISTORY?**

**Where is History Now?**

For those, like me, who seek-out histories told “from below” and for Welsh persons trying to establish a modernity continuous with the past, the indigenous language and history of Wales have a tendency to bond to the self, much like the smell of free-floating coal smoke or of paraffin fumes, to which one is exposed in the tedious and lonely ritual of building a coal fire. The politicized significance of language and perspectives on history, as well as other demonstrative markers of identity, while contested by Welsh residents, travel as if by air. Perhaps it is the factor of autobiographical time itself by which these, otherwise accidental, features of cultural life become a part of personal and social identity.

Like the coal smoke describementioned above, I found it crucially and ethnographically important to take in those scents, fragrant or sour by turn, to allow them to influence my participation in, and perhaps my analysis of, life in regions of Wales where identity is politicized.
Yet, in the analytic aspects of ethnography, too, the interests that dispose scholars to one stance or another are equally volatile; not to say (though they are occasionally), explosive.

Most scholars in professional history see things differently from activists who deal with the practical realities and legacies of historical processes like colonization. The former come to see the political conditions of earlier periods as somewhat foreign to present-day political institutions and our current notions of statehood. Samuel (1998: 3-4) illustrated this observation by historians’ locating the initial moment of the modern British state in ever more recent times—once said to occur in 1485 (end of the War of the Roses) or 1536 (first Acts of Union), later proposed as taking place in the 1590s by another author, and then discovered to have originated in the 1740s by a more recent writer. Historians’ notions of the past become more opaque upon further study (Lowenthal 1996: xi). By contrast, activists (along with other kinds of heritage-seekers) “clarify pasts so as to infuse them with present purposes” and, through this process, they “domesticate” the past (Lowenthal 1996:xi), making it familiar by adopting it as “theirs”.

Extending Lowenthal’s metaphor of domestication, I suggest that the domesticated past is “cultivated” when people treat the past as part of the heritage of their group, as a resource that can be used to enrich present nation-centered projects. Accordingly, many Welsh activists feel and experience that Wales has been a nation at least since a codified set of laws was enacted and enforced throughout a unified, Tenth-Century Welsh principality.

By representing this dichotomy as a real division, I am also identifying a problem that has been recognized from an international Western academic vantage in various areas of scholarship. As an intellectual problem in linguistic anthropology, this issue has to do with the shaping of a particular form of historicity by the emblematic use of language to stand for the nation (see Silverstein 1998a). This means that language represents the nation; where “represents” can mean
three different things (at least)—*rhetorically*, to be substitutable in discourse for nation; *cognitively*, to invoke the nation in perception; and *ontologically*, to be the tangible shape of the nation.

**A Lesson about History Teaching**

Over the last fifty years in the UK, devolution has demonstrated the willingness of state officials to allow the constituent parts of the UK to develop regional policies. First occurring in Ireland, with the relatively abrupt and total independence of the Republic of Ireland in 1922, devolution was later seen in minute shifts in public opinion along the “Celtic fringe” in the 1970s, in the divestment of local policy (e.g., education and agriculture) in the 1980s, and by constitutional changes in the 1990s that brought into being political assemblies in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

Since public education is widely recognized as an institution susceptible to national identity projects, and as a site of cultural reproduction within Wales, I decided early to center my research on issues surrounding Welsh identity and to focus on history instruction in schools in Wales. This decision was informed by the fact that the 1988 provision of autonomy to education policy-makers in Wales by the UK political state resulted in much discussion on how to make Welsh education more “Welsh” (Phillips 2004). The 1999 revision of the Welsh national curriculum, released in January 2000, included (as did revisions released previously) some products of that discussion. The national curriculum of 2000 required that a “Welsh dimension” (*cwricwlwm cymreig*) be included in the education provided to pupils in Welsh state schools. This was an independent part of the curriculum.

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6 Throughout all of my preliminary and principal dissertation research, with the last fieldtrip ending in March 2008, the curriculum released in 2000 remained the official curricular program for instruction in state schools in Wales.
that cut across traditional curricular subjects like Mathematics and Science, operating in conjunction with them as a “cross-curricular requirement”.

The mandate to bring a focus on Welsh identity to multiple school subjects could have led to the presence of patriotic versions of British history, focusing on Wales, in classrooms. While I intended to investigate such presences in the field, I was ultimately forced to conclude that either they were absent from classrooms or that teachers modified their teaching in my presence. More critical reflection led me to realize that the impulse to use historical accounts to enable expression of group cohesion among Welsh children could not be the only factor in curriculum implementation. Interaction of the Welsh dimension and the history curriculum could (per hypothesis) mobilize resources in other school subjects for a patriotic pedagogy. However, a conjunction of a new opportunity and old motives do not amount to the emergence of the means to do so. Teachers have their own pedagogical strategies and routines, including meeting children’s requests for certain topical material. Discourses and opinions in the larger community also impinge on how teachers meet curriculum demands (see Maas 2005).

Prior to gaining long-term access to classrooms of schools in north-west Wales, I believed that history teaching in Wales might exhibit styles of managing the contested history of Wales’ national character. Historical accounts have the potential to enable expression of group cohesion among Welsh persons as in other nations. Indeed, Welsh nationalists throughout the Twentieth Century expressed a felt need for a distinctly “Welsh” recounting of national history. Before beginning my preliminary research and based partly on experiences during a non-academic trip to Wales in 1995, I believed that I would discover history instruction being used intentionally to stage some range of Welsh national identities.
Thus, I imagined that the revolutionary Fourteenth-Century figure of Owain Glyndŵr would take a central role in Welsh schooling. Glyndŵr used political instability in England to stage a claim to independence for Wales in 1400, leading to a failed alliance with two other leaders in Britain, whose victory would have led to a three-part division of Britain. During Glyndŵr’s short revolution, Wales was united, a national political assembly was created, and the idea of several other national institutions conceived (e.g., a national university on the model of late-medieval European universities like those in Paris, Oxford, and Cambridge). He poses a contrast to a figure like Henry VII (arriving on the historical stage fifty years later). Equally Welsh, Henry VII is credited in some accounts of history with the founding of the modern British state. Teachers and students of English, Irish, or Scottish ethnicity are unlikely to have any affinity with the distinctly Welsh hero, Glyndŵr, but would recognize Henry VII as a British figure.

Shared understandings about Glyndŵr form the potential for a project of constructing a distinctly Welsh history in a setting that resembles the modern world and, thus, stakes a claim for the legitimacy of a distinct Welsh nation (not to say, “state”). Such projects have been promoted now and again in Wales over the Twentieth Century, particularly by nationalists associated with various political parties. However, I came to realize through my dissertation research fieldwork that the idea of a focus on the conflict-oriented figure of Owain Glyndŵr, or the figures of Welsh princes in the Middle Ages who fought against English rulers, was unlikely because many perceive it as casting Welsh and English relations in an antagonist light—something unsuitable for state schooling—even in a devolutionary context (see Maas 2005).

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7 I mention this cultural reference because such cultural references and their mutual relations are an intrinsic part of understanding the (folk-historiographic features of the) cultural milieu I am describing in more general terms. The /w/ in Cymraeg is pronounced as a vowel with a value between an American-English long-‘o’ and an ‘ooh’-sound, while the second-syllable ‘y’ is pronounced as an ‘uh’-sound. If marked by a circumflex to signify a “long” vowel, as in “dŵr” [water], it is an ‘ooh’ sound.
Furthermore, an educational focus on history and geography preceded the cross-curricular requirement of the Welsh Curriculum, and this produced patterns of practice that continued after the Welsh dimension was introduced as a curricular requirement. When the Welsh dimension was made part of the official curriculum, teachers continued the geographic focus on local history in Wales, thereby meeting demands of both the history segment of the national curriculum and the Welsh dimension. Many opportunities for patriotic history lessons are present in north-west Wales because it is the stomping-grounds of the most famous of Welsh princes. Teachers could even focus on the larger area of north Wales, where Henry VII came from (and where current Prince William is said to live), or they might broaden their gaze to include the effects of Henry’s Tudor-era reign on different parts of Wales. However, of the Tudors, the one I found that most teachers focus on is Henry VIII (son of Henry VII). Why was this; because he also had Welsh forebears? No. According to the teachers, it was because the details of the fates of Henry VIII’s wives is a popular topic among children in primary school.

Despite a thread of nation-centered advocacy, beginning in the 1920s and lasting at least until the 1970s, in which nationalists suggested that Welsh persons needed to develop a consciousness of Welsh national history as separate from England’s—history teaching in schools in the north-west of Wales remained largely devoid of any programmatic effort to distinguish Welsh narratives from English narratives in the service of patriotism. This is as much the case at the policy-making level as at the level of implementation in schools, as confirmed by library-research and field research in schools in north-west Wales.

A previous researcher from outside Wales concluded from his research that a language-based identity, but not national identity (in his opinion), was being deliberately fostered through the use of Cymraeg as a medium of instruction in schools (Khleif 1980). It was only during a
post-fieldwork re-reading of Bud Khleif that it became clear to me that I could have recognized the centrality of language from this simple observation. All other concerns (e.g., with history instruction as a stage for national identity) fade into the white space on which the text of that fact is printed. Despite the available “evidence”, I did not initially realize how central language was to questions of identity and everyday cultural practices in Wales, particularly in the north-west.

In a quest to cultivate a Welsh modernity that is rooted in an indigenous past, language has become central to cultural identity and heritage issues over the last 30 years, even more so than the project of disseminating a national history. Since language identity, but not national identity, was being enabled through the use of Cymraeg as a medium of instruction in schools, I chose not to focus, in the larger dissertation project, on historical imagination. This is also due to the fact that the entanglement of history, nation, language, and cultural identity would make for confusing ethnography. Rather, I chose to focus on the primary issue of the cultural process by which language operates as a central, but problematic indicator of identity.

People in north-west Wales often express this importance in terms of the Cymraeg-schools movement, which sought to establish schools that would use Cymraeg as the primary language of instruction. Such expression involves the deployment of landmarks in that history. Some of this account of history, and all of its flavor, appears in a document on the website for the National Assembly of Wales (see NAW 2009). Thus, in 1939, the first school to teach solely through the medium of Cymraeg, a primary school, was established in Aberystwyth (mid-Wales). In 1953, Ysgol Garnedd, a primary school in Bangor (north-west Wales), was designated as a Cymraeg-medium school. In 1956, Ysgol Glan Clwyd was opened in Rhyl (coastal north Wales). Ysgol Glan Clwyd was the first secondary school where the pupils were taught through the medium of Cymraeg, with others to follow in the 1960s. “By 1950 a total of seven designated bilingual
primary schools operated. By 1960 the number had increased fourfold to twenty eight” (Jones 1993: 564).

While doing principal dissertation research, I wondered why I did not hear more about the local effects in Gwynedd of this Cymraeg schools movement during my preliminary research. The primary school, Ysgol Garnedd, was not celebrated as a local example (though Ysgol Glan Clwyd, in another county, was celebrated because it was a “first” type of event: first among secondary schools). I wondered why this narrative did not emplot Gwynedd in its progressive tale of relative success. Teachers in Gwynedd would refer to this history rather vaguely as if it occurred all over Wales, including Gwynedd. The reason is that most of the schools in villages in and around Caernarfon and surrounding Bangor (whose university attracts more English monolinguals) would have already been using Cymraeg as the primary language of instruction. This is because Gwynedd was situated in that part of north Wales with a high proportion of Cymraeg speakers and a climate of “resistance” to English (equivalent, on occasion, to a tacit preference for Cymraeg). That fact did not prevent, and actually explains a county-wide response to the “encroachment” of English: The Gwynedd County Council Language Policy of 1975 stated the aim of making “every child in the county thoroughly bilingual”, meaning bilingual in literacy as well as orality (Baker 1985:55). “When English speaking newcomers entered these schools or elected to attend designated Welsh schools in the more anglicized areas, an intensive course in Welsh was to be given so that they adjusted linguistically as soon as possible” (Baker 1985:56).

The problem might have arisen more keenly with respect to secondary school teachers, for whom expertise with their subject-matter at a college-educated level would be a requirement; indeed, Cymraeg has been used at very few universities as a language of academic dialogue,
which has changed slightly in recent decades. Even today, Bangor University (formerly University of Wales, Bangor), is the only place of higher learning in which one can take all courses in a sociology program in Cymraeg.

According to several history teachers in Gwynedd, in the 1960s, county education authorities aggressively recruited secondary school history teachers who could speak Cymraeg fluently. Since history has a natural place among laypersons of Welsh society, the county probably recruited even more aggressively for secondary school teachers in math and sciences.

“In 1991, 19 out of its 23 secondary schools provided teaching through the medium of Welsh in five or more subjects, compared with 12 schools in Dyfed and only 4 in Powys. Maths [as this subject is called in British English] and Science in Welsh, available only in Gwynedd in 1985, are now more widely available” (Giles Jones 1994:53).

Observations like Khleif’s (1980) can, and should, lead one to challenge what I had assumed in my original question regarding whether/how the school subject of history is made to serve the interests of identity construction and the teaching of a Welsh heritage. Such a question, if asked so baldly, should be challenged because it cannot be answered in north-west Wales (and probably other parts of Wales) without first tackling the essentially diachronic (and, therefore, contingently dynamic and historiographic) issue of language politics. Indeed, that is a corollary to the main thesis of this dissertation. Consequently, during my fourteen-month dissertation fieldwork, I moved away from a primary focus on history instruction. I also moved away from a focus on curricular concerns and to a broader, more holistic concern with how language is used in schooling settings and how attitudes toward language identity are expressed in such settings.

One way I believed I might address the more holistic concern was to seek diversity by examining what is excluded from a duality-prominent image of Wales—a nation that is English-
speaking and Cymraeg-speaking. The tension in the numerous dualities—Cymraeg and English, historic past and the present, and others—suggested to me the operation of a deeply interesting set of social, linguistic, and political processes. There are, of course, traditional minorities in Wales, which make up even smaller proportions of the population in north-west Wales. The existential problems they face in trying to inhabit the complex cultural milieu of north-west Wales would make the political challenges of the “Welsh natives” relatively trivial. Nevertheless, the historical statistics for Cymraeg speakers suggests something like “endangerment”. Those who feel they belong to a community of Cymraeg speakers frequently express their felt-sense of a diffuse oppression by the English language community. These factors compelled me to look for complexities in belongingness and entitlement against the background of what is, only superficially, a dichotomy—one that manifests in ordinary discourse about a “bilingual” nation divided under some contexts between Cymraeg-speaking nationalists and the greater majority.

SUMMARY

This dissertation is divided into four parts. The first, introductory part provides a statement of the ethnographic setting, the theoretical concerns and nature of the research, and the analytic framework for bringing the latter to bear on the former. A large part of this research involved shaping and articulating a relationship between discourses about identity and analysis. The second part of this dissertation situates identity within the national setting of Wales and the local setting of north-west Wales. Chapter Two addresses the lack of fit between scholarly conceptions of belonging to a national community and the motivations and ideas about belonging within Wales. Chapter Three provides an analysis of an interview with two teachers about their
views on teaching Welsh history at school. The interview revealed a potentially explicit
discourse about Welshness that is submerged in an implicit stream of talk discourse about
language. Cultural references that the speakers make, signal the submerged topic of language
identity. Once decoded, these cultural references reveal relations between the appropriate style
of talking about what can be recognized as potentially controversial topics (given the fact that
they were encoded in the first place) and the lived practice of the existential and practical
features that those potentially controversial topics are about. Discussion of this interview forms
the basis for my notion that there are political goals that are served by the marking of particular
activities, practices, and themes as political or not.

Part III of the dissertation provides a more conventional description of the discursive
context of the cultural milieu, the phenomenal expressions of identity. The main objective of
this part of the dissertation is to examine critically the prototypical positions regarding the
official languages of Wales and national identity, positions that figure in public discourse in
terms of “nationalism”. Chapter Four details how the persistence of the category of political
nationalism serves to ground the less acceptable form of nationalism, even while culture- and
language-based forms are constituted in communicative settings as blurring into the political end
of the spectrum. After surveying the broken discursive terrain at the edges of political
nationalism, I discuss the rhetorical work that certain categories for identity (e.g., being English
or being Welsh) do. Given three major foci for taking up issues of identity—the conflict-laden
past, the future of a liberal democratic Welsh modernity, and the separateness of languages and
their distinct kinds of identity—the rhetorical work of identity categories produces a Welsh logic
of heritage. The importance of this logic of heritage is that it makes impractical the adoption of
all three foci at salient public sites like schools.
Chapter Five continues with detailed exposition of the organization of the two other rubrics of nationalism: cultural and language nationalism. Chapter Six takes a substantivist approach to the social imaginaries in north-west Wales. I document the tropes that apply to the cultural importance of Cymraeg, particularly in light of “post-modern” concerns with decolonization. Chapter Seven presents the results of a diagnostic method I used to locate some core attitudes in the substantive ethnolinguistic consciousness associated with nationalism. The results indicate that the attitudes of self-described nationalists outside of schools are relatively narrow. The problem such diagnosis presents is that, while such narrowness is assumed by the discourse of and about nationalism, it is clearly at odds with the range of the social uses of nationalism described in the foregoing.

Part IV of this dissertation moves beyond the ideology of subject-positions related to national identity and focuses on the dynamics of such positioning practices. Chapter Eight interrogates the ways the entrenched positions on Welsh identity are constructed in Welsh Studies in Wales. Chapter Nine offers reflections and a more thoroughgoing analysis of the surface positions and discursive contexts in which nationalism and national identity converge. Finally, the concluding chapter brings together my discussions of the shifting line between what is political, and what is not. It reveals a moving-picture of the ongoing processes of constitution of a cultural community centered in Cymraeg use, which I describe as the pragmatics of language community. Together, the various settings for “waging” such pragmatics, the various linguistic and discursive stances people deploy in asserting associated ideologies (and systematic organization of this variety), and how people maintain positions within the surface-level discourse of and about nationalism inform an account that can denaturalize without denaturing (speaking pejoratively about) the essentialist beliefs of Cymraeg language activists.
CHAPTER ONE
    ◄ A PLACE IN A DISCOURSE ►

The terms *discourse* and *practice* have what we might call a ‘felicitous ambiguity’: both can refer to either what people are doing on a particular occasion, or what people habitually do given a certain sort of occasion. That is, both can refer either to action, or to convention. The ambiguity is felicitous here because it helps underline the social nature of discourse and practice, by suggesting that the individual instance always implies social conventions—any discourse or practice implies conventional types of discourse or practice. The ambiguity also suggests social preconditions for action on the part of individual persons: the individual is able to act only in so far as there are social conventions to act within. (Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (1989:28))

**THE GOG’ TRÈN**

In the initial months of this research, while laboring to gain moderate access to schools, I learned that the phenomena of relevance to cultural identities available at schools were largely produced outside school sites. While I do not shoulder the burden of evidence for this claim, it is abundantly clear that the production of national identities that relate to the two official national languages of Wales is a broad phenomenon. The following extended description serves as an illustration of how the topography of cultural difference appears in the context of language.

The route I have most often taken into Wales is the railroad. The North Coast Rail Line is one of the fastest ways from England, across the border region, into those parts of Wales where Cymraeg is used in significant proportions. For most of its course, this rail line runs next to the A55 freeway, which lacks regular station stops, as well as other constraints on freedom of when or where to move (see Figure 0.1 in the previous chapter and Figure 1.1 below for many of the towns mentioned in what follows). The railroad runs from the border-towns of Chester, Crewe, and Mold—on the English side of the border—all the way to the Welsh university and cathedral city of Bangor, and on further to Caergybi (Holyhead) on the northwestern island of Môn (Ynys Môn), where there is access by ferry to several points in Ireland.
The idea of a linear track with particular stopping points and stages of travel makes the rail-line concept analogous to the felt linguistic realities of the region of north Wales. During the time of my research, the station stops in Wales between Crewe and Bangor, moving east to west, were: Flint, Prestatyn, Rhyl, Abergele, Bae Colwyn/Colwyn Bay, LLandudno Junction, Conwy, Penmaenmawr, and LLanfairfechan. This linear progression through the countryside offers some initial impressions for the outsider. When the train stops at Prestatyn, welcome signs and the like are printed with the English version on top, and the Cymraeg version below. When the train stops at Abergele, however, not only is the Cymraeg text on the top of signs—thus, “araf” and “ffordd allan” are printed more prominently than “slow” and “way out” [exit]—but one also begins to see a broader presence of Cymraeg texts, including Cymraeg graffiti. I never did see the rare and particularly vulgar, “twll tin pob Sais” [All English are assholes] until I was closer to Caernarfon or Pwllheli, however.

The stop at Colwyn Bay signals the arrival into Cymraeg “heartlands” more starkly, if superficially, in that the Cymraeg name for the location (Bae Colwyn) is both syntactically

Figure 1.1: A map of north-west mainland Wales. The mountainous region of Snowdonia or Eryri marked in dark grey.
(noun initial) and morphologically different from the English name (Colwyn Bay). While “Cyffordd LLandudno” [LLandudno Junction] is less accessible to monolinguals than “Bae Colwyn”, English remains prevalent along the coast even this far west. While Cymraeg is much more prevalent moving south up the Conwy Valley (the leftmost finger of dark grey in

Figures 1.2a and 1.2b: Two maps of Wales (ONS 2001a) based on 2001 census data that show the percentages of people born in Wales who can speak Cymraeg. Figure 1.2a distinguishes (with the darkest grey) areas where ninety percent or more of the people born in Wales speak Cymraeg. Figure 1.2b uses the darkest grey on that figure to mark areas where eighty percent or more can speak Cymraeg. The next darkest shading on Figure 1.2a is the range of 90-50%, and 80-50% for Figure 1.2b. Notice that these ranges almost coincide with the next darkest ranges—50-20% for Figure 1.2a, and 50-30% for Figure 1.2b.

While the upper-end ranges are noteworthy, to provide any context at all for these data requires knowledge of the absolute number of people in their sample (N=868), and for the ranges to the degree the census report allows. There were 61 people in the 97.3-90% range, 65 people in the 90-80% range, 117 people in the 80-50% range, 71 people in the 50-30% range, and 68 people in the 30-20% range. By contrast to these comparable sub-samples, there were 486 people in the 20-6.8% range; over 50% of their total sample! Interestingly, the census officials found no areas in which less than 6.8% of those born there could speak Cymraeg.

1 There is also a distinctly Cymraeg name for Y Rhyl [the Rhyl], which marks out the geographic site of a salt marsh (though this etymology is a matter of debate). However, the welcome sign in Rhyl (like the official signage for some similar cases) does not recognize the definite object in the Cymraeg welcome message. It states “Croeso i Rhyl”, rather than “Croeso i’r Rhyl”, where the definite object is marked by an apostrophe-’r’ form following the vowel.
Figure 1.2a), as well as west of LLandudno Junction. By the time one reaches the station at Bangor, if one steps out onto the platform or walks the streets, one is more likely to hear Cymraeg than English.

During my fieldwork travels across north Wales, I had the distinct sense that, as one goes farther west along the Gog Trên, it becomes more ordinary for most people inhabiting any given village to accentuate the use of Cymraeg as a component of an identity that connects them to others and that forms a source and sense of national belonging. The literal train route of the North Wales Coast Line might be called “the gogledd trên” [northern train]. This suggests “Gog’ Trên”, for short; however, I came to use this nickname not for the literal train route with its multiple stations in areas whose denizens find more or less affinity toward Cymraeg, but for something else. I use “the Gog’ Trên” to refer to graduated changes in the way language is perceived, which corresponds to the series of gradations of linguistic competence in Cymraeg as one moves west across north Wales from the English border.

My train metaphor about language identity is based loosely on the idea of a dialectal chain, which refers to a series of gradations of dialectal variation in a language. However, there is an analytic analog in cultural anthropology as well. Ong’s (1999) concept of graduated sovereignty refers to areas of gradually diminishing state control over economies that give rise to flexible performances of personal identities. These flexible performances trade on sets of opportunities, benefits, entitlement, and exclusion. Similarly, the coastal part of north Wales exhibits graduated language prevalence. Thus, various material-ideological concerns give rise to zones of gradually diminishing prevalence of one language regime relative to another in society in general. On the north coast of Wales, it is not economic privatization that produces the relevant gradations—as in graduated sovereignty; rather, material-ideological concerns produce
gradations in language prevalence and competence. These include inter-village mobility, a leisure class, holiday economies, and inter-lingual migration. When coupled with other factors, including institutional arrangements and other cultural regimes, the result of graduated language dominance is a chain of gradually differing senses of identity, which correspond in some way to the graduated prevalence of one language relative to the other.

Regional history is also part of my construct of the Gog’ Trên. The last three-quarters of the Twentieth Century saw changes in the way the land along the north of Wales was divided. The creation of an intermediate jurisdiction made it convenient for the Cymraeg-prevalent parts of the county of Gwynedd, and the English-prevalent portions of north Wales to the east of Gwynedd to have different language policies for schools. The changing jurisdictional

Figure 1.3: The different divisions of counties and boroughs of Wales. The 1974-1996 arrangement of counties (8) is shown on the left. The post-1996 unitary authorities (22) are shown on the right.
boundaries in north Wales is significant because of the cultural importance of schools in Wales.² Importantly, I focused on a school in this “border” region—now called “Conwy”, not “Gwynedd”—that had the unusual feature of employing many teachers whose first-language was Cymraeg. Thus, they were in the position of having an affinity for the Cymraeg language world, but were not able to make much as much use of Cymraeg in their classrooms as teachers at schools now within the new boundaries of Gwynedd. Some knowledge of the changing boundaries will clarify why this feature of the school and its teachers was valuable.

Between 1974 and 1996, the north-west of Wales was composed of the county of Clwyd and old Gwynedd, which spanned from east of Llandudno to south of Dolgellau, and included Ynys Môn. The eastern edge of Gwynedd during this period was defined by the north-south flowing river, Conwy, and not linguistic boundaries. These new boundaries reestablished the relatively ancient boundaries of Gwynedd, which existed when it was ruled by dynasties of native princes. In 1996, a change in county boundaries created a pocket across the old borders of the then-county of Clwyd and the present-day county of Gwynedd (see Fig. 1.3). In 1996, the western half of Clwyd and an eastern portion of the old county of Gwynedd were merged to create the county of Conwy, which encircles the river Conwy, the corresponding north-south roadways, the broad river valley that stretches to the east, as well as the eastern slopes of the Eryri mountain range (Snowdonia). The boundaries of the new local government jurisdictions were not shaped to the boundaries implied by informal or rigorous language use-sampling. However, the differential responses of these local authorities are likely to influence future developments in language gradation.

² A movement to broaden instruction in Cymraeg to areas with high English language concentrations resulted in the establishing of the first secondary school, Ysgol Glan Clwyd, which opened in Rhyl in 1956. Rhyl, formerly at the East-West midpoint of the old county of Clwyd, of Clwyd—lies at the pivot point in language prevalence along the Gog’ Trên.
The change in the way north Wales has been divided is significant from the standpoint of language and schools because schooling administration is tied to counties. Most primary schools in Gwynedd make primary use of Cymraeg (based on a sample of primary schools visited during a survey in 2002). By 1975, Gwynedd had already initiated a bilingual policy for schools that required use of Cymraeg in schooling, which remains in effect today. The prevalence of Cymraeg has been in decline all over Wales and the likelihood of such a decline in Gwynedd seemed to be the motivation for this policy.

By the time of my preliminary research trips, what became the county of Conwy had become an inverted microcosm of Wales. That is, English was the prevailing language in its urban northern parts, while the more rural southern parts of the county contained high proportions of Cymraeg speakers—the north-south relation here is inverted relative to Wales as a whole. Even before the boundary changes, a much higher percentage of students in current-day Conwy were monolingual in English. When they were part of the old county of Gwynedd, primary schools along the northern part of current-day Conwy would have addressed Gwynedd’s bilingual policy mandate differently. After 1996, schools in communities in those parts of Conwy where English was more prevalent than Cymraeg no longer had to conform to Gwynedd’s language policy. Thus, first the county boundaries, then the language policies mandated by county jurisdictions, came to mirror the series of gradations of linguistic competence in Cymraeg and identity that I call the Gog’ Trên.
Situating My Research

The Schools-Centered Research

My research design originally required one school in north Wales (Gwynedd county) and another in south Wales. The important differences that this geographic arrangement was intended to express, concern the kind and amount of Cymraeg use in instruction, the concentration of Cymraeg in the local community, and local estimates of the strength of nationalism in the area. In my planned site in Gwynedd, the relative values of three features were high, while many areas of south Wales would contain schools with minimal use of Cymraeg in instruction, low concentrations of Cymraeg use in the local community, and low estimates of perceived nationalism. It turned out to be possible to accomplish the goal of different geographic arrangements by coordinating permission for research at a school site in north Wales that contrasted in these features with the focal Cymraeg-prevalent school of the study. Thus, the contrast site was in Conwy county, in a village that has relatively few Cymraeg speakers.³

The first school for which I gained entry was a few miles from where I was living. Demographically, it had roughly 200 pupils from ages of around three to eleven, and a teaching staff of ten teachers, including the headteacher, whose main teaching role occurred during school assemblies. Cymraeg was the main language in the homes of 93% of the pupils at this school, according to the school inspection report for this school (the bibliographic information for which would identify this school). Less than 20% of the pupils took free meals, to use the standard economic indicator in Welsh education.

³ The following descriptions use pseudonyms and slight misinformation where true statements are likely to yield to identification of the schools or persons researched, and where such misinformation has no significant effect on the details of the ethnographic account.
Unfortunately, my access to classrooms at this school was occasional, at best. Despite the agreement I had worked out with the headteacher there during a short, preliminary trip in December 2005, I was only able to arrange one visit every few weeks, in addition to occasional fieldtrips. I suspect that the teachers at the school did not share the headteacher’s enthusiasm for the long-term, intensive presence of a foreign researcher. I called this school, “Ysgol Gynradd Brynpiws” [“Brynpiws Junior School”], the abbreviation of which (“YGB”) could also have the significance of “Cymraeg School B”. I gained better and more regular access to another school at which Cymraeg was the prevailing language of instruction, and which became my anchor for my initial focus on history instruction—my “Cymraeg School A”. Since I had trouble gaining consistent access to Ysgol Gynradd Brynpiws, the school I thought would be my anchor, Ysgol Brynpiws became Cymraeg School B.

Classroom observations at YGB amounted to about fifteen hours in September 2007, fifteen hours in November 2007, and several hours in February and March 2008. While the headteacher was very generous about allowing me to attend fieldtrips in July and September, which he tended to lead, these served more of the broad purposes of research. Since they involved lots of walking in outdoor environments, these events did not allow me the opportunity to record interactional talk. I sought out other schools because I was not having success in gaining continuous access to classrooms at YGB.

In late summer of 2007, YGB was attending a field trip to an overnight outdoor center in a part of Wales near Y Bala (Meirionydd, Gwynedd county), to which the headteacher at YGB had invited me. On that fieldtrip, I met the assistant head teacher from another school, which I designated “Ysgol Gerrig yn yr Afon” (meaning, “Rock in the River School”). YGA is only a few miles from YGB and shares many of the same demographic features. My main interest was
still in history instruction and I scheduled a series of one- to two-hour visits to YGA during history lessons in the month of October. Although my initial access to both YGA and YGB was slight, these cracks allowed for gradual increases in access. Initial visits to YGA amounted to slightly over twenty observation hours in history and related lessons during the month of October, but I returned periodically in November 2007, and in February and March of 2008.

In seeking a school that would allow more continuous access and offer cross-linguistic comparison to the Cymraeg-medium schools, I had the fortune of meeting the headteacher of Ysgol Glain y Sir (“YGS”). The headteacher was very willing to allow me access—to the point that teachers were complaining among themselves near the end of my research stay (as I learned during the very last days of observing). YGS is located in the village of Croes Efydd, in the county borough of Conwy, in the middle of north Wales. It lies about thirty miles east of the other two schools (i.e., YGA and YGB). At this primarily English-medium school, I was able to spend about two hundred hours observing activities in classrooms and other areas of the school in October 2007, part of November, and then virtually all of late January, February and March of 2008.

Croes Efydd has a population of around 4,000, while YGS has just under 200 pupils from ages of around three to eleven. According to the 2001 census, less than thirty percent of the people in the area of Croes Efydd are Cymraeg speakers and more than sixty percent have virtually no knowledge at all of Cymraeg. The latter figure is higher than the national average and made YGS a perfect comparison with the two Cymraeg-prevalent schools.

Ysgol Glain y Sir has had an unusually high retention rate for teachers, given that the occupational group is fairly mobile. This is notable because it means that teachers there during my fieldwork had remained there since before the change in county boundaries, with the various
implications these changes had on the language practices of instruction. After 1996, teachers in
the part of the new county Conwy that formerly had been the eastern edge of the old Gwynedd
county gained greater flexibility in their performances of national identity. That is, the
demographics of their students (and the corresponding prevalence of one language over another
in the community) did not change, but the policy regime did. As the assistant head teacher at
YGS described:

So we were in the old Gwynedd. And Gwynedd had a policy of—you had to
teach Welsh as a first language. Well, it was impossible to do it in this area [east
of the current Gwynedd border]. It was impossible to teach [in] Welsh, even
though they pushed you to do it. So all the teachers also had to be Welsh speakers
in Gwynedd. You had to have Welsh as a first language. ‘Cause we’ve been
lucky ‘cause a lot of us have been here for such a long time and we’ve still got all
the teachers as first-language. I’m sure if you went to some schools just a little- a
few miles down the road, you’d see a lot of the teachers have Welsh as a second
language. (March 6, 2008)

Thus, while the use of English or Cymraeg is partly dependent on the prevalent language of the
larger community, the teachers themselves possessed a native competence in the cultural and
grammatical features of Cymraeg.4

The life choices that teachers at YGS have made has also impacted the language
character of the school. They have been relatively sedentary in their willingness to remain at the
school for long segments of their careers. As a result, nearly all of the teachers at YGS were
first-language Cymraeg speakers. Nonetheless, fewer than ten pupils and maybe only one pupil

4 Notice also the geographic reference to a few miles down the road, which is an abstract reference to the proportion
of Cymraeg speakers in the area and the resulting competence of the teaching staff at area schools. It is not clear
whether she meant a distance that would indicate a marked change in the proportion of Cymraeg speakers in the
community in general, or whether the distance signifies that YGS is alone in the area among minimally bilingual
schools for the number of teachers who are first-language Cymraeg speakers. There is one bilingual primary/junior
school in the area that far exceeds the amount of Cymraeg that the county requires be used in classrooms, but the
teacher’s comparison could not have included that school because the school’s criteria for competence would select
for first-language Cymraeg speakers in terms of pupils and teaching staff; thus ruling that school out of the teacher’s
comparison.
would be able to carry a conversation in Cymraeg. Apart from lessons on the school subject of Cymraeg, students at YGS heard Cymraeg only among and between teachers, occasionally as commands to sit or to be quiet, and in hymns they sang at daily assemblies.

This does not (though to some people it would, while others would object to the idea that it should) mean that teaching Welshness and Welsh history there is less important. According to a different teacher, a teacher of the younger pupils, teaching Welshness and Welsh history:

... is very important in an area like this, which is not totally Welsh, the children to understand what it is to be Welsh, really. But I would say, in this area, the children do feel that they are Welsh. You have to go a few miles [east] down the road... and that changes quite considerably. You know, there’s a kind of invisible border there. And I think you’d be struggling really to present that identity of Welshness. (March 6, 2008)

Notice that her reference, using the very same words as the assistant head teacher—“a few miles down the road”—is implicitly directed to the east, along the Gog’ Trèn toward the English border, because she is specifically concerned with a diminished expression of Welshness.

It might surprise my reader that these references to “Welsh” are all indicators of language identity are indirect references to Cymraeg. The invisible border the second teacher referred to is one of the stops, or transitions between grades along the Gog’ Trèn of graduated language prevalence. By making apparent references to Welsh culture (actually, ambiguous references to “Welsh”; i.e., Cymraeg) and making a geographic reference, it is immediately apparent to those with the appropriate background regarding gradual language prevalence that she is, in fact, making an implicit reference to the contrast between Cymraeg and English-language. It is as if she were saying that the Cymraeg-oriented “identity of Welshness” could not easily be presented “a few miles down the road” because it was more difficult to find Cymraeg speakers there.
Overview of Fieldwork

The Scenarios of Welsh Life Sub-Study: It was not until July 2007 that I had finally obtained permissions for regular school visits and entered the classroom of YGB. The delay caused me to reconsider my objectives continually from January until July. Between January and May 2007, I engaged in background ethnographic research on national identity in society at large in north-west Wales and surveyed students at a regional teaching college. I attended teacher-training class meetings at the regional teaching college, and seminars and meetings of the various university “Welsh Studies”-related academic programs.\(^5\)

Between May and September 2007, I devoted much of my attention to a project that used structured interviewing techniques on the topic of attitudes about language and national identity. The sub-study was inspired by a research project (see Trosset and Caulkins 2001, 2002) on shared national culture. That study was developed on the foundations of ethnographic research into Welsh personhood by the US-trained and US-resident anthropologist, Carole Trosset, published as *Welshness Performed* (1993) (I summarize her findings in Chapter Two and discuss them more in Chapters Eight and Nine.). Trosset suggested that understanding of society and identity in Wales could be furthered by conceptualizing more or less discrete categories of personhood. The subsequent work by Carol Trosset and Doug Caulkins employed textual snapshots of everyday life from Trosset’s field experiences. Use of these descriptions, or scenarios, provided a method by which respondents could respond to identical elicitation materials that were also fairly rich representations of cultural life, as contextualized by respondents’ own understandings and personal histories. However, Trosset and Caulkins (2001,

\(^5\) Note that this image of a cohesive interdisciplinary area in academic institutions in Wales is a rhetorical device of fiction, which enables me to protect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals. At the same time, the fiction does reflect something factual about some range of scholarly interactions across campus and disciplinary boundaries.
2002) almost completely avoided any of the controversial politics of language because they pursued a representation of shared Welsh culture. By contrast, the scenarios-based sub-study I undertook, involved generating scenario items related to three areas of Welsh life: language and governance, as well as the more banal, but significant cultural issues Trosset 1993 identified (e.g., egalitarianism). A report of my sub-study is found in Chapter Seven. It presents a rigorous—but what I came to see as a flawed—conceptualization of identity phenomena in Wales.

In July, I recruited a focus group to evaluate a set of a large number of candidate scenario items. I weighed their comments (especially novel issues raised in this focus group session) against the ethnographic considerations that led me to generate them, the commentary on the initial study of this kind (Trosset and Caulkins 2001, 2002), and my previous field-testing of some of the items. That process led me to reduce the set of candidate scenario items to about thirty key scenarios on language and governance, in addition to fifteen scenarios on cultural identity. In August, I pilot tested the selected items at a national culture festival, which allowed me to eliminate several more items. I then conducted interviews with about ten nationalists in September using a set of thirty-two items on culture, language, and governance. In addition, I asked approximately ten teachers at each of two schools in north-west Wales to respond to the thirty-two scenario items used with the self-described nationalists, plus nine additional cultural items to avoid a nationalistic cast to my research interests.

School Ethnography?: By September 2007, I finally arranged extended access to school locations at two Cymraeg-prevalent schools and one English-prevalent bilingual school. I carried out interviews and observations at each of the three schools—attending classroom
lessons, school assemblies, rehearsals for extra-curricular competitions and school productions, and field trips. I completed this research in March 2008.

Because of my problems with access to schools, I have some reservations about calling my research “school ethnography”. It is true that, during the fourteen months of preliminary dissertation research in north-west Wales, I studied bilingual schooling environments in which either English or Cymraeg prevailed. I focused on three schools that are similar in that each school had between 150 and 250 pupils from ages of around three to eleven. I visited these schools during a variety of pedagogical moments, including classroom lessons, school assemblies, rehearsals for extra-curricular competitions and school productions, and school trips to regional sites of cultural importance. Nevertheless, this dissertation is probably best described as being about the discourses that impinge on those sites of schooling. In particular, one of its goals is to clarify our conceptions to better understand those discourses as they appear in the context of empirical field research.

Within the context of the critiques of theory and ethnographic practice in anthropology of the last thirty years, the issues I address on the basis of my experiences at schools in north-west Wales are not revolutionary, nor do they overturn fundamental conventions of ethnography. That would be inappropriate in a Ph.D. thesis. Whatever novelty this dissertation possesses is limited to making explicit the impact on methods (not to be read as “ethics of ethnography” as sometimes happens) made by the accompanying critique of theory. This involved explicating the concrete meanings of what are often termed “the effects of power”—as they relate to the politics of language in north-west Wales. It might not be obvious why this is such an important task for ethnography of this region, unless one has spent time there among the academics of highland Wales.
Any original ethnography will be decoded by Welsh academics according to the cultural logic prescribed by orientations to Welsh identity as found in Welsh Studies in Wales. This should sound familiar to graduate students in anthropology at US universities and their mentors. Post-Vietnam-era ethnographers worried that the work of anthropologists could be mined by the military intelligence community purely in the “national” interest, aided by the open structure of traditional ethnographers’ reports. That lesson is recounted annually in anthropology seminars. My related point is both different and similar: Ethnography of Wales will be read in the light of entrenched positions on Welsh identity unless deliberate steps are taken to prevent that from happening. Unlike the challenge presented by the threat of having one’s ethnographic work co-opted by state institutional regimes and used in alarming ways, my challenge was to uncover, by ethnographic means (of course), how previous ethnographic work was so thoroughly channeled into established positions. These positions are so entrenched that I constantly worried that no effort on my part would be sufficient. Regardless of the success of such pre-emptive measures, the fact that there is such a cultural logic in the Welsh academy points to circumstances—underlying cultural currents—that warrant attention.

In the process of making explicit, and offering an account of, the politics of language and community that impinge on schools, my reflection on my fieldwork experiences led me to a theoretical basis that my perception of analysis of those experiences seemed to demand. Since I convey my experiences in the terms of that explicit methodological presentation, this account is also able to reveal unnoticed analytic problems contained in the cultural milieux of Wales. These problems are ones with which I wrestled while conducting the research itself. The process of writing this dissertation, then, has enabled those problems to be formulated and (partially) addressed in the empirical sections of this dissertation.
The following section, by describing a moment in a particular classroom, provides some substance for adopting an analytic language for the pragmatics of language community (i.e., the normative forms of consciousness and action related to how people in north-west Wales express and live their sense(s) of cultural belonging). This analytic substance is not simply given as a result of experiencing life in Wales, nor is it given in the anthropological literature; no more do our senses simply receive some objective existence outside the body. The substance of perceptual content must be made, whether this substance is the perceptions of sensory experience or perceptions of cultural interpretation.

BUILDING BLOCS

The Problem of Recognizing Recognizability

It was an autumn day, the second of October 2007, and I sat in the fourth row of a classroom at YGB. This class combined third- and fourth-grade pupils. The classroom, like most other classrooms I had seen for third- or fourth-grade students was colorful and its walls were papered in pedagogical materials. Of particular interest to me at the time was the chronological sequence of historical landmarks and personages printed on placards that seemed *de riguer*, though the content of the sequence varied with each classroom. This timeline stretched across the back and side wall. From the 1500s to the middle of the 1850s, this classroom highlighted “Sir Walter Raleigh”, “Elizabeth I”, “Guto Ffowcs” [Guy Fawkes], “Rheilffordd Stockford” [Stockford Railway], “Rheoliad Plant yn y Ffatri” [1833 Factory Act], “Queen Victoria”, “sefyliad post brenhinol” [establishment of the Royal Mail’s service, free-of-charge for receipt of mail].

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On the ceiling, there was a compass, as in the fourth-/fifth-grader’s classroom. In the back-left corner, if sitting in a chair oriented toward the front of the room, there were three computers with one of the monitors displaying on a screen saver the nearby, local Conquest-Era castle in the nearby town of Caernarfon. That castle, a site of bloody conflict that was once a key part of a series of fortifications used to subdue the local Welsh people and to end the autonomy of dynastic Welsh princes, was now a tourist attraction and key part of a series of exchange points in the Welsh service economy. It was also a part of the landscape of local history and offered resources for teachers to use.

In the front of the classroom, next to the teacher’s desk near the left corner, there was a digital whiteboard with the Welsh flag on the desktop screen. A nearby dry-erase board had writing on it: “September 28th” (interesting because it was in English and used the US-American date-format), and “atalnodi” [pronunciation]. Windows on the right hand side-wall looked onto the outside play area where I could see children playing. The boys’ shirts, in particular, represented association football [soccer] teams (mainly Liverpool, with some wearing shirts for Manchester United and Wales). In the classroom, all pupils wore school uniforms.

For the period immediately after lunch, the teacher was beginning a history lesson about the Celts and it was my first day in her classroom. Before providing a recap of the previous history lesson on Friday, she introduced me to the class. This event would be largely unremarkable except for the interesting way in which the children tried to classify me as a new part of their classroom environment.
Mrs. P: Cyn i ni gychwyn, fella fel ‘dachi di sylwi, ella,
    Before we begin, you may have noticed, perhaps,

    mae ‘gynna ni ymwelydd yn y dosbarth heddiw. Mister?
    we have a visitor in the classroom today. Mister?

Steve: Maas.

Mrs. P: Maas?

Steve: Iawn [Right].

Mrs. P: . . . wedi dod i weld chi. Wel, sut ydach chi?
    . . . [He has come to see you. Well, how are you?

Tom: Is he Saesneg, Miss?
    Is he English, Miss? [inaudible sounds from other children]

Mrs. P: Manyrs, Tom!
    Manners, Tom!

Child 2: Saesneg-
    English -

Child 3: Cymraeg ydi o?
    Is he Welsh?

Small clues reveal that this is an entry-point into a rich setting for identity practices and politics. One of the most important clues is that Tom’s suggestion that I am English, rather than Welsh, provoked a strong reaction from Mrs. P, who rebuked him for his brazen rudeness. I return to this entry-point in a later chapter, as it warrants additional interpretation. My purpose here is the broader one of introduction. My choice of translation, however, demands that I pause to note that the translation of “Saesneg” as “English” is, at once, culturally true, but linguistically inaccurate. Like its complement (“Cymraeg”), “Saesneg” refers to a language. “Saesneg” refers to the group of language varieties we call “English” and its complement refers to the language
indigenous to Wales. While sitting in the classroom, however, I understood exactly what the child had in mind, and it had less to do with the language someone (me, in this case) tends to speak than it did with a type of total persona: a cultural identity. In the later chapter in which I return to this classroom moment (Chapter Four), I interpret broadly how particular capacities for using a specific language could be imagined in such a way as to play this role in the talk of a ten-year old boy and his classmates.

The greatest challenge I feel this dissertation faces is in revealing the forms that recognizability takes—both in this cultural setting, and more generally. This is a great challenge because, by “recognizability”, I mean a second-order kind of recognition: the recognition of recognition, and the conditions of such recognition. The vignette above, independent of commentary, does not necessarily draw attention to the way language comes to mark cultural identity. The vignette can only show—not say—that (and perhaps how) language marks identity. This is because commentary is needed to point out how language acts as a kind of marker of, and how people in Wales associate it with, cultural identities in a way that a language comes to seem essential to identity. Yet, even when commentary provides such interpretation, it cannot say who recognizes what about what other people recognize; it can only show something open to further interpretation. Given the main problem of this dissertation, an important point follows from that anthropological truth about ethnography: Even if the essential role(s) that the two official languages of Wales play in cultural identities is clear, it would not necessarily be clear that (or how) the significance of such sociolinguistically marking would be political, or that

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6 Although, in English-language contexts, Cymraeg is typically called “Welsh” or “the Welsh language”, I do not follow this practice—which is to take a unique political stand of my own. I use the term, “Cymraeg”, as if it had not English translation and I think this is the best anthropological position, but not the most ethnographically accurate position. Some Welsh people do, and perhaps most would, find it aesthetically unsettling to encounter my routine use of “Cymraeg” (rather than “Welsh”) in English-language contexts. Also, one principal analytic task this dissertation undertakes, is to explicate the role of language in the social organization of north-west Wales. Apart from reproducing a convenient, if “lazy” convention, it would be contrary to my analytic objectives and, therefore, rhetorically and communicatively counterproductive to denote the Cymraeg language code by the term, “Welsh”.

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It might seem implausible or bizarre that language, especially those aligned with indigeneity rather than a sovereign state, would incite reactions related to such political allegiances (cf. Handler 1988). However, in making sense of how people identify themselves as Welsh in conversations in Wales, nationalism is the typical key people in Wales use to make sense of positioning one’s own and others’ identities in such conversations. Moreover, as this dissertation explores, what it means to be nationalistic is differently valued in Wales depending on the local organization of the social, communicative, and political setting and one’s affinities within that setting.

People in Wales commonly think of identity practices relevant to this dissertation—practices cued by or that evoke the dominant culture or nation of Wales—as being generally unconstrained. Yet, these same social actors can also easily identify a regime that heavily constrains identity practices. These social actors can identify such a regime even if the only available framework to describe that regime does little more than identify a thematic space they can designate with the vague trope-label of nationalism. To give a more neutral name to the discursive context for which nationalism is the key orienting trope, I refer to it by the common, if rather bald, term of “national identity”. The discourse context of national identity in Wales is organized by a normative regime, and it is this regime that is the subject of this dissertation.

Typically, in cultural anthropology, the internal organization of any cultural phenomenon like nationalism is explored in light of concepts of varying constraint, which I refer to as normative regimes. Among others, these include Foucault’s (1978) techniques of the self,

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7 For comparison, in simple terms, one might think of the ideology of freedom maintained by members of both parties of the constraining and regulative two-party political system in the United States.
Gramsci’s (1971) cultural hegemony, Williams’ (1961) structures of feeling, and Bourdieu’s (1977) habitus. In contrast to these representations of normativity, as more or less abstract schemes, normative regimes can be concretely recognized when they appear as the frame for descriptions of cultural practices. The latter can be seen in anthropologists’ innovations on the preceding, more philosophical/social-theoretic frameworks. To take two representative examples, Ortner (1984:148) presented the maxim that “society and history. . . are governed by organizational and evaluative schemes. . . within institutional, symbolic, and material forms”; and Wolf (1990:586-7) articulated an elaborate notion of social structure and power largely outside of the hands of agents. Yet, in moving beyond the social-theoretic frameworks, normativity itself is seldom examined in the anthropological cases. Few examine the cultural production of the particular forms of normativity themselves, which regiment or organize relatively more substantive areas of practice. This question about the cultural production of normativity in Wales, then, is what raises the issue of the recognizability of recognition. It is only by communicating something about the recognizability of recognition that normativity becomes open to empirical investigation. However, I do feel that many aspects about the recognizability of recognition are not themselves easily rendered into rich ethnographic description and occasionally have to be grasped more abstractly.

A Stance on Normativity

Although I began my dissertation research anchored in my interests in the social uses of Wales’ indigenous past in the present, I quickly saw NATIONALISM as the broad set of phenomena my research needed to address before I could grapple with the problem of cultural identity in the past or present. NATIONALISM is not the primary key to understanding everyday practices in
Wales. That is because everyday practices admit an infinite number of perspectival frames, and there might not be any single “primary” key to everyday practices. However, the rubric of NATIONALISM is the first key an outsider investigator is likely to recognize in observing broad social and cultural identities in Wales—emerging even out of the mouths of youths like Tom. In this sense, the subject-matter of NATIONALISM can be called a discourse because it maintains coherence across gaps of time and settings even while this sort of “theme” admits different kinds of expressions, evaluations, and more and less prevalent orientations toward it that operate situationally on talk and other action. Nationalism was so recognizable to me and, undoubtedly, is recognizable to residents of Wales in this sense of being a thematic cultural feature of life in Wales. That is, it is recognizable for its recognizability, without which it could not perform a thematic function.

Anthropologists tend to focus on the cultural description of such identity practice, but I am most interested in how these different modes of expression, representation, and belongingness emerge, rather than in what they are. I privilege the questions: How are such meanings organized? How are such acts and processes organized? I examine these how-processes by making a philosophical assumption: Whatever might be the metaphysics of cultural processes—most centrally, the process of constructing social reality—there subsists a normative regime that organizes the discourse context for national identity. This philosophical assumption about a normative regime is added to the article of faith that this regime warrants description. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, this dissertation describes a number of varying and sometimes conflicting, meaningful forms of local normative regimes, which I refer to (in the concluding chapter) as “cultural modalities”.
If social actors deem identity practices to be generally unconstrained, but also recognize a regimenting system of normative values, the marking out of cultural space for one’s sense of cultural or national continuity suggests we can describe two different, but interrelated layers. In Wales, as in other places, the line between the constraining regime and ordinary identity practice is blurred. Also, the regimenting norms are naturalized and seldom in focus. Through ethnographic research, however, it is possible to identify analytically two distinct, if interrelated, domains of cultural life that conform to this abstract description. This dissertation investigates this analytic space of the claim for which these two planes of ethnographic description—the space of generally unconstrained identity practices and a regimenting system of normative values—are local realities.

I maintain that, even if such an investigation focuses on rather abstract levels of culture and society, such a project of substantiation warrants the designation of “ethnography”. I propose, for this dissertation, placing the primary focus on the internal organization of normative regimes in Wales, rather than using these regimes as descriptive frames for something else or focusing solely on the local, cultural description of normative structures. To do so in an intelligible way, however, requires a theory-bound, methodological frame for—or, at the least, a statement of—the stance I take towards normativity as subject-matter, which I make here at the outset. My rationale for focusing on such an abstract, even hypothetical, level, however, must have a frame. I find the supporting frame in an analogy to language.

As many have observed in the study of language use, the normative regime in language production is not best seen as a set of laws that structure behavior (e.g., as in Chomsky’s language acquisition device). Yet, there are many suggestions and no general consensus as to how best to describe—or, better perhaps, to provide a theoretical explanation of—the arbitrary
normative regime of language expression. My own preference is the figure of a game, since
games can be organized variably in more or less constrained ways. The implication I draw is not
that, by analogy, there is a game at the level of sociocultural life and a rulebook that explains it.
Rather, to put it simply: There are two levels at which games are taking place.  

In the Euro-American study of language, scholars make a division between description
and action (as constructed by the conflicting interests of analytic philosophers like Bertrand
Russell versus sociolinguists like William Labov), and also between structure and practice (as
constructed by the conflicting interests of the camps of de Saussure and Chomsky versus
anthropologists like Dell Hymes and William Hanks). In either analysis, the latter term—
action/practice—has tended to be privileged in anthropological discussions. While I do not
reject that emphasis, I would privilege the contrast between two levels in the image of language
given by Louis Hjelmslev, which seems most relevant to national and cultural identity. This is
the contrast between the instruments of expression and meaningful forms.

The meanings that social actors more or less consciously associate with language use—
whether words, lilting prosody, incomprehensible jargon, descriptions, insulting remarks—all
depend on a dimension that is itself stratified into a number of basic, underlying forms:
phonemes (e.g., /z/), syllables (DOGS), and other expressive unit-types (such as foot and tone
group). The latter dimension, in contrast to meanings, is the set of resources by which people
express language as manifest meaningful forms. Stratification at the underlying level of
instruments of expression, as well as at the level of the more accessible (interpretable) meanings,
leads to complexity in the building blocks of expression and, ultimately, suggests an abstract
description of language use. This dissertation is primarily concerned with the analogue to this

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8 One of these is at the visible level of meaningful forms, while the other is at the hidden level outside of general
awareness (as a cryptotype, to use Whorf’s (1945) term).
means of expression in language use and identity: the means of expression of that sort of identity practice which is keyed to nationalism and national identity. As with language (e.g., grammatical principles), the basic building blocks of such identity practice are not always (and almost never are) in social actors’ consciousnesses.

Certain combinations of sounds might be arbitrary, but their normative use in producing meanings creates the “reality” of right or wrong combinations. Such motivation at the level of meaning, despite an arbitrariness at the level of expression, subsists for everyday practices in relation to national identity, analogous to the phonetics of language practice and the structured motivations of word-meanings. Similarly, one can find segments of Welsh society that do not all agree about their cultural affinities in relation to the nation, but there is a common perception in Wales that differences between the Welsh and the English go deeper than the forms (e.g., the use of a common ethnic or national name for the Welsh). These differences are part of the social reality of cultural and national belonging.

The Surface Effects of Normativity: Cultural Submergence

To recall my earlier statement, my stance on normativity might suggest that there is a game at the level of sociocultural life and a rulebook or grammar that explains it. However, I would reiterate that this is not the case. There are simply two levels at which games are taking place. This trope of games is useful because it highlights the active use of meanings by social actors in the face of rule-like norms—norms that themselves can become subject to active use, and thence removed or modified in interaction. I think of the pertinent normative regime in Wales as the game inside the game that everyone typically knows about. When rendered with more ethnographic details, this normative regime can be seen to resemble a game that is part of
social life. We discover the norm-generating game by seeing its effects: the playing of a game everyone knows about, which depends on the norm-generating game.

The game everyone knows about is characterized by something very like what, on a smaller scale and in the rubric of kinship, traditional anthropology might have called a system of “moieties”. That is, people in Wales can recognize (and orient themselves accordingly to) two fundamentally different kinds of (national) identification and expression. Some attempts (e.g., Owen 1960) have been made to reveal such bipolarities in Wales by means of the local concept of a “buchedd”, but this has been directed at the contrast between two sorts of lifestyle within community locales in Wales: a traditional Welsh sort of lifestyle centered on chapel community and a less respectable lifestyle dichotomy centered on the pub (See Chapter Five for more on this concept.). Community locales are not the same as the larger Welsh, national community.

The two kinds of national identity with which I am concerned differ in how people of each orientation conceive of Welsh modernity/-ies in relation to an indigenous complex of practices and cultural heritage in the present. Those who do not participate in the community associated with the indigenous language code—and the associated “consciousness” of belonging—do not insinuate that the idea of an identity lurking in “native” Wales is a mere figment of the imagination. Instead, they express an academic or cultural-democratic concern with representation. They will suggest that such a narrow scope would force other lifeways out of whatever image of Wales is co-imagined. Across Wales, it is clear that this latter group is dominant, but at smaller geographic scales (business meetings and villages) the reverse might be true. Consequently, I should mention some aspects of this national situation that highlights the “politics” at play in this cultural field.
“Political” is frequently used for contexts in which there are people who belong to recognizable blocs and who, from such positions, vie for resources. By “political”, I am extending the meaning to include blocs that might not be recognizable to people outside the cultural milieux of Wales. Within Wales, everyone would recognize the bloc of so-called nationalists, in contrast to those who try to deemphasize indigeneity and nationalism. One consequence of this dilemma of identity is that those who do not belong to either of these blocs are caught between living their lives in one of two shapes or forms of Welshness, and the normalizing political context that seems to determine (and thus, people actually respond to) what are appropriate ways of being Welsh in light of this polarized, or binomial Welshness. A second consequence is that members of the subordinate bloc, participants in the complex of Cymraeg language and cultural practices, live the legacy of a conquered nation. In asserting the legitimacy of their sense of national identity, they contribute to and confront reactions mobilized by the larger majority which does not actively seek Welsh identity in the primordial past of indigeneity.

Those who do not participate in a community organized around the indigenous language either ignore, or reject any focus on, the substantive aspect of that complex of language and cultural practices because they think such a focus would be reductivistic. Members of the participant bloc feel they are unable to express that substantive core to those who do not participate in it and who do not position themselves within it. People who would say they belong to this community mark out cultural space for their sense of continuity in such a way that does not require or enable them to make any substantive cultural claims. I call this condition of cultural production in the north-west corner of Wales—intended or otherwise—the submergence of culture. It is the central phenomenon on which I focus in this dissertation.
This situation of cultural submergence is common to practically any locale that traditional anthropologists established as their research sites, as well as to the consciousness in which national affinity was the product of more or less deliberate processes of state-building. These ongoing dynamics of expression, representation, and belongingness in Wales are like any culturally salient identity practice in which social actors believe such identity practice is generally unconstrained, but (on reflection) can also easily identify a “regime” or set of attitudes that heavily constrains identity practices. While certainly not unique, the type of phenomenon I focus on involves features of social organization in Wales—features that are imagined and enacted in the rubric of “the nation”. The thematic dimension of “the nation” makes these features particularly and peculiarly political. In addition to raising the micro-political issue of “who decides”, the nation is political at a macro level.

The fact that certain practices do not require or enable participants in both Welsh indigeneity and modernity to make any substantive cultural claims is the product of a national political context. Therefore, it differs from many of the kinds of identity practice alongside it in Wales (e.g., gender or race), as well as being different from its correlates in other territorial units (e.g., Quebec). That is, it shapes the imagining and construction of social institutions in explicit state-oriented dimensions local to Wales, as well as implicit dimensions that can also invoke controversy on occasion. Unlike identity practices keyed to the rubric of, say, sex and gender, national identity practices are political not only in terms of how individuals are positioned within a social category, but also in terms of who has a recognizable right to membership within something that has long been associated with a recognizable geographical territory.
“Deeper” Social Reality

This dissertation is an account of the ongoing cultural dialectic in identity politics of language and community between the two major positions of language-cultural identity in Wales. (To recall: Those who do participate in a cultural complex that is bound, through everyday banal practices, to the indigenous language know in their heart of hearts that this community represents their national identity. Those who do not participate in it feel that a focus on the source of identity in the daily practice within that community would, if taken as directly representative of an empirical Welsh identity, misrepresent and overdetermine perceptions of Welsh identity.) In particular, I draw attention to the cultural construction, within the confines of that dialectic, of a thin line between “politics”—or practices of identity that some perceive as controversial—and ordinary and taken-for-granted culture. The dialectic provides the structure of motives for imagining that there is such a line between politics and culture, however (in)flexible. At the same time, the tendency to organize cultural performances differentially in relation to the ground on either side of that shifting line (re)produces the dialectic.

Since that thin line is itself the aspect of cultural life that is most instrumental to the (re)production of the cultural dialectic, there is a (non-vicious) circularity in my account. Yet, I have not intended for my readers to lend my construct of this cultural dialectic the status of an empirical fact; rather, the construct captures numerous phenomena that reveal an absence in Wales. That is, the cultural dialectic—lacking any known resolution or synthesis in Wales multiplicitous sociocultural life—acts as a barrier to identifying those resources for Welsh identity that are (putatively) to be found in the indigenous complex of practices and cultural heritage. In other words, an account of those resources for Welsh identity that are (putatively) to
be found in the Cymraeg language-cultural complex age is barred by the fact that a substantive content for Welshness is not recognizable or visible. Because Welshness is politicized in the way(s) this dissertation describes, there is a part of Welsh culture that is submerged.

To focus on the submergence of indigeneity in Wales, one must first confront the cultural fact that the idea of nationalism is the most salient category in the context of national identity. My use of “nationalism”, here, is not a reference to any set of activities and attitudes of actual people. This term, in my use of it, denotes the idea of such activities and attitudes and, more importantly, the role of this idea of such activities and attitude in creating the evaluative framework in which discussions of national identity take place. However, the complementary nature of nationalism and cultural submergence of indigeneity should not be equated with local conceptions of a mutual contrast between English and Welsh, or of a duality between those who would lionize or minimize the resources of indigenous language and culture.

While I do not disregard the seeming dichotomy—of two ways of relating the Welsh modernity to an indigenous complex of practices and cultural heritage in the present—it is not my focus for two reasons. First, it conceals more significant processes, as already noted. Secondly, it appears by means of labels and categories for other people, more so than in what ethnographers would find in actual practices of social actors. I consider a focus on these (or any parallel) two positions to be a preoccupation with a dimension that is, at best, the mere surface of culture—a preoccupation that misleadingly lends a static quality to a deeper process of cultural dialectics. Such a focus on visible designs “on the surface” allows one to miss the processes that are part of the warp and weave of social life. Yet, it cannot be denied, a dichotomy with two “sides”, often glossed as Welsh nationalist and Anglocentric cosmopolitan, is an ever present “reality” of life in Wales.
In this context, the ever-present frame of nationalism has supported an obsession with subject-positions on the “surface” of cultural life, which typically appear in the contrast between nationalists and, for want of a better word, cosmopolitans. This gives the impression that use of these positions serves much as does a life preserver for those who cannot swim. If one rejects that polarized superficial “reality”, as a whole, then one can better understand a “deeper” reality of the cultural dynamics of sociocultural contexts related to national identity. The submergence of one “subordinate” set of social networks and lifestyles cannot be explained, or even described, by giving attention solely to attitudes that are so informed, as a totality, by the topics of nationalism. To answer the questions of whether and how one identity of one cultural community is submerged, requires description of discourses organized by a dialectical set of perspectives on the history/historicity, cultural heritage, and languages of Wales.

I try to clear away these habits of thinking through analyses of the contexts in which a way of thinking about national identity, common to both orientations, moves people to privilege one or the other fundamental orientations to Welsh identity. While it is part of the cultural topography, I reject the underlying, popular, polarizing assumptions—according to which every person chooses between two ways of relating the Welsh modernity to an indigenous complex of practices and cultural heritage in the present. Labels like “small-minded nationalist” and “English colonialist”, “cosmopolitan” and “Cymro glan [literally, pure Welshperson]”, are obviously part of the discourse about national identity. Nevertheless, the salience of the discourse on and about nationalism is constituted by “deeper” cultural processes than the positions and labels on the “surface”. The same is true, by implication, of the submergence of indigeneity in Wales.
Communities of Debate

The impression of a nation divided between those who do and those who do not participate in the community associated with the indigenous language code ubiquitous; as much so as the discourse of and about nationalism. Published research has not made clear what conditions, or shapes, this internal boundary of what I call a “community-of-debate”. To have an identity of either of the two major orientations requires people to commit, in practice, to particular types and meanings of interactions and particular ways in which everyday life is organized. These are what I call “endorsements” that people make in everyday life. This dissertation should not be perceived, and was not intended, as an attempt at a systematic investigation of the acts and ways in which people commit to particular types and meanings of interactions and particular ways in which everyday life is organized. In such an investigation, a focus on endorsements would replace a focus on surface positions. That investigation of a positive question about the submerged part—rather than the critical question I do address—would require an ethnographic investigation that can begin only at that point at which this dissertation ends.

In navigating the boundary between these two orienting attitudes, people of both positions in Wales endorse an axiomatic inference. To focus for a moment on it, I put this “dominant implication” in block formatting:

To accept that the indigenous language of Wales and related traditions supply special resources for identity is to be committed to the view that the indigenous language and related traditions have a special claim on identity for all Welsh people.
In this dissertation, I argue that this dominant implication is what focuses people on the discursive/ideological surface positions to the detriment of recognition of, and communication about, the special resources for Welsh identity themselves, which the indigenous language might offer.

Once again, there is an unavoidable circularity, and the operation of the dominant implication of Welsh ideology returns us to a point I introduced above, that point of the cultural construction of a thin line between “politics”—or practices of identity that some perceive as controversial—and what is taken for granted by people, regardless of their affinity toward either cultural orientation, as ordinary features of life in Wales. The dialectic of the two cultural orientations provides the structure of motives for imagining that there is such a line between politics and culture, while the tendency to organize cultural performances differentially in relation to the ground on either side of that shifting line (re)produces the dialectic itself. As a result of the inherent sociopolitical problems tied to the discourse of national identity and nationalism in Wales, and in the absence of a coherent image of a consensual national identity, no public discourse has emerged that provides an explicit form of discourse or vocabulary for self-description of indigeneity in Wales.

Again, this dissertation does not provide historiographic and ethnographic evidence for this condition—of the absence of a public discourse that provides an explicit form of discourse or vocabulary for self-description of indigeneity in Wales. Rather, I treat this more or less stable dialectical “state”—in the relation between two cultural orientations—as the presenting condition of life in Wales. It is one that provides the structure for further investigation. This dissertation, then, is not an investigation of the condition itself, but of the available resources for a potential—but not currently developed—explicit form of discourse, tantamount to a rich lexicon for self-
description. The scarcity of these resources, it turns out, is also symptomatic of the focal
historical and cultural dialectic, insofar as the resources fall under a regime of cultural
management, within which the world is divided up between what is controversial and “political”,
versus what is banally “cultural”. The next chapter addresses the internal relations between
normal (academic) views within cultural and linguistic anthropology, and also normative (lay
and academic) views on the two official languages of Wales. In doing so, the next chapter
begins to describe the line between POLITICS and CULTURE, so-recognized in Wales.
PART II

IDENTITY AND POLITICAL PRAGMATICS
CHAPTER TWO

◄ ZONES OF LANGUAGE, IDENTITY, AND SELF ►

For any speaker, if it is a given language, it is at once either more or less his own or more or less someone else’s, and either more or less cosmopolitan or more or less parochial—a borrowing or a heritage; a passport or a citadel. The question of whether, when, and for what purposes to use it is thus also the question of how far a people should form itself by the bent of its genius and how far by the demands of its times.

The tendency to approach the “language issue” from the linguistic standpoint, homemade or scientific, has somewhat obscured this fact. (Clifford Geertz, “After the Revolution” (1973:241))

THE NORTH WALES PUB TALE

By taking a different look at the Gog’ Trê n, one from the other side of the border, many of the cultural tensions in this broad context come into sharper view. From that vantage, the “culture” of north Wales is made visible in terms of how some English people describe people in north Wales; that is, as xenophobic. I illustrate this vantage by means of a narrative genre I call “the North Wales Pub Tale”.

For people who visit north Wales, the A55 across coastal north Wales from Flint, through LLandudno and Bangor, is probably the normal means of entering the region from England. The implications of using this route are several, most important of which is that the A55 allows a motorist to have no contact with local people. If travelling by personal car, one can admire the natural beauty of north Wales’ ocean views and mountain vistas without having any personal encounters to indicate how differently nationhood is experienced in the local places to either side of one’s vehicle. The insularity of a car, of course, is not the only means by which visitors can block influences on the imagination of life in Wales. In fact, there is one famous short narrative that conveys the “strangeness” or remoteness of Wales without requiring more than superficial contact with “the natives”.

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The “North Wales Pub Tale” has a remarkable social life at the imaginary border between Wales and England (and other regions in the world that are associated strongly with the English-language). I was told the North Wales Pub Tale on a number of occasions. A kind English lady told me the tale while bringing me back from a train station to her bed-and-breakfast in Manchester. A man in a Liverpool pub told me the tale at some point in conjunction with a tirade that the Welsh had stolen all the English mountains. An English stranger on a train platform at Manchester Piccadilly station even offered a theory about it after telling it to me, which I recount below. A headteacher from north Wales told me the tale in quotations (i.e., as indirect recorded speech) and referred to it as a myth concocted by English people who know little or nothing of Cymraeg-speaking Wales.

When it was recounted by English persons, these speakers always told me the tale in the realist mode (i.e., as something that actually happened, the truth of which is beyond reproach) and from a third-person perspective—as an experience of their brother, friend, or other intimate—never in the first-person perspective. I also heard it many times in the critical mode told by Cymraeg speakers who found the tale greatly annoying and indicative of what they saw as cultural-linguistic imperialism. I have even been told the tale by an ethnographer who worked among laborers in Ireland and Northern Ireland while we were both in the US. I call him “Peter Tell”. Surprisingly, Tell recounted the North Wales Pub Tale in the realist mode and from the first-person perspective; therefore, it is worthwhile to recount it as he told it to me.

Peter Tell had been driving in north Wales in the mid-1980s—a period which he characterized in terms of the Welsh arsonists who burned English vacation residences at that time. During the 1980s, he informed me, there was a large number of such cases of arson by Welsh activists (but that number has been greatly exaggerated, having become an urban myth of
its own, of which only a relatively few instances can be documented). Tell’s car broke down and so he walked to a pub to make a phone call to request roadside assistance. Upon entering the pub, Tell noticed that everyone had switched from using English to speaking Cymraeg as soon as Tell stepped inside the pub. This is the gist of the North Wales Pub Tale: Those who can speak the Welsh language will do so only—or can be depended upon to “switch to Cymraeg”—when an English person stumbles upon them “at home” among themselves, where they will have been speaking English.

In the abstract, the tale evokes for me Hollywood scenes of the Old West in North America in which the antagonist or protagonist walks into a saloon. In those scenes, every occupant in the saloon stops talking and turns to look at the figure in the doorway. There might even be a visual framing of the bartender frozen in place while drying a glass or pouring a drink. My own, many attempts to determine the languages being used in pubs before I entered them were consistently foiled by insulated windows and door fittings, as well as the common, rural Welsh building construction, which employs two- to three-foot wide walls. It is almost never possible to hide within earshot, but out of sight once one enters a “public house”. Since I knew also from experience on many buses that it is extremely common to hear Cymraeg and English casually spoken in public spaces, and code-switching too, I found the tale to be a virtually pure case of fabrication as an emblem of English persons’ feelings of alienation in north Wales. I believe my everyday experiences with social life in north Wales immunized me and differentiated me from those who told the tale in the realist mode.

Before I heard Peter Tell’s version, I had never encountered a realist, first-person version of the tale and was faced with either accepting the truth of the myth, which violated my first-hand impressions of Welsh society, or questioning Tell’s credibility. The choice was more
vexing because of Tell’s professional identity: Not only were accurate observations of cultural scenes the essence of his trade, but he was very familiar with clashes between the British-centric vantage and viewpoints less aligned to the UK state. My best guess is that, while standing on the threshold, he could not tell the difference between English spoken with a thick Venedotian accent (a dialect of north-west Wales) and use of Cymraeg. He likely heard the tale at some point before or after the event and used it as a schema in making sense of, or later recollecting that moment during which he stood looking in at the pub scene.

I seldom pushed those who propagated what I considered a yarn. If met with my somewhat concealed skepticism, some persons recounting the narrative as a fact would produce a “triangulation” of several confirming, third-person perspectives. Occasionally, encountering realist perspectives, I have asked if the teller thought the tale was actually true, which always met with an affirmative response. When I asked for additional confirming details, I did so gently up until the point that I would be expressing my disbelief in the person recounting the narrative (almost always a stranger) and suggesting they were telling falsehoods.

In July 2003, after arriving at the airport in Manchester, in one of those situations where going the wrong way puts one in the right direction, I wound up at a station one stop on the other side from Wales. While I was standing on the train platform in Manchester Piccadilly, I struck up a conversation with a local man who was curious about my travels to Wales. As if we had reached item Number Three on some public hospitality program for travelers, he told me the North Wales Pub Tale. I confess I might have said (with ulterior ethnographic intent) that I was looking forward to going to a pub when I reached north Wales.

Feigning ignorance all the way through my interlocutor’s tale of his relative’s experiences in a north Wales pub, I asked the stranger about the significance of the tale. He
thought it represented xenophobia among people of north Wales. According to him, the Welsh only use Cymraeg to offend the English or keep them at a distance. I told him of my experiences that people in north Wales will do the opposite. That is, they switch from Cymraeg to English if there is someone in a group whose first language is not Cymraeg. I asked him how these two representations could both be true. In the north Wales pub tale, pub regulars are thought to switch to Cymraeg from English. “Why wouldn’t they start out in Welsh to begin with?” I asked. “Why would they be speaking English in the first place?” He replied matter of factly: “Well, it’s easier for them, isn’t it? Welsh is a very difficult language”.

It is possible that some people believe they hear that language in which they feel the most comfortable, until they learn otherwise. This would explain why so many English monolingual persons believe the occupants of north Wales pubs are speaking English before and then switch to Cymraeg upon learning a foreigner stands in the pub doorway. I find it doubly interesting in that, in contradiction to what I just wrote, when I heard anyone speaking just outside of my hearing range in north-west Wales, I often believed—assumed, that is—I could hear Cymraeg phonemes. On some of those occasions, I learned that it was a south Asian language and neither English nor Cymraeg.

Interestingly, linguistic anthropologists tend to find my doubts about the veridicality of the North Wales Pub Tale compelling, while a few cultural anthropologists find my skepticism amusing and perhaps indicative of a sympathy for Welsh national causes. Linguistic anthropologists are aware that all sorts of claims are made about language by those uninitiated with linguistic issues and those unfamiliar with particular cases of multilingualism. Typically, cultural anthropologists interpret the case of the North Wales Pub Tale in the keys of cultural logics, Foucauldian discourse, and mythopraxis. Linguistic anthropologists interpret the case in
the keys of language ideologies and (meta)pragmatic functions. The rationale for the divide between linguistic and cultural anthropologists in how they receive my accounts of the tale might be explained in terms of the greater salience the tale possesses for linguistic anthropologists: The explanation the man in Manchester Piccadilly gave is taken up as a theme in Laurie Bauer and Peter Trudgill’s introductory text, *Language Myths*. The response of the man on the Manchester Piccadilly train platform is Myth #7: “Some languages are harder than others”.

One cultural anthropologist with a personal background in Europe and first-hand experience in Wales pointed out to me how common it is in Europe for people to use more than one language. He went on to express his confusion at the political salience of language issues in Wales and at the obstinacy of Welsh language activists. While academics’ sentiments are not the primary focus of this dissertation, they are indicative of the paltry imaginational resources available to us for either making sense of something (i.e., interpreting) or analyzing (i.e., rendering into a matter amenable to cultural comparison), and my goal has been to do both.

These differences suggest something else, as well, about the mode of experience involved. Ethnographers who see little method in the minor politics of language use in Wales, like the English people who recounted the North Wales Pub Tale, never stay for long in Wales. This condition enables the sentiments of ethnographers and other social actors of this persuasion to privilege the British imagined community in a political or ethnic dimension—not because this is a reflection of their own language politics, but because they have no schema for understanding language politics regarding this corner of the world, nor any role for participating therein. Where Wales is concerned, the mandate to evaluate the significance of “the hold life has” (to use Malinowski’s ([1922]1961) turn of phrase) does not extend to recognition of the hold language has. Further, when ethnographers make such comments, the hold life has on these ethnographers
in relation to their own familiar language-scapes and to the dominant–subordinate system of languages in modern states goes unexamined.

By contrast, ethnographers who are preoccupied with language dwell for long periods of time within local politics of language, as do language activists. These linguistic anthropologists are aware, and at least implicitly critical, of the naturalization of modern “world” languages like British English, French, and Spanish. Nevertheless, their ethnographic lives inhabit the reality of social tensions that are not merely abstract relations between different language categories like Cymraeg and English, but are constructed through language choices and constituted by language identities.

When I left my home university for principal dissertation field research, I embraced the implication that language is often (always?) a central cultural concern in ethnography. However, I do not think I would have begun to question certain conventional assumptions about language without first trying to understand the activities (as opposed to categories or representations) of language politics in situ. It is a problem of description that led me to recognize a problem with theory. There is a large difference between recognizing the importance of language in a place where the politics of language become quite heated, and the bigger step of obtaining answers about the cultural and political significance of language practices in such a locale.

What I did not realize until I was home again is that virtually all things of significant cultural interest that I encountered in the field were predicated on some conception or another of a community; a community of language, but it was the relations of community that were of key importance. Language, in the sense of the language practices that linguistic anthropologists study, was the visible presence of that community, but the sense of cohesion that language lent to social interactions and perceptions of society—which enabled people to sense fissures, fractures,
and a moral code to resist, tolerate, or endorse—was the cohesion of putative communities, not the cohesion of language as conventionally understood. While I had moved from concerns with history instruction to concerns with language practices, it was yet another major step to the realization that, if I constructed my research problem in terms of language practices, this would misrepresent the sociocultural realities. My research problem was more properly centered in issues regarding the role of languages-as-symbols in the social constitution of the macro-form of domestic and voluntary association: communities. The politics of language and identity in Wales, then, is the politics over the recognition and production of communities.

The consequences of the politics of language and community make it difficult to produce a coherent image of a consensual national identity: None, apparently, would deny the compelling force of the discourse of nationalism (Thus, nationalism phenomena, for lay adherents and many scholars alike, bear a startling resemblance to phenomena of religious practices.). As a result, nationalism stands in for such a coherent image. I am concerned as much with this false promise of coherence that nationalism has, as with understanding its social uses. The region of the world in which this ongoing difficulty with coherence emerges, has long served as a site of struggles over identity. Today, some of those struggling with the idea of a Welsh identity are called or call themselves “nationalists” although their goals might have nothing to do with the state. That is, nationalism is figured in the public imagination as being about the country of Wales; as a preoccupation that might have as salient features the indigenous Welsh language, traditional Welsh practices, or historical relations between England and Wales; and typically includes a concern that Welsh culture or language is threatened.

The outcome of the discursive settings in north-west Wales (and beyond) is that any attempt to identify and put on display those special resources of the Cymraeg language-cultural
complex or to construct a national identity on its basis is branded, in the mainstream frame of perception, as an expression of a negatively valenced Welsh nationalism. This outcome perpetuates the conditions of language politics by motivating: 1) native speakers’ reticence to identify and put on display the special resources of Welsh identity to be found in the complex of Cymraeg language and culture, and 2) challenges to any articulation of national identity that highlights the complex of Cymraeg language and culture in the construction of the proprieties of belonging.

The phenomenon of the North Wales Pub Tale is an elaborate example of the way that difference is highly visible, while the principles of cultural engagement that organize such visibility are not merely difficult or impossible to see, but are located necessarily offstage in the production of difference. Thus, no empirical evidence can convince those who propagate the realist versions of the North Wales Pub Tale that it did not happen. The first-person realist version told by Peter Tell shows how persistent such a perspectival frame is. That trained ethnographer had worked in settings in northern Ireland that were (admittedly) largely monolingual, but nonetheless highly volatile in terms of a prominent cultural divide. Yet, he believed that everyone in a pub in north Wales switched from using English to speaking Cymraeg as soon as he stepped inside the pub. Even for that experienced ethnographer, the borders of familiarity and difference were constructed by his very presence. This persistently counter-empirical condition would seem to have no cure, but I suggest that making the underlying norms of consciousness and action central is one way to find empirical traction that is not purely fictional.
**THEORETICAL CONDITIONS**

**Pragmatic Functionality**

It should be no surprise that I have been unable to avoid the fact that race, ethnicity, nationalism, and language practices often intersect in questions about language identity. Wales is not an exception. The general fact of intersection is evident in the scholarly consideration of language *vis à vis* imagined communities—of both ethnopolitical and the language kinds community (by, for example, Kulick 1986, Silverstein 1998a, Bauman and Briggs 1990). The underlying analytic principles have come to be known under the rubrics of *iconization* and *indexicality*. “Indexicality” has a narrow and a broad meaning. The narrow meaning is synonymous with *deictics*, the prototypical example of which are pronouns. The broad meaning of *indexicality* sets aside the standard semantical interpretations of morphosyntactic units in favor of a myriad of kinds of linguistic functionality. It is in its broad significance that Silverstein’s (1976) concept of *indexicality* has achieved its widely recognized explicative power.

Silverstein’s image of functionality (1976) is key to understanding this use of *indexicality*. His image of functionality resulted in a replacement of the role that semantics has traditionally played in as an apparently context-free, conventional, cognitive framework for interpreting recurrent form-tokens—within models of language entertained in linguistic anthropology. The first type of functionality to replace traditional semantics—best represented in Malinowski’s (1923, 1935) notion that words have a pragmatic effect—was a “metapragmatic” capacity in language users for “computing/representing intents to perform effective, socially understood action with speech” (Silverstein 1987:28). This kind of expressive functionality—what Silverstein called “PRAGMATIC FUNCTION$_2$”—has its emblematic form in
Silverstein’s (1976, 2003) idea that there are non-referential categories of “pointings”—including acts of pointing to symbols of situational context (e.g., presence of mother-in-law), symbols of gender, symbols of linguistic community, symbols of epistemic or affective attitude.

The best strategy to approaching Silverstein’s model of language use is to start with the pivotal phenomenon that stands in contrast to Silverstein’s conception of traditional linguistics. That phenomenon is the directness that certain signs have to its communicative situation. This turns out to be Silverstein’s central discovery: There are ways of signifying meaning that involve neither context-independent, abstract description (what Silverstein has called semanticity), nor an appeal to the words, categories, and arrangements in terms of which traditional linguists analyzed them. The difficulty in formulating this principle comes from the entrenched nature of the received terms, the ordinary lack of awareness among speakers of the roles that performative markers in communication play, and the lack of any convenient terms that serve in contrast.

According to Silverstein, linguists have traditionally constructed proposition-like expressions according to what he called the traditional “metalanguage of constituency”, characterized by:

“a description of formal arrangements of units, in the familiar metalanguage of constituency (hierarchical linear combinations of structural units), and with a description of the referential-and-predicational potential of such constituencies, in the familiar metalanguage of their logical or denotational [sic] sense (based on implication, synonymy, antonymy, taxonomy, and similar relationships of propositional form). (Silverstein 1987a:19)

Silverstein attacked this traditional view of how linguistic forms operate functionally in terms of two related concepts, semanticity and reference, but gave non-traditional interpretations to them. For Silverstein, the first is a linguistic habit of abstraction—a detachment from, and lack of direct contact with, communicative events and their contextual variables. “Reference”, in
Silverstein’s usage, stands for that quality of traditional linguistics in virtue of which meanings are said to be attached to “hierarchical linear combinations of structural units”, in the grammarians’ metalanguage of constituency.\(^1\)\(^2\)

Ultimately, it is impossible to isolate semanticity and referentiality in Silverstein’s usage because they arise as an attempt to analyze a tradition of semantico-referential metasemantics. Silverstein noted that traditional linguists had identified indexical expressions that had general functions that were stable event-to-event, but whose uses were only intelligible in terms of the context they were used—which he dubbed “hybrid” signs (non-semantic, but referential, in his use of these terms). Consequently, it appears as if Silverstein’s concepts of semanticity and referentiality are somehow independent of each other. However, the symbiosis of these two concepts is so strong in Silverstein’s model that he wrote that the “abstract reference or description as a property of speech, can be called SEMANTICITY” (1995[1976]:190).\(^3\) What is

\(^1\) In using “reference” to indicate the semantic representational functionality of description more generally, Silverstein was apparently influenced by Jakobson’s ([1960]1990) sense of “referent”—which is better captured by the psychological term of intentionality (i.e., aboutness—not to be confused with “doing something on purpose”; see Brentano [1889]1995; Husserl [1900/1]2001), since Jakobson’s usage also draws, in part, on the Saussurean **signified** aspect of signs, for which there may or may not be an existing object that the signifier is about. Jakobson ([1960]1990) elaborated “a set (**Einstellung**) toward the referent” as “an orientation toward the CONTEXT” and as “the so-called REFERENTIAL, ‘denotational,’ ‘cognitive’ function”. Here, the use of “cognitive” (itself in quotation marks) alludes to Brentano’s notion of intentionality, and the use of “denotational” (also in quotation marks) links Jakobson’s use of “referent” to that category used by de Saussure’s and Benveniste’s commentators.

\(^2\) In focusing on linguists’ use of *reference* and *predication*, Silverstein neglected the deep, philosophical problems that gave rise to two, such distinct concepts. I would go so far as to say that the failure of philosophy to reconcile the two functions of reference/extensionalism and predication/intensionalism was so momentous that it brought an end to philosophy of language as a productive field. It is this failure that drives much of the debates in philosophy of mind, which absorbed the bulk of the problems of philosophy of language (see Burge 1992). In this connection, Silverstein connected *reference* and *predication* together and marked their reconstruction with a single, conjunctive lexical item because the former provides the (idea of a) putative connection between lexical expressions and things in the world that those lexical expressions purportedly denote, while the latter provides the (idea of an) immutable, abstract mentalistic domain of meaning. It is only by separating reference from predication that one begins to see how traditional philosophy of language understood representation to work. Since linguistic anthropology as a field of practice has not differentiated the concept of representation from semanticity and reference-(and-predication), it simply is not clear how indexicality is supposed to work in terms of beliefs, significances, and things.

\(^3\) Silverstein (1985a, 1987a) came to call the functionality of *reference-and-predication* by the short-hand term, “denotation”, since he located such operation on “the denotational plane”. Denotation, for Silverstein, is a focus on the value of grammatical constituents as representing, or standing-for things in the world (i.e., linguistic “referentiality) and a detachment from, and lack of direct contact with, communicative events and their contextual variables (i.e., Silverstein’s “semanticity”).
needed is a third basic concept of traditional grammarians: the idea that grammatical constituents have the capacity to stand for something—traditionally, this is called "representation" and is the concept at the center of Peircean semiotics. The concept of representation overlaps both targets of Silverstein’s criticism.

Nevertheless, it is the directness of features of talk to the ongoing communicative context and the sense that certain signs point in a way that could not be given a dictionary definition that inspires Silverstein’s novel use of the term, “index”. “Pure index” is Silverstein’s term for “features of speech” that “signal some particular value of one or more contextual variables” “independent[ly] of any referential speech event that may be occurring” (Silverstein 1995[1976]:201). Of such an “index”, Silverstein gave the example of a suffix “–s” on the inflected verb “of every non-quotative utterance spoken by a [culturally-recognized] female individual”, to mark the gender of this kind of speaker in Muskogean languages (1995[1976]:202). Rather than “contribut[ing] to the referential speech event” by signaling

4 The challenge of distinguishing among the three categories is made considerable by a Saussurean deflation of classical reference into Silverstein’s concept of “denotation”. Silverstein’s concept of “denotation” conflates traditional semantic values—moving from the objectivist platform, on which reference was traditionally posited, to a mentalistic framework of ideas. In addition, his use of the term, “index”, as traditionally used for deictic signs that involve traditional reference—for signs that relate directly to things in the field of discourse—does not make for clarity. The epistemological context is decidedly unclear since Silverstein uses “index” primarily to demonstrate that features of context are interactionally/pragmatically involved in talk (i.e., its pure form, in Silverstein’s parlance), rather than to mark out intellectual space for taking about a connection or causality between signs and objects (i.e., as indexes operate in Peirce’s parlance). In the linguistic strain of semiotics, signs perform actions (index), while in Peircean semiotics, intelligences perform actions (representation).

5 N.B.: Since linguistic anthropology as a field of practice has not differentiated the concept of representation from semanticity and reference(-and-predication), it simply is not clear how indexicality is supposed to work in terms of beliefs, significances, and things (i.e., consciousness). It is only by separating reference from predication that one begins to see the way in which traditional philosophers of language understood representation. In particular, by focusing on linguists’ use of reference and predication, Silverstein neglected the deep, philosophical problems that gave rise to these two distinct concepts. I would go so far in emphasizing such a difference as to say that the failure of Twentieth-Century philosophy to reconcile the two functional ranges of reference/extensionalism and predication/intensionalism was so momentous that it brought an end to philosophy of language as a productive field. It is that failure that drives much of the debates in philosophy of mind, which inherited the bulk of the problems of philosophy of language (see Burge 1992).

6 For Peirce, an index was equivalent to the prototypical concept of a genuine clue as is typically imagined in the detective genre of popular fiction. I would argue that Silverstein’s (1976, 1979; cf. Burks 1954 and Jakobson 1957) use of “indexicality” borrows as much from de Saussure as from Peirce’s discussions of indexical sign-relations, and largely ignores Peirce’s architectonic of logic-privileging semiotics.
abstract semantic values—by way of either structural grammatical categories (e.g., the semantico-syntactic category of COUNTABLE) or lexical significance—pure indexes “signal the structure of the speech context” (Silverstein 1995[1976]:201). Silverstein added the construct of PURE INDEX to the constructs of 1) semantic categories of REFERENCE (e.g., in Silverstein’s sense of “reference”) and 2) categories of language use that directly link to contextual features, but nonetheless have stable meanings; that is HYBRID INDEXES, which are prototypically represented by deictics. This addition rounded off the picture Silverstein envisioned of semiotics as bearing on language use.7

In his “Metapragmatic Discourse and Metapragmatic Function” (1993), Silverstein began exposition of this revolutionary perspective in linguistics by first defining semantic categories of reference. These have “denotative” features, in the two senses of this word; that is, “denotative” as in his usage of representational description (i.e., a kind of meaning that privileges semantics over context and interaction) and as in the more narrow usage of philosophical tradition of non-designative reference (i.e., referential projections of language that do not name, but merely make reference to things). He then distinguished pure indexes from hybrid indexes:

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7 The equivocation regarding sign-object and sign-significance in this picture of semiotics makes it difficult to see what the essential difference would be between a non-semantic “index” and a referential (hybrid) “index”. Generally speaking, Silverstein did not give examples of semantic “indexes”, but instead of non-referential “indexes” (i.e., “pure indexes”). This is because almost all examples of genuinely non-referential indexes involve a direct connection to context, and hence are also non-semantic (in Silverstein’s senses of “semantic” and “referential”). Conversely, there are cases of “indexical” signs that are non-semantic, referential “indexes”, but no obvious cases of semantic, non-referential “indexes”.

Thus, it seems clear that Silverstein’s example of a so-called non-referential (or pure) “index”, the Muskogean suffix “-s”, is a non-semantic sign (again, in Silverstein’s sense of “semantic”), rather than a non-“referential” sign, as he called it. As a “pure index” in immediate connection to a communicative event, the Muskogean suffix “-s” does not describe anything by way of lexical features that lack a direct connection to the present communicative event. It is not a lexical expression that stands descriptively for something in the general way that “this morning’s rosy dawn” does. It bears directly on the communicative situation it is a part of, and this places it in direct contrast to signs that instantiate Silverstein’s concept of semanticity. That is, it is a covert marker of meaning. Hence, it does describe, in some sense of describe, the speaker as a Muskogean female and, for that reason, it can be taken as analogous to a traditional, grammatical constituent that operates in terms of Silverstein’s concept of reference-and-predication.
We should thus distinguish between INHERENTLY METAPRAGMATIC semanticoreferential forms, lexicon and structural elements, the denotational values of which qua constituents of any grammatical expressions in which they occur characterize pragmatic facts of one sort or another, and denotational explicitness in the metapragmatic-pragmatic functional relationship germane to some interactional-textual segment. The former type of signs, e.g., DEICTICS (indexical-denotations) such as English I, you, here (: there), this (: that), now (: then) and their equivalents in all languages, etc., denote [signify] by virtue of coding a characterization computible in terms of pragmatic facts about contextualized use of a token of the form, which facts they presuppose/entail in particular ways on each use. They can thus always contribute to denotational text in a particular way. In any particular interactional text, however, they may not figure among the latter, denotationally explicit machinery in the instance (the nonregimenting role of deixis in many rituals comes immediately to mind). (Silverstein 1993:39-40)

If one avoids equivocation regarding the sign-object and sign-significance (à la de Saussure), one can see that Silverstein was concerned with three sign-variables. One of these includes features of talk that have immediate relations to communicative events through a link to a particular value of one or another contextual relation (or not). Where a feature of talk is not immediately related to a communicative event in this way, it is easier to assimilate it to semanticity, but to do so would be to ignore the pragmatic “component that is motivated only at the level of speech acts” (Silverstein 1995[1976]:218). Even forms of communication that seem to be wholly inert and indifferent to context has a “socially constituted ‘task[s]’ which speech behavior accomplishes or ‘performs’” (Silverstein 1995[1976]:213).

A second sign-variable includes formal markers of significance. This might be a lexeme such as GOAT or THAT, or it might be a gesture that literally points to something in the spatiotemporal context. Thirdly, there are functional instances of expression significance in some shape or another. Traditional grammarians believed any grammatical constituent acted as a marker of expression significance in the shape of semantico-referential content—indeed, this was their prototypical emblem of meaning (i.e., REFERENTIAL FUNCTION). Silverstein has suggested that
pragmatic indexes act as functional markers of significance that signal pragmatic effects—*his prototypical emblem of meaning* (i.e., PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONALITY).  

*Iconicity* is a kissing cousin of *indexicality*. Iconization is the process by which people link categories under which a social group falls (or images of that social group) to categories under which a language or stylistic practice falls (or images of that language/stylistic practice). Persons naturalize a perceived relationship between a language practice and a grouping of people and, thus, iconization is important for identifying the mechanisms people use to differentiate groups of people. As Gal (2005:26) put it:

“One key aspect of ideologies of differentiation is that they pick out qualities supposedly shared by the social image (in this case, aspects of the categories of persons, themes, spaces, and moral attributes) and the linguistic image (in this case, aspects of style and interaction) and bind them together in a linkage that appears from the perspective of the ideology to be inherent and particularly apt”.

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8 Silverstein (1979, 1985a, 1987) differentiated three kinds of meaning-functionality (and implied a fourth): 1) REFERENTIAL FUNCTIONALITY, 2) PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONALITY, and 3) PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONALITY. One way of understanding Silverstein’s subscript notation is in the following way: FUNCTION is [act or instance] and FUNCTION is [convention or general principle]. The first of these kinds of expressive functionality (i.e., REFERENTIAL FUNCTIONALITY) is, roughly, the semantico-referential linguistic conception of assertion, as the generalized capacity of expressions to describe and represent states-of-affairs. PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONALITY is the capacity of talk to have purposive, consciously-intended social effects on the occasion of particular acts. As defined in the body text above, PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONALITY is the capacity of talk to put the values of contextual variables of communicative situations (in addition to whatever descriptive content is part of the utterance) into communicative play. Thus, a passive voice construction can operate (syntactically and pragmatically) to tie clauses together cohesively, as well as serve (social-pragmatically) to indicate deference and, therefore, politeness (Silverstein 1987); and, possibly to indicate, according to cultural models of femininity, social categories like gender (Ochs 1992).

As for the implied fourth category, REFERENTIAL FUNCTION, Silverstein (1987a:25) wrote:

[I]f referring and predicating are uses of language in specific contexts, that can thus be appropriate/correct/effective or not, then viewed from this second perspective [of PRAGMATIC FUNCTION] the first functionalism [REFERENTIAL FUNCTION] performs an analysis of grammatical structure of sentences that can now be seen as abstractions from maximally appropriate/correct/effective referring-and-predicating. In other words, the first approach is an idealization of how lexical expressions PROPOSITIONALLY or REFERENTIALLY FUNCTION in grammatical patterns that underlie how certain utterances can pragmatically function, in achieving effective referring-and-predicating results. There is, in other words, a particular PRAGMATIC FUNCTION we can dub PROPOSITIONAL or REFERENTIAL FUNCTION, forming the backdrop for the REFERENTIAL FUNCTION analysis of language.

Once referring-and-predicating is (correctly) seen as the socially-effective action for which language is uniquely essential—i.e., no other totally language-independent code has this functional capacity—then referring-and-predicating becomes one of the “FUNCTIONS” to be considered and explained in this second functionalism. But note that understanding this REFERENTIAL FUNCTION is logically prior to explaining the REFERENTIAL FUNCTION of lexical expressions in an idealized account of abstracted correct referring-and-predicating.
If this sort of “naturalizing” of constructed features and relations were not typically outside the awareness of the social actors of concern, the features and relations would not appear natural. Given the limits of awareness, most observing researchers neglect to notice that such naturalizing is itself an inference—that the linking between tacit categories of social group and of language/stylistic practice is inferred to be a metaphysical necessity.  

The Projectivist Stance and Inferentialist Pragmatics

I would argue that even where researchers of language use have absorbed the lessons of Prague School theorists such as Jakobson and Mukařovský regarding the many functions of language, a certain semantic-representational residue remains. Professional practice has implied or stated that utterances constitute a textual category of existence. The result is the deeply held conviction that a text is the proximate cause that projects meanings. This view implies that either texts project the meanings of descriptions of reality, which are descriptions insofar as they passively project meaning, or reality is seen to be projected in the form of ideas that texts express.  

In this view—the projectivist stance—texts bear a naturally-occurring and immediately-expressed projective relation to meanings, which suggests that the existence of such “texts” is privileged relative to that of acts, practices, agents, beliefs, and other non-linguistic

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9 Just because an inference is a process that we can describe as movement from one state of understanding to another does not mean that anyone is aware of the inferences they make; certainly not all of the inferences and probably only a fraction of them.

10 The rendering of utterance into morpheme-by-morpheme transcripts and into “conversational” transcripts gives the “basic” textual level of utterances: The “what is said” from the speaker’s and recipient’s point of view in the model of a “message”. In cases of descriptive-analytic reports (e.g., ethnographies of communication), the audience to the report was not present to the communicative act; thus, there is a methodological use of, and instrumentalist need for, text. It should be clear that I am not making the claim that, in linguistic anthropology, non-referential functions are “riding on” descriptive propositions as was the case in “the point of view of the traditional semantico-referential linguistics” (Silverstein 1995[1976]:191). However, I am concerned with a specific kind of meaning-functionality that is a special kind of “standing for something else” in which the sign itself carries some meaningful content—whether only on particular occasions of interpretation or in a more general way (as with conventional sign-meaning relations).
things. The position that signs stand for something else in virtue of the fact that the sign has some meaningful content has led to the (re)production of habits of thinking in which meanings, beliefs, and things blur into each other. It is this professional view on the (sociocultural) reality of texts, every bit similar in this respect to the common-sense descriptivism that it rejects, that makes it possible to see such texts as interpretable in opposition to a non-textual (sociocultural) reality. While I do not dispute that *the implications of sign tokens are socially constructed*, these implications are not somehow “out there” to be grasped: People infer some interpretation from the sign tokens, thereby producing effects and possibilities that come to operate in some interaction among participants.

A comprehensive presentation of semiotics requires consideration of the possibility that some instances of meaningful “content” have nothing to “contain” them (just as it is possible that there are causally efficient things that never become a sign for anything to anyone). The consequence of not admitting those possibilities is that meanings, beliefs, and things blur into each other. The seeming necessity of meaningfulness, in a general or particular sense, is difficult to resist given an appreciation for the cohesiveness of pure textual (and/or intertextual) components in “participation” (e.g., use of pronominals, or categorical nominalizations, that “refer” back to previous mentionings, in language, of a person, place, event, or thing). Consequently, those whose jobs require that they analyze textual matter tend to equivocate

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11 The projectivist model itself might be said to hold the power of its own mode of duration (keeping in mind Whorf’s (1956:148ff.) comments about Hopi habitual cultural behavior). The relation of ideas and language as a representation of the world in words has one of its best formulations in the Western tradition in the statements of Locke. He is often attributed with the turn to language in philosophy, in which the tools of communication are subjected to analysis. He argued that “the use of Words . . . stand[s] as outward Marks of our internal ideas and those ideas [are] taken from particular things” (Book II, Chapter XI, §9). Through these marks, the ideas within individual minds “might be made known to others, and the thoughts of men’s minds might be conveyed to another” (Book III, Chapter I, §2). In Locke’s view, the primary projection is of ideas, rather than particular things or facts, although some of one’s ideas stand for things in the world. As Ott (2008:294) characterized Locke’s view: “words are signs in the sense of indicators or signals of mental contents and acts”.

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regarding 1) the efficient role things play in producing the presentation of a sign token; and 2) the significance a sign obtains for an intelligent being who interprets a particular sign token.\textsuperscript{12} Description of meanings in terms of projective-meaningful functions has the result that agents are subsumed under constructed and re-animated discourses.

The challenge in addressing the projectivist stance amounts to—as Webb Keane expressed, while discussing a related observation—“drawing attention to the dynamic interconnections among different modes of signification at play within a particular historical and social formation” (Keane 2003:410) while managing not to “reduc[e] [the historicity and social power of material things] either to being only vehicles of meaning, on the one hand, or ultimate determinants, on the other” (2003:411). I would argue that to avoid conflating (1) and (2) above, requires going even beyond modes of signification, in one’s focus, to the possibility of signification, at all. Interestingly enough, given Peirce’s nominal presence in linguistic anthropology, the neglected alternative is to theorize discourses in light of their supporting role of producing and reproducing culture through inferential networks of meaning—also known as philosophical, or “American” pragmatism.\textsuperscript{13} Keane’s resolution draws on Peirce, but does so in light of current applications of Peircean semiotics. Use of the concepts of iconicity and indexicality tend to downplay the role of both active and implicit inferences in communication and in other social action.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12} Traditionally (i.e., in philosophy), projective-meaningful functions that form a family with Silverstein’s \textit{indexicality} and Gal and Irvine’s \textit{iconicity} have been articulated in terms of meaningful functions that are about or intend some mentalistic role (\textit{intension}), or refer to an existing class or particular (\textit{extension}).
\textsuperscript{13} One might argue that philosophical pragmatism lacks relevance to contemporary anthropological theories and critiques of culture, but one can say the same thing about Peircean semiotics that now infuses many areas of linguistic anthropology.
\textsuperscript{14} Inference is an indispensable part of semiotics in the Peircean tradition, from which Silverstein’s and Irvine and Gal’s terminology is derived. Conventional formulations of iconization, in particular, do not take a stance on the “inferential” nature of the relation between groups and communicative practices, but draw on the language of constructivism instead.
The problem for theoretical discussions that draw on Peircean semiotic concepts (e.g., indexical signs) is that Peircean semiotics is intrinsically a set of tools for analyzing philosophical problems from his particular perspective (i.e., pragmatism). This is not to say Peircean semiotics cannot be used extrinsically, but the tension in the problematic space is what makes up the substance of Peircean semiotics. Most extrinsic applications neglect that substance of Peircean pragmatism (which Peirce later renamed, “pragmaticism” because others had applied his concepts in ways not aligned with his intentions). Given that Peirce developed the semiotic concepts for making sense of the family of phenomena of which Silversteinian entailments are members, while addressing problems in inference and meaning, the neglect of Peirce’s pragmatistic concepts (e.g., Thirdness) in favor of a basic categorization of sign-relations marks a particularly lamentable lost opportunity—but not an unrecoverable one.

The pragmatic intent expressed by attention to networks of inferences and meanings is clear in linguistic anthropology generally (see, e.g., Silverstein 2004), but theorization in terms of Peirce’s specific concepts often does not deliver such a pragmatistic result. Applications of these concepts in linguistic anthropology do not reject, and sometimes even seem to suggest that the basic (but more general) sociality of communicative situations emerges only after an utterance has been identified by recipients as a particular type of sign15. The wider contexts in which any participant interacts, from the agent’s perspective, involves networks of inferences and meanings that are made by means of inferences.16 Consequently, one of the less empirically

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15 A frequent type of instance of this is most harmless, being analogous to evolutionary biologists’ talk about a non-directed, almost random process that occurs in actively phrased terms like “selection”, where “nature” is “doing” the “selecting”. The difference between linguistic anthropology and evolutionary biology, of course, is that there is a recognized agent in the linguistic and semiotic cases. Alongside such modes of talking are instances that belie these modes, such as Silverstein’s discussion of “pragmatic calibration of the metapragmatic sign-event” (1993:40)—even if it is not clear whether it is a who or a what that is doing the calibration.

16 Bearing in mind an example of indices given by Peirce, involving the mark left by a bullet, while modifying the gun lobby’s mantra: Signs don’t make indexes; people do.
grounded, but still integral arguments of this dissertation is for recognition of the fact that inference is an important part of cultural processes.\textsuperscript{17}

Rather than privilege signs, I take the much more (fundamentally?) Peircean approach of examining the space of inferences. That analytic “space” corresponds to whatever precedes any agent’s recognition of particular signs in communicative interaction, but still give pride of place to the agent. Where de Saussure can be said to equivocate regarding objects and meanings (for want of better philosophical terms), Peirce was driven by a scientific realist perspective to give a place to “real” things in the world (beyond texts under analysis).\textsuperscript{18} Recalling my distinction above—between 1) the efficient role things play in producing the presentation of a sign token, and 2) the significance a sign obtains for an intelligent being who interprets a particular sign token—it is critical to differentiate between (1) and (2) if one is to address the problem of counter-empirical, underlying norms of consciousness and action.

Unlike Peirce, however, I take a sociocultural approach according to which this space of inferences is constructed in conditions that are essentially social and cultural, and by means that

\textsuperscript{17} Recognition of the role of inference allows us—not the least of its virtues—to avoid treating “natives” as given themselves (as pegs that fill a slot, to make a trans-metaphoric reference to Trouillot’s (1991) notion of the “savage slot” of academia). It does not, nor should it, prevent us from describing “natives” own cultural claims of givenness—that is, as if their vision of the world lends a kind of necessity to their beliefs. The givenness of such claims are somewhat independent of power relations inasmuch as the cosmological claims of the “natives” of Chevy Chase, Maryland can seem as natural to themselves as those of the “natives” of Prince George’s county seem to the latter. Indeed, description of strategic or historically particular essentialisms is frequently important to understanding life “on the ground”. A focus on inference allows researchers to analytically suspend commitment to those beliefs while preserving their cultural implications.

\textsuperscript{18} While he firmly believed in an objective reality beyond thought, he also believed that such an objective reality and thought were connected in a way that made it possible for human intelligence to discover truths about the objectual world. Thus, his writings between 1885 and 1908 indicate that Peirce believed thought and reality to be continuous such that some element is common to both in varying degrees (Peirce 1974, CP 6.476-7, 1908). The central notion of thought, here, is that of symbolic representations with a content that is about or intends toward something else, where this capacity for being about something—whether it be something as “real” as the index fingers on our hands, or some image of a fictional palace on the moon—is called “intentionality”. Thus, Peirce took the capacity we have for such intentional representations to be a result of the constitution of the physical universe having a nature interrelated with thought (CP 5.93-5.106, 1903). If we leave his forbidding system of thought in the background, we can see that the basic unit of semiotics, “the sign”, which represents the capacity of human-like intelligence to participate in representational relations that Peirce believed, encompassed the objectively real universe.
are essentially social and cultural. In moving from Peircean semiotics to anthropology, it is useful to draw on a social theorist in the background of much of my thinking, as well as of Gal’s and Irvine’s writings. As an exemplar of post-structuralism, Bourdieu emphasized the more-than-dynamic (i.e., more than one-to-one relational) movement that is characteristic of open-ended sociocultural “games”. Bourdieu’s practice theory addresses what might be seen as ontological issues, but transposes them to the key of epistemological inquiry, involving terms of cognition (e.g., recognition and practical knowledge). Thus, social actors engaged in such games possess “tacit recognition of the value of the stakes of the game as practical mastery of its rules” (Bourdieu 1992:117).

Sociocultural games tend to exhibit systematicity even though performances can vary greatly in the way they are produced. Taken collectively, these games may depend as much on somewhat static, overt ideology or on fluid perspectives and purpose-oriented orientations to sociocultural interaction. Therefore, these games imply tacit interests and cognitive commitments. This serious-minded “ludic” perspective fuels my attempt to formulate a methodological framework that is assumed or implicit in the linguistic anthropology, but never

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19 Note that this use of “game” and “ludic” should be distinguished from Schiller’s use of “das Spiel” (in Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen), and from Huizinga’s (1949) concept of “ludic”, as well as those following him, such as Bateson (1972), Turner (1978, 1982), and Schechner (1988). Nonetheless, my view is much more aligned to the Bateson/Turner tradition, which sees value in “the ludic”, than to schools of thought that oppose ludic to material. Thus, my usage is entirely separate from Teresa Ebert’s (1991a, 1991b) use of it for certain kinds of postmodernism and for ludic feminism, which privilege “linguistic play” over material social factors in its analyses of the politics of difference.

20 For example, consider that US-American attorneys and judges do not mechanically follow statutes and case law precedent, but use laws and precedent as if they have roles in complex legal games that can be played with more or less creativity, typically in more adversarial contexts, but sometimes in nearly cooperative contexts.

21 The flexibility involved in this concept of games is not limited to the fuzzy boundaries of classification or to a capacity for flexibly capturing complexities. Instead, the trope of games encompasses the sense that people have stakes, and that there are a variety of stakes. At a very basic level, any definition of a game implies a by-definition kind of stakes. Juggling is an example of a highly dynamic game and, consequently, one could not be said to have a stake in the game if one tried to demonstrate one’s ability to juggle by putting only a single object into motion. By “stakes”, I mean something more than requisite knowledge of the nature of, and that excludes a willingness to mock, the game. Besides being measured by commitment, stakes of the game can be expressed in terms of performance: an activity is still recognizable as juggling whether one is throwing puffy plastic balls or battle-axes, but use of the latter in the performance entails its own stakes, which are different from use of the former. Stakes can also be identified in the social context of games.
expressed in perfect clarity—perhaps out of fear of the specter of positivism or objectivism. Since I give priority to the essential sociality of communicative situations over communicative texts, this risk is necessary (and particularly evident in Chapter Seven).

Another risk lies in the unwieldy string of themes that arises due to my goal of addressing a space of inferences constructed in essentially social and cultural conditions and by essentially social and cultural means. The mapping relations that are addressed in a focus on iconization allow a much simpler exposition. The space of inferences involved here allows me to describe the internal relations between normal (academic) views within cultural and linguistic anthropology, and also normative (lay and academic) views on the two official languages of Wales. However, in addressing the theoretical concerns that relate to the network of inferences and meanings, the development of this (lengthy) chapter obtains a kind of organic chaos. The glue holding the whole together remains, nevertheless, scholarship related to imagining “the nation” as a community.

**The Places of Nations**

In the broader literature outside linguistic anthropology, scholars have often presupposed some particular position in this scholarly, analytic space that shapes their focus. Academics aligned with powerful world-states like the US, the UK, and France have tended to take state to be prior to nation (Ferguson and Gupta 2002). They are, therefore, critical of the nation-privileged perspectives of nation-oriented activists who stress ethnicity and a broadly imagined fictive “kinship” among compatriots (*cf.* Cohen 1974 and Weber 1968). The result is an externally viewed constellation of concepts, such as invented national traditions (Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983; Hobsbawm 1990), invented nations (Gellner 1983), and imagined communities.
From a perspective in which state is assumed to be conceptually prior to nation, the Welsh nation emerged only during the last 150 years through Welsh persons’ recognition of, and opposition to, the hegemony of the English state. That nation, on this view, only became remarkable in the latter-half of the Twentieth Century.

As with the clinging scent of paraffin, the choices a researcher makes stays with her. For example, to refer to the practice of speaking the language indigenous to Wales as speaking in “Welsh” (instead of using “yn Gymraeg” or “in Cymraeg”) is far more significant in its effects on thinking than might be apparent. In particular, the label “Welsh” blurs a great many distinctions (of language and ethnic groupings—as well as racial, gender, and class groupings that I do not address). Such blurring can be the purpose of a given use of “Welsh” and, at other times, shapes the thinking of the person using it.

The selective, if conventional use of terminological distinctions related to the indigenous language of Wales speaks to historically settled conventions and a legacy of ethnic or cultural dominance by English institutions and polities. In a train of thought one might call Romantic (as a genre mode), selective use of this terminology could symbolize, by its binomial quality, the potential for a well of culture fed by Cymraeg streams, which stands in counterpoint to English-language cultural production. In this dissertation, I treat this well of culture as real—“the Cymraeg language-culture complex”.

By “language-culture complex”, I mean the obverse of Agar’s (1994) modification of Friedrich’s (1989:306-7) “linguaculture” into “languaculture”. Agar has used this phrase to gesture to something about language over and above “vocabulary and syntax and sentence drills and dialogues about buying a ticket for the train” (1994). He pointed to a phenomenological cultural space that is made visible through analysis of lexemes and representation-centric (i.e.,
semantical) aspects of language. However, I mean the network of sociocultural practices that constitute and reproduce such a cultural space, beyond the not insignificant aesthetics of belonging.

Similarly, Basso’s notion “place-making” opens up a sociocultural space by focusing on practices and activities within such “place-worlds”. Any set of recognizable landmarks and any network of people can evoke “entire worlds of meaning”, “a posited state of affairs, a particular universe of objects and events” and people (Basso 1996:5). Place-making is “a way of constructing social traditions and, in the process, personal and social identities” (Basso 1996:7). As Basso (1996:7) elaborated: “[W]hat people make of their places is closely connected to what they make of themselves as members of society and inhabitants of the earth, and while to the two activities may be separable in principle, they are deeply joined in practice”.22

Basso’s concept is a general one that accommodates many different analytic foci. I use the “language-” prefix, in connection with “culture complex”, in order to indicate that the system of sociocultural practices is organized in terms of the empirical problematic space of a language. I use “language-” in this way whether the so-called language is thought to achieve cohesion by means of a grammatical code or due to the impression that there is a community whose members communicate in some way that they or others describe as communicating with the so-called language.

Members of the Cymraeg language-cultural complex, as with members of any putative community, can be thought of in terms of a set of hypothetical “sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes” (Burke 1969:21) and believe that every other member shares roughly the same interests and motives. The presumed-to-be common sensations, concepts, images, ideas,

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22 The underlying contrast between Basso’s place-worlds, oriented in terms of concrete settings, and my language-cultural complexes, oriented in terms of status differences created by social relations and sociality, amounts to a contrast between PLACE and SPACE.
attitudes, including, become manifest via practices in circulation within and between communities of people. These practices “owe their convincingness much more to trivial repetition and dull daily reinforcements than to exceptional rhetorical skill” (Burke 1969:26)—and through this repetition and reinforcement, a set of contextualized ideational “objects”, along with the notions and practices of belonging, become the tools of place-making.23 I now turn to a different set of issues: how the discourse of and about nationalism shapes ordinary Welsh persons’ place-worlds, and how such shaping of place-worlds can disrupt the work of even the most careful of ethnographers.

**Welshness Performed and Welshness Politicized**

In the early stages of research, I became aware, from mostly second-hand parental complaints, about the image of teachers who were glossed locally as “nationalist”. These parents’ children would come home from school with stories about a teacher who, for example, narrated an historical event framed by the elements of English dominance and the valiant resistance of the Welsh to the same. In fact, only once did I ever come across a moment that resembled the one some parents fear.

An assistant head teacher presented and elicited details from his students about the circumstances surrounding Battle of Bosworth, which led to the end of a series of Fifteenth-Century civil wars in Britain (“the War of the Roses”). In that lesson, the assistant head teacher presented the defender, Richard III, in terms borrowed from Shakespeare and emplotted him as

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23 In unpacking a domain defined by what are problems for this ethnographer to puzzle over, I uphold a contrast between the analytic notion of ideologies and that of styles of place-making because a focus on ideology (need not, but) tends to separate world-views from moral dimensions of action (which are not separable within Basso’s perspective on place-making). Rather than suggest that researchers must select a critical frame that represents a choice between ideologies and styles of place-making, I aim to find a common ground that takes the best from each. I do not see myself as a pioneer here; see, for example, Becker 1979; Geertz 1957; Irvine 1992; Kockelman 2010; Lutz 1988; Ochs 1984, 1996; and Schoaps 2002.
the antagonist and loser.\textsuperscript{24} The reason is not to be explained merely by Tudor or Elizabethan values and narratives, but because of the personage who figured as the protagonist and victor. The battle that led to the end of the War of the Roses (and some historians have said the beginning of the British state) also led to the reign of Henry VII, whose Tudur forebears were rooted in Penmynydd in north-west Wales.\textsuperscript{25}

In certain parents’ minds, something clearly does happen on occasion at their children’s schools, and the confluence of concern and happening is of ethnographic significance. What I find most important—methodologically, at the least—about such reports by those parents has to do with the frame that allows interpretation of such a communicative event at school as a token of nationalism: that is, the means of production of this frame is largely outside of schools. In fact, that frame cannot even manifest at schools without the potential of causing a rupture in everyday practices, making schools a problematic site for that frame, as these parents’ frustrations suggest. Since the discussion of the different ideological commitments that inform different senses of citizenship and community membership is deemed political (Chapters Four and Five elaborate this point), one is not likely to encounter occasions that support any sort of thesis on nationalism in schools.

\textsuperscript{24} The English Bard described Richard III, in the play of that name, as a hunchbacked, scheming misogynist, tyrant, and murderer of a brother and of child-princes. He is said to “clothe his naked villainy with odd old ends stol’n forth of holy writ, and seem a saint, when most [he] play[s] the devil” (I, iii 336-338).

\textsuperscript{25} Moreover, although Henry VII, known as Harri Tudur [Ti.dǝr/“Tudder”] according to the typical Welsh orthography, was to take the apical position in the Kingdom of England (and Wales), his genealogical connections linked him to the Welsh domain of British kingdoms: to the Lord Protector and the Chief Councillor to the only two Welsh rulers to be styled “the Great”. These two so-styled rulers were the Ninth-Century leader, Rhodri ap Cynan (Rhodri the Great), whose Lord Protector was Marchudd ap Cynan, and Twelfth-Century leader, Llwelyn ap Iorwerth (Llwelyn the Great), whose Chief Councillor was Ednyfed Fychan (Davies 1993; Lloyd [1911]2004; Thomas [1872]2000). Rhodri was considered great probably because he united for the first time most of the area recognized by the English at the time as Wales under his leadership for thirty-odd years, while Llwelyn was styled “the Great” probably because he united all of recognized Wales again after it had fragmented in the mid-Eleventh Century, and then held it together for nearly forty years. The two figures are part of a Welsh dynasty (the house of Aberffraw) based in north-west Wales that nearly succeeded in constructing a stable polity—a project that decisively ended in 1282 with the failure of princes of this dynasty to halt the Norman English conquest of Wales. “[O]f the main line of Aberffraw, Rhodri’s branch was the only one to survive the tribulations of 1282-3” (Davies 1993:164).
Consequently, while my originally conceived dissertation research was designed to study schooling contexts, I gradually came to focus on a constellation of phenomena that is most salient outside schools. This constellation obtains unity by the coupling of an ongoing, practical struggle for identity to processes related to the invention of Wales. While local people use the label, “nationalism”, for certain stances regarding Welsh cultural heritage or Cymraeg (or for both), the set of phenomena of interest actually straddles nationalism on one side and national identity on the other. In the Welsh context of a broad and official public, it is generally controversial to be a nationalist, but everyone is expected to have national identity. It is just not all that clear what national identity amounts to or whether people could have different shades of a singular national identity, or different national identities while remaining “Welsh”.

The overlap between the rubrics of nationalism and national identity is easily overlooked. This is because the salience of nationalism creates a kind of epistemic glare (to invert Taussig’s (1987) trope of epistemic murk) that blurs anyone’s image of particular kinds of national identity. Moreover, the politics of language identity further act to subvert any analysis of local forms of identity. As transparent and banal as the shield metaphor and the trope of defense are, and as apparently valuable they might be to reveal the depths of local meaning about communities of Cymraeg speakers, these figures form but one culturally symbolic indicator with social and emotional dimensions. The deeper cultural reality to which they point involves social division according to the two official languages of Wales.

When I set out to Wales in 2007, it never occurred to me to write an ethnography about the organization of identity discourses among the community of Cymraeg speakers, as that community manifests in north-west Wales. This is partly because there was already an excellent monograph on this setting of the Cymraeg-anchored imagined community: Carol Trosset’s
Welshness Performed: Welsh Concepts of Person and Society (I describe the conclusions of Trosset’s monograph briefly here, but I give more attention to it later in this dissertation.). I doubt I or few others could have provided a richer, more informative description, written for “outsiders”, of the Cymraeg language cultural complex as it appears in north-west Wales. Nonetheless, that work thoroughly left its mark on my anthropological consciousness, as did similar work in the sociology and geography of Wales. In each of these cases, part of what left its mark is the missed opportunity to interrogate language politics. Tacitly, I pushed the politics of language and community into the background. As a result, initially, they became barriers to understanding, rather than objects for explication.

Trosset’s (1993) presentation of the ethnolinguistic ideological constellation she experienced in northern Wales centered on descriptions of several component ideologies. The most visible feature of Welshness in north-west Wales (but would not be as visible a feature in, say, Cardiff or Swansea) is that of the use of Cymraeg as an emblem of nation. An inability to speak Cymraeg or a choice not to speak it (Trosset 1993:50) is cause for others to position one as English. However, Trosset did not count this feature as its own component among the seven components to which she attributes determinate (if somewhat fuzzy) boundaries by numbering them. Rather, this feature plays the minor role of informing her readers of the substantive content of the component that she designated “degrees of Welshness”.

The concept of relative degrees of Welshness is the idea that there is a diametricality to being Welsh in the British state-context (in mathematical terms, the proximity of any particular position to the terminal of either being Welsh or being English is a ratio of the two); for, while one can be both Welsh and English, the sort of belonging that pertains to being English or being Welsh is, in the abstract, does not overlap. It is a highly problematic concept since there are
positive and negative values associated with being primarily Welsh or primarily English. Also, there is a great deal of variation over what could count as being more Welsh or more English. Despite the controversy and variation, the clearest possible exception to such variability is that the concept of degrees of Welshness seems to relate largely to issues of language.

Language in Wales—when the context opposes Cymraeg and English to each other, which is virtually all of the time for a very large percentage of people there—has a binomial character in which people feel that one or the other language provides the core of their sense of self. Thus, one might take, as a principal ideology among the components of Welsh personhood, the assertion of a past and present domination by the English, where being English is symbolized by the inability to speak Cymraeg (Trosset 1993:50). However, Trosset did not count such assertions among her seven components. This ideological feature is submerged in the first component she discussed, degrees of Welshness, and the relations there are not fully explored. The omission of the politics of Cymraeg as a component ideology is an important lacuna.

Another major important component of Trosset’s image of Welshness is an ideology of egalitarianism (1993:164). The ideology of egalitarianism involves a sensibility of “strong disapproval of those seeking status” (Trosset 1993:164) attached to a seemingly contrary “respect for high status, education, official credentials, and prestigious jobs” (1993:164). In addition, the prevalent constellation of ideologies that Trosset described includes a tendency toward self sacrifice and martyrdom (1993:125-127) in which Welshness is seen as a burden (1993:127-128), and individuals, and even groups, are perceived as powerless in the face of systemic conditions (1993:121-125). This locally dominant ideology of Welsh identity also involves an interest in contributing to the current existence of certain “community” practices which are seen as essentially Welsh (Trosset 1993:53). Trosset’s ideology of personhood also
involves a number of component ideologies related to a distaste for contamination of groups identified as attaining a “purity” (Trosset’s term) of Welsh membership (1993:59-61), sectarian organization of affiliation, and the imaginary absence of hierarchy.

I regard Trosset’s as the best treatment of sociocultural life in Wales available, particularly of north-west Wales. It provides an impression of what it is like to inhabit north-west Wales when one was not born into a family that is part of Cymraeg-speaking social networks. In fact, Trosset achieved success at gaining access to Cymraeg-oriented social contexts, where I found such access to be possible only by marrying into such a family (which I did not do) or by committing to long-term residence in Britain (which was economically unsustainable for me). If I were to fault her, it would be for not subjecting language and Cymraeg-oriented social activities to greater analysis.

What my summary leaves out is that Trosset’s components of a Welsh ideology of personhood is based on those who participate traditional activities and those who react against the commitment of these participants to those component ideologies. My informed guess is that she did not provide an account of the important connection between the prevalent Welsh ideology of personhood (which she did describe) has to the emphasis many place on Cymraeg in their own notions of identity because any mention of the generally salient traditional practices Trosset focused on already has the tendency to evoke Cymraeg as a naturalizing component of identity. Even while trying to avoid the impression that she thought Cymraeg was representative of all Wales—through no less than an outright denial of this (Trosset 1993:37)—her readers could not be disabused of the notion. Charlotte Davies, another anthropologist, claimed that “Trosset’s view of Welshness as emanating from what is even a relatively small segment of Welsh-speaking society, let alone Welsh society as a whole, is ultimately unconvincing”
While attending a concert in Caernarfon, the subject of Trosset’s monograph came up in a conversation with an acquaintance. Originally from the US, but having settled in Wales, this scholar was currently working within the “humanities sector” of Welsh Studies in Wales. Although this scholar was not involved in such empirical praxis in her/his scholarship, s/he had been involved in language activism in Wales. S/he commented that Trosset’s monograph seemed only to touch the surface, covering only the more obvious parts of Welsh culture and society. The force of the criticism was that Trosset (1993) neglected to address the undercurrents of language politics in Wales.

As we shall see, Trosset’s focus on ideologies prevalent among those who participate traditional activities—and not a focus on Cymraeg—is and was doomed to misunderstanding by a stubborn sociolinguistic fact: “Welsh” has the extensional (i.e., referential) scope of anything that can be subsumed under the concept of Wales. “Welsh” operates as a semiotic mélange of geographic, linguistic, ethnic, and civic identifiers—as does “English”. Hence, although there is a history of ethnic conflict and tensions, social actors in Wales can move the struggle between two culturally recognized kinds of languages, with their own historical continuity—to the foreground without explicitly mentioning the conflict between two putative kinds of people. The latter is part of what the humanities scholar was referring to as underneath the surface. Further, “Welsh” makes no distinction between the imagined community of Wales and each of the following three groupings: 1) the Cymraeg-anchored community, 2) those who participate in
Cymraeg-dominant “community” activities, or 3) those who feel that participation in the Cymraeg language-cultural complex is an essential part of their own social being.26

By blurring across lines of division, the common use of “Welsh” is, in fact, an important way in which Welsh persons manage intercultural dialogue without foregrounding centuries of conflict, and thereby offering offense to ethnic others. By the same token, where language choice evokes a politics of belonging, the ethnic label, “Welsh”, can be used in a way that does not immediately distinguish the normal-political territory from a linguistic domain (e.g., “Welsh ethos”). The result is not only that of confusion on some occasions, and an enabling of a kind of communicative unity across domains of ethnicity, language, and civic identity, but also a concealment of the object of discourse.

The politicization of issues surrounding language and national identity contributes to an inability by Welsh publics to develop a generally intelligible set of stances, beliefs, and categories for making explicit the substantive claims intrinsic to the indigenous language-cultural complex. This might seem to be an empirical claim, but I do not treat it as the focus of my investigation. Rather, I see it as a general condition—what I called “the submergence of culture” in Chapter One. It is similar to many contexts around the world, but with specific formations in Wales. In this dissertation, I focus on the particular effects of cultural submergence. To indicate the direction I intend to take these strands of thought in the relevant areas of the literature on imagined communities, I extend this lengthy chapter in order to relate some of the practical effects I have in mind to the theoretical language developed in anthropology.

26 Unlike in English, people communicating in Cymraeg can easily distinguish Cymraeg (the language) from a large variety of properties or things grouped by their association with Wales [cymreig]. In ordinary speech occasions, however, pronunciations of these two ideally-phonemically distinct words are not always aurally distinguishable (even for native speakers), which creates an interpretive demand for contextual features, just as in English-language situations. Even if this were not so, I suspect that the centrality of the root form of cymr- in the relevant linguistic locations serves to create an image of unity across domains of ethnicity, language, and civic identity, even though additional forms are available in Cymraeg that do not have analogs in English.
The Shield Trope

In the summer of 2007, I attended a field trip to an overnight outdoor center in a part of Wales near Y Bala (Meirionydd, Gwynedd county). On that daytrip, I met the assistant head teacher whom I call Mrs. Lloyd from a school I call “Ysgol Gerrig yn yr Afon”, or “YGA” (pseudonyms). Eventually, I arranged a schedule of visits to YGA, but those discussions had not yet occurred. In front of us, pupils scaled a training climbing wall, which resembled the keep of some of the atypical, rectangular native-built castles around north Wales. The paved area where we stood led up to the housing units and administrative buildings and, in the other direction, down to the dock of the lake, Llyn Tegid. On the other side of this narrow strip of pavement, opposite the climbing wall, there was a gentle slope of verdant grass. Looking on, as site instructors assisted children, Mrs. Lloyd explained to me what it meant to know and use Cymraeg as a first-language.

She began by recounting her own personal story, in English, which we had been using (I address this impolitic, but then-necessary practice in Chapter Three.). The following is a reconstructed monologue on the basis of the notes I took, the details of which I furiously filled in immediately after the conversation.

“We lived in South Wales about twenty-five years ago and we were surrounded by English language. Welsh language schools were very important then. Even more popular now, but at the time Welsh language schools were popular because they were an alternative to the English comprehensives, which were thought to be a poor education. Parents who wanted to give their child a better education would send their children to the Welsh school—even if they weren’t as passionate about the language as the culture.

“But we found our own community an artificial community. If we saw each other on the street ordinarily, we wouldn’t do things, but because we had the language we’d organize activities. We even had our own club, with a bar. You could have a pint and chat with each other in Welsh. One night, my husband and
I went out for the evening and had our child at a child-minder and when he came home he stuck his foot out like that.

She demonstrated, extending one foot in front of me, and continued.

“He said, ‘Tie my shoe, Daddy’ [in English, not Cymraeg] and my husband said, ‘We’re moving’, and we started planning that night.

“We decided we would try it individually and whoever got a job first would move and the other would follow and stay at home. When our friends visited and we knew they would—we had a place in north Wales and they would drive up and stay for a weekend. And we would go to the park because we all had toddlers and they were amazed. They would look out over the park—a grassy area like this with children playing and, hearing the children, they would say [using a tone of great surprise]: ‘They’re speaking Welsh!’”.

In this autobiographical account, language appears as an inhabitable zone or, at the least, an essential element of some inhabitable zone. For her and her husband, the overwhelming presence of English did not motivate their move until they believed that it was becoming a salient and visible factor in their child’s personality. Cymraeg, in her autobiographical account, while they were surrounded by an English-language environment prior to the move to Abergwaith, figured as one of the components of a complex medium. When their child began using English, it was as if the nitrogen content of the ambient air suddenly rose from seventy-five or eighty percent, up to ninety percent: the environment suddenly became unbearable, the air toxic.

In the context of her autobiographical narrative, once she had moved to a Cymraeg-rich environment and occupied a community that could sustain a Cymraeg-based identity, Cymraeg took on another quality: It figured as a protective force, but only in the context of the recent present. At that point in her account, the notion of shield took the form of a cultural identity, an
imagined community counterpart to an intrinsic aspect of personal identity that emerges from belonging to a local language community:

It’s who you are. It protects you. It’s also because we’ve been oppressed and we don’t want to be engulfed by this wave of Englishness and American culture. People who move in and participate in village activities and learn the language, they understand. It’s your feelings. It’s a part of you. It’s also a shield.

This image in which Cymraeg is cognized as protecting a segment of society is a prevalent, if not a commonly expressed, one. This particular example is notable because of its implied description of the cultural topography that situates language in its protective mode and the pronominal variety that operates as resources for meaning in that description.

In her short statement about the protective potential of Cymraeg, Mrs. Lloyd captured nearly the entire range of positions from a certain perspective in this field of discourse about language worlds. The way she moved across different person-deictic classes, from “it” to “you”, to “we” (to “this wave”), to “they”, to the reflexive “you”, and back to “it” again, is like a musical progression that resolves in the anchoring harmonic foundation of the musical key. Put differently, it is a linguistic expression of discursive motifs that links to aspects of the social landscape just as some musical scores have leitmotifs for the protagonist and the villain. In doing so, this short stream of talk amounts to an identity game of its own, and many of her compatriots, who would sympathize with her reasons for moving to north-west Wales, know that game intimately.

Using the third-person pronoun, “it”, Mrs. Lloyd began by referring to the language as a marker of identity (“It’s who you are”), but also as an emblematic part of self that can operate in an agentive sense (“It protects you”). Her simultaneous use of the English-language, second-person objective pronoun, “you”, can take a singular or plural form. The origin of reference—
given that the context was focused on her experience—was herself. This singular form of expression clearly was not sufficient for her purposes. After all, her experience of Cymraeg was not individual. One might even argue that her use of the second-person objective pronoun (“... who you are”, “... protects you”), even if construed as singular in number, represented the unmarked human membership in her reflexive community, the Cymraeg language community. Hence, she moved from using “you” to using the first-person collective pronoun, “we”, representing those who respond appropriately to being in Wales by using “the language”; that is, the Cymraeg community. She then characterized the culture of outsiders—all English, American, Australian and similar “external” culture-kinds grouped together—as a “wave” threatening “to engulf” the community.

An interesting shift in this short stretch of talk is the move Mrs. Lloyd made away from a simple image of her experience in terms of an internal sense of identity and an external non-identity—the internal we, as contrasted with the implied they, who are not part of the language community. She seems to have recognized, as she represented that image, that the internal community (the “we”) is not homogeneous. Some members of this community start out from a place outside that language community, while others start out from a place that is “outside” in a merely geographically sense (as in her case). Hence, she then introduced the “they” of those who make the transition to becoming a member of the Cymraeg community by learning the language and participating in village life. Since her experience of language is one in which language is not individualistic, but ties people together into a community, she moved back again to the third-person and her predication of the language with properties of protection and of shielding the “we” from the “wave”.
Defensive Translation and Parallel Zones

The emblematic use of Cymraeg in the figurative role of defense of a national geist (whether embodied in a person, as in the above, or not) appears in many forms. The shield metaphor shares similar motives with these other emblematic uses of Cymraeg as defense. Another way of cognizing language as defense concerns the set of various translation practices that reflect a modern Wales, in which both Cymraeg and English enjoy official status, but stand in different vernacular spaces. When there is a task-orientation of bilingual presentation of the “same” content, this context helps to produce a regime of practice in which translators impose relatively strict equivalences. Thus, the Gwynedd Hospital in Bangor translated “Breastfeeding policy” as “Polisi bwydo ar y fron” [transliterally: A feeding-on-the-breast policy]. Even the matching of National Patent Safety Agency’s “A clean hand is a hand you can trust” with “Rhowch eich fflydd mewn dwylo glân” [Put your faith in two clean hands] is a fairly equivalent pairing.

However, it is fairly common in other settings to find translations of phrases in which there are non-equivalent descriptive meanings—where translation appears as a deliberate act of transposition of different cultural contexts. The result—itself a realization of the duality of identity in these cultural milieux—is one in which one can understand that the parallel translations are related to each other as translations without understanding the precise cultural meanings and background associations of each translation. Some of the most readily available instances are slogans issued by quasi-state agencies.

Under the functionalist interpretation of translation, we might suppose the Welsh Language Board takes “Welsh! Give it a go” to be equivalent to “Cymraeg yn Gyntaf” [Cymraeg First; or, less transliterally: Cymraeg in the Beginning/Cymraeg at the Start]. The English-
language phrase encourages risk-taking and trying new things, which carry no hint of commitment, while the Cymraeg phrase speaks to a normative sense of priority—a statement that might be unnecessary for those who can already read the Cymraeg slogan, as they are putting it first by reading it (i.e., by reading the Cymraeg slogan, the conveyed message is already represented in immediate consciousness by that practice). The UK Baby Friendly Initiative’s impersonal thematic of “Breastfeeding’s world of benefits” was translated as—“Llaeth mam: llond gwlad o fanteision” [Mother’s milk: countryful of benefits]. The Cymraeg phrase makes the kinship link between mother and child salient, and notionally connects that link between mother and child to the overflowing resources of a rich nation. By contrast, some might read the English slogan in the register of UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund), where “world of benefits” could be an allusion to the scientific analysis of health and nutrition.

The preceding are fairly banal instances of exceptions to the tacit doctrine of a bilingual translation-regime that purports to uphold parallelisms in meaning. They are significant because they illustrate how such a tacit doctrine of parallelism in translation conceals the “deeper” networks of meanings by means of a functionalist scheme that takes what translation is simply to be what translation does. Attention to variability can reveal cultural significance, which becomes more clear when one turns from state-issued slogans aimed at public welfare to domains closer to the heart of cultural feeling.

One example, which also serves the purpose of showing the use of language as an explicit symbolic instrument, is the title of a book about the history of Cymraeg-medium schools. Translated from the original Cymraeg, it bears the English title, Our Children's Language: the Welsh-medium Schools of Wales 1939-2000. The original Cymraeg version is called Gorau Arf: Hanes Sefydlu Ysgolion Cymraeg 1939-2000. When I asked a librarian how she would translate
“arf”, immediately after I found the book of that title on the library shelf, she said it meant “weapon” or something used in battle. Incidentally, that is the first conventional translation, which can be found in many dictionaries. However, the librarian immediately said that that was wrong and corrected herself after a minute of thinking about it, suggesting “defense” instead. The Cymraeg title, then can be translated as “Best Defense: A History of the Cymraeg Schools Movement 1939-2000”.

I am inclined to take the librarian’s situation of translation discomfort as a recursive moment, in one sense or another—as a defensive repositioning of cultural semantics. On one hand, I could construe her “correction” as a reflection of her understanding that a weapon does violence, while a defense protects against violence. As I have told some of my students when they have proposed paper topics, a language used as a weapon is different from a language used in defense. On the other hand, the (meta)semantics of “arf” might be a reflection of the historical imagination of Wales as a conquered nation that long tried to defend itself. In that imaginary, weapons were used defensively to protect the nation. Either construal—self-conscious cultural politeness or a demand for verisimilitude in meaning—entails a defensive repositioning of the cultural semantics of defense. The previous section of this chapter should have suggested some ways language might operate defensively in the context of official language in Wales. Interestingly, the main title of the book on the Cymraeg-medium schools movement, in its Cymraeg form, makes no mention of who is defended—“our children”; nor “their” language—as did the English-version.
“Gorau arf” is a fragment of a longer proverb—“Gorau arf, arf dysg”—that states that education is the best defense (or, literally: tool or weapon).27 Local people’s suggestions regarding the source of that quotation includes biblical proverb and the more easily confirmed motto of a secondary school in north-west Wales (the derivation of which is unknown).28 29 The symbolism of the phrase itself supplies the implied context of education and, therefore, children.

Moreover, since the phrase, an allusion to education as a resource, is in Cymraeg, the code of communication itself evokes the cultural context within which Cymraeg is presumed. This informs the kind of education to which the phrase refers, indicating a language-medium for education (i.e., in Cymraeg). Consequently, the title in Cymraeg both expresses explicitly and itself exemplifies the way in which teaching children in Cymraeg serves to insulate the Cymraeg language complex from the influences of other language complexes; the language of English, being the obvious “threat”. One can interpret such a social imaginary in its aspects that reflect an historical narrative, or one can interpret it in terms of the sense of place it produces. The following section takes up the first alternative, but the rest of this chapter shows how these two kinds of interpretation are not mutually exclusive and even seem to implicate each other in the place-times of Wales.

27 Interestingly, on the publisher’s web page for the book, the book’s title is stated as the entire proverb (as if the four words made up the main title), despite the fact that only the first two words appear in the actual title; http://www.ylolfa.com/dangos.php?ISBN=0862436176, accessed February 24, 2012.
29 A history of the National Eisteddfod—contained in Barddoniaeth Fuddugol Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Caernarfon, 1877: yn nghyda Hanes cyflawn o’r Eisteddfod, yn cwmws yr areithiau [Winning Bards of the Caernarfon National Eisteddfod of 1877: along with a complete history of the Eisteddfod, in contents of the speeches], Caernarfon: Y Genedy Gymreig (1878)—mentioned finding the motto in a setting described therein: “O dan yr orielau gwelid yr arwyddeiriau canlynol [From under the gallery is visible the following mottos]: . . . ‘Goreu arf, arf dysg ’”.

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Language Communities and Language Demesnes

I have already related a lesson I learned about schooling contexts in north-west Wales, about history teaching (in the introductory chapter). This dissertation is largely about a second lesson I learned in north-west Wales, which is two-fold. First, the conceptualization of Welsh culture among those with an affinity for “indigenous” Wales is figured in terms of the indigenous language, Cymraeg, which declined dramatically during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By the mid 1980s, only twenty percent of the population of Wales voiced confidence in their competence. The figuring of Welsh culture in terms of Cymraeg articulates to a fear of loss. If culture is taken to be identical to language (which is a coarse-grained representation of a diversity of experienced reality in this milieu), then the decline of the language signifies a loss of culture. Secondly, when people make what are essentially references to Cymraeg-based language identity, from subject-positions within that identity-space, these references tend to be submerged in utterances that are, on the surface, about cultural practices.

It is worth noting that the submergence of Cymraeg language-culture is fundamentally both a diachronic process and a synchronic system (cf. Geertz’s (1962) distinction between the two, in this connection to national identity). It is both historical process and cultural dialectic—even if I could reasonably only address one or the other (and I chose to focus on the latter). Thus, the synchronic system is but the current moment in an ongoing history that is told from various perspectives, which, in the self-narrations of these perspectives, maintain a synchronic system. Put differently, cultural activities of the Cymraeg language-cultural complex are practiced primarily because they are sustained by, and because participants act-as-if-they-believe
that these activities sustain, the reproductive social function of Cymraeg use.\textsuperscript{30} I leave this interpretation with the status of a hypothesis, not to be investigated in this dissertation, because the function of language and salient traditional practices associated with Cymraeg cannot be adequately examined until the ideological appearances are addressed.

To some extent, this cultural knowledge of the relevance and significance of language involves an almost universal taken-for-granted quality (common to the taken-for-granted quality of cultural practices practiced anywhere), where those with a language identity rooted in an affinity for the Cymraeg language-cultural complex could not imagine a world without Cymraeg. However, the fact that Cymraeg has been the target of repression and does not have a high status among world languages—as if balancing on its narrow, rocky, and gradually deteriorating ledge alongside the broad fields of England—is not the stuff of ordinary tacit cultural knowledge that is necessarily familiar to every ethnographer of any cultural setting. The fact that the indigenous language has been the target of repression and does not have a high status among world languages is the motivation for a sort of political consciousness that, for some people in Wales, guides individuals’ participation in a politics of language and national identity, rather than being an inert part of the background of everyday life—whether tacit or expressed.

Since that political consciousness is driven as much by accounts of the past as of the present, this dissertation is really about something common to both the first and second lessons I learned. That is, it is of primary importance that the conceptualization of Welsh culture is in terms of implicit references to Cymraeg and that the implicit references to Cymraeg are submerged in explicit references to culture—as Chapters Three and Nine discuss. Yet, because

\textsuperscript{30} We can compare these activities to that of baptismal practices, which are sustained by, and serve to sustain, a Christianity cultural complex (This reference to Christian baptism is partly coincidental and partly motivated, given my discussion in Chapter Nine of the trope of “drowning” children in Welshness.). In this imperfect analogy, Cymraeg is one type of language, with associated sociocultural spaces for its performances (kinds of practices); just as Christianity is one type of religion, with associated kinds of practices, such as baptisms.
the meanings and circulation of implicit references to Cymraeg require an historical consciousness of the Cymraeg language-cultural complex, history narratives and images do vital work in (re)producing Cymraeg-based language identities.

I eventually came to see that teachers choose many of the national figures selected for history instruction because the figures are part of the history of the Cymraeg language in particular. My recognition that most lessons that did address a distinctly Welsh history were about figures in the history of Cymraeg finally met my conclusions based on the first lesson I had received: that there was no programmatic effort in history lessons to distinguish Welsh narratives from English narratives and to teach a pointed Welsh history in the service of patriotism. The consequence was my sense that history as a topic, implicit or explicit, was secondary to the implicit or explicit topic of Cymraeg as the centerpiece of a language-cultural complex. In discovering that that was much of the content of a question I had not asked (“Why is there no such programmatic effort in history lessons?”), I realized I had a basis—albeit, a fuzzy, underdetermined notion—for an answer.

The fact that instructional resources, like the curriculum and lesson materials relating to the school subject of history, are not mobilized to teach a patriotic version of Welsh heritage is of cultural significance. Ultimately, it means that those people with an affinity for “indigenous” Wales rely on background knowledge about the history and practices of the Cymraeg language-cultural complex that is only ever made explicit on those occasions when people express frustration with the status quo or a desire for change in Wales. These occasions, in turn, become marked—as “political”, by people who share those views, and as “nationalistic” in a negative sense by those who do not share those views—precisely because that knowledge is unusually
being made explicit on these occasions and given a directedness that would ordinarily be merely implicit—and, therefore, neutral or, at least, indeterminately (un)directed.

After the realizations above, I came to see that they do not speak as much to language in the sense of communicative practices as they do to the idea of language communities as cohesive units. Silverstein (1998a, 2003b) defined “language community” as a community of people whose membership consists in their treating the focal language (and only that language) as symptom and emblem of the community, regardless of dialectal variation. The concept borrows on Anderson’s (1991) idea of an imagined community that is horizontal and generally not in interpersonal mutual contact. Language community is an especially important concept when considered in conjunction with the folk models and folk theories about language use and language forms that linguistic anthropologists have come to call ideologies of language (see Schieffelin et al. 1998).

According to Woolard and Schieffelin, ideologies of language are “notions about how communication works as a social process, and to what purpose”, where these “envision and enact links of language to group and personal identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology”, “often underpin[ning] fundamental social institutions” (1994:55-56). Contrasting the concept of language community with that of speech community, Silverstein stated that definition of the latter depends on patterns “of who, normatively, communicates in which ways to whom on what occasions”. By contrast, language communities are made solidary by language ideologies (e.g., of purity of registers) “based on allegiance to norms of... code” (1998a:129).

The sort of language community with which the phenomena in north-west Wales were involved manifest as the more traditional notion of a more or less interpersonal (nevertheless, imagined) community that is an experiential and inhabitable locality or social network. Such
loosely defined locality or network that is associated closely with a necessarily non-experiential and partially impersonal language-based imagined community might be called a language demesne—despite the feudal origins of the term. That is, a language demesne is some “chunk” of a language community shaped by and constituted by those who lay claim to it in and through their frequent interactions within its indefinite and permeable boundaries. Because the area of north-west Wales in which my research was centered, 1) cohered together according to present and historical occupational mobility, and 2) could be studied adequately within a six to twelve month period, Abergwaith formed what I call a language demesne.

While the term refers to something belonging to a landlord with vassals who was himself a vassal of other lords, it is noteworthy that a language demesne occupies a middle territory between different domains of language-based identity. In the language demesne in which I carried out my research in northwest Wales, Cymraeg dominates and has its “vassals”. Among those who belong to the Cymraeg language community living and intermingling there are those who feel subject to a local Cymraeg regime, people who feel imposed on by social obligations to participate in the Cymraeg community. At the outer edge, that particular demesne is one among many demesnes within Wales that have in common the fact that Cymraeg has a minority status in Wales. Even more dramatically, it is almost insignificant next to the power of the force that borders it; that is, the English-language language-empire of the UK, not to mention the UK’s diplomatic sibling and linguistic paternal-twin, the United States of America.

When I left my home university for principal dissertation field research, I embraced the implication that language is often (always?) a central cultural concern in ethnography. However, I do not think I would have begun to question certain conventional assumptions about language without first trying to understand the activities (as opposed to categories or representations) of
language politics *in situ*. It is a problem of description that led me to recognize a problem with theory. There is a large difference between recognizing the importance of language in a place where the politics of language become quite heated, and the bigger step of obtaining answers about the cultural and political significance of language practices in such a locale.

What I did not realize until I was home again is that virtually all things of significant cultural interest that I encountered in the field were predicated on some conception or another of a community; a community *of language*, but it was the relations of community that were of key importance. Language, in the sense of the language practices that linguistic anthropologists study, was the visible presence of that community, but the sense of cohesion that language lent to social interactions and perceptions of society—which enabled people to sense fissures, fractures, and a moral code to resist, tolerate, or endorse—was the cohesion of putative communities, not the cohesion of language as conventionally understood. While I had moved from concerns with history instruction to concerns with language practices, it was yet another major step to the realization that, if I constructed my research problem in terms of language practices, this would misrepresent the sociocultural realities. My research problem was more properly centered in issues regarding the role of languages-as-symbols in the social constitution of the macro-form of domestic and voluntary association: communities.

**A Scholarly, but Practical Dilemma**

This dissertation is the result of trying to answer two questions that haunted me throughout my graduate student career, but which I laid aside in my later grant proposals for dissertation fieldwork. I asked them in a form directed specifically at language and identity
issues while attending as a non-presenter at a Michicagoan conference in Chicago. The questions I posed seemed to lie in the not-distant background of nearly all of the papers presented that Saturday afternoon in May 2008. With Jane Hill, Judith Irvine, John Lucy, Susan Philips, and Michael Silverstein (among others) looking on and participating in support of graduate students from the University of Michigan and the University of Chicago’s anthropology departments, I asked the following:

First, how might we reconcile the deconstructionist mission in mainstream anthropology with the interests of indigenous language speakers, whose rights sometimes depend on their treating language codes as natural kinds?

Secondly, why is it that this issue of reconciliation only gets raised (as a rule, it is seldom more than framed) near the end of journal articles, books, and conferences (e.g., Silverstein 1998a:421-423 and Silverstein 2003:546-554)?

Had I asked those present to tell me the meaning of life, the universe, and everything, I would have received a more encouraging reply.

When my questions in Chicago were met with a thoughtful silence that seemed unlikely to produce a response, I continued: Of course, I know that we cannot answer my questions in the time we have, and they might even be unanswerable. At that, a light shower of ambiguous laughter broke across the crowd. In fact, there was no face-saving response the audience could make—and yet, I was convinced there was a genuine problem of broad significance here crying out to be addressed.

31 This is a conference at which graduate students of anthropology from (normally) the University of Chicago and the University of Michigan present papers in or around linguistic anthropology. It alternates between the two host departments and receives enormous moral and intellectual support from both departments’ linguistic anthropology faculty. In 2008, the theme was “Linguistic Worlds in Collision”. My questions were partially inspired by several sessions I had attended the previous two days at the University of Illinois’ Decolonizations: Subaltern Studies and Indigenous Critical Theory symposium. I returned to the Michicagoan conference in Chicago in 2010 to present some of the material in Chapter Seven and some of what follows on the theme of “Inhabitable Language”. As far as I know, I am the first Michicagoan presenter who was not a student at either host department.
Within the last forty years, it has become conventional for linguistic anthropologists to treat the relation between language and identity in a dialectic way, both in situations (e.g., Bauman and Briggs 1990) and in historical context (e.g., Silverstein 1985b). This is a result of the struggles to contextualize the “texts” of linguistic analysis (see Goodwin and Duranti 1992). In that period of time, anthropological conceptualizations of these “texts” have moved away from a focus on morphosyntactic and semantic elements of utterances that constitute expressions with the propositional quality of descriptions and statements of fact (what Silverstein has called “denotational texts”). They have moved toward a focus on particular, situational analyses of dialogic interaction that are not revealed solely in the meanings of “denotational texts”. Silverstein has called the latter analytic readings of cases of communicative interaction and dialogical meanings, “interactional texts”.

Linguistic anthropology has undergone such a revolution—perhaps, without fully acknowledging (certainly without privileging)—the intrinsic sociality of the social and semiotic situations in which texts, as models of meaning and interaction, arise. In other words, the features of sociality that can be seen in interactional texts are revealed by means of a given evidentiary record. The evidence happens to be a primarily linguistic object (“text”) with social pragmatic components. This linguistic ontology of analytic textuality, in which utterances, as texts parsed into cohesive units by ordinary interpersonal interaction or by professional analysis, constitutes a category of existence that establishes the professional reality that texts analyzed or responded to in everyday sociality exist in a space of their own; obviously these texts and the space they occupy are understood to be in close contact, and co-constitute and are co-constituted by interpersonal action, assessment, and collaboration, but nonetheless necessarily distinct in imagination sufficient to make analysis possible. As Caton (2004:647) put it, linguistic
anthropologists’ “method of analysis has been to start with the empirically concrete, interactive event and then work outward to ever wider contexts to develop our insights into the connections between language and culture”.

Yet, it is an inherently social situation that becomes the communicative situation that yields the empirically concrete, interactive event, which is amenable to analysis of inferences and interpretations. To make the latter into “texts” of a more familiar analytic genre is to take a realist (i.e., non-constructivist) view of texts, or even a kind of reductivism. That is, there would seem to be little recognition of an essential fact or, at least, the methodological problem entailed by the following fact: *The tactile, visual, or auditory signal that will ultimately be decoded in some sense as a semiotic sign already has a social being (is already part of social reality) before it has a linguistic being.* Recognition of difference does not need to wait for decoding of a message, but can occur at the moment anyone interprets—as a possibly social act—anything another person is doing, such as speaking a “foreign” language. Normativity that helps members of a language community to police borders, as with English-only campaigns, is expressed in a social assertibility that enters into interaction before, as well as during and after, signals are interpreted (decoded) as messages. Within such an analytic strategy, there is no seam of functionality between the forms of talk and social assertibility.

This idea of the *social envelopment* of language can be contrasted with a different model that is sometimes accidentally applied in linguistic anthropology, and more actively in some cultural anthropological accounts. According to the latter, conventional *social deployment* of language model, linguistic form structures social action or acts as a cue to shared cultural knowledge. The methodological disability with respect to that essential fact neglects the existential conditions of identity as constructed in linguistic and social practices. This is the
condition I was dimly aware of when I asked those two questions in Chicago. It is the condition this dissertation tries to address by tacking back and forth between the sociocultural and the communicative aspects of language politics in Wales.

Given Rosaldo’s (1988, 1989) category of sub-altern communities of marginal importance in traditional anthropology, there are at least two ways of talking about the apparent absence of culture, both of which apply to indigeneity in Wales. One is related to the lack of (traditionally ethnographic) prototypical elaborate rituals, material culture and complex subsistence practices, and therefore seem so irrelevant as to be invisible to the ethnographic gaze. Another, which is related to the first, is the lack of an explicit form of discourse or vocabulary for self-description of indigeneity in Wales. This is a consequent of the subordinate status of and the incommensurate differences (in mass media, language, political, economic terms) between indigeneity in Wales and modern British regimes (see Gewertz and Errington 1991).

As I outlined above, the social relations and institutions of the Cymraeg language-cultural complex and the worldview associated with Cymraeg, in public discourses, figure as a special interest (i.e., as political). In turn, cultural labor devoted to moving those “special” aspects of Welshness out of that problematic space—making a point of treating them as if they are not problematic—is also deemed to be political and, occasionally, an expression of “Welsh racism” (because the issue of difference is made salient). The consequence is not only a shaping of place-worlds that is influenced by the discourse of and about nationalism. As demonstrated in the previous section, which focused on the shield trope and defensive translation, one can identify zones of identity that people inhabit—and the boundaries of which they reinforce by various communicative and rhetorical means.
CHAPTER THREE
◄ CULTURE IN CODE ►

If culture itself had been an elusive phenomenon, one may say that Geertz has pursued the most elusive part of it, the ethos [the affective and stylistic dimensions]. It may also be suggested that this, among other things, accounts for his continuing and broad-based appeal. Perhaps the majority of students who go into anthropology, and almost certainly the majority of nonanthropologists who are fascinated by our field, are drawn to it because they have been struck at some point in their experience by the “otherness” of another culture, which we would call its ethos. Geertz’s work provides one of the very few handles for grasping that otherness (Sherry Ortner, “Theory in Anthropology Since the Sixties” (1984:129n3))

DECODING CULTURAL REFERENCES

The Setting

During visits to about a dozen schools in Gwynedd county in July and August 2002, I conducted a routine interview with an assistant head teacher, Mrs. Hefina Williams and her close friend, Mrs. Hughes, also a teacher at the same school.¹ The headteacher of the school was away in mid-Wales with the school’s tennis team during this visit to that school. I interviewed him on a separate occasion (with less interesting results). After finding my way to the main entrance, I followed a staff person into the building, who then went to find the deputy head teacher. Mrs. Williams arrived and escorted me into the head teacher’s office. Mrs. Williams explained to me that in a few moments, a stream of kids was going to come out of the classrooms and she would have to go away to arrange that her duties were covered. She left and returned again with a cup of tea according to my specifications: with milk and a little sugar. She left again for about fifteen minutes.

Along three of the walls of the headteacher’s office, there were shelf after shelf of binders filled with curriculum and assessment materials. A small quilt wall-hanging depicting a pastoral

¹ Interview D2#3R, 5 July 2002
scene with sheep decorated the fourth wall. Several school athletic trophies were displayed on a table. A security monitor with alternating views of the school was conspicuously located adjacent to the headteacher’s desk. Sorting out my interview schedule and notes, before the interview with Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Hughes, I could hear children’s voices and the cry of seagulls far off through the open window on this summer afternoon. I organized my thoughts and considered for yet another time how my series of questions performed in previous interviews.

When Mrs. Williams returned, our communication was conducted almost entirely in English. The interviews I conducted English-language almost certainly would have been different if they had been conducted in Cymraeg, but this does not mean that they should have been conducted in Cymraeg (or in English, for that matter). If they would have been “better” in such a case—if the “data” of these interviews would have been better—than this technical fact would act as a professional imperative to conduct them in Cymraeg (or English). Of course, better data for one research purpose might be worse data for another purpose. Apart from the basic methodological issues (see, for example, Briggs 1986), this very issue of interview language, in the context of my (and similar) research, is an issue of language politics, as well as management of interpersonal communication in a research context.

The recording of the interview, as a communicative event in English, is of lasting value—beyond some unidimensional sense of quality, in the context of the interviewees’ participation. My reasoning for this claim is that the cultural knowledge I sought could neither precede nor be accomplished as a direct result of competence in the various registers and cultural areas I thought to be relevant. That is, it was not purely interactional data I was after. Such cultural knowledge was grown, not manufactured, albeit socially—in collaboration with others; and it is grown in
individual time-spans that allow management of knowledge through whichever language code is best available. I responded by framing my understanding of my results in light of the limits imposed by the methods I used. This retrospective view was not available to me during most of the time in which I conducted the principal dissertation research, of course.

When Mrs. Williams returned, she took up a patient and welcoming demeanor, given that she was facing a stranger who, she might have imagined, had no inkling of the depths of Welsh culture. I can imagine her wondering how exactly I expected to learn about Welsh culture if I had not grown up there and, therefore, didn’t already know “it”. Just as I began sipping the tea that Mrs. Williams prepared for me, she made a suggestion she probably thought would be helpful: “If you tell me what it is that you would like to know, perhaps I could then find a way to get the information to you”. While, at the time, I could appreciate how common such a moment in ethnographic research was, I could not have imagined how impossible it would be to satisfy Mrs. Williams’ request, given that it was Welsh things that I wanted to know. Even in retrospect, I do not necessarily think that my post-analysis familiarity with the culturally-constructed, narratival expressive forms that Mrs. Williams would employ in the interview to follow could be equated with, or could have allowed me to articulate, “what [I] would like to know”. Regardless of my bemusement with Mrs. Williams’ request at the time, my mode of analysis of this interview takes its cue from the cultural expectations of the two teachers.

Their cultural expectations, as is evident from my discussion of the interview that follows, include much that is taken to be part of a European legacy, by which I am alluding to the centrality of description. In Wales, this often takes the form of a string of propositions about the past as a coherent subject, as did happen in that interview. Narratives of an historical register are an important part of how Welsh people, with or without a primary affinity to Cymraeg,
convey what is Welsh about themselves. Cultural references—such as to the Welsh hero, Owain Glyndŵr—and their mutual relations are an intrinsic part of understanding the (folk-historiographic features of the) cultural milieu. In this way, Welsh people and their heroes take on the role of protagonist in a story of collectivities.

The plane of expressive content—the description—is a recounting of what the protagonist did. However, apart from explicit descriptions of the history of the Welsh, such narratives play at least an equally important, implicit symbolic role. Appendix A provides some clues as to how the importance of language identity is bolstered by such a narrative. My highlighting of the importance of language makes explicit what is mostly implicit in the kind of history of the Welsh that I encountered. It is the implicit symbolism of teachers’ thinking that I was interested in when interviewing these teachers.

Of course I mentioned none of this. Instead, I explained the project and gave Mrs. Williams the informed consent form so that she would have a clear idea of my objectives. I explained to her my interest in the ways in which national identity figures in history teaching and suggested a format for the interview. She wanted to know more about the subject population. I explained that, since this was a preliminary research project, it wasn’t important that the teachers I spoke to be exclusively teachers of Years 2, 5, and 8 (US-American school grades 1, 4, and 7) as my principal dissertation research envisaged as participants.

Mrs. Williams mentioned a teacher who was related to the pioneer who had taken thousands of Welsh persons to Patagonia and who was very proud of her Welshness. I later came to suspect that this was a good friend of Mrs. Williams, a good friend partly because they were so like-minded in their views of national identity. Then, she made an interesting conversational move. Mrs. Williams started to talk about how the “older” teachers, like herself
and Mrs. Hughes, were much more conscious of the difficulties Welsh teachers had faced in the past, such as the struggle to get Cymraeg services to be considered the norm. The “younger” teachers now took for granted that which was won by her and her peers.

Mrs. Williams referred to this sort of talk as “getting on her soapbox”. This phrase was a framing device that marked out discourse as inappropriately political for the ordinary school environment, much like PG-13 movie ratings mark out content deemed inappropriate for primary-school aged children. I recognized the framing device on some level, but I had not yet moved to my focus on language politics. As a result, I did not interpret it as a language politics soapbox, but only as a Welsh nationalist soapbox. My interest in the role that regulation—of what is political and what is not—plays in meaning-construction was, at the time, still undeveloped. Yet, even beyond my lack of readiness to focus on that theme, I was hesitant to focus on cultural struggles that occurred during a period of Welsh history that many Welsh teachers liken to the civil rights period in Twentieth-Century United States. I wanted to know what teachers were doing now, in this decade, since education policy and practice were now in the hands of Welsh teachers and policy-makers. The expressive forms that allow teachers like Mrs. Williams to say what Cymraeg means to them and why it is the history of Cymraeg that represents Welsh history to them—as I can now recognize—lie largely in such narratives of the recent past (1960s through the 1980s). For teachers who lived through that period, it was a time of energy and expression of the cultural values that they locate in Cymraeg.

While conducting the preliminary fieldwork during which this interview took place, and even throughout much of my principal fieldwork, the complex relations among Cymraeg, history of the nation, English-language hegemony, civil rights, language ideologies, and history instruction evaded me. I felt that I was skipping along the surface of a deep reservoir, but I
seemed to lack the cultural ballast necessary for anyone to plumb those depths (This is revealing, given that I began developing my cultural (albeit propositional) knowledge of Wales as a pre-teen.). To add to all of this, I had been saving questions about the patriotic sentiments of teachers until the ends of interviews. Therefore, I was unwilling to make the most out of Mrs. Williams’ revelation, which came at the beginning of the interview. Luckily, she returned to the theme later by using the soapbox image again.

To anticipate the subsequent details, those of the references to “cultural history” that Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Hughes made in this interview—which bear on Cymraeg, in particular, but only implicitly—were merely tacit references to the cultural thematics of nationalism and national identity (for the first half of the interview). Much of what motivated the two teachers’ turns in their interview performance was implicit and, on the surface, this gave the interview a haphazard and rambling quality. The interview was not so much topically organized as it was organized by the associations that cultural concepts, places, and historical figures had to other concepts, places, and figures. One would already have to possess that network of cultural concepts, places, and historical figures to understand that the references were related to each other in terms of the cultural significance of Cymraeg. On the surface, whatever explicit statements make use of these cultural references appear to be about the cultural significances of cultural landmarks. I now proceed by presenting segments of that interview.

**First Half of the Interview**

The first recorded segment begins by documenting their evaluation of English as their second language. Clearly, their expression did not suffer from any lack of competence. Rather, the general atmosphere is one in which performances in Cymraeg exhibit a more-or-less degree
of one’s embodiment of Cymraeg-based Welsh identity. Thus, the teachers’ lower confidence in English is relative to expectations of performance in Cymraeg, within the context of Wales. While literary Cymraeg is the object of great scrutiny, everyday Cymraeg expectations revolve around local patterns, rather than formal competence. People feel some discomfort speaking in English not because of a greater or lesser ability, but because they do not strive to meet high standards in English in the first place. Further, the attitudes about English by many Cymraeg-speakers in its oppositional relation to figures English as a foreign language. Hence, there are no local patterns of performance that would be perceived as naturally local; hence, no local English pattern to adopt as one’s own. Nonetheless, people who regard Cymraeg as their first language tend to be generally aware that their English competence is not equal to their Cymraeg competence.

1 Hughes: ‘s my second language.
2 Williams: It’s our second language, yes.
3 Hughes: Yes.
4 Williams: So-
5 Hughes: Um, well, this term in our in year 3 and 4, our theme is um, sea, the sea life and the sea shore and in history we’re doing Tudor Times and we try to look at the Welsh aspect you know not- we do talk about things like you know who was the King and Queen of England at the time you know-
6 Maas: Mm hm:
7 Hughes: But that’s just by the way we really try to think of what pla- what sort of place it was in Wales at th~s- at the same time and what’s the most important thing. There is the um, translation of the Bible

It is not surprising that Hughes began the discussion: She was the head of the history department and would be expected to lead because she held that role. Such formalities do not tend to affect the interview that follows, however, and she allows her friend, Mrs. Williams to prevail at many points of the interview. Her dominant role at this early stage might have set the pattern for the
rest of the interview, though I found the pattern to be fairly common, being intrinsic to the
temporally-unfolding conversations with strangers about a professional practice. This pattern
involves the recall of items that are relevant to the discussion.

The Theoretical List: This short initial segment indicates the most obvious feature of this
communicative event. Given the explicit purposes for the interview—for these teachers to
describe how they teach history—this event was arranged, in the teachers’ perspectives, for them
to transmit information to me. This means that it has the implicit structure of a list. That is, it
consists of a number of nominal forms (e.g., “the Bible”), many of which require explanation.
The complete transcript can be found in Appendix B.

This initial segment also shows a transition from informal talk to addressing the explicit
purposes of the interview. As such, the theoretical list has not yet conformed to its organizing
theme. Lines 5-8 reveal Mrs. Hughes’ drawing on counter-examples to the intended theme (i.e.,
teaching about Welshness) as they presented me with a catalogue of related information,
something they did throughout the interview. Thus, telling students who was the King and
Queen of England during the Tudor, on the surface, does not serve this purpose. Human
practices for those who live next to the sea also seem irrelevant, but it is not simply because it
applies to local experiences of Welsh persons. As Mrs. Hughes recognizes that the monarchs of
England might not be apropos to life in Wales (“But that’s just by the way. . .”, line 11), she
reconstructs the narrative—“we really try to think of what sort of place it was in Wales” in times
marked by “English” chronology (“what sort of place it was in Wales at th~s- at the same time”,
lines 11-12)—and orients herself to “what’s the most important thing” (lines 12-13). This
provides the first entry on the theoretical list that corresponds to my vague purposes in interviewing these teachers: translation of the Bible into Cymraeg.

It is important to recognize that, whereas the start of Henry VII’s reign (and the end of the War of the Roses) is sometimes taken as the starting point of the modern British state, the translation of the Bible into Cymraeg in 1588 plays a similar role. Clearly, there are earlier moments when events associable with that language took place and are recognized in the present as important events (e.g., the earliest known Cymraeg literary work). Yet, all of the schools I visited made the translation of the Bible by William Morgan a paramount landmark, and starting terminus in the narrative they believed themselves accountable for telling. The translation of the New Testament by William Salesbury in 1567 (twenty-one years earlier) did not receive such attention, and I did not hear it mentioned on any of the visits I made in 2002, or playing a prominent curricular role during my principal dissertation research. Precedent in accounts of history, then, yielded to images in collective memory of a presentist perspective. Note also that another significant event occurred the same year: the destruction of the Spanish Armada. Some teachers give time to both, while some schools omit the Spanish Armada.

These details suggest a specific selective tradition, in conjunction with publication and circulation practices, which together have reproduced the significance of William Morgan and his translation. Some partially explanatory accounts of that tradition bear on the significance of this moment in the history of Cymraeg, which amounts to giving much of the credit for the survival of Cymraeg to the Morgan Bible. First, Morgan’s translation of the Old Testament was so popular (in reception and eventual consumption) that, as a landmark in writing, it became a standard for good written Cymraeg (Morgan 1988). Secondly, it came to act as a common text that bridged dialectal variation as clerics encountered obstacles to religious communication with
respect to their own religious tracts they were distributing in north and south Wales (Morgan 1988).

On the surface, then, the reference to translation of the central text of Christianity, which played a key role in sectarian Christian politics during the Sixteenth Century, as the Protestants wanted to eliminate the public role of the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church—vernacular translations of the Bible served that instrumentalist goal. At a deeper level, the sectarian Christian politics had the consequence of spurring activity in and related to Wales for which Cymraeg was the focus (though religion was the more salient practical focus). That segment of Welsh society that had an affinity toward Cymraeg (virtually all of the population of Wales in the Sixteenth Century, except some of the gentry) was suddenly encouraged by new resources of written Cymraeg and a model for writing Cymraeg in these Christian texts that, for the first time, were in their most familiar language. In the process, that era of Cymraeg-centered activity produced the foundations for Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century cultural revival movements and Twentieth-Century “pilgrimages”.

9 Maas: Mm hm:
10 Hughes: But that’s just by the way we really try to think of what pla- what sort of place it was in Wales at th~s- at the same time and what’s the most important thing. There is the um, translation of the Bible.
13 M: Uh huh.
14 H: Which happened in 1588, you know?
15 M: Uh huh.
16 H: By request of Elizabeth, who was Queen at the time, you know?
17 M: Oh, so she actually requested that? I didn’t-
18 H: Yes, yes.
19 M: ...know that.
20 H: Because she wanted to change, because before th- it was a Catholic country, wasn’t it, and then she wanted to change it really, um, to Protestant so she thought the best thing is to give the people of Wales the chance to read and learn about the Bible.
24 M: Hm.
25 H: And of course there weren’t any schools. . .
M: Right.
H: …so they- they didn’t have books either. So she started with the Bible, really, and that was translated fours hundred- in 1588 And then um each village was given or each town was given a bible in the chapel of the church, chained, because there was only one and they were so rare, you know.
M: Right.
H: So people then started having schools in chapels and in churches you know where they started to read.
M: Huh.
H: Um, so that’s quite interesting, you know th-.
M: How do the students respond to. . . I guess by that time they know who L- Elizabeth is.
H: Yeah’m. They also know about the Spanish Armada, as well, which happened in 1588, you know, y- uh- so we relate it with that, as well, you know, talk a little about what’s happened, you know, during that time.
Em, and every four years we go: to where William Morgan was born, the chapel d- wooded—the translation—we go there on a pererindod-
Will’ms: Right, it’s on a pilgrimage.
H: “Pilgrimage”. No, we walk there, which is nice you know through forestry and uh-
W: Mmm.
M: W- You walk from where to?
H: We walk from em- the- the- village where he lived was near Penmachno, Betws...
M: Uh huh-
H: …-y-coed.
M: …Okay. Right. [castle built by a]
H: …So, we eh walk from Dolwyddelan... Welsh prince, not by a Norman king]
M: Uh huh.
H: …across you know and that...
M: Mm.
H: …which is a nice walk, it’s not very long, it’s-
M: It’s about te:n:: miles isn’t it?
H: It’s two, three...
M: …Or six-
H: …miles you know, but it’s...
M: -Oh, okay.
H: …it’s, it’s countryside and you know, it’s- it gives them a feeling of what sort of age it’s very very narrow road, you know...
M: Uh huh.
W: Oh.
H: …um and then when you do arrive I don’t know if you’ve been there, but it’s a wonderful place.
M: I walked from um:: Capel Curig...
W: Mm:
H: Yeah.
M: ...to Betws-y-coed.
H: Oh there we are.
M: Which was more-
H: But you’ve haven’t been to /y/ [the]\(^2\) Ty Mawr Wybernant where William Morgan lived?
M: No: no.
H: That’s very interesting. It’s-
W: Mm, it’s a lovely- it’s being...
H: ’s museum there
W: ...renovated.
H: you know. Yes.
W: Yes.
H: And there’s a museum there you know, showing uh, you know...
M: Hm.
H: ...what’s sorts of, uh, and it’s a wonderful place for the children to go and see...
W: Mmm.
H: ...as well what sorts of houses they lived you know...
M: Uh huh.
H: ....because there’s no glass on the windows you know, shutters and, very, very old-fashioned.
M: Mm.
H: So that’s just you know what we do this term that is, you know. We also look at, um, [school bell/alarm sounds] in history, I mean in the Year 4, we look at the Cel-, you know, at the Celtic Time...
M: Mmmhm:
H: ...where we learn really from where we’ve come from as a nation you know or as a people.
M: How far back do you start? Is it Iron A- Age or...?
H: No, we d-, um, when the Celts really came to places in Wales, you know. Um, we don’t really give a date.
M: Uh huh.
H: And also there, we talk about Dewi Sant, you know...
M: Uh huh.
H: ...the patron saint of Wales...
M: Yeah.
H: ...Saints come into that category as well and that time you know.
M: Uh huh.
H: So you’re able to talk about Dewi S:ant David, but also about Deiniol.

\(^2\) Both teachers occasionally used the Cymraeg definite article, “y” [the], as a definite article in English-language streams of talk.
Mythological Presentism: Interestingly, Christian religious topics dominate this segment even when the topic seems to have changed to the prehistoric time of the Celts (who, on some accounts, survived the Roman invasion, and on other accounts, are only distantly or virtually related to present-day Welsh persons). The classical saints (400-600 A.D.) of Saint David and Saint Deiniol (as well as Saint Tudno, for whom Llandudno is named) emerge as the main topics. Thousands of years are compressed, comprising a kind of mythology that enjoys the status of being referred for teachers’ consideration by professional archaeologists and historians. However, the teachers themselves can only relate to these figures and civilizations through their remnants that are left on the physical and cultural landscape. The literal history of Britain, at primary schools, is extrinsic to the purposes of teaching about the locale and regions in Wales that appear significant from retrospective perspectives.

Didacticism: This second segment illustrates another feature of this communicative event, which these teachers shared with others. They not only were willing to tell me what they taught, but they wanted to teach me, too. Much of the time, I was aware of what Welsh persons were referring to when it was historical—to a fault, as it has made it difficult for me to see how communication should have appeared to a new ethnographer. At other times, I was learning new things. I was certainly new to the details of their fresh recollections of what makes up their syllabi and benefitted from their personal embellishments. This was a great kindness, as they could have avoided the inconvenience of the interview and simply given me photocopies of the schools’ curriculum for various ages/grades.

The personal didacticism that characterized the teachers’ engagement with me, the foreigner, was common to many teachers I interviewed during preliminary and principal
fieldwork. Early on in my series of fieldtrips, I did not conceal the fact that I knew many of the
details they did not expect an outsider to know. It made no difference: They went right on
teaching me. It must have seemed impossible that anyone outside Wales would know about its
history. However, simply for these educators to teach me what was on the theoretical list in even
this personally engaged way cannot bring home the central point the theoretical list represents
evocatively, connotatively.

The next segment (skipping lines 113-150) illustrates the practical use of fieldtrips to
cover a wide variety of Welsh heritage, which stems from the primary teachers’ role of nurturing
children. These fieldtrip allow teachers to move beyond a catalogue of information about what it
means to be Welsh and into the living environment and historical context that literal landmarks
evoke—“what sorts of houses they lived you know” (line 91). The teachers were more
cconcerned with evoking a sense of place and time—see lines 102-104 above—than with dates
and chronology (an approach that has pendular swings, coming and going in popularity)—see
lines 200-201 in Appendix B). This pedagogical impulse of theirs has an established, formal
place in the traditions of curriculum development in Wales under the rubric of historical empathy
(see lines 250-388 in Appendix B, for the informal theory on empathy that this approach
represents).

151   H: Yes, when we do- eh, when we do study the Celtic times, that’s in the
152       Spring term, we take the children to Glanllyn. I don’t know if you’ve
153       heard about Glanllyn. It’s a Welsh, em, it’s a camp
154   W:  League of…
155   H:  Welsh…
156   W:  …Youth
157   H:  League of Youth.
158   W:  On LLyn Tegid…
159   M:  Uh okay.
160   W:  …in Bala. It’s between Bala and LLanuwchllyn.
Yeah. So that gives us a chance to go to Celtica in Machynlleth and, eh, we looked at Celtic places around Bala as well, em. What else do we do? We do Victoria Time, but, em, what we do is we, you know, movement, people moving from Wales to Patagonia…

Oh yeah.

…and places…

Uhh.

…like that, you know.

Uh huh.

So it’s a chance for me to talk to them about Michael D. Jones and other people who did leave country, you know.

Multi-Tasking Fieldtrips and Identity: Fieldtrips are difficult and time-costly to arrange. Teachers must make the most of these times outside of the classroom. A single area, Y Bala, serves as the destination for several purposes. This area of and around Y Bala is one of great cultural significance. It is the heart of Christian literacy in Wales. William Morgan came from the area. When the teenager, Mary Jones, purportedly walked barefoot over twenty miles north-east from LLanfihangel-y-Pennant to buy a bible from Charles, this prompted Thomas Charles to found the Bible Society, which is known for distributing bibles (line 624-662, Appendix B). The man known for recruiting Welsh persons for settlement of Patagonia, Michael D. Jones, came from the village of Y Bala (line 170, above). It is also considered “ground zero” in the construction of contemporary Welsh activism and resistance to English hegemony (i.e., so-called Welsh nationalism). During the 1950s, 60s and 70s, several water reservoirs were constructed in Wales. However, one in particular captured the cultural imagination: the flooding of Capel Celyn to the north of Y Bala to create the Tryweryn reservoir, which was made to supply water for Liverpool, England. A play commemorating the process of removal of people and submerging the village was produced in 2007, while I was conducting my fieldwork. In addition, the group that broke from the Women’s Institute when the latter established a policy of conducting business in English only was formed near Y Bala in Y Parc. Finally, the original and
continuously maintained site for the youth organization, League of Youth (Yr Urdd Gobaith Cymru),\(^3\) is located near Y Bala: Glanllyn (lines 152-160). It holds dormitories for overnight stays and outdoor activity facilities.

Lines 161 to 164 contain numerous and disparate references: the Celts (via Celtica, an interactive museum devoted to the Celts, but is now closed), Celtic places around Bala, Victoria Time, people moving from Wales to Patagonia. The recollective process expressed in this last segment (lines 151-171) is fairly symbolic of how the teachers perform their role as nurturing children in their Welshness and manage multi-tasking fieldtrips. Ostensibly, Mrs. Hughes mentioned Michael D. Jones because she had changed the topic to migrations and people who left Wales (lines 162-171). That is only the surface part of what is going on at that point in the interview. The fact that Michael D. Jones is from Y Bala—and this is a significant fact of local culture—is likely the stronger motivation for moving from the pedagogical unit of The Celts, which was the original topic, to that of Victoria Time. The eclectic itinerary of any fieldtrip to the area is likely to center in a vague cohesion tying together the diverse set of activities. Where some deeper meaning to this vague cohesion might be missing, they are connected in their representation of a kind of Wales.

The following segment continues this pattern of skipping from topic to topic by some implicit principle of conceptual cohesion. The first principle in the following segment is the

\(^3\) In its creation, Yr Urdd Gobaith Cymru [The Welsh League of Hope/Youth] drew loosely on another Band of Hope, which was a temperance organization for working-class children founded in the mid-1800s. Although Welsh culture has been oriented to the non-Conformist chapel tradition, but the latter was not explicitly directed toward alcohol abstinence. The Urdd was founded in 1922 and was clearly devoted to Cymraeg as emblem of the nation. Clearly, it was the declining use of Cymraeg that was the primary cause for the Urdd’s founding. Its founder, O. M. Edwards (see lines 665-667) was also the first Chief Inspector of Schools for Wales. The symbol used the three colors of the Welsh flag, but used them to different symbolic purpose: green for Wales, red for humanity, and white for Jesus. Apart from several hospitality sites for outdoor or civic activities, its biggest event is the Urdd Eisteddfod: a festival that culminates in May, but involves several competitions at the school district, sub-county area, and county levels before the final rounds of competition at the annual week-long event. These events cover prose and poetry recitation, singing in a variety of forms (choral, duet, solo, with and without accompaniment), instrumental performance, drama, folk dancing, as well as sports like gymnastics, swimming, and rugby.
connection between wars and the Red Cross. The local involvement of people in the Red Cross and family histories in relation to World War identifies another pedagogical approach, that of enabling pupils to recognize the existing personal connections to history. This transitions to the historical topic of an aspect of the subject-matter of World War II, in which Wales figures as sanctuary for evacuees from the major cities of England during the period of German air raids. The implicit principle of cohesion guiding the next transition, however, is of particular interest.

203 W: …because, we in Year Five and Six this term, we’ve been working about
204 the- talking about- learning about the World War Two, period…
205 M: Mm hmm.
206 W: …but what’t it is, it’s all how that affected…
207 H: Yeah.
208 W: …[area of north-west Wales] itself.
209 M: Mm.
210 W: And…
211 H: And-
212 W: …what life was like here, you know rather than what life was like
213 throughout Britain, and the battles...
214 M: Mm hmm.
215 W: em, and we had someone from the Red Cross coming in to speak to me
216 the other day and so we’ve learned about the history of the Red Cross
217 and when it was founded, and things like that, em, but mainly ,again, as
218 you say, local…
219 H: Yeah
220 M: Hm.
221 W: …and get the children to find out…
222 H: I think the main-
223 W: …who’re related to them…
224 H: Yeah.
225 W: …who were in the war, what they were doing and they come up some-
226 with some, you know, really interesting facts.
227 H: Yes.
228 W: …You know, one grandmother has written out three A4 sides about her
229 memories of being evacuated to Wales…
230 M: Wow-
231 W: …and she’s moved back, of course, to live in- i- to- to London, eh, to,
232 em, England, but what she didn’t realize at the time, after, she’d have a
233 granddaughter living permanently in Wales…
234 M: Hm.
235 W: …and learning and- and being a bilingual child.
The Mother Who Learned Cymraeg: In lines 232-233, the topic of interest is the long-distance grandmother-granddaughter relationship. The features that are most probably salient might seem to be the issue that the granddaughter lives permanently in Wales. What is lying underneath the surface is the principle that, by learning Cymraeg, you can become a permanent inhabitant. For a mother to have a bilingual child should mean, in relevant cases, that the child can use a language that the mother (and grandmother) can understand. In that case, the distance between persons would only be geographic since there should be no linguistic barrier. Beyond this, however, is the idea of cultural distance that is created by the granddaughter growing up (in) Cymraeg. It is as if this fact makes the granddaughter into a wholly different being from the granddaughter: not only is the mother and daughter made a permanent (in some moral sense) inhabitant of Wales, coming to belong to Wales, but this fact marks a difference between the mother (and daughter) and the grandmother. Consequently, the final transition to an explicit stance of admiration for the “learner” who has a daughter at the school (line 242) is a very interesting one.

Implicit Elaborative Themes: Even if one is present in contexts oriented to the Cymraeg language-cultural complex, the value of the theoretical list cannot be conveyed by “find[ing] a way to get the information to you”, as Mrs. Williams volunteered at the beginning of our meeting. Of course, one might recognize the paramount importance of Cymraeg; after all,
explicit statements to that effect are quite common. However, it is only in seeing that importance
as an elaborative theme for the theoretical list that the items on the list can be instructional
according to the way the teachers understand those items.

391 W: But there’s quite a strong feeling here, em…
392 H: Mm.
393 W: …about learning about Kenni-…
394 H: Mm.
395 W: …eh, Penrhyn Castle…
396 H: Yeah-
397 W: …There’s a s- still a bitterness…
398 H: Mm.
399 W: …between the landlord and the people…
400 H: Mm.
401 W: …of Bethesda.
402 H: Yeah-
403 M: Hm.
404 W: …because they…
405 H: Still.
406 W: …were locked out…
407 M: Uh, wow
408 W: …Was it?…
409 H: Yes, uh huh.
411 H: Yes. I- I’m not sure-re how long it was…
412 W: No.
413 H: …but they were on strike, you know, for quite a long…
414 W: Mm.
415 H: …time
416 W: and they suffered great hard…
417 H: Yes.
418 W: …ship- so the lord…
419 H: and they still-
420 W: …was in his…
421 H: feel, you know-
422 W: …castle and, you know ‘cause- I remember one parent [Name]…
423 H: (Repeats) [Name]-
424 W: …the Welsh actor. He came in to speak to- to the children about, em,
425 life in the times, you know, as told by his grandfather and he has never
426 set foot within the grounds of Penrhyn Castle…
427 M: Hm.
428 W: …and he will never set foot…
H: No, and he wo’ let…
M: Hm.
H: …his children even though-
W: No.
H: you- you know, his- that feeling…
M: Hm.
H: …to them…
W: Mm.
H: …as well…
W: Yes-
H: And…
W: So, you know-
H: …it’s still true where I live in [village name], which is, you know…
M: Mm hmm-
H: …a quarry village. It’s…
M: Right
W: Ah.
H: …the same there…
W: Yes-
H: …with the older people, you know…
M: Hm. So there’s-
H: …They don’t talk about Castell Penrhyn, you know. They don’t talk about it.
M: Are there any, uh, descendants of the, uh, of…
H: Of the- of the family?
M: …Of the landlords, yeah?
H: Well, yes, there are…
W: Yes, but they don’t live in- the National Trust…
H: Has taken the place-
W: …has taken…
H: over now, you know.
W: …over the Castle now.
M: Uh huh.
W: But the Queen had, eh, eh, em, supper there recently…
H: Yes-
W: …didn’t she?…
H: Two weeks ago-
W: …on her travels…
H: she was here, you know…
M: Hm-
W: …The Jubilee…
H: That’s where she dined-
W: …Yes.
H: Dinner time-
W: But they had the Welsh flag, eh…
H: (Laughs) Yes. It’s a-
In the preceding segment, it seems obvious to me that there is a mix of seriousness (lines 391-461) and a bit of serious play about cultural politics (lines 462-501). The first sequence revolves around the teachers’ explication of the class-ethnic history of the mansion or faux castle, Penrhyn, near Bethesda. A strike occurred during a time of labor issue tensions at the turn of the century, and over a hundred years later, some tension remains. It is not clear from what they say who was pitted against whom, whether English, Welsh, proletariat, gentry, or what (I address these issues at the end of
Chapter Five.). Whatever the identities of those on different sides, the teachers were informing me about the historic site.

This didactic moment takes a rather spontaneous turn into implicit knowledge and attitudes, which acts as a kind of intermission. When Elizabeth II visited Penrhyn Castle during the protracted celebration of her fiftieth year as reigning Queen of the United Kingdom, the staff at Penrhyn flew only the Red Dragon flag of Wales. The teacher’s response, as vocalized during the interview, is the prototype of object-directed thinking—“Well that’s something”; here, knowing what she means by “something” is crucial. This—and the relational quality of this knowledge: it is shared by her friend—is even more important.

As far as implicit elaborative themes are concerned, this implicit, relational quality—the sharing of certain feelings about the world—is very different from the topics of their didactic moments and was not elaborated. The significance, of course, is that—on this important day of a visiting, sitting monarch—nobody insisted on making the flag of Wales take a subordinate place to the state’s Union flag. I continue since the significance of this part of the interview is in the progression.

501 H: But things have changed a lot, you know…
502 M: Mm.
503 H: …that Lady Douglas Pennant, who was last Lady. She died about three years ago and she had a very, very sad death ‘cause she was in the same home as my mother-in-law, you know…
504 M: Mm.
505 H: …a’ it was…
506 M: Mhm:
507 H: …so sad, you know. She had all this money and yet…
508 W: And there was no-
509 H: …Oh…
510 W: difference between her and the poor peo-
511 H: ..Yes…
512 W: you know.
H: …and- Oh yes, s’was- it was very…
W: Mm.
H: …very sad…
M: Mm.
W: Hm-
H: …You know…
W: Lot’s…
H: Yes.
W: …a- g- is- is done, em, by Le-, eh, education authorities, I think, in
Wales by now… to make sure that history is brought to life…
H: Yeah.
W: …and the children, you know we’re talking about LLanustumdw, em…
H: Yeah.
W: …Castell Penrhyn and, eh…
H: There are places to take them here-
W: …Yes…
H: -aren’t they?-
W: …lots…
H: We’re lucky-
W: lots…And the- e- even Caer-, em, Caernarfon Castle. They will have,
em, role-playing going on there…
M: Uh huh-
H: Yeah.
W: …And children are invited…
H: Yeah.
W: …to go along, you know, for different occasions..
H: Yeah.
W: …em…
H: And-
W: …So they ca~ do~
H: They’ve given the Welsh aspect, as well-
W: …That’s it…
H: You know-
W: …Yes.
H: Even though it’s…
M: Mm.
H: …you know, Caernarfon is an English castle…
W: Mm-
H: …D’y’know’t I mean? They’ve changed, you know, and they’re ready
to say, “Well, what- what were the people who lived outside castle”? 
W: Yeah.
H: …What sort of life they had?…
M: Hm.
H: …You know. They’re ready to- They’ve changed th’r’attitude really.
With me, in the absence of children, the teachers do take up partisan stances in relation to the historical subject-matter, as can be seen in the preceding two segments (lines 391-501, 501-559). Where there is a site they identify as “an English castle”, there are those inside the walls and those “outside castle” (line 554). We can also see that, beyond this sort of stance-taking, there clearly is a salient relation between such subject-matter and feelings that persist today about historical events. These feelings are reproduced, in part, because of the interweaving of personal connections across these borders of the social and historical topography. They are also produced by animating the perspectives of others.

In this segment, there is a faceless “they” who have an attitude, and who change their attitude (lines 553, 558). These historic sites that become part of the official landscape are recognized as having a certain perspective by virtue of the default Englishness of British officialdom—the Penrhyn estate, Caernarfon castle, but notably less so Lloyd George’s museum in Llanstumdwy. In recent days, the teachers seem to be arguing, that officialdom has become a little more Welsh. This opinion of the teachers is its own sort of stance. It is in this tension among stances that we see the implicit politics emerge—still at the implicit level, which is the only level at which politics are acceptable at school.

**Politics of Politics at School**

**Getting on “The Soapbox”**

Roughly half-way into the interview, the discursive figure of getting on a soapbox reappeared. The assistant head teacher expressly marked the beginning of a shift to explicit statements about the cultural significance of *Cymraeg*—as opposed to cultural landmarks that do not explicitly refer to language—by saying: “I told him I’d go on my soapbox”. She said this
with some excitement—louder volume, higher pitched tones—as if she were doing something that gave her a feeling of liberation, something she really was not supposed to be doing. In our preliminary conversation before we were joined by Mrs. Hughes, which was the first mention of a soapbox, Mrs. Williams had told me about the struggle, in an English (language)-dominant society, of those teachers who feel the use of Cymraeg is an intrinsic part of their cultural identity. She now continued in a more typical volume and pitch: “I was telling him how we more mature teachers, feel strongly about our country because we had to fight, because we didn’t have anything and we had our education through the medium of English”.

695  W: …I told him I’d go on my soapbox. I was telling him…
696  H:  (Laughs loudly)
697  W:  you know, how- how my children- how we s- older teachers, I was saying, or more mature teachers, feel strongly about…
699  H:  Mm.
700  W: …our country…
701  H:  Yes, of course-
702  W: …because we had to fight, because we didn’t have anything in-, you know…
704  H:  Yes.
705  W: …and we had our- our education through the medium of English…
706  H:  Yes.
707  W: …as children…
708  H:  Mm.
709  M:  Secondary…
710  H:  Yes!
711  M: …and primary or…?
712  W:  Ehh…
713  H:  Yes! More or less-
714  M: …just secondary?
715  H:  -secondary as well. I might be ~ -
716  W: …Secondary more than the junior, I would say…
717  H:  Yeah. Yeah-
718  M:  Uh huh-
719  W: …Em, I think a few…
720  H:  I think I did the- I’s did scripture through the medium of-
721  W: …That’s it…
722
The notion of lecturing or sermonizing that I associate with “getting on a soapbox” is strikingly at odds with Mrs. Williams’ performance in this interview. I know now that “getting on a soapbox”, in this instance, meant that Cymraeg would occupy a place of central (and, therefore, “political”) importance. Hence, it is particularly interesting that the teachers make a few false starts before verbalizing this fact. They “feel strongly about [their] country” (line 698, 700), but their country is not identical to their language. They “had to fight” (line 702); what were they fighting for? They “didn’t have anything in. . .” (line 702); what was missing? They drop the subject of the discourse several times before: “we had our- our education through the medium of English” (line 705). Tellingly, while English-language instruction dominated her general schooling experiences, some of Mrs. Williams’ religious recitation work was done in Cymraeg (line 723): she “did scripture through the medium of [Cymraeg]”. The significance of this should be apparent from the historical importance of the translation of the Old Testament and other ways religious history converges on language history.

**Metapragmatic Marking:** It is important to recognize that this notion of getting on a “soapbox” to talk, where Cymraeg occupies a place of central importance, has nothing to do with a specific topic of conversation. It is a Welsh performative genre whose significance lies in the regulation (or better: *modulation*) of cultural representations; a regulation that makes the genre salient in the first place. There was nothing in the last few minutes, at this point in the interview, to indicate that Mrs. Williams was lecturing or preaching. However, the two teachers had been using cultural references in an implicit, emblematic way.
This act of marking that she was doing something in her ongoing participation and explaining what it was she was doing is known, more generally, as *metapragmatic* marking and discourse (Silverstein 1985a, 1993, 1997). By saying that she was “getting on her soapbox”, she meant that she was presenting some of her relatively more political views about cultural identity. The views are relatively more political insofar as they can be located near the margin of culturally recognizable differences of opinion among Welsh people. Even tacit, implicit references to potentially controversial stances on language-based cultural identity, then, can be construed as getting on a soapbox.

**Circumstances of Application:** What is especially fascinating about the marking of a controversial subject is that there is no clearly obvious sign that Mrs. Williams had stepped onto the soapbox in the first place. Therefore, it is worth looking at what preceded her metapragmatic statement.

667  W:  So there’s lots, you know, the Urdd movement itself, an- f- the Child- (y)
668  Children of the- Youth of Wales, we talk about O. M. Edwards- We
669  teach th’m’bout- about O. M. Edwards, the founder, who again ‘s a
670  statue…
671  M:  Uh huh
672  W:  …in LL-Llan-n-…
673  H:  LLanuwchllyn
674  W:  …LLanuwchlyn…
675  H:  Mm
676  W:  …em, cemetery and, em, we also teach th’m’bout, eh, modern day, eh,
677  heroes, if you like…
678  M:  Uh huh-
679  W:  …Like Bryn Terfel, you know and…
680  M:  Uh huh-
681  W:  …Ryan Giggs and these that they- We- we make sure they know that
682  they are Welsh, even if some of them can’t speak the language…
683  H:  Yeah.
684  W:  Right.
This last segment (lines 667-695) illustrates how language is salient even when it is absent. For no apparent reason, in referring to the famous baritone Bryn Terfel and the soccer player Ryan Giggs, Mrs. Williams raised the issue of the ability to speak Cymraeg. The sequence, of course, did move from the youth organization best known for championing Cymraeg use (Yr Urdd Gobaith Cymru), but resolved itself on the subject of modern day Welsh heroes—a subject which one might think would be indifferent to language ability. Two instances were cited, Bryn Terfel, who probably learned Cymraeg before English, and resided in the region of my fieldwork, and Ryan Giggs. Without warning, Mrs. Williams mentions the soccer star, Ryan Giggs, as a figure whom she uses to stand in for famous Welsh persons who cannot speak Cymraeg.

As possible reasons for Mrs’ Williams’ saying that she was getting on her soapbox, there are only a few more references the two teachers made: Tom Jones, Sion Dafydd, and Olwen. Although the famous singer, Tom Jones (who is often compared to Elvis) is more like Ryan Giggs than Bryn Terfel in the relevant context of symbols of (a lack of) Cymraeg competence. However, Sion Dafydd is one of the key figures in modern resistance to English-language hegemony; unlike the others mentioned (apart from Olwen), Sion Dafydd is a fictional character in a poem (cerdd) by Jac Glan-y-gors, Cerdd Dic Siôn Dafydd. Moving to London for better
better opportunities, the main character, Dic Siôn Dafydd, claims he forgot how to speak Cymraeg and insists on speaking English to his Cymraeg-speaking mother. This is the primary (perhaps only) signal of possible controversy in this segment. In my interpretation, the best explanation is that the topic of famous representatives of Welshness already presupposes a discontinuity between those who represent Welshness through their use of Cymraeg, and those who do not.

A Mother, a Grandfather, and an Archdruid: Following Mrs. Williams’ metapragmatic marking, both teachers told—together, in narratival fragments, while finishing each others’ sentences—two “stories” (lines 730-770). These anecdotes were about the previously mentioned village of Y Bala, in the culturally sacred area of north Wales where Mrs. Williams lived as a child. Mrs. Williams recalled that her mother told her that she did not realize until years after leaving school that some of the teachers in the village spoke Cymraeg. Her mother did not learn they spoke Cymraeg until they used the language outside of school, on the streets of the village, in private conversation. Mrs. Hughes told a story about her grandfather, an early member of the so-called nationalist party (Plaid Cymru) and teacher in Y Bala, who preferred not to mention that he was Welsh and, although a teacher, would not speak Cymraeg at school.

723 W: …I did scripture in Welsh…
724 H: and it’s part of my history-
725 W: …Mm…
726 H: …do you see?
727 W: …Th- that’s…
728 H: Yeah.
729 W: …what I did…
730 H: Anything else-
731 W: …All the others and I remember my mother saying, when she was at school, she didn’t realize until years afterwards, em…
Without preamble or explanation, the teachers moved on from the segment above to comment on the fact that a ceremonial official associated with the central cultural festival that emphasizes Cymraeg the Archdruid, was a grandfather of one of the children at their school.
The *eisteddfod* tradition was once centered on events in the Middle Ages where the performers were professional bards. Welsh lords would award bards who gave the best performances within usually strict poetic requirements. The *eisteddfod* tradition, today, is strongly associated with the performances of children and the preservation of Cymraeg. It is also associated with the National Eisteddfod—an annual, national cultural festival centered in musical, literary, dance, and dramatic competitions in Cymraeg—and an order of bards (*Y Gorsedd*). The centuries-old project of romanticizing Wales and its history in terms of the music, myths, and literature of Welsh people persists in ceremonies of the modern-day druids and bards of the Gorsedd (Morgan 1983).

These ceremonies involve solemn, colorful rituals at which literati are inducted into the order of druids, winners of poetry competitions are "chaired" and "crowned," and quasi-religious services are carried out from within stone circles. Their members include those who win the *eisteddfodau* events that are most highly regarded or who have made some well-recognized achievement (as author, poet, scientist, archbishop). The Archdruid (*Archdderwydd*) is the presiding official of the Gorsedd and of its most important ceremonies, most of which take place during the long week of the annual National Eisteddfod.
W: …Have you heard…
M: Yes.
W: …of our Eisteddfod…?
M: Yes, I went-
W: …He’s a…
M: in 1995-
W: …grandfather…
H: Here
W: …He’s a grandfather here and- that’s why I was hoping that the ce-
chairing ceremony would be on…
H: It would’ve been-
M: Uh huh.
W: …today…
H: today, so you-
W: …because we, you know because he- because being, em, a grandfather,
he’s agreed to be…
H: to be Archdruid-
W: …you know, Archdruid for our ceremony, but it’ll be next Friday now.
Emm, and that’s something else we do a lot of in the school is to make
sure tha’ they know…
H: Mm-
W: …of our culture…
M: Mm hm:
W: …you know, the Eisteddfodau, the, eh, noson lawen, which are, em…
H: Yes.
W: …like evening concerts…
M: Uh huh.
W: …only formal, where they…
H: Mm.
W: …They started when they were held at- in farmhouses, around the fire,
when people…
M: Mmhm:
W: …from neighboring farms came together in the winter to entertain…
H: Mm.
W: …you know, to pass /y/ [the] long hours
H: That they know about the-
W: …of
H: tradition, really-
W: …Mm.
H: you know-
M: Uh huh.
H: What has happened and th- that things change, you know as-
W: …Yes…
H: history has changed-
W: …And that they’ve got to carry on.
H: Yes
M: Do they experience these things happening in the present, um?
H: Oh yes.

Because of the symbolic role that the *eisteddfod* tradition plays in the Cymraeg language-cultural complex of Wales (discussed at more length in Chapter Five), this reference to that tradition afforded the teachers with the opportunity to return to the official, overarching topic of the interview: how they teach Welshness in the classroom. However, Mrs. Williams returned to this topic by re-framing the topic: “something else we do a lot of in the school is to make sure they know of our culture”. This frames the issue of cultural instruction in terms of heritage-based communities of belonging, rather than in terms of a procedure-driven response to a state-mandated curriculum. Besides the competition-oriented performances of the *eisteddfod* tradition, the only activity they mentioned was the *noson lawen*, which is a form of traditional evening entertainment characterized by humor and musical performances (and, as Mrs. Williams described (lines 810-815), were once held in farmhouses at evening time around a fire.

Unfortunately, I did not unravel the mystery of the scope of the “our” in line 798. My understanding was that this was an inclusive referral to the general Welsh society, with the focus being on the Cymraeg language-cultural complex; “our ceremony”, then, would mean the ceremony of those of us who participate in the National Eisteddfod. This might not have been the case, however. Yet, I also need to explain the notion of the “chairing” ceremony. The word, “*eistedd*”, signifies a sitting in the sense of an audience. More significantly, the bards who are deemed the best receive rather ornately carved chairs to mark the honor. In high-profile competition contexts, such as the National Eisteddfod, and the Urdd Eisteddfod for youths, there is a chairing (*yn cadeirio*). Much later, I considered the possibility that the school might have organized a reenactment of the chairing ceremony or held their own chairing ceremony, which
makes better sense of the idea that someone was invited, and that he “agreed to be. . . Archdruid for our ceremony”.

**Political versus Cultural Brainwashing**

It would be easy to fail to notice why these various cultural traditions and stories, as conversational topics, would fall under the category of “getting on a soapbox”. Luckily, an explanation emerges from the topical layer of the interview after I probed with questions that were purposefully oriented toward history instruction. Because of my interest in how different perspectives on Welsh history enter the classroom, I asked the two teachers about the currency of these traditional cultural activities (lines 827-828 above). I asked whether the children experience these activities in the present. Mrs. Hughes’ answer was an immediate “Oh yes”. However, Mrs. Williams, hearing Mrs. Hughes’ too quick answer, reflected on the fact that over half of the students at their school come from non-Cymraeg backgrounds. This prompted her immediate caveat, which seemed at first to be a *non sequitur*: “We are not supposed to brainwash children politically, but we can brainwash them culturally”.

829  W: Cer- You know the- the- what we have to do, we- we have children here-
830  To be honest, we have abou- ha- over half of them who are from non-
831  Welsh speaking backgrounds. We are not supposed to brainwash
832  children politically…
833  H: (Laughs)
834  W: …but we can brainwash them culturally…
835  M: Uh huh.
836  W: Hoping that-
837  M: What would be difference between those two?
838  H: (Laughs)
839  W: …Well, that they will realize that there is a place for them and, eh- onus
840  on them to carry on…
841  H: Mm.
842  W: …Em…
843  H: -tradition-
The Cues of Cymraeg and Eisteddfodau: The segue, from a comment about students’ general commitment to the traditions and the idiom of “brainwashing”, became intelligible to me upon reflection on the distinction between political and cultural. At the time these teachers formulated
it, it was new to me—as was the whole domain of brainwashing as a useful metaphor for instructional or nurturing roles of teachers. Key to answering the question about how or why “brainwashing” (or anything like it) would arise at this point in the conversation is that Cymraeg was cued: “To be honest, we have about half of them who are from non-Welsh speaking backgrounds. We are not supposed to brainwash children politically” (lines 830-831). We had just been discussing traditional cultural activities, not Cymraeg. Mrs. Williams had emphasized the importance of making sure “tha’ they know of our culture, you know: the Eisteddfodau, the, eh, noson lawen” (lines 799-804). These traditional cultural activities are, of course, distinguishable from Cymraeg. Hence, one mystery is exchanged by another: How and by whom was Cymraeg cued? In fact, what had been cued was not the topic of Cymraeg, but the topic of language politics.

I was later able to see, in many other contexts, the distinction Mrs. Williams evoked. At the time, my inquiries regarding how they distinguish between cultural and political pedagogy were ineffective. However, they did elicit references to “tradition”, “love of country”, and an “onus on [children] to carry on traditions” (lines 839-853 above), all of which signify core motivations within the ethnolinguistic consciousness of the Cymraeg language-cultural complex. Eventually, I asked if “political” would suggest political parties, which they confirmed, adding that they “have the Welsh Nationalist Party” (Plaid Cymru, “Party of Wales”) and that they both voted in line with that party (line 864). Evoking more embodied forms of conceptual experience, rather than to provide a more abstract definition of political brainwashing, Mrs. Williams immediately clarified, “but you don’t talk about things like that” at school, and Mrs. Hughes added, “We don’t bring that into school” (lines 870-881).
The significance of this metapragmatic marking of ongoing talk as soapbox talk was that certain “political” views or perspectival orientations are outside the bounds of what is obviously appropriate when children are the audience. For the teacher to “get on her soapbox” meant an opportunity to be forthright about her beliefs, but also to signal that this performative genre, under normal conditions of school operations, would be illicit behavior. Given that the interview was occurring in one of the offices of a primary school and that it was topically oriented toward what the teachers do at the school, it retained some of this feeling of illicit behavior.

The Grey Area of Sports: My questions, asked to help me understand how they draw the line between cultural (unobjectionable) and political (objectionable) pedagogy, brought to light a grey area occupied by competitive (and well-financed) sports. The World Cup (of association football, or soccer) was in high gear during my summer research in 2002, and England had made it through to the final match. There is a cliché that many people in Wales will cheer the side that is playing against England even if Wales was never really expected to go far in the competition (as is often the case for association football, but not for rugby football). The grey area between cultural and political pedagogy was illustrated by the willingness of the headteacher of the school to “cross” the implicit line in his visible support of Brazil against England in the final game.

882    W:  …But you have children like the- the- the World Cup last-…
883    M:  Uh huh.
884    W:  …last week. The children were allowed to watch the games, you know…
885    H:  Yeah.
886    W:  …Up to a point, until the bell rang or lunch-time and, eh, the day bef-
887    M:  Uh huh.
888    W:  …em, who- who beat them, ehh?…
889    M:  Brazil.
890    H:  Brazil!
W: …Brazil…
H: Yes.
W: …And we had the children in- in the theatre. One or two children had
asked to stay at home to watch because if/that they won…
H: Yeah.
W: …his mother was English…
H: Yeah-
W: …and, you know, and he was very, very upset when he got in…
M: (Laughs)
H: Tsk.
W: …but I- I went from the theatre to my car- ‘ll I thought I might as well
make use of the time, eh, at the- I heard a great roar: “Yeahhh”, you
know…
H: [Williams] will just will act it out (Laughs)
M: (Laughing)
W: …and…
H: Really funny.
M: (Still laughing)
W: …Yes, I thought: “Oh, England has scored” and the children came
running, he did: “Brazil beat them, Miss!”…
M: (Laughs)
H: Yes, they wanted to- you know-
W: …You know, and- and it’s- noth- it was nothing, we didn’t…
H: No.
W: …I mean, we daren’t, you know…
H: Mrs. ~, you wouldn’t-
W: …you can’t…
H: -would you?- 
W: …You’re not…
H: You know.
W: …You can say something, Oh [Headteacher] used to say, (In a deep,
parodic voice) “Oh, I hope th- I hope- I hope the Brazilians beat them”,
like that, but you know, em, no, we’re not allowed to really, but I- I
think, lots of the children…
H: (Laughing, presumably about the other’s performance)
W: (Almost laughing too) They- they have got a strong W-…
H: Yes
W: …feeling of Welshness…
H: Yeah
W: …haven’t they?

The stance the headteacher took not only marks an affinity toward Brazil (momentary at
best, despite the consistently good performances of that country’s team at the World Cup), but an
aversion to England. The proscription against taking such a stance can be measured according to
the metric of teachers’ own evaluatively keyed linguistic stances: “we didn’t”, “we daren’t”, you
wouldn’t, would you?”, “you can’t”, “you’re not” (lines 915-921). A recognizable line in
behavior has been drawn (at least for the day-to-day teaching staff) and they are “not allowed to
[cross it] really” (line 925). Ultimately, the headteacher’s expression of sentiment that goes
beyond Welsh national identity is ameliorated by the fact that he cannot really influence the
converted: “Lots of the children. . . have got a strong W- feeling of Welshness, haven’t they?”
(lines 926-932)

There is much that calls for further investigation in cases like this. Many headteachers at
primary schools in Gwynedd and Conwy are men, while only ten percent of the day-to-day
teaching staff would be male. Headteachers typically do not do the day-to-day teaching but tend
to take up a more “moral” role, exemplified by their leading school assemblies. That role itself
creates a grey area in contrast to the more clear-cut rules that teachers, applying their training, do
not have the authority to bend.

Following this fairly contained story, the teachers return to explaining why they would
use the intensifier of “brainwashing” in reference to cultural pedagogy. Importantly, while they
do not see themselves doing anything that is objectionable, there is something about the motives
for cultural pedagogy that justify the metaphor used for an objectionable influence on other
people. This something is composed of the feelings the teachers have for Cymraeg and related
traditions, feelings that figure in their social consciousness.

933 H: Well, it’s a matter of, you know, loving an old, old language, isn’t it…
934 W: Mm.
935 H: …and you want that to carry on, you know. This is it, isn’t it?…
936 W: Right.
H: …And it’s all part of well…
938   W: (Laughs self-consciously, presumably realizing the hilarity of her
performance)
939   H: …(Laughing a little) Eh doesn’t it. Y’know’t’ I mean? It’s all…
940   M: (Laughs)
941   W: Yes, but we have…
942   H: If we don’t do it…
943   W: No, who will?
944   H: Em, there’s not another school in [area name] will do it…
945   W: No, ~
946   H: …feel like us ~…
947   W: ‘cause this is the Welsh school of [area name], you see.
948   M: Uh huh-
949   H: …You know, you want it to…
950   M: What d- Does that mean that… Welsh is a core… subject as- as opposed
951   W: Well, in Eng-
952   M: …to a found-…
953   H: …in Wales, there are four core subjects: English, Welsh, En-
954   W: …eh, Maths, and Science. Em, but lots of schools- Gwynedd, eh,
955   M: …ational subject or…?
956   H: Hm.
957   W: …in Wales, there are four core subjects: English, Welsh, En-
958   H: Maths-
959   W: …eh, Maths, and Science. Em, but lots of schools- Gwynedd, eh,
Country policy is that Wales- Welsh is the first language…
960   H: Mmm:
961   W: …You know, they do the test of the Welsh first language, em, but you’ve
962   got Anglicized areas in Gwynedd where I live and where Mrs. Hughes-
963   where you live, very…
964   H: Yes-
965   W: …near to Bangor, but it’s…
966   H: Yes.
967   W: …it’s…
968   H: Very-
969   W: …very Welsh…
970   H: Yes.
971   W: …It’s…
972   H: Oh yes-
973   W: …it’s very Welsh and I live the other side of Caernarfon, which is very
Welsh, em, but here, and the schools where we are they are Welsh…
974   H: Yes, yes.
975   W: …schools, you know…
976   H: Mmm.
Drowning Children

So as not to break the flow of this intensely interesting portion of the interview, I will make few comments about the highlighting of Cymraeg that happens in the last and the next segment. It is worth calling attention to the fact that, in addition to cultural brainwashing, there is another dramatic metaphor these (and other) teachers apply to their practices. It is not immediately obvious that it has to do with the language of Cymraeg because it is expressed in terms of (what would seem to be) a generic type of identity: Welshness.

978 W: …You- you rarely have children who don’t speak Welsh…
979 M: Hm.
980 W: …coming to the school- er you have the maybe two or three and they, 981 you know, they learn very quickly, because they’re drowned…
982 H: Yeah.
983 W: …in Welshness.
984 M: Right, right.
985 W: Whereas here, the parents- This is a W- a specifically Welsh school, 986 where you have another four or five junior schools in the city, em, where, 987 okay, they do teach Welsh, but’s not’s- a- they- they don’t do the’s- the 988 tests, do they?
989 H: No, so they don’t work-
990 W: Em, so really, they’re teaching more through the medium- of English, 991 and learning the language, okay?
992 H: Mm.
993 W: …Whereas we- we start here by learning through the medium of 994 Welsh…
995 M: Ahh.
996 H: Em.
997 W: …but as they go up to school, em, what we aim for is to get them 998 bilingual…
999 H: Fifty percent.
1000 W: …by the time they’re eleven…
1001 M: Right.
1002 W: …and by the time they reach us, they do 50% of the work through 1003 English and 50% through Welsh…
1004 M: Hm.
1005 H: Mm.
1006 W: …and- but some people in th- in [the area] are under the misconception 1007 that we only teach through the medium of Welsh…
1008  H: No, it’s not true really-
1009  W: …You know…
1010  H: Well, it-
1011  W: …No…
1012  H: T’isn’t true.
1013  W: No, it’sn’t true.
1014  H: No, but I think they dr- they’re really drowned in the Welshness at the
1015              beginning…
1016  W: Mm.
1017  H: …you know, so that’s- eh, eh, you know, their Welsh is good when they
1018              reach Year Six…
1019  W: Mm.
1020  H: …you know…
1021  M: Uh huh.
1022  H: …because they’ve been…
1023  W: Mm.
1024  M: They’ve been doing everything, or…
1025  H: Mm.
1026  M: …well,…
1027  W: Yes.
1028  H: Yes.
1029  M: …at least half…
1030  W: Yes.
1031  M: …of…
1032  H: Yes.
1033  M: …everything.
1034  W: Yes.
1035  H: Yes, we do science, maths, everything through the medium of Welsh, but
1036              also, you know, we bring it- the English in…
1037  W: Yeah.

The obvious and intriguing theme in this segment is the provocative concept of drowning
(line 981 and line 1014), which is dramatic both in terms of the mortality of drowning and the
idea that Welshness could be used to “drown” someone. It is also remarkable in that it is so
ambiguous. Various Welsh teachers’ elaboration clearly revealed processes of immersion in
Cymraeg contexts of communication as being central to its meaning. Moreover, as at other times
in this interview, the presenting symptoms have the shape of features of culture
(“Welshness”/Cymreictod”) and not language (“Welsh”/”Cymraeg”). Thus, Cymraeg can figure
as the theme of discourse even where the theme of communicative practices of a particular language code are never explicitly denoted. Welshness, in such cases is what is used; where attempts to elicit this implicit denoting of Cymraeg also invoke a broader sense of Welshness than that which motivated the speaker. In English conversations, this took the form of talking about a “Welsh ethos” or “drowning children in Welshness”, where in both cases Cymraeg plays the central part.

As the trope of DROWNING is the subject of a different chapter (Chapter Nine), I postpone discussion of it until that chapter. For now, it suffices to note that it falls on the cultural side and not the political side of the pedagogy divide. It constitutes a kind of cultural “brainwashing” because it clearly meant more than a cultural repertoire to these teachers and others with similar commitments to the Cymraeg language-cultural complex. That is, it meant far more than the immersion of pupils in Cymraeg contexts and more even than the intended results of such immersion: Cymraeg competence. From an analytic perspective, it signifies the culture that lies in the Cymraeg language code and the world the language code makes manifest.
PART III

PROBLEMS IN DIAGNOSIS
CHAPTER FOUR
◄ POLITICS AS USUAL ►

Whatever else ideologies may be—projections of unacknowledged fears, disguises for ulterior motives, phatic expressions of group solidarity—they are, most distinctively, maps of problematic social reality and matrices for the creation of collective conscience. (Clifford Geertz, “Ideology as a Cultural System” (1973:220))

This chapter addresses the discourses about nationalism issue of Welsh ethnic consciousness from the ideology-centric orientation that gives analyses of nationalism their sense of conceptual cohesion. I discuss what commitments can be attributed to nationalism in the communities in which my schooling sites were situated. I do not see the labor of this chapter as a project of so-called objective reporting. In discussing nationalist commitments, it is important to acknowledge that public perception constructs a simplification of a variety of opinions to be found among nationalists. I begin by highlighting the context that acts as ground when political issues—particularly nationalism—figure as a topic. Given ordinary usage of the concept, politics, it is rare for lay persons to consider that what is or is not generally considered political is regulated by yet more politics.

THE NATIONALISM META-DISCOURSE

Highlighting the Politics of Politics in “Nationalism” Usage

It is often observed that global trends have not brought about the end of nationalism. These retrospective comments tend to possess a tone of puzzlement and to suggest a sense of humanity’s failure. The implication—particularly, in Welsh and US academic contexts that resonate with the collective memory of world wars, hot and cold—is that nationalism is not a
benign way of looking at the world. Yet, it is possible to imagine some forms of nationalism that are benign, even if they are deployed merely as a classificatory label for others.

Michael Ignatieff (1993) suggested that this possibility begins to be realized in what he called “civic nationalism”. Civic nationalism “appeal[s] to people on the basis of a shared allegiance to [certain] constitutional principles” (Ignatieff 1999:143), such as equal protection before the law. Ignatieff (1993) distinguished civic nationalism from ethnic nationalism: a nationalism that appeals to people on the basis of language, religion, or other naturalized bonds. Ingatieff thought civic nationalism was a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for a nationalism to be called benign; that is, for an ideology about national affiliation to be benign, that affiliation had to be based on constitutional guarantees, but other conditions would also need to be met. A civic nationalism in which some people have fewer protected rights than others on the basis of skin tones, sex, or genealogy, for example, would not be benign.

The distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism, based on constitutional protections and issues of equality, does not map very well onto cultural contexts in north-west Wales, where the primary distinction is between political and cultural nationalism, with language nationalism overlapping the two. Nationalism, then, has at least two sides to it in everyday contexts in Wales: Politically overt nationalism and a more or less benign cultural nationalism. Movement from one to the other occurs on a graduated continuum of expression of one’s commitments, largely through deployment of symbols of various kinds.

Some commitments can be evoked by treating a harp, a mountain scene, a line of verse, a painting of a colliery, and postcards of the traditional Welsh feminine costume as Welsh and would be treated as benign and unobjectionable in virtually any context. Others are generally considered unimpeachable emblems, but involve more variability in how they are received. The
national anthem and the national flag are staunchly displayed on the principle that they instill and evoke pride of a positive sort, despite the associations these sorts of signs have with international division and conflict. Party politics are completely off-limits in certain contexts (e.g., classrooms). Because many sporting events (especially rugby and association football) mimic warfare in their physicality and antagonism, the performance of the national teams is considered a sometimes permissible, but borderline case of the political.

Teachers must toe the line on this sloping, sometimes shifting ground when teaching lessons and, yet, I met many teachers who considered themselves to be nationalists. It was not always clear what they meant by this, but they “knew” what was acceptable in schooling settings and saw no contradiction between their nationalist commitments, of which many were very proud, and what they could or had to do at school. While a small minority of parents might complain about the “deplorable” presence of nationalism in schools, they did not see these excesses of nationalism to be cases of malignant forms of nationalism comparable to racist ideologies. Yet, the nebulous threat that some think nationalism presents, is a persistent and constant concern of many parents and nationalism that is frequently put on display in mass media, both by professional media personnel (i.e., broadcasters or writers) and by subscribers who seek to have their opinion published.

Of course, no one suspects that ordinary teachers have a malignant effect on children, even if the complaints seem to express some sense that authority is being abused. Rather, the culturally significant issue I draw attention to is the sustaining of a normalizing screen that conceals “contradictions” in Welsh society. Maintenance of this screen obliges members of the public sphere to perform or feel shocked disbelief when the full range of claims about community appears in state-official, semi-public spaces like schools. Since some of the visions
of community that exist in Welsh society are incompatible with other visions, but invoke no reason to prohibit their circulation (as would overtly racist talk), the liberalist principle prevails. The result is a principled, if tacit, refusal to establish criteria for what is acceptable content for ideological commitments to the nation. As a corollary, the sociopolitical conventions related to determining what is and what is not political are never examined to any significant degree in public spaces. While my research was not directed at such macro-sociological cultural operations, I have sketched them because they are what give a broader significance to any discovery of local meanings of nationalism, belonging, and community membership.

The mainstream public discourse on nationalism is, in general, blind to what it means to possess a sense of belonging to local Cymraeg communities. Hence, the nation-wide public discourse is largely numb to what is felt by those teachers who describe themselves as nationalists. Indeed, many of the teachers I interacted with in north-west Wales would call themselves “nationalists”, but not in any pejorative sense. I have a responsibility to avoid the impropriety of simple-mindedly assuming or, worse, suggesting that teachers teach nationalism in their classrooms. Nevertheless, if the fact that (some) teachers see nationalism as a positive form of expression is silenced, then their sense of belonging and its meaning is silenced, too. From their perspective, such a silencing is malignant, as well as unpatriotic.

**Semiotic (Re)cognition of Nationalism**

One of the problems with the specter of “nationalism” is that there is a plethora of features that become homogenized in the public imagination of nationalism. In my own usage of the term, “nationalism”, I do not use the label to classify people according to their attitudes, except as part of a characterization of prevalent discourses about nationalism, or as a description
meant to be in alignment with such discourses. I rely on individuals to describe themselves as nationalists and I try to qualify such identities in terms of membership in relevant activist organizations or political party.

If utterances exhibit discursive features that the principals of utterances identify as nationalistic, I would argue that these utterances are not themselves tokens of the discourse about nationalism except in virtue of those principals’ tacit, discursive understandings. This has deep implications and it valuable to probe those depths at the risk of complicating things. Such utterances can only be said to have discursive features that people identify as nationalistic in virtue of persons’ tacit, discursive understandings within which the unified image of nationalism has an “objective” appearance. Therefore, the relevant discourse is itself a kind of context that gives meaning to utterances once they are identified as being nationalistic or being about nationalism. Talk ascribed to the discourse of nationalism does not itself involve an endorsement of nationalist principles (or even of language communitarian principles, to use my less objectionable term). However, it might imply participation in, or complicitness with, the discourse. This is to engage in some way, directly or indirectly, with an ideological unity that is part of the field of social action related to identity in north-west Wales.

This leads me to treat nationalism as a discursive trope that people discuss and in which they participate, but might not want to be complicit with the discourse in all of its effects. Although just as awkward as the cumbersome phrase, “discourse of or about nationalism”, it would be better to locate that discourse in relation to its sociocultural setting of the “nationalism meta-discourse”. The nationalism meta-discourse is a fluid and freely contextual discursive context that organizes communication on occasions regardless of whether the object of talk is or is not nationalistic in any conventionalized objective sense; whether or not the agent responsible
for animating the discursive token recognizes that token, or exhibits any features generally recognized, as nationalistic. Allusions to nationalism—or rather, talk that registers in the cultural consciousness of Welsh persons as being nationalistic or being about nationalism—signal a cohesive field of action. Such communication (implicitly or explicitly) enacts the discursive context in which such ascriptions or embodiments of nationalism are figured as being of or about nationalism. This discursive context is the nationalism meta-discourse.

The nationalism meta-discourse operates largely out of the awareness of most people in Wales, including social researchers (see Silverstein 1985b). What is in practical awareness are the surface positions that this and the next chapter describe, by way of a representation of the phenomenal level discourse of and about nationalism. The research that produced the data for the present chapter involved a partial, tentative, and ongoing deconstruction of the cultural dialectic about language politics in Wales, as well as the tracking of the discourse of and about nationalism, and identification of the latter’s more “objectual” and salient features (i.e., the discourse of and about nationalism). Because of its fluidity, the meta-discourse eludes attempts to demonstrate determinately that it is what it seems to be (what I say it is). It is, essentially, a game within the game of nationalism and national identity. As with much ethnographic interpretation, the compelling quality of such a representation comes from the coherence of the image represented, which in turn suggests an organization to the discourse.

**The Blurring of Party-Political Nationalism into Cultural Nationalism**

The label of “nationalist” is frequently used in a way that confounds different stakes and claims about a person’s national affinities and allegiances. For purposes of systematic research, it is relatively useful to distinguish between political, cultural, and language nationalism, as a far
more precise terminology. However, as this chapter shows, these varieties are not faithful to the fluid ways people in Wales use the concept. Nonetheless, to gain a first-order sense of how the discourse about nationalism produces identity-positions in north-west Wales, I present a diagnostic description of varieties of nationalism that gradually reshapes the typology into a more faithful representation of the way nationalism figures in ordinary conversations.

During the period of my preliminary and principal dissertation fieldwork, the primary activist organizations that might be deemed nationalistic were Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg (“Cymraeg Language Society”) and Cymuned (“Community”), each of which is focused on language issues. Plaid Cymru [Party of Wales] was the relevant political party. Within lay or academic conversations in Wales, the traditional political variety of nationalism tends to be treated either as a more or less normal expression of support for the political party, Plaid Cymru, or as a deviant desire to rid Wales of England’s influence on Welsh political affairs. The latter position, in prevailing views in Wales, conveys extremism. Nonetheless, such a variety of political nationalism in the dominant popular imagination elicits an explicit and polarizing affirmation or rejection.

During my field research trips to Wales, expressions of political nationalism were fairly muted in public spaces. Since 1998, devolution has produced a political assembly as a native faculty of Wales. As devolution has been progressing in perceptible stages, political nationalism has become less visible. To present oneself in relatively extreme ways (e.g., as a separatist) would suggest more than impatience with devolutionary developments—it would express something more like ethnic antagonism toward English people or the Anglocentric views that occasionally appear in the mass media and sound to some or all ears to be anti-Welsh. In 2008, there were measured changes to policy-making procedures according to which the National
Assembly could make legislative decisions on any aspect of policy that formerly had been reserved to the UK Parliament. Nevertheless, there have been and are obviously intermediate positions between separatism and conventional devolution, where these are muted or erased in various ways through the normalizing aspects of public discourse.

Today, this constellation of political nationalism might be considered the current governmental status quo in Wales insofar as power once held by the UK state has for decades been going through a process of decentralization. As such, it would be the contrast-class to British conservatism centered in specifically English traditions. Of course, political nationalism has traditionally been associated with the idea of separating altogether from the UK. This makes for considerable slippage in what frequently passes for a technical term.

Although lay critics say the National Assembly has accomplished little and has settled into a routine that reproduces the existing state of devolution, others see in it a vitality that represents the potential for developing national institutions that do not presently exist or are in early stages. One sign of the latter viewpoint is the trend, beginning around 2002, to apply the convention in the British parliamentary context to refer to the administration in the hands of the UK Prime Minister, to the administration of the Wales’ First Minister, calling it a Welsh “government”. The effect was to suggest a developing seat of power in Wales, even though the Welsh government enacts a fairly limited scope of policy. It fulfills a nascent executive role in the governance of the Principality balanced by the National Assembly, which itself fulfills a nascent legislative role. Neither has autonomous control of the respective branches of governance and all judicial and policing powers and functions remained with the Crown.

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1 In recent developments, the Senedd voted to hold a referendum on the following question: “Do you want the assembly now to be able to make laws on all matters in the 20 subject areas it has powers for?” The results of the referendum of March 3, 2011 were: 517,132 votes (63.49%) of “yes”, and 297,380 votes (36.51) of “no”. http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/elections/results/referendums/wales, accessed March 1, 2012.
A few years following this terminological development, after a new building was constructed to house the National Assembly, party leader Ieuen Wyn Jones coined it the “Senedd”. This is the Welsh name for the parliament building in London and was the name of the Welsh parliament in the early 1400s, when Wales was formally independent of England for about a decade. Such practices, while suggestive of a spirit of autonomy, are more consonant with a banal nationalism (Billig 1995) of the flag-waving variety. It is here that party-political nationalism blurs into “cultural nationalism”.

Day’s (2002:245-246) summary of Denney’s (1991) presentation is particularly useful at displaying the problem of typologies.

Using illustrations from a number of literary and political sources, Denney et al. [N.B.: there is only one author listed on the published article he discussed] deconstruct nationalist positions into a set of ideal types—that is, purified abstractions which are not necessarily to be found empirically in exactly that form. . . One [of two central positions] consists of a sociolinguistic approach, which combines the defence of the Welsh language and associated culture with an attack on the capitalist economic order that is held to be undermining it. This is held to be close to the views of the Welsh Language Society [Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg]. Finally, there is a position of cultural pluralism, advocated more recently by Plaid Cymru [Party of Wales], which works within the democratic process, through parliamentarian means, but aims to gain separate institutions for Wales, within a European context.

Although Day (2002:246) noted that “Welsh nationalism is. . . a highly differentiated type of movement”, the bifurcated view of a political variety and a language-cultural variety of nationalism matches (indeed, probably informed) my experiences of discourses in Wales. However, the blurring of the analytic terms so they cannot track the differentiations of nationalism as a diverse movement—for example into cultural or language-based varieties—is analytically problematic. This is not only because language and cultural are phenomenologically
and practically intertwined, even when either results in English-language/“English”-culture activities or Cymraeg/“Welsh”-culture activities.

In the Welsh context, the blurring of language and culture coincides with the joining, over the Twentieth Century, of the agendas of political party and broadly cultural objectives. This chapter wrestles with the problems that emerge from the convergence of this cultural milieu and the categorial rubrics. I resolve the problem by arguing on the basis of local features in Wales that nationalism is not an analytic concept, but a phenomenal-discursive trope. However, I dwell here for a moment on two interesting features of Day’s (2002) use of Denney 1991.

One of the contexts for the blurring of culture and language in (at least) scholarly discussions of nationalism arises, oddly, with respect to the ideal type of political nationalism on which Day (2002) commented in the block quotation a couple of pages above. Thus, it is interesting that both Day (2002) and Denney (1991) described Plaid Cymru [Party of Wales] as cultural pluralist. The attribution of cultural pluralism implies a move away from political nationalism as an ideal type—other than in the sense that Plaid Cymru is a political party. Yet, being a political party does not make the Conservative Party a token of political nationalism. This is of interest because both authors portrayed Plaid Cymru’s political nationalism as more tolerant and less critical than their representative token of sociolinguistic nationalism: Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg.

The background information that both authors might assume their readers possess is that Plaid Cymru was once widely recognized in English by the name “the Welsh Nationalist Party”
and has worked hard to remove the “stain” of nationalism. If *Plaid Cymru* had not had this history or been so recognized, it is unlikely that Denney (1991) could have justified using the image of such a culturally pluralist party as a token of political nationalism. The historical process that this bloc in the Welsh political party system underwent, from an agenda of self-government to cultural pluralism, does not sit easily within a general rubric of political nationalism. The current blurring of political and broadly cultural nationalism continues today, as *Plaid Cymru* struggles with the image, sometimes vocalized, that this party has the goal of dividing Wales. Indeed, after the creation of the National Assembly, when political independence from England seemed unnecessary and a new arena was opened for competition between different political parties in Wales, that perception of *Plaid Cymru* became a tool of political parties opposed to *Plaid* (This is illustrated by a series of indirect exchanges that occurred in the newsprint- and internet-based news distributions of BBC News before the spring elections of 1999. See Appendix C for a brief discussion of these exchanges.).

Interestingly, neither author explicitly noted that the phrase and English-language name for *Plaid Cymru*, “The Welsh Nationalist Party”, is related to the former name of *Plaid Cymru*: *Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru*. The modifier, *genedlaethol*, should be translated as “national”, not

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Although there was a Home Rule movement in the teens and twenties of the Twentieth Century, it was probably never so shocking in its brazenness as a speech Saunders Lewis made (in English) at the 1923 National Eisteddfod in Mold (quoted in Davies 2011):

> Our condition cannot be saved by a conference but by discipline and obedience. Do not seek a conference in which all the chatterboxes of Wales can deliver useless speeches, but next year form a battalion and a Welsh camp, and every Welshman who wishes to serve his country to come there to drill together for a fortnight and obey military orders so that they work together quietly and without argument, everyone prepared to obey and to be punished if he does not do so. And do this for five years, without chatter. Drilling without weapons, and so openly and without breaking the law of any country, but by this preparing ourselves to accept laws and leadership by Welshmen. If we had a hundred or fifty or only twenty in the first year to do so, this would be Wales’ most important movement since the days of Glyndŵr. I am perfectly serious.
“nationalist” [i.e., genedlaetholwr, which uses the person-individuating suffix, -wr (singular)/-wyr (plural)]. These two streams of translation and consciousness are relevant, but would seem to be reduced in significance by the fact that the association of “national” with “nationalist” in popular perceptions of the political party was due to the party’s original aim of self-government. The deletion of the term “national” might have been due to the negative connotations of nationalism and its association with fascism. Moreover, Plaid Cymru is commonly referred to as “the Welsh Nationalist Party” in English-language contexts. During all stages of my fieldwork, I encountered Plaid Cymru so named in ordinary English-language conversations. This pattern included people who described themselves as nationalists and were fervent about Cymraeg, as well as people who did not know Cymraeg.

The fact that there are two parallel streams of language translation and consciousness results in the fact that two authors with little competence in Cymraeg would fail to observe that “Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru” does not mean “Welsh Nationalist Party”. However, the convergence of these two streams—in the commonplace idea that Plaid Cymru is the Welsh nationalist party—does not contradict such a social parallelism. In fact, it is related and clarified by the second interesting feature of Day’s (2002) use of Denney 1991.

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3 Plaid Cymru, established in 1925 eventually moved away (in the late 1990s, with the establishment of the National Assembly) from the politics of the “Home Rule” movement. Indeed, one of the founding members of Plaid Cymru, Lewis Valentine, was a member of the Welsh Home Rulers Army, with which that movement was identified. Plaid Cymru’s history involves the transition to the constitutional politics of later years of the devolution era that occupied most of the Twentieth Century, and a preoccupation of some of the party’s members with language issues (e.g., Saunders Lewis), as these became more widely recognized (because of people like Saunders Lewis). The Home Rule movement began under the auspices of the Liberal Party, a context in which “self-government” was better left undefined. Even at a time when the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom was the Welsh nationalist, David Lloyd George (who was instrumental in the founding of the world-state of Ireland), it was controversial to talk about a Welsh state.

4 One example is the title of this webpage about “Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru (The Welsh Nationalist Party)”, found on the website of the National Library of Wales [Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru], which is not typically referred to as the “Nationalist Library of Wales”: http://centenary.llgc.org.uk/en/XCM1917/events/1.html; accessed October 27, 2012.
The second feature is that Day used the English translation for a Cymraeg activist group (Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg), some of whose members engage in civil disobedience for the sake of language interests and for whom jail time is a badge of honor. This contrasts with Day’s usage of the Cymraeg name (Plaid Cymru) for a political party that, because it is politically expedient to do so, takes pains to reach across to both official segments of the Welsh population and, thus, its spokespersons commonly use “Party of Wales”. In this connection, language issues have had an equally long role in the history of nationalism in Wales.

Consider, for example, the use of “byddin” [army] by several activist groups. In the context of his discussion of early Twentieth-Century activist groups, D. H. Davies (2011) noted, two “among the small patriotic movements that were emerging briefly and disappearing like fireflies as Welsh enthusiasts sought the way forward” in the 1920s were:

St Dogmael’s Byddin Cymru (Army of Wales)—not a weapon in sight despite its name... [and] Byddin yr Iaith (The Language Army). . . Despite its threatening title, there was nothing military about Byddin yr Iaith: members were to wear the movement’s badge, to speak Welsh as often as possible in places such as post offices and train stations, and to demand official status for the Welsh language.

Even without taking these uses of “byddin” [army] literally, they do suggest, in conjunction with the modest objectives of Byddin yr Iaith, a particular social reading of activism of the time: It was deemed “militant” in the 1920s (and, thus, frowned upon) to demand that others use the indigenous language of Wales. Alternatively, a highly cohesive sense of group identity like that of an “army” was necessary if one were going to maintain a position of making such demands of others. The legacy of that Victorian-era climate remains today. The idea of an army, much like the Salvation Army, provided a sense of solidarity and discipline in pursuing activist objectives. These included speaking Cymraeg in post offices and train stations—public places where people
might use English if they do not know the person with whom they come into contact. However, a nationalist “army” is different from a charitable organization with Christian overtones (i.e., the Salvation Army).

It is past time to present a concrete example of how cultural pluralism within party-political nationalism blurs into “cultural nationalism” or “language nationalism”—one that touches on schooling settings. By turning to such an example and my explication of the example, we can begin to see how much more realistic are descriptions that cast the categories of political and cultural as overlapping, rather than as distinct and ideally concepts. Further, it is only by considering language issues that we can see the way that political and cultural overlap, and also held in tension with each other.

SYNECDOCHIC IDENTITY AT YSGOL GERRIG YN YR AFON (YGA)

Is He Saesneg, Miss?

I return here to the autumn day, the second of October 2007, when I sat in the fourth row of a primary school classroom in Abergwaith. I described this scene in the opening pages of this dissertation. Now, I want to recount it not as I understood it at the time, but as I came to understand it.

The teacher was beginning a history lesson about the Celts and it was my first day in her classroom. Before providing a recap of the previous history lesson on Friday, she introduced me to the class. This event would be largely unremarkable except for the interesting way in which the children tried to classify me as a new part of their classroom environment.
Mrs. P: Cyn i ni gychwyn, fella fel ‘dachi di sylwi, ella,
    Before we begin, you may have noticed, perhaps,

    mae ‘gynna ni ymwelydd yn y dosbarth heddiw. Mister?
    we have a visitor in the classroom today. Mister?

Steve: Maas.

Mrs. P: Maas?

Steve: Iawn [Right].

Mrs. P: . . . wedi dod i weld chi. Wel, sut ydach chi?
    . . . [He] has come to see you. Well, how are you?

Tom: Is he Saesneg, Miss?
    Is he English-language, Miss? [inaudible sounds from other children]

Mrs. P: Manyrs, Tom!
    Manners, Tom!

Child 2: Saesneg-
    English-language-

Child 3: Cymraeg ydi o?
    Is he Cymraeg?

Mrs. P: d- Deallt Cymraeg.
    He understands Cymraeg.

Mrs. P spoke in a very rapid style, which in some instances caused a problem even for
native speakers of the region (from whom I sought assistance in interpreting some of her
recorded talk). Hence, I had more trouble with this teacher’s use of Cymraeg than any other
teacher. When I missed an opportunity to tell the students where I came from, which Mrs. P
gave to me following the segment transcribed above, she summarized (in Cymraeg): “He is
learning Cymraeg and comes from the US, from America, and he has been learning Cymraeg”.
This was a diplomatic way of dealing with Tom’s question of classification, which clearly was a
more impolitic question in the teacher’s perspective than in the perspectives of the children.
After this introduction, the lesson moved straightforwardly to a review of the ongoing series of lessons on the Celts.

At the time, this communicative segment seemed unremarkable to me, even with respect to the way the children tried to classify me. By this point in my fieldwork, I was already immured to the seamless movement among discursive themes, from ethnicity to language to personal identity. Being very uneasy with the politicization of language and struggling to find some kind of neutrality, I had no way of analyzing the simplifying “logic” that Tom applied: Was I “English-language or Cymraeg?”. Its very simplicity seemed to thwart elaboration. On this day in the classroom, I was also focused on how the Celts were going to be related in figurative terms to modern-day Welsh persons. Therefore, at the time of this introduction, I took the children’s questions as being formulated in terms of a careless figure of speech. I did not even notice the fact that I myself figured in a synecdoche, being included not as a member of a population of language speakers, but by having the language code itself predicated of me, much as one might say I am White.5 This is highly significant, but I did not notice the significance at the time.

Geertz (1973), almost aphoristically, pointed out the field of significance Tom evoked by figuring me as a language code:

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5 In rhetoric, the concept of synecdoche is hardly a matter of established convention. As part of a larger area of inquiry (no pun intended), conversations about the role of synecdoche give rise to competing definitions and schemes not only for the best known type of trope (i.e., metaphor), but also for other fairly widely-known types (e.g., metonymy and synecdoche); as well as those tropic types that are the common currency of classical and modern commentaries on rhetoric (allegory, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, epithet, antonomasia, periphrasis, and so on). Rather than establish a genealogical lineage or terminological convention amid this dizzying variety of opinions and definitions, I find it useful to focus on the semantic-rhetorical function of tropes; an approach proposed by Black (1962), and followed by Purcell (1990) and, most relevantly, Seto (1999).

Seto (1999) highlighted two functional types of tropes; constituted, on one hand, by referential transfer based on spatio-temporal contiguity—partonomy (a system of parts); and, on the other hand, conceptual transfer based on semantic inclusion—taxonomy (a system of kinds). The former is “the relation between an entity and its parts, such as the relation between a table and its legs” (Seto 1999:93). The latter is “the relation between a more comprehensive category and a less comprehensive one” (Seto 1999:93).
As a cultural system, an ideology that has developed beyond the stage of mere sloganeering consists of an intricate structure of interrelated meanings—interrelated in terms of the semantic mechanisms that formulate them—of which the two-level organization of an isolated metaphor is but a feeble representation (Geertz 1973: 213n.).

Ideology as a cultural system is both more significant than a unit of crude polemic and more meaningful than “false consciousness”. In the English-speaking world (and beyond), the idolizing of objective truth leads to the occasionally expressed, but more frequently implied, statement that an ideology amounts to a distortion of the facts rather than a cultural system in Geertz’s sense. Both ideology and rhetoric are concepts that can be deployed to belittle another position on that basis. Both of these, in turn, are part of a number of concepts (e.g., discourse) that are units for analysis of phenomenal items that can be present in particular instances, but that can also be carried from communicative setting to communicative—available for instantiation—without being instantiated in particular instances. As such, they are also methodological lenses for analyses—of social consciousness (respecting ideology) and modes of identification (respecting rhetoric)—that transcend pejorative commentary. Also, they are more powerful when used together.

Out of the Mouths of Youths

Tom’s question, “Is he Saesneg, Miss? [Is he English-language, Miss?]”, was clearly on other children’s minds. His and the other children’s use of synecdoche, in effect, meant the children believed that there was a language code-category into which one could most conveniently fit my vocal presentations, and that this code-category could stand for me, in terms of what I was, as a sociocultural being: my personhood. On its own, this is a fairly mundane and even banal act. At a basic level of decoding this figuration, the children’s questions reflected
their desire to know how to think about me in terms of a local schema of identity. The most
telling aspect of the event, however, is the teacher’s recognition that the local schema is value-
laden.

In this pedagogical context, Tom’s request that I be classified, allows us to notice that the
values of the two-place schema (Saesneg and Cymraeg) are not neutral. Mrs. P’s response to
Tom’s question expressed an apparent need for diplomacy (“Manyrs, Tom!”). As Bowie
(1993:176-177) noted: “the terms ‘Welsh’ [and ‘Cymraeg’] and ‘English’ [and ‘Saesneg’] are
used as ciphers for ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’, and serve to distance incomers from locals and
learners from first language [Cymraeg] speakers”. When she rebuked Tom for his failure to
demonstrate good manners, Mrs. P’s response starkly marked the charged value associated with
speaking of someone as oriented (more) toward Cymraeg, and therefore an insider, or toward
English, and therefore an outsider.6 To act in such a way that, simultaneously, welcomes
someone and emphasizes the cultural exclusion (in some sense) of that person, is a violation of
good manners (from Mrs. P’s perspective).

In general, the binomial nature of the *alien/foreign* and *native* category-set is applied
contextually to either Cymraeg or English. For obvious reasons, the value of *native* is evoked
more often in relation to the indigenous language of Wales. People in Abergwaith routinely
apply the definite object, in English-language conversations, to the language-code of Cymraeg in
order to avoid the confusion that can occur between Welsh ethnicity and “the” Welsh language.
I have never heard English referred to as “the Welsh language”. However, the privilege
Cymraeg enjoys in being more “natural” within the geographic setting of Wales than English is

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6 Later observations suggested that the teacher felt that Tom was an occasional concern in her management of class
discipline. Thus, when Tom asked a question that requested that I be classified, his role in doing so might have
amplified the effect of his question. Yet, it should also be noticed that Tom conscientiously code-switched to
English (apart from the noun phrase, “Saesneg” [English-language]) in accordance with his guess that I was more
accustomed to English than to Cymraeg.
limited to a privilege of simple, abstract taxonomic purpose. The either/or tendency means that some choice has to be made and even the most “forward”-thinking of English persons are susceptible to historical precedent (even if not to Romantic compulsion), according to which Cymraeg is “the Welsh language”. However, this is not much of an instrumental gain for the Welsh position (within a binomial scheme) in historical or current ethnic tensions.

This privilege, derived from mere expedience, is illustrated by the macro-contextual factors of linguistic usage. If one combines multiple neighborhoods and villages together without making finer distinctions, then much of Wales is composed of areas in which English is the prevailing—and therefore, socially unmarked—language. In such areas, English holds the position of being the tacitly native language (unless people are asked to reflect on the deeper history of the area), and Cymraeg is somewhat “alien”. This macro-context amounts to reapplication of the original significance of the ethnic label, “Welsh” (as “foreign”).

This does not prevent, in many such areas, the idea of Cymraeg competence from carrying prestige: Many parents in English-prevalent areas desire that their children learn Cymraeg, despite the fact that the parents would likely be excluded from Cymraeg conversations. Within so-called Welsh-language regions or areas of Wales (e.g., north-west Wales), Cymraeg is considered native, while English is “foreign”. Thus, when Tom asked whether I was Cymraeg or Saesneg, Cymraeg was taken to be the “home team”. To suggest that someone cannot be identified with Cymraeg is to classify them as an outsider. This has the further significance that to be from the outside has a negative value and it is not good manners to cast a guest in negative terms.

I introduce the anecdote above at this point of the dissertation because it is symbolic and expressive of the sociocultural reality that I seek to explicate, and it occurred in a mundane way.
very early in my contact with a new pedagogical context. Its occurrence was so mundane that I almost failed to take notice of it. Yet, the questions, “Is he Saesneg, Miss?” and “Cymraeg yd o?” [Is he Cymraeg?] enact a broad vernacular politics of language. In so doing, together, they stand—in a synecdochal relationship of representation—for the larger whole that this dissertation investigates. This broad synecdoche speaks to a diffuse ideology, a “discursive formation” in Foucault’s (1984) terms, which is instantiated in the roles people play as they participate in the correlate field of social action. The most elegant formulation of the cultural synecdochal relationship of representation, which enacts a broad vernacular politics of language, appears in the form of what I call “the Welsh Logic of Heritage”. However, “elegant” is not to say “simple”, as the following sections illustrates.

Identity and the Welsh Logic of Heritage

This conflict is the mark of a particular logic of heritage that operates in Wales. For those who ground Welsh national identity in a history and language prior to Anglo-Saxon settlement, the identity of Wales is based on a primordial version of the nation, as homogeneous, unified, and in conflict with early English settlers. Importantly, the latter image of the nation is not compatible with present-day social, linguistic, and political arrangements. Whether termed “liberal” or “neoliberal”, these arrangements require negotiated settlements and movement across frontiers between cultural spaces of difference that, nonetheless, have in common (as democratic political institutions) a presumption of a capacity to choose. This capacity to choose is, in principle, constrained only by

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7 I am indebted to Lugo’s (2008) insights, which expanded Terrence Turner’s understanding of synecdoche as a “fundamental, totalizing tropic relation” (Turner 1987:19). Lugo (2008) demonstrated that synecdochal figures can function both rhetorically and also interdiscursively with ideological, ideational, and political import. Thus, interdiscursive use of synecdoche encompasses different types of tropes (e.g., metaphor and metonymy) and multiple domains.
laws; in practice, other constraints might exist, but economics is the only sort of constraint that can operate as a valid rhetorical factor for all.

Given the location of Wales as a constituent part of the modern state of the United Kingdom, the geopolitical form of Welsh identity must explicitly address the conflict between the ethnic-conflict-laden past and negotiations in the present because its goals are located in a negotiated near-future where the historical conflict is more or less irrelevant. Day-to-day, the imagination of a present-day Wales (tacitly) denies the image of a primordial past to some extent; conversely, the imagination of the primordial past denies (but more actively) some aspects of present-day Wales. In the identity genre of ethnicity, the past of present-day Wales is not so much foreign or undomesticated (Lowenthal 1985, 1996), as it is an apparent self-contradiction.

Language identity is the basis for much of the cultural action centered in language identity in Wales. That kind of identity also entails the practical, and tacit or implicit resolution of paradoxes, the constant interplay of topical discourses and of agency—of discourses about language and Welshperson’s own presentations of self based tacitly on language choices. Unlike political identity, however, the language-based form of identity need not deal with—can safely ignore (usually)—that paradox. Because of the politicization of language in Wales, it is important to note a significant difference between the bounding of mutually excluding spaces by linguistic practice and that of the narrative bounding of mutually exclusive spaces tied to ethnic or racialist themes. Despite the efficacy of language for imposing boundaries between exclusively conceived spaces, language operates in ways that are clearly different from ethnicity or race. Identities based in the particular languages of Cymraeg or English are unequivocally embodied identities. Nevertheless, unlike other kinds of identities, social actors can
pragmatically sever language identities’ associations with distinct ethnic identities (e.g., by changing the language code in use).

Given the logical independence of language-based identities and ethnic identities, Welsh history tellers can lose the thread of their own narrative when they find themselves caught in the middle of a struggle for national identity and the construction of national political institutions. Teachers who would want to foreground Welsh heritage in their lessons run up against this very conflict—as we began to see in the interview represented in the previous chapter (for more detailed discussion of this conflict, see Maas 2005). In the process of reinforcing the broader ideology that language naturally excludes, by the activists’ maintenance of politicized language boundaries, language activists turn the idea of a national history into an insurmountable task. It becomes insurmountable simply because it conflicts in obvious ways with the imaginary of the Wales of the present as a constituent part of a liberal democratic state.

One of the “choices” a large minority of Welsh people would like to make is to participate in a nation in which everyone knows and uses Cymraeg. Since the genre of language identity in Wales (particularly by language activists) often “rides” on the more established genre of ethnic identity, the logic of heritage outlined above applies to language identities by extension. The result is an instable relationship between: 1) Welsh ethnicity, which is primordial and most clearly visible in its antagonistic relationship with English ethnicity; 2) Welsh modernity—replete with its own liberal democratic political institutions, but united with England; and 3) the idea that languages like Cymraeg and English exclude one another.

Consequently, the production of a national present that is at odds with the narrative of a primordial past produces enormous and multiple challenges. In primary schooling, teachers often motivate historical accounts by reference to current events, such as the opening of the Welsh
National Assembly (see Maas 2005). The ideology of binomial language exclusion carried by language activists in Wales, then, seems to have two outcomes. One outcome is that of interference between language promotion, on one hand, and efforts to teach non-language heritage, such as national history, on the other hand. The other possible outcome is that of parallel streams, in which the Welsh past never joins with, or becomes increasingly distant from, the Welsh political modernity.

Considering the impression that I had of some parents and academics—that they believed many teachers in north-west Wales are nationalistic—there would be no reason to think that the teachers themselves would find inappropriate things like a narrative of resistance to English cultural and language hegemony. Nevertheless, there is a set of principles operative at school, by which certain schemas in identity games are rendered invisible. I take this to be the percolation of the politics of *politics* (as a concept in ordinary usage) into schools. In the previous chapter, I discussed how an interview during my preliminary research could have already told me how the politics of *politics* function at school. To see that requires decoding cultural references. Once decoded, these cultural references, given the fact that they were encoded in the first place, reveal relations between the appropriate style of talking about potentially controversial topics and the lived practice of the existential and practical features that those potentially controversial topics are about.

“*The Current Political Situation*”

So much of even the explicit discourse about Welshness closes down quickly as it moves into implicit discourse about language, a phenomenon that might not be visible to those outside the Cymraeg language-cultural complex. Hence, attempts to elicit the meanings of Welshness
result in doubly implicit references to some kind of language-based cultural identity. That is, explicit references to culture mask an implicit reference to domains of identity in which Cymraeg is central, where even if one uncovers the implicit reference to language, the role and outcome of Cymraeg as central to identity remains implicit. While one might find justification for claiming that such identity praxis conflates Cymraeg and Welshness, there is no justification for conflating the negative aspects of nationalism with a deep cultural affinity for the Cymraeg language-cultural complex.

Beyond locale-based identities, the most salient aspect of such identity dynamics manifests in ordinary cultural situations in Wales in the shape of a discourse about nationalism—a discourse that is largely concerned with the emblematic use of Cymraeg as the language of the Welsh nation. While Cymraeg is generally implicit, the various significances of its use play an ever-present role in social and cultural identities. One unfortunate outcome of that cultural understanding is that laypersons and scholars alike often make no distinction between 1) the claim that the Cymraeg language-cultural complex is an essential part of national identity and 2) the vague idea of nationalism. The impulse to equate the two could also be understood as a conceptual linkage between the former claim and latter idea. The semantic transfer from one to the other has “moved” from being locally conceived as a figurative one (in some mythological time of analytic purity) to being conceived as involving a single identity of essentialist claim and the idea of nationalism. The impulse to subsume the claims of the Cymraeg language-cultural complex under the rubric of Welsh nationalism does have one specific kernel of truth to it: Those who feel Cymraeg to be an intrinsic part of their personality and cultural identity often have Cymraeg implicitly in mind when Welshness is the explicit topic. It is far from clear, however,
whether that kernel of truth is the result or the cause of the impulse to equate nationalism and the putative centrality of Cymraeg.

Although self-described nationalists animate expressions of nationalism, producing an embodied position fairly frequently, I should make clear that I am writing about nationalism as a cultural representation about others. The cultural status of the message of which self-described nationalists are the principals is distinct and very different from those nationalistic messages that are ascribed to them (and others) by self-described non-nationalists. Given the conventional discourses about nationalism in Wales, it might not be surprising that actually held attitudes about the Cymraeg language-cultural complex identity are more open to elaboration and engagement than public discourses about nationalism would lead one to expect.

The implied script of common social practices supposes that nationalists identify nation with a set of practices or a language code. In turn, the disembodied subculture of nationalists is identified, in public discourse, with a narrow range of commitments about what practices or code should stand for the nation. Ultimately, the violation of mores that such nationalism is supposed to commit, consists in the perceived narrowness of so-called nationalism. Typically, in mainstream communicative practices, any apparent evidence for commitments in this narrow range is taken to imply a commitment to so-called nationalism.

The Manichean frame into which nationalism is made to figure in public discourse plays no small role in the discursive status of those forms of nationalism that popular discourse makes conventionally salient. After all, if the good versus evil narrative of an imagined Welsh nationalism is something to be rejected, then the perspective from which one congratulates such rejection will in turn be the seat of the “enlightened” observer.
Any influences permeating schools have the potential to be perceived by a parent, other teacher, or school inspector as inappropriate and out of place—a category that “nationalism in the classroom” occupies. At the same time, Welsh people recognize expressions of national identity as a range of things. Some expressions of national pride (e.g., regarding a military victory of the home nation) would be banal in world-states (if aligned with the dominant society), but are sometimes construed as excessively and problematically nationalistic in a Welsh context—particularly in schools. On the surface, justification for the enlightened perspective comes from the liberalist prohibition against school teachers coercing a population’s consent to a given political state of affairs. If one looks deeper, however, one can see a subtle struggle to determine what is political and what is not.

That any apparent evidence for certain commitments is taken to imply a commitment to “nationalism” is true of practices within, say, a coffeeshop in Upper Bangor in the north-west of Wales, as it is in international academic exchanges. Consider one culturally enlightened review of my initial proposal for a National Science Foundation dissertation completion grant that I received in the summer of 2006 (quoted below). While my methodology underwent a significant change, in part due to this reviewer’s comments, my original proposal described use of one analytic procedure that was at the center of the reviewer’s concern. I originally proposed to “count” teachers’ references to Wales as a nation that they made in their lessons. To count them, I intended to classify pedagogical acts as either Nation-Significant (NS) or Nation-Insignificant (NI) acts within larger sequences of acts, which would also be classified as NS or NI lesson events. I could then compare these tabulations to teachers’ personal attitudes toward language and governance that I would elicit from them in separate structured interviews. The NS acts and lesson events would be divided into those that seem to stem from curricular requirements and
those of a less official nature (such as those motivated by teachers’ interests). I hypothesized that measures of “nationalism” would be higher in Cymraeg-prevalent pedagogical spaces.

In a text that exhibits many conventions of British typographical and lexical conventions, one NSF reviewer responded in a form that represented the publicly prominent, liberalist perspective. At the same time, the reviewer’s comments reflect a professional appreciation for the vulnerability of the minority Cymraeg community:

This proposal shows a serious lack of sensitivity to the current political situation in Wales, where the term ‘nationalism’ is politically very highly charged. It is associated with party politics, with references to ‘narrow nationalism’ frequently being made by the Welsh Labour Party in attempts to discredit Plaid Cymru / The Party of Wales, who are currently the main opposition party in the National Assembly. Under these circumstances, research that purports to show that ‘nationalism’ among teachers is related to their performance in the classroom could be highly damaging to them personally and to their schools. Furthermore, the attempt to show that this is more prevalent in Welsh-medium state schools could conceivably do a very great injustice to what has been a widely praised and successful movement to promote the survival of a minority language.

I would concur with the reviewer’s general opinion about the volatility of ascriptions of nationalism, as would teachers who describe themselves as nationalists. However, because s/he tacitly accepts (or does not challenge) the criticism of nationalism found in public discourse, this reviewer does not seem to be aware of something equally important: her/his stance requires that we take the unmarked form of “nationalism” to be a non-benign form of nationalism.

It might be less than wise for researchers to accept the unmarked significance, the malignancy, of nationalism without question. Note that the NSF reviewer maintains a professional distance from the interests of the Cymraeg community, exhibiting an appropriate sensitivity to, but not positioning herself in sympathy with, that community’s vulnerability. This stance implies that she endorses one sociocultural reality to the exclusion of others—the reality
in which nationalism is politically charged by definition. Consequently, this stance of an expert professional (unintentionally) blocks the voices of those who take nationalism to be a positive form of expression.

This milieu makes research problematic for those who wish to address the issue of (less saliently political) substance, as well as the more salient instrumental claims about that substance. Tacit acceptance of the conventional, liberal criticism of Welsh nationalism would prevent inquiry into the potentially diverse local meanings that are attributed to “nationalism” and the cultural implications of such an ideological constellation. Further, the highly public discourse on nationalism in Wales generalizes the embodiment of personal commitments to a social imaginary that is associated with nationalism. As a result, that discourse makes no distinction between a private sort of self and a quasi-public kind of self that is performed and made manifest at schooling settings. Teachers in north-west Wales, in their practiced identities that are enacted in what are called state (or, in US terms, “public”) schools, are semi-private/semi-public selves. Particularly in primary schools, there is a large emphasis on the role of the teacher as an agent of nurturing. While a great deal of teachers’ personalities come out in classrooms, it is an open question whether teachers, in their carefully constructed performances, feel it responsible or irresponsible to perform private selves. Moreover, if private selves are performed, it is far from given which aspects of private selves and which kinds of commitments teachers would perform (not to mention whether any private aspects or commitments have a uniform interpretation).

The comments of the NSF reviewer did not assume that nationalist teachers’ expression of their own personal commitments in a classroom would express a malignant form of nationalism in the classroom. However, that assumption—as purportedly dormant or active in
other people’s minds—does seem to ground her/his worry about conducting the proposed research in an imaginary “current political situation”. What is missed here is that this kind of uptake of discourses about nationalism results in the silencing of teachers’ ideological commitments because they are “nationalistic”, and this response to nationalism discourages an interest in examining the substance and significance of those commitments. Unfortunately, as I already noted, the reviewer is correct about the current political situation. This does not mean that the proposed research should not have been done. It means that the proposed research is already undercut by the controversial quality of politics in the classroom.

Nationalism is part of the cultural thematics of Wales, by which people organize their experience and prioritize what is to command their attention. However, it is also a complex field of social action in which certain positions can, as the NSF reviewer simultaneously noted and demonstrated, create ruptures in the appearances of intersubjectivity. People often believe they are jointly acting, or interacting civilly, but this mutual belief can be disrupted if it appears that what an interlocutor is doing can be framed as nationalistic, and if the beholder does not welcome “nationalistic” performances. Either of these conditions can occur alone, but it is only for people who take nationalism to be unwelcome that a social assertion of nationalism has the effect of rupturing the appearance of joint action. These conditions can present themselves equally as well to those who feel an affinity toward Wales, use Cymraeg in their daily life, and seem to bear all the other cultural markers of being a nationalist. Reproduction of the impression that all so-called nationalisms are created evil has the effect of rupturing the appearance of intersubjectivity among Welsh patriots.

I suspect that it is the potential for the discourse about nationalism to disrupt appearances of intersubjectivity—to promote communication breakdown—that makes this topic so salient.
The discourse about nationalism is also a discourse about what is political and what is not, discussion of which can table indefinitely the description of ethic consciousness among participants in the Cymraeg language-cultural complex. It is this range of subjectivity that makes ascriptions of nationalism to others into socially efficacious tools for positioning others, and therefore divisive, as well as problematic for those in the subordinate position.

This discourse and the field of identity of which it is a part are so prevalent that an anthropologist on my preliminary examination committee, who was from the US but had traveled by car in north Wales, told me: “You know, Steve, sometimes you write like a Welsh nationalist”. It is possible there was some truth to that comment. Likewise, some sections of this dissertation might be read (though incorrectly) as an apology for Welsh nationalism. At the time, however, familiar with the use of the label in Wales as a tool for silencing others, I could think of no constructive response to that comment—but his statement has borne fruit.⁸

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⁸ The head of the Department of History at a midwestern university, who researches British imperialism, asked me if I had said, “Thank you”, in response. Yet, even this response would not repair the rupture in intersubjectivity.
CHAPTER FIVE

IDEOLOGY AND SURFACE POSITIONS

The supreme test of a book is that we should feel some unusual intelligence working behind the words. . . I have expressly written here not “intellect” but intelligence. There is no intelligence without emotion. . . There may be emotion without intelligence, but that does not concern us. (Ezra Pound, in a review of T. S. Eliot’s Prufrock and Other Observations ([1917]1960:20, quoted in Williams 2002/3:23))

This chapter continues the theme of Chapter Four by pursuing the “substance” and significance of commitments that are often labeled “nationalistic” in Wales. It also continues the task of the previous chapter of evaluating the three ideal types of nationalism—political, cultural, and language—by taking up the latter two types. It, further, examines the less ideal overlap between them and politically shaded ideologies of national identity.

NON-“POLITICAL” VARIETIES AND FEATURES OF SO-CALLED NATIONALISM

“Cultural Nationalism” and Ideologies of Personhood

Non-Conformism: Religion might be the most distinctive aspect of cultural nationalism simply because this part of the imagining of a traditional Welshness is not likely to be associated with language politics—despite the close tie between Non-Conformism and Cymraeg. Traditional Welsh religious practices are marked by a resistance to what was the established (or State) religion in Wales until 1920: The Church of England. This resistance, called “Non-Conformism”, was not limited to Wales, but it is closely associated with the Welsh identity that is projected as the “traditional” one. Non-Conformism was a reaction to the Church of England’s status as the official religion in Wales, which carried such implications as a Church Tax and the exclusion of other religions from various state opportunities and benefits. The
dominant religious variety in Wales in the Nineteenth Century was more evangelistic than the mainstream Anglican Church and more related to Methodist, Calvinist, and Baptist Protestantism. Similar to Cymraeg in Wales, the Non-Conformist tradition is in a minority in relation to the broader society of the United Kingdom while being dominant within some smaller local spheres.

The impetus for teaching in a Christian context, involving the Non-Conformist and the Anglican religious traditions, has played an historical role in schooling in Wales. From the mid-Seventeenth Century to the end of the Eighteenth Century, there were Puritan, Anglican, and Non-Conformist schools, involving circulating peripatetic Sunday schools. Christian themes are still an implicit part of schooling, in terms of structure and content. That is, biblical and Christian stories are common—especially during school assembly presentations—and are referred to at various parts of the year. In recent decades, the symbolic appeal of religion as a feature of Welsh identity has lessened. In north-west Wales, secular practices that are treated as “traditional” Welsh activities seem to occupy the symbolic position of representing cultural identity. In fact, the constellation of practices and affect that is highlighted in use of the notion of cultural nationalism is usually indistinguishable from a love of one’s familiar environs, including “traditional” cultural practices that are strongly tied to the use of Cymraeg. Most important among these is the eisteddfod tradition.

The National Eisteddfod: As mentioned in Chapter Three, an eisteddfod is a set of events centered in competitions of music, poetry, history essays, drama, among other forms. The eisteddfod tradition is symbolized most prominently by the National Eisteddfod—or, more exactly, the Royal National Eisteddfod. The National Eisteddfod falls squarely into this broader
tradition. However, it is a different sort of thing that figures in mass media projections and that occurs as an event that is vaguely similar in some ways to a state fair. This national festival has even inspired a similar Scottish event, called “the National Mòd” (Macdonald 1997:35).

The National Eisteddfod is an annual, national cultural festival centered in musical, literary, dance, and dramatic competitions in Cymraeg, and to the general exclusion of English language practices. The origin of the National Eisteddfod is usually traced to an official festival of music and poetry competitions held by Rhys ap Gruffudd at his Aberteifi court in 1176. The eisteddfod tradition was once centered on events in the Middle Ages where the performers were professional bards. Welsh lords would award bards who gave the best performances within usually strict poetic requirements. It was later “revived” in a more popular form when it was held, for the first time in the modern era, at Abergavenny in 1789 (Morgan 1983). The National Eisteddfod began in 1789—a tradition “invented” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983)—as a way to “revive” traditional Welsh culture related to the bardic traditions and to display that culture to the rest of Britain. Consequently, it was not initially organized in a way that excluded English-language events.

The National Eisteddfod is held in a different area of Wales in the first week of August, alternating between “north” and “south” Wales. During the “week” of the festival—more exactly, it lasts nine days—a small, temporary city sits where there had been none a month before. The center of that temporary settlement is composed of the main Maes [field] on which

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1 This “Inventionist” narrative (in its instrumentalist mode) seems to imply, inaccurately, that there is a discrete event or period that marks the invention of tradition, as opposed to something more continuous (and therefore, more traditional). The latter might involve false starts or minor events that are taken up in the eventual event or period that is deemed epochal of the modern invention stage. Thus, the bardic establishment attempted to maintain a professional bardic tradition through the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, which gave rise to notable eisteddfodau that are intermediate to the “primordial” past and the modern “present”. For example, eisteddfodau in 1523 and 1567 are revivals of a different sort all their own, involving less invention, and involving less of a reception by a general public than the National Eisteddfod does. While the 1789 National Eisteddfod event at Abergavenny might be seen as inventing a tradition that is frequently invoked by associating it with the Aberteifi eisteddfod in 1176, it is just as valid to represent it as the popularization of a bardic tradition that had discontinued.
the main events take place and venues are situated, including scores of booths for political parties, teachers’ unions, universities, book associations, book vendors, cultural societies, among others; and dozens of pavilions for competitions, performances, and exhibitions (e.g., art, science, and literature exhibits). The Maes is surrounded by several camp sites, including a youth one, Maes B, which hosts various non-competitive entertainment events. It is a socially and culturally vibrant event where people from all over Wales congregate. This makes it an event to look forward to for most of the year—especially for those attendees who cannot manage to arrange to see each other at other times of the year.

In the contemporary era, the most distinctive feature of the National Eisteddfod might be that virtually all programmed events, and nearly all social interactions there take place in Cymraeg. There is no prohibition in place for conversations, but it would be difficult not to recognize on some level that the Eisteddfod locale—the Maes, the camp sites, and the pavilions—is an island of social activities surrounded by a much larger and diffuse socially organized setting for English. The Cymraeg ethos that prevails at the National Eisteddfod is present elsewhere and might even be the cause of Cymraeg-only norms in settings where Cymraeg use is promoted as a more-or-less self-consciously, more-or-less political practice—as a model for Welsh society. The Cymraeg ethos associated with the National Eisteddfod is but one instance of the bleeding across of cultural and language types of nationalism.

_Eisteddfod Tradition:_ The presence of the modern institution of the National Eisteddfod in the national imagination is indicative of the sprawling precision of the Cymraeg language-cultural complex in Welsh society. Where youths’ involvement in the National Eisteddfod is more of a leisurely vacation pursuit, the broader settings for _eisteddfodau_ is a part of banal cultural life in
many parts of Wales, much like school activities. Small-scale *eisteddfodau* are organized separately by villages, schools, a national youth organization, and the National Eisteddfod organization—where each of these is a different sort of milieu for events. The image of *eisteddfodau* at schools, at the annual youth festival, and at the National Eisteddfod is so emblematic of the constellation of traditional Welsh cultural practices that the latter is often called simply “*eisteddfod culture*” in colloquial conversation.

In addition to village and national *eisteddfod* events, the *eisteddfodau* tradition includes a specific series of events organized around the performances of children and is arranged by a national organization (*Yr Urdd Gobaith Cymru*) with the participation of schools. Thus, the *eisteddfodau* tradition, today, is strongly tied to the performances of children. In particular, *eisteddfodau* are only emblematic for those with children or who have themselves participated in this part of the Cymraeg language-cultural complex. A series of competitions take place moving those judged best into another level of competition—from the school level, to the area [*cylch*] level, to the region/county [*rhanbarth/sir*] level. The competitive process culminates in competitions at the national [*cenedlaethol*] level at an annual festival for children that mirrors the National Eisteddfod. This tradition also emigrated as part of the Welsh diaspora: One can find medals, which were used as awards for *eisteddfodau* performances by school children, on display in museums in Welsh-American communities in the US, such as the Lillian E. Jones Museum, in Jackson Ohio.²

² In school districts like those in Jackson City schools in Jackson County, Ohio, these medals were awards for the best performance in literary and musical contests. While the performances in the original eisteddfodau in Welsh-American communities sometimes took Cymraeg to be the language of performance, this was generally not sustainable in an assimilationist immigration context. *Eisteddfodau* were being held in Jackson City schools as late as 1983. The program for that *eisteddfod* can be found at: http://ohio.llgc.org.uk/syllwr/arddangos_mets.php?xmlfile=DGR00025&lang=en&div=0, accessed January 20, 2011.
Today, the concept of the *eisteddfod* is often used as a trope, by which one can move seamlessly in a conversation from one type of *eisteddfoda* to another in order to capture something culturally generic about all of these events. In terms of networks that people form, there is a lot of truth to Trosset’s (1993:37) observation that “the same people did everything”—applicable to those who are active in *eisteddfoda* of various kinds (e.g., mothers who organize or participate in a community *eisteddfod* will actively support their children who win youth competitions held at the area and county levels). In this way, different kinds of *eisteddfoda* can be thought of as part of one large cultural or language complex. Moreover, as a super-trope, “the *eisteddfod***” is a figure that is deployed when people comment on cultural practices (from “inside” or “outside” the Cymraeg language complex), or when they enact symbols of specific Welsh values (typically, from “inside” the Cymraeg complex). Ethnographically, these are very different functions, but the super-trope links them together in communicative practice, making it difficult in any particular context to distinguish which function is operative, while lending cohesion to the different functions under a general super-trope.

As much as it is emblematically rooted in an indigenous bardic tradition (mentioned above), the *eisteddfod* tradition also emerges from (and to some extent, is the invention of continuity of) life in Wales on the threshold of the Late Modern age. Both the bardic tradition, and an idealized image of national folk are central to conceptions of a distinctive Welsh nation. In other words, the so-called *eisteddfod* culture, in the social imaginary, is bound to certain ideas about the national folk of Wales that acquire content in the values expressed by the *eisteddfod* tradition. To describe how the cultural community of so-called *eisteddfod* culture interacts with the *eisteddfod* tradition, I first must show why the tradition itself figures in the imagination of Welsh society.
Segmented Society: Welsh laypersons and scholars alike imagine traditional Welsh society as a two-class system, made of the *bonedd*, or gentry, and the *gwerin*, or common people (see Jones 1992; cf. Williams 1985). In contrast, post-feudal English society was marked by the division of labor and a corresponding stratification of society into farmers, working-class, merchants, industrial capitalists, nobles, and royalty. The two-class schema of Welsh society is a point of distinction often used to indicate the distinctiveness of Wales relative to England in ordinary conversations—through indirect allusion by direct reference to the *gwerin* of Wales or through direct mention by those aware of the image in scholarly accounts of Wales’ social history.3 Moreover, the gentry of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries tended to take English culture to represent high civilization and were often portrayed by the Welsh “folk” as betraying the *gwerin*, particularly in labor disputes.

While the simple division of Welsh society into gentry and *gwerin* is easily overstated, this cultural representation also has currency in academic and lay discussions of Welsh identity. Therefore, it would be valuable to state briefly here “what everybody knows” in the Welsh academy about social strata and the eisteddfod tradition. I took this to be “common” knowledge—and, therefore, was one of my unexamined ideology about Wales—while conducting preliminary fieldwork. I encountered this idea of this simple class division before I entered anthropology—while in junior high school—in books on Welsh history at the library collections of the University of California campus in Riverside. Academics in Wales are

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3 In what amounts to an intervention in identity politics by means of “legitimate” scholarship, Gwyn A. Williams (1985) remarked on the possibility of inserting another class-category coordinate to the *gwerin*. This category is the industrial working class in Wales, particularly in the south’s coal mining fields and iron/steel mills. This division of the “low” (into industrial working class and *gwerin*) provides a perspective relevant to the historical development of political discourse and party politics in Wales, which came to influence the positions of cultural and language identity that academics, like the Marxian scholar Williams, and other professionals adopt in the current present.
familiar with the outlines of the narrative at the very least, and it percolates into common knowledge in Wales as a picture of traditional Welsh society.

Before and during the early part of the Tudor period (1485-1603), members of the professionalized bardic tradition, which focused on poetry and music production and circulation, depended on the gentry’s patronage. Prior to and during the Tudor period, the gentry were “conscious of their obligations to a community structure and to the organic unity of a broader political entity which depended largely on dedicated leadership and protection” (Jones 1992:xx). After the reign of Henry VIII, the rise of *nouveaux riches* and economic conditions made it difficult for the gentry both to support local communities and to maintain their influence on nobility and royalty. Consequently, there was a change in the practice of conscientious patronage of local Welsh communities.4

In the Seventeenth Century and the Eighteenth Century, the gentry of Wales began to look to England as an example of cultured civilization and sought ways to display their sense of distinction from the common people.5 These ways included distancing themselves from the Cymraeg-speaking, Calvinist folk of Wales by expanding their use of English and choosing the

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4 According to Jones (1992: xxxvi):

The growth and consolidation of the Tudor social and administrative settlement had forced upon the gentry new pressures and strains in addition to granting them and their successors the benefits of equal citizenship. The tensions of financial inflation and continual demands in local and regional government, together with the pressing need to keep up appearances and create favourable impressions in places of power and influence had a serious impact upon those professional declaimers who sought to benefit by enjoying more lavish and sustained patronage.

5 According to Jones (1992:xxxiii):

One essential element in social development in the sixteenth century was the attraction of urban centres in England, especially London, for the younger sons of the gentry. Since they were deprived of a full property inheritance many of them either married local heiresses and set up cadet families or drifted over the border to England and sought their fortunes elsewhere as professional soldiers or in trade, commerce, the church or the law. The degree of absenteeism, even among heirs to established estates, also increased in the course of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, thus gradually depriving the Welsh countryside of cultural leadership [because the gentry failed to act as patrons of “the national cultural entity in Wales”].
Church of England, as well as by building *faux* castles or “palaces” [*plas tai*] that survived to become part of the Twenty-First Century landscape. The gentry of the Eighteenth Century and the Nineteenth Century tended to perceive English culture as emblematic of high civilization. The gentry and those they who shared their interests in English religious and political traditions, such as owners and head managers of quarries and mines, are often portrayed in the Welsh retrospective gaze as antagonists to the *gwerin* protagonist. In this way, processes of identity construction along the English–Welsh cultural divide informed, as well as organized this stark division by economic class. Thus, this “class” division became an ethnic one insofar as the gentry lacked authenticity as Welsh persons, from the populist perspective.

The gentry’s antithetical interests were particularly salient during labor disputes. As a comment on the legacy of such social imaginaries, docents at Penrhyn Castle—*a faux* castle near Bethesda in north-west Wales that hosts public tours—tell visiting school children of tensions between quarry workers and those who worked in this manor palace (see Chapter Three, lines 391–451). The key story is that of conflict between slate-quarry workers who maintained the strike and those who returned to work six months into a strike that would last three years (see also Jones 1981:210–266). Teachers in the area told me that these tensions live on today in the interactions between descendants—as “a bitterness between the landlord and the people of Bethesda”. Apparently, families who live around the Penrhyn and Dinorwig slate quarries in north-west Wales pass on stories, from generation to generation, about the betrayal by those who sided with the gentry in the Nineteenth Century, against the Welsh *gwerin*. As industrialism began to play a role in the shaping of national identity, the gentry faded from visibility (apart from the *faux* castles) and a middle class among the *gwerin* began to emerge.
The non-gentry segment of Welsh society was likely never as monolithic as the stock image of the *gwerin* presents. Nevertheless, this image has helped to sustain the connection of traditional Welsh culture to the *eisteddfod* tradition, which is important to expression of the meaning of the Cymraeg community. As the anglicization of the gentry progressed, various quasi-scholars identified aspects of bardic and traditional Welsh culture that they believed to be an important part of folk life. The *eisteddfodau* were one of these aspects.

**The “Dominant” Ideology of Welsh Personhood:** Trosset (1993), in her performative-based ethnography of national and local identity in Cymraeg-speaking Wales, wrote about a “dominant ideology of Welsh identity” that seems to be equivalent to the so-called “*eisteddfod* culture”. Indeed, another anthropologist faulted Trosset for “deal[ing] with only one segment of Welsh society, whose cultural expression and sense of Welshness are particularly closely linked with *eisteddfodau*” (Davies 1998:149). Yet, as Trosset (1993) showed, people in north-west Wales buy into local ideology in complex ways, including those who do not think that any particular language should stand for “the” nation.

Certainly, it is plausible to treat participation in those features of cultural life in north-west Wales that are combined in references to so-called *eisteddfod* culture as subscribing to the ideology of Welsh personhood that Trosset detailed. Even so, Trosset clearly stated that it “could not be representative of even Cymraeg speakers in northwest Wales” (1993:37). Yet, the normative aspects of these “traditional” features of cultural life in Wales carry such weight in evaluations of “authentic” Welsh identity that even if one does not participate, one must engage with the ideas encoded in the ideology. It is “dominant”, then, in that “it is sufficiently widespread that it affects everyone’s thinking about society and their individual places in it”
Therefore, according to Trosset, this ideological complex of a putatively distinctly-Welsh kind of personhood is not dominant in the sense of being endorsed by most people. Rather, in Trosset’s view (and I agree), this ideological complex manifests dialogically in the form of salient and culturally recognized features in public and private discourses about Welsh identity. At the same time, even among those who endorse its ideologies, its components manifest in activities that do not figure in the general popular imagination as “cultural traditions” of the Cymraeg language complex.

Trosset’s (1993) presentation of the ethnolinguistic ideological constellation of northern Wales encompassed several component ideologies. Even if, according to Trosset (1993), Welshness could not be analyzed into its essence, Trosset was able to break down the ideological discourse about Welshness into several related components. Performing emotional states, in political arenas as well as in contexts devoted to expressive culture, is considered vital among Welsh persons (1993:167-171) and I take this to be her best illustration of her concept of performance. It forms part of a Goffman-esque strategy in Trosset’s monograph and does not speak so much to a distinctive Welshness as to the ideological discourse that is her topic. In fact, it is the performing of socially appropriate expressions of one’s feelings and private life, rather than the unconstrained and unstructured show of emotions or the performance of music and poetry, that is more central to Trosset’s (1993) main argument. Trosset considered performing of emotional states, in political arenas as well as in contexts devoted to expressive culture (1993:167-171), vital to the discourse of Welshness. (From the egalitarian attitude and sense of self-sacrifice, one can see the resemblance between the “eisteddfod culture” and the Protestant Ethic idealized by Max Weber.)
Most of Trosset’s descriptions relate to practiced (i.e., performed) components of that ideological discourse. In a later study (Trosset and Caulkins 2001, 2002), the more complex discussion in Trosset 1993 was summarized in terms of five concepts of person and society that Trosset (1993; also Trosset and Caulkins 2001) argued were components of the locally dominant, hegemonic ideology. These five analytic categories are Egalitarianism, Martyrdom, Performance, Emotionalism, and Nostalgia/Hiraeth (The last category was added because hiraeth is commonly cited (e.g. in National Geographic treatments of Wales) as an untranslatable concept significant to Welsh persons.).

Trosset conceived of the idea of egalitarianism as a marker of the distinctiveness of Welsh society (1993:164). The importance of the latter might seem to be a less likely point of distinction in an inward-looking ideological discourse (compared to the egalitarianism of perspectives from outside Wales). It is productive of a sense of distinctiveness partly because England is perceived as very stratified and class-conscious. Thus, the ideology of egalitarianism involves a sensibility of “strong disapproval of those seeking status” (Trosset 1993:164). The ideology of egalitarianism is attached to a seemingly contrary “respect for high status, education, official credentials, and prestigious jobs” (1993:164). Yet, this respect for high status did not mean an idolization of the gentry. Rather, it was influenced by the cultural values of traditional Welsh society as a Protestant society marked by great respect for expressive culture: music, debate of historical questions and Biblical scripture, and the production and critique of poetry. Thus, the high esteem for religious and educational positions reconciles the apparent tension between egalitarianism and respect for persons of high status (broadly viewed) who were in a position to put prestige on display. One can be “called” to a position of service (religious or civic leadership, teaching, and increasingly translating), where certain positions are prestigious
because of their symbolic place in a society imagined to be egalitarian, without seeming to seek status.

The hegemonic ideology also includes a tendency toward self sacrifice and martyrdom (1993:125-127) in which Welshness is seen as a burden (1993:127-128), and individuals and even groups are perceived as powerless in the face of systemic conditions (1993:121-125). Another component of this locally dominant ideology of Welsh identity is an interest in contributing to the current existence of certain “community” practices which are seen as essentially Welsh (e.g., *eisteddfodau*) (Trosset 1993:53).

A final feature of this ideological discourse is a distaste for contamination of groups identified as attaining a “purity” (Trosset’s term) of Welsh membership (1993:59-61). Trosset offered as an example of the duality of purity–contamination, the idea that the political party, *Plaid Cymru* [Party of Wales], is purely Welsh because, unlike the other parties (e.g., the Labour Party), it only operates in Wales and not in England. This seemingly simple component is tied to other component ideologies, such as there being relative degrees of being Welsh and associated sources of prestige, sectarian organization of affiliation and the imaginary absence of hierarchy, the cultural center and inauthentic sources of status, and egalitarian personal bonds.

The “Things” of Value in Welsh Cultural Identity

Some writers have denoted the features of the imagined *eisteddfod* cultural community, apart from the cohesive language bond created through use of Cymraeg, by the phrase: “*y pethe*”—literally, “the things”. US-trained anthropologist Charlotte Aull Davies (1998:149-150) described these “things” in the following way:
These ‘things’ are the types of performance and activity that traditionally are
central to eisteddfodau—singing, both individual and choral, and especially cerdd
dant [a musical form characterized by counterpoint]; recitation, again both
individual and group; harp playing; and less prestigious, but still highly valued,
various sorts of group dramatic activity, most typical being the can actol in which
a short presentation involving both singing and acting depicts some set theme.
There is often a high degree of family continuity among those whose lives are
wrapped up in y pethe, with parents who have themselves competed successfully
coaching their children. Indeed the ‘eisteddfod mam’ who sits in the front row
mouthing words and making facial expressions as her offspring perform on stage
is one of the comic stereotypes of this collectivity.

One origin of the objectifying label that Davies used—“y pethe” [the things]—might be
found in the title of an autobiography published in 1955 and written by Robert Lloyd (Lloyd
n.d.). Lloyd lived most of his life near Y Bala, which is a village in a part of north Wales that is
a quasi-sacred area of cultural history. I originally thought the label, “y pethe”, would be more
common in the south than in north-west Wales. The use of the -e inflected, plural form is linked
to south and west Wales, rather than to the primary dialect of the northern part of Wales, which
uses the -au form for plurals.

I was unaware of Lloyd’s use of the phrase (and, thus, the connection to geographic north
Wales) at the middle stages of my principal dissertation fieldwork stay in Wales. Taking it to be
a culturally significant concept, I asked student teachers from Gwynedd about it. Few of those I
asked about the term in north-west Wales recognized it, but once I cued them with some hints
about so-called eisteddfod culture, they recognized it immediately, but could not identify the
source of the phrase. These student teachers, virtually all within the age-range of 20-28 years old
and with family rooted in the Cymraeg language complex, believed the term, “y pethe”, to be a
linguistic construction belonging to south or west Wales—as did I. Because it employs the

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6 While more properly considered part of the north of Wales, Y Bala lies along the boundary of the south and north
Walian dialect regions (see Thomas 1973). The boundary of these dialect regions could be a result of movements of
people from different parts of Wales that were motivated by the cultural importance of the area.
inflected plural form, “-e”, my participants characterized the phrase as exotic to north Wales. This demonstrated, more than anything else, the student teachers’ lack of familiarity with the concept and term.7

Since the “things” of Welsh cultural (and language) identity are not universally recognized in Wales, it is worth noting that not everyone finds them relevant. In a careful analysis of some of the activities that took place at the 1995 National Eisteddfod in Colwyn Bay, Davies (1998) took exception to Trosset’s (1993) depiction of Welsh identity—the ethnographer whose work I have privileged in the account above. Davies thought this other anthropologist, Trosset had taken the constellation of “traditional” cultural practices referred to as “y pethe” to be, or to represent, the dominant segment of culture. One might say that Davies believed Trosset (1993) to be turning “the things” of a specific variety of Welshness into “The Thing” of Welshness at large. She (Davies 1998:150) criticized Trosset as follows:

Her discussion of Welshness, in fact, appears to deal with only one segment of Welsh society, whose cultural expression and sense of Welshness are particularly closely linked with eisteddfodau; but there is less support for her view that this segment is hegemonic in defining Welshness in terms of their relationship to the Welsh language, eisteddfodau, cultural and (usually) political nationalism.

This particular segment of Welsh society is recognized among Welsh speakers as those who are active in and have a love for ‘y pethe’ (the things).

As noted above, when I asked student teachers with family connections rooted in the Cymraeg language-cultural complex about the term in north-west Wales, few recognized it. However, once cued appropriately, they demonstrated a general grasp of the concept. In north-

7 One problem of linguistic/cultural etymology is that the term, if of north Walian provenance, might be an intentionally unusual usage since the -au plural form is characteristic of formal Cymraeg (as well as the primary north Wales dialectal variety) and the author was emphasizing aspects of traditional, folk culture; evoked by the –e plural form, where this particular form-type (of the plural form)—as traditional, rather than formal—was selected from varieties of Cymraeg associated with south or west Wales. The murkiness is increased when one considers that “formal” Cymraeg was constructed through the history of precisely those literary activities that form the core of y pethe of folk society. Hence, the origin story must be left a mystery of the convolutions involved in the invention of tradition.
west Wales, where Trosset conducted the major part of her research, there would seem to be no special need to mark out such things as are denoted by “y pethe” because they are very common and subtly entwined in other everyday performances, such as seeing that children do their homework and get to after-school activities and back home again. Practical experience in north-west Wales suggests no reason to objectify y pethe as a matter of course. Where y pethe is a marked category of Welshness, there would be a salient divide between the same activities organized at schools between parents “who are active in and have a love for y pethe” and parents who do not have such a love, but still have children who wish to participate.

As with any cultural practice, my point about the ordinariness of y pethe in north-west Wales can be overdrawn. This category, after all, can take on a markedness that brings it in stark contrast with other “ordinary” practices in many different ways. Even by hinting that choral singing is different from going to the butcher, without saying why, one can immediately bring into salience the traditional aspects of an objectified landscape of traditions and practices (e.g., many US-Americans often immediately mention Welsh male-voice choirs when I say that I study Wales). From an outsider perspective, it might seem hardly the case that going to the butcher could be considered distinctly Welsh, especially if compared to the number of recordings of Welsh male-voice choirs. Yet, it is precisely this compulsion toward distinctive Welshness that creates the landscape of surface positions with which this part of the dissertation is concerned. Both going to the butcher and choral singing are equally “traditional” activities for Welsh villagers, but the evoking of a particular kind of cultural activity (i.e., expressive culture) brings the aesthete quality into sharper contrast, which might suggest something out of the ordinary—and, therefore, suggests the things that fit into the category of so-called eisteddfod culture.
The claim that participation in so-called *eisteddfod* culture or *y pethe* is a kind of nationalism seemed to surface only when there was a sense of compulsion to participate, a sort of peer pressure said to be imposed, generally, by those with connections to people who have familial continuity in these traditions. One professor in Welsh Studies at the University of Wales carefully formulated his own opinion as the following: “I don’t like the fantasy that it [the *eisteddfod* culture] is part of an inclusive popular culture, when it isn’t really and it isn’t something practiced across the whole of Wales. It is something which is taught in schools and... it is very, very, very competitive and people are schooled to be competitive.” The point he was making seems to be that Welsh culture as conceived in the paradigm of *eisteddfod* culture excludes some people—in fact, a majority—and this is inappropriate, in his view, for a “national” culture. If that is a fair portrayal of so-called *eisteddfod* culture, it is remarkable since competitiveness would seem to be at odds with the egalitarian aspect of the ideology of Welsh personhood Trosset (1993) represented—as she noted herself in her conclusion (1993:164). One explanation requires that one notice the competitiveness is restricted to the *eisteddfod* tradition—even if this is a highly significant and prevalent component of the Cymraeg language-cultural complex.

Welsh society and culture are, in general, relatively non-competitive and many people’s presentation of self is marked by self-deprecation. Nonetheless, the codes of behavior that generate performance in *eisteddfodau* settings are governed by prescriptions about performance; and this is not surprising given that so-called *eisteddfod* culture emerged, in this idealization of Welsh society, from bardic traditions known for competitions using strict meters. Further, an essential feature of *eisteddfodau* is that performances are adjudicated, often by a panel of several judges. Trosset (1993:164-165) reconciled the competitiveness and egalitarianism by referring
to the fact that major competitions involve pseudonyms (so nobody knows who are among the unsuccessful) and to the general sentiment (or rationalizations) that those who do not win are victims of arbitrariness in adjudications. Her observations of the sectarian nature of Welsh society also speak to the coincidence of competition and in-group egalitarianism. Nevertheless, something of larger significance is at play here.

The eisteddfod stereotype, as emblematic of Welsh culture, holds a central truth beyond the spectacle of the National Eisteddfod that motivates its role as emblem. The codes of behavior for eisteddfodau settings, governed by prescriptions about performance, include non-linguistic codes. However, language (i.e., Cymraeg) is one of the more salient code categories that is regulated in eisteddfod contexts according to particular standards. The professor in Welsh Studies quoted above used the following phrases to characterize the qualities of Cymraeg performance of those with whom he felt uncomfortable speaking in Cymraeg: “very good”, “very formal”, “very correct”, and “very eloquent”. This view is a common one among those learning Cymraeg and have an awareness of the literary and bardic heritage in Wales, amplifying ordinary anxiety associated with learning any language as an adult.

Hence, there is an evaluative aspect of Welsh culture that plays a part in regulating good language. For example, schools frequently post on classroom walls examples of bratiaith, literally “traitorous language”. In the didactic mode, “bratiaith” is more conventionally translated as “slang” or “sloppy language”, but it also used in a sociopolitical mode that signifies the decline of Cymraeg in many parts of Wales and in ways that appear at the phenomenological if not at the systematic (i.e., census) level. Bratiaith is the contrast-class for one of the ordinary (if evaluation-laden) things that make up proper Welsh society from the perspectives of members of the Cymraeg language-cultural complex.
In any metalinguistic use of “y pethe”, one can recognize a category or type whose markedness Davies herself illustrated by using “y pethe” to link Trosset’s analysis to cultural commentary in which prototypical cultural features (i.e., y pethe) are objectified. Moreover, that meta-analytical move served Davies’ purposes by objectifying Trosset’s perspective and, in doing so, played down aspects of the sociocultural realities of north-west Wales. My understanding is that, beyond Davies’ (1998) article quoted above, which explored cultural issues at the 1995 National Eisteddfod in Colwyn Bay, her ethnographic research has not been extensive in the north of Wales. Yet, even if it had been, such experience might not yield a clear picture of the shifting and dynamic discursive platforms from which one might position oneself as a Welsh person, which explains Davies’ frustration with the idea of such positions. The positions Welsh persons take in discourse are likely to appear to be less discrete if a researcher fails to capture the layering of such discursive platforms. One of these platforms is that of everyday life routines such as afterschool activities.

There are families in any part of Wales that do not participate in eisteddfodau activities, as well as those that do, but there are also those people who defy the first-order generalizations that are based on whether (or not) they participate in such activities. For example, the only person of a traditional minority I interviewed (at a “Chinese restaurant”), told me of her involvement in eisteddfodau activities at a Catholic school in Bangor. This might not seem surprising to a non-Welsh audience, but it is commonly assumed (but presumably not by the teachers who actually teach there) that the Catholic school in Bangor cannot be as “Welsh” as other schools. This is the case even if a person knows that the school participates in eisteddfodau, though most people without intimate knowledge of the school would assume that it does not. Several people mentioned to me that the Catholic school is a place at which pupils
would have a difficult time being immersed in the cultural and language practices of the Cymraeg language complex. This is due to the legacy of the religious dimension of identity in the context of narratives about the history of Wales: Welsh Non-Conformism, in the content of the various Protestant religious traditions that Non-conformism comprises, was as opposed to Catholicism as it was to Anglicanism.

“Language Nationalism”

The Cymraeg Structure of Feeling: Nationalism in north-west Wales is most often identified by reference to language practices or attitudes. Therefore, the most common sort of so-called nationalism is language nationalism. The activist organizations mentioned in the previous chapter as nationalist organizations are both central examples of language nationalism. Cymdeithas, which was founded in 1962, was involved in the movement to make Cymraeg an official language of Wales, which occurred in 1993. Cymuned is a more recent group, founded around 2001 when several politically-active people decided that Plaid Cymru representatives at the county level were not doing enough to protect the language against English language imperialism. This allegedly affected community integrity in those villages with smaller numbers of people; at greater risk because every English-speaking individual has a greater proportional effect. Both of these groups were involved in a movement in 2007 and 2008 to keep county governments from closing or consolidating small village schools in north-west Wales. Where small village schools in Gwynedd county are permanently closed and their students are blended into larger schools (with a larger proportion of English-speaking “incidence”), it is widely believed that the prevalence of Cymraeg use that was normal prior to such closings could not be maintained.
For many in Gwynedd, Cymraeg is part of a “structure of feeling” (Williams 1961:41-71). With the term, “structures of feeling,” Raymond Williams meant to point to the set of normative impulses that move people to appreciate the same affective and aesthetic sorts of things about life in their community and to respond in generally similar ways. For language activists and self-described nationalists, there is a structure of feeling about the sense of loss of language identity that they feel is occurring in Gwynedd. Thus, people who fall into these categories, especially those with multi-generational family histories in north-west Wales, think English monolingual retirees and vacationers who buy property there are doing injury to Wales. In their view, these English people are laying siege to Wales’ distinctiveness, by driving housing prices upward and by remaining monolingual English-speakers.

In north-west Wales, schools push for youths to maintain their reliance on Welsh as their primary language. However, the disparity in local wages and housing costs impacts Welsh language viability: Because local housing is scarce, young adults must leave to the urban and populous south or east, where English is more likely to be prevalent at the village and county level. Very few can afford to return to raise families where they were themselves raised. When individuals naturalize Cymraeg as “their own language”, as Wales is their own nation, they provide a sense of confidence from which perspectives on changes in Welsh communities can be comfortably voiced and articulated in ordinary human-scale terms. The sense of continuity that members of the Cymraeg language community achieve in doing so might be a psychological remedy to the cognitive dissonance of demographic change.

Due to the specter of a non-benign nationalism, I distinguish the Cymraeg language community (anyone who can, but might choose not to participate in Cymraeg-language events) from the Cymraeg language complex. People participate in the latter in a more or less active
way to construct a sense of community that privileges Cymraeg and the cultural resources that are part of that complex. The confusion of the language community and language complex is common in popular discourse because the activities associated with cultural nationalism privilege the use of Cymraeg, which is the defining characteristic of a language community. Because a concern for the welfare of Cymraeg is so common among those who use Cymraeg regularly, the “nationalist” concern with language bleeds over into “nationalist” concerns represented by cultural practices that are associated with a distinctly Welsh sort of identity.

This “bleeding-over” tends to happen when these cultural practices begin to seem like the locally prevalent and normal kind of practices. Such putative dominance would go unnoticed if it were not marked by the presence of something people are so easily made conscious of, such as a specific language code as opposed to another. Another way of saying the same thing is that language nationalism, as a cultural concept, increases in salience on those occasions when one objects to a more or less subtle expectation to participate in Cymraeg-centered activities (e.g., any of the “traditional” Welsh cultural activities). Expressions of an expectation to participate in Cymraeg-centered activities include potentially unwelcome “encouragement” to teach in Cymraeg and requests that the private sector (e.g., grocery stores) make primary use of Cymraeg in communicative media (e.g., signage in the parking lot). This last point about objections to a felt expectation to participate is useful to recognize, and it can be generalized as a principle about the different scales involved in identity, sometimes simultaneously, which I illustrate with attitudes toward the National Eisteddfod.

The National Eisteddfod “Test”: Structures of feeling, whether anchored in the Cymraeg language complex or in the globalist English language complex, are not equivalent in scale to the
moments in which people gauge the language attitudes of others. The latter moments take place at the level of *interactional stance* in conversations and other communicative events. One infrequent example of stance regarding language identity is the inclination of a person to attend or avoid the National Eisteddfod, one of the symbols of Cymraeg-speaking Wales.

When I asked several people who know Cymraeg, but favor the more liberal contexts of global English whether they would attend the National Eisteddfod, my question was met with a laugh that marked a self-conscious distancing of themselves from the festival. Sometimes a person was going, but for academic reasons related to research or academic obligations. Nevertheless, the laughing indicated somewhat more than critical distance; something like ironic distance. If the person were not going to attend, the laugh generally took on the quality of scoffing, expressing the view that the person would not wish to be seen anywhere near the National Eisteddfod or that they thought it a waste of their time. This is one means of resisting the felt sense of the imposition of Cymraeg as against individual choice. The very same people can be caught off guard and feel uncomfortably pressured at times when in situations where a question about participation in Cymraeg practices is given the tenor of a more or less subtle expectation or moral responsibility to participate.

**SEGMENTARY SOCIETY AND CHANGE**

One might see cultural division of the sort discussed in Welsh Studies as two divergent demands that define different visions of Welsh society in the context of the locally varying subordination and dominance of one or the other language code. In social relations, they manifest as demands for interpersonal activities to be conducted in Cymraeg (or, in much of Wales outside north-west Wales, in English) and for the option to distance oneself from
Cymraeg (or English) activities. In north-west Wales, in particular, whenever there is a sense that those who locate national identity in Cymraeg might currently hold the upper-hand, there is almost always a hint of revolution by those who expressly locate national identity beyond Cymraeg.

Put more simply, during my fieldwork, I witnessed a “clash of civilizations” within Cymraeg-speaking Wales—roughly twenty percent of Wales’ population. This clash occurred and continues between those who support or tolerate Cymraeg-based language nationalism and those who have cosmopolitan leanings that are attuned to the issue of choice relatively unencumbered by Cymraeg-based institutions. It is important to recognize that this is a cleavage within Cymraeg-competent members of Welsh society, even though it is historically tied to the language divide that, in centuries past, was located between English and Welsh ethnic groups. So, today, one of the component “civilizations” overlaps with the English monolingual segment.

Persons of each category possess different kinds of what Abercrombie (1998) called “interculture”, which is “produced through centuries’-long interactions along a cultural frontier that has been the site of a great deal of violence, exploitation, resistance, and accommodation” (1998:115). Persons of each (or both) intercultural subjectivity have, at least, a different kind of relation to the dominant language in Wales (i.e., English); and possibly a different kind of relation to the dominant ethnic other in Wales (i.e., the English). These different kinds of relation ground the sense of two kinds of imaginaries of Welsh society. Persons I would “assign” to each of these categorial constructs inhabit a differently conceived kind of community (and could, in principle, inhabit both kinds of community, because they are neither totalizing nor mutually exclusive for all occasions).
The opposition between those who see Cymraeg as the substance of community and those who privilege personal choice—between those who support or tolerate Cymraeg-based language nationalism and those who have cosmopolitan leanings—is homologous to academic debates between communitarianism and liberalism (e.g., Kymlicka 1988, Sandel 1982, and Walzer 1984), where the former is the claim that people are situated in social relations and local values and knowledge, and that these cultural encumbrances are constitutive of self in ways that contradict the individualist-liberal claim that each person has a free range of choice. This division between Cymraeg communitarianism and liberal cosmopolitanism reflects relatively recent transformations of Welsh society in the specific context of language politics. Given that the descriptions above present a more or less synchronic picture, some remarks on the diachronic transformations, of which former divisions remain in collective memory, are warranted.

The classic image of a bifurcated Welsh society into the bonedd, or gentry (largely anglicized), and the gwerin, or common people no longer exists as a division of society. As Welsh society became more stratified, the ideology about a simple division of status positions became more complex in terms of religious and other cultural domains. One of these modern developments was the bifurcation of society into Non-Conformists and those who supported the

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8 That debate, deadlocked and antiquated as it has become, does offer terms that are much more descriptively accurate than “nationalist” or “English-centric”. The terms of the communitarianism debate evokes more precisely the sorts of issues that genuinely do appear on occasions and in mediated discourses. I will hereafter refer to those who support or tolerate Cymraeg-based language nationalism as “communitarians” and to those who demand the option to distance themselves from Cymraeg activities as “liberal cosmopolitans”. The latter are people who are competent in Cymraeg and who explicitly endorse a “liberalist” ideology about choice in language-use according to which there should be no cultural or state constraints on one’s choice to use one language code or the other, or both. It is theoretically possible for such people never to feel any compunction toward either language, nor to feel any tension about their choice to use one or the other. Nonetheless, I did not meet nor hear of the existence of any of these theoretically possible people.

Those who can express themselves in Cymraeg can speak both of Wales’ two official languages. However, I encountered no one who expressed equal affinity toward both official languages. The singular example might be Wales national poet, Gwyneth Lewis, whom I have not met. She makes it a professional challenge and obligation to master the poetic qualities of both languages, often in relation to each other. (See Lewis 1985 and Williams 2002/3). The relationship between person and nation is complicated, then, not only because languages, as national symbols, are generally polysemic (as are most symbols, national or otherwise), but also because language identity seems, on “the ground”, to be so very un-vague.
Church of England. After the Church of England in Wales became disestablished in the early Twentieth Century, Non-Conformism carried less national significance. Eventually, those whose national identity and personal values were wedded to the chapel life continued their chapel practices, while others became less interested.

An analogue to the current social reality captured in my two constructs of language communitarians and liberal cosmopolitans can be found in a collection of four projects at four sites throughout Wales.9 One of the contributors used the categories of “Buchedd A” and “Buchedd B” to represent the empirical division of the community into “chapel people” and “pub people” (Jenkins 1960). The importance of Cymraeg in chapel traditions and of both Cymraeg and chapel for local traditional cultural life means that there is a resemblance between Cymraeg communitarianism and Buchedd A. However, whereas my constructs concern ideology largely apart from economic circumstances, Jenkins (1960) considered socioeconomic class more closely. Jenkins (1960) associated sixty percent of the village with Buchedd A, while sixty-five percent of these were manual laborers. Of the forty percent associated with Buchedd B, ninety-six percent were manual laborers.

While I did not estimate the proportion of professionals versus working-class persons among liberal cosmopolitans, it is obvious to me that the predominance of working class persons among those associated with “the people of the tavern” in Jenkins 1960 does not apply to my category of liberal cosmopolitans. Since the end of the Nineteenth Century until at least the third

9 While the contributors to that edited volume researched the traditional quality of rural communities, this was in contrast to Ronald Frankenburg’s monograph on a border town. During the 1950s, Frankenburg accidentally came to the borderlands in the northeast of Wales to study the place he called (in Cymraeg), “the village where there is no work”. His original site for research became impossible, so he decided to work somewhere close to the university in Birmingham. He settled on this Welsh village and is widely acclaimed for innovatively representing the lines of integration between this village and British society, focusing on the flows of people across the border. He also highlighted the disputes that arose in the village in connection with three organizations: a brass band, a soccer team, and production of a carnival. As he was ultimately blamed for the failure of the soccer team, because his foreign status made him a convenient lightning rod, he included those details in his reflective ethnography. It, thus, represented a divergence from the typical focus on traditional rural life.
quarter of the Twentieth Century, socialist political work in Wales has been part of a triangle of mutual opposition, being in tension with British conservatism and Welsh republicanism—a triad of incompatibility (or, more conventionally, an inconsistent triad). The non-elitism to be found among working-class people, then, can be divided into a distinct sympathy for ordinary folk of the traditional sort [gwerin] and Marxian trends in the sociopolitical history of industrial Wales. Many liberal cosmopolitan academics can be described as such precisely because their liberalism is oriented toward individuals’ access to public goods as members of society and, therefore, occupies a position that is opposed to the political conservatism of the Conservative Party in Britain.

Interestingly, an anti-establishment attitude, which is easily assimilated to the religious history of Non-Conformism in Wales, spans the division between language communitarians and liberal cosmopolitans. Non-Conformism succeeded at ending the imposition of the Church of England as the established religion through a majority that imposed its will against the state-level policy. Of course, since Non-Conformism was successful by 1920 in ending the official status, in Wales, of the Church of England, it is difficult to state that Non-Conformism is, today, an anti-establishment movement. It has now become a dominant part of the image of traditional Welsh society. Hence, one can make a plausible argument that the general anti-establishment attitude toward language dominance involves a nested oppositionality regardless of which “side”

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10 Over the course of the Twentieth Century, Cymraeg was a marker of local identity in the north and west, while English became more associated with economic well-being and industry in the south and east. Politics among the industrial working-class incorporated a broad sort of cosmopolitanism that connected with the working class ideals of other English-speaking societies, while politics centering on the gwerin were concerned with the interests of Cymraeg-speaking Wales. Consequently, due to this imagining of the socioeconomic structure of Wales, there is a culturally persuasive myth about two major political parties in Wales. That is, the Labour Party in Wales represents, and is anchored to the support by, people belonging to “industrial Wales”, while Plaid Cymru (Party of Wales) is anchored in the support of and represents people belonging to Cymraeg-majority communities (found predominantly in rural Wales).

11 Although I cannot confirm it, I heard reported that, when, Margaret Thatcher was asked in 2002 what her greatest achievement had been, she quipped: “New Labour”. This indicated she believed the Labour Party had continued her Conservative Party work for her, unintentionally.
has primacy in any given context (Gal and Irvine 1995 referred to this sort of phenomenon as “fractal recursivity”). Thus, language communitarians insist on their right to speak Cymraeg in private and commercial settings because the broader, dominant society is imposing English on them. Yet, there are settings in Gwynedd in which liberal cosmopolitans feel that the local, dominant society is imposing Cymraeg on them. Reliance on such nested oppositionality are part of the cultural topography—indeed, the interculture (Abercrombie 1998)—throughout Wales.

To understand a little about the dynamics of the nested oppositionality in north-west Wales, recall the observation of the Welsh Studies’ professor that the so-called eisteddfod culture “is very, very, very competitive and people are schooled to be competitive”. The interviewee claimed that this leads to exclusion, rather than to the flat, egalitarian society that Wales’ folk are supposed to inhabit. On the other hand, if claims of cultural nationalism coincide with a sense of a social expectation or even compulsion to participate—and this suggests inclusiveness, even if it is forced inclusion—then this observation about exclusion is at odds with the cosmopolitan’s objection to the expectation to participate. What that particular cosmopolitan professor was objecting to, then, was that there should be any expectation to include oneself in the first place. This suggests a kind of membership in local communities that is always, ever voluntary, which seems to erode the idea of community. Oppositionality between communities and its correlate of national egalitarianism are as much a traditional feature of Welsh society (apart from the former society of the gentry) as the activities in which he objects to being expected to participate.

This apparent tension in cosmopolitans’ attitudes can be resolved by recognizing how this appearance of exclusion relates to a different sort of appearance; that is, the appearance of a

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12 This dissertation does not examine the social history of anti-establishmentarianism, but it is worth mentioning that such agonistic resistance has a broader societal presence than that pertaining to language politics.
ranking aspect in the way community boundaries are marked. “Invitations” to participate in so-called *eisteddfod* culture carry with them an unspoken expectation that one’s performance will be evaluated according to the standards of those individuals doing the “judging”. Hence, it is not enough to stress the cosmopolitan leanings that explain their discomfort in Cymraeg-centric settings. One must remember that the *liberal* cosmopolitan is just as interested in the structural setting of choice, as well as the content of the choices.

By keeping in mind these two perspectives—communitarianism and cosmopolitanism—rather than focusing on a mere preference toward Cymraeg or English, one can see that discourse is not constructed merely as a duality, but involves a more complicated collection of activities, practices, and processes. Even if this complex set is viewed as a field of action in which there are two major identity orientations, both of these orientations can be found among those who are bilingual in Cymraeg and English. Moreover, a communitarianism anchored in the English language community and a liberal cosmopolitanism that is very similar to what I have been discussing and that can be found among those who speak only English—albeit with differences in how English and other languages figures in their practices. Such a research perspective is better able to capture diversity in national identity, but it also better equips a researcher to study the social life of language attitudes.

The framework composed of language communitarianism and liberal cosmopolitanism is especially useful in that it juxtaposes two non-continuous ways of practicing identity in north-west Wales. There is, of course, an essential difference between language communitarianism and liberal cosmopolitanism—in the former, the identity associated with a language is not a personal trait that one can choose not to express, but is an integral part of oneself; in the latter, nothing about language is taken to be a substance shared among the community members—i.e.,
“consubstantial” in Burke’s (1969) terms. Nevertheless, nothing about the practice of the two would necessarily lead to mutual exclusion.

To elaborate, one is not “more cosmopolitan” simply because one resists the particularist communitarian impulse that is tied narrowly to a language such as Cymraeg. Conversely, one is not a “more communitarian member” of a Cymraeg (or an English) language community if one follows the call of that particular language community—what I called a language community demesne for short in Chapter Two. Clearly, it is possible to feel that speaking English, at one time, and Cymraeg, on another occasion, are equally valid ways of expressing membership in some inhabitable, experiential, and personal part of each of these language communities. One might even feel, oneself, to be equally a member of a demesne of both overlapping language communities. This latter position would be a generalist, rather than a particularist communitarian stance on the capacity of language competence to make a group of people and their ethos cohesive. Although a generalist communitarian stance is not a self-contradictory position, it just so happens that few people in Wales, particularly in Abergwaith, equivocate in this way over cultural identity when language is the salient factor.

The following chapter describes some events, settings, and conversations that represent a particular stance within language communitarianism. I call it “decolonization”, which is often associated with political territories. However, the Gikuyu-Kenyan writer, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, has used the phrase in relation to “the mind” and, in particular, language of choice among artists and writers (1986). It was a visit by Ngugi to north-west Wales that impressed on me the importance of one of the analytic frames that both has local currency and cultural-comparative value. My discussion of the decolonization stance begins with Ngugi’s lecture.
CHAPTER SIX

THE DECOLONIZATION CHRONOTOPE

Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When change is absolute there remains no being to improve and no direction is set for possible improvement... Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it... [T]he progressive organisation of irrational impulses makes a rational life. (George Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, Vol. 1 (1906:284, 291))

The fusion of all the inhabitants of these islands into one homogeneous, English-speaking whole, the breaking down of barriers between us, the swallowing up of separate provincial nationalities, is a consummation to which the natural course of things irresistibly tends; it is a necessity of what is called modern civilisation, and modern civilisation is a real, legitimate force; the change must come, and its accomplishment is a mere affair of time. The sooner the Welsh language disappears as an instrument of the practical, political, social life of Wales, the better; the better for England, the better for Wales itself. (Mathew Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867:12))

CONVERGENT IDEOLOGIES

Ngugi wa Thion’o and Phatic Conflict in Bangor

In June 2007, the Gikuyu-Kenyan writer, Ngugi wa Thion’o, visited the north-west corner of Wales. He appeared at a 200-person capacity lecture hall on the University of Wales campus in Bangor, Gwynedd. Days previously, Ngugi had appeared in the Welsh border market-town of Hay-on-Wye at the Hay Festival of Literature and the Arts, to discuss his recently published novel, *Wizard of the Crow*.¹ The event at the University of Wales was sponsored by the School of Cymraeg and, as the head of the department told me afterwards, it was part of a larger project of encouraging scholars of the School to incorporate modes of decolonizing the academy that are drawn from such areas as literary criticism.

Ngugi is known for cultural elaboration of the effects of the “international bourgeoisie” on the organization of language-cultural institutions, by means of that “bourgeoisie’s” supporting

¹ The fact that a Kenyan Hay Festival has taken place in Nairobi, Kenya every year since 2009 (in collaboration with the publisher, Storymoja) suggests Ngugi’s presence in Hay-on-Wye in 2007 had a broader purpose that overshadowed his visit to Bangor. However, I have not confirmed any such brokering during his visit to Wales.
role in imperialist operations of “consolidated financial capital” in nations that have been colonized, particularly by the British. His *Decolonising the Mind* concerns the politics of English language and literature as it constrains the expressiveness of native African writers, artists, and intellectuals. Given the presence of an international bourgeoisie and the historical colonization by an English-language empire, continued commitment to the unassailably supreme position of English was devastating for African languages and cultures. It led to the use of colonial forms to express the emerging leadership of African persons in a post-colonial Africa and the undervaluing of indigenous languages and cultures. *Decolonising the Mind* is his most well-known statement on the importance of not conducting intellectual or literary communications in English. Ngugi (1986) wrote, in “A Statement”, in that book that it was to be his “farewell to English as a vehicle for any of my writings”.

When I walked, a few minutes late, into the lecture hall theater to see and hear the Kenyan speak, I noticed headsets near the door. Familiar with Ngugi’s opinions, I took one with me as I looked for a seat—I thought he might speak mostly or entirely in Gikuyu. To my mild surprise, he opened with a few awkwardly-spoken words of Cymraeg: *P’n’awn da* (“Good afternoon”). He also used another standard phrase, which was inaudible except for the /ch/, which was much closer to the sound in Cymraeg than most English monolingual speakers are able to perform when learning the language: possibly *Dioleck yn fawr* (“Thank you very much”), or *Sut dach chi?* (“How are you?”). The headset, as it turned out, was for instantaneous translation into English of any Cymraeg that occurred. The entirety of the talk that followed, a talk on the importance of not intellectualizing in English, was in English.

There was some surreality to this even, amid such political academic stance-making, given that this persona was giving a presentation in English to a school devoted to scholarship in
and about Cymraeg.\(^2\) Cymraeg is a language that his audience though of as having barely survived English’s first trial on the way to (inchoate) global domination. The event became more surreal when Ngugi interrupted his presentation to answer his cell phone. He carried on a conversation for the next five minutes. However, the real problematic nature of the event in Bangor did not fully emerge until near its end, during the question-and-answer session.

Ngugi began his discussion of a loosely connected set of topics related to linguistic hegemony by saying that, when some religious texts were translated in Britain, the Bible in particular, English versions were argued to be more true than other vernaculars (perhaps by later, Eighteenth-Century English speakers, but not by Cymraeg speakers and probably not by Queen Elizabeth I, who ordered the translation for political-religious reasons). Ngugi moved on to Matthew Arnold’s plea for the elimination of Cymraeg linguistic identity in the Nineteenth Century. Stating that Ireland, like Wales, shares the ignominious claim to be among the first colonies of the Anglo-Norman kingdoms, Ngugi discussed the application of colonization experiences in Ireland to the colonization of Africa.\(^3\) African languages came to be associated with negativity, he said, especially at schools, where educators required children who used vernacular languages to carry a placard around their neck, and to hand it over to the next similarly transgressing student; with corporal punishment being imposed on the last pupil to be charged with speaking their mother tongue.

This disciplinary practice has a familiar ring to it: Victorian Welsh persons—whose minds Ngugi would have said had been colonized—carried out this practice in schools in Wales,

\(^2\) One of his responses on this point is that he has never said that he was “above” or had “found solutions to” “the contradictions which bedevil our society” (Ngugi 1981:11, quoted in Cancel 1985:28). Similarly, Gikandi (1992:134) claimed that “the most important issues raised in Ngugi's discourse on language... reside in the splits, the ellipses, and the gaps that it opens up”.

\(^3\) The era of colonization he drew from was that of Edmund Spencer, in the seventeenth century, and not the era immediately following the early Norman invasion in the twelfth century, during which some of the Normans “became” Irish.
which has become known as “the Welsh Not”. It is most widely known because the story of this historical practice is reproduced in the very institutional setting that is its narratival setting: the school. Its popular form is called the “Welsh Not”. Pupils who violated the prohibition were compelled to wear a heavy placard made of slate (or other material) around their neck until another pupil could be caught speaking the “Welsh” language. The child still carrying the “Welsh Not” at the end of the day was caned.4

The “African Not” was one of the less brutal forms of colonizing minds since the agents of colonizing administrations had gone so far as to cut out tongues to stop a person from speaking a language thought to hold him back from his potential. Ngugi cautioned us with what was, under English-medium circumstances, enigmatic advice: by intellectualizing in English, French, Portuguese, and so on, we help to produce a fate for subordinate languages in which the representative literary texts of vulnerable mother tongues will become archaeological sites for seeing what those languages used to be like.5

After Ngugi finished and the applause died out, the moderator of the event invited the audience of fifty to sixty people to ask Ngugi questions. Unlike Ngugi and the moderator, the voices of members of the audience would not be amplified by means of a microphone. I thought nothing of this. I was excited to be able to participate in the academic event through my competence in Cymraeg, which varies relative to context. The first two questions, in English,

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4 Historical narratives that circulate in Wales depict this era in different ways. Some versions of this and similar narratives adopt a conquest and domination theme, and blame the English for such disciplinary measures. Others note that Welsh persons, not the English, enacted such measures themselves in full complicity with English-language hegemony. Those who imagine neutrality to be a condition of historical accuracy might leave out the moral condemnation of the English language, omit any sense of language dominance in a material as well as ideational sense, and downplay the role of dominant languages in the ideological portrayal of identity as a dichotomous sense of belonging and place.

5 Ngugi finished his talk by reading to us from his newest novel about the bizarre and sycophantic steps that a set of ministers took to please the ruler of the Free Republic of Aburiria; which involved surgical modification of their sensory and expressive organs, thus allowing them to better serve the state—bigger eyes, bigger ears, bigger tongues.
were spoken loudly, but the third was uttered in Cymraeg by a soft-spoken woman. Before she began, someone sitting in the audience prompted Ngugi in English that he should put on the translation headset. This was the moderator, a member of the faculty of the School of Welsh, C. Thomas Logan. He obviously knew the female speaker who had indicated she had a question. There was a brief moment of confusion until the significance of this advice dawned on the guest speaker. I could not hear any words of the question that followed from where I sat, so I tried to turn the headset on for the first time. The question was short and I waited too long to put the headset on. By the time I had fitted the headphones over my ears, she had finished asking her question. Unlike any other similar context of simultaneous translation in Wales, such as main events at the National Eisteddfod, I could not get the headphones to produce sound. Ngugi’s answer, in English, was fairly brief and gave me no better context for guessing what the question had been. No one in the area in which I was sitting had heard the question either.

As the event came to a close, the moderator walked up to the podium and announced in Cymraeg that there would be a reception afterwards. Continuing in Cymraeg, Dr. Logan mentioned that he first came across the Kenyan writer’s work twenty-five years prior in an English Department in another country. Before C. Thomas Logan could say much more, he realized that Ngugi was having trouble with the headset. I had not been able to figure out how to turn my own headset on and, apparently, neither had Ngugi. After a bit of trouble, it appeared that Ngugi had resolved the problem and Thomas continued.

A moment later, we learned that Ngugi’s wireless headset was not receiving an adequate signal and Thomas paused again. After another headset was found, Thomas began yet again, but clearly the second set of headphones was of no help to Ngugi either, so Thomas said, “I’ll switch to English. It’s alright”. Ngugi, however, urged him to continue and was receiving assistance
with the headset. Seeming to truncate his speech, Dr. Logan finished by recognizing the importance of new ideas, thanked the person who organized the event and thanked Ngugi. After the applause died down, we all exited and proceeded to the foyer.

It is worth noting a number of things about this event. Ngugi did not demand that he be addressed in Gikuyu and probably never has in public situations outside Kenya. Nobody demanded that he speak Gikuyu at the Bangor speaking event and no one demanded that he use Cymraeg in his lecture. At least one person insisted on using Cymraeg when she asked her question. Ngugi, also, insisted that Thomas continue in Welsh despite the fact that he could not understand Thomas and had no means of translation available to him at the moment.

Over the course of an hour, I was enthralled in the imaginational act of listening to the Kenyan writer’s discussion of linguistic colonization and his portrayal of the fictional state administration of Aburiria that followed. In the final moments of technological difficulties, I found myself cognitively synthesizing the social practices that unfolded on the dais during the question period and afterward. While so engaged, I recognized that part of what I had witnessed was a conflict over the kinds of links that can and ought to be made between people. This issue evokes Malinowski’s (1923:315) concept of *phatic communion*: “a type of speech in which ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words”. Such communion “serves to establish bonds of personal union between people brought together by the mere need of companionship and does not serve any purpose of communicating ideas” (Malinowski 1923:315). Notwithstanding Malinowski’s idea that silence is never interpreted as a reassuring factor and is to be regarded as alarming and dangerous (*cf.* Basso 1990), it is true that a failure or an inability to communicate can cause problems when there is an expectation for someone to do so. I call the condition(s) for such a failure or inability, “phatic conflict”.
Utterances that (seek to) establish phatic communion can also accomplish other ends. Abercrombie (1956:3) established this multiplicity by recounting an instance in which Dorothy Parker mocked sociolinguistic conventions. Parker was asked how she was at a social occasion. In cocktail party tones, responded to the standard greeting with, “I’ve just killed my husband with an axe, and I feel fine”. Far from astonishing any of her interlocutors, this utterance confirmed her health by conveying an attitude typical of her—signifying that all was well with Dorothy Parker. In the communicative event in Bangor, there were several simultaneous communicative features that are noteworthy. First, there was a directly present phatic conflict in which material channels were blocked, partly due to technological problems. Thus, a very basic condition of communion, which would have allowed the communication of interactional bonds as well as ideas, was not established.

This basic conflict could not be resolved, however, because of a second phatic conflict, regarding which language code was acceptable under the particular conditions of technological problems. Key participants, Ngugi and the third person to ask him a question, chose to privilege a break in one material channel of communication (i.e., simultaneous translation via headphone) by rejecting a language code (i.e., English) that would have re-opened channels of communication. Nevertheless, that present phatic conflict was not about keeping the social channels of communication open. The choices Ngugi and others made during and after the question-and-answer session reflected a sensibility to recognize the colonized status of language use in Wales and its similarity to Giguyu in Kenya.

This commonality partly explains why social intercourse at the lecture Ngugi gave was anything but smooth and convenient. Key participants erected impromptu barriers to communication due to the felt injustice of acquiescing to the general conditions of constraint on
language use. Despite one kind of phatic conflict, communication occurred on a broader level beyond interaction. That is, phatic conflict continued because the participants already understood what each other was talking about. The inconvenience of entertaining different code-properties was sufferable because the sub-textual theme of post-colonizers using language to dominate others was paramount.

Importantly, because there was a general communion on the topic of decolonization, we can recognize a third kind of phatic conflict, which is a more figurative case of a generalized conflict that was not directly present in the communicative situation in Bangor. This third kind of conflict concerns the issue of what language code was acceptable when material channels of communication are opened in the broad societal context of life in Wales. The positions people take in this broad kind of phatic conflict depend on individuals’ specific socio-histories and the meanings that different kinds of communicative participation have for different people.

This broader phatic conflict lends itself to a broader interpretation of the “situation” that Ngugi and several other participants orchestrated in that lecture theater. I characterize that broader interpretation after exhibiting two other instances of this broader figurative conflict that also occurred in June 2007. I present these other cases in light of the fact that the glimpse into the Kenyan writer’s imagined world of experience was very similar to the views I had had over the previous four months when Welsh-speakers attacked the hegemony of the English language and, in fact, on each preliminary field trip since my first visit to north Wales in 1995.

The Thomas Cook Affair

Two weeks after Ngugi’s Bangor speaking engagement, another event occurred in this same college town that illustrates the broader situation of a figurative phatic conflict. Cymraeg
language activists interpreted it as an exemplar for violations of language civil rights. I gathered a common core of “facts” about the event, which I learned from activists, reporters, and acquaintances of those involved.\(^6\) A monolingual manager of the office of a travel agency company with a UK-wide marketing presence enforced an alleged company policy that business communications between employees are to be carried out solely in English. Two employees who were discussing something in Cymraeg were actually in heated disagreement over an issue they had been arguing about for some time. Given her position at the branch, the manager thought she would have been able to manage the situation if she had understood the argument before it became so heated.

The issue was discussed in television news, on the internet in Youtube videos, and in private places. In some of the local discussion, there was confusion about whether the travel company, Thomas Cook, was discouraging its patrons (or its employees) from using Cymraeg.\(^7\) Confusion notwithstanding, there was an underlying concern among language activists about private sector language practices (e.g., Cymdeithas Yr Iaith Gymraeg [The Cymraeg Language Society] had identified the goal of strengthening the provisions of the Welsh Language Act of 1993 related to bilingual communication, which applied only to governmental settings.). The activists saw the issue, as stated above, as one that involved a violation of the employees’ civil rights. Within a few days of the event, Wales-level political leaders from all of the major political parties contacted Thomas Cook. The company was required, due to public complaints,


\(^7\) Even Member of the National Assembly, Bethan Jenkins, seemed to be confused on this point about customers’ rights, despite an image of the bilingual notice Thomas Cook had posted on their entrance in Bangor, which read, in capital letters: “Os ydych eisiau trefnu eich gwyliau yn Gymraeg, fe fyddan yn hapas ich helpu” and, in English, “Despite press reports, you are very welcome to do your business here through the medium of Welsh”. Clearly, there are performative dimensions of the initiating communicative event that have motivated the response, which go beyond explicit intentions of the Thomas Cook principals. Ms. Jenkins’ web page on this topic is: http://bethanjenkins.blogspot.com/2007/06/gwyliau-yn-gwmraeg-thomas-cook-yn-hapas.html; accessed June 28, 2007.
to meet with the Commission for Racial Equality. When I left Wales in April 2008, however, the company policy had not been deemed unlawful by any formal legal process.

Web-logs, or “blogs”, as the modern-day equivalent of the village square, are probably the most public (and least restrained) arena for discussion of events like those at the Bangor office of Thomas Cook. One blogger referred to the event as “the Thomas Cook Welsh Not fiasco”, which highlights the cultural thematic of colonization and repression. The blogger tellingly used the pseudonym of Ordovicius, which refers to one of the ancient British ethnic groups, the Ordovices, who inhabited Wales when the Romans arrived, and resisted Roman settlement until (as Tacitus recounted in his “Agricola”) they were all killed in an invasion in the 70s of the First Century A.D. In the comments section of that blog item, published two days after the incident, one commentator wrote that, “I don’t see how anyone’s rights have been offended” and referred to the social drama as “a storm in a teacup” (Wardman, Matt, posted on June 8, 2007 at 22:33).

Another “blogger” with opinions similar to those of Ordovicius intervened and wrote:

“What's being denied, Mr Wardmann, is the inalienable right of citizens to speak their own language in their own country, whenever and to whomever they please. Any suggestion that this [company policy] is either 'reasonable' or 'sensible' is dangerous nonsense” (Gwe, posted on June 9, 2007 at 15:47).

Gwe (a pseudonym) used a commonplace phrase in addressing commenter Wardman’s views on the Thomas Cook affair: “their own language in their own country”. It is not difficult to find this sort of phrase appearing in discussions of linguistic hegemony and Cymraeg’s subordinate status. The occurrence of tropes like “their own language” presupposes some interesting things.

Whether a person recognizes a single language as their own language and the question of which

languages are appropriate to which countries are highly contingent issues. Some of these issues arose in an interview I conducted with a teacher at the junior school in Brynpiws (YGB).

**The Welsh “Not as Passionate as Us”**

In early June 2007, a day before Ngugi’s talk, I had been interviewing teachers using basic questions about their favorite subjects and the importance of Welshness and Welsh history to them. Each of these interviews touched on how much control they had over what was taught, what made them want to go into teaching, what their hopes and visions about teaching were, what their favorite subjects were, whether their students were more likely to enjoy teachers’ favorite subjects, how important teaching Welsh history was to them, and whether there were any special qualities that make someone Welsh as opposed to British or European. The responses of one teacher at the school in Brynpiws (YGB), Siân Lewis, were still echoing in my thoughts.

I focus on my interview with Siân here because her passionate outspokenness brought together the elements of increasing cultural stresses that I had been feeling for months, which revolved around language politics. As my competence in Cymraeg improved, but not as quickly as I liked, so also did my awareness of both how narrow and how hidden was the line between those who belonged to the Cymraeg language-culture complex and those who did not. I found myself in a position in which I had not wanted to find myself: Unable to remain in the country long enough to become fully fluent in a diverse set of registers and cultural domains, I felt forced to do what I could, in the time I had, in the best available way I could do it.
I was learning, but was not yet conversant enough to conduct the interview with Siân and the other teachers *yn Gymraeg*. Siân was not the only first-language Cymraeg-speaking teacher to feel comfortable enough with me, even in an English-language context, to speak her mind. Indeed, Siân expressed claims and arguments that some Welsh people would find objectionable and even offensive—that is, “nationalistic”. I avoided the temptation to exploit the fact that I was learning Cymraeg, to use this fact to garner the favor of those who felt most comfortable speaking Cymraeg. Instead, I encouraged research participants to participate only to the degree with which they were comfortable. In some cases, in fact, I had the impression that the English-language interview could itself inspire discussion of the interviewee’s own politics of language.

Siân and I sat on opposite sides of the small table in the teachers’ lounge at Ysgol Brynipws, having our perfectly abnormal conversation. The key points in the interview with Siân came when she highlighted Cymraeg as a special quality that makes someone Welsh.

“...so I think it doesn’t matter where you are in the world, you still will be Welsh you know, but if you lost the language...”

—Siân hadn’t finished her sentence, so after five to ten seconds I asked, “What would you be losing?”

“Well you’d lose something that was very precious to you. And if you’d lose it, you wouldn’t think it’s precious and... actually, these football players who play for Wales (she grimaces), hmm, gets under my skin ‘cause if you can’t speak Welsh, this is my opinion, if you can’t speak Welsh, you’re not a Welsh woman or a Welsh man.”

In understanding the surface message here, it is important to know what Siân was alluding to. Most of the professional soccer players on Wales’ national team at that time could not speak

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9 The transformation of the initial /c/ of Cymraeg to /g/ is called a “mutation” and is a feature of Celtic languages.
Cymraeg, which is not a contractual requirement. This is a commonly known fact that people discuss in the context of the pre-game ritual of singing the national anthem, which is in Cymraeg. Siân was alluding to the fact that many of the players could not sing the national anthem without a translation (or even read the words off a page).

The importance of knowing the words to the national anthem had become symbolized in 1993 by a highly publicized videotaping of then-Secretary of State for Wales, John Redwood at a national conference of the Conservative political party. In the video footage, taken soon after Redwood had been appointed to the lead political office in Wales at the time, Redwood seemed to be miming—bobbing his head and mouthing shapes that had no correspondence to the words of the national anthem. This cultural knowledge lay in the background while Siân and I spoke. These things, and their broader societal significance, grated on Siân. For others, they might have amounted to mild annoyance or amusing facts.

While strong sentiments such as Siân’s might guide conversations among participants of the Cymraeg language-cultural complex, careful questioning revealed that Siân also employed a more articulated, dynamic mode of feeling and thinking about these matters. Siân continued:

“You can’t be [i.e., Welsh]. Until you try to attempt to learn it. You might not be well-spoken and you might not be an expert at reading or writing it, but you have to try.”

This elaboration of Siân’s views demonstrates that strong statements can be, and often are, compromised upon reflection. Typically, the emphasis on language competence is modulated to a concern with whether people make an effort to acquire competence.

The impression of an implied ethnic purity frequently gets taken in this direction in Welsh contexts. Rather than the totalizing expression of absolutes, we see a much more ludic
conception of life in Wales unfold in this teacher’s articulation of her thoughts. The terms of identity are altered to address degree, rather than kind. Moreover, while her classification and bounding of place on such a basis evokes the symbolic violence of ethnic ontologies, this case of classification involved shades, rather than absolutes:

“‘Cause these people who come in, they don’t learn the language and expect us to talk English to them. It doesn’t happen not in this area of Wales . . .”

Of course, I saw myself, to some degree, as was one of “these people”, as she put it, who came to Wales and “expect” people like her to talk English to me. We see, however, that such opinions are not etched in stone, but are more mutable. They can be and are modulated in practice. These negotiations over the terms of identity are part of everyday transactions in practices of performing identities, but recognition of this fact did not ease my conscience.

Nonetheless, given the diversity of language practices in Wales, Siân seemed to be ruling a lot of people out of her picture of Welshness, so I inquired about areas known for their lack of Cymraeg-speaking communities and virtual lack of Cymraeg speakers: south Wales and south-east Wales, respectively. By asking for her opinion of the contrast between these culturally recognizable different (whether they are, in fact, objectively different) areas, which carry different temporal markings, different centuries in which Cymraeg declined to nearly absent levels, I contributed to her confusing answer to my question, “What do you think of people in south Wales and south-east Wales?” Her response to that question illustrated that, to such an inquiry, she would and did modulate the issue of definitive membership into an issue of levels of commitment:

“I wouldn’t say that they’re not as Welsh as us. No, they are Welsh, you know, because they have, they talk the language and things like that, but in some areas
they’re not as passionate as us or they wouldn’t let the language die, you know? They’d never speak English to a Welsh person. I wouldn’t.”

Thus, the first two instances of “they” refers to people in the areas in which Cymraeg is not common (“they are Welsh, you know”), while the “they” who “let the language die” refers to people in the areas where Cymraeg is virtually absent from everyday life. The final “they” refers to a counter-factual—if the people of south-east Wales, who “let the language die”, were passionate about the language, they would not speak English to persons accustomed to Cymraeg.

This amended position is a far cry from the original formulation: “If you can’t speak Welsh, you’re not a Welsh woman or a Welsh man”. Nevertheless, it reserves the slot of “Welsh person” for those who speak Cymraeg. In that sense, it is a part of a practice of exhibiting a stance toward language politics that is oriented toward whatever position a person (e.g., Siân) has chosen to occupy.

While the progression of the segment of the interview displayed above reveals a complex and nuanced way of thinking, the result is a fairly rigid framework that she projects on the society and culture of Wales. The “value” of Siân’s subject position did not change throughout the interview, but she did exhibit various stances that eventually took a particular shape that she clarified in terms of such notions as passion and effort. In just so many words, this social actor erected a range of values within a field of discourse. In Chapter Two, I referred to such a range as a language zone.

As Siân’s presentation of her phenomenological space might suggest, these zones can operate as corridors. Such “language corridors” operate as the pathways into which social action is canalized—by orienting, constraining, or forcing people to articulate a social action in a culturally recognizable language code. It is to construe language codes (English, Welsh,
Japanese, Quechua) as if they were modes of expression that can be delineated as the aspects of the communicative process by which material constraints are placed on how a message can be conveyed; in other words, as if they were analogous to communicative channels (inscriptional, verbal, gestural, telegraphic, by Aldus lamp, etc.). To read in modern English a Sixth-Century Welsh poem in some way true to the original requires two language corridors. To take another example, one cannot properly protest the prevalence of English monolinguals in a Welsh village without conducting some part of the protest in English.

The Public and the Pendulum

Given the preceding chapters, cultural practices can be and are divided into various segments of the discursive space of the public sphere—a segmentation that prompts the use of the plural notion of publics. The abstract public space is divided in everyday practices within such zones of discourse operate in such a way as to organize language-canalizing processes; thus invoking language corridors applicable to the occasion, and positioning participants in a specific language corridor. By contrast, the concept of “position” seems inadequate in this context in that it fails to connote a sufficiently broad and dynamic process.

What my discussion of Siân’s progression of thought leaves out, however, is motivation for her perspective of phatic conflict at the broad, societal level—a figurative conflict that I have not yet defined. A typical analytic tack regarding such motivation (in Welsh Studies and without (e.g., Handler 1988)) would be to evaluate or simply frame such motivation in terms of nationalism. Yet, there is a tendency among intellectuals looking in from the outside at “Welsh nationalism” to portray self-described Welsh nationalists as if they were cabalists or Rosicrucian fanatics like those found in Umberto Eco’s Foucault’s Pendulum. What is compelling in that
second-order, analytic image of “nationalism” is the (double-edged) clarity of the ethnographic perspective according to which nationalists select and shape the content of a narrative—the plot—using a schema either as guide or goal. As a guide, it aids “nationalists” by conveying felicitous ways in which the details fit together. As a goal, it is the posited and imaginary kernel inside the shell of details that (allegedly) resonates with a person’s “nationalist” ideologies.

In the “native” Welsh historical imagination, there is a schema of resistance against diminishing odds. This image is fleshed out with tales in which the people of Wales or their princes figure as beleaguered defenders who are encroached upon by the Anglo-Normans and forced into the mountains. People like Matthew Arnold, an Oxford don of the Victorian era, long advocated that Welsh be made a relic of the past, as if it could be swept into a pit.

When the conspiratorial perspective is brought into play, the schema of resistance against diminishing odds and its narrative details not only evoke, in my mind, *Foucault’s Pendulum*, but they also have an abstract similarity to Edgar Allan Poe’s story, “The Pit and the Pendulum”. The protagonist finds himself in a dark room after being released from interrogation and narrowly avoids a pit, which causes him to trip in his surprise, hit his head, and lose consciousness. His accidental and unforeseen discovery of the pit leads his prisoners to tie him down while he is unconscious and to try another form of disposal. A pendulum made of a sharpened blade slowly descends from the ceiling and is intended to slice through the prisoner. He manages to escape and, as a last resort, the Inquisitors somehow bring the iron walls that enclose his space of confinement closer and closer toward the pit in the center; the iron walls that now glow with great heat urge him ever on into the center. Inevitably, he loses all possible footholds and falls into the pit.
Within this image, the difficulties for the reproduction of Cymraeg use are considerable. If the pendulum could sway only in one direction, in favor of Cymraeg, they would prosper, it would seem, and escape the bite that is felt to accompany English-language dominance. The pendulum swings from one side to the other, however; hence, the broad societal phatic conflict. The result is the ongoing battle to find some way of avoiding the sense that one’s Welshness is being attacked whenever English is or seems to be favored. Even when communities maintain some sense of stability in terms of Cymraeg identity, however, something like the Thomas Cook affair surfaces. For people like Siân, Ordovicious, and Gwe, these occurrences seem but the latest step in a long protracted move to bring the walls closer together and to cast those Welsh-speaking communities into the pit of the past. Somehow, Cymraeg continues to be used to this day and has managed to escape that fate. This life of resistance even has an unofficial theme song in Cymraeg, made popular by former folksinger Dafydd Iwan, the president of Plaid Cymru (“Party for Wales”) from 2003 to 2010. The song and refrain are: “Yma o hyd” [[We are] still here].

Bakhtin’s Pendulum and the Decolonization Chronotope

Given the clarity in such images of a culture resisting invaders, what I have in mind as a figurative, societal-phatic conflict over which of the official languages is most acceptable in the national context could best be described in terms of chronotopes. I refer to Bakhtin’s concept of chronotope, but attempts to apply a concept of literary critique to cultural analysis have moved the concept beyond Bakhtin. A literary chronotope is a construct denoting a crystallized moment in time and space, which an author creates through a patterned and consistent use of language styles: “the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically
expressed in literature” (Bakhtin 1981:84). If my recounting of Ngugi’s speaking engagement in north Wales in June 2007 gave any sense of the occurrence of an academic lecture, then the “voices” and “tastes” of meaning expressed by that description have produced a literary chronotope.

In collaboration with the concept of social imaginaries (Taylor 2004; see also Castoriadis 1987), Bakhtin’s literary chronotopes provide a methodological bootstrap for describing these “place-worlds”. A cultural chronotope is the extension of both of these (or something like each of them combined). Emerging from the material-social milieu in which people carry out daily tasks, a cultural chronotope is the synthetic representation of:

. . . points in the geography of a community where time and space intersect and fuse. Time takes on flesh and becomes visible for human contemplation; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time and history and the enduring character of a people. . . Chronotopes thus stand as monuments to the community itself, as symbols of it, as forces operating to shape its members’ images of themselves. (Basso 1996:62)10

A literary chronotope occurs in the universe of literature, while a cultural chronotope happens within a community of people who may or may not be involved in writing and reading in the same context as the focal cultural chronotope.

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10 In several texts, Basso appears to attribute this block quotation to Bakhtin 1981 (page 7 and pages 84-5). It seems more likely that this block quotation was a type-setting mistake that merged quoted phrases found in translations of Bakhtin with commentary. That is, it appears to be Basso’s development of a larger idea that used a material (de re) mode of speaking (in articulating a cultural type of chronotopes), where Bakhtin used a discursive (de dicto) mode of speaking about literary chronotopes. Repeated uses of the same block quote, by Basso and his followers, have made this a canonical idea of Bakhtin(ian thought), but I stress the distinction between literary and cultural types of chronotopes. Bakhtin (1981:84) did write:

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. The intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope.
In the discursive regimes of north-west Wales, it is customary to describe certain communicative participatory roles, such as that of Ordovicius, Gwe, or Siân, as expressions of nationalism—as previous chapters showed. However, in adopting some aspects of the methodological lens of place-making, I believe the attitudes they each express are more tractable through, and amenable to, a description of the cultural chronotopes they inhabit. The discussion after the talk Ngugi gave, offered me a window with a view onto the cultural chronotope from which emerged his principled refusal to write novels in English, as well as a window to the more relevant cultural chronotope that circulates in north Wales. I could perceive only the barest traces of Ngugi’s own cultural chronotope. Nonetheless, each of the two cultural chronotopes was easily recognizable in the operations of mythopraxis. That is, each possesses a convenient clarity by its association with a narratival schema with mythological ambitions; one traced with lines some conspiracy-minded creative writers would interpret as intimations of a Rosacrucian-style plot (to allude to Eco’s fictional story).

The traces of Ngugi’s experiences were present in his comparison of colonial experiences in Ireland and in Africa, as well as my background knowledge of his imprisonment in Kenya and his book, Decolonising the Mind. The clarity of the decolonizing context of Ngugi’s implicit plot were intersubjectively real and possessed similar clarity—to the extent that Ngugi’s talk painted, in strokes that his audience would assimilate to the history of Wales, the comparative dimensions in Kenya and British colonial Africa, in general. Likewise, in the Welsh plot, the joining of Wales to England was a forced union. Now, with Britain’s standing in the world maintained through the existence of an informal but official network of former colonies (i.e., the Commonwealth), it is a marriage of convenience as well as historical domination, where one
partner (the English language-social-political complex) clearly holds the upper hand, while the other partner (primordial Wales) resists its own seemingly inevitable extinction.

By witnessing the two cultural chronotopes of resistance in this setting, I was able to recognize a superordinate, “master” chronotope in the University of Wales, Bangor auditorium; and by witnessing the unfolding of the latter, was able to recognize the two subordinate cultural chronotopes as coordinate to each other. Indeed, what I perceived in the lecture hall in Bangor was the joining of at least two cultural chronotopes into one, which might be called the Decolonization Chronotope. As a master chronotope, which synthesizes points from other cultural chronotopes and fuses them together—an image of a place that connotes specific moments, of a time that speaks to specific places—the Decolonization Chronotope bears the image of confinement and struggle through histories of imperialism.

As comparative methods in anthropology acknowledge, communities privilege different values of belonging, and specific values of history depending on where people come from. In this case, different communities converged on similar values of confinement. The fact that the similarities in these differences become recognizable is what is salient here. The similarities between the two component chronotopes brought Ngugi and his audience together into a single place, even while representing different national histories. This moment brought him and his audience together in simultaneity, despite different languages, different sites of struggle, and different styles of living. Within this moment of shared understanding, those present gained a sense of communitas; but not from sharing a collective sense of an experience. Rather, in sharing diverse experiences of a single type, which carried presuppositions of underlying, compatible schemata, the participants came to have a collective sense of purpose.
The Decolonization Chronotope is a fusing of space and time and the commonalities in
the perspectives of those who felt dominated by the continuation of colonial processes into the
post-colonial phases of each of their nations’ present. Each of the separate cultural chronotopes
that constituted the Decolonization Chronotope was a form of resistance against the not-so-subtle
domination of subordinate vernaculars by the hegemonic use of the languages of those identified
with colonizers in the present day. This linguistic hegemony played an essential part in
producing the chronotopes that make up the focal Chronotope; for, in gouging out channels for
the enactment of one set of colonially-selected cultural practices, this hegemony supplied the
raison d’etre for resistance to the domination of the sub-altern languages.

The performative genre in which the Welsh component of the Decolonization
Chronotope, and its accompanying narrative of resistance, manifest, can be loosely described as
nationalism—and is so described in colloquial communicative practices. However, this is an
inadequate descriptive label. It is a performative genre within the orientation of Cymraeg
communitarianism that communitarians and cosmopolitans alike recognize as a genre about
instrumental interests related to competing versions of Welsh identity. It, along with the
discursive register of “getting on one’s soapbox” discussed in Chapter Three, is recognized as
political because of the dominant politics regarding politics in Wales—which makes it a register
they cannot perform in the classroom.

In turn, due to these politics of politics, it is difficult to uncover the substantive features
that go beyond the controversy to what the communitarians really think is at stake. They have
conceded the constraint of the prohibition against political “brainwashing” at school, and they try
to pass on Welsh traditional heritage as a form of cultural pedagogy. In doing so, this limits the
instrumental claims they can make about their perceived collective interests, about the gradual
loss of that traditional heritage. Does the constraint against teaching politics in the classroom, further, imply that some substantive content associated with the Cymraeg language cultural complex is barred from the classroom or is it only instrumental claims about the boundaries of that community that are barred? Are there, for example, feelings about traditional Welsh heritage that cannot be shared or emoted because part of what makes them feelings about—also a substantive content of—a particular kind of Welshness is that they violate the social pact regarding civility?
CHAPTER SEVEN

NATIONAL POSITIONALITY

Taking now the point of view of identification, the reader must remind himself [or herself] as the author has constantly to do, of how much is here embraced by the term *culture*. . . the dartboard, Wensleydale cheese, boiled cabbage cut into pieces, beetroot in vinegar, 19th-century Gothic churches and the music of Elgar. The reader can make his [or her] own list. (T. S. Eliot, “Notes toward a Definition of Culture” (1948:31))

The point, of course, is that while “the reader” may make his [or her] own list the serious student of society may *not*. To decide which activities are characteristic implies some principle of selection and some theory of social process. . . Mr. Wollheim will draw Proust and Mr. Jones will draw *Seventy Splendid Nudes* and Mr. Brown will draw the Book of Revelation and I will draw the *Niebelungenlied*—and what the hell shall we all do with what we draw? How shall we live? Will we be there at all—or some other kind of person with different values and tastes? And what shall we *add* to the store of our own? (E. P. Thompson, “The Long Revolution [Review]” (1961a:32, 1961b:36))

CAPTURING NATIONALISM

We might imagine, if a substantive content (of consciousness) associated with the Cymraeg language cultural complex is to be found, that the documentation of attitudes of self-described nationalists, or those analytically identified as communitarians, would reveal it. Popular discourse in Wales would instruct those who seek substance in so-called nationalism to seek it in expressions about language or the nation. In a study of a more general sort of Welsh identity, Carol Trosset and Douglas Caulkins (2001, 2002) used exploratory statistical techniques in their study of Welshness. They examined “the degree to which the behaviour and attitudes [presented in items used in interviews] seemed Welsh to [the participants]” and participants’ rating of “the degree to which they personally valued each behaviour (how ‘good’ it seemed)” (Trosset and Caulkins 2002:243).¹ The items that they used to elicit responses were descriptions

¹ My instrument materials included a response format in which the range and structure of responses were constructed prior to participants’ responses. Such a “direct response format” is an information capture protocol or device that indicates a range of (dis)agreement with scenarios by means of a micro-scale with discrete positions: strong approval, moderate approval, and mild approval to mild disapproval, moderate disapproval, and strong disapproval. The even number of positions of this six-point micro-scale ruled out a neutral position.
of everyday Welsh life, or “scenarios” that speak to issues of Welsh culture that were suggested by Trosset’s ethnographic research in Wales. The following example illustrates the use of such a description of an everyday situation: “A university professor has tea with the workers who are repairing his garden wall”. In the implied cultural context, tea is any substantial snack/meal in the afternoon, such as lunch or supper, and the scenario exemplifies the absence of boundaries between academics and laborers.

Trosset and Caulkins’ (2001, 2002) particular method of analysis of responses is known as consensus analysis. In conventional use of this method, elicitation items are supposed to address what is imagined to be shared knowledge (Boster 1985, 1986; Garro 1986; Romney et al. 1987; Weller 1984). The received view is that questions should not address individual preferences. With respect to Welshness or any other domain of “knowledge”, aggregates of more or less competent people should converge more quickly on the “answers” as a result of “increasing either the number of informants or the agreement among the informants” (Weller 2007:343).

2 This interpretation of statistical results exhibits an emphasis on explicit beliefs, rather than emotion—and, consequently, implies that preferences are not epistemic; and, conversely, that knowledge is not affect-laden. The distinction between shared knowledge and individual preferences presupposes a theory of knowledge that I take to be problematic, where the categorization and motivation for particular knowledge claims is taken to be given, not produced by social actors, nor under construction at the time of measurement (see, however, Caulkins and Hyatt 1999, and Gatewood and Lowe 2009, which address this issue).

3 In the formal model of cultural consensus, it is assumed that: 1) the cultural reality is equivalent or the same for all members of the population such that it is possible to construct a valid “answer key” (whatever that might be); 2) each participant’s response is given independently of the other participants’ responses; and 3) the set of questions is homogenous. To some extent, these assumptions establish guidelines for gauging construct validity for the questions (e.g., if one is concerned with construction techniques and astronomy is not recognized by experts to be a relevant field, the questions should not also be about astronomy), but they also are intended as criteria for cultural consensus itself. If the questions are validly constructed, an outcome yielding negative correlations between responses reflects a lack of satisfaction of one of these assumptions.

Note, further, that the homogeneity assumption is construed functionally: each participant’s knowledge level is consistent across all of the questions. This functional homogeneity is usually taken in a way that suggests there is some purely formal basis for rating the “difficulty” of the questions; if true, this would support a claim that each participant will answer virtually all of the questions with an equal level of (in)competence. However, homogeneity need not relate to “difficulty” of the question—and difficulty is a dynamic cognitive property and not a property of a textual entity like a question-item. Thus, while the third assumption is independent of the first assumption about a common social reality, both are concerned with how people interpret reality. Thus, there is potential for mismatch
I conducted a sub-study within my larger dissertation research project that expanded the work of Trosset and Caulkins. Specifically, I extended their work to the domain of national identity as it concerns language and governance; namely, by means of scenarios that reflected issues of language and governance (or civic principles). I developed new scenarios and modified slightly the data-collection technique Trosset and Caulkins used. Here, I draw out only a few details of that project as it relates to the issue of national identity and the objective of gaining a coherent image of the personally-variable content of so-called nationalism.

Participants

This sub-study involved two site-specific groups of people found at two state elementary schools and ten self-described “nationalists” from three organizations, plus one non-affiliated independent “nationalist”. The nine individuals who were affiliated with a “nationalist” organization included five members of the political party, Plaid Cymru; two members of the...
language activist group, *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg* (Cymraeg Language Society); and two members of the activist group, *Cymuned* (Community). The two site-specific groups were composed of teachers at two of my main school sites, Ysgol Brynpiws Gynradd (YGB) and Ysgol Glain y Sir (YSA). So as to maximize variation, I strove for “100 percent” quota samples—all of the teachers at the two schools. In actuality, I obtained responses from eleven members of the twelve full-time members of the teaching staff at YSA, and nine of the eleven full-time members of the teaching staff at YGB, including the headteachers of both schools.

**Pre-Analysis**

Assuming the questions are on the sort of topic of which one can be knowledgeable and assuming that the non-random patterns in answers represents knowledge,\(^5\) one can locate the individuals who are most knowledgeable—that is, who are most “competent”. Here, “competence” is a technical term that is measured by examining who has been among the majority for the most questions. I see this variable as having less relevance to the colloquial meaning of “competence” and, rather, as an index that combines an individual’s stake in a particular game and their subjective relations to the body of supposed knowledge (i.e., “interest”). If the items used are genuinely cohesive, then anyone whose experiences have led them to a particular position in the sociocultural web of relations from which they can give the most acceptable answer to a given question, will also find articulated answers among the other questions.

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\(^5\) The second assumption is tested using a standard criterion of *consensus* by means of informal consensus analysis.
Comparing different sets of questions, the same individuals were consistently represented among the respondents with the thirteen highest “competence” scores. These individuals included eight out of the ten self-described nationalists that I interviewed. They also included a handful of teachers from both the Cymraeg-prevalent school and the English-prevalent school (three from YGB and two from YSA). In addition, by identifying those scenarios that these “experts” have agreed on more consistently than have the non-experts, I discovered a relatively small number of key scenarios that, together, index the meta-discourse of nationalism. One might predict that the most likely scenarios to function as key indices would be related to the emblematic role of Cymraeg and the associated traditional activities. The result was a set of ten scenarios that spoke to certain cultural interests.

The Scenario Items

Two Primary Analytic Categories: Situations like those discussed under the rubric of the Decolonization Chronotope were the inspiration for the scenarios I developed. The broad categories of social life that I saw applicable to (and that were used to generate) the scenarios

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6 I used a statistical package (Systat 13) for exploratory analysis of responses to the scenario materials. I made use of two kinds of exploratory analysis—cultural consensus analysis (CA), following Trosset and Caulkins (2001, 2002) and non-metrical multidimensional scaling (NMDS). Informal consensus analysis was carried out on a set of data by way of the method of iterated principal axis (IPA) factor analysis, which evaluates the data for agreement, or correlations. All three of these techniques use a common family of algebraic algorithms, with slight differences in how the algorithms are implemented.

When we arrange data tables with cases as rows and the surface variables as columns, the techniques of both CA and IPA involve extraction of a factor (or principal component) that accounts for the most amount of variance in the data. The process then extracts another factor-component that accounts for the most amount of variation in the remaining variables and cases, until all of the variance in the data has been accounted for. 

Eigenvalue is a German-English language term for a unit reflecting a factor’s own (eigen) value, taken to be the standard value for each factor if every factor made an equal contribution. If there are ten variables, we can expect ten units of equivalent variability, or ten eigenvalues. Each object being analyzed will contribute to the eigenvalue of each factor, which is its factor loading. The benchmark for determining which factors to focus on is based on the potential share of the variability that can be accounted for by each principal component (Shennan 1988:288-90). Any factors over a single eigenvalue should be taken seriously (known as the Kaiser-criterion). However, in informal consensus analysis, it is to be hoped that the first principal component will capture the bulk of variability, leaving little variance to be accounted for by many factors of single eigenvalue factor loadings.
were LANGUAGE and GOVERNANCE (which might alternatively be called “CIVIC RELATIONS”). It should be noted that these two topical categories are methodological or ideal types. These “pure” topical categories were further divided into the following (also ideal) sub-categories as a means to imagine new scenarios:

- **L1) Cymraeg as Welshness**—The Cymraeg language code signifies a strong criterion of Welshness;
- **L2) Langua-culture Vitality**—Welsh language use is an ordinary and common practice;
- **G1) Dissent and Sacrifice**—Everyone has an obligation to participate in social life in specific ways that reflect principles or beliefs they hold that are deemed unimpeachable, particularly if it involves sacrifice; and
- **G2) Welsh Self-government**—As a nation, Wales should govern affairs that go on within its territory.

Using these four categories, I generated around ten scenarios for each of these sub-categories. These scenario items were evaluated by a focus group of five social researchers at the University of Wales, Bangor. After modifying and eliminating some scenarios, I had a set of forty-one scenarios, which I pilot-tested at the National Eisteddfod in August 2007 (N=10). These scenarios included, in addition to scenarios generated from the LANGUAGE and GOVERNANCE sub-categories, scenarios belonging to two sub-sets of a “CULTURAL” category. The CULTURAL scenarios consisted mostly of scenarios developed by Carol Trosset in her collaboration with Doug Caulkins (see 2001, 2002).

The scenario items listed below are scenes of ideology. Some represent a more concrete representation of identity in performance and practice, while some represent a more abstract and explicit statement of a feature of ideology. Even in the latter cases, however, respondents

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7 **Level Society** (C1)—Welsh society is egalitarian and represented by folk (gwerin), rather than hierarchy; and **Community Orientation** (C2)—Members of Welsh society place greatest value on community, rather than on oneself. See above for more details.
seemed able to recall an incident that matched a relatively thin description of ideology in practice.\textsuperscript{8}

\textbf{Cymraeg as Welshness (L1):} The first LANGUAGE sub-category consists of eight scenarios.

They are:

- Overhearing a teenager discussing S4C, a man complains to his friend about the production of programmes in Britain that need British (i.e., English) subtitles
- A female manager frowns at an employee who is speaking Welsh because she does not understand what he’s saying
- A headteacher, who has an advanced degree in education from Aberystwyth, modifies her speech while shopping because she believes the shop employees will be put off by the way she normally speaks. (originally, used in Trosset and Caulkins’ study)
- A first-language Welsh speaker interrupts her conversation in Welsh to greet a passerby in English
- When Robert speaks to his friend, whose only language is English, he uses Welsh names like ‘Caerfyrddin’ for places in Wales
- A shop-owner apologises for her English when she cannot remember the word for something she would normally say in Welsh
- A woman from mid-Wales argues that people ought to use the Welsh language spoken in south Wales when in the south, and the kind of Welsh native to north Wales when in the north
- Outside of his business, a middle-aged man refuses to speak in English to Welsh people who know Welsh

\textbf{Langua-culture Vitality (L2):} The second LANGUAGE sub-category consists of seven scenarios.

They are:

- A shop owner begins greeting people in English because there are now many more people in the village who speak only English
- A young mother goes to her first eisteddfod-related event when her oldest daughter performs at school
- A farmer delays in collecting his sheep that have wandered into the pasture of a new English couple who speak no Welsh, thinking to teach them something about rural Wales
- A first-language Welsh speaker gently chides her friend for speaking Welsh to an English person
- A gardener says he has gone to the National Eisteddfod at least every other year since he was a boy
- A retired man makes and provides materials for expecting families to help them to use Welsh with their future child, in the hope that everyone raised in Wales in 20 years time will be Welsh-speaking
- A Welsh speaker realizes that he hasn’t spoken English for at least two days

\textsuperscript{8} Prior to analysis, I thought of each sub-category as a useful grouping of items that survived pilot testing and as a coherent construct. As valid as the classification of items into their sub-categories or even into their language or governance categories might appear, the sought-after clustering of attitudes need not conform to these pre-conceived categories. These sub-categories and categories do speak to attitudes that might speak to culturally recognizable fields in which disagreement would be likely. However, the cohesiveness of items within these units is indicative of an intellectualist approach (which was useful to generating scenarios). As such, the units are not necessarily a model (in a formalist sense) of, nor bear any resemblance to, the cultural organization of ideologies “on the ground”.

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Dissent and Sacrifice (G1): The first GOVERNANCE sub-category consists of nine scenarios.

They are:

- A farmer tells his neighbor that there are no principles or beliefs worth supporting if it means the family or community is going to suffer somehow for that commitment
- Gareth makes fun of his friend who supports Wales’ football side when they play against England, calling the outcome an inevitable slaughter
- A former chapel-goer argues that non-Conformism might have been un-Christian since it had the effect of dividing people in Wales and Britain
- A father tells his children to turn off *The Weakest Link* because it is well known that Anne Robinson made some anti-Welsh remarks
- A published letter from a newspaper reader asserts that one should argue economic policy on the basis of the needs of the community and not primarily for the benefit of individuals (originally, used in Trosset and Caulkins’ study)
- Two women fight bitterly because of their opposing political views
- A father agrees to help out at the chapel’s charity sale largely because he feels guilty that he no longer attends chapel
- A woman regularly buys petrol at the higher of two available local prices because the owner of that shop is a member of the same political party
- Upon learning that Prince Charles will visit his town, a man begins making plans to leave town with his family that weekend out of protest

Welsh Self-government (G2): The second GOVERNANCE sub-category consists of nine scenarios.

They are:

- During the S4C program, *Pawb a’i Farn*, a teenager argues that devolution has been worse for Wales than anything else Labour has done and that Wales is better off staying united with Scotland, Northern Ireland, and even England
- A council worker complains about how much Plaid Cymru talks about Welsh identity and wishes the Assembly would just get on with the job of running the country
- A college student from Aberystwyth describes his nation's sense of confidence and self-sufficiency in a conversation with a Canadian visitor
- A nurse argues that Wales healthcare system would be much improved if it were controlled entirely by Welsh people and not joined to the NHS across the border
- A bus driver votes according to what candidates think about Wales’ place in the Union, rather than according to their views on economics and government programs.

While I had pilot-tested a set of forty-one scenarios, only thirty-two had been answered by all three sample-groups I used. I evaluated the responses to these thirty-two scenarios for the thirty-one individuals for whom I had responses. However, I understood that there was nothing about any individual scenario to make it essential to a set of thirty-two, or even of thirty-one scenarios. The procedure of cultural consensus analysis, which Trosset and Caulkins (2001,
2002) used, requires a minimum of twenty items; therefore, it seemed fairly straightforward in that vein to locate the smallest number of scenarios between twenty and thirty-two, if any, that would yield consensus among the responses.

**Images of Consensus:** Several sets of scenario items, in relation to the total set of respondents, were subjected to consensus analysis. However, consensus analysis could not be conducted on Q19, since the number of items fell below the minimum of twenty. However, the rankings and competence scores for participants using Q32, Q21, and Q20 are presented in Table 7.1. This allows one to see the consistency in how individuals are ranked according to “competence” as the scenarios included in each set changes.

As can be seen, the same group of individuals is represented among the thirteen with the highest “competence” score using each of these sets (shown in bold, with PC3 as an exception). These include virtually all of the self-described nationalists, PC1, PC2, PC5, and PC4 (members of Plaid Cymru); CI2 and CI1 (members of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg); CD1 and CD2 (members of Cymuned), but neither PC3 nor IN1 (the non-affiliated nationalist). They also include first-language Cymraeg-speaking teachers from both the Cymraeg-dominant school (YGB) and the English-dominant school (YSA): B4, B2, and B1; and S12 and S6.

**Narrowing the Focus:** Given a coherent image or cohesive set of values, then consensus analysis is likely to confirm such coherence or cohesion. This is the case even if the field being investigated using consensus analysis contains variation that is impenetrable to consensus

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9 These included the core set of thirty-two scenarios (Q32), a core set of LANGUAGE and GOVERNANCE scenarios (Q21), which was reduced to the sets, Q20 and Q19, in response to a couple of scenarios that did not load very well in analyses using IPA. I took this to mean that the variation in responses to these scenarios was not shared to the same degree or in the same way as the other scenarios.
analysis. That is, if an investigator supposes that the field in which the coherence or cohesion is recognized has scalar properties that are typically amenable to the Likert-type response format, then consensus analysis will indicate the coherence or cohesion, but will not interpret the scalar properties. However, use of consensus analysis and creative evaluation of scores was sufficient to reach some very interesting conclusions.

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.1: “Cultural interest” competence values and rankings for individuals, by set (Plaid Cymru nationalists = PC1 – PC5; Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg nationalists = CI1 and CI2; CYmuned nationalists = CD1 and CD2; YGB teachers = B1 – B9; YGS teachers = S1 – S12.
It is possible, as Table 7.1, shows, to identify a group with a high “cultural interest quotient”, which are those participants with a competence higher than 0.500. Reassuringly, this group happened to include eight of the ten self-described nationalists. This group, and the scenarios in which their cultural interest quotient is anchored, provides a rational basis for narrowing the scenario list beyond the degree to which cultural consensus analysis could be validly applied.

Thus, Q21 contained five scenarios—q1, q15, q21, q23, and q30—whose response-averages were under 3.9 when considering the ten most “competent” respondents. Here, strong approval of the underlying variable is represented by a “6”. These scenarios (and only these scenarios in Q21) had lower response-averages for these “experts” than the competence scores for all the respondents—respectively, the expert versus collective averages for these scenarios were: 3.5/3.7, 3.3/3.8, 3.7/4.4, 3.4/3.5, and 3.8/4.4. These lower averages were good reasons for eliminating those scenarios. Once I had achieved that goal for a set of twenty scenarios, I realized there was nothing intrinsically special about consensus analysis, particularly given a limitation that required a minimum of twenty items. An even smaller set might be located for which the self-described nationalists exhibited an expert kind of “competence” (i.e., very strong inter-item correlations). Further, there was nothing of intrinsic value to any of these individual scenarios alone. Indeed, statisticians on psychology department faculties would say that isolated, individual scenarios are meaningless, and must be taken as only a part of a whole. The attitudinal scale as a totality is what yields the measurements of attitudes. The relative value of these scenarios is that, after testing a large number of such scenarios, these in particular avoided problems in the response-context (confusion of meaning, bad phrasing, etc.) and validly addressed the “construct” investigated.
Among the twenty scenarios, then, I discovered a set of ten scenarios that provided a candidate attitudinal scale for evaluating so-called nationalists in the future. I designated this set “Q10” on the basis of how many scenarios each set comprised. Q10 consists of the following scenarios (the right column indicates the topical category I assigned to each scenario):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario Items in Q10</th>
<th>Type of Scenario</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A young mother goes to her first eisteddfod-related event when her oldest daughter performs at school. (q2)</td>
<td>Language/Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the S4C program, <em>Pawb a’I Farn</em>, a teenager argues that devolution has been worse for Wales than anything else Labour has done and that Wales is better off staying united with Scotland, Northern Ireland, and even England. (q7)</td>
<td>Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A gardener says he has gone to the National Eisteddfod at least every other year since he was a boy. (q9)</td>
<td>Language/Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A retired man makes and provides materials for expecting families to help them to use Welsh with their future child, in the hope that everyone raised in Wales in 20 years time will be Welsh-speaking. (q13)</td>
<td>Language/ or Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overhearing a teenager discussing S4C, a man complains to his friend about the production of programmes in Britain that need British (i.e., English) subtitles. (q17)</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A shop owner begins greeting people in English because there are now many more people in the village who speak only English. (q19)</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A former chapel-goer argues that non-Conformism might have been un-Christian since it had the effect of dividing people in Wales and Britain. (q22)</td>
<td>General/ Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A female manager frowns at an employee who is speaking Welsh because she does not understand what he’s saying. (q25)</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A published letter from a newspaper reader asserts that one should argue economic policy on the basis of the needs of the community and not primarily for the benefit of individuals [NB: This scenario was originally used in Trosset and Caulkins’ (2001, 2002) study.]. (q29)</td>
<td>Governance/ Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside of his business, a middle-aged man refuses to speak in English to Welsh people who know Welsh. (q31)</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 7.2: Listing of scenario items and their category types for Q10.*
The (Relevant) Results

The results for each sample group and for the aggregate sample are shown below as Figure 7.1-7.4—showing the set of ten scenarios-items designated “Q10”. These figures are the two-dimensional plotting of variation in each sample with scenario items disaggregated. Thus, the individual respondents are not distinguishable because each object plotted represents the responses from all individuals in that sample for a particular scenario item. The plots resemble a geographic map insofar as distance in the sense of Cartesian orthogonal axes also represents difference among the different objects plotted (according to the aggregate set of responses).

The main result is that the scenario objects for self-described nationalists are far less differentiated than for the other samples (see Figure 7.3). This means that aggregate responses to each of these scenario items were much more similar for this group than for the other groups. It does not say anything about how varied the individuals were, but it does mean that these ten scenarios constitute a more cohesive group of items in the context of self-described nationalists, than for the site-specific groups of teachers. Indeed, the responses by this group to these scenario items (with the exception of q22) are so similar as to be indistinguishable (see Figure 7.3). In creating such an empirically valid and statistically reliable attitudinal scale for “measuring” agreement in attitudes (Thurstone 1931, Likert 1932, and Guttman 1944)—a scale for attitudes about nationalism—standard practice would be to eliminate the exceptional scenario, which reads: “A former chapel-goer argues that non-Conformism might have been un-Christian since it had the effect of dividing people in Wales and Britain”.

Figure 7.1: Q10, Ysgol Glain y Sir, YGS (N=12)

Figure 7.2: Q10, All samples (N=31)
Figure 7.3: Q10, Self-described Nationalists (N=10)

Figure 7.4: Q10, Ysgol Gynradd Brynpiws, YGB (N=9)
The reasonable conclusion is that this set of scenarios contains nine scenarios that honed in on the content of some non-random cultural interest(s) related to nationalism. Further, the particular content of this collection of nine scenarios expresses a primarily language-based variety of nationalism—only two of the nine lacked an immediate connection to language issues.\(^\text{10}\) With the caveat that the sample size was too small to allow much generalization, the outcome of my scenario sub-study was a textbook demonstration of scaling so-called nationalist attitudes. Based on the results, the set of ten scenarios, Q10, constitutes a standardized battery of items that, once further tested, could be repeated all over Wales to indicate variation with respect to the attitude represented by this set of scenarios.

**Naturalistic Ethnography**

The previous three chapters detailed some contexts in which one can find symbolic expressions that evoke or produce a social substance related to language or the nation. The scenarios I developed in my sub-study capitalize on this supposed relation between symbolic examples and attitudes about language or governance represented in popular discourse. The result was as successful as I could have hoped. The most obvious conclusion to be drawn from these results is the following statement:

> *It is possible to identify empirically and substantiate statistically a set of common features for a specific unidimensional perspective on social life that is typically called “nationalism”.*

\(^{10}\) It is interesting, but not especially pertinent, that my classification of scenario items into three categories—language, general culture, and governance—fairly closely matches the arrangement of distances and similarities among the objects in the plotting of responses by scenario item for YGB (Fig. 7.4). That figure shows, perhaps, three stances one might take toward language issues (\{q17, q25\}, \{q2, q9, q13\}, and \{q19, q31\}).
The scenarios that represent the features of this unidimensional perspective operate as a high-resolution projection of the sort of thing Welsh people seem to have in mind when they talk about Welsh nationalism, and about language nationalism in particular. In ordinary conversations about nationalism, people will recall and tell a story or two. However they tend to rely on background tacit knowledge about what they mean and might not be able to articulate these understandings on demand. In my sub-study, I made use of specific scenarios that speak to the features that make up the unidimensional perspective—resulting in richer recollections and better “resolution” in choosing a position on a scale. Thus, the scenarios used here are more precise means for articulation. The scenarios can be said to establish a Welsh nationalist scale, where this nationalism is anchored in the Cymraeg language community.

The result of scaling was identification of a small core of content that puts in concrete terms what certain people—those who answer to the interpellative call of “nationalist”—think and feel. Still, what this tells us is the following: Nationalists are those for whom these three domains of life and identity in Wales—language, governance/civics, and general culture—merge into one. These Welsh nationalists, far from being essentialists in seizing on a singular aspect of identity, synthesize different aspects of life into a singular image; and are essentialized, in doing so, by non-nationalists in a correspondingly confusing manner.

On the one hand, in the interests of scaling attitudes, one might downplay the differences among the three domains, in which case language stands out as the salient domain, symbolic of all items. On the other hand, the holistic mandate for anthropologists entails that everyday experience involves linkages among language, civic principles, and ordinary practices. Even if it might make good analytic sense to distinguish among the domains of cultural, language, and political nationalism, enactment of the surface position of being a nationalist in Abergwaith
involves stances within all three domains. Despite this convergence of empiricist methodology and cultural holism, each has the same outcome. That is, each runs roughshod over the differences. This is hardly the desirable outcome of an exercise in isolating an analytic object, such as social psychologists strive to construct.

While the one-sentence conclusion in block quotes above might be accurate in some sense, I do not take the results to confirm the reality of such a perspective. I take the results to show two different, but complementary things. First, the phenomenal description of the identity game is false. Secondly, self-described nationalists do position themselves within a social reality that corresponds to the phenomenal description of the identity game. The attitudes a nationalism scale would purport to represent are themselves products of a game played at a particular point and from a particular perspective on the game. Social life, as a set of “realities” that encompass (rather than being identical to) the attitudes such a scale is intended to “measure”, is the game in which one makes moves to adopt or express certain attitudes. I developed and executed a rigorous method that can reliably produce precise results in a valid and reliable way—results that represent a category of identity. However, while it purports to offer something like a chemical formula, the nature of the set of scenarios (Q10) is more accurately compared to a mixed drink the ingredients for which one can no longer recall. Further, although the scenarios of the so-called nationalist scale point in different directions, lacking cohesion, it is clear that they emerge from the particular conditions and experiences of life in north-west Wales.

The consequence is that, to acquire the sort of validity I achieved, the method itself must become so refined that the results are incompatible with the much less precise range of purposes

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11 My success in capturing nationalism in north-west Wales carries with it a great deal of irony, some of which guided the writing of this chapter—a fact that might be easily missed due to my use of the otherwise appropriate scientific formalities; not to mention my production of a nationalism scale in the social psychological tradition.
to which the meta-discourse and trope of NATIONALISM are put; the purposes to which is put the category of identity that is a surface position at the phenomenal level. The standardized content of the nationalist attitudinal scale I developed is so peculiarly narrow, even in drawing from all three topical domains, that it would quickly become useless for understanding ongoing interactions and disagreements within the so-called nationalist camp, which is surely not a monolithic group.

By “honing” in on a certain content of a Cymraeg-based chronotope, this method reveals that the perspective it instantiates—one that engages with surface positions on the phenomenal level of Welsh society as socially real—is flawed. This phenomenal description differs from a comprehensive explicative account, one this dissertation provides by means of engagement with those concerns with difference and cross-cultural comparison that are native to contemporary strands of anthropology practiced today. In this sense, my use of scaling techniques operates in a way akin to a reductio ad absurdum argument. It should, perhaps, be called a “reductio ad abusum” since the thrust of my argument suggests that the phenomenal description leads, of necessity, to a consequence that does injury or abuse to the cultural processes in north-west Wales.

My use of scaling techniques reproduces the injury or abuse in both its phenomenal and its analytical aspects. That is, the surface positions of phenomenal national-positionality and scholarly productions about national positionality reproduce the simplified model of the dialectic between communitarianism and cosmopolitanism, but reduce that dialectic to a dualism. Even as my sub-study samples and exhibits the discourses current in the field, my nationalist scale reproduces the qualities shared by both discourses—communitarianism and cosmopolitanism. This quality is that of possessing the “air of the factual, of describing, after all, the genuinely
reasonable way to live” (Geertz 1957:425). The nationalism meta-discourse informs a manifest reality, thereby becoming a ubiquitous and obvious part of social life in north-west Wales. This discourse context is such an immediate part of social life that it might be said to have—once one analytically separates it from the phenomena to which it is tied—an independent, cognitive “existence” beyond the utterances made on any given occasion.

Yet, if this blending of the moral, aesthetic, and evaluative elements of a given culture, and of worldview is necessary to ethnography, to getting us “into” a cultural milieu, it is not enough to get us back out. It creates a rhetorical model, but not an ethnographic model. It reveals the rhetorical aspects of life in a given (or multiple) setting(s), but either does not provide a full sense of the dynamism of such rhetorical life (because it delivers only a cultural logic) or does not convey the rules of the game (because the theoretical elaboration of its thick description is not adequate to this task). Alternatively, the rhetorical model merely stitches a cultural logic to a theoretical rationalization. Blending ethos and worldview together is enough to draw us into a problematic field of culture, but it leaves us “there”.

Unlike in moral philosophy, the “naturalistic fallacy” that creates this problem is not that of mistaking propositions about morality to be about the “natural” order and, thereby, reducing a moral proposition (an “ought”) to a non-moral proposition (an “is”). The result of this naturalistic attitude is scholarly practice that reproduces ontologies of human kinds found in the field, rather than being the result of an epistemology of human practices.

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12 Some background is useful here. Half a century before Geertz (1957) interpreted the distinction between ethos and ideology/eidos in light of the history of western philosophy, G. E. Moore made arguments for distinguishing ought-claims from is-claims. Following Hume ([1740]2007:302-306), G. E. Moore (1903) argued for a distinction in statements between those about what is (facts) and those about what ought to be (values), the conflation of which Moore called “the naturalistic fallacy”. The fallacy might better be termed “the fallacy of moral reductionism” since the problem is that, by mistaking propositions about morality to be about objects, whether sensible or not, one reduces a moral proposition (about an ought) to a proposition about objectual properties (about that which is, whether natural or supernatural).
The normative-inferentialist alternative to naturalism

The moral (and aesthetic) aspects of a given culture have commonly been summed up in the term “ethos”, while the cognitive, existential aspects have been designated by the term “world-view” (see Geertz 1957:421, 424). Geertz (1957) pointed out that the duality of ethos and worldview is a reproduction of the philosophical distinction in general cultural circulation between what is and what ought to be. While philosophical traditions block their conflation (i.e., even naming it “the naturalistic fallacy”), Geertz argued that, in everyday cultural practices, the difference between “is” and “ought” is constantly conflated according to local purposes.¹³

Morality has thus the air of simple realism, of practical wisdom; religion supports proper conduct by picturing a world in which such conduct is only common sense . . . [T]he tendency to desire some sort of factual basis for one’s commitments seems practically universal; mere conventionalism satisfies few people in any culture. . . [P]robably the overwhelming majority of mankind is continually drawing normative conclusions from factual premises (and factual conclusions from normative premises, for the relation between ethos and world-view is circular) despite refined, and in their own terms impeccable, reflections by professional philosophers on the “naturalistic fallacy”. (Geertz 1957:424, 426, 437)

In opposition to the habit of “continually drawing normative conclusions”—and with interesting differences to the critical tone Gal and Irvine (1995) used to discuss naturalizing essentialisms—Geertz clearly disagreed with the philosophers and their reflections “in their own terms”. The gap between natural pattern and moral reality is exactly what is at issue in the calling of attention

¹³ Given social constructivism, both the natural and moral orders are distinct, but for reasons different from those to which Moore (1903) was committed: they are both constituted in sociocentric processes, but determined by cognition that is distributed, individual, and rooted in objective reality, all at the same time. The formal constitution of meaning-systems in a sociocentric process consists in what can be taken to be rules, even if they are not of some immutable metaphysical kind of being (à la “natural law”). The failure to conceive of a sociocentric constitution of rules that emerge even in what appears to be individually isolated use, has often led to the illusion of a dilemma between the rejection of and commitment to formalism in meaning. Geertz clearly did not state this as I have done, but I think he was on a similar course.
Geertz (1957) was suggesting (or, at least, I am) that the continual drawing of normative conclusions from factual premises is a necessary part of meaning-making. The creation of the inhabitable world as we know it through language is, simply put, what “is” (i.e., what someone or another believes is the case), where what “ought to be” (i.e., what someone or another believes ought to be the case) is derived from what “is”; often, within a given perspective (for there is no experience of reality without perspective), common-sense makes up the difference between what is and what ought to be. Note, also, that Geertz was using “normative” in the philosophical sense of not merely a social expectation, but of being governed by a systemic force or potential outside the causal order; this concept, by its lack of specification, abstractness, and anti-naturalism gives rise to much philosophical debate. This philosophical sense contrasts with the statistical and anthropological sense of “normative” as average or typical, whereby a particular typicality comes to be recognized as a felt or humanly-enforced expectation.

Rather than adopting a distinct combinatory notion, Geertz preferred the tension between the two ideal types of the affective-moral (ethos) and the cognitive-representational (worldview, eidos, doxa). Thus, Geertz (1957) expressed a commitment to both ethos and worldview.\textsuperscript{14}

Ortner (1984) seems to have followed Geertz in this:

All of these routines and scenarios are predicated upon, and embody within themselves, the fundamental notions of temporal, spatial, and social ordering that underlie and organize the system as a whole. In enacting these routines, actors not only continue to be shaped by the underlying organizational principles involved, but continually re-endorse those principles in the world of public observation and discourse. (1984:154, my emphasis)

\textsuperscript{14} It might deserve a different, and positive name—perhaps “ethodoxy”, to contrast slightly with the connotation of conventionalism found in “orthodoxy”—given that people do “continually draw[ing] normative conclusions from factual premises” and vice versa in everyday practice to construct cultural realities.
For Ortner, principles of practice serve as the ethnographer’s entrée into constructed cultural realities relative to any agent’s confrontation with structure. These principles surface as analytic concepts in Ortner’s emphasis on the ordinary—“the little routines people enact, again and again, in working, eating, sleeping, and relaxing, as well as the little scenarios of etiquette they play out again and again in social interaction” (1984:154).¹⁵

It is the relation of principles of practice to power, in particular, that most concerned Ortner (1984, 1999), rather than tacit principles *sui generis*. As Ortner put it herself: “the study of practice is after all the study of all forms of human action, but from a particular—political—angle” (1984:149). Hence, this concern suggests that principles of practice need to be understood in relation to such concepts as Bourdieu’s (1977) *habitus*, and a trio of Foucault’s concepts: *discipline* (1977), *governmentality* (1978), and *practice of the self* (1988). Ortner’s principles of practice, however, do not enable analysts to explain how agents’ actions and principles express the “intentional or unintentional political implications” of “the most significant forms of practice” (1984:149), nor how political implications obtain sufficient coherence to be expressed and to influence practices. Ortner’s uptake of Geertz’s theoretical conjunction of ethos and worldview does imply (and underscore the importance of) an explanation of this issue: “[A]ction is constrained most deeply and systematically by the ways in which culture controls the definitions of the world for actors, limits their conceptual tools, and restricts their emotional repertoire” (my emphasis).¹⁶ Unfortunately, the terms of this implied

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¹⁵ Note the resemblance these principles of practice have to Burke’s consubstantial “general body of identifications that owe their convincingness much more to trivial repetition and dull daily reinforcements than to exceptional rhetorical skill” (1969:26).

¹⁶ The germ of this core concept of constraint, as Ortner presented is, can be found in Ortner’s principles of practice and in her (1984:156) agreement with the empirical variability of openness expressed in Yengoyan’s (1979) theory of constraints.
explanation of the systematic sociocultural constraints on action beg the very question about political import that practice theory was supposed to answer, as an improvement over symbolic anthropology, political economy, structural Marxism, and transactionalism. How do they control, limit, or restrict?

The task of providing an account of Ortner’s principles of practice is tantamount to explaining what might be called the “endorsement” of cultural concepts, or of particular metapragmatic discourses—and Ortner uses this idiom (i.e., ENDORSEMENT) in her discussion, as well. In the sense I propose (following Sellars 1956 and Brandom 1988, 2000), endorsements “in the public world of observation and discourse” are attitudes and acts (in communication and other forms of interaction) that conform to or maintain systematicity in human judgments and that regiment the semiotic (re)cognition of systemic relations and practices. The transformation of what appears to be “content” into what appears to be abstract “form” is neither empirical—in the ordinary sense that the image of an actual, purple sunset is—nor something individuals can volunteer to do. Yet, individuals are actively involved in such processes insofar as they endorse certain intersubjective conceptual relations in taking up positions vis à vis a universe created through language use—by uttering certain utterances in given contexts and not others.

The notion of systematic sociocultural constraints on action presupposes there is a sheer potential to convey meaning in some sense—to signify at all—in the context of (non-deductive) inferences. I would suggest that, hypothetically, this potential is what is manipulated to obtain the power to control, limit, or restrict what we and others do. If we call this potential by the shorthand, “meaning-formalism”, we can recognize meaning-formalism as the epistemological hypothesis “that the language we use has a much more intimate connection with conduct than we have yet suggested, and that this connection is intrinsic to its structure as language, rather than a
‘use’ to which it ‘happens’ to be put” (Sellars 1954:213). Similarly, the same hypothesis of a meaning-formalism is expressed in the view that “epistemology. . . is the theory of what it is to be a language that is about a world in which it is used” (Sellars 1967:646).

Given the interrelationship of meaning-formalism and endorsement in an account of principles of practice, it would be worthwhile to examine each of these to a greater extent. Meaning-formalism clearly bears a resemblance to Kant’s synthetic a priori. It is not surprising, then, that Durkheim (1995:238, 239) recognized the possibility of meaning-formalism when he wrote the following in his commentary on Kant’s critique of pure reason:

... From the standpoint of observation through the senses, everything is disparate and discontinuous. Nowhere in reality do we observe beings that merge their natures and change into one another. . . it is religious beliefs that replaced the world as the senses perceive it with a different one. This, the case of totemism shows very well. What is fundamental to totemism is that the people of the clan and the various beings whose form the totemic emblem represents, are held to be made of the same essence. . .

. . . Of course the mental habits it implies prevented [hu]man[s] from seeing reality as his senses show it to him; but as the senses show it to him, reality has the grave disadvantage of being resistant to all explanation. For to explain is to connect things to other things; it is to establish relationships between things that make them appear to us as functions of one another and as vibrating sympathetically in accordance with an internal law that is rooted in nature. Sense perception, which sees only from the outside, could not possibly cause us to discover such relationships and internal ties; only the intellect can create the notion of them.

Durkheim was making the Kantian point that reality, as pure sensory impingements, is unintelligible and is only made intelligible by the contribution of the intellect. His anthropological point about totemism, as a corollary, can clearly be applied to the nationalism meta-discourse and its social effects. The intellectual replacement for the world—the world that the senses conceivably would otherwise show—becomes reality. That replacement makes underlying cultural processes counter-empirical and, for Durkheim, resistant to all explanation.
To explain the underlying intersubjective relations beneath phenomena like totemism requires an assumed network of understandings about concepts and things. There has been, in fact, a multi-millennia-running dialogue on the very subject I called meaning-formalism—the defining property of any system that is instrumental in the expression or production of meaning, but a property that is not functional in expressing particular meanings. The principals in the quest to articulate some such regimenting and productive system have included Aristotle, Duns Scotus, Gottfried Leibniz, Immanuel Kant, John S. Mill, Charles S. Peirce, and many others. There are two major perspectives on concepts and things that can be characterized in terms of whichever of two key ideas are privileged. Logicians and medieval grammarians have used the terms “denotation” and “extension” to signify the referential relation of words and sentences to things and situations that people interact with, in a spatiotemporal sense. This relation is distinguishable from the conceptual content intrinsic to and “internal” to particular minds—“connotation”, “intension”, “sense”, “comprehension”. These two orienting concepts emerged

17 It does not function by marking an instance of a form (as do tokens of a syntactico-semantic constituent-form), nor by being the systemic form for conveying, say, the truth-functionality of a deductive system.
18 Umberto Eco (1987) outlined the relations of extensional versus intensional treatments of meaning as they bear on explicit commentary by Peirce, J. S. Mill, and Saussurean semiotics. In that commentary, he goes on to trace the history of the relevant terms in the medieval tradition, relating these to J. S. Mill’s usage.
19 Notwithstanding my idealized, consensus-oriented narrative of continuity in the stable senses of “denotation”/“extension” versus “comprehension”/“intension”, it is obvious that this tradition was not the only one available for linguistic anthropologists like Silverstein to draw on in adopting the concept of denotation. Upon Hjelmslev’s (1943) reconstruction of de Saussure’s distinction of signifier and signified into the planes of expression and content, a particular concept of denotation and connotation emerged into the canon of structuralist linguistics. Thereafter, Hjelmslev, Benveniste, and Barthes developed the pair of concepts further than had de Saussure. Since the thing-object referred to is not intrinsic to any structural analysis of a particular language code, those working in the Saussurean tradition disregarded the Scholastics’ and logicians’ concept of extension. With Hjelmslev’s (1943) assimilation of the Saussurean framework to traditional terms, denotation became an ideal, rather than an objective relation, while connotation remained ideal. Once denotation was made ideal, it became less clear how to distinguish the two. Even today, for many linguists, the concepts stand as far apart and as close together as the literal, dictionary definition of a term (which is one description of denotation) and the necessary and sufficient conditions to be satisfied for a term to denote something (which is one description of intension). “Connotation” is sometimes taken to be the subjective or, at other times, intersubjective associations of words, and has been dismissed from some theories of semantics that emphasize reference.
from the medieval European grammatical and logical traditions, extending through the German enlightenment, through the English and Scottish renaissances, and up to recent schools.

Extensionalists and intensionalists experience the same general world, with ordinary differences in experience, but when they begin to describe the conceptual apparatus involved in experience, complications multiply. Extensionalist philosophers tried to theorize language in a way that excluded consciousness, much as Chomsky theorized language in a way that excluded performance. This occurred during an empiricism-dominated period in the history of philosophy in which most philosophers in the US not only placed more confidence in the formal concreteness of language over “ideas” (“the linguistic turn”), but also turned away from the general concepts that organize social actors’ particular and far-from-abstract experiences.

Intensional perspectives on how to understand the concept of meaning (whether subjective, intersubjective, objective) are those for which categories might or might not exist independently of particular minds (i.e., meaning need not be determined internally to minds), but meaning is unequivocally constituted by minds (whether individual or communal minds). Thus, it is an essential fact of intensionalism that someone might not know that Robert Allen Zimmerman is Bob Dylan and, therefore, understand different things based on the two names.

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20 Often, anything that falls outside of the principles of logic that assume an extensionalist interpretation is called “intensional”, even though “non-extensional” would be more accurate. That is, intensionalism is often constructed on the basis of the absence of standard (i.e., extensionalist) conditions. Some conditions that cause difficulties under an extensionalist interpretation include making reference to things that do not exist and opaque contexts in general, which occur in different ways—when mentioning objects of other people’s beliefs (de dicto attitudes), when making reference to things that have several names of which people have varying knowledge, and when using referring terms that denote more than one class of things (referential ambiguity/polysemy). When sentences fall under one or more of these conditions, they have been reformulated in more explicit terms, involving stipulated conditions, so as to render them no longer “intensional” (i.e., unacceptable) contexts. Conditions involving layers of beliefs cause the most problems and most readily inspire traditional logicians to construct models that reduce meaning to reference so as not to address “intensional” contexts. The extensionalists’ antagonism toward predicates (as generals) lives on in Silverstein’s (1985a, 1993) placing of both reference and predication into a single category, which he would never do for the parallel concepts of metasemantics and metapragmatics.
While extensional perspectives recognize that meaning requires minds in order to occur (whether individual or communal minds), meaning is unequivocally determined by means external to minds. Thus, given the fact that Robert Allen Zimmerman is also Bob Dylan, both names have the same connotation and there is no possible universe in which either of these names might not be the designation for the named individual.

Figure 7.5. The compass rose of the space of imagining. The horizontal orientation represents a simplification of sociological, psychological, and linguistic factors related to the agency of meaning—who is distributing, maintaining, consuming meanings and how. The vertical orientation represents a simplification of epistemological, general-semiotic, and linguistic factors related to the origin/nature of meaningful contents—the necessary conditions for meaning. Together, these “dimensions” are the minimal number of orientations required to make sense of relations among actors, language-codes, communicative situations, and cultural communities.

This two-dimensional figure is meant to block the conflation of a variety of considerations into a single dimension of meaning where *signifiers* have their meanings projected in *signifieds*. However, I would argue that not even the vertical orientation can be represented unidimensionally. The relations between world and individual that the vertical line in this synchronic representation represents, are themselves constituted (the horizontal line) in what is, minimally, a process with linguistic, cognitive, and social factors. As a diachronic process by which the relation between world and individual varies according to different emergent purposes, the determining orientation defies synchronous representation.
The potential for confusion about meaning warrants introduction of two terms (see Fig. 7.5). *Determination* of a meaning has to do with the origin or locus of that which enables us to say there is (or is not) a meaning; and some theorists have recognized that locus as being in the causal-objectual order, and others in the intentional order. *Constitution* of a meaning is the setting of use in which meaning manifests and is maintained; and it can be said to occur primarily either through communicative contact in a social network, or individualistically/egocentrically. It is important to see the difference between the distinct issues of the determination and the constitution of meanings. Many anthropologists see the latter, but rarely recognize the former. For this reason, perhaps, prominent theorists in linguistic anthropology (Agha 2007; Silverstein 2010; and, differently, Hanks 1996a) have articulated their models on the basis of a naturalistic, extensionalist philosophy of language (drawing on the work of Hilary Putnam).21 I would argue (as Durkheim implied) that any extensionalist perspective is

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21 Hilary Putnam’s extensionalist externalism has been cited by linguistic anthropologists because Putnam locates meaning in the social realm of language communities, rather than in any individual’s head. He expressed this view by stating that language is a tool that involves a “division of linguistic labor” to operate much like a battleship requires a crew to operate it (1974:449). By this, he meant that individuals depend on others to construct their statuses as communicative participants and as users (inhabitants) of one or more languages. Verification of something as being appropriately called “gold” requires jewelers or scientists as well as lay persons (Putnam 1974:449). However, the apparent embracing of social interaction in language use by Putnam turns out to be more evocative than theoretically revealing.

I would agree with Sellars (1974): “[T]he points he is concerned to make have little to do with the contrast between individual and group, and concern rather the contrast between different groups, whether they...are as isolated as the populations of different possible worlds” (1974:460). Putnam, a content externalist for whom meaning has a content that is a direct function of the objectual order, did not claim any more than that society manages (in a range from experts to novices) the meaning of expressions such as natural-kind terms like “gold”, which is different from saying that society *determines* those meanings. In his conception, the semantical values of expressions are realized by the objectual order of the “real” world. Indeed, the physical-structural arrangements of the natural world are what determine whether some term successfully refers or not.

In applying the framework of the determination-and-constitution-of-meaning to Putnam, we can avoid making the mistake of conflating the two dimensions. That is, Putnam did not argue that meaningful contents are *determined* by linguistic labor that is socially organized. His principle of socially-graduated language use has tended to overshadow the fact that Putnam, along with Quine and Kripke, has espoused a *double externalism*. Although Putnam is an externalist in that meanings are *constituted* by a graduated distribution of use (with the recognition that the sociocentric constitution of meanings is limited to a causal theory of reference in which words are given their meanings in christenings or dubbing events), he is also an externalist in the way already mentioned, regarding the *determination* of meanings by the physical-structural arrangements of the natural world.
inadequate to the task because its externalist orientation fails to articulate the requisite cohesion among cultural concepts.

These ancient issues remain vital today because the cases of typification that characterize social judgments—such as are involved in conflicts within social interaction described in terms of, say, ethnicity, gender, or religion—can only be understood within the context of a theory of meaning-formalism and predication. Linguistic anthropology has a theoretical framework regarding the relation of communicative action to context. However, the use of this theoretical tradition today is propped up on assumptions about whatever it is in which semiotic entailment consists (who or what entails something about the context-of-occurrence and how does it do so?); and many of these assumptions are fairly vague. The assumptions involved in any discussion of typification or semiotic entailment imply theoretic positions regarding the relation of tokens and types. One cannot address that issue without touching on the rubric of generals, predicate-concepts, and essential qualities. That issue, therefore, depends on what perspective one takes toward the problem of predication and representation—central problems that Peirce’s semiotic system was meant to illuminate.

Only an adequately detailed account of predication can avoid a deep and wide morass of confusions in addressing the issues about sociocultural realities that are anthropologically relevant. As suggested above, a number of philosophers (Peirce, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Wilfrid

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22 This is anchored in the Firth-Malinowski context principle that “the real linguistic fact is the full utterance within its context of situation” (Malinowski 1965[1935]:11) and that “[o]nce someone speaks to you, you are in a relatively determined context and are not free just to say what you please” (Firth 1957[1935]:28). Later developments include Silverstein’s concept of “indexical entailment” (1976, 1993); Gumperz’s “contextualization cues” (1982); discussions of the sequential organization of context in conversation analysis (e.g., Schegloff 1988, especially 61-62); and the ethnomethodological concept of double contextuality (see Heritage 1984:242). These form the basis for a nascent theory of context in which participants use communication “to constitute the culturally and historically organized social worlds that they inhabit”, allowing analysts to “approach[ing] context from the perspective of an actor actively operating on the world within which he or she finds him- or herself embedded” (Goodwin and Duranti 1992:5).
Sellars, and Robert Brandom, most notably) have addressed the issue of a kind of normativity that fulfills what I call meaning-formalism. Moreover, they did so in a way that can explain the cultural politics with which Geertz and Ortner (among others) were concerned. Peirce called the philosophical perspective in which action is governed by a normativity that emerges from regular practice, “pragmatism”. For want of a shorthand term, the ideological and interactional features of belief and perspective according to which sociocultural activities and discourses are performed, might be called “pragma”.

In the service of developing an anthropological position that does not fall prey to naturalism, the concept of pragma should be divided into two types, which correspond to the two roles that features of sociocultural practices can play. These two types are a) an aesthetically-evaluative, or heuristic orienting role and b) the epistemically-normative, constitutive role that elements of a code play. The former (a) might be referred to as “psychological pragma” and the latter (b) as “epistemological pragma”. In psychological pragma, the relation of significance between two signs and their meaning(s) is arbitrary, but not constitutive of the use of the sign. The aesthetic relation of empirical class to member is that of token class to token (as a living zebra is a token of a species). In epistemological pragma, the relation a token has to a type is constitutive of the conceptual (mis)taking of that token. This norm-grounded relation of type to token is the relation of an abstract category or object to an instantiation of that abstract category/object, much as marks on a page and on a chalkboard can be differently occurring

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23 This is related, but different from a development in speech act theory. John Searle (1969) advanced Austin’s insight that acts of talking are also performances of social acts even in the act of saying something (where “saying” has a prototypically cognitive sense). He advanced Austin’s theory of speech acts by proposing that speaking a language implies the existence of underlying rules that—as opposed to regulating and constraining what could be done with or without such rules—provide the basis for specifying behavior that could not be specified without those rules.
tokens of the same abstract sentence-type.24 The reason why naturalistic approaches reproduce ontologies of human kinds found in the field, rather than an epistemology of human practices, is that they do not distinguish (re)cognition that is merely aesthetic-evaluative from (re)cognition that is epistemically-normative. The former ignores the cognitive judgments about difference and reifies such difference (i.e., locates difference in the metaphysical or physical domain), while the latter identifies categorization in the epistemic domain of agent-centered cognitive judgments.

As suggested by the discussion of extensionalism and intensionalism, the major value of making a distinction between aesthetically-evaluative and epistemically-normative principles is obscured by the several layers in ways of talking (and thinking) about different conceptual schemes for talking about things and concepts. The issue can be simplified by thinking in terms of different worldviews within the human sciences: a naturalistic worldview and a pragmatistic worldview. For some researchers, some of the categories people use, are not culturally constructed. Thus, the distinction I am making manifests (though differently) at the level of culturally-constructed categories (e.g., as most people would describe the concept of blue) and natural or innate categories (e.g., as some might describe the concept of red). On the naturalistic worldview, there is no distinction between aesthetic-evaluative and epistemic-constitutive principles for categories since any category is a matter of innate psychology or social aesthetics. For the radical constructivist, there are no non-culturally constructed categories. If such a radical

24 What Sellars (1948:607) called “the psychologistic blunder” is the error of confusing language understood in terms of empirical, psychological functions, with language understood “as an epistemological category for which the relation of type to token is not that of empirical class to member” (Sellars 1948:608). This is similar to the very pertinent, even recursively relevant, Boasian pluralist problem in which different cultures might be taken to be different cultural species (in the quantitative “blunder”)—that is, as token classes—or as something else. The alternative is not taking the set of cultures as different tokens of a type, but as a class of types each of which is represented—“though the imposition of conventional meaning on the flux of experience” (Stocking 1968:159)—in token cultural practices. Notice that each token is only related to a type in virtue of a judgment of recognition.
constructivist were a pragmatist of a certain stripe, the distinction I make would be valuable in separating the vast realm of thinking about the world from that part that is constitutive of different resources for thinking about the world.

The different ways in which aesthetically-evaluative principles and epistemically-normative principles apply to colors is instructive because those two types of principles apply in different ways. My distinction between aesthetically-evaluative and epistemically-normative principles cannot help us to understand the difference between the concept of red and the concept of blue. In my opinion, blue is a culturally constructed category, as is red, for whatever cultural-perceptual community knows those colors (For those who do not agree with my opinion on color classification, they might substitute other debates.). Thus, the difference between concepts of red and blue for any cultural-perceptual community lies in particular histories of knowledge regarding the explicit concepts of the community. However, the conceptual schemes for talking about colors and sounds and things are governed in different ways (psychologically versus epistemically) by the different types of principles.

If members of a given cultural-perceptual community debate over whether a color in their visual field is blue or green, this debate is motivated by a conflict in aesthetically-evaluative principles. If they debate whether they are talking about a sound or a color—whether the tone of the bell is as blue as a bellflower—the debate is motivated by a conflict in which epistemically-normative principles are being endorsed. It is a part of the meaning of the concept, blue, that

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25 Note also that whether members of a given community respond differentially to different values (of hue or saturation) corresponding to a color concept (e.g., red or blue) is a different issue. This response, in my terms, is governed by cognitive judgments, but might not involve concepts. The stable dispositions that manifest as categories in psychological experiments, given those cognitive judgments, are what most social scientists mean by “construct”. The experimenter constructs those categories because they are of analytic use. If they do correspond to the research participant’s set of categories, this does not make them any less a construct. This fact just makes the research and its constructs valid. Many of the constructs used in cultural research do not have such (“face”) validity.
blue is a color (and not, for example, a sound). Similarly, it is part of the concept of snow that its instantiations be (ideally) white:

To judge, for example, that snow is white is not just to represent snow and represent white; it is to be committed to the idea that the representable snow and the representable white belong together regardless of what anyone happens to think. It is, in other words, to be committed to the idea that representings that snow is white are (epistemically) correct and representings that snow is not white (epistemically) incorrect. . . (Sellars 1967:638, emphasis mine)

Three points suggest themselves. First, in this example, the link between snow and white is a normative one, such that “representings that snow is white are. . . correct”. Secondly, this normativity is of epistemic value, which is to say that it is related to the concepts involved in the formation of knowledge about the world. Other conceptual relations would imply other understandings of the world, and vice versa; any of which would involve different language worlds. Thirdly, therefore, this epistemic normativity—and particular, occurrent endorsements that instantiate it—is a feature that is part-and-parcel of any network of language use.26

NATIONAL POSITIONALITY

Some Varieties of Positioning

The presentation of a normative-inferentialist alternative to naturalism provides a platform for theorizing the way members of a putative community can find grounds for positioning others. In the process, of course, the sociocultural reality—what Durkheim attributed to the intellect, but which we can now locate in a space sociocentrically constituted and cognitively determined—replaces a reality that is the paragon of objectivity. Since objective

26 Most logicians would deem an inference such as, “It is raining; therefore, the streets are wet”, to be (formally) invalid because it does not explicitly state a generalization about the relevant weather and its effects on the street. By contrast, Wilfrid Sellars (1953, 1954a) argued that this inference is valid as a “material” move. That is, the inference is valid—in everyday epistemic contexts—in terms of its conceptual substance.
reality cannot be conceived of independently of sociocultural reality, it is clear that the empirical reality of an objectivist existence is just as theoretical as the sort of reality that has now come to be recognized as being socioculturally constructed. The positions people in Wales imagine their fellows to occupy are constructed through the separate and various endorsements people make in everyday life. Awareness of the fact that these empirical positions are shaped by the inferences and judgments people make, but of which few are aware, should allow us to become more cognizant of the counter-empirical reality; and to make the counter-empirical, empirical.

This progressive alternation from one model of objectivity to the next explains my failure (productive as it was) in trying to capture positions of Welsh nationalism. The static positions I did “capture”, reveal the “indexicality” of identity. That is, the positions are analogous to Silverstein’s (1985c, 2004) deictic metricalized (mapping-)relations between texts at his denotational plane and interactional texts—but “occur” at the metadiscursive, rather than the textual order. Yet, they do not reflect the “background” cultural dynamics. Knowing about the possibility of the cultural dynamics that lie beyond the empirical reality that enjoys a current objective status is helpful here; and, in the previous chapters, we have seen more than a merely possible cultural dynamics. The more ordinary situations in Wales now take on a different light.

Just as cultural identity becomes less ambiguous for people in Abergwaith when language is the salient factor, their own image of themselves affects how they classify other people into non-overlapping categories. Consider Trosset’s (1993) neutral explanation of a woman who, based on what Trosset recounted, seemed to reject Cymraeg-oriented language nationalism. This female guest house owner thought Cymraeg was unnecessary in official settings. She told Trosset “about the rudeness of a young woman guest” who was learning Cymraeg and insisted on speaking it and using Cymraeg words even for cities outside the language’s imagined
jurisdiction (e.g., using “Caeredin” for Edinburgh in Scotland)—much as I am using “Cymraeg” (instead of “Welsh”) for Cymraeg in an English-language context. Yet, the guesthouse owner spoke approvingly of a Canadian man who continually asked her for the Cymraeg word for things. Trosset concluded as follows:

It is likely that her different responses to these two people were related to the ways they tried to position her Welshness in relation to their own: the man treated her as an authority and sought Welsh knowledge [of Cymraeg, that is] from her, whereas the young woman claimed a high degree of Welshness by using words the native speaker did not know. (Trosset 1993:39).

That is a highly plausible explanation. Moreover, Trosset’s explanation exhibits, implicitly, the social space in which the cultural blurs into the political and vice versa.

Trosset did not highlight that blurring, but she did provide a discursive context: Trosset used the term “rudeness” to describe the young woman’s excessive language practice. Although it is unclear whether she was indirectly reporting the implied stance or conveying an explicit attitude of the guesthouse owner, there is a sense that something more is going on than a social slight. What is crucial is that “trying to position her Welshness” can be—in this case was, and often is—interpreted as rude. It is this act-type of positioning that is of broader significance.

Despite the fact that the arenas differ in terms of choice and range of action, I believe the same category of everyday cultural life is being evoked both when the NSF reviewer objected to my studying nationalism in classrooms because it seemed too political (quoted in Chapter Four) and when Trosset conveyed the guesthouse owner’s sentiment toward the female guest. This same sort of event occurred, as we saw in Chapter Four, when Tom wanted to know if I was Saesneg [English-language] or Cymraeg. Of course, people will have different ideas about the
degree to which something is “rude” or “nationalist”. Moreover, what one person deems to be rude, another might find to be proper and prescribed behavior for the context. Hence, it is important to evaluate both the conventional range and the “directionality” or valence for rudeness.

If this point is generalized to various social settings, then issues of choice and range of action are salient—with respect to this point that the same category of everyday cultural life is being evoked by referral to rudeness or nationalist. Clearly, the guesthouse owner was willing to be patronized economically by a chronically rude person, and there are many areas of social life in which such associations are voluntary. In such areas, the guesthouse owner might exercise her right to avoid people deemed to be rude. Settings for social interaction that are voluntary might have selective or open membership. Even in the latter—such as chapel or church life, choir groups, women’s groups, activities in the local pub—members cannot choose who they will associate with and “rude” social interactions are more likely to occur. Where a committee screens membership applications, there are often surprises (as an extreme example, consider confirmations for US Supreme Court justices, who sometimes express opinions at odds with their expected ideologies). In official, non-voluntary social settings, such as schools, public policy makers and administrators would require more careful monitoring of a “rudeness” that involves positioning other people’s Welshness; specifically, as nationalist.

The discourse about nationalism is such an immediate part of social life that it might be said—once one analytically separates it from the phenomena to which it is tied—to have an independent, cognitive “existence” beyond the utterances made on any given occasion. Because of its fluidity, I find the notion of position implicit in positioning to be limiting in making analysis of discourses about nationalism in Wales tractable. What I am more concerned with is
the learned system of resources and constraints that people engage with in taking up—what have become, through an analytically distinct process, recognizable as more or less discrete—positions. “Positionality”, then, would seem more apt. For Holland et al. (1998), this term “refers to the fact that personal activity (the identified action of a person) always occurs from a particular place in a social field of ordered and interrelated points or positions of possible activity” (1998: 44). However, while this conception emphasizes perspective, it locates it in transpersonal and determinate “points and positions”, reinforcing the discreteness of positions.

Wortham’s concept of interactional positioning, drawing on work by Kenneth Gergen (1992 (with Kaye), 1994, 1999) is better at capturing the contextuality of production, and the process of recognizing positions. For Wortham (2001:9), in communicative interactions, people “presuppose a certain version of the social world and position the narrator and audience with respect to the social world and to each other”. Thus, positions are generated in context and, while they might become recognizable with repetition, they require explanation in the context of their use. Moreover, Wortham makes (re)cognition an explicit part of the concept:

“Something more flexible than rules mediates between the cues in an utterance and the interactional positioning that utterance accomplishes. . . Hearers first attend to (sometimes conflicting) cues in utterances, on the basis of which they next select aspects of the context as relevant, and they then apply rules (or presupposed regularities) to determine what positioning is going on” (2001:36).

On the other hand, where Wortham was concerned with positioning in an interactional setting, I am concerned with positioning in an interdiscursive milieu. While communicative interactions impose their own sort of constraints and frames for motivation with respect to how participants interact, so do interdiscursive milieux like those in Abergwaith. One framework for discussion of these constraints and contexts for motivation is presented in the remaining part of this chapter.
Construing “Nationalism” in Terms of “National Positionality”

The popular insistence on deploying the frame of nationalism is often jarring, but all the more ubiquitous because it seems to fit the realities I experienced in Wales. Geertz (1973:253-254) made the rather useful comparison of nationalism to religion, which addresses both the controversial key in which nationalism tends to appear and the way it acts as a lens in shaping perception.

Rather like religion, nationalism has a bad name in the modern world, and, rather like religion, it more or less deserves it. Between them (and sometimes in combination) religious bigotry and nationalist hatred have probably brought more havoc upon humanity than any two forces in history, and doubtless will bring a great deal more. Yet also rather like religion, nationalism has been a driving force in some of the most creative changes in history, and doubtless will be so again in many yet to come. It would seem, then, well to spend less time decrying it— which is a little like cursing the winds—and more in trying to figure out why it takes the forms it does. . .

Researchers could make more progress in trying to figure out why so-called nationalism takes the forms it does in Wales if the simplistic set of relations called nationalism were recast in terms of a complex game I call, “national positionality”.27 This phrase makes it easier to recognize that nationalism is a category of colloquial discourse and is not an analytic category.

In the context of north-west Wales, the normalizing projection of a consensus-oriented conventionality in public discourse has a simplifying effect on the recognition of nationalism— whether as a discourse or as a diversity of positionings. This might be expected, given popular

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27 The lack of a concept that embraces both extremes of this phenomenon in Wales—nationalism and national identity—impeded my progress in this research and, profoundly hampered my ability to recognize something. This something is the cultural and language resources that are used to give shape to it and that people use to express some position within its range. The first step was to recognize the identity orientations that operate independently of language preference. Once these orientations were identified, it became easier to see the ways in which individuals and socially constructed realities modulate the expression of national identity in the public sphere under different disciplining regimes and through (individual and collective) use of different cultural and linguistic resources.
and academic ways of imagining democratic societies, particularly in the image of “the public sphere”. As the irregular typefaces used, suggests, some (e.g., Fraser 1990) have taken the first two words of this three-word phrase to be problematic.

Habermas’ (1989) notion of the public sphere has been influential to the point that even the most critical commentators accept something like a public sphere in their sociological imaginings. Nonetheless, theorists have found much in that normative model, based on a historical description of a transformation of bourgeois society in the Eighteenth Century, with which to disagree. One sort of critique (e.g., Fraser 1990) has challenged Habermas’ image of public life on three accounts. First, his description of reasoned debate does not reflect the communicative varieties found in strata of general society within a state other than bourgeois society. Second, Habermas’ notion of a singular sphere presumes that an unexamined social consensus motivates public deliberation, as is suggested by such anchors of deliberation as “the common good”. Third, the supporting ideal of a bourgeois, liberal-minded, and calmly intellectual rationality that informs deliberation is needlessly restricting.28 The different tradition of theorizing “publics” has taken a perspective that is less normatively skewed toward an unexamined and narrowly construed social consensus (Thompson 1961a:29-33; see also Gal and Woolard 1995 and other articles in that issue of Pragmatics). Instead, the publics approach emphasizes contestatory and often highly emotional forms of transacting attitudes toward the issues of the day.

Recent discussions have raised questions about how social actors are held responsible for talk (Hill and Irvine 1992; Irvine 1992) and about what is and what is not of concern to a specific

28 Some (e.g., Polan 1990:260) would even take the particular rationality with which Habermas is concerned, to be “a show, a spectacle in which truth is not a content but, à la Russian Formalism, a device, an alibi, to get excitement going, to make a scene”. That is, some emotional content is allowed, but only as a response to a supposed violation of a particular norm of rationality in which the idea of truth becomes a stage in a taken-for-granted theater of discourse.
set of participants in “public” arenas (Fraser 1990). Language nationalism in Abergwaith is a
good source of examples of contestatory and highly emotional modes of expressing a political
will in public arenas, which resonate with the modes Fraser (1990) had in mind. It is precisely
these modes that make them “easy targets” for associations with a pejorative kind of nationalism.
In effect, in response to those modes of expression—seen from the liberal-individualist
perspective as disorderly (see Urciuoli 1996 and Hill 1998) and as “annoying exceptions”
(Rosaldo 1993:28)—well-positioned members of the public sphere bundle the variety of attitudes
carried by language activists together under an appearance of similarity and presume that these
attitudes belong to some singular form of nationalism. Consequently, few members of Welsh
publics have a reason to think deeply about what nationalism amounts to as a set of practices or
attitudes—even while those who feel Cymraeg to be central to their own identity would have
much to say about this, but would not thicken the sense of sharply segregated duality. Indeed,
those who think the “deepest” about what nationalism amounts to as a set of practices or attitudes
tend to express views that resemble the reflective (multivalent) nature of the comments of the
NSF reviewer mentioned in Chapter Four. However, because these practices and attitudes are
categorized as nationalistic—as opposed to a more positively valued category, such as
patriotic—they are deprived in public spaces of some degree of the legitimacy that might be lent
them as pursuits of active members of the public.

This complex field of social action involves a system of relations in which emergent
positions can be differentiated due to attitudes toward languages and related language ideologies.
The system of relations includes acts of taking and legitimizing positions regarding the nation
and the conditions for occupying such positions, which people might believe they occupy as a
result of acting jointly, or interacting civilly. It is this broad range of positionality that makes the
discourse about nationalism socially efficacious for positioning others; and, therefore, it is divisive, and ethnographically problematic. The symptoms of so-called nationalism can create ruptures in the appearances of intersubjectivity (as briefly noted in my critique of hyponstatizing “the current political situation” in Chapter Four). Mutual belief that others and oneself are acting jointly can be disrupted both *when it appears that what an interlocutor is doing is nationalistic* (or can be so-reconstructed by reanimating an utterance in a more politicized context) and *where a person would not welcome “nationalistic” performance*. The first condition—the appearance that what an interlocutor is doing is nationalistic—can also present itself to those who feel an affinity toward Wales, use Cymraeg in their daily life, and seem to bear all the other locally recognizable markers of being a nationalist. However, a social assertion of nationalism has the effect of rupturing the appearance of joint action only when people take nationalism to be unwelcome.

Such ruptures are indicative of problems in constituting phatic communion or community. They are (tacit or explicit) points of conflict over the endorsement or rejection of principles—whether these are principles of interaction or community. Such ruptures equally might be points of conflict over whether the principles in question can be decided on the basis of social agreement or whether they are rooted in fundamental principles of community. The former involves merely aesthetically-evaluative principles and might apply to sophisticated lay persons or to an ethnographer’s sense of proprieties about culturally constructed concepts. The latter involve epistemically-normative principles and might best characterize the essentializing and naturalizing treatment of a language by those who speak it and give it pride of place. In taking this multidimensional approach to analysis, one can avoid speaking pejoratively about, say, the essentialist beliefs of language activists. Further, through this multidimensional
approach to analysis, one can come to understand how the politics of language can generate beliefs that are constitutive of a language demesne or a language corridor out of what appear to be merely the boundaries of a (potentially global) language community. If a social actor treats some concept (e.g., the role of Cymraeg as national emblem) as constitutive in some way over and above human intervention, then it is inappropriate to treat it as a merely aesthetic notion. Such an actor (even lacking any like-minded compatriots) creates a community on the basis of an epistemically-normative concept of community—as surely as blue is a color, not a sound.

The category of everyday cultural life described in this section—national positionality—is visible largely in terms of the instrumental claims that constitute what I call “surface positions”, and not the substantive content of an ethnolinguistic consciousness. To be effective, national positionality would need to be understood to include substantive claims of a social consciousness. This fact forces one to choose either 1) to accept the surface positions as genuine features of the social reality being described and analyzed, or 2) to conceive national positionality as an analytic category of a higher conceptual order than the usual concept of (surface) positions. If indigenous Welsh constructs are incompatible with the surface positions of everyday (and academic) discourse that are dominated by a discourse about nationalism, as I am claiming, then a higher-order concept of national positionality (in option 2) would itself “include” the fact of that incompatibility within its scope. Accordingly, national positionality would not take surface positions such as “nationalist” as its empirical matter, but would take, as its empirical matter, the complexly dynamic system of politics of language and community that produces such incompatibilities. It is this latter conception I use “national positionality” to signify, which is more amenable to the dominant–subordinate binominal structure of official languages in Wales.
PART IV

THE PRAGMATICS OF CULTURAL SUBMERGENCE
... [A] dominant social character plus a structure of feeling plus the direct intervention of power plus market forces and systems of promotion and reward plus institutions can make and constitute together a system of ideas and beliefs, a constellation of received ideas and orthodox attitudes, a “false consciousness” or a class ideology which is more than the sum of its parts and which has a logic of its own... [T]here may be an impression of openness over a wide area and yet still at certain critical points quite other factors—of power or of hysteria—come into play. (E. P. Thompson, “The Long Revolution [Review]” (1961b:37))

... for each basic factual word in the language there are one or more logically synthetic universal sentences which, as exhibiting the rules for the use of these words, have the status of “necessary truths” of the language. These sentences are those into which a user of the language would insert the words “must” or “necessary.” He would say that what they express is necessarily so, as opposed to what just happens to be so. (Wilfrid Sellars, “Language, Rules and Behavior”, §35 ([1949]1980:131)

The demographic existence of the two official languages in Wales plays some role or another in how people think about language realities there—laypersons and academics alike—no matter their ideological or intellectual orientation. Since the content of these ways of thinking do shape the way social actors understand their own membership in local communities, their sense of the realities of language and community affects their cultural affinities. The walls of universities are no more of a hindrance to the entry of cultural or language nationalism than they are to the coal fumes that waft through village streets and towns. This makes for an interesting meta-theoretic dialectic about the scholarly discussion of identity. The pursuit of an indigenous

1 The phrase, “language games”, in the chapter title comes from a widely circulated and loosely (mis)interpreted concept of the highly original analytic philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953). In part, I use the phrase in ironic allusion to the habit of this overgeneralizing use in the social sciences, according to which any contextual use of language is thought of as a language game. More pertinently, I use “language games” to highlight that language codes have a serious political role—even if a “stress on the politics of ethnicity... reduces cultural identity to a utility function” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009:44). That point is taken up in this chapter in terms of the cultural significance of state-recognized language-codes as they figure in specific academic discourse in Wales. Laypersons often deem such communications as trivially “academic”—dismissingly, as games—but these games on the subject of language are anything but trivial. I also use “language games” because the underlying principle that Wittgenstein established through his skeptical, dialectic philosophical investigations provides my way out of a practical problem of analysis that this dissertation addresses, though this “solution” is not explicitly presented in this dissertation.
modernity is sometimes at odds with scholarly interests, yet is frequently carried bodily into—embodied by people who enter—the offices and seminar rooms in Welsh universities.²

The Welsh logic of heritage (see Chapter Four) has implications for interpretive work in Welsh Studies. This chapter describes its manifestation within the Welsh academy. I introduce the pattern in Welsh Studies here as the most salient instantiation of those issues of historicity and language that previous chapters addressed. Most tellingly, the two major orienting perspectives on Welsh identity in Welsh society are found among those in Welsh Studies of the academy in Wales.

Recall from my introductory statements of my main argument that there is a cultural dialectic at work in Wales. It is constituted by the tensions between those who do not participate in the language-cultural complex—and either ignore or reject any focus on the substantive aspect of that complex because they think such a focus would be reductivistic—and those who do participate in that complex—but who feel they cannot express it to those who do not participate in it and, thus, cannot position themselves within it. These orienting perspectives highlight the major issue of contention in this dissertation and its empirical field: the idea at the heart of the “strategic use of positivist [sic] essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest” (Spivak 1988:13), that of asserting the more-than-socially-constructed real existence of socially-constructed cultural communities.³ Although the orientations correspond loosely to the opposition of essentialism and constructivism, the latter categories are transformed in those settings of practical-intellectual engagement, as might be expected.

² I do not suggest that what might be collected together under the umbrella term of “Welsh Studies” is unique in this respect. In fact, I mean the opposite. I point to an essential rhetorical dimension in scholarship which manifests in generally cross-culturally comparable ways with locally particular outcomes.
³ The preoccupation in anthropology with “positivism”, so misidentified (as I see it), is more aptly referred to as a commitment to naturalism, which comes in more or less palatable versions, some of which move under the radar of those scholars set on exposing “positivisms”, perhaps even explaining their own preoccupation with a misidentified positivism.
THE WELSH STUDIES SCHISM

Crisis of Identity

The identity dialectic in Wales with its two orienting perspectives is analogous to the tensions in anthropology that Marcus and Fischer (1986) called “the crisis of representation in the human sciences”. In US-based anthropology, there are a diversity of opinions about the contexts that give rise to such a crisis and the consequences of it, but practice has led to the entrenchment of two options, which can be stated in more or less general terms. Generally speaking, these options involve a search for or a denial of coherence, particularly where cultures figure as explicit topics of representations. It is a welcoming of or suspicion toward “the ability of encompassing paradigms to ask the right questions [and] provide answers” (Marcus and Fischer 1986:9). The paradigms of interest are those expected, or assumed to fail, to provide some coherent account. This might be an account of “conditions within American society [and] Western societies globally, which seem to be in a state of profound transition” or, more broadly, an account of “the variety of local responses to the operation of global systems, which are not understood as certainly as they were once thought to be under the regime of ‘grand theory’ styles” (Marcus and Fischer 1996).

In Wales, not surprisingly, those who participate in the Cymraeg language-cultural complex have had long experience with the lack of confidence and uncertainty that comes with changes in the conditions of life (social, economic, political, linguistic, geographical).4 It is even

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4 It is interesting that famous anthropologists bearing “obvious” Welsh names seem to follow a pattern common to Welsh émigrés, including Lewis H. Morgan and Evans-Pritchard. These two anthropologists located their own identities in broadly cosmopolitan and even imperial communities of some regional “provenance”—New England and southeastern England, respectively—and not in an ancestral Wales. Barth (2005:32) specifically classified the latter as an Englishman, and Leach recognized him as “a very English Englishman despite his [double-barreled] Welsh name” (quoted in Tambiah 2002:481n53). I think there is a common feature between Wales’ national crisis of representation and this pattern among Welsh émigrés, whose diasporic historical imagination runs counter to, say, “the Irish experience”: Welsh immigrants seem to stop claiming to be Welsh in earlier generations.
possible that, much as the methodological objectification of culture in Twentieth-Century
anthropological discourse became conventionalized among those defending “their own” culture,
the crisis of representation is similarly becoming convention in the assembly halls, pubs, post
offices, chapels, and town halls across Wales in the Twenty-First Century. If true, one should
expect to see, among laypersons and scholars alike, as part of the Zeitgeist, what Marcus and
Fischer described as “a loosening of the hold... of either specific totalizing visions or a general
paradigmatic style of organizing research” and cultural recognition (1986:8).

It is certainly true that even mundane topics, such as which historical figures belong in a
Welsh national history or which language the locals usually speak in a particular pub in
Penrhyndeudrath, are inextricably tied to culturally particular tensions about the privileging of
ethnic and political identities with apparent continuities (old or recent) in imagining Wales.5

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5 It might be that there is such a “loosening” of scholarly authority, but the value of this observation about the
percolation of the crisis of representation into lay society lies in noting that this appropriation of a discourse by
laypersons does not unsettle scholarly authority of scholarly collectives. Indeed, the crisis of note does not even
need to be real or to mark a real schism within modernist-interpretivist anthropology. Rather, the crisis of
representation could be construed (and diminished, in the process) as an application of the Boasian idea—now
directed at the idea of culture as a cultural feature—that culture is a sociocentric process with an unfolding history
that actors produce jointly, rather than as something that individuals invent.

Marc Goodwin’s (2011:41) depiction of Adorno’s attempt to answer the question of why the new (Modernist) art
in the 1920s was so difficult to understand, is enlightening. Adorno argued, according to Goodwin, that it is not due
to the whim of the individual avant garde artist, but to the socioeconomic context of the production of art—where
Adorno argued that religious function was no longer the center of art production. The “new art” emerged just as art
was being conceived as a domain itself in which art pieces were exchanged and consumed, moving beyond the
artists themselves. Artists responded to this cultural context, in which their work was degraded in artistic value
through popular consumption, with their own language, which defied commoditization.

Similarly, culture consumed through analysis is different from culture regarded as generalized human nature,
producing an analogous “degradation”. With this change in perspective of the idea of culture, the idea itself then
begins to change—giving rise to the need to protect disciplinary boundaries in the “marketplace of ideas”. Analytic
practitioners of the “new culture”, in the academy or without, develop new languages for analysis. The latter must
obtain a level of difficulty that keeps out “the riff-raff”. In this reading, Marcus and Fisher’s thesis of a crisis of
representation is an avant garde restatement of the idea of culture after it has been appropriated by academic and lay
“others”; while more traditional anthropologists feel they have already been addressing the same thing prior to the
nouveau restatement. This reading maintains the validity of the original issue. It can be treated as “epistemological
hypochondria” (Geertz 1988:71) only on pain of neglecting the sociocentric process and socioeconomic context of
the production of academic discourse.
Some people take up clearly delineated “sides” in the face of such tensions, while others seem to despair, believing that these problems are as intractable as they are unavoidable.

All scholars carry their interests bodily into academic halls, and scholars are the canaries in the coalmine of a crisis like that Marcus and Fischer (1986) described. 6 Welsh scholars were already in the throes of the implications of the idea that tradition is invented (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) when the crisis of representation in the human sciences was announced in the US in 1986. As Day (2002:8) wrote, after citing several illustrious texts from the mid-1980s (Curtis 1986; Smith 1984; Williams 1985): “[I]t has become almost obligatory in recent years to note how variously Wales is imagined, represented, and packaged, and to acknowledge the confusion that exists about which of these accounts, if any, is closest to reality”.

In Wales, situated against the fading glory and inequalities of the British Empire, however, the situation has been more complex than that in elite research-focused academic institutions in the US. A crisis of identity and culture already prevailed when something like Marcus and Fischer’s crisis of representations “arrived”. As theorists in Wales (and other parts of Britain) tackled the problems of representation, largely through the “invented tradition” school (again, see Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983, particularly Morgan 1983), a pattern of reversal established itself over the 1990s. Thus, scholars who felt the cultural crisis of identity as part of their daily lives were furnished with the tools to decenter those academic observations that they saw as English-centric, in both language and ethnic-cultural terms. Consequently, they gained greater confidence (during a decade of growing confidence among the Cymraeg-speaking populace). Yet, to critique English-centrism effectively requires real targets (regardless of

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6 In their personal histories, scholars everywhere consent to or shape their own positionings, in turn by themselves and by others. However, this shaping locates them relatively close to or far from the center of recognizable domains within the broad space of belonging, subjectivity, and society. That is, they do not manufacture their identities out of whole cloth. Ironic detachment is itself a variably scarce resource; and not even scholars can remain in full supply of it in every moment.
whether they are deserving of the criticisms leveled at them). At the same time, those intellectuals who were confident in “‘grand theory’ styles” of social research were, also, inclined to deconstruct the grandiose essentializing and “nationalistic” images of a primordial Wales whenever a grand narrative rooted in the primordial Welsh past appeared. Thus, Welsh Studies own “cultural wars” (to use a phrase that refers to certain debates in the US academy of the 1990s) were waged in a setting in which each side took up the critical arguments and “postmodern” tools of new modes of analysis.

In Welsh Studies in Wales, the conflict about what form (if any) a crisis in representation has taken, functions as a social, scholarly, and cultural schism. This schism cannot be represented as a strict contradiction—most so-called “contradictions” should not be so represented—because each position cannot be stated in strictly opposite terms. Rather, the schism exists because each opponent does not find the opposing position fully intelligible or compelling. Most simply stated, the schism is made of two “sides”. One “side” is (pre)occupied with the relations of power in representation differentially available to the Cymraeg-speaking population, relative to the circulation of English-language representations. The other “side” is (pre)occupied with reliably representing perceptions and groupings of Welsh identity, while maintaining, in the formulation of their analytical constructs, the tenuous balance between those who are and those who are not part of the Cymraeg language-cultural complex.

Indeed, the growing sense of confidence in Cymraeg-speaking Wales seems to make the contingent that is not involved in the Cymraeg language-cultural complex less confident about making sense of Wales from a sociological perspective. Although there was no pool of confidence that would shrink if either side partook of it, the use of the new ability of one group of scholars to de-center the other side’s authorities led to a loss of confidence among those with
affinities to the targeted, traditional (English-language sociological) authorities. This led to the creation and consolidation of the side that is not involved in the Cymraeg language-cultural complex as a reaction to attacks on its authorities.

**Schismatic Conversations**

The setting I have chosen for discussing the schism in Welsh Studies in Wales is a symposium conference of Welsh Studies scholars, the comments of which were published in the January 2005 issue of the journal, *Contemporary Wales*. The subject of the symposium was Graham Day’s book, *Making Sense of Wales* (2002). A sociologist at the University of Wales in Bangor in north-west Wales, Day has shown a concern for the methodological issue of reliability in sociological studies, which has the unintended consequence of conservatively favoring the status quo. Unintended conservatism notwithstanding, his concern with accurate representation, without showing undue loyalty to the minority segment in Wales, is characteristic of one “side” of the Welsh Studies schism.

The most stringent and analytic criticism of Day’s book—in the published comments—came from Charlotte Aull Davies. Davies was trained in mathematics and anthropology at US universities, did her anthropological fieldwork in Wales, and later took up a faculty position at Swansea University in Wales. She has written a very valuable account of historical nationalism in Wales and, since the 1990s, she has been directing attention for some time to the importance of reflexivity in social research. The research stance she displayed in her published comments for the symposium can be associated with scholarship on the Cymraeg-speaking segment that is of a self-consciously progressive stripe. Davies commented positively on the work of Williams and Morris (2000), which she characterized as addressing “the language [Cymraeg] as a force
structuring social groups and affecting economic prospects (for example, the over-representation of Welsh speakers in rural areas in unskilled and semi-skilled manual employment)” (Davies 2005:212). Davies demonstrated concern for the politics of language and community that structure research and that result in links between ethnic or cultural differences and economic disadvantage.

Davies (2005) targeted Day not only because his book was the object of criticism, collegial and otherwise, but because she thought he sided with the hegemonic aspects of English-language, capitalist society—for offering, in her words, an “extremely negative interpretation of the Welsh language and Welsh nationalism” (Davies 2005:212-3). Davies envisioned, in Day’s (2002) work, an “implicit portrayal of the indigenous population along with [language activist] organizations”, where these appeared as “backward-looking, refusing to accept the inevitability of the direction of social change”, with whom “charges of racism rest rather more heavily with them than with the incomers” (2005:210, emphasis mine). She did not call attention to the polarized terms that she “borrowed” from Day (at least, I sense no irony in her usage), nor suggest there might be alternatives to this binomial condition. She (2005:208) did, however, formulate a dilemma she saw in Day’s work, which she found lamentable:

This suggests the other reason for Day’s continued concern about, and tendency continually to interrogate, the existence of Wales as an entity for sociological study, namely a concern that a ready acceptance of a socially and culturally distinctive Wales may allow too great a prominence for language-based and nationalist visions. He is in fact caught in a dilemma, in that he advocates the development of a distinctive sociology of Wales, to which he has been a distinguished contributor for decades, while at the same time wanting to resist any encouragement this might give either to the position of the Welsh language or to the growth of nationalist political fortunes.
Davies’ concern with the dilemma she ascribed to Day did not depend so much on resolving the two lemmas or the binomial condition on which they are constructed. The primary concern, here, was with a lack of reflexivity that she saw in Day’s and others’ implied perspectives of their own subject positions in the role of researcher.

Davies identified different kinds of research stances, which, perhaps, supervene on those subject positions. These stances are embodied in those “whose theoretical approach challenges dominant political perspectives” and those “whose work reflects more mainstream and hence taken-for-granted perspectives” (Davies 2005:211). The two research stances, combined, are characteristic of the Welsh Studies schism and Davies’ practical categorization highlights the terms that play into that schism. As Davies (2005:209) noted, the taken for granted character of subject positions rooted in the English-language cultural complex is associated with both the strict-representationalist sociologist that Day appears to be and the sort of cosmopolitan attitude he expressed, which appears to treat parochial stances pejoratively, as something to avoid. For Day (2002:265), “[g]lobalization and localization go hand in hand”. Yet, as Davies observed (2005:212), in Day’s elaboration of this slogan, “celebrations of diversity” are rhetorically encoded in Day’s (2002:265) writing as equivalent to globalization, while “new forms of tribalism and exclusivity” and “hunt[ing] out the security of old or newly invented forms of identity” are rhetorically encoded as equivalent to localization. Day’s tacit view of globalization and localization do not seem able to fit in the same hand, where localization is treated as sinister, and globalization more correct.
A Departmental Rift

There is a context that forms the background for the intellectual disagreement that surfaced at the symposium conference of Welsh Studies scholars mentioned above. When this context is presented, some of the more strident reactions to Day’s book make a little more sense. Day, as a pillar of the School for Social Sciences at the then-University of Wales, Bangor has been counter-positioned by another pillar: Glyn Williams. Williams has long taken up discourse analysis from the French theoretical perspective and applies it to Wales’ economic and cultural conditions in line with Hechter’s critique of British constitutional arrangement and economic policy as exemplifying a kind of “internal” colonialism. The latter, internal colonialism, involves at least two conditions:

First, an instrumental relationship existed between the core region and its internal colonies in that decisions were made, by the state's ruling elite, to serve the interests of the core without regard for detrimental effects on the peripheral economy and society. . . Second, the peripheral region had a separate culture from the core, and cultural distinctions provided a basis for socioeconomic divisions, with the economic dependency of the periphery being largely attributed to its cultural distinctiveness. (Davies 1989: 61)

In contrast, Day’s perspective applies the more empirical and detached strategy of British social research and examines the phenomena of social and economic organization, exemplified in such features as social closure and exclusion. Yet, the two Bangor dons differ in more than their sociological approaches.

The divide in the School of Social Sciences at the then-University of Wales, Bangor, is the stuff of academic rumors even if I know less than I would like to know about it. It extends to the early 1990s, when some of the participants in the Welsh Studies schism (on Day’s side) were
still at Bangor. Beyond the manuscript text, patterns of social avoidance and a normalized standard of collegiality make it virtually impossible to document the tensions at the level of interaction. It is only because anthropologists are professionally required to tell tales out of school (and because it is not a well-kept secret) that I would discuss the contentiousness. Moreover, things have changed at Bangor and one might attribute the recent cooling of a decade or more of conflict to the reaching of retirement age by Day and Williams, and the carrying on by a younger generation, some of whom themselves have recently retired. Thus, Day’s (2002:247) comment about the future exchange described above involving his own sociology colleagues, comes to apply to himself: “In a thoroughly reflexive and ‘postmodern’ fashion, these contributions made by sociologists (working at the time within the same academic department) form part of the discourse of Welshness and nationhood which they are investigating”.


> . . . [T]here are quite fundamental differences of theory and method between the critic and the criticized, which represents distinct, and probably irreconcilable, positions within social analysis. However, there is also a strong vein of polemic running through the attack [by Williams (1994)]. . . The arguments put forward by Denny et al. are said to exemplify an ‘aggrieved ethnocentrism’, appropriate to ‘transient voyeurs’ casting

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7 Some of the earlier participants—David Denney (Royal Holloway-University of London) and John Borland (University of Chester)—have moved on from University of Wales, Bangor to other institutions. These formed part of a cohort based around ideas and not age. Day’s reference to “Denney et al. 1991” might reveal his personal knowledge of the history of a manuscript that ultimately became listed in Contemporary Wales as a single-author article. However, that reference also represents a sharing of ideas among two of the putative co-authors who were on staff at the School of Social Sciences at Bangor. Along with Ralph Fevre, John Borland and David Denney published papers about the legitimization of social closure in north-west Wales in 1992 and 1999 (and others, and also presentations in between these dates). Glyn Williams’ image of Day’s cohort has similarly conflated personas of his “opposition”, particularly in his attacks of Day 2002.
their eyes over a country to which they do not belong (Williams 1994:87, 95). Their approach is interpreted as an attempt to ‘pathologize’ minority culture, by attributing to it ‘mystical’ and mythical properties, and denying it reason. . . There are a number of interesting features of the way in which the argument proceeds, which amount to a statement of who can say what about Wales. . . The ability to speak Welsh is said to confer an insight into the cited texts that is denied to those who have not mastered the language—even though all the texts in question were written in English (including those by [the strident nationalist poet] R. S. Thomas).

While not explicitly aggressive, Day’s mode of selection and style in this message might signal a referral/renvoi to background tensions if they existed (and they did). Thus, Day used “polemic”, which tends to signal a critique that goes beyond ordinary rational discourse. He used “interesting” in characterizing the “features of the way in which the argument proceeds”, where this word often highlights a certain discursive key of objectifying interest, bordering on sarcasm: The features are of interest not because of how the message (and its principal) informs us about those features, but because the features tell us about the author of the original message (i.e., Glyn Williams).

Also, as Day’s initial, topical sentence of this paragraph indicated, he was documenting the polemical style of the original message. If there were background tensions, and there were, then the selections Day made and his evaluative language would be like flags marking various battle grounds. Some of these flags are directly reported—“‘aggrieved ethnocentrism’”, “‘transient voyeurs’”, “an attempt to ‘pathologize’”, “‘mystical’ and mythical properties”—while others involve layered representations of points-of-view: “casting their eyes over a country to which they do not belong” and “denying [minority culture] reason”.

Tellingly, William’s (2005) contribution to the symposium was entitled, “Blaming the Victim”. Because Williams mentored Davies while the latter conducted structured interviewing as the former’s research assistant in 1984 and 1985, and has established more recent
collaboration with one of his students on the sociology faculty at Bangor (Dr. Delyth Morris), it might be tempting to imagine that Davies was playing the role of defending Glyn Williams’ and her own position in a debate that has been too politicized for too long. Of course, by criticizing faculty in his own school, Day opened up old wounds and opened himself up to a counter-critique. He wrote of Williams and a current professor in the School of Social Sciences (and one of Williams’ former students), Delyth Morris:

. . . [R]ather than pursuing specialist debates about issues such as language change and language shifts, code-switching and the various ‘domains’ of language use, they prefer to concentrate upon language as an instrument of social action, but also as a powerful structuring force which contributes towards the formation of social groups and allegiances” (Day 2002:223).

Davies took this as dismissive:

He essentially dismisses in a couple of paragraphs (pp. 223–3[sic]) the extensive work of Williams and Morris (2000), which treats the language as a force structuring social groups and affecting economic prospects (for example, the over-representation of Welsh speakers in rural areas in unskilled and semi-skilled manual employment)

Importantly, the positions Davies and Williams have defended, as with Day, are not rooted solely in ways of doing analysis, but in social imaginaries. The following point of Day’s (2002:247) is an apt one, which applies (again) to his own involvement in the previous referrals to Williams, and also to Davies’ uptake of Day’s response in his book: “As the editors of the journal in which the exchange appeared state, there is clearly far more at stake here than a dispute about modes of sociological analysis”.

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Language Essentialism?

The schism in Welsh Studies in Wales becomes most salient upon Day’s examination of “the thought that identity can rest only upon language” (2002:253), which is based on a suggestion made by Aitchison and Carter (2000). In characterizing responses to the recent history of devolutionary voting results (in 1979 and 1997) as evoking that idea, Day elaborated this claim in terms of the protection by Cymraeg-speakers of their collective interests: “The real danger appears to be that an alternative conception of Welshness might undermine the claims of the Welsh-speaking community within Wales to represent the defining essence of Welsh identity and nationhood” (2002:253-4). In response, Davies rejected the implied corollaries in Day’s thinking: that the Cymraeg-speaking segment was actively essentialistic and that it promoted exclusivity. She was disturbed that Day would present “[t]he Welsh-speaking collectivity in Wales. . . as elitist and intent on projecting the language as the principal, if not the only, marker of Welsh distinctiveness” (Davies 2005:212). She also attacked him because of the kind of attitude that this way of thinking suggested: “. . . his treatment of the Welsh language as primarily a divisive and negative force within Welsh society” (Davies 2005:211).

In implying that (no parts of) the Cymraeg-speaking collectivity is unafraid for the reasons Day suggested, Davies denied that the fear Day ascribed to Cymraeg-speakers is of any significance. By implication, Davies might also have been suggesting that Cymraeg-speakers should not be expected to have collective interests; but, of course they do have instrumental interests in common as Cymraeg speakers, and, of course, many do feel threatened by the slide of Cymraeg toward increasing marginality that, many feel, has been halted in the present moment. One should not deny these facts about Cymraeg-speaking Wales, a diverse segment of the population of Wales, simply because they might seem unpalatable or controversial. They can
be unpalatable or controversial only if people refuse to separate these facts from an implied consequent. However, it is the implication, not the facts, that should be seen (by Davies and Day) as offensive. That is, what should offend is the inferential move:

\[ \text{from} \quad \text{a) the fact that persons produce and act on collective interests and fears of language “extinction”} \]
\[ \text{to} \quad \text{b) the belief that such persons are “primarily a divisive and negative force within Welsh society”}. \]

Technically, this is called a non sequitur. The cultural significance of that inferential move, besides the fact that this implication is seldom examined in Wales, lies in the meaning and value imputed to the related tacit, middle terms: essentialism, exclusivity, elitism, and the “projection of the language [i.e., Cymraeg] as the principal, [or] the only, marker of Welsh distinctiveness” (Davies 2005:212).

It is the denial of the legitimacy of expression of a full range of responses to Cymraeg activists that, I believe, characterizes the “current political situation”. This was illustrated in the NSF reviewer’s comments, which I quoted in Chapter Four. Also, consider the deployment of the term, “byddin” [army], discussed in that same chapter. I do not believe that the expression of a full range of responses, in action, as well as words, should be allowed, of course. Even if any were willing to kill for Wales, Irish history offers many cautionary tales.

To clarify, my point is not that any individual is monitoring and blocking the expression of extreme ideas about the Welsh nation. The legitimacy of such acts, however, is undercut before anyone thinks to express such ideas. The implication seems to be that Cymraeg-speakers would violate a basic social pact if they appear as divisive or as a negative force, as imposing a social hierarchy or ethnic typology, as promoting exclusivity or elitism, as projecting the language as the principal or only marker of Welsh distinctiveness. In making an apology for
Cymraeg-speakers, as being none of these things, Davies’ position was perpetuating the stigma related to the full expression of civil responses, and reproducing the taboo against a metaphorical militancy.

**Degrees of Welshness and an Imagined Hierarchy**

Davies’ target recognized that competence in Cymraeg and its visibility is “widely endorsed even among those who do not speak the language” (Day 2002:221). Yet, Day’s claim that the use of Cymraeg as a critical marker of ethnic identity “relegates [those who do not speak the language] to a diminished status” (2002:221) gave Davies pause. Day’s claim of such relegation implies, in Davies’ view, a social imaginary consisting of “degree[s] of Welshness within some imagined hierarchy” (Davies 2002:211-212). Of course, Day’s belief does imply such a hierarchy; and the claim regarding degrees of Welshness might even be demonstrable (see Trosset 1993, which Davies (2005:212) considered “rather questionable”). For Day, “nationality and national identity” have a “multiple nature” “in which they are constructed out of a cluster of attributes and characteristics” (2002:253), but that multiple nature does not rule out social hierarchies.

If one continually crosses the borders of the language divide on a daily basis, even if as a cultural tourist, an imaginary hierarchy becomes vaguely tangible. For whatever reason, Davies did not acknowledge such a social imaginary, and my guess is that it is simply more tangible in north-west Wales. My short visits in Swansea and Cardiff (in south Wales), Davies’ stomping-grounds, did not convince me that the same social imaginary subsisted there as in Bangor and Caernarfon (in north Wales). The constructed “natural” balance of language identity, according
to which one or the other language is prevalent and taken for granted, is precisely what differs in those two areas of Wales.

At the same time, the idea of an imaginary hierarchical scheme of relative degrees of Welshness violates the ideology of egalitarianism, which Trosset (1993:164-165) pointed out. From the outside, the sense that some are more authentically Welsh because they can participate in social activities using Cymraeg (Bowie 1993; Trosset 1993) does seem to imply relative degrees of Welshness. These relative degrees are expressed ordinally, as rankings, as more or less Welsh. They evoke the idea of racial hierarchies, because such rankings do not have a natural place in vernacular socio-cultural rankings because of the ideology of egalitarianism. Ranking people in terms of human-wide relations of difference does have the familiar rubric of race and prejudice. Charges of racism are frequently leveled at so-called language nationalists for that reason, and they are offensive to so-called language nationalists for similar reasons.

The language in which Trosset captured her experiences—as a distaste for contamination of groups identified as attaining a “purity” (Trosset 1993:59-61)—would heighten the discomfort, for those who are committed to a Cymraeg-centered sense of identity, of those reading such an account. Given the positive values many place on Cymraeg-centered sociality, this violation of egalitarian sensibilities and the resulting discomfort serve to motivate the location of relations of difference in the rubric of ethnicity rather than race. Such a positioning of language-cultural identity, however, does not match well with the sense of Wales as a quasi-state for those committed to Cymraeg-centered sociality. That is, for those responding emotionally and existentially to the decline (prior to the 2001 census and current low levels) of competence in Cymraeg throughout Wales, in tandem with the increasing scope of authority of Welsh jurisdictions by people within Wales, ethnicity fails to represent the relation between
these two realities of language and politics. Consequently, neither race nor ethnicity seems an appropriate category for language-culture identity.

According to Davies, “Day’s assumption that non-[Cymraeg] speakers feel diminished” in some Cymraeg-dominant language demesnes “does not sit easily with his acknowledgment of the very positive attitudes of the vast majority towards the language. . . or their active involvement over decades in establishing Welsh-medium schools, especially throughout the former industrial valleys of south Wales” (Davies 2005:212). This is to draw attention to what Davies saw as a contradiction in Day’s sociological analysis—because she thought that his analysis was wrong. However, if that analysis is correct, it draws attention to a condition of life in Wales.

In my experiences in Wales, I would suggest that the Cymraeg schools movement in south Wales is very strong precisely because there is more social inertia for the language in the community outside schools; industrialization and mobility led to a decrease in community-use of Cymraeg in south Wales long before and more extensively than in the north-west. Cymraeg (unlike, say, Punjabi) is completely “at home” in many villages and towns of Wales. As a minority presence (in most of Wales, but not necessarily in the north and west), its use is typically unthreatening today. If there is a hierarchy of a Cymraeg-based language identity in the south of Wales, it amounts to minimal stratification. While there is no question that the Cymraeg schools movement has constituted and continues to constitute a new reality in south Wales, the contrasting majority force it represents in north-west Wales operates within a broader hegemony of English-language culture. As a result, one of the many simultaneously ascribed valences of that majority Cymraeg presence in north-west Wales is a perception, from a particular subject-position, that the local Cymraeg-speaking majority is being thuggish or is imposing their will on
others. This perception is theoretically possible in south Wales, but the concomitance of factors that load the relevant subject-position—from which that perception seems natural—are less likely to occur where Cymraeg is not perceived as densely prevalent as it is in north-west Wales. This difference, related to the different statuses of Cymraeg in south (minority status) and north-west (majority status) Wales, respectively, is a strong symptom of the differential politics of language in Wales according to area or region. By rejecting the collective interests and fears of some Cymraeg-speakers, one also neglects the area-by-area variation in the dynamics of language politics.

One of the characteristics of the Welsh Studies schism, as can be seen from the above, is that most of the labor in its expression is devoted to regulating the discourse. This fact is why it is a schism and is what provides the substantive quality of polarization. However, this fact also means that much less time is devoted to the collaborative production of novel theories about identity and to the production of new contexts and use-relations for discussing Welsh identity across schismatic battle-lines. When such theories do emerge, the ideological trenches militate against acceptance or modification.

**WHEN ETHNOGRAPHERS BECOME PAWNS . . .**

**As Different as Davies and Day: Schismatic Responses to Trosset**

As mentioned in the early parts of this dissertation, Trosset did not count the assertion of a past and present domination by the English among her seven components of a Welsh ideology of personhood. That assertion takes “being English” to be symbolized by the inability to speak Cymraeg (Trosset 1993:50). Such assertions—whether of being dominated, oppressed, or led by leveraged consent by the English—are submerged in the first component she discussed, degrees
of Welshness. The omission of the politics of Cymraeg as a component ideology is an important lacuna, particularly in light of my points above about the area-by-area variation in the dynamics of language politics. That variation in sociopolitical place-making, differentially constituted by the minority/majority status in south and north-west Wales, bears heavily on the concomitance of factors on which subject-positions are produced.

Trosset (1993) seems to have been aware that laypersons in Wales routinely reproduce a dichotomy between Cymraeg-oriented Wales and Cymraeg-independent Wales. She probably assumed that academics were above such “games”—incorrectly, if so. Perhaps unwisely, I make an attempt in this dissertation that is identical to Trosset’s (1993) in certain features. Trosset attempted to describe beliefs and practices that were: 1) endorsed by a portion of the Cymraeg language community; 2) prevalent in larger Welsh society not as practiced, but as salient and culturally recognized features mentioned in a “dialogue” about identity; 3) countered by a dominant segment of Welsh society, including members of the Cymraeg language community; and 4) symbolic of a position within a milieu in which their expression is likely to elicit a response from the antithetical position. These four features apply to the phenomena with which I am concerned in this dissertation. Hence, one of the challenges I face is also identical to that which Trosset faced: to deflect my readers from misunderstanding my claims about ideologies in Wales. I believe I can see the challenge to this attempt more clearly than Trosset could have at the time. After all, I have the opportunity to benefit from exploiting responses to Trosset’s monograph. However, one consequence of this challenge and the fact that I am writing after Trosset and published responses to her monograph, is that I have been obliged to incorporate the culture of academics into the scope of my own ethnography.
While I consider Trosset’s monograph on performing Welsh identity to be one of the most significant contributions to the literature, its reception in Wales falls prey to the schism in Welsh Studies and is interpreted by means of the two sets of schemas that that academic milieu affords. It is in this spirit that I complete the title of this section: When ethnographers become pawns . . . scholars become informants (and the “pawns” become *ex post facto* or *post hoc* elicitation items).

One response that reflects the schismatic conditions described above can be found in statements made by another anthropologist mentioned above who is also from the US, but who settled in Wales—Charlotte Aull Davies. Day’s discussion of “Welshness as Production and Performance” (2002:249-252) is another response. It is precisely at the point in Davies’ comments on Day’s *Making Sense of Wales* uptake of the idea of “degrees of Welshness”, where she rejects the idea of an implied hierarchy, that one also finds Davies (2005) suggesting that Day was guilty by association with Trosset (1993). She wrote: “Some imagined hierarchy” is “an idea he has taken from a rather questionable study of the ‘performance’ of Welshness (Trosset 1993; cf. Davies 1998)” (Davies 2005:211-212). Day (2002:239-257) did draw on Trosset’s monograph about the performativity of an ideology of personhood—as a contrast to the typologies and classifications of sociologists (e.g., Balsom 1985; Denney 1991; Rawkins 1979) and political scientists (e.g., Osmond 1985; Wyn Jones and Trystan 1999). There, he cited “a more detailed insight by an American anthropologist, Carol Trosset” (Day 2002:251).

**Day:** In his book, *Making Sense of Wales*, Day (2002:251) characterized Trosset’s aim and ethnographic conclusions as follows:
Trosset’s aim was to discover what was fundamental and shared within Welsh culture, and why it was that ‘out of all the experiences lived in Wales, only some are popularly deemed to have any ethnic significance’ (Trosset, 1993: 54). For those who speak Welsh, she argues, there is a dominant ideology which revolves around the centrality of the language, and a cluster of activities and values which are associated with it. These include participation in *eisteddfodau*, with the peripatetic National Eisteddfod as the crowning event; preferences for Welsh-language over English-language media; and the adherence to certain distinctive styles of behavior and conduct.

What is most telling about this summary is that the only specificity in ascription “revolves around the centrality of [Cymraeg]” and the “crowning event” of Cymraeg-centered activities (*eisteddfodau*). The “adherence to certain distinctive styles of behavior and conduct” is decidedly vague. The former features of Cymraeg and *eisteddfodau* typify Welsh culture in this passage in which Day describes his reading of Trosset 1993. However, the focus on language in Trosset 1993, to the extent that one could be said to exist, lasts for only fifty pages.

In the block quotation above, Day described the main focus of the monograph as “a cluster of activities and values” and “certain distinctive styles of behavior and conduct”. Day did not articulate whatever is distinctive about these activities and values, in his view; whereas these concerns preoccupied Trosset for two-thirds of her monograph. While Day went on to discuss Trosset’s “degrees of Welshness” thesis and the pattern of social organization that Trosset called sectarian, these have the opposite relationship to language that they did in Trosset’s monograph. Trosset used language-based tensions as a minor theme that introduces her readers to the sociocultural milieu of north-west Wales and, partly, frames her topic of the components of Welsh personhood. In contrast, Day treated a certain social closure as being caused by the tensions related to Cymraeg and activities and values associated with it; social closure, thus, unites the thesis of “degrees of Welshness” and the idea of Wales as a sectarian society.

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8 The National Eisteddfod, in conjunction with the Gorsedd, involves a chairing event and a crowning event, and it should be noted that winning the chair is more prestigious than being singled out in the crowning event.
Davies: The opposing view from Davies (1998) takes a very different tack, but is motivated by, interestingly enough, the same excessive attention to Trosset’s claims about language and the activities and values associated with Cymraeg as had motivated Day (2002). In her critique of Day (2002), Davies (2005) disagreed strongly with Trosset’s focus (in her substantive interpretive strategy). Davies’ major criticism seems to have been that Trosset carried out her research “mainly within the context of eisteddfodau [i.e., artistic competitions within the Cymraeg language-cultural complex]” (Davies 2005:212), which are traditionally-conceived cultural activities involving competitions of music, poetry, drama, among other forms. Davies (1998) then used explicit attitudes and preferences as cases of evidence that seemed to contradict some of Trosset’s (1993) claims. Davies (1998) drew on her own experiences interacting with people who attended the 1995 National Eisteddfod (which also happens to be the first National Eisteddfod I attended).

Some of her experiences seemed in conflict with the list of features in Trosset’s picture of Welsh society. Thus, in one of Davies’ empirical cases, an “active political nationalist” complained about his child’s success in eisteddfodau competitions because it meant waiting for several hours for the next competition. The complaint suggests the political nationalist displayed a lack of passion in this emblematic cultural activity. Another example Davies offered was of an eisteddfod enthusiast who, wishing to move into a larger home, sought an English buyer for their home in the knowledge that no local person could afford it (1998:150-151). This case suggests an act of betrayal of the Welsh/Cymry people, because English “incomers” are notoriously resistant to learning Cymraeg. Citing these apparent counterexamples, Davies concluded that “Trosset’s view of Welshness as emanating from what is even a relatively small segment of Welsh-speaking society, let alone Welsh society as a whole, is ultimately unconvincing”
Davies argued that ethnographers should emphasize “performances not of a single homogeneous and hegemonic Welshness, but rather of alternative and often competing ‘Welshnesses’ ” (1998:151).

Davies’ criticism here is not straightforward or of the nature of empirical disagreement. She did not quibble with Trosset’s claims about egalitarianism or the performance ethos, for example. She also did not utilize Trosset’s specific terms, such as “self-sacrifice” and “martyrdom”, to describe the counterexample of a Welsh *eisteddfod*-goer selling her house to English people. In fact, the only details of the dominant ideology construct that Davies mentioned or alluded to were those that were overtly related to Cymraeg or Cymraeg-oriented cultural activities.

It is important to recognize that Davies did not make the objection to Trosset’s ethnography simply because that monograph presented a skewed representation of Wales as part of that Cymraeg language-cultural complex. Davies’ objections are much more intelligible if interpreted as conforming to the schism in Welsh Studies in Wales. In the glare of that schism, Trosset’s monograph, as an actual text, is but a pale shadow of the image her ideological opponents beheld. This is precisely because ideology in that context functions both in an analytic role and as constitutive of a social imaginary; and it is much more likely that the social imaginary will re-calibrate the analytic perspective than that the analytic perspective will re-calibrate the social imaginary.

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9 In defense of Trosset, it is clear that even people whom anthropologists fit into objectified roles like *political nationalist* have limits on their time and can be impatient after hearing the same song performed 100 times in recent months, which is typical in the youth *eisteddfodau* competitive process. Also, those who participate in core, culturally symbolic activities sometimes put their own desires first, even against the perceived threat of the “diluting” or “polluting” effects of English immigrants. The counterexamples that Davies cited would contradict Trosset’s (1993) claims only if Trosset had argued that people follow the dominant ideology unthinkingly without exception. Trosset argued that the dominant ideology often operates even when people act in some way contrary to it—something that is more common than adherence to the components of the ideology.
It is useful to contrast Davies’ view with the surprisingly non-schismatic impression of Trosset’s monograph I represented in Chapter Two. The impression of a scholar in the “humanities sector” of Welsh Studies in Wales—someone who is originally from the US, but who settled in Wales—commented that Trosset’s monograph seemed only to touch the surface, covering only the more obvious parts of Welsh culture and society (I should add that this scholar amended their criticism with a comment that early-Twentieth-Century Trobriand Islanders might have said the same thing about Malinowski’s work.). While it is true that humanities scholars are not typically required to analyze practices they themselves have documented (e.g., by means of field notes), this humanities scholar was as familiar with the milieu as was Trosset, and increasingly less of an outsider.

Since the force of this humanities scholar’s criticism was that Trosset (1993) neglected to address the dynamics of identity in Wales, I suspect that the salience of eisteddfodau culture played a role in that impression, along with Trosset’s focus on attitudes and values. However, it was how Trosset explored her topics, more so than which ones she selected, that led to that impression. What is under the surface is a politics of language and identity that was not subject to much analysis in Trosset 1993. Although the humanities scholar’s response was a critical response, it was a neutral one, relative to the schism in Welsh Studies.

The Role of the Cymraeg Language Complex

In my reading, Trosset’s (1993) overall argument rests on the idea that Welshness is performed and not an essence to be possessed. Yet, Trosset did not fully articulate the connection between this concept of “Welshness performed” and the idea that “Welshness is an ideological discourse rather than an essence” (Trosset 1993:54). This might have been due to
structural-textual circumstances: No chapter was devoted to this theoretical issue. Other factors—such as that language, as a major (but not counted) part of that ideological discourse, dominates the first fifty pages of the monograph and then fades into the background—suggest that the theoretical relation between performing Welshness and performing the ideological discourse was not fully clear even to Trosset at the time of her writing. Thus, it is easy to misinterpret “performing Welshness” as a grandiose expression that takes Trosset’s argument to be that culturally significant presentations of culture—exemplified in music and poetry performances—represent Welshness. It is a tempting conclusion that both Day (2002) and Davies (2005) seemed to have reached; but as a reading of Trosset 1993, it is an incorrect one.

Locally salient, traditionally Welsh practices (even excluding Cymraeg) are not sufficient for a representative picture of life regarding all Welsh people in Wales. However, they would seem to allow for a less (objectionable kind of) essential treatment of Welshness than would a focus on Cymraeg, which is salient to all and highly politicized. My impression of Trosset’s strategic approach is that she thought the traditional social activities for which Cymraeg is the common medium would be less problematic than Cymraeg practices per se because the locally salient traditional practices are more fluid, and even less representative of Welsh people in Wales (and less political) than Cymraeg competence. Trosset’s focus on cultural practices makes it less likely (or so it might seem) that any “traditional” activity one includes in an ethnographic project will appear to play the role of the essence of Welsh identity (as identified in Trosset’s ethnographic account and given how traditional activities appeared to operate in mis-readings of Trosset’s ethnography). Unfortunately, Trosset’s decisions regarding ethnographic representation created a problem for readers in Wales that she could not have foreseen. This problem arises because any mention of the generally salient traditional practices (e.g.,
eisteddfodau) evokes the role of Cymraeg in identity, yet the role of the Cymraeg language complex does not emerge in Trosset’s monograph.

**Circumstances and Consequences of Semiotic Application**

What this discussion of Trosset’s role as pawn in the Welsh Studies schism in Wales reveals, is that Cymraeg and Cymraeg-centered traditions (not restricted to, but most saliently evoking eisteddfodau) act as a lightning-rod or trigger for a discursive context. This phenomenon, furthermore, was shown to manifest outside academia in Mrs. Williams’ distinction between cultural brainwashing and political brainwashing (see Chapter Three), a distinction cued by this same double-headed lighting rod. When it appears in any of various instantiations, the cultural operation by which such signs facilitate or directly trigger a response do not occur naturalistically; for example, in the way that certain proteins trigger genetic transcription and replication. Nonetheless, if it is not random, then such motivated actions or reactions will be organized as a system of concepts and practices. There is an obvious candidate for such a system (i.e., the set of discourses of and about nationalism), but I contend that this candidate of a meta-discourse lies in the phenomenal level of surface positions, and does not offer a way out.

The Welsh Studies schism amounts to tension between two principles for regulating the proper categorization and practice of sociology. Each representative of the competing parties and the regulative principles associated with them recognizes the cultural category of language (in particular, Cymraeg) and eisteddfodau as the salient point(s) in the identity game. These points—or rather, acts of recognition of these as occurrences—signal a moment of conflict. Each side in the Welsh Studies schism exhibits a tacit, and seemingly accidentally coinciding,
commitment to the idea that the cultural category of Cymraeg and *eisteddfodau* are signs (indices or icons) of conflict. For each side, Cymraeg and *eisteddfodau* mark a salient point in the identity game.

The meta-level recognition of this fact could afford the opportunity for those on each side (and other people too) to discuss how each perspective would envision the constitutive features of the Welsh national community. However, elements of rhetoric, cognition, and society (simplistically labeled “ideology”) intervene by figuring the schismatic conflict in terms of Cymraeg and *eisteddfodau* so as to maintain that conflict on the level of regulative principles.

To begin to show the way out of this trap requires that I provide elaboration of two aspects of meaning- and community-productive processes. These two aspects are part of a frame that relates semiotic circumstances to the consequences of semiotic application—a frame that I borrow from Brandom (1988, 2000, 2002), who borrowed and adapted the basic concepts from Dummett (1973). The former are the conditions under which one is justified in making some presentation of signs, the circumstances under which a sign is correctly applied, uttered, or used. I have already tacitly employed the concept of circumstances of application, in Chapter Three, with respect to the usage of “getting on my soapbox”. The consequences of application of a sign are the conditions that follow from accepting some presentation of signs as appropriate, the consequences of some semiotic application, utterance, or use.

Brandom (1988:20) provided the following example: “Being classified as AWOL does have the consequence that one is liable to be arrested, but the specific circumstances under which one acquires that liability are equally essential to the concept”. One can take a devil-may-care attitude about the circumstances and consequences of using and interpreting signs, but members of the community will be more discriminating toward some signs and context than others; and
there can be consequences to neglecting underlying regimes of normativity. Which sets of signs evoke a tacit or expressed evaluative framework, whether in terms of the appropriate circumstances or the acceptable consequences, is a matter of the particular regulatory principles at work internal to the community.  

Before I return to the Welsh context and Trosset 1993 (in the next chapter), consider the following fictional case of ascriptive identity, which uses, as a label:

[the] pejorative term. . . “Boche”. The conditions for applying the term to someone is that he is of German nationality; the consequences of its application are that he is barbarous and more prone to cruelty than other Europeans. We should envisage the connections in both directions as sufficiently tight as to be involved in the very meaning of the word: neither could be severed without altering its meaning. Someone who rejects the word does so because he does not want to permit a transition from the grounds for applying the term to the consequences of doing so. (Dummett 1973:454)

In many (or most) social realities, people seldom have the opportunity as individuals to alter the circumstances of application of such a term (to apply, for instance, to Libyan elites), or the consequences of application (to mean, instead, a lover of freedom). Hence, the options Dummett suggested were to accept or reject the term. This polarized condition of choice is a characteristic feature of social realities in which the circumstances or the consequences of semiotic applications (or both) are maintained as part of a normative system that lies outside individual agency.

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10 It follows, as a condition of concepts’ being intersubjective and rule-regulated, that the normativity of concepts is derived from their sociocentric constitution. Such a sociocentric origin for the normativity of concepts should not lead anyone to underestimate the “reality” that results. The resulting normative system imposes rules that are every bit as real as the fact that there are natural or supernatural influences on our lives (e.g., gravity is every bit as mysterious from the scientific perspective as it is from a supernatural one). This makes the issue of the constitution of meaning one of epistemological formalism, rather than of an individual-oriented empirical psychology.
Explication of just such a normative system is the goal of this dissertation. The following chapter carries that project forward by making sense of a trope that would seem to defy sense. It does so by moving beyond the mapping relations in the nationalism meta-discourse that founder on the surface positions, and moving toward the constituting relations of identity to be found in the special resources of Cymraeg.
CHAPTER NINE
◄ DROWNING CHILDREN ►

It is imperative, therefore, when analyzing putative “realistic” representations of reality to determine the dominant poetic mode in which its discourse is cast. By identifying the dominant mode (or modes) of discourse, one penetrates to that level of consciousness on which a world of experience is constituted prior to being analyzed. (Hayden V. White, *Metahistory* (1973:33n.13))

The essential rulishness of cognitive conduct is taken in the first instance to be lived in what the linguistic community does, rather than starting out represented in what it thinks. (Robert Brandom, “Inference, Expression, and Induction” (1988:257))

In the introductory pages of this dissertation, I observed that participants in the Cymraeg language-cultural complex perform a cultural script in which they do not make particular, concrete claims to a distinctive Welsh culture. Rather, they are invested in an ongoing past—having traditions and a language that, apparently, say all that anyone needs to say. I noted that, in the absence of a generally intelligible language about things like culture, heritage, and difference, this is a difficult script to perform. Somehow, these participants manage to mark out cultural space for their sense of continuity in such a way that does not require them to make any substantive cultural claims. This chapter describes an image that people in Abergwaith use to accomplish that marking of cultural space.

THE TROPE OF DROWNING

Linguistic Significance of DROWNING

While I was doing preliminary research in 2002 and 2003, a provocative concept appeared several times in conversations and interviews with teachers in Gwynedd county. The interview with two lively teachers presented in Chapter Three was my first encounter with the idea that children are “drowned”. The first mention of it in that interview during an eight-week
preliminary fieldtrip in 2002 communicated that, although there are a few children each year in each school who are unable to speak Cymraeg, they “learn very quickly, because they're drowned in Welshness”. However, the concept did not appear with enough regularity to draw any conclusions about it at that time other than that it was a striking figure of speech.

With respect to its typical semantic value in the English-language context, the dramatic nature of the image of drowning is no less drastic in Cymraeg (using “boddi” in the context of “drowning [in Welshness]”). Translated into English, the entry for “boddi” in a widely used Welsh dictionary yields the definition, in my translation: “to die as a result of failure to breathe underwater or under any other fluid”. Many teachers in north-west Wales use the dramatic metaphor of drowning children in Welshness to describe immersion of pupils in their native heritage, in reaction to English and US-American language influences and the broader cultural implications of these influences. The notion of DROWNING CHILDREN IN WELSHNESS described below symbolizes, for me, the complex relation of language and culture. Its use reveals how difficult it is to identify, analytically and in descriptive terms, which kind of thing is being fashioned as identity, genre, topic, or practice out of the whole-cloth of “Welshness”.

In the usage I highlight here, DROWNING speaks to the positive formation of a cultural community rooted in use of Cymraeg. One of the tenets of this set of acts of community-formation involves the rejection of any need to elaborate the target concept. If this tacit knowledge is part of the process of being drowned and part of how Cymraeg can be used defensively, then this proposition—paradoxically, but entirely consistently—is never stated. The following example, from YGS in the English-dominant community of Croes Efydd, is one that comes as close to explicitness as any I saw. In it, the teacher, Mrs. Bellamy, speaking mostly English, is aware that they are not only focusing on various facets of Wales in their celebration.

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of the patron saint of Wales, Saint David, but ensuring that the content is presented in “Welsh” (i.e., Cymraeg).

Mrs. B: Em. So. Let me see. Just get familiar with it just in case. Em. Just have a quiet read um until the end and I’m sure everyone will be fine by Thursday- Em. The rest of your- Just before you start reading- Have a listen. It’s a special day for us in Wales on Friday. Isn’t it? Why?

[children are talking]

Mrs. B: Shh. Put your hands up, please.

[a child volunteers an answer]


She turned to me to explain what the children already knew:

Mrs. B: It’s our special saint’s day. So, the services this week are going to be about Wales; really, not just about Dewi Sant, but about Wales. And what we’ve been given to do is, em, about how lucky we are to live in such a beautiful country, em, and getting the ch- g- being given the chance to take part in-

She turned back to the students.

Mrs. B: Are you listening, please? Just for a second or two. Just for a second or two.

Turning back to me, she continued:

Mrs. B: Em- being given the chance to learn to speak a bit from th’ language and to- <pause> take part in things like the Urdd Eisteddfod. Not everybody chooses to do that, but those of you [addressing the students again] I think who have, em, have had a lot of enjoyment out it, haven’t you? ‘specially going out of lessons and practicing, I would say.
She was finished explaining for the moment.

Mrs B: Okay. Right, so Donald is going to take Johnny’s part for a little while, em, and then I’ve got- Wher- You’re having- Was that yours, Ian? Is that your prayer? ‘kay Come get it. [Muffled] Diolch i ti o yn ddiw
[Thank you for persevering] Who’s doing that one? You’ve got your own copy, Jake? Em- Have you got your own copy of the story?

Pupil: Yeah.

Mrs. B: Okay, off you go. Just stand by the board so we can have- Mae’n posib
[It’s possible] [then inaudible as she alternates her attention to the class and me]

Pupil: Can I read Gwilym’s? Missus-

Mrs. B: Wait a minute, now, Martha. Shh shhsh. I don’t know, ‘cause you haven’t been with us. Can you read “Pwy mae. . .” [inaudible] yn Gymraeg or would you rather wait for an English one? Do you normally? Well, let me give it to someone else because I’m pretty certain Gwilym will be back

Mrs. B: Right. The rest of you: if you have finished your reading book, you can listen or you can have a quick reading session, okay?

Having finished managing and directing the students for a moment, she began explaining again:

Mrs. B: We’re having a very Welsh service this week because it’s eh a special week for us. So everything, I think, is in Welsh. [Turning to student] Iawn, Eric [Good, Eric]. (February 25, 2008)

This snapshot of classroom life shows how such programmatic goals of schools are embedded in everyday, managerial tasks such as giving and enforcing the following of instructions. Some of these managerial tasks involve finding students to replace others who are absent and cannot perform certain roles to which they have been assigned—in pursuit of using Cymraeg for all of the children’s contributions at school assemblies during the week of Saint David’s Day. It also illustrates a principle of equivalence between Cymraeg and commemorative events related to
Wales. In addition, it illustrates an ethnolinguistic requirement in which Cymraeg is privileged in such contexts. As a whole, the effort represented in the practice session above makes the day and the symbolic relation of the patron saint to Wales into vehicles for immersing the event and participants in Cymraeg.

This moment in the classroom illustrates the trope of drowning children in Welshness, even if Mrs. Bellamy did not use that expression. Some people (e.g., Mrs. Lloyd, the assistant headteacher at YGA, or the assistant headteacher in “the soapbox” interview of Chapter Three) would use the expression of “drowning”, but others would not. Mrs. Bellamy did, on another occasion, use a different expression, “trochi” [to dip], for the same concept. Whatever the surface expression, the underlying meaning is that if the children are surrounded completely by activities carried out in Cymraeg, they will learn what it is to be Welsh. There are, of course, varying ideas about what it is to be Welsh. Nevertheless, it is valuable to elaborate fully on the linguistic and cultural significance of the trope of DROWNING, even if it suggests a narrow range of identity. This will lead to a brief discussion of the metapragmatics of the discursive space of DROWNING.

I examine the dominant poetic mode “in which its discourse is cast” because “[b]y identifying the dominant mode (or modes) of discourse, one penetrates to that level of consciousness on which a world of experience is constituted prior to being analyzed” (White 1973:33n.13). I believe this movement—to the level of consciousness on which a world of experience is constituted—provides greater resources for analyzing the identification of language and nation than are conventional in linguistic anthropology. Recall, in this connection, that my main problem in this dissertation is of producing ethnography of the constituting of the social reality of a distinct Welsh identity rooted to Cymraeg language demesnes.
Unless one or the other of the terms, "cymreictod" (having the quality of pertaining to Wales) or “Cymraeg”, are used in the phrase containing “drowning”/“boddi”, ambiguity will remain. Reference to drowning children occurred during preliminary research as often as not without any modifier (e.g., “we drown them, don’t we?”). The primary problem, then, is the nearly ubiquitous ambiguity of context. As a result, part of my metaphorical journey of fieldwork was spent navigating the equivocation of culture and language, even at this microscale of phonology and semantics.

My thinking of the trope of DROWNING in the early days of principal dissertation research went as follows. Drowning children in Welshness meant that students are to be prevented from taking in any “air” that is not Welsh, with the implication that the “non-Welsh” identities of students that require such air will die—or, at least, that those “non-Welsh” features of identity will not prevent the students from adopting “properly Welsh” ways. Outside Gwynedd, I encountered teachers who use the similar, but milder concept of “dipping” [trochi] children in Welshness, as into a fluid like water. This is also the word used for the symbolic act in Christian baptism, as well as a word used for the process of dipping sheep for purposes of cleaning them and removing pests. In accord with the weaker gloss of boddi—as in the use of trochi—I suspect the rationale for such usage is less exciting than the provocative impression of a literal drowning of children. That likely rationale is the psychologically “smooth” transition of sequential substitution of the following concepts (and the metasemantics of the corresponding words):

submersion (as an act-instance), immersion (as continuous action), and drowning (as the result of a continuous action).

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2 Although people communicating in Cymraeg can easily distinguish the set of Welsh language varieties (Cymraeg) from properties or things pertaining to Wales (cymreig), the only difference between them is the vowel-value of the second syllable. Natural conversation tends to make it difficult to distinguish between /æ/ and /ei/ in north Wales.
Because the denotation of metaphorical “drowning”—an abstract and implicit term—is descriptive of a largely taken-for-granted practice, the term in either language is used only irregularly. When I heard it used, it was virtually always in the context of conversations about the language and cultural differences between England and Wales, or in response to my questions about how teachers in Wales teach national identity. Neither of these contexts for labeling some abstract, implicit “thing” using the term in question is an everyday occurrence. At schools in communities where use of Cymraeg is common, “drowning” is a label not so much for a particular practice, but for a kind of approach to socialization that certain teachers take—“certain teachers” being those first-language Cymraeg speakers at schools in communities where use of Cymraeg is common. This approach to socialization arises out of the deep love of teachers’ own heritage and their professional objective of nurturing children.

Many of the student teachers that I interviewed in the early days of my principal dissertation fieldwork, both Cymraeg-focused and English-based cohorts of student teachers, offered the idea of nurturing as a primary motivation for pursuing a teaching career. Most of these student teachers identified teaching as an occupation that has an essential element of influencing students in a positive way that engenders open communication, growth, and trust. As a result, the positive sense of “drowning” draws on tacit understandings about how to help children learn and mature, making it more difficult to define than to describe this set of practices.

Ultimately, I found that this family of contexts—related to drowning in Welshness and teaching national identity in classrooms—depended on an understanding of the cultural context for these contexts. That cultural context, however, varied according to the meta-discourse of nationalism, which pervades school hallways, classrooms, offices and teachers’ lounges. In this connection, it must be noted that I never heard the phrase as a natural occurrence in Cymraeg
settings, but only in conversations in English. To have a conversation in Cymraeg is, to a great extent, to already be drowned in Cymraeg, which would make it unnecessary to mark the practice. It is in English conversations that the gap between the immediate communicative context (defined by use of English) and these teachers’ most comfortable communicative settings (defined by the use of Cymraeg) that provides an occasion for metapragmatic marking of the practice of DROWNING.

(Meta)Semantics of “Drowning”

Eventually, I arrived at the following conclusions about the best linguistic analysis. The phrase, “drown them in Welshness”, does not conform to a model in which “drown[ed]” is the verb, “them” is the direct object, and “Welshness” is the indirect object or “in Welshness” is a prepositional phrase. In fact, “drown [them] in Welshness” should not be interpreted as a construction that involves an indirect object. In terms of semantic structure, another way of saying this is that the verb “drown” takes “in water” to be its unmarked adverbial. Hence, “drowned in Welshness” is a complex transitive verb and the phrase, “in Welshness”, is an obligatory adverbial (though, this adverbial is not supplied on every occasion of use). Thus, the similar “immerse in work” employs “work” in an equivalent (functionally) as “Welshness”. Both are treated as fluid media.

Consider how more distant and simpler verbal forms with similar surface features operate in contrast to complex transitive verbs using an obligatory adverbial. Specifically, consider the verb, “to eat”, which presupposes that whatever is taken as its object is at least mechanically
edible.\footnote{Eating typically also presupposes that whatever is mechanically edible is also potentially food (i.e., is analogous to culturally appropriate foods). Nonetheless, (meta)semantics tend to extend farther than typical usage; consider “My baby sister ate my homework” and “Locked in his own library for two days, Thomas Jefferson ate a copy of the New Testament to keep his strength up”. We even speak of eating one’s words; since words are abstract, eating words is not physically possible and the expression “eating one’s words” is, therefore, metaphorical and appropriate under just such a reading.} Just as the normal (meta)semantics of “to eat” presupposes food-like substances, “to drown” presupposes a lack of usable air and suggests that some other medium is substituted for air with lethal consequences. However, it is more complicated to use “to drown [something]” than “to eat [something]”. The use of “eat”, as transitive verb, is simple enough so that the variety of things that can be ingested does not require a specific category for the direct object position when occupied by other than food-like substances, as “drown” [boddi] requires a marked adverbial for media that exclude water.

This fact of a slotted quality to “drown” explains the visceral reactions to this metaphor as a violent one. This reaction should be surprising. After all, drowning in water is lethal, but drowning in Welshness hardly so—and I never encountered the poetic counterpart of the binomial; that is, dying to English, being born to Cymraeg. This is in contrast to neutral reactions to “eating one’s words” (which lacks a visceral quality such as taste, for me anyway), but more similar to the reaction to “eating crow” (You don’t really eat a black scavenging bird when you eat crow, but some might find the image disgusting.). Even, when “in Welshness” is included in the phrase” drowning children. . .”, cultural outsiders tend to see the phrase as not only a dramatic metaphor, but a disturbing one (by contrast, I never found it disturbing—merely “colorful”).

I think this usage warrants coining a term for such an adverbial: medium adverbials, which make use of a mass noun that lacks explicit boundaries.\footnote{See Hawkins 1984 (specifically, page 94) and Nesset 2004 for a justification of the choice of the term “medium” for this adverbial category, which moves spatial relations (e.g., containment) to the background and leaves the definition of boundaries implied, but non-specific.} Given the base or ground on
which the profile/figure of drowning appears, we might say the (quasi-)obligatory adverbial for “drown” (when not merely implied, as when it is used in its unmarked mode) belongs to the category of “medium adverbials”. Since the interest in this complex transitive verb (i.e., “drowned in Welshness”) lies at the point of the quasi-obligatory adverbial (i.e., “in Welshness”), there is some value to adopting a category of medium adverbials, given the indeterminate status of the implied boundaries.

The metasemantics of the phrase, “drown in Welshness”, provides only one instance of marking, but this single markedness is doubly significant. In using the phrase, Welsh teachers use a lexical form (DROWN) that has an unmarked semantic value (“in water”), but they mark the adverbial position so as to indicate a different semantic role: to drown in something other than water. This is one value of the single instance of marking. In addition, the specific value of the explicit medium of drowning indicated in the phrase (i.e., the value of “in Welshness”), which might be any other dense fluid that is not breathable, implies that the verb in this phrase connotes a metaphorical type of drowning (as does “eating” in “eating one’s words”). The metaphorical connotation is a second value of the single instance of marking.

**Re-Theorizing the Pragmatics of Communication**

**Cultural Objectification**

It is useful to compare this way of thinking about language and cultural identity to the discussions of the same range of identity in a different ethnographic study (i.e., Trosset 1993), particularly in relation to an influential perspective on nationalism (i.e., Handler 1983). Trosset’s primary experiences with ideologies of a Welsh ethnic identity came from her participant-observation of traditions that are closely linked to Cymraeg as a language-cultural
complex. Trosset identified recurring features of an ideological discourse about Welshness when interacting with people who took Cymraeg to be central to their identity, interactions that took place in certain activities in which “the same people did everything” (1993:37). As a result, the model for the ideology that drew her attention emerged from the social networks of people involved in certain activities. In the idiom of the earlier part of this chapter, these are people who are drowned in Welshness. The local activities in which Trosset was interested were “groups interested in local history and folklore, the Welsh women’s group” (1993:37), attending chapel services, and singing in a local choral group.5

Apart from choral singing, it is important to notice, that these traditions are not those that figure in the general popular imagination as “cultural traditions” associated with the Cymraeg language complex. The “traditional” activities that Trosset (1993:37) listed (quoted above) are better described in terms of specifically social activities—or, even better, in terms of community construction: local objectifications of culture, rather than cultural objectification at a social

5 The Welsh women’s group that Trosset referred to is Merched y Wawr. Literally translated, Merched y Wawr is “Daughters of the Dawn” in English. I would find it even more difficult to research this organization than primary schools because of its sex-specific basis. It is the Cymraeg correlate to the UK-wide Women’s Institute (in Cymraeg: Sefydliad Merched; transliterally, “Women’s Foundation”). The UK-wide WI organization, perhaps having received complaints from local women in Wales, objected to the typical use of Cymraeg at Women’s Institute groups in Wales and, in 1967, made English the language of conducting business. Interestingly enough, today, the website for the National Federation of Women's Institutes of England, Wales, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man (NFWI) has pages devoted to NFWI-Wales, and on the index of pages, Cymraeg pages are listed first. Merched y Wawr is a sociological analog of what linguists refer to by the simple phrase, “back-translation”: the translation from Language B to Language A of something that had previously been translated from Language A to Language B. It is more convoluted than “back translation” might suggest, almost of Borgesian proportions (referring to Jorge Luis Borges). That is, the first Women’s Institute meeting in Britain took place in an area in which Cymraeg use was prevalent. After it expanded across Britain, some of the Welsh members reacted to the English-language policy of 1967 and created a splinter group, the meetings of which would be conducted in Cymraeg.

While “[t]he WI movement began at Stoney Creek in Canada in 1897 when Adelaide Hoodless addressed a meeting for the wives of members of the Farmers' Institute”, “[t]he first British WI meeting took place on 16 September 1915 at Llanfairpwll on Anglesey in North Wales” and “[t]he first [WI unit in Britain] to be formed was at [this same village] on Anglesey, North Wales”. By the following year, there were forty local units in various villages, presumably, all across Britain; and over 100 local units in 1917. This information was obtained from the official sites at http://www.thewi.org.uk and http://www.merchedywawr.co.uk, particularly the History pages at http://www.merchedywawr.co.uk/Hanes.link and at http://www.thewi.org.uk/standard.aspx?id=56 and http://www.thewi.org.uk/standard.aspx?id=58; accessed June 15, 2011.
distance. According to Trosset, these “community” activities are important because the people involved in them are “contributing to the current existence of certain social practices” (1993:53). They do so out of various motives and for different reasons—but all these motives are related to creating community. People do not organize and participate in these activities in order to “act[ing] in imitation of something done in a less self-conscious form elsewhere in the society” (Trosset 1993:52) or to “re-creat[e] something other sectors of society used to do” (1993:53).

In discussing the relation of “cultural traditions” to community-construction, it is important to highlight what Handler (1988) called “cultural objectification”. As a result of this process, objectified activities, as “things”, and the “folk” producing cultural objects can be presented as authentic representatives of national culture. Often, such objectified traditions are put on national display in imitation of people elsewhere in society who are practicing those traditions less self-consciously (Handler 1988). The notion of locally salient traditional practices—“local objectifications of culture” as differentiated from cultural objectification at a

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6 Handler's treatment of cultural objectification raises worries of both a philosophical and an anthropological nature. In explaining his omission of an explicit discussion of Québécois history by observing that Québécois nationalism and nationalist historiography is predicated on a socially constructed historical reality, he raises questions of epistemology. Given our cognitive capacities, all human knowledge is constructed, but that doesn't mean that there is nothing there for our knowledge to be about. Anthropology of knowledge offers to philosophy confirmation that all of our understandings and knowledge are incomplete because perception and conceptualization are not independent from culture. In other words, there is no escape—for nationalists or social scientists writing on nationalism—from the sort of objectification Handler resisted; something Handler seemed to suggest himself (1988: 194-5). Objectification is a cognitive resource without which we would experience nothing, precisely because Westerners are wrong to believe that any “thing, objectively existent in the real or natural world, presents itself unambiguously to human subjects who can... apprehend the thing as it truly is” (Handler 1988: 14). From the Kantian perspective, which has not outworn its value, the sensible aspects of things are apprehended and the objects are constructed as known objects in the process of perception.

The danger of thinking that movements that objectify their culture have the option of not doing so is that of presuming that their actors will, by objectifying their culture, always fail to recognize the constructedness of national identity and that they will never apprehend new cultural qualities of their constructed cultural objects. It may seem paradoxical, but if objectification is seen as a natural part of human experience and knowledge, then this “pragmatic use” of a construct of objectifying practice “within the context of action” (as Malinowski (1965b) would say) becomes less monolithic and less consumed with totality than it is in Handler's discussions. On the other hand, it is far too easy for commentators to interpret ethnographers of Wales as having essentialized and objectified those social groups recognized in Wales. The schism in Welsh Studies might result in an outcome in which my perspective is said to objectify Cymraeg and associated traditions. My pragmatistic perspective can only be successful if the consequences of its application and the circumstances of its uptake by other researchers are both congruent with my argumentation in this dissertation.
social distance—is crucial to understanding the positioning of people relative to Welshness, among laypersons and academics alike in Wales.

There are many things that might be considered traditionally Welsh, and many that are considered saliently traditionally Welsh by those who practice them. Some of the former or the latter are culturally objectified in such a way as to be made the object of possible parody, ridicule, or even contempt by members of the larger national community in Wales. The simulated, parodic, and pejorative aspects of cultural objectification are not central to how I use the concept of cultural objectification in this dissertation. Nevertheless, the pattern seems to be that when the community of people who hold some practice to be saliently traditional is very broad, the more likely “it” is to be objectified—in mental, communicative, and re-enacted representations—in ways that are at odds with those who practice it “with feeling”. Many traditions that are recognized as saliently Welsh by only a relative handful of people are not candidates for pejorative objectification for that reason (i.e., their low visibility).

To reiterate, only some of the social activities that are part of local community construction and associated with the Cymraeg language complex are popularly recognized to play such a role. Thus, beyond local communities and outside the Cymraeg language community, few of these activities could be recognized as special symbols that could anchor a Welsh identity in relation to Cymraeg. It is important, then, to identify the people involved in any case of cultural objectification as having occupied one or another of two positions. These two positions divide: 1) those who participate in a more or less ingenuous way as part of community construction and 2) those who participate in distancing themselves from these activities (e.g., through stereotyping). The former can be said to endorse the traditions, while the
latter merely engage with them, sometimes without being fully aware of it, sometimes in a pejorative or parodic way.

Any activity that anyone might claim to be traditional might be culturally objectified in different ways by different people. Some of those who participate relatively sincerely (“with feeling”) in a widely recognized (and perhaps ridiculed) tradition also participate in other social activities that are not nationally recognized as a distinctly Welsh activity, but might be distinctly Welsh to the participants. People who emphasize Cymraeg in their sense of identity would readily recognize local history groups as a “very Welsh” cultural tradition, but a discussion of local history at an arranged meeting is not something that mass media have culturally objectified as being stereotypically Welsh. Thus, there are those who identify traditional Welsh activities as stereotypic customs that reflect an imagined past, while others live that imagined past in their daily lives as they reproduce and produce the Cymraeg language complex.

Drawing the line between the two perspectives on social activities is a critical move. The implication that these perspectives construct two different types of social activities—which some might find indistinguishable when witnessed—is equally important to analysis. The popularly recognized traditions, which are represented repeatedly and stereotypically as signifying ethnic Welshness, figure in the general popular imagination as “cultural traditions” associated with the Cymraeg language complex. Such culturally objectified traditions in Wales include Welsh music and poetry competitions, traditional Welsh folk song form (e.g., cerdd dant, which involves musical counterpoint), and noson lawen (traditional evening entertainment characterized by humor and musical performances that were once held in farmhouses at evening time around a fire). It is possible that some people would slide back and forth between these positions, exemplifying an ambivalence about their own participation and significance. I did not
meet any who expressed ambiguity about the two positions. Typically, people in north-west Wales are “rooted” to one or the other, although many feel tensions between the two in meeting everyday objectives and obligations. If a line is to be drawn between locally objectified social activities and stereotyped cultural traditions, it must be a fine line that takes into consideration the processes of cultural objectification and popular stereotyping.  

The fact that certain traditional practices are not well-known or culturally objectified beyond those who engage in them for purposes of constructing their communities means these activities can avoid being politicized. Use of Cymraeg is the most symbolic and recognizable practice that is culturally objectified by those who do not strive to maintain the Cymraeg language complex and language community. The symbolic tyranny of language attitudes in the sociopolitical life of Wales also means that Cymraeg can operate by association with traditional activities, even where language practices, as a theme, are preemptively redacted from discourse by elimination of explicit denotings of Cymraeg. The consequent of these points is that the imaginary object of the Cymraeg language complex—taking various shapes according to different national identity positions—plays a very significant role in processes of cultural objectification in Wales.

**Iconization and the Limits of Analysis**

The language activists I encountered in north-west Wales, among others, understood language (in the particular shape of Cymraeg) to be the central emblem—one might say the essence—of the nation. Hence, they took it to be a matter of necessity that language stand in some kind of signifying role relative to an imagined community of people. In using the term,

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7 By contrast, the line between overtly political, on one side, and social activities or cultural traditions is much more contrastive. Volunteer work on campaigns of the political party, *Plaid Cymru*, which many in Wales still refer to as “the Welsh nationalist party”, would involve overtly political activity.
“necessity”, I am deploying it as an analytic term that expresses something of the force that sociocultural actors attribute to Cymraeg. Like the term, “identity”, “necessity” is vague and requires ethnographic content. At the center of vexing questions about the cultural necessity of particular languages (in north-west Wales and elsewhere) is what Gal and Irvine (1995) called “iconization”. Various predecessors and contemporaries of current-day anthropology have endorsed (e.g., Herder) and critiqued (e.g., Boas) the idea of a seemingly “necessary” link between a group and a set of language practices (i.e., a language). As mentioned in Chapter Two, Susan Gal and Judith Irvine have made this principle a canonical one in linguistic anthropology.

Iconicity involves a transformation of the sign relationship between linguistic practices, features, or varieties and the social images with which they are linked. Linguistic practices that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them—as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a social group's inherent nature or essence (Irvine, 1989). This process entails the attribution of necessity to a connection (between linguistic features and social groups) that may be only historical, contingent, or conventional. The implication of necessity is reinforced by the iconicity of the ideological representation. By picking out qualities supposedly shared by the social image and the linguistic image, the ideological representation (itself a sign) binds them together in a linkage that appears to be inherent. (Gal and Irvine 1995:973)

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8 The class of phenomena that was initially called “iconization” (in Gal and Irvine 1995 and Irvine and Gal 2000), was later changed to “rhematization” (Gal 2005). However, in the case of each label for iconization/rhematization, Gal employed a term that signified a strength of correspondence between signs and their objects that was less than that of index and, in changing the name, employed a term that signified even less about interpretive significance (indeed, as little as is possible in a Peircean context). The formulations that Gal and Irvine have used, suggest a desire to capture two different kinds of semiotic factors: a sign-object factor (a relation between a social group and a language, or signs of them) and a significance factor (in fact, an image of a “necessary” link between the two). Gal and Irvine probably focused on icons in naming iconization because they (seem to have) understood the putative resemblance of iconic relations (real or not) to have the same status—in the perception of any beholder—as any indexical relations. Regarding the latter, they might have understood indexes as having only the significance of whatever is being pointed at, rather than the indication of the real effect of a causal relation of, say, moving air on a weathervane.

9 Many of the linguistic anthropology terms whose use is accompanied by a citation of the semiotic theory of Charles S. Peirce tend to deviate significantly from how Peirce used them. In fact, the linguistic anthropological use of Peircean terminology is almost entirely due to Silverstein’s (1976, 1979) importing of those terms in his project to address problems in traditional semantics.
Iconization/rhematization can be seen as a principle comparable to the law of averages in that it speaks to an ideological conviction that is supposed to emerge more-or-less “naturally” according to the appearances of experience and an underlying reality (whether social, cultural, or physical reality). The shared ideological commitment is a tacit or explicit belief that connections among the appearances of the universe are not accidental. In unpacking this notion, we begin to notice that such connections emerge (at least, in part) from the expectation that signs have, and even must have, a meaningful content. In the domain of experience of connections between social groups and practices, this notion suggests that the functionality of expression is a rule of cognition or language use. Thus, the knowledge that I am a US-American citizen might (or must) carry the content that I speak English. To take a famous example: to speak English with centralized /ay/, in a certain presupposed vicinity, can be said to express (or did when Labov was doing research) the meaning that one’s family has lived on Martha’s Vineyard for generations.

The most important aspect of the iconicity concept is that the link between group and practice is claimed or taken to be necessary, which is to be other than “historical, contingent, or conventional” (Gal and Irvine 1995, Irvine and Gal 2000). When I read Gal (2005) defining the concept “as an indexical sign that its interpretant takes to be an icon” (2005:35n5, emphasis mine), my reading is that the grammatical referent of “its” is “rheme” and that this as a semiotic explanation of what it means to take the conjunction of social image and language image as a putatively necessary conjunction.10 Thus, iconization is the two-part process by which people 1)

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10 My reading of this passage is that the grammatical referent of “its” is the relation Gal (2005) had in mind, which she called “rheme” when she renamed iconization, “rhematization” (in Gal 2005). In the Peircean context, in which the recent semiotic work in linguistic anthropology purports to be anchored, the change in stress from icon to rheme indicates a broad, multidimensional, and non-coordinate change, rather than a unidimensional one—as the authors might have understood it. Gal (2005) specified the Peircean category of Firstness when she called the class of phenomena “rhematization”, just as Gal and Irvine (1995) did when they called it “iconization”. That is, both rhemes and icons are relations of Firstness, which is a category characterized by possibility/quality, rather than actuality (as with Secondness) or law-like regularity (as with Thirdness). However, in moving from icons to
link categories under which falls a social group (or images of that social group) to categories under which falls a language or stylistic practice (or images of that language/stylistic practice); and 2) infer/assume (for whatever reasons) that this link is a metaphysical necessity.\(^{11}\)

As Keane (2003:417) noted, “[t]he social power of naturalization” comes from this application of the principle involved in such “necessary” conjunctions of group and language practice. Such conjunctions are not simply the “false readings” that make associations seem to have “some prior essential character” inherent to them. They are the “misconstruing[s]” of those socioculturally entailing sign tokens that have effects on the future situation or institution, misconstruing them not as the creative or inventive moves in communication that linguistic anthropologists can see them to be, but “as if they were merely expressing something that already exists” that is part of objective reality (Keane 2003:417)—as if they were something on the known landscape.

Irvine and Gal describe iconization as involving “an attribution of cause and immediate necessity” (2000:37, emphasis mine—the phrase “cause and” is an addition since the 1995 article). While being philosophically insightful (or allusive) in doing so, Irvine and Gal are not expansive about the folk-ascription of cause and necessity to the situated perception of a group/practice link. Thankfully, there is an older, if narrower literature on perception and belief from which to draw. Those familiar with the US-American academy’s canonical history of

\(^{11}\) The awkward-sounding sign-relation relation of argument is what Gal and Irvine might have used to indicate a binding (i.e., a compelling) perception of relations between a sign’s appearance (such as some language practice), its significance, and (social or geographic) object. It seems safe to say that what Gal and Irvine have had in mind in the various presentations of the concept of iconization/rhematization—that is, what is common to both their analytic perspective and the practical perspectives of their research participants—is what Peirce called rhematic symbols or, even more likely, arguments, rather than rhemes sui generis. It is the sign relations of symbols and arguments that convey the regularity and compulsion, respectively, of conjunctions between things like social/language image and the language or social group. However, there are two other possible sign-object relations that are relevant: a rhematic index [“any object of direct experience so far as it directs attention to an Object by which its presence is caused”] and a rhematic icon, which would also direct attention to an object (present, absent, or non-existent), but only to the idea or possible qualities of an object (Peirce [1933]1974, CP 2.256, c.1903).
philosophy in will recognize the similarity between Irvine and Gal’s (2000) formulation of this process of group/practice identification and David Hume’s Eighteenth-Century critique of the appearances of causation.\textsuperscript{12} In that critique, Hume suggested that appearances of causation are better described as “constant and regular conjunction”. I draw loosely on that picture of causation to further expand Gal and Irvine’s model.\textsuperscript{13}

Given their original statement of iconization, we can see that a perception of a link between group and practice, as something observed at least once, is likely to be followed by consistently coincidental appearances of one group and one language/stylistic practice. Eventually, this might lead to an attribution of a conjunction by necessity, which (if true) would explain the constancy expressed in there being a \textit{series} of these conjunctions.\textsuperscript{14} Given some mention or appearance of a practice or group, the pair (of group or practice) is typically already

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} To provide textual context for this quoted phrase, Hume wrote in his \textit{Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding}, published in 1737 (section IV, part II):
\begin{quote}
[T]here is no known connexion between the sensible qualities and the secret powers [like physical inertia or the nutritional value of foods]; and consequently. . . the mind is not led to form such a conclusion concerning their constant and regular conjunction [of sensible qualities and “causal” powers], by anything which it knows of their nature. As to past Experience, it can be allowed to give direct and certain information of those precise objects only, and that precise period of time, which fell under its cognizance: but why this experience should be extended to future times, and to other objects, which for aught we know, may be only in appearance similar; this is the main question on which I would insist.
\end{quote}

\item \textsuperscript{13} David Hume represents a transition from Cartesian concerns with certainty to later concerns with necessity in nature and knowledge. However, philosophy progressed in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. The concern with necessity was followed by concerns with contingent, probable combinations, which were the notable concerns of thinkers like the naturalist, Charles Darwin, and the mathematician, C. S. Peirce. The replacement of necessity by probabilistic contingency is useful for anthropologists who draw on the history of philosophy because—in a view that is unlikely to be intuitive to anthropologists who still find Boas’ nomothetic model of natural science compelling—the apparently less (or, for Hume, un-)intelligible natural world became more intelligible through recognition of its more contingent, merely probable nature.

\item \textsuperscript{14} Another account of this imputation of necessity is the attribution of design. I would call this “the Clouseau Fallacy”, to recall the way the Blake Edward character, Inspector Jacques Clouseau, would generalize from a single case to a principle in a way that suggests a misuse of cognition. Thus, in one scene, he mistakes a closet for the exit as he takes his leave. When he runs into the wall inside the closet, Clouseau suggests his host is “up to the old closet ploy”, despite the fact that there is no nefarious purpose behind something that is easily explained by Clouseau’s own error of judgment.
\end{itemize}
“known” and, therefore, presupposed when sociocultural actors say the constant conjunction of the paired elements is necessary.15

Linguistic anthropologists have become interested in Peircean semiotics in the same span of time in which ideologies and broad, cultural discourses have nudged interests in traditional field linguistics to the periphery. Thus, it is important to note that, while citation practices link indexicality and iconicity to the mathematician-logician-philosopher Peirce, the fidelity to Peircean semiotics wavers in linguistic anthropological usage. Peirce was no discourse analyst and, if he is not to be so portrayed, it is important to be clear on how Peircean semiotics relates to the kind of mapping relations Gal and Irvine (1995) discussed.

Gal and Irvine are concerned with cases in which a social actor takes linguistic practices to index social groups or activities and, thereby, takes those practices to be iconic representations of the groups/activities. In giving theoretical description to such cases, Gal and Irvine (1995:973) claim that, when a social actor takes a linguistic feature to be “somehow depicted or displayed a social group's inherent nature or essence”, which (they say) “entails the [actor’s attribution of necessity to a connection (between linguistic features and social groups) that may be only historical, contingent, or conventional”. The Bourdieusian concern with misconstrual

15 It seems useful, also, to consider the idea that iconization could also (indeed, it does) occur in the opposite order from one that presupposes a given pair. That is, it could also occur as an instantiating application of the basic principle of necessity. That is, people might assume that every language/stylistic practice (or a social group) must necessarily be linked to some particular (but currently) unidentified social group (or language/stylistic practice, respectively). People who assume this might then look for the relevant group or practice that is currently missing. By locating some practice or group—a candidate for pairing—the sociocultural reality of necessary conjunction comes to bear on a newly exemplifying pair. The result of applying in practice a cosmological principle of necessary conjunction is the creation of a (more) concrete, privileged association that had not existed previously.

In certain (but not all) settings when links between group and practice are discussed by “folk” (e.g., many Welsh or English persons in the border zones of Cymraeg and English language-based identities), the two kinds of serial group/practice conjunction are intertwined in a loop of cultural logic. That is, the appearance that a presupposed pair is necessarily linked is sometimes explained by the “obviousness” that any group or language has a twin-correlate, and vice versa. It is possible that the assumption of a principle of a necessary conjunction without a presupposed pairing—as a habit of rule-following that represents a deeper normativity than that of a presupposing application of observed correlations—is the motivating force behind iconization in many national contexts. Bauman and Briggs (2003) suggested something like this to be the case in Europe after Lockean modernization.
and misrecognition is clear in their writing. When ethnographers of communication who focus on semiotic processes like iconization write of misconstrual in the field, they write in the language of irrealis moods (e.g., subjunctive), discounted views of cultural essence, and epistemic hedges—“as if”, “somehow”, “inherent nature or essence”, “supposedly”, “appears to be” (Gal and Irvine 1995: 973, see the block quote above), “appears [to be inherent] from the perspective of the ideology” (Gal 2005:26), and “. . .as if they were merely [expressing something that already exists]” (Keane 2003:617).

Moreover, such ethnographic treatment tends to conflate processes of sign interaction and representation (i.e., semiosis) with broader discursive processes. This treatment of signs is in stark contrast to how signs operate in Peircean semiotics. Linguistic anthropology is concerned with recognizing the creative entailments of signs (effects on a situational context that are signaled in a communicative event). The kind of entailment that is central to Peirce’s semiotics has to do with how any given sign token becomes a sign. That sort of entailment is key to understanding a number of key features of what motivate Gal and Irvine’s notion of iconization: the conventionality of symbols, the necessity of what Peirce called “arguments”, and (more generally) the law-like force of his “universal category”, “Thirdness”.16 It is an interest in such realist normativity—which structures meaning/representation itself—that makes Peircean semiotics “pragmatistic”.

At a less philosophical level, it is important to see that Peircean semiotics is a framework for analysis of appearances. An “indexical sign” that someone takes to be an icon is, by that very

16 Peirce shares with the philosopher David Hume (see footnotes 12 and 13, this chapter) an interest in principles of governed regularity (e.g., successful inductive inferences). However, Peirce inverted the Humean finding about reasoning and reality, contrasting also with Durkheim and Mauss finding about forms of classification (1963). He did not conclude that reasoning imputes a law-likeness to reality that does not exist (or is unfounded), nor that people impute systems of classification to objective reality that they find in their own societies. Rather, Peirce’s monistic realism held that the success of human “laws” of reasoning (like causality) is due to the fact that nature’s substance is representational, a substance that human reasoning shares (Peirce 1974, CP 6.476-7, 1908; CP 5.93-5.106, 1903).
fact, an icon; similarly, if taken as a symbol, then it is a symbol; if taken as an argument, then an argument; and so on. Someone else might see the same object as a sign in its index aspect—for example, as something that indicates to them the presence of a ghost—where the first person saw an icon—for example, something the latter thought was reminiscent of a ghostly presence. The analysis of signs cannot reveal delusions or illusions, but only what is perceived because Peirce located significance in a specific element of his analysis of sign structures—the interpretant (or interpretation, akin to message). The element of significance—as a part of a sign structure—is a distinct element from that of the sign-object and the sign-vehicle. Peirce’s analysis of signs allows for demonstration of variation in the interpretations of any given sign token (i.e., variation in sign significance), but not demonstration that a sign significance is a misconstrual. There are no discourses in Peircean semiotics, only signs.

Peirce’s interest in the concomitance of signs was a logical and evidentiary interest. The processes by which signs represent not only objects, but other significances did not imply sociological or cultural forces. Signs, for Peirce, were appearances and progressions of significance. While they might implicate habits of thinking, these habits were far removed from such “phenomena” as, say, sexual repression, gender alignment, and institutional racism. Because Peircean semiotics is phenomenological (in the precise sense of empirical appearances)—and neither psychoanalytical, nor ideological, nor cultural—surface meaning is all important. Although the superficiality of Peircean signs might seem a detriment to discourse analysis, as with any tool of analysis, Peirce’s semiotic system actually simplifies research on cultural discourses. It allows for attention on complex dynamics to be applied to discourse and society. To gain that view, significance must be analytically located in agents and not in multiple layers of a sociocultural milieu.
In recognizing the limits of analysis, it is important to see, then, that sign relations subsist at one level of analysis, while the dynamics of cultural discourse subsist at another (or others). The productive use of Peircean concepts in linguistic anthropology is hindered by a conflation of the two levels (or, worse, a reduction of one level to the other): the phenomenological, on one hand, and the socio-discursive, ideological dimension of (cultural) inference, on the other. The difficulty of separating the two levels in linguistic anthropology might be the fact that both are equally agent-oriented. However, it is critical to separate the two levels if one is to address the counter-empirical, underlying norms of consciousness and action (as stated in Chapter Two).

The mapping relations that fit Gal’s and Irvine’s descriptions of iconicity seem to be commonplace—at the discursive level. As a contrasting cultural practice, the dominant poetic mode in which the trope of DROWNING manifests is worthy of note. Indeed, it suggests a more broadly pragmatic analytic strategy than that of iconicity. Recall, in this connection, my distinction between aesthetically-evaluative and epistemically-normative principles. We need not restrict our analysis to the merely aesthetic and heuristic level. Instead, we can adopt an orientation that focuses on the normative constitution of community in terms of the relations of cultural discourse, rather than in terms of misconstruals of signs of such cultural relations (by “the native” or the ethnographer). By doing so, we come to how the trope of DROWNING transcends the simple mapping relations of iconicity (and indexicality).

Variation in the Use of “Drowning” and Its Cultural Significance

There is a more common usage of “boddi” in the same circles that I found it being used in the way this chapter discusses. This more common usage connotes the destructive elimination of

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17 Notice that, in my view, this gives rise to the identification of another area of research; that of socioloinguistic scale (e.g., micro versus macro). See the June 2012 special issue of Anthropology & Education Quarterly.
a village to make way for a reservoir that would provide water resources for English cities. While there were several instances of this intra-state, inter-nation exploitation of water resources in Wales, the most commemorated village so affected is that of Capel Celyn in north-central Wales, whose “drowning” benefitted the denizens of Liverpool. Despite the fact that Liverpool, in England, is often called the capital of north Wales, due to the numbers of Welsh persons who have lived there, many activists saw this case of state-required compulsory exchange of property around Capel Celyn as a culturally symbolic case of “drowning”. For them, Liverpool’s “taking” of the territory in which the village of Capel Celyn rested, signified a double threat to nationhood: the literal submerging of local life around Capel Celyn and the exporting of natural “Welsh” resources.

One of the signs of the depths of the trope of “drowning” (boddi) children is that the spectrum of language politics in north-west Wales is captured in that trope and in the variety of local accounts people give of it. For teachers at schools in Cymraeg-majority villages in Gwynedd, the drama of this metaphor transforms a vague, county-mandated approach to Welsh-language immersion into something of national importance. They will explain that boddi is something done to children who come from backgrounds where Cymraeg is seldom or never used.

Use of the metaphor and practice varies according to the language-policy principle that a language should be the medium of instruction during the majority of classroom time if it is spoken by the majority within the school’s community. Where this principle implies that Cymraeg is the dominant medium of instruction, children are said to be drowned in Welshness; and where not, they are not. Nevertheless, among Gwynedd teachers for whom Cymraeg is of fundamental importance, boddi is a national-cultural obligation, not only a professional one:
They “drown” children in the “welshness” of Cymraeg in order to combat the prevalence of the English language in mass media and most of Wales. That is, they drown all children, even the ones who might learn it in their home, because they are “in danger of losing it” as they get older.

Alternatively, many who feel greater affinity toward the English language—who would rarely, if ever, hear the “drowning” metaphor—take it to be a perfect example of “Welsh nationalism”. For these people, the idea of “drowning” children highlights the exclusionism of those whom they portray as separatists from the UK. The range of emotional significance of the metaphor is not limited to ethnolinguistic attitudes, but also interacts with the image of nurturing that is emblematic of primary school teachers. DROWNING, while enacting this nurturing value for first-language Cymraeg teachers at schools where most of the community members regularly use Cymraeg, clearly can convey the opposite to those whose idea about what constitutes personhood was not formed in the Cymraeg language world. An anthropologist at Manchester University found the metaphor—the image of teachers drowning children—“disturbing”.

The Manchester University anthropologist had no connection to Cymraeg communities. Someone who did have such a connection, but now lived and worked in communities with English-majorities also had a strong negative reaction to my inquiries about whether the practice, and I used the term “drowning”, occurred at her school. This Cymraeg-speaking primary school teacher at YGS, which lay midway between the Welsh western coast and the English border—outside the Cymraeg-majority Gwynedd county—told me that my use of “boddi” was mistaken. I had never heard the metaphor used at that school, in either English or Cymraeg, during the several months I was observing lessons and activities there. She denied that teachers would ever use it, the idea of drowning, in reference to children. They would, however, use the word, “trochi” (to immerse or to dip), she said. When I asked her what “trochi” meant, she replied:
It’s where children, usually it’s children, you know, they’re right in, you know, in a school where they just hear Welsh from an early age. And you usually hear that term, if it’s referred to with children that have come from another area, typically an English area... totally immerse yourself in work, isn’t it? You say that, don’t you? (March 6, 2008)

A researcher of school language practices at a university in Gwynedd, himself a first-language Cymraeg-speaker, had a similar view on the general concept. However, he located the metaphor in a setting different from that of any present-day cultural milieu. Born and raised in the school district of one of my Cymraeg-centered school sites, he offered an account of this usage of “boddi” that gave it a temporal connotation. He told me teachers had once used “boddi”, but it probably stopped being used in the 1980s. At that time, according to that researcher, teachers did not apply it to all children in reference to a native Welshness maintained by Welsh culture or language. He told me teachers only used it for language immersion practices related to children who came from England or other places.

The implication was that, since the communicative medium in which teaching took place in that now-finished era was the medium of the ordinary lives of pupils who were “really Welsh”, it was not necessary to apply the term to them. There was also an institutional connection: From his perspective, the practice has since become confined to the three small language centers that are dispersed across Gwynedd and devoted to immersion teaching for children with little or no Cymraeg competence. Nevertheless, when I did preliminary research in north-west Wales in 2005, and during the fourteen months I conducted principal dissertation research in north-west Wales in 2007 and 2008, the metaphor of drowning children in Welshness was clearly “still” in use.
Despite the enormous disparity in knowledge of local practices between this researcher and I, his lack of awareness on this one point is due to his long occupation as an instructor at a teaching college (i.e., not as a schoolteacher “on the ground”) and his research and recruiting methods. Representing a locally-based research project and university, he demonstrated a formal regard for official distinctions between private and public spaces, where schools are semi-private territories. He also spent a mere day, two, or three at each school, to which teachers were accustomed in the form of school inspections and university research.

Despite my more intensive (not to say intrusive) presence, it was difficult for me to get a definitive sense of the concept of drowning [boddi], and the causes were many, as I later discovered. The reasons have to do with the wide variation in usage, as well as variation in how teachers approach national identity. When I was first encountering the cultural concept, I understood the semantic potential of the “drowning” phrase, as used in various contexts, to be as follows. “Welshness” seemed to denote an imaginary kind of substance, and seemed to connote a cultural sort of national identity, but this is not the best interpretation—not even given the orientation of this dissertation, with my focus on language identity. Unfortunately, when those who use the phrase attempt explication, their attempt often involves an ambiguous reference to traditional Welsh practices. These practices might be particularly Welsh because they are traditional or they might be particularly Welsh because Cymraeg is a constitutive part of their performance.

When the phrase of “drowning children in Welshness” is used, the notion of a Welsh ethos is often used as well. Again, the same problem occurs, since the project of creating a Welsh ethos involves creating the same kind of environment in which children would be drowned in Welshness. To anticipate, the implicit significance of such discursive practice is to
keep Welshness implicit. The circularity is itself functional because it restricts knowledge to
those already accepted as part of the community. In the case of adults, if they are not community
members, they are made explicitly liminal. In a positive sense, this liminality allows the
outsiders to be welcomed. From the obverse perspective, the liminal position allows candidate
community members to be monitored.

**THE METAPRAGMATIC SPACE OF “DROWNING”/DROWNING**

As noted above and evidenced by the context of application of terms like
“drowning”/"boddi", those who feel Cymraeg to be an intrinsic part of their personality and
cultural identity often have Cymraeg implicitly in mind when Welshness is the explicit topic.
Unfortunately, during most of the time researching Welsh identity, I failed to find any
representational content in identity beyond a tie to Cymraeg (or English for their English
counterparts). Still, while I found (and continue to find) the search to have been useful in and of
itself, cosmopolitan-minded people with liberal views about the politics of language do not look
further into the role of language in such contexts. Allegiance to a language, for the latter, seems
to be superficial. They do not expect to find anything below the surface.

As long as the contours and regimentation of the domain of the political are not made
visible, it is difficult to see how such a powerful and dramatic trope would have emerged for
imagining immersion in a language. In the context of north-west Wales, clearly “immersion” or
“dipping” (trochi) do not capture the affective and moral depths that are meant because there is a
reservoir of cultural knowledge and collective experience (of the Cymraeg language complex)
to which “drowning” refers.
The pragmatic significance of the DROWNING trope can be articulated as its power to mark two kinds of transition. First, there is the transition from polite conversation to conversation that, given the mainstream dominance of the English language, is almost inappropriately political. Second, there is the transition from the putative inclusiveness of the general Welsh-national community (including even “traditional culture”) to the more bounded Cymraeg language community. In each of these two kinds of interface, the latter part of the distinction is the denser and less fluid of the two substances that are interfacing.

The denser fluid, into which teachers drown or dip children, acts to obscure the vision of any outsider who intrudes on the Cymraeg language community—though one could also say that it is equally welcoming of any who want to participate fully. While use of the phrase is very infrequent, the fact that I encountered it in English-language contexts is symbolic of the connotation of Cymraeg being the denser fluid. There would be less of a need to mark the interface in the two transitions if the communicative context were already the Cymraeg one, the native language context for those who see DROWNING as a positively-valued process. The process would be especially deserving of mention in English-language communicative contexts given that the English code-medium of performance itself evokes the very interface that DROWNING serves to mark.

Following Taussig (1987), I would suggest that the greater “density” I associate with Cymraeg contexts is the product of the conquest and colonization of Wales. At many points in Taussig’s study of the Putamayo rubber boom, he draws on the literary work of Robert Conrad. Like the stories of Conrad’s character, Marlow, the Putamaya rubber boom was full of horror. Such tales cannot convey the sense of horror by a straightforward description.
The indescribable horrors with which Conrad and Taussig were so involved contrast with the simple yarns of seaman. The meanings of the latter stories could be revealed simply in the telling, like the kernel inside the shell of a cracked nut. The pervasiveness of horror in Putamayo, for Taussig, was captured in a different way of telling tales. Told by a master like Marlow, the simple yarn is reversed, so that meaning is not revealed in the telling, but the meaning of a tale and the knowledge associated with it might be shown to influence the telling. Conrad’s fictional Marlow had a reputation that lent his pronouncements a special significance: Looking on a twilight scene characterized by a “lurid glare” of “a brooding gloom in sunshine”, Marlow noted that, by contrast, “this has been one of the darker places on the earth”. From Marlow’s lips, such a pregnant remark was not surprising, but “was accepted in silence” and was cause for wonder and reflection.

In this Marlovian theory of knowledge, description brings out the meaning of an event “only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine” (Conrad 1999:50). We might wish for more clarity and try to articulate illuminating details, but the essence of the phenomenon itself is obscurity. In presenting this theory of knowledge, Taussig used the phrase, “epistemic murk”—a diffusely gray area of knowledge. It signifies that “the haziness brought out by the glow [of telling the tale] could be as powerful a force for terror as it could be for resistance” (1987:127). I reverse this relation, choosing to emphasize counter-hegemony.

The space of “drowning” is no carnival of horrors like that Taussig analyzes using his concept of space of death. Rather, the space of drowning offers a haven from the prying eyes of holiday-goers and English patriots who do not value Welsh cultural features as highly as do those who take pride in the Cymraeg language complex. The murkiness of Welshness, in
connection to Cymraeg, might lend itself to acting as a platform for resistance, or simply for avoidance of social tensions brought on by contentious identity issues. Whether intended or not, the reticence of or difficulty for Welsh people to spell out the meanings of Welshness within the Cymraeg language complex ensures that a person has to live those meanings to know them.

The implied ethnographic risk should be evident: If ethnographers treat cultural concepts as having a clarity to them—a more precise definition—that they do not have in practice, then an ethnographer risks treating culture simplistically. As stated, this is likely no different than for any number of cultural concepts in other cultural contexts. However, such a compulsive intellectualism would be highly problematic where the cultural concepts are related to Cymraeg use in Wales—because Cymraeg use there is neither constantly political, nor constantly neutral; it is often, but not always, politicized. The degree to which it is problematic depends on the appropriateness of framing cultural practices or settings in terms of potential controversy. Thus, it is important to observe that, where the question arises as to whether the cultural concepts related to any practice are subject to being treated variably as potentially controversial, the question about proprieties of a practice (and not only the practice itself) can be potentially inappropriate and controversial—and, therefore, political.

To bring too much clarity to a description of any actual sociocultural event at the level at which structural power is enacted—to hand out meanings like kernels from the shell of a cracked nut—would be to reductively treat meanings as so many atomic features, features which the meanings do not have when they are put into practice. Even if these atomic features are treated as analytic or heuristic constructs, the danger remains that they will be treated as merely phenomenal features of practice—but phenomenal features that are more than appearances.
CONCLUSION

SURFACE AND DEPTHS

This dissertation tracks several kinds of ethnographic sites in an investigation of the normative construction of a politics of language and community in north-west Wales. It finds spaces of sociocultural interest in the classrooms of three primary schools, academic offices and hallways, teachers’ lounges, the comments of a proposal reviewer, a lecture by a famous Kenyan writer, and even structured interview response formats for scaling attitudes.

Cultural identity in north-west Wales, as a popularly (not officially) recognized kind of belonging and citizenship, has a binomial character. Omitting the categories of learners and incomers/immigrants, which are characterized by change, there are two well-recognized types, or “species”: Cymraeg and Saesneg; that is, Cymraeg-Welsh and English-Welsh. That there might be a large number of such identity role-types—far exceeding the empirical, imagined, set of two “species”—is seldom recognized in Wales. That possibility is so often neglected because the very few role-types that are recognizable, are chained to a specific game of identity the playing of which depends on “tacit recognition of the value of the stakes of the game as practical mastery of its rules” (Bourdieu 1992:117). The game of identity involves surface positions, and these surface positions are assimilated in daily practice to a (simplified) taxonomy, or a synecdochal rhetoric. People only recognize a few such roles in the game of national positionality, and this limited game is the one people in Abergwaith (and Wales in general) have mastered.

NATIONALIST is the emblematic role that epitomizes the game at the phenomenal level, the nature of the game, and what is at stake. It operates rhetorically for all to see, while the epistemic operations in which it is involved are less apparent. The game of identity in Abergwaith is conducted not by players’ manipulation of game pieces, but by means of players’
performance of their own roles and those of their interlocutors, which are part of the game’s constitution—a game in which there are only two sides. There simply are not enough roles in this phenomenal picture to play the game of identity that is played in actuality.

The consequence of perceiving Cymraeg-language activists as nationalists is a failure to cognize society’s diversity—failure to recognize either certain kinds of participants or their issues at all, or failure to distinguish between those participants and attitudes ascribed to them. Such failure can lead to a group’s or individuals’ exclusion from—or a limitation on group-members’ participation in—the public sphere. By failing to recognize Cymraeg-language activists except insofar as they make unreasonable demands on others in society, liberal cosmopolitans exclude certain kinds of participation by the former from the public sphere.

Some Welsh people construe the sentiments that other Welsh people express, through cultural and language resources, as excessively and problematically nationalistic in a Welsh context—particularly as they relate to what teachers might do in classrooms. Teachers in Wales actively manage their performances to construct particular presentations of self in schooling contexts that are not determined solely (or at all) by their attitudes toward national culture, language, and governance. What is hidden within schooling settings, then, is not a “hidden curriculum” (Apple 1971; Jackson 1968). That is, it is not a habitus or other component of teachers’ personality grounded in their autobiographical experience that, unknown to them, influences their evaluation of students’ performance in non-academic terms. Rather, what is hidden is the explicit statement of teachers’ somewhat stable opinions and convictions about the nation.

By contrast, the implicit references, on the other hand, are there “for all to see”, and some parents do complain about instances of “nationalism”: certain implicit, but marked and culturally
salient references that are made in classrooms. It is far from clear, however, how children understand such implicit references, which are organized by cultural concepts, places, and historical figures of the Cymraeg language complex. Young children likely do not understand them according to any particular political orientation of the nationalist meta-discourse, communitarian or otherwise. However, children are well-aware of the “teams” on this field.

Once one understands that the hiding of national positionality at schools is deliberate, it is important to see that the operation by which such cultural submergence occurs is only partly deliberate. This is the case in two different senses. First, teachers make a practical distinction between politically motivated and politically framed allegiance to the nation, on one hand, and a national pride that is based in everyday activities and cultural distinctiveness. As Mrs. Williams put it (see Chapter Three), “We are not supposed to brainwash children politically, but we can brainwash them culturally”. This is the basic schema by which nationalism is adjudicated in those zones of the public sphere that bleed off into the private, such as schools. Teachers use the distinction between culture and politics to enact moral economies that can determine whether some expression of self is appropriate or inappropriate in schooling settings. As a result, some things are deliberately hidden from children’s view, while some things need not be concealed.

Secondly, teachers—and most people in Wales, even academics in the area of Welsh Studies—do not have a convenient way of effectively evaluating, as a unity, a phenomenon that ranges over both national identity and controversial nationalism, and across everyday culture, language practices, and political stances. This lack, I believe, is the reason so many people—including academics, whose livelihood involves evaluation of stances within this space—rely on the simple label, “nationalism”. The reliance on a problematic concept of nationalism has a
further result: Educators in primary and secondary schooling often evaluate their professional field in terms of concepts like “brainwashing”.

The use of political and cultural varieties of brainwashing actually represents a sophisticated attempt to map the topography of this phenomenon in the absence of an “aerial” view of the cultural landscape. However, the concept of brainwashing reinforces the use and ambiguity of the concept of nationalism. This is because, if there is an issue of political brainwashing, it clearly would fall under nationalism, while if the issue is one of cultural brainwashing, then this recognition makes the label of nationalism irrelevant because cultural nationalism is seldom controversial on its own. The result of teachers’ fairly sophisticated attempt to map national positionality is an evasion of discussion of the normative and aesthetic expectations that surround claims of nationalism. Also, by immersing children in Cymraeg activities and practices—that is, by drowning children in Welshness—teachers reinforce the relative lack of cultural visibility of the Cymraeg language-cultural complex compared to claims about Welsh national identity.

At a general level, Cymraeg has two functional aspects with respect to national visibility and cultural visibility. With regard to national visibility, Cymraeg operates as the foremost emblem of the bilingual nation of Wales. Thus, Cymraeg is frequently referred to as “the Welsh language”, though only roughly one-fifth of the population are competent in it. At the same time, Cymraeg operates as an anti-emblem with respect to “the culture”; that is, with respect to the Cymraeg language-cultural complex. One has to know and appreciate Cymraeg—that is, to belong to the language community—in order to belong to that cultural community. These circumstances create specific challenges for ethnographers of (the nation of) Wales.
In Chapter Three, I recounted the suggestion of the assistant head teacher in responding to my requests for an interview: “If you tell me what it is that you would like to know, perhaps I could then find a way to get the information to you”. That suggestion is an instance of the descriptivist perspective—the European attention to objects/reference/facts; what Silverstein has called the “denotational plane”. The picture revealed in this dissertation presents a surface field of culture that resembles the descriptive functions of language. Mrs. Williams’ suggestion corresponds both to her cultural expectations for participation in the interview, as well as to a “theoretical list” consisting of items of interest about the Cymraeg language-cultural complex.

The direction of research that I adopted and that this dissertation represents, can be explained in relation to the role of the culturally-emergent (but theoretical) list, and in relation to the relative lack of cultural visibility of Cymraeg-centered identity. That is, I focused on such descriptivist features as historical landmarks and figures—because these were part of the metapragmatic discourse of the Cymraeg language community—while simultaneously pursuing the constitutive principles of a social reality that bears both on Welsh cultural and national belonging and on the claim to special, particular resources of identity.

That dual-mode “research design” mirrors the theoretical framework I adopted, in gradually more explicit ways, during fieldwork and writing. The recognizability of subject positions of national identity conforms to the descriptivist/“denational” aspect of sociocultural life in Wales. This aspect characterizes both national visibility in Wales and the metapragmatic discourse of the Cymraeg language community in Wales. Notably, the scenario sub-study detailed in Chapter Seven defined the surface position of nationalism as it manifests in north-west Wales. That chapter demonstrated that the surface position of nationalism is an ordered
field that has the factual character of such value-poor knowledge as knowing where cereal is shelved at the local grocery store.

Also, Chapter Seven argued that a *phenomenal* description differs from a comprehensive *explicative* account. The relative lack of cultural visibility of the Cymraeg language-cultural complex in a context where *characterizing certain identity practices as political* is itself a political move, fraught with potential controversy. The lack of cultural visibility symbolizes some of the covert conditions of sociocultural life in north-west Wales that demand explication beyond the phenomenal description. In particular, the polarized condition of choice in identity politics in north-west Wales is a characteristic feature of social realities in which the circumstances or the consequences of semiotic applications (or both) are maintained as part of a normative system that lies outside individual agency. As I came to understand deeper layers, these conditions and the polarizing normativity in north-west Wales became part of my research topic.

**COLLECTIVE REPRESENTATIONS**

For laypersons and scholars, there are generally two images of cultural identity in Wales—either identity is conceived as a simple diversity or as a duality. The *image of duality* implies the sort of (more-or-less strategic) essentializing game played by language activists and less politically conscious people in north-west Wales. The *image of diversity* implies the sort of game played by impartial observers such as those ethnographers who, explicitly or implicitly endorse a constructivist vision of the empirical field. Ultimately, the constructivist vision produces an objectivist vision of the ethnographer’s role in knowledge production (and which, on
some level, I am also producing). Deconstruction of the tension between activist-belief and researcher-belief depends on recognizing that some such game of identity is being played, either the one involving duality or the one involving diversity, or both (or neither). Yet, that deconstructive project also implies the possibility (at least) of deconstructing not only those naturalizing discourses “on the ground” in the field, but those at the ethnographer’s home, too. In fact, I can see no justification for not doing so.

Importantly, the problem for linguistic anthropology that I raised in Chicago (see Chapter Two) is remarkably similar to a problem that exercised Durkheim (1995) many decades ago, which Karen Fields highlighted so insightfully in her introduction). In fact, Gal and Irvine’s (1995) formulation of what they called “iconicity”, and Gal (2005:35n5) renamed “rhematicity”, is another view of Durkheim’s concern with totemism and religion. Although Gal and Irvine defined their problem in terms of ideologies about language, both problems concern collective representations more generally. Before discussing the abstruse, but crucial question Durkheim raised about collective representations (and how it bears on iconization), it is worth mentioning several approaches to the counter-empirical domain that I called “the politics of ‘politics’”.

In the anthropological literature on ethnicity, one might identify four basic positions on the politics of ‘politics’: primordialist-essentialism, instrumentalism, constructivism, and pragmatism. Essentialism is a metaphysical commitment to some core (primordial) features of a community. Instrumentalism conceives of claims about community as means of mobilization for achieving instrumental ends, rather than as intrinsic bonds of belonging. It “stresses the mutability of [community] attachments”, but only in terms of “the roles of interests and context

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1 Put differently, the idea of diversity amounts to an increase in the number of categories (qualitative quantity), but not an expansion of the qualitative “space” of culture. I believe it is this lack of expansion that Ortner (1984) had in mind when writing her famous introduction of practice theory within the Geertzian legacy in which she worked. However, she was so far from certain about how to characterize the concept that she used scare-quotes when she described this concept as “openness” (Ortner 1984:156).
in the process of [community] conflict”; that is, it stresses “competition between groups over scarce material and symbolic resources” “in a particular socioeconomic and political context” (Schmidt 1993:82). Constructivism also stresses the mutability of attachments as constructs, but as constructs of belonging. That is, the attachments are not determined by interests and a particular context of political and economic factors, but by the analyst’s own metaphysical commitments—either by dismissing the community attachments as subjective constructs, or as a more generous appreciation for the purposes and plans of subjects.

Comaroff and Comaroff (2009:39) suggested that synthesis of primordialist-essentialism and constructivism leads only to banal bromides about ethnicity (but one can challenge this view on the grounds that they conflated instrumentalism and constructivism, though I do not take this route). They argued that “a theoretical synthesis that seeks the ontology of ethnic identity in a fusion of the primordial and the instrumental” does not explain, but “merely re-describes, at a higher level of abstraction, the phenomenon as it is lived and experienced”, which “is precisely what needs to be explained” (2009:162n.29). If every synthesis of primordialism and constructivism leads only to banal bromides about ethnicity, in the general form Comaroff (1996:164) called “Neo-primordialism”, then one must be committed either to the view that such objects or forms are real, or that they are vernacular tropes (or some other sort of construct).

In their account, the contrasting features of “native” primordialism and of constructivism cannot be dissolved into one another, except on pain of failure to explain (since it is not enough to describe) “the phenomenon as it is lived and experienced” (2009:162n.29). The conclusion is an impression that the explanatory task of relating the features of “native” primordialism and of

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2 Kant thought he had solved the similar problem of empiricism and rationalism by generating the first viable constructivist strategy; but he was followed by the neo-Kantians who popularized approaches that repeated errors Kant had corrected; then came US-American pragmatists like Peirce, whose complex theory of semiotics is an outgrowth of a radically different conception of Kant’s project of critiquing the idea of pure reason; and then Wilfrid Sellars, who peeled the gold finish off several philosophical altars to fashion his own project.
It is highly significant that Comaroff and Comaroff (2009:45) characterized the issue of the clash between primordialism and constructivism as one of metaphysics; that is, “the ontological [observation] that contemporary cultural identity is experienced as the product, at once, of shared essence and self-fashioning”. This is significant because to understand constructivism as ontological in more than a nominal sense is to fail to understand the explanatory force of constructivism (and I would be confident that the Comaroffs would agree, if they had not called this a general “ontological” observation). Constructivism is, essentially, an “epistemological” strategy that happens to have ontological challenges to its validity. That is, in an ontological discourse, constructivism cannot be a complete theoretical stance regarding cultural identities without explaining how sociocultural realities are real (Of course, the short answer is that they are constructed!). The status of such sociocultural realities is metaphysical for an ethnographer concerned with cultural practices of some member of a culture (but probably

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3 Unfortunately, the Comaroffs (2009) did not present criteria for adequacy of an explanation of ethnic consciousness (as if these could be available in *a priori* conditions). Of course, anthropologists use *a priori* considerations all the time, as professional convention intervenes in empirical research. Yet, even these are deployed in a more or less justificatory fashion; for example, in a discussion of the literature and the findings of other researchers. Thus, in an earlier version of the Comaroffs’ chapter on totemism and ethnicity in *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (1992), John L. Comaroff (1987) dissected five propositions (and relevant alternatives) to provide a heuristic understanding of his proposal for explanations of ethnic consciousness and social activity. Because of the interest in primordial claims and primordial markings of ethnic-classificatory relations, J. L. Comaroff’s text is preoccupied with the opening act in the play of ethnicity: ethnogenesis. However, most of his suggestions would seem to apply to ongoing practices, beliefs, and change.

4 Constructivism might seem to be an ontological/metaphysical strategy if one takes up the idea, say, that facts are invented not discovered, since facts are putatively bits of reality or reliable propositions about reality. Nonetheless, by characterizing the issue as ontological/metaphysical, the Comaroffs can only mean that the question contains a statement about the nature of things and their existence (in fact, they do mean something like this, in presenting a thesis about the unequal arrangement of material means of production). Nonetheless, the real nature of things and their existence is irrelevant to constructivism: The ultimate nature of things does not bear on how we should address the empirical dimensions of problems related to cultural consciousness. Hence, the problem at hand is not intrinsically about the real nature of things and their existence and, therefore, is not ontological.
not for that focal person), but it is epistemological for an ethnographer concerned with the methods she is using.

In construing constructivism as instrumentalism and as ontological, the Comaroffs highlight the issues of motive—nativist (for essentialism) versus utility (for instrumentalism)—and of determining the proper branch of philosophy—metaphysics or epistemology. While they enlightened me on the first issue of motive, allowing me to recognize a useful distinction, they seemed to err in taking constructivism to be equivalent to instrumentalism and to be an ontological account. The Comaroffs (2009:40) made a distinction between “an explanation for ethnic consciousness” and “phenomenological representation of how that consciousness, once constructed, is experienced” and the fact they did so must be evaluated in light of two aspects of their argument. These are: 1) that the Comaroffs worry about the fact that constructivism cannot seem to explain how sociocultural realities emerge, and 2) that essentialism cannot seem to explain how invented traditions could be primordial. Because the Comaroffs have worried about these two conjoined problems, they include constructivism in the duplex problem they characterize as ontological (i.e., primordial-essentialism versus constructivism).

However, constructivism is a perspective in theories of knowledge—of knowledge of whatever objects one likes (one’s social status, the assumed and socially confirmed reality of one’s social status, the boundaries of one’s community, cosmology, etc.). Explanation is an epistemological process, even if it pertains to metaphysical or scientistic details. Constructivism, by definition, dissolves the “ontology” of primordialism into an “epistemology”; such that this assimilated epistemology of primordialism (what is given) appears to compete with the epistemology of constructivism (what is made). This dissolving is the point, I think, to which the Comaroffs objected by reference to bromides—because it seems to transpose the primordialism
to a different key without improving on our knowledge. When properly directed, however, constructivism addresses the semiotic recognizability of social realities, rather than their metaphysical nature. The ontological worry related to either constructivism or essentialism, or both, is properly located in the commitments of the researcher—and is independent of the realities in the field. It is to be found in the domain of explanation and it is also what makes the explanatory-analytic dimension domain distinct from the representational-phenomenal dimension.

The issue of an incompatibility between essentialism and constructivism coincides in the linguistic anthropology literature with the use of semiotics as a toolbox for analyzing cultural dynamics. That use raises the problem that, because (Peircean) semiotics is not revelatory for cultural dynamics, it is not obvious what provides the appearances for turning cultural dynamics into an empirical problem when theory is so underdetermined by facts. Fields (in Durkheim 1995) carefully unpacked this very problem, but did so drawing on a social theorist who has less than broad appeal in cultural and linguistic anthropology: Emile Durkheim.

In her introduction to her translation of Durkheim’s *The Elementary Forms of Religion*, Fields (1995:xxxvii) described Durkheim’s concern in the following way:

> If the faithful are thought of as rationally constituted human beings, what would cause them to fly in the face of what they can observe from moment to moment and year after year. And is our understanding advanced if we assume the religious faithful of all ages merely to be people who can be sold the Brooklyn Bridge, not just once but over and over again? Ultimately, then, to leave belief unexamined is to gain a mentally incompetent human.

Durkheim’s and Fields’ point, much like mine, places the onus on the analyst, rather than on those people ethnographers study. Academics would see the idea that languages are natural kinds as an obviously false notion, while missing the fact that essentialism and constructivism
cannot occupy the same space simultaneously. Ethnographic analyses cannot treat the
naturalizing (of religion or) of language as rational and simultaneously argue that such
naturalizing is a false reality. I have described this conceptual conflict, as did Durkheim and
Fields, and argued that ethnographers must address it explicitly, and must not rest on the
privilege that divides their authoritative perspective from members of the subject communities.

There is obvious value in understanding inferences about social group and language
identities in the terms of a misconstruing of future effects and possible meanings of sign tokens
“as if they were merely expressing something” that is part of objective reality (Keane 2003:417,
emphasis added). However, to analyze “the social power of naturalization” as emerging from
misconstrual means linguistic anthropologists must reject naturalization as a locally efficacious
mode of action and subjectivity in its own right, as local truth.5 To treat naturalization as a
misconstrual of a sign token’s significance—to misconstrue its pragmatic effect of changing a
communicative situation or social institutions, as if it were merely descriptive—is to substitute
Silverstein’s interest in creative entailments of sign tokens for the Peircean interest in the
normativity that structures meaning/representation itself.

This tendency alone should signal a problem in theory. However, it is not the only
problem. It is also far from clear that, as far as the cultural particularities of any case of
naturalization are concerned, the analytic interest in creatively entailing signs (i.e., sign use that
produces changes in the communicative situation or broader cultural field) can reveal or do more
than re-describe them at a higher level of abstraction. I tend to think that now-common analytic
strategies that extend the terms of Peircean semiotic terms do not do justice to the cultural

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5 It is crucial not to take Peircean realism as a kind of materialism, as Keane seems to have done. That is, the law-
like normativity (i.e., Thirdness) of concern to Peirce (leaving aside his opulent, if monistic metaphysics) was not a
law-likeness of first-order object-level processes like causality, but representations in intelligent beings of such
material processes. Such intelligent representations of material processes are likely (eventually) to converge on the
truth about those processes because, in Peirce’s worldview, such intelligence is of the same fundamental substance.
particularities that lend the character of necessity to commitments about social groups and
language practices (i.e., about the necessary connection of language to social group).

The Comaroffs attempted to address such cultural particularities and argued that, initially,
primordial consciousness is constituted by its reification in systems of structured inequality and
then, on an ongoing basis, as an ideological motive for altering material reality (Comaroff 1987;
see also Genovese 1968). Yet, the Comaroffs have not articulated what it is about typification in
ethnic formation (or its consequences) that would distinguish it, as persuasive (i.e., as imagined to
be capable of altering material reality), from other typifications; or what would prevent such
typification from being the original determining force in ethnic formations relative to economic
structures and the social organization of status.\(^6\) Moreover, the sense of necessity natively
imputed to iconicizing/rhematicizing ideologies in linguistic anthropology is not itself an
explanation, as it is exactly what needs to be explained (and theorized).

**EMERGENT POSSIBILITIES: EPISTEMIC MATERIALISM**

Rather than focus on mapping relations, I used the trope of GAMES because it can apply to
an activity of complex dynamism—the process of which rules are inadequate for explanation—
as easily as to an activity of simple dynamism (e.g., such as is involved in looking up the English
equivalent of a Cymraeg word in a dictionary). Indeed, it is because the trope of cultural logic
does not do justice to the situation of identity in Wales that I employ the trope of games. At the
phenomenal level, identity dynamics can certainly be subsumed under the notion of a cultural
logic or narrative. However, the surface positions that are visible as phenomenal aspects of

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\(^6\) These lacunae serve as a wedge from which to challenge their emphasis on systems of structured inequality, but it
is their conceptual analysis and the related questions about primordialism and constructivism that I find more
productive in the context of an explication of the pragmatics of language community in Wales. In particular, their
analysis helps us to recognize areas in a theoretical domain that must be developed to make sense of the
interrelations of language and community in Wales.
identity games in Wales are the material of which confusions, silences, erasures, and dominance are formed. Identity games are not the elements of a storyline, but the stuff of history in which plots are appropriated by parties, altered, represented under different guises; all the while, this subplot has become subverted by another party and made insignificant or re-figured as a cause for claims of treason. In the abstract, cultural logics amount to simple games, whereas one way of describing the games of identity in Wales is as a game that consists of the nesting (and a shuffling and reorganizing) of cultural logics within other cultural logics, involving a process in which each cultural logic jockeys for position.

What might be treated simplistically as naturalization in the case of Wales can now be seen to involve a covert cultural institution of positioning practices as controversial or not, as unacceptably political or not. Similarly, the practice of drowning children in Welshness serves the social function, in a history of colonization, of keeping prying eyes away from the substantive content and values of the culture of Cymraeg. Neither of these—either controlling the boundaries of what can be considered politics, or the metapragmatic space of DROWNING—can be subsumed under the modality of certainty or necessity.

While I do not position this research as a project in constructivism, that third variety of the politics of ‘politics’—or, to use my leading phrase, of “the pragmatics of community”—bleeds into pragmatism, thereby suggesting a fourth possibility. The fourth possibility, epistemic materialism, is a pragmatist orientation toward the politics of ‘politics’. Epistemic materialism takes the relation of type to token to be grounded in a system of conceptual norms, as a relation predicated on the idea that conceptual or perceptual matter is not given in conception/perception, but made through acts of cognitive judgments. This orientation stresses the normative principles involved in the organization of practices—where this organization is governed by forms of
conceiving and perceiving. This systemic normativity speaks to a “force”, not of any causal order, but of the conceptual (or epistemic) order.

To speak of epistemically-normative principles does not suggest the conviction in stable, unchanging meanings that characterized traditional semantics. The line that linguistic theorists use to demarcate metasemantics, as a subset of metapragmatics, emerges from the relation of text to discourse, whereas a focus on epistemic structures concerns the relation between discourse and consciousness. Because it renders impossible any account of a substantive rhetoric and consciousness of belonging, I criticized the conflation of reference and predication in Silverstein’s work (one layer of which occurs in the body, and another is left to the footnotes of Chapters Two and Nine). To attend to predication (but without committing the errors of traditional semanticists) is to recognize that human experience involves the appearance of structured connections subsisting among generals/predicates. Human experience consists in this at least as much, and perhaps more so, than it does in the “objective” relations among objects.7

The organization of these systems of concepts is not determined by, but constituted in social relationships and interactions. Systems of concepts are enacted by individuals who, in their personal development, have gradually gotten the knack of salient typifications and their exemplification. Conceptual typifications and their exemplification represent (for those people) the proper way of engaging in a community. Early in the last century, Malinowski spoke to the pragmatic force of such systemic normativity:

“The effective force of such. . . acts [of conception and perception] lies in directly reproducing their consequences; and it is because there is a. . . tradition,

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7 Dominant perspectives in the philosophy of logic resolved this demarcation issue in a way that pragmatics remained a small subset of semantics—one might call it the garbage bin of non-logical concerns. On other philosophical perspectives (e.g., Sellars 1969), however, the scope of pragmatics came to overshadow that of semantics. In this, the latter, pragmatistic philosophers share a view on the distinction with linguistic anthropologists who make their conceptions on the subject explicit (e.g., Silverstein 1987a, 1993).
sanctioned by various beliefs, institutions and explicit rules, that a certain challenge cannot be ignored, that a certain request must be fulfilled. The pragmatism of such . . . acts is based on the same complicated mechanism as that on which the pragmatism, i.e. the effective force, of all rules of conduct, customs and [societal] laws is founded” ([1935]1965:49).

However, in situations characterized by issues of who gets to decide how to label other people, it might not be clear whether the “typifications” are merely aesthetic or the foundations for constituting and distinguishing communities. To group Neanderthals among the Great Apes, exclusive of modern humans is a (debatable) matter of scientific propriety that carries an aesthetic kind of taxonomic “necessity”, but lacks the properly epistemic sense of normativity—unless you belong to a society constituted on that basis!

The question much of this dissertation revolves around is whether cultural claims about Welshness amount to psychological or epistemological pragma. Do the features of Welshness that people in north-west Wales use to identify Welshness have the coherence of meaning-constituting necessity or merely of taxonomic convention? The staging ground for the pragmatics and politics of claims about language and community can now be conceived of as a field of tensions between aesthetic-evaluative and the epistemological-normative principles. That is, rules that are not rules can become rules when (and only when) the claims they represent become endorsed as part of local cultural and social realities.

In the play of human politics, the characters on the stage-of-the-world act in ways that are more or less “appropriate expressions of the thematic structure which ought to determine them” (Culler 1980:32). Each of the components of political acts, then, can be seen as moments in which the actors endorse the circumstances and/or consequences of a component of a political

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8 The normative term Culler chose, implies that thematic structures do not merely or necessarily influence actors, but inhabitants act as if they ought to determine actions in a narrative. For that reason, the fact that he recognizes that normativity is at issue is crucial. Here, the suggestion of determinism should not detract from the point about the normative influence of thematic structures on action.
act. This is the micro-scale at which political action is constructed, apart from the broader ideological consciousness and tacit practices. By looking at the ways in which such endorsements are material—have real force in human life and on other humans—we can move beyond the empty rhetoric of explicit ideology to the substantive rhetoric and consciousness of belonging.  

Currently, there are available resources for application in anthropology of this position on epistemic materialism and, more importantly for developing an explicit theory related to it. However, some of these resources are not well recognized and part of the goal of this dissertation has been to bring them to light. Now that I have applied theoretical concepts to empirical situations in Wales, only a little more effort is to bridge the concerns with ethnicity, essentialism, and constructivism to current methodologies in linguistic anthropology. While the mid- to late-Twentieth Century study of presupposition (e.g., Sellars 1954a; Grice 1975; Katz and Langendoen 1976; Morgan 1973; Stalnaker 1973, 1974) has influenced current-day sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology (e.g., Agha 2006; Duranti 1997; Rosaldo 1980; Schegloff 1991; Silverstein 1985c), the latter work has suggested that pragmatic functionality operates in two directions—connecting the present to the past, by means of presupposition, and creating the future, by means of creatively entailing signals. This conception of the relation of talk to context does not address the central problem of how social actors can do either.

The position I have taken, inferentialism, implies that what we think of in terms of contents, concepts, values, and structures of practices are all connected. Because “conceptual

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9 This is to allude to Wilfrid Sellars’ (1953, 1954a) critique of assumptions common in analytic philosophy, which would take, “It is raining; therefore, the streets are wet”, to be an invalid inference. By contrast to the emphasis on formal, truth-functional relations in inferences, Sellars highlighted the more ordinary truth: Learning of the concepts associated with the terms in the statements—“raining”, “street”, and “wet”—allows one to connect those concepts in a useful way that leads one validly from the premise to the conclusion on the basis of such knowledge of the world. Background knowledge about weather effects that are part of the concepts that these particular utterances are in virtue of what persons infer from them—both presupposing and understanding what other people want and need. Of course, the street is going to be wet if it rains! How is it logical to think that this is not a valid inference?
contents are conferred by being caught up in a social practical structure of inferentially articulated commitments and entitlements” (Brandom 1988:279), we are not left with the dilemma of culture versus language, matters of fact versus semantical meaning, and talk versus language ideologies. We have other options, such as a commitment to an “ongoing elucidative process”, as a process of discovering, deploying, and examining appropriate concepts, and “of discovering and repairing discordant concepts” (Brandom 1988:279). This inferentialist perspective allows me to frame the pragmatics and politics of language and community in north-west Wales by means of an alternative to indexes or icons that are bound by a sense of necessity. It envisions an empirical field organized not only by principles of Welsh belonging that are fundamentally constitutive (i.e., necessary), but a field that is held in tension by different types of principles.

ADVANCING THEORY: CULTURAL MODALITIES

To see the importance of epistemic materialism, it is necessary also to see that it is only half of the truth to say that cultural categories are objectified or typified—as in the Comaroffs’ discussions of the motivations for ethnicity, Handler’s (1988) discussion of cultural objectification, and in Gal and Irvine’s (1995, and other works) concept of iconization. The fuller truth is that ordinary people (including academics) use a combination of resources—concepts they see as constructed and concepts they see as completely natural and universal—and they use them with, as well as in tension against each other. This systemic practice also conditions academics’ use of the concept of constructed realities. Even if all realities are culturally and socially constructed—at the least, as a prerequisite for a reality to be recognized as
reality—scholars have to feel that some are more real than others if scholars are to claim any authority at all in the realm of knowledge.10

While I am somewhat inclined to see the forms of naturalization and objectification as largely unanalyzable into component elements—as in the case of metaphors and myths—I find ethnographic interest in the variation in forms of expressing naturalization. It is not just a sense of necessity that is important, which would lead to the impression that we are content with mapping relations alone. My numerous discussions of the shifting line between what is political, and what is not, reveal the ongoing processes of constitution of a cultural community centered in Cymraeg use, which I describe as the pragmatics of language community. Within such a cultural system, the rhetorical and cognitive acts of individuals come to have real force in the world. The various settings for “waging” the pragmatics of language community, the various linguistic and discursive stances people deploy in asserting associated ideologies (and systematic organization of this variety), and how people discipline their own practices in maintaining positions within the surface-level nationalism metadiscourse—discussion of all of these inform an account of the sort of essentialism in north-west Wales that sustains, for example, Cymraeg language activists.

As structured, epistemic, connections among apparent generals, systemic conceptual connections are represented in everyday experience and political action by means of various expressions; that is, by means of repeatable, explicit lexical forms, as well as more implicit stances. The analytic language for describing grammatical resources for producing the boundary between the real and the constructed is well-developed. Typically, this analytic language consists of tense, aspect, and mood (see for, example, Palmer 1986 and Sweetser 1990), which in its general shape is often referred to as “modality”. In one of its primary senses, “modality”

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10 I think this practical-moral hierarchy of concepts is what makes the denotational or descriptive mode of meaning so indispensable.
signifies a grammatical resource for coding agents’ ontological, epistemological, and moral commitments either to act or to believe (also called, with various senses, attitudes, stances, and positions). These commitments to act or to believe stand in relation to what can be treated as three classes of “things”: physical objects; events, processes, and states of affairs, and propositions (Lyons 1977; Perkins 1982). The grammatical coding of modality occurs in terms of various dimensions of human contexts, such as moral responsibility, personal evaluation, what is (un)known/(un)knowable, truth/alethic, time/tense, causation, probability (Perkins 1982; Rescher 1967). In everyday usage, POSSIBLY, BELIEVABLE, ACTUAL, YESTERDAY, ALWAYS, MUST, PROHIBITED, WONDERFUL, WILL HAPPEN, IS NOT LIKELY, would all be instances of language uses in which the expression of modality is coded by lexico-grammatical means.

Signs that are reproducible, having a (meta)semantic (i.e., conventionally meaningful) status, and that express those constraining aspects of situations can be conceived in explicit terms as a modal category or in a modal figure of discourse (cf. Brandom 2000:89-96). Whenever such modal devices are used, some epistemically material proprieties are at least tacit. Thus, even the indicative mood is “modal” in that it presupposes an actual world and a complex status quo within it. Some kinds of modalities (e.g., alethic) involve normative formulae that relate to propositions (as opposed to physical things and to events, processes, and states of affairs (Lyons 1977; Perkins 1982)). Normative formulae that express propositional kinds of modalities would provide the resources for metalanguage discourse in the context of elucidative processes.

Modal devices, defined functionally, are motivated with respect to dialogic and interactional interests. Also, on this account, they are part of a system of use (meaning-formalism) and a set of public (i.e., not in the head), culturally recognizable non-deductive games. Normative formulae render relatively explicit (which is contingent on the beholder) the
endorsement of the material proprieties that motivates the use of modal devices (This is a paraphrase of Brandom’s (2000:89) that reveals a more relativistic attitude toward explicitness than Brandom displayed.).

The analytic languages for the grammatical and lexical kinds of resources do not have a counterpart in the conceptual language for application to non-linguistic forms of social action (beyond the abstract social theoretic frameworks of Foucault, Gramsci, Bourdieu, and the like). However, there is a broader, discursive kind of communication that can be classified according to those forms of talk that have become central in linguistic anthropology in the last forty years, such as narratives, performance genres, communicative styles, or participant frameworks. Within this communicative order(s), there are linguistic resources for modulating the (assumed) modality of describing reality.11

There, we can surely find such resources for managing the transparently “constructed” concepts and topics, and for differentiating them from the “real” concepts and topics. They are persistent ways of thinking and ways of constructing social realities that are implicated in institutions and identities (and identities implicated in institutional practices), and these have been the empirical focus of this dissertation. More specifically, features of talk in this order(s) bear interrelationships through resources typically identified by means of evaluation and assessment (e.g., Biber and Finegan 1989; Englebretson 2007; Goodwin and Goodwin 1992; Jaffe 2009; Kockelman 2010; Labov 1997; Labov and Waletzky 1967; Palmer 1986; Thompson and Hunston 2000; Wortham and Locher 1999). Lexico-grammatical and discursive kinds of modality—“We can’t do that”, “That’s not feasible”, “If only we had alien technology”—can be

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11 Thus, a narrative about non-existing creatures or abilities might be recognizable as belonging to a purely imaginary state-of-affairs and, therefore, to a fantasy genre of expression. This is a modal category of broader scope than grammatical modality, even though what appears in the broad scope is suggested in the “narrow” scope. That is, alethic/dynamic modal forms can be expressed by non-structurally means—for example, a lexical item like DREAM—or by grammatical means—for example, by the auxiliary verb, “cannot be [true]”.
taken as expressions of the normativity of the conceptual relations by which agents construct their social worlds. It is because the same lexical item can be used for different conceptual framings, such as epistemic and moral perspectives, that the grammatical and lexical forms of modalities can address both structural concerns in language analysis and the broader “getting about” in the worlds we inhabit by means of learning, interpreting, and producing signs.

While developing a framework for the analytic concepts of status, role, and attitude, Kockelman (2010:8, 9) seemed to have those considerations in mind. Besides amplifying the writing of anthropologists like Ralph Linton, he also drew (implicitly in the following block quotation) on the work of Wilfrid Sellars’ champions—Robert Brandom and Ruth Millikan (Paul Kockelman, February 10, 2011, personal communication):

For present purposes, the modes of permission and obligation that make up a status may be regimented by any number of means: while typically grounded in norms (as commitments and entitlements), they may also be grounded in rules (as articulated norms) or laws (as legally-promulgated and politically-enforced rules) . . . In short, a status should be defined as a collection of commitments and entitlements to signify and interpret in particular ways; a role should be defined as any mode of signification or interpretation that enacts these commitments and entitlements; and an attitude should be defined as any interpretant of a status through a role—usually itself another status. Here, then, is where modality (entitlement and commitment) is most intimately tied to meaning (signification and interpretation).

The multiplistic dynamic space comprising the implicit and the expressive dimensions of social and interpretive constraint constitutes a domain of modality at the discursive and cultural level—“cultural modalization”. Thus, two prominent cultural modalities are the prevalence of

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12 Inferentialism can be argued to be an obstacle to understanding cultural modality. As part of a philosophical approach grounded in a sharp divide between the descriptive (“is”) from the prescriptive (“ought”), inferentialism emphasizes analysis at the cost of practical understanding. However, just as one sees in material modes of talk the confused blurring of the use–mention distinction, one also sees in ordinary cognition and language-use a blurring of the is–ought distinction. The result is the merging of the semantics/notional/worldview side of meaning with the pragmatics/performative/practice side of meaning: a hallmark of philosophical (“American”) pragmatism.
the nationalism meta-discourse and the drowning of compatriots in Welshness. What I have described as cultural submergence is the clashing of these two modalities at the surface of cultural processes. The fact that the surface of national positionality is dominated, first, by English media, and second, by the prevalent meta-discourse of and about nationalism in the English media is that communitarians who center their identity in Cymraeg move toward the cultural depths and richness of the Cymraeg community.

My approach in this dissertation engages directly with the conflicting strategies of essentialist-primordialism and constructivism without denaturing the essentializing claims of, for example, language activists. The product of this perspective of pragmatic action as being in tension among different modal types of principles is an account that transcends iconic mapping relations. The account presented in this dissertation suggests strategies for identifying, and has portrayed, a variety of particular ways of conceiving and enacting belonging within language communities.

Further investigation would examine commitments to a language community or language demesne—the accompanying entitlements, and related attributions, undertakings, and endorsements of those commitments and entitlements. Such an interrogation would allow me to make coherent claims about individuals, peoples, and practices without presupposing or conveying an underlying cohesion that might not exist. By investigating the construction of language communities in terms of areas of cohesion that do not necessarily overlap—and might be in mutual conflict—I would more likely arrive at a complex dynamic picture of sociocultural interaction. Consequently, such a project allows researchers to develop language for empirical description of how language functions productively relative to constituting of language demesnes and language corridors.
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APPENDICES
“Hiraeth” is an emblematic word in the contact between Cymraeg and English-language contexts. This word is often described by Cymraeg-speaking Welsh persons as untranslatable. In English-language contexts (e.g., National Geographic, June 2001), “hiraeth” is often translated as “homesickness” and “nostalgia” (see Drakakis-Smith et al. 2007:9). If “hiraeth” really is untranslatable, then “nostalgia” is, at best, a gloss—in the sense of a tentative, but inadequate translation. “Nostalgia” is etymologically accurate insofar as “nostalgia” can signify an illness related to homesickness, which was medically recognized in the eighteenth century, leading even to the burying alive of soldiers who succumbed to the illness (see Lowenthal 1985:3-12). However, in the contemporary context of social research, particularly anthropology, translating “hiraeth” as “nostalgia” is problematic because nostalgia itself has become an object of analysis. Translating “hiraeth” as “nostalgia” is particularly problematic because post-colonial studies has yielded a variety of the concept of nostalgia that takes on the connotation of a particular sort of historicity, à la imperial nostalgia (see Rosaldo 1989b). Hence, today, researchers can be nostalgic for a time when they were able to experience nostalgia happily and innocently.

“Nostalgia” is also inadequate because hiraeth speaks to longing for home and being situated in a cultural milieu that is part of oneself, but also speaks to the macro-locale of Welsh traditions, recursively encompassing the Cymraeg contexts (e.g., famous poetry and hymns) in which allusions to hiraeth figure. “Hiraeth”, thus, has an historical dimension (as Lowenthal 1985 noted of “nostalgia”), as well as the sense of having connections to a place—Wales and particular parts of Wales. Consequently, it makes sense to think of the concept of hiraeth, from
an academic perspective, as a particular kind of historicity. This chapter presents a representation of that practical *hiraeth* sort of historicity.

**The Cymraeg Social Imaginary**

Once upon a time, the Welsh knew when their history began. It began about 1170 BC. That was when the Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines and when Brutus, a descendant of the Trojans, landed on the shores of Britain. Apart from a few giants, the island had no inhabitants. Brutus and his companions were the first of the Britons and the ancestors of the Welsh. This was Geoffrey of Monmouth’s account of the early history of Britain, written in AD 1136, an account which would be central to the consciousness of the Welsh for many centuries.

Such precision about the beginning of Wales and the Welsh has long ceased to be tenable. (John Davies 1993:1)

These are the words that open the English translation of academic historian, John Davies’, *Hanes Cymru* [A History of Wales]. It is telling that he begins with the gambit of “once upon a time” and follows with his brief, tongue-in-cheek, quasi-historical account—one that nevertheless has been and might still be, for some, “central to the consciousness of the Welsh”. It is especially telling that he replaces this fairy tale frame with an evaluative comment about the difficulties of producing consensus about the Welsh origins. The evaluative comment, a rhetorical expression of aporia, marks an historiographic ambiguity and sociological sense of uncertainty.

Wales has served as a site of such struggles for so long that this history evoked the challenging question by Gwyn Alf Williams (1985): *When was Wales?* One answer, contained in the asking of that ambiguous question, is that Welsh identity can be found only in its struggle for something akin to state status, even if this struggle is unsuccessful from the perspective of any historical point in time. However, this idea of national struggle should not be construed as a simple conflict between thesis and antithesis. Struggle involves dynamic situations in which
people simultaneously propose various propositions and interact socially in these political and
other spheres. The very idea of struggle holds within it the possibility of rejection of the idea of
conflict itself; and not only by those who are the target of resistance, but also by those who
merely dislike struggle. Struggle implies tension, rather than a state of peace and comfort that
many seek. Thus, not every Welsh person, perhaps not even most, would endorse Williams’
principle of political-sociological struggle as a national ideal.¹ The corollary to the question of
“What is the nation?” , which Williams addressed via the question “When was Wales?” , would
seem to be, “Whose history?”.

Williams’ emphasis of the processual nature of a Welsh historicity and the idea of Wales
he advanced are instructive in situating the problem of the submergence of culture. Crucially,
Williams begged the question insofar as he did not explain how the historicity of a nation is to be
identified. To put it another way: If, as Santayana (1906) cautioned, a nation of people is
condemned to repeat the past because the people cannot remember how it (i.e., the past)
constitutes the core nature of the nation, what is the “it” they are condemned to repeat? What or
who makes the past into an “it”? Moreover, how can “it” be repeated by a people who lack the
identity to make themselves continuous with those who lived such a past on previous occasions?
Williams, like Santayana, left unspecified the particulars of the presupposed link between
embodied personal experience and some kind of historicity (where either of these might take on
the value of substance or essence, with the former subsuming individual bodies or economic

¹ There is even less reason to hope for consensus in light of Williams’ amicable clashes on this very subject with
another famous Welsh historian, Wynford Vaughan Thomas, on a television history program in the late 1970s with
the telling title, The Dragon with Two Tongues. [The dragon is one of the national symbols of Wales and it has had
multiple appearances throughout British history that some see as continuous. Many link it to Roman use of a dragon
figure as a device of auxiliary cavalry troops. It has been associated with the legendary king, Arthur. Henry VII
used as a dragon device on his standard at the Battle of Bosworth. The two “tongues” are English and Cymraeg.]
production processes, and the latter narratival frames of experience or perspectives on the sweep of history). Thus, Williams poured new paradoxes into old antinomies.\(^2\)

While there might be no consensus about when the history of Wales should begin, Wales has served as a site of struggles to anchor identity to an inchoate and futurist imaginary state for many centuries. If one adopted the view that one cannot locate nationalism in Wales prior to the industrial era, this neglects the long millennium preceding industrialization (to extend phrasings of the “long century” for spans of times that do not match up as conventional centuries, which would be inaptly designated using ordinals, such as “the Eighteenth”). If it is untenable to speak of Brutus and giants in an historiographic register, it is much more tenable to address the time in Wales’ history after Rome’s troops left or assimilated into societies in Britain. The historicity of Welsh identity might find its clearest evidentiary basis in the period when Anglo-Saxon settlement and Irish raiding established boundary lines between the three peoples—the Teutons, the Gaels, and the Britons. If there is a “consciousness of the Welsh” associated with the Cymraeg language-cultural complex, the first millennium of this post-Roman Welsh history, extending from the 400s to the 1200s, is central to it. It includes periods, each arguably a “golden age” for Wales, that are in contrast to the “Dark Ages” of Europe that was signalled by the “fall” of Rome.

The most recognizable contrasting age of “radiance” (400-600) is marked by the development of monastic communities—think of the patron saints, Patrick and David, of Ireland and Wales, respectively—and a periodic literary tradition that is known through later written documents of much earlier oral poems. Also, between the years 400 and 900, Welsh societies underwent a transition from the figuring of corporate identity in terms of conquered tribes to that of Welsh quasi-feudal dynasties and their associated territories. One might even imagine this era

\(^2\) The mentioning of antinomies is an allusion to Kant’s use of certain intellectual dilemmas in which each lemma leads to contradiction. He claimed that such a result indicates a problem with the formulation of the dilemma.
as the assimilation by native Britons in Wales of what Davies (1993:44) called the ethos of Athens (e.g., literature and fine arts) and Rome (e.g., social economic stability and political administration). Since the legionaries and auxiliaries “were more likely to hail from the valleys of the Rhine and the Danube than from the valley of the Tiber” (Davies 1993:32), this image draws on an elite administrative class and a Roman-culture hegemony.

Professional historians of Wales and those attempting to express “properly academic” voices might be more confident in locating a national identity centuries later in the post-Conquest part of the medieval era. Wales, emerging from a group of small kingdoms occasionally unified between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, lost its autonomy well before the other two major non-English areas. Until the late thirteenth century, when the successful conquest of Wales occurred, Wales had been divided into multiple territories. At several points in history, certain rulers could unite these “micro-states” into a principality encompassing most or all of the territory of modern Wales for several decades. The last native leader of Wales was defeated in 1282 by the forces of a Norman-English king, Edward I. Conquest symbolized the end of a dynasty of these various native rulers, with only a short, but important rebellion begun (by Owain Glyndŵr) in 1400 to interrupt briefly the longue durée of Norman-English hegemony from the thirteenth to the twentieth century.

Losing independence long before the Industrial Revolution, Wales was never in a position to develop indigenously the industrial and economic systems that Scotland did by the eighteenth century. It also lacked, in more recent centuries, the networks to enable, and willingness to employ outright violence in resistance to the English state as Irish republicans
Moreover, although Welsh nationalism was tied to a religious movement that was opposed to the Church of England, it managed to avoid the internal, religious divisiveness exhibited in Northern Ireland. Nationalism in north-west Wales—often deemed the most extreme of Welsh nationalism, in conjunction with the view from south Wales that villages and social networks in the north of Wales can be less welcoming and more closed than in the south—appears to be idealist. That is, it normalizes a more idealist, expression-oriented sort of cultural identity, rather than a more materialist view of identity that would emphasize political acts or attitudes (see Khleif 1980, Rawkins 1984, and Davies 1989).

Wales is most easily distinguished from the rest of the other nations of the UK by its remarkable maintenance of a thriving, if minority, “native-language” complex. There has been a great deal of resistance to the acceptance in British modernity of that indigenous language community. It was only in 1993 that Cymraeg became Wales’ second official language alongside English, and this followed the centuries of struggle that make up the nationalist’s view of the history of the indigenous language of Wales.

During the second half of the long millennium before industrialization, the occasional stability among fractious political units in present-day regions of Wales provides several bases for claims about national unity. That scope of interest ranges over local-area princes’ irregular attempts to unite Wales since at least the eight century and the codification of Welsh national laws in the tenth century. How broad a perspective can be given to the telling of so-called

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3 By an odd set of unconnected coincidences, hundreds of these Irish republicans, including Michael Collins, were detained at a former-whiskey distillery-turned-prison-camp in then-remote north Wales after their involvement in the 1916 Easter Rising. By interring the “worst” of the Irish revolutionaries together in one place, the British government facilitated the detainees’ founding of the Irish Republic Army, since the prisoners organized the covert teaching of guerrilla tactics—and, interestingly, facilitated the detainees’ exposure to the non-English language (i.e., Cymraeg) prevalent in the countryside around the prison camp (Whitmore 1917). Another camp for these detainees was located a mile or so away, near Capel Celyn, on the land of what would become one of the symbols for modern Welsh nationalism: the Tryweryn Reservoir.
nationalistic history is often a matter of how closely it is tied to the history of ethnic conflict and tension between the people of Wales and England.

The latter history of conflict begins with the early history of confrontation with English settlers and rulers (combining, from a Welsh perspective: Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and the Normans). That the late medieval English kings saw the Welsh as a separate people is clear, given that legal entitlements yielded to the Welsh are mentioned in the Runnymede Charter of 1215, the most famous of the charters referred to under the abbreviated name of “the Magna Carta”. The history of Wales and England over this particularly contentious era, during which the futures of the two peoples were joined, is generally told from a doubly insular perspective (islanded from English Britain, which is islanded from Continental Europe), rather than addressing interaction between ethnic groups. Although the historiography of language contact across the Welsh borders is one I have not explored and this scholarship appears to me generally neglected, language was probably a symbol for cultural identity even before the conquest.

Even after conquest by the Norman-English in 1282, the native language complex continued for over seven centuries. This complex includes a literate tradition that was standardized by the sixteenth century according to the native concerns and interests of Wales’ artistic and religious communities (see Jones 1994). However, by the eighteenth century, societal conditions had changed so that the literate tradition could no longer support itself. Although some degree of standardization might have lent validity to Cymraeg in an objectified form, material and ideological forces in Welsh society directly and indirectly impacted public Cymraeg practices during the Victorian era. As with other indigenous and colonized language communities during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the British state and civil society
applied various methods to persuade the Welsh to recognize Cymraeg as pre-modern, relative to the “modern” language of English.

The method most widely recognized in Wales is the prohibition of the use of Cymraeg in school settings. It is most widely known because the story of this historical practice is reproduced in the very institutional setting that is its narratival setting: the school. Its popular form is called the “Welsh Not”. Pupils who violated the prohibition were compelled to wear a heavy placard made of slate (or other material) around their neck until another pupil could be caught speaking the “Welsh” language. The child still carrying the “Welsh Not” at the end of the day was caned. Historical narratives that circulate in Wales depict this era in different ways. Some versions of this and similar narratives adopt a conquest and domination theme, and blame the English for such disciplinary measures. Others note that Welsh persons, not the English, enacted such measures themselves in full complicity with English-language hegemony. Those who imagine neutrality to be a condition of historical accuracy might leave out the moral condemnation of the English language, omit any sense of language dominance in a material as well as ideational sense, and downplay the role of dominant languages in the ideological portrayal of identity as a dichotomous sense of belonging and place.

Whatever might have been the specific role of Cymraeg in ethnic identity, from the medieval era to the Victorian period, the conspicuous replacement of that language by the English language in many settings in Wales by the twentieth century brought language politics into national consciousness. Teachers in north-west Wales often compare mid-twentieth-century protests, which complained about policies and practices that favored the English over Cymraeg, to the civil rights movement in the United States. One teacher I spoke with in 2002 claimed:
The great hero of course in Wales was Martin Luther King. . . and he certainly had an impact on Welsh politics in the 60s. . . There are a lot of Welsh poets in the 60s who wrote about the Montgomery bus protests and that sort of thing. . . If you look back to the language movement in the 60s, a lot of leaders were ministers in religion and they obviously identified with Martin Luther King. . . And they were pacifists. That is why Welsh nationalism has gone down a different path, for example, to Irish nationalism. There’s a strong tradition of pacifism. Gandhi was very influential, as well. (Interview D2#2R, July 3, 2002)

Because of the non-violent strictures of the movement associated with him, Martin Luther King, Jr. is frequently cited as an important figure for Welsh people who participated in Wales’ language rights movements in the 1970s and 1980s, and were influenced by those who participated in language activism in the 1950s and 1960s.

Some key landmarks in this “protest era” of Wales will help to provide a sense of how this time in Welsh history is often conceived of from a popular and educational perspective. In 1938, demands were made of the British government by petition for Cymraeg to be granted an official status equal to that of English. Three decades later, in 1967, an Act of Parliament was enacted that required government forms to be printed in both English and Cymraeg, and bilingual services to be provided in courts of law. In 1977, campaigns to establish a Cymraeg radio station succeeded. In 1982, language activists badgered then-Prime Minister Thatcher into keeping her promise of establishing a Cymraeg television service. The UK Parliament gave Cymraeg a status in courts and the public sector (in Wales) equal to that of English in 1993.4

This series of events and dates might suggest a concession to a more positive outlook of the language’s survival. On the other hand, it might be the influence of a motivated segment of the Welsh population on parliamentary regimes, whose members came to see imperial attitudes

4 While never officially tied to governmental institutions prior to 1998 (with the exception, perhaps, of the nationalist political party), these landmarks in the history of civil protest—as developments in the cultural restoration of mass media and civic spaces—paralleled developments in the cultural restoration of educational institutions positioned within the state governmental framework.
as old-fashioned and counterproductive to British exploitation of global capitalism. The unambiguous consequence is a range of choice. While that range of choice is most visible in the commercial sector, it corresponds to a wider liberal attitude in Britain, where the “choice” of Cymraeg has only recently become visible in the governmental, not the commercial sector. Thus, many people in Wales have recently been able to choose to have their utility bills printed in Cymraeg, and to enjoy the bilingual services of public institutions (e.g., libraries and post offices) which are required by law to employ staff persons who can communicate in Cymraeg. The ability to tune in to S4C—Sianel Pedwar Cymraeg [Channel 4, Cymraeg], which was in 2007 and 2008, and has been for some time, the only antenna-received, television channel featuring Cymraeg programming—is another context of choice.

I give this account because it reflects a history of protest in Wales that is centered on felt abuses to the state of Cymraeg. Of course, protest can take and has taken different forms and can be differently evaluated, both violent and non-violent. People I interviewed at several stages of dissertation field research generally considered political action that involves damage to physical structures like electrical transformers and buildings, but not people, to be non-violent. A strong constraining principle is exemplified by the measured use of symbolic, though physically destructive violence performed by two sorts of groups: One of these consists of the paramilitary organizations of the 1960s and 1970s, whose members blasted pipelines and dam construction
sites. The other sort includes the Welsh arsonists (Meibion Glyndŵr [Sons of Glyndŵr]) who, in the 1980s, set fire to English holiday-homes located in Wales.⁵

The way the Welsh have dealt with ethnic conflict for a century and a half has been outside the realm of full-fledged violence. Rather, their actions and practices fall within a range that neither excludes peaceful settlement of conflicts, nor declines into outright ethnic violence.⁶ Not surprisingly, music, literature, and other expressive forms of culture appear in a favorable light to all and sundry in Wales. I believe the explanation (which I do not provide) can be found in conditions like those Comaroff (1987:305) formulated, if slightly stronger than the Welsh case: “But even where they have had a social identity contrived for them, subordinate groupings . . . may begin to assert a shared commitment to an order of symbols and meanings and, sometimes, a moral code (Moerman 1967)”.

Expressive culture might have been the primary way of expressing a Welsh sense of culture because it is free from any of the social recriminations ranging from accusations of social backwardness or of personal contrariness, to being anti-English (and therefore anti-British). While many, perhaps the mainstream of, Welsh

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⁵ I believe the model for this mode of reprisal, involving the burning of second homes owned by English residents and of property of government (UK) agencies in Wales, is suggested by tenth-century, codified indigenous Welsh law. The more contemporary reference is probably the 1936 incident when three nationalists set a shed on fire at the Royal Air Force installation at Penyberth on the LLŷn peninsula. Yet, the Tenth-Century, codified indigenous Welsh law might lie in the background of that incident. My suggestion is that this cultural knowledge lies in the background among some Cymraeg speakers or texts, but I have found no confirmation of the idea that anyone is aware of such a source as a motivating inspiration. In the version of Cyfraith Hywel (The Law of Hywel Dda) called Llyfr y Damweiniau, this legal codex states: “If it happens that a person does violence or harm against another for land or earth, let him do it on the land or earth for which his claim is . . . This is violence: burning houses and breaking ploughs” (Jenkins 2000:111). Another version, the Cynferth Redaction, further states: “Whosoever holds land for three men’s lifetimes in the same country as those entitled . . . without claim and without surclaim, without burning houses and without breaking ploughs, they will never be answered for that land, since law closed between them” (Jenkins 2000:111-112).

⁶ This kind of action, while labeled nationalism in Wales, could be alternatively labeled “ethnic affrontery”. The etymological derivation of “affrontery” is that of an Old French expression meaning a literal slap to the forehead, where the import would be more social than physical. The Welsh use of ethnic affrontery exemplifies gradations among kinds of political and social action. These gradations subsist whether political action involves an attempt to inflict damage on the physical implements of hegemonic institutions, or those expressive means of social and/or political action in which political violence is often sheathed (for example, protest songs).
persons tend to respond negatively to forms of violent or criminal political action, everybody
loves a good Welsh male-voice choir.

The result might be variously described in awkward connotations, as repressed, as a
simmering anger, as cultural frustration. Tellingly, the way I heard it most commonly expressed
by Welsh persons is that the Welsh have a lack of confidence. Thus, the confident stance that is
frequently maligned as “nationalistic” sometimes appears unexpectedly in contexts thought to be
pacific in nature and free of political tensions. In the 2003 national culture festival, the National
Eisteddfod, the highest award in the competitions at that festival was received by a poet wearing
a t-shirt bearing the Cymraeg word, “cymuned”. The typesetting styling of the word [Cymraeg
for “community”] was that of an activist organization that is generally perceived to represent a
“nationalist” point of view about maintaining the “Welsh” character of villages in Wales,
particularly rural Wales. Cymuned is generally taken to be extreme, but only within the range of
civil action; and would only rarely (if ever) be confused with paramilitary groups or arsonists.
Knowing that he would be receiving the award that day, the winning poet chose to wear a t-shirt
of a political group best known for its campaign to control English immigration into Wales.
Moreover, the winning poet is and was announced at the ceremony to be an active member of
that organization.

It is easy to imagine, and I do, that this history of protest has led to changes in the
political prospects of Cymraeg. Cymraeg language identity has also been (and is being) shaped
into a more positive object of perception by changing social attitudes. Up until the 1980s, the
broad public considered Cymraeg to be a lower status language than English (Khleif 1980).
Consequently, the former language was linked by social values to Welsh culture and heritage,
while English was linked to economic well-being and modern civilization. Conservatives and
centrists of the UK believed that the language was going to “die out” in the near future—and this “extinction” was encouraged at least since the nineteenth century (see Jones 1950; Jones 1998). The situation is different today, as many economic opportunities now exist for bilingual persons. It is noteworthy that use of Cymraeg was thought to be disadvantageous in pre-war Wales, motivating parents to emphasize English in the home. Today, competence in Cymraeg is sought in many jobs, from post office clerk to university instructor.

**Language, Ethnicity, and Modernity**

While Cymraeg has made a slight recovery from the long slide to its plateau of relative marginality during the Victorian and Edwardian eras and the twentieth century, its future in the linguistic reality of Britain remains in doubt. Certainly, it now has a more positive image and status in discourses in Wales than it had in the Victorian era, coming to be seen as less alien to an imaginary Wales in the modern age. Nonetheless, the label of “Welsh” (originally meaning “foreign”) remains.

The central descriptive topics that this dissertation addresses are the role that languages play as emblems of nation, their cultural persuasiveness in this role, and—for many, but not all, or even most—Cymraeg’s primacy over any other image of native identity in north-west Wales. It is not only careless, but problematic to refer to the mutually intelligible varieties of Cymraeg as the Welsh language. This is not simply because of the plurality hiding behind the singular term, “Cymraeg”, or even “the Welsh language”, but because English is also a Welsh language—albeit one that has failed to obtain legitimacy as an indigenous language, both because of and despite its dominance.
As do people around many parts of the world with language, Welsh persons talk of the salient language categories of English and Cymraeg in ways that suggest the categories are monolithic, even if each label encompasses a large range of linguistic forms. It is somewhat well-known that the set of language varieties conveniently called “English” is highly diverse in the United Kingdom, and this is also true within Wales. While laypersons in Wales recognize two major kinds of Cymraeg (south Walian and north Walian), the number of the Cymraeg language varieties associated with regions in Wales is not fully charted, with the exception of broad varieties (as studied under the rubric of “Welsh dialectology” by Thomas 1973, for example). Given modern forms of media (e.g., television), the presence of any of the regional dialects of English overshadows that of the Cymraeg regional dialects, much as the presence of the former does in most of the urban areas of Wales. This “fact of life” accentuates the sense of

Figure A.1: Percentage of those able to speak, read, and write Cymraeg by age ranges. (ONS 2004b)
unity across region-based Cymraeg varieties, producing an image of a dominant monolith of English language and a subordinate monolith of Cymraeg.\textsuperscript{7}

One recent sociolinguistic study by researchers based at the University of Wales, Bangor (Jones and Morris 2008) described Cymraeg in Wales in terms of its national-level features. The authors (2008:128) located Cymraeg in Wales under their “Cluster B”, which they characterized as follows: “Some young families speak their [\textit{sic}] language with offspring, but mainly the older generation [speak their language with offspring]; a few minority language speakers in mixed families also use minority language”. Such a description opens the cracks to allow more nuanced studies of differences among generations and communicative contexts, as well as area and regional variation—even in the context of a typology of the status of languages in states.\textsuperscript{8}

By contrast, most academics and well-informed laypersons typically describe Cymraeg in Wales in terms of official census figures. The 2001 census showed a trend reversal in the proportion of people in Wales who can speak Cymraeg: After a century-long drop from fifty percent in 1901 to eighteen percent in the 1980s (ONS 2004b), this proportion rose to just over 7

\textsuperscript{7} If the language takes on the nature of geological orders of time, this is poetically apt. Several terms for geological periods come from Welsh heritage, whose rocky countryside held Paleozoic-Era remnants on which early geologists labored: Cambrian (Latin for “Cymru/Cymry”, Wales), Ordovician (from the name of an ancient British tribe), Silurian (from the name of an ancient British tribe), and Breconian (a now-defunct label for a stage of the Devonian period that comes from the name for an area of Wales).

\textsuperscript{8} The other categories and characterizations that Jones and Morris (2008:129-130) include for comparison are: Cluster A—“Virtually all young families speak their language with offspring as do most minority language speakers in mixed families”; Cluster C—“Only about half of families speak minority language with offspring, mainly the older generation”; Cluster D—“Only a minority of families speak minority language with offspring, mainly older people; people have heard grandparents speak the language”; and Cluster E—“Virtually no families, except for the very old, use the minority language in the family”.

Examples of these different categories include: Cluster A—“Swedish in Finland, Catalan in Catalonia, German in Belgium, German in Italy, Luxembourgish, and Turkish in Greece”; Cluster B—“Basque AC, Catalan in Majorca, Galician in Galicia, Ladin, Slovene in Italy, Slovene in Austria, Basque in Navarre, Danish in Germany, Occitan in Spain, Friulian, Catalan in Aragon, Albanian in Italy, Occitan in Italy, Mirandese”; Cluster C—“German in Denmark, Catalan in Valencia, Irish, Asturian, Gaelic, German in France, Frisian, Croatian in Austria, Basque in France, Catalan in France, Corsican, Franco Provençal, Slovak in Austria, Catalan in Italy, Slavo Macedonian, Bulgarian, Aromanian, Albanian in Greece”; Cluster D—“Sorbian, Saami in Finland, Tornedalen, Hungarian in Austria, Irish in Northern Ireland, Saami in Sweden, Breton, North Frisian, Dutch in France, Occitan in France, Sardiniian, East Frisian, Portuguese in Spain”; and Cluster E—“Grico, Cornish”. The table in which Jones and Morris (2008) present this classification was adapted from Glyn Williams’ \textit{Sustaining Language Diversity in Europe: Evidence from the Euromosaic Project} (published in 2005 by Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke).
twenty percent by 2001 (ONS 2004a:7). There is great variety concealed by these national-level official figures, however. At the scale of neighborhoods and villages, there is dramatic variation. Moreover, different regions of Wales have historically had different trends and patterns of decline in Cymraeg usage, with some areas maintaining very high levels of usage.

Nonetheless, the national census figures do express an image of Cymraeg’s minority status that is born out even at the scale of counties, with which local governmental bodies tend to be associated. Only four of Wales’ 22 unitary authorities (counties, boroughs, and three cities) have a percentage greater than fifty percent of their respective residents (age three and older) in possession of some kind of competence in Cymraeg (ONS 2004a:7). The unitary authority with the next largest proportion of people competent in Cymraeg possesses a population with less than 30 percent competent in Cymraeg (ONS 2004a:7). With a total of 417,736 residents, age three and older, the collective populations of these four Cymraeg-majority counties make up only 14.9

Figure A.2: The slope of the changing percentage of people aged 3 and over who are able to speak Cymraeg over time—which was in decline until the mid-1980s. (ONS 2004b)
percent of Wales’ total population. In terms of physical territory, these four counties are among
the ten largest unitary authorities in Wales, covering over thirty-five percent of the total area of
Wales. These are relatively rural counties, which tends to make them marginal in terms of
production markets for mass media like television.

It is possible that the association between rural areas and Cymraeg dominance offers
hints about different trends and patterns of decline in Cymraeg usage in different regions of
Wales. Before 1800, there were many villages and towns in which Welsh people would have
experienced Cymraeg in monolingual settings. In the eighteenth century, the English language
increasingly came to be conceived of as a sign of civilization, as the only means of
communication for civilized people, a goal with which Cymraeg. The expansion of the Anglican
Church into Wales, the development of a state church-run network of schools, the “Whig
interpretation of history”, Matthew Arnold's social Darwinian excoriation of the use of Cymraeg,
the royal commission report that criticized Welsh education and morality in 1847—all these
presented a contrast between the supposedly progressive and upstanding English and the
purportedly backward and inferior Welsh. That is, not only were human labor and natural
resources (e.g., coal) of Wales being exploited by the British Empire, but various more or less
good-intentioned Britons had developed an elaborate system of institutional “trenches” (Gramsci
1971:243) throughout Welsh society that placed elements of English culture strategically within
Welsh life.

Of course, the Welsh responded with their own system of institutional trenches in this
war of position; even if some were “concerned to answer the criticisms [of the 1847 report on
Welsh education] by becoming more like the English” (Morgan 1983: 93). Members of Welsh
civil society continued to create Cymraeg language and literary societies, but these became more
markedly and pointedly Welsh cultural institutions. In addition, revivals of Welsh culture, exemplified by the National Eisteddfod and the Order of Bards, were characteristic of Britain between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Morgan 1983) and their persistence over time, until today, appears to have been due largely to cultural confrontation with the foreign, English culture.

Presumably areas affected most by the industrial revolution would also be most influenced by those messages about a “civilized” modernity. Despite the concurrent circulation of multiculturalist messages in mass media, I have heard people say that Cymraeg is obsolete in today’s world. A cultural evolutionary ideology, then, re-assembles in the present into mutual exclusive human spaces. Whatever motivated people to produce verbal or written expressions of that perspective on language and progress, the outcome is that many in Wales conceive of domestic and public spaces as being open to one or the other exclusive means of communication (i.e., language codes).

Today, as in the Eighteenth Century, messages that seek to exclude Cymraeg from the spaces of modernity often are animated by people who cannot participate in Cymraeg conversations. While use of Cymraeg over much of Wales was seen as natural and to be expected before 1800, the present situation is one of bilingualism for a mere twenty to twenty-five percent of the national population. The majority of the Welsh population can only speak English. Unfortunately, the idea of language exclusion is also reproduced by bilingual activists. In meeting the challenges faced by those in Cymraeg-centered communities who feel threatened by language decline, Cymraeg activists perpetuate the politicization of the language. This theme is elaborated later in Chapter Four, in terms of a “Welsh logic of heritage”.
Hughes: ’s my second language.
Williams: It’s our second language, yes.
Hughes: Yes.
Williams: So-
Hughes: Um, well, this term in our in year 3 and 4, our theme is um, sea, the sea life and the sea shore and in history we’re doing Tudor Times and we try to look at the Welsh aspect you know not- we do talk about things like you know who was the King and Queen of England at the time you know-
Maas: Mm hm:
Hughes: But that’s just by the way we really try to think of what pla- what sort of place it was in Wales at th~s- at the same time and what’s the most important thing. There is the um, translation of the Bible.
Maas: Uh huh.
Hughes: Which happened in 1588, you know?
Maas: Uh huh.
Hughes: -By request of Elizabeth, who was Queen at the time, you know?
Maas: Oh, so she actually requested that? I didn’t-
Hughes: Yes, yes.
Maas: …know that.
Hughes: Because she wanted to change, because before th- it was a Catholic country, wasn’t it, and then she wanted to change it really, um, to Protestant so she thought the best thing is to give the people of Wales the chance to read and learn about the Bible
Maas: Hm.
Hughes: And of course there weren’t any schools. . .
Maas: Right.
Hughes: …so they- they didn’t have books either. So she started with the Bible, really, and that was translated fours hundred- in 1588 And then um each village was given or each town was given a bible in the chapel of the church, chained, because there was only one and they were so rare, you know.
Maas: Right.
Hughes: So people then started having schools in chapels and in churches you know where they started to read.
Maas: Huh.
Hughes: Um, so that’s quite interesting, you know th-
Maas: How do the students respond to... I guess by that time they know who L-
Elizabeth is.
H: Yeah’m. They also know about the Spanish Armada, as well, which happened in 1588, you know, y- uh- so we relate it with that, as well, you know, talk a little about what’s happened, you know, during that time. Em, and every four years we go: to where William Morgan was born, the chapel d- wooded—the translation—we go there on a pererindod-

W: Right, it’s on a pilgrimage.

H: “Pilgrimage”. No, we walk there, which is nice you know through forestry and uh-

W: Mmm.

M: W- You walk from where to?

H: We walk from em- the- the- village where he lived was near Penmachno, Betws...

M: Uh huh-

H: …-y-coed.

M: …Okay. Right.

H: …So, we eh walk from Dolwyddelan...

M: Uh huh.

H: …across you know and that...

M: Mm.

H: …which is a nice walk, it’s not very long, it’s-

M: It’s about ten:: miles isn’t it?

H: It’s two, three...

M: …Or six-

H: … miles you know, but it’s...

M: -Oh, okay.

H: …it’s, it’s countryside and you know, it’s- it gives them a feeling of what sort of age it’s very very narrow road, you know...

M: Uh huh.

W: Oh.

H: …um and then when you do arrive I don’t know if you’ve been there, but it’s a wonderful place.

M: I walked from um:: Capel Curig...

W: …Mm:

H: Yeah.

M: …to Betws-y-coed.

H: Oh there we are.

M: Which was more-

H: But you’ve haven’t been to /y/ [the]¹ Ty Mawr Wybernant where William Morgan lived?

M: No:, no.

H: That’s very interesting. It’s-

W: Mm, it’s a lovely- it’s being...

H: ’s museum there

W: …renovated.

H: you know. Yes.

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¹ Both teachers occasionally used “y” [the] as a definite article in English-language streams of talk.
W: Yes.
H: And there’s a museum there you know, showing uh, you know...
M: Hm.
H: ...what’s sorts of, uh, and it’s a wonderful place for the children to go and see...
W: Mmm.
H: ...as well what sorts of houses they lived you know...
M: Uh huh.
H: ....because there’s no glass on the windows you know, shutters and, very, very old-fashioned.
M: Mm.
H: So that’s just you know what we do this term that is, you know. We also look at, um, [school bell/alarm sounds] in history, I mean in the Year 4, we look at the Cel-, you know, at the Celtic Time...
M: Mhm:
H: ...where we learn really from where we’ve come from as a nation you know or as a people.
M: How far back do you start? Is it Iron A- Age or...?
H: No, we d-, um, when the Celts really came to places in Wales, you know. Um, we don’t really give a date.
M: Uh huh.
H: And also there, we talk about Dewi Sant, you know...
M: Uh huh.
R2 ...the patron saint of Wales...
M: Yeah.
H: ...Saints come into that category as well and that time you know.
M: Uh huh.
H: So you’re able to talk about Dewi S:ant David, but also about Deiniol.
M: Uh huh.
W: Uh.
H: ...who in:cidentally, who um-
W: Founded.
H: Established, yes,
W: Founded? Mm.
H: Established the Church [redacted] in you know in Bangor, you know we...
M: Uh huh.
H: ...try to do it as a local thing, more or less. And of course in Anglesey, as well, we’ve got, eh, Celtic places where we can go to, which are very,
W: Yes, the...
H: ...interesting.
W: ...burial grounds.
H: Yes, burial...
W: In Pen Celli Du
H: ...grounds. Pen Celli Du…
M: Oh right.
W: ... and um Pen LLYwydd(?), which is a very interesting place. It’s over, see, you know that, on top of the hill.
M: Huh.
W: Em. Pen LLYwydd(?) that’s great if you’ll get the chance to go there you know...
M: Okay.
H: ...because you can see where the- the houses- the round houses were, you know...
M: Uh huh.
H: ...you can still see the, eh, bases at Solfach- Solfach(?). Um, what else..
W: And- you- you also...
H: We do...
W: ...take them down to Celtica...
H: Yes.
W: In-
H: When we...
W: ...in...
H: Yes.
W: ...Machynlleth, don’t you?
H: Yes, when we do- eh, when we do study the Celtic times, that’s in the Spring term, we take the children to Glanllyn. I don’t know if you’ve heard about Glanllyn. It’s a Welsh, em, it’s a camp
W: League of...
H: Welsh...
W: ...Youth
H: League of Youth.
W: On LLYn Tegid...
M: Uh okay.
W: ...in Bala. It’s between Bala and LLanuwchllyn.
H: Yeah. So that gives us a chance to go to Celtica in Machynlleth and, eh, we looked at Celtic places around Bala as well, em. What else do we do? We do Victoria Time, but, em, what we do is we, you know, movement, people moving from Wales to Patagonia...
W: Oh yeah.
H: ...and places...
W: Uhh.
H: ...like that, you know.
M: Uh huh.
H: So it’s a chance for me to talk to them about Michael D. Jones and other people who did leave country, you know.
M: When do you- How do you split up the- the year? There’s a Summer, a Spring, and a Fall term?
H: Yeah. We have six themes.
W: Six themes.
H: Yes.
W: Over two years. Three a year.
H: And then, what we do really is Victorian Times, th- we take two terms to
do that, you know, two terms to do the Celtic thing…
M: Okay.
H: …and two terms- Yes. That’s more or less how we do it. So we split it
over two- two terms, you know…
M: Mm hmm.
H: …and look at different things like maybe one term we look at the fashion
of Victorian Age, you know, and, em, you’ll look at the houses maybe or
how people lived.
M: Hm.
H: So, that’s more or less, you know.
M: You get a feel of how the people
H: Yeah.
M: …lived.
W: We try to make it a local thing…
M: Uh huh.
W: You know, bringing history to their own experiences and life around
here… more than you know learn the hist’ry’f England, sort of thing, you
know.
M: Mm hmm.
W: Yes, and dates and things…
H: Yeah.
W: …really, you know. Children aren’t really interested- children of this age
aren’t interested in remembering a list of dates….
M: Uh huh.
W: …because, we in Year Five and Six this term, we’ve been working about
the- talking about- learning about the World War Two, period…
M: Mm hmm.
W: …but what’it is, it’s all how that affected…
H: Yeah.
M: Mm.
W: And…
H: And-
W: …what life was like here, you know rather than what life was like
throughout Britain, and the battles…
M: Mm hmm.
W: em, and we had someone from the Red Cross coming in to speak to me
the other day and so we’ve learned about the history of the Red Cross
and when it was founded, and things like that, em, but mainly ,again, as
you say, local…
H: Yeah.
M: Hmm.
W: …and get the children to find out…
H: -I think the main-
W: …who’re related to them…
H: Yeah.
W: …who were in the war, what they were doing and they come up some-
    with some, you know, really interesting facts.
H: Yes.
W: …You know, one grandmother has written out three A4 sides about her
    memories of being evacuated to Wales…
M: Wow-
W: …and she’s moved back, of course, to live in- i- to- to London, eh, to,
    em, England, but what she didn’t realize at the time, after, she’d have a
    granddaughter living permanently in Wales…
M: Hm.
W: …and learning and- and being a bilingual child.
W: Like [Name]…
H: Yes.
W: …you know because her mother has learned Welsh after moving here…
H: Yes.
M: Uh huh.
W: …and she (Clapping) she’s really to… be admired,
H: Very, very c-
W: …isn’t she? You
H: Yes…
W: …know?
M: Hm.
H: … but…
W: Sorry-
H: …history, I think the word is empathy, you know that the children…
M: Uh huh
H: …you know, can feel…
W: Yes
H: …what sort of times it was…
M: Uh huh-
H: …um, you know ‘s just trying to give them the exper-…
M: Mm hmm-
H: …ience of being there, which is very, very
W: It’tis difficult-
H: …difficult, really, you..
M: (Laughs)
H: …know, you try- we try to do it by videos, we’ve got good videos…
W: Yes-
H: …em.
W: Oh! S’ Years One and Two take the children dow’ to, er, places…
H: Lloyd- lik- Lloyd-
W: …to the Lloyd…  
H: George-  
W: …George Centre…  
H: Centre. Yes-  
W: …Yes…  
H: -they took them down-  
W: …where they ’re able to dress up in the period...  
M: Hm-  
W: …Em, they have an experience last week- I was talking to one of the  
tutors an’ he said that, em, they have to preten- they had to- pretend were  
going into a school- an-n’ he told them before-hand: “I’m going to be  
acting now. And I’m going to be like an old teacher was” and slapping  
the cane and he…  
M: (Laughs)  
W: …said, even though he told them, he was acting…  
H: They were all afraid, you know-  
W: …One child was crying.  
M: Wow. (Laughs)  
H: Yeah…  
W: You know?  
H: We -aw- We’ve taken children there…  
M: Mm  
H: before when the other gentleman…  
M: Mm  
H: …was down.  
M: -Mm-  
H: …I think he was worse than the one that is . . .  
M: (Laughs)  
W: (Laughs)  
H: …They were like this!…  
W: -Yeas-  
H: …Even I was like this…  
W: Right  
H: …you know…  
W: Yeah  
H: …You were really a…  
W: Yeah  
H: …part of that school…  
W: Yeah  
H: …at that time. We’ve also- when we were doing Victorian Times, we-  
we’ve been taking them to Castell Penrhyn…  
W: Mm  
M: Uh huh.  
H: …you…  
M: Uh huh  
H: …know, Penrhyn Castle…
M: Uh huh
H: …They- they have the same sort of thing there, like looking in the…
kitchen…
W: Kitchen-
H: …is made, you know?…
M: Uohhh
H: or being at school and…
M: Mm
H: …using the slates…
W: -Yes-
H: …trying to take them to places where-
W: We- when we ’re talking about the quarries…
M: Mnmhm
W: …Right? We have, em, a- a- a- a project on homes, so we take them to
Llanberis Slate Museum…
M: Uh
W: …because they’ve renovated a row of houses. They’ve brought the
houses down- the old mine-, em, slater’s houses…
M: -Mm hmm-
W: …and renovated and th- you know, and one is in, say, Nineteen-Twenty
another ’s Nineteen-…
H: Forty-
W: …Forty…
H: Yeah
W: …et cetera, et cetera…
M: Wow.
W: …and em-
H: You’ve been to Saint Fagan in eh…? You haven’t been to St. Fagan?
M: No.
W: Oh…
H: Oh that’s-
W: …Folk-…
H: …really-
W: Welsh Folk Museum…
H: Welsh Folk Museum-
W: Welsh Folk Museum-
H: They’v got that sort of thing there…
W: They’ve
H: …you know.
W: taken buildings…
H: Yes.
W: …from different parts of Wales-
M: -In Llanberis?
H: Yes.
W: No! No. Down in Cardiff, eh-
H: Plas-
M: Ahh.
W: …This one i’ Slate Museum- they have a row of houses…
H: In LLanberis.
W: …but down in the- in the-, em, in the-
H: -eh, Saint Fagan, the one-
W: …Saint Fagan…
H: F-
W: …down…
H: Yeah.
W: …in Car-
H: -Car-
W: …-diff-
M: Ao::
H: They’ve built that same sort of thing, but it’s…
W: But it’s on a very large…
H: …large
W: …scale…
H: -scale-
W: …you know…
H: -Yes-
W: …a house here and then you walk and you come to a different house or a
building-
H: Yeah.
W: …you get-
H: -But they’ve got their own houses as well…
W: -Yes!-
H: -which is very interest…
W: -Yes-
H: …ing, but...
W: -That i- yes-
H: …you know.
W: -But there- there’s quite a strong feeling here, em…
H: -Mm-
W: …about learning about Kenni-…
H: -Mm-
W: …eh, Penrhyn Castle…
H: -Yeah-
W: …There’s a s- still a bitterness…
H: -Mm-
W: …between the landlord and the people…
H: -Mm-
W: …of Bethesda.
H: -Yeah-
M: -Hm-
R1…because they…
H: -Still-
W: ...were locked out...
M: -Uwow-
W: ...Was it?...
H: -Yes, uh huh-
W: ...How long, eh? Nineteen-Ten- Nineteen Oh One.
H: Yes. I- I'm not sure-re how long it was...
W: -No-
H: ...but they were on strike, you know, for quite a long...
W: -Mm-
H: ...time
W: -and they suffered great hard...
H: -Yes-
W: ...ship- so the lord...
H: -and they still-
W: ...was in his...
H: -feel, you know-
W: ...castle and, you know 'cause- I remember one parent [Name]...
H: -(Repeats) [Name]-
W: ...the Welsh actor. He came in to speak to- to the children about, em, life in the times, you know, as told by his grandfather and he has never set foot within the grounds of Penrhyn Castle...
M: -Hm-
W: ...and he will never set foot...
H: No, and he wo’ let...
M: -Hm-
H: ...his children even though-
W: -No-
H: you- you know, his- that feeling...
M: -Hm-
H: ...to them...
W: -Mm-
H: ...as well...
W: -Yes-
H: And...
W: -So, you know-
H: ...it’s still true where I live in [village name], which is, you know...
W: -Mm hmm-
H: ...a quarry village. It’s...
M: -Righ’-
W: Ah.
H: ...the same there...
W: -Yes-
H: ...with the older people, you know...
M: -Hm. So there’s-
They don’t talk about Castell Penrhyn, you know. They don’t talk about it.

Are there any, uh, descendants of the, uh, of...

-Of the- of the family?

-Of the landlords, yeah?

-Well, yes, there are...

-Yes, but they don’t live in- the National Trust...

-Has taken the place-

...has taken...

-over now, you know.

...over the Castle now.

Uh huh.

But the Queen had, eh, eh, em, supper there recently...

-Yes-

...didn’t she?...

-Two weeks ago-

...on her travels...

-she was here, you know...

-Hm-

...The Jubilee...

-That’s where she dined-

...Yes.

-Dinner time-

But they had the Welsh flag, eh...

-(Laughs) Yes. It’s a-

They didn’t have the E-...

-The English

...Th- No, they didn’t-

-Didn’t they?-

...have- ‘cause I was going to LLandudno after school...

-(Laughs) And y-

And I noticed on the way home, they only had the Welsh...

-The Red-

...flag...

-Dragon-

...up on the tower while she was there and I thought, “Well that’s something”...

(Laughs)

-Yes, yes.-

...You know.

-They took-

...A good thing-

...it down after she left?

Oh yes. Well, yes. I think so.

The Welsh flag?

...Em...
M: -Not the, eh -
W: …The Welsh flag. No, there’s nothing now, ‘cause I was passing today.
M: -Huh-
W: …there, em-
M: -Mm-
H: But things have changed a lot, you know…
M: -Mm-
H: …that Lady Douglas Pennant, who was last Lady. She died about three years ago and she had a very, very sad death ‘cause she was in the same home as my mother-in-law, you know…
M: -Mm-
H: …a’ it was…
M: -Mm hmmm-
H: …so sad, you know. She had all this money and yet…
W: -And there was no-
H: …Oh…
W: -difference between her and the poor peo-
H: …Yes…
W: -you know-
H: …and- Oh yes, s’was- it was very…
W: -Mm-
H: …very sad…
W: -Mm-
H: …Oh…
W: -Hm-
H: …You know…
W: Lot’s…
H: -Yes-
W: …a- g- is- is done, em, by Le-, eh, education authorities, I think, in Wales by now… to make sure that history is brought to life…
H: -Yeah-
W: …and the children, you know we’re talking about LLanstumdwy, em…
H: -Yeah-
W: …Castell Penrhyn and, eh…
H: There are places to take them here-
W: …Yes…
H: aren’t they?-
W: …lots…
H: We’re lucky-
W: lots…And the- e- even Caer-, em, Caernarfon Castle. They will have, em, role-playing going on there…
M: Uh huh.
H: Yeah.
W: …And children are invited…
H: Yeah.
W: …to go along, you know, for different occasions..
W: …em…
H: And
W: …So they ca~ do~
H: They’ve given the Welsh aspect, as well-
W: …That’s it…
H: You know –
W: …Yes.
H: Even though it’s…
M: Mm.
H: …you know, Caernarfon is an English castle…
W: Mm.
H: …D’y’know’t I mean? They’ve changed, you know, and they’re ready
to say, “Well, what- what were the people who lived outside castle”? 
W: Yeah.
H: …What sort of life they had?…
M: Hm.
H: …You know. They’re ready to- They’ve changed th’r’attitude really.
W: And…
H: So it’s-
W: …then we study the history of Bangor itself, eh, with the ten year old,
em, next term now we’ll be going revisiting, you know, going back
(th)ith /y/ [the] theme of Bangor and again developing on what you’ve
done about Deiniol, em, the settlement, em, that he founded and the
growth of Bangor…
H: Mm.
W: …from that little…
H: from the cathedral-
W: …em, from the cathedral…
H: -to the church, really, yes-
W: …because, em, I don’t know. Do you know the- what the meaning of
“Bangor” is?
H: No, actually.
W: …Right. Well, it’s- it’s /y/ [the] Welsh word for a- for a wattle-and-daub
fence.
H: -Mm-
M: -Hm-
H: -Yeah-
W: …And that was what’e…
H: -Sacramented(?)
M: -Ahh-
W: …you know, built around…
H: -Around his little church-
W: …his little wooden church…
H: -there, yeah-
M: -Huh-
W: …the wattle-and-daub and the Welsh word for that is “Bangor” and that’s why it’s called…
M: (Laughs)
W: …Bangor.
H: Yeah. You’ve got a Bangor as well in, eh, America, haven’t you?
W: Bangor, Maine.
M: Yeah, yeah.
H: Bangor, Maine.
M: Right.
H: Yes, I think there are two Bangors-
M: I think they call it “Bayng-er”. I think they call it “Bayng-er” out there.
H: Yeah.
W: Bayng-er.
M: Bayng-er.
H: That’s the…
M: (Laughs)
H: That’s the…
M: (Laughs)
H: …eh, reason for the name, isn’t it?
W: Yes…
H: It’s-
W: …Yes…
H: Welsh people in ~
W: …Emm…
M: ‘S very interesting-
W: Wasn’t that interesting
H: …Yes and…
W: Yeah-
H: Yeah-
W: …you know, we talk a lot about, em, important personalities over Welsh history. We’re talking about Dewi Sant she was saying…
H: Yeah-
W: …William Morgan you was saying, Gruffydd Jones, who in fact…
H: Llanddowror, eh, Welsh schools-
W: …one of the, er, one of the founders in Welsh schools and then you have stories, interesting little stories of- em, connected with the Bible, em.
And you’ll notice it if you’re in Bala. Walk along the street and they’ll say: “Thomas Charles…
H: Mm-
W: …”lived here”…
H: -Mm-
W: …Now Thomas Charles, em…
H: Mm-
W: …was involved…

H: Bible-
W: …with…
H: -Society-
W: …he- he-…
H: Yes-
W: …Yes, the Bible Society…
H: He started the Bible-
W: …Yes…
H: Society, didn’t he?
W: And, em, little girl, there’s a story about a little girl…
M: Mari Jones.
W: …who collected…
H: Mari Jones!-
W: …Mari Jones. Yes…
H: We’re doing that now-
W: …An’ they lo::ve that story…
H: you know-
W: …you know…
H: Coming from- after we’ve done William Morgan and the Bible…
W: Mm-
H: …We go, then, to Mari Jones, you know, and they…
M: Hm-
W: Mm-
H: …they- the children they experience that themselves, y’know’t’ I mean?
W: they…
M: Uh huh.
H: …So that’s quite interesting as well…
M: -They don’t-
H: …She went to Thomas Charles in Bala for a Bible…
M: Ahh.
W: Mm.
H: Yes.
M: And d-
W: So there’s lots, you know, the Urdd movement itself, an- f- the Child- (y)
Children of the- Youth of Wales, we talk about O. M. Edwards- We
teach th’m’bou: about O. M. Edwards, the founder, who again ‘s a
statue…
M: Uh huh.
W: …in LL-LLan:…
H: Llanuwchllyn-
W: …Llanuwchhyn…
H: Mm.
W: …em, cemetery and, em, we also teach th’m’bou:, eh, modern day, eh,
heroes, if you like…
M: Uh huh.
W: …Like Bryn Terfel, you know and…
M: Uh huh-
W: …Ryan Giggs and these that they- We- we make sure they know that they are Welsh, even if some of them can’t speak the language…
H: Yeah-
W: Right-
H: Tom Jones…
M: (Laughs)
H: …and Sion Dafydd and Olwen ‘n’t they? I think it’s…
W: Yes, they-
H: …important, yes.
W: ‘re ours…
H: Yes-
W: …They are ours…
H: Yes.
M: (Laughs)
W: …I told him I’d go on my soapbox. I was telling him…
H: (Laughs loudly)
W: you know, how- how my children- how we s- older teachers, I was saying, or more mature teachers, feel strongly about…
H: Mm.
W: …our country…
H: Yes, of course-
W: …because we had to fight, because we didn’t have anything in-, you know…
H: Yes.
W: …and we had our- our education through the medium of English…
H: Yes.
W: …as children…
H: Mm.
M: Secondary…
H: Yes!-
M: …and primary or…?
W: Ehh…
H: Yes! More or less-
M: …just secondary?
H: Secondary as well. I might be ~ -
W: …Secondary more than the junior, I would say…
H: Yeah. Yeah-
M: Uh huh-
H: Em, I think a few…
W: I think I did the- I’s did scripture through the medium of-
W: …That’s it…
H: Welsh-
W: …I did scripture in Welsh…
H: and it’s part of my history-
W: …Mm…
H: …do you see?
W: …Th- that’s…
H: Yeah-
W: …what I did…
H: Anything else-
W: …All the others and I remember my mother saying, when she was at
    school, she didn’t realize until years afterwards, em…
H: Some of the teachers-
W: …Meeting people…
H: Yea-
W: …out on the streets- Yeah: “That person speaks Welsh!”…
H: ‘Cause she-
M: Huh-
H: you know-
W: …because they’ve never spoken a word of Welsh…
H: A school in Bala, [name of school]
W: …in the school…
H: Yeah-
W: …It’s- this is in Bala, where…
H: Mm-
W: …I was brought up…
M: Huh-
W: …and my mother went to school, you know.
M: Ohh-
H: Well, my grandfather taught in Bala in…
W: Yes-
H: …a boy school there and- some people there, you know, they didn’t want
to say that they were Welshmen, really, you know…
M: Uh huh.
H: …It was awful…
W: Mmm-
H: …And he was a member of Plaid Cymru, one of the earliest ones…
W: Yeah.
H: …you know…
W: one of the earliest members, yeah-
H: …But yet he talked a mete(?) of English…
W: Mm-
H: …you know in Bala…
W: Huh-
H: …’s very funny…
W: Well, that’s-
H: Yeah-
W: …that’s how it was, isn’t it? I’m sure…
H: Yes, in the Thirties, yeah-
W: …Mister- Mister [Name], eh, [Full name]…
H: Yeah, [Full name]-
W: …Eh…
H: would be the same, yes-
W: …One of our old, eh…
H: Ba-
W: …Be’dy “Archbeirwydd”? [What is “Archbeirwydd”?] They’re the
Eistedd-
H: Archdruid.-
W: …-fod- The Archdruids in the Eisteddfod….
M: Uh huh-
W: …Have you heard…
M: Yes-
W: …of our Eisteddfod…?
M: Yes, I went-
W: …He’s a…
M: in 1995-
W: …grandfather…
H: Here-
W: …He’s a grandfather here and- that’s why I was hoping that the ce- the
chairing ceremony would be on…
H: It would’ve been-
M: Uh huh.
W: …today…
H: today, so you-
W: …because we, you know because he- because being, em, a grandfather,
he’s agreed to be…
H: to be Archdruid-
W: …you know, Archdruid for our ceremony, but it’ll be next Friday now.
Emm, and that’s something else we do a lot of in the school is to make
sure tha’ they know…
H: Mm-
W: …of our culture…
M: Mmhm:
W: …you know, the Eisteddfodau, the, eh, noson lawen, which are, em…
H: Yes.
W: …like evening concerts…
M: -Uh huh-
W: …only formal, where they…
H: Mm.
W: …They started when they were held at- in farmhouses, around the fire,
when people…
M: Mmhm:
W: …from neighboring farms came together in the winter to entertain…
H: Mm.
W: …you know, to pass /y/ [the] long hours
H: That they know about the-
W: …of ~
H: tradition, really-
W: …Mm.
H: you know-
M: Uh huh.
H: What has happened and th- that things change, you know as-
W: …Yes…
H: history has changed-
W: …And that they’ve got to carry on.
H: Yes
M: Do they experience these things happening in the present, um?
H: Oh yes.
W: Cer- You know the- the- what we have to do, we- we have children here-
To be honest, we have abou- ha- over half of them who are from non-
Welsh speaking backgrounds. We are not supposed to brainwash
children politically…
H: (Laughs)
W: …but we can brainwash them culturally…
M: Uh huh-
W: Hoping that-
M: What would be difference between those two?
H: (Laughs)
W: …Well, that they will realize that there is a place for them and, eh- onus
on them to carry on…
H: Mm-
W: …Em…
H: tradition-
W: …to- to carry on traditions and hopefully, em,…
H: Hmm, love of country, you know-
W: …Yes…
M: Mm hmm
H: Every-
W: …”T is…
H: Everybody has-
W: …Love of…
H: it, I suppose-
W: …country, love of /y/ [the] language…
H: Yes, and how important it is-
W: …Yeah…
H: You know-
M: So…
H: If no one-
M: …if it were politically, would- that’d be political parties…
H: Well-
M: …or-r would it be…?
W: Oh yes…
H: Well-
W: …we have the Welsh Nationalist Party…
M: Right-
W: …yes, so we bo-, yes, we both vote for the Welsh…
H: Yes-
W: …~ of the, you know
H: yeah-
W: …but you…
H: I don’t-
W: …don’t talk about things…
H: We don’t-
W: …like that, for ~~…
H: bring that into school-
W: …Oh no…
H: No, no-
W: …We don’t…
H: No-
W: …No…
H: No-
W: …But you have children like the- the- the World Cup last-…
M: Uh huh.
W: …last week. The children were allowed to watch the games, you
know…
H: Yeah.
W: …Up to a point, until the bell rang or lunch-time and, eh, the day bef-
well, when- when England went out…
M: Uh huh.
W: …em, who- who beat them, ehh?…
M: Brazil-
H: Brazil!-
W: …Brazil…
H: -Yes-
W: …And we had the children in- in the theatre. One or two children had
asked to stay at home to watch because if/that they won…
H: -Yeah-
W: …his mother was English…
H: Yeah.
W: …and, you know, and he was very, very upset when he got in…
M: (Laughs)
H: Tsk.
W: …but I- I went from the theatre to my car- ‘ll I thought I might as well
make use of the time, eh, at the- I heard a great roar: “Yeahhh”, you
know…
H: [Williams] will just will act it out (Laughs)
M: (Laughing)
W: …and…
H: -Really funny-
M: (Still laughing)
W: …Yes, I thought: “Oh, England has scored” and the children came running, he did: “Brazil beat them, Miss!”…
M: (Laughs)
H: -Yes, they wanted to- you know-
W: …You know, and- and it’s- noth- it was nothing, we didn’t…
H: -No-
W: …I mean, we daren’t, you know…
H: -Mrs. ~, you wouldn’t-
W: …you can’t…
H: -would you?-
W: …You’re not…
H: -You know-
W: …You can say something, Oh [Headteacher] used to say, (In a deep voice) “Oh, I hope th- I hope- I hope the Brazilians beat them”, like that, but you know, em, no, we’re not allowed to really, but I- I think, lots of the children…
H: (Laughing, presumably about the other’s performance)
W: (Almost laughing too) They- they have got a strong W-…
H: -Yes-
W: …feeling of Welshness…
H: -Yeah-
W: …haven’t they?
H: Well, it’s a matter of, you know, loving an old, old language, isn’t it…
W: -Mm-
H: …and you want that to carry on, you know. This is it, isn’t it?…
W: -Right-
H: …And it’s all part of ~~~ well…
W: (Laughs self-consciously, presumably realizing the hilarity of her performance)
H: …(Laughing a little) Eh doesn’t it. Y’know’t’ I mean? It’s all…
M: (Laughs)
W: Yes, but we have…
H: -If we don’t do it…
W: -No, who will?
H: Em, there’s not another school in Bangor will do it…
W: -No, ~
H: …feel like us ~…
W: -’cause this is the Welsh school of Bangor, you see.
M: -Uh huh-
H: …You know, you want it to…
M: -What d- Does that mean that… Welsh is a core… subject as- as opposed to a found-…
W: -Well, in Eng-
M: …ational subject or…?
H: -Hm-
in Wales, there are four core subjects: English, Welsh, En-

-Maths-

...eh, Maths, and Science. Em, but lots of schools- Gwynedd, eh,

County policy is that Wales- Welsh is the first language...

-Mm hmm-

...You know, they do the test of the Welsh first language, em, but you’ve

got Anglicized areas in Gwynedd where I live and where Mrs. Hughes-

where you live, very…

-Yes-

...near to Bangor, but it’s…

-Yes-

...it’s…

-Very-

...very Welsh…

-Yes-

...It’s…

-Oh yes-

...it’s very Welsh and I live the other side of Caernarfon, which is very

Welsh, em, but here, and the schools where we are they are Welsh…

-Yes, yes

...schools, you know…

-Mmm-

...You- you rarely have children who don’t speak Welsh…

-Hm-

...coming to the school- er you have the maybe two or three and they, you

know, they learn very quickly, because they’re drowned…

-Yeah-

...in Welshness.

-Right, right-

.Whereas here, the parents- This is a W- a specifically Welsh school,

where you have another four or five junior schools in the city, em, where,

okay, they do teach Welsh, but’s not’s- a- they- they don’t do the’s- the

tests, do they?

-No, so they don’t work-

...Em, so really, they’re teaching more through the medium ~ of English,

and learning the language, okay?

-Mm-

...Whereas we- we start here by learning through the medium of

Welsh…

-Ahh-

-Em-

...but as they go up to school, em, what we aim for is to get them

bilingual…

-Fifty percent-

...by the time they’re eleven…

-Right-
…and by the time they reach us, they do 50% of the work through English and 50% through Welsh… but some people in this city are under the misconception that we only teach through the medium of Welsh…

No, it’s not true really-

You know…

No, it t’sn’t true.

No, but I think they dr- they’re really drowned in the Welshness at the beginning…

…you know, so that’s- eh, eh, you know, their Welsh is good when they reach Year Six…

…you know…

…well,…

They’ve been doing everything, or…

…of…

…everything.

…we do science, maths, everything through the medium of Welsh, but also, you know, we bring it- the English in…

…as well by-

They do their, eh, you know their leaving, their- their SATs tests, when they leave, they do them through the medium- they’re doing their science and their maths…

Through the medium of Welsh-

…through the medium of Welsh…

-English, Welsh-
W: …and they do the Welsh paper, but when we do history and geography…
H: -Mm-
W: …we may do this aspect…
H: -This aspect, yes-
W: …of history through the medium of English…
M: -Hm-
W: …we might do another bit through the medium of
H: -Yeah-
W: …Welsh, because what we- the hope is that we bring our history and
geography into our- that…
H: -Into our language work-
W: …Into our language work or our language work into the other, em-
H: When we were doing the Tudor times, for instance, we’ve been looking
at pirates, as well, you know…
M: -Yeah huh-
H: …and doing some of ‘em through the medium of English, you know, like
some famous pirates, but they’re are very, very Welsh, very famous
Welsh pirates as well…
W: -Mm-
M: -Right-
H: -So we do that in Welsh…
W: -Mm-
H: …you know, so we’re combining both, really, so that they have the
skills…
W: -And you learn songs, eh, you know…
H: -Yeah-
W: …when you're doing the-…
H: -Yeah-
W: …eh, about the sailors, you learn lots…
H: -Wel-
W: …of…
H: -Welsh songs-
W: …Welsh, or Welsh sea shanties-
H: -Sea shanties, yes.
M: Huh.
H: …You know, and folk songs…
M: -Wow-
W: you teach a lot…
H: -Yes-
W: …of in Years Three and Four don't you…
H: -Yeah-
W: …Mrs. [Name]?
H: Yes.
M: So you might even do som-me- some songs or, well, you probably
wouldn't be doing English sea shanties, would you?
R1 No, we-
H: -We haven't
W: -We have our own.
M: Yeah. Right.
H: Yes.
M: So you might teach the- about the English pirate, say, Blackbeard.
H: Yeah.
M: I think he's-
W: -Mm-
H: Blackbeard, yeah.
M: …English and you might teach that in English, but then you would do
Captain Morgan…
H: -There we are-
M: …Say…
H: Harri Morgan.
M: …in Welsh?
W: Harri Morgan is-
M: -Ahh-
H: Yes, so it's, you know-
W: Y bê'ty d' yr (?)
H: You bring the Welsh and the English language into it, you know…
M: -I see-
H: …so they get
W: And poetry, poets?
H: Yeah.
W: Eh, lots of famous…
M: -Mm hmm-
W: …Welsh poets and…
M: -Definitely-
H: Yes.
W: We have people coming in, we have authors and Welsh poets…
H: -Mm-
W: …coming in, you know and we have English authors as well…
H: -Yes-
W: …haven't we?
H: -Oh yes-
W: …Children's authors? We…
H: -Yes-
W: …We do- we're not s- so narrow-minded as we appear.
H: -No-
M: (Laughs)
W: …or as we sound.
H: No, we have, eh, and who was here, Eric, em…?
W: Tony Brackman.
H: …Tony Brackman…
W: -Yes-
H: …I'm trying to get a friend of mine now who is a famous English author,
   Phillip Pullman…
W: -Pullman-
H: …who was, went to school with me…
M: -Hm-
H: …eh, to come. He- he's the next one to visit us, I think…
W: -Yes-
H: …When he's in this area.
W: He writes through the medium of English.
H: Yes.
W: Books…
M: -Huh-
W: …for the children…
M: -Hm-
W: …and adults.
H: -He won the-
M: -And he's from Bala as well.
H: -No, he's-
W: -Harlech-
H: …from Harlech…
M: -Oh-
H: …My- my home was in Harlech…
M: -I see-
H: …em, he's- even though he's- he never taught Welsh, you know he never
   spoke Welsh…
W: -Mm-
H: …but he's just won the Whitsbrid Book Prize…
M: -Hm-
H: …now, for…
W: -Mm-
H: …a children's book, first one to w-win a prize for the…
W: -Mm hm-
H: …for a children's book…
M: -children's book-
H: …you know?
W: -Yeah-
H: It's quite interesting. . . I'm supposed to be on the yard, Mrs. [Name], but
   em..
W: Yes, and I'm- the lollipop isn't here today and he's not coming up. So
   I've got to go to the-
H: …to the…
W: …to the
H: I hope you've had some information out of us.
W: lollipop QT.
M: Yes, it's been wonderful.
H: [Laughing, as she watches me pick up my recorder]
Is that thing still on, is it?
W: I don't know if that's what you wanted to know?
M: Yeah, uh-
W: You'll be laughing when you go home…
“Political Nationalism”

A self-conscious Welsh nationalism emerged in the nineteenth century, consisting primarily of locally-based ministers and deacons of Non-conformist (in reaction to the Anglican Church) congregations and London-based prominent Welshmen (Davies 1989). The central issue of Welsh nationalism in this historical period was that of the encroachment of the state into the everyday individual concerns of the Welsh. For most Welsh elites, the agent of encroachment was the Church of England. Although Welsh Non-conformism was well developed throughout Wales and symbolized interests that were antithetical to English interests, its localism prevented a national Welsh identity from forming (Davies 1989). This was a significant point of contrast to the other sort of elite that constituted Victorian-Era Welsh nationalism.

The Welsh identity of the relevant London-based Welsh gentry was highly salient while that gentry lived in English society. In connection with the opportunities they took to travel around Wales, that locally salient ethnic identity caused a national Welsh identity to congeal among them (Davies 1989). This brings to mind and confirms Anderson's creole-journey model of national identity-formation, in which creole functionaries travel between administrative units maintaining patronage and acquiring a consciousness of connectedness with travelling-companions and colleagues (Anderson 1991: 54-56).

The emergence of Welsh nationalist organizations began when Cymru Fydd [Wales To Be], which formed in London and Liverpool in the mid-1880s as a cultural
and literary organization, came to act as an umbrella organization for groups of Welsh socioeconomic and cultural elites who had developed a national Welsh identity. Although a segment of Cymru Fydd was working for change from within the British Liberal Party, the umbrella organization was not well-organized for integration with the greater Welsh society (Davies 1989). Rather than having a Welsh constituency, the primary audience of this movement was English society, which they attempted to convince that the Wales of Celtic romance and magic “had contributed to England's cultural eminence and imperial greatness” and that Welsh persons were overcoming the “handicap” of their native language (Davies 1989: 15). Its work mostly focused on legislative initiatives with cultural and religious aims. Those initiatives established a Welsh university, a national library, a national museum, and closed pubs in Wales on Sundays, but neglected to address the lack of any bureaucratic and economic institutions with the mission of improving living conditions in Wales (Davies 1989).

By contrast, Plaid Cymru, started from humbler beginnings than did Cymru Fydd. It was grounded in industrialized Wales and its members were well aware of the condition of Wales as an internal colony of the UK. While economic conditions were not the impetus for twentieth century nationalism, the image of Wales as an internal colony was an influence on nationalists’ attempts to revalorize (in the sense of establishing a new value of) Welsh culture, to invigorate the Welsh economy by exploiting bureaucratic agencies established after World War II so as to introduce regional development programs, and to address problems of class inequities by adopting socialist ideology (Davies 1989).
In regards to education, Plaid Cymru has advocated changing those approaches that are “completely alien to Welsh values”, such as using the competitive market as a model for school administration.\(^1\) Plaid Cymru has opposed the idea of schools as competitive markets to the idea of schools as resources for the community. Strangely, the diminished ability of Welsh colleges and universities to compete against those in England is used by Plaid Cymru as a reason to have the Assembly oversee higher education in Wales. With respect to culture and communications, Plaid Cymru has supported funding of a foundation for cultural policy, an increase in the budget of the Cymraeg BBC channel (S4C), and review of the legislative framework for Cymraeg.

In regards to issues of governance, Plaid Cymru has emphasized “the need for Wales to have the powers to act effectively for its own benefit”, to “have powers similar to those of Scotland”, which can make laws governing Scotland.\(^2\) While arguing for more legislative power to be vested in Wales’ National Assembly, the Manifesto advocates solidarity among stateless national regions in Europe. In addition, Plaid Cymru has advocated that, on one end of the spectrum, local governments should be given more power and that, on the other end of the spectrum, regions and nation-regions that have their own parliaments or assemblies should be allowed representation in a bicameral European Parliament (which currently only has one house). In the past, Plaid Cymru urged application for “full member-state status” in the European Union for Wales.\(^3\) Today, Plaid Cymru international vision includes commitment “to an independent Wales as a full member of the European Union”.\(^4\)

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\(^1\) http://www.plaidcymru.org/manifestosection2.html; accessed April 21, 2003.
Fighting Independence Within

On April 9, 1999, BBC News reported that nonspecific “opponents” were “warning” that “Plaid is a separatist party which will only be happy when Wales has gained total independence from the rest of the UK”. In the same article, entitled “Nationalists ‘don't want independence’”, then-leader, Dafydd Wigley was given a chance to defend Plaid Cymru:

We haven’t used the term full independence or independence at all in any stage in our history. We have used the term self-government and self-government within the European context as we believe that is the relevant term. We don’t believe that any country is independent in the 21st century in the way that it was interpreted in the 19th century. There is interdependence between countries and particularly between the countries in Europe... We are part of a united Europe. The separatists we have within these islands are the little Englanders who want to separate England away from the continent we are part of.

The article was treated as if it were merely an opportunity for the leader of Plaid Cymru to give a presentation of the party's position on various constitutional questions (e.g., devolution) and to speculate on the outcome of the election. No other individual was represented explicitly in the article. It was likely also an opportunity for BBC News to create a bit of controversy.

Ten days later, on April 19, BBC News reported that “Welsh independence claim [has been] scorned”. In an article with that headline, BBC News reported that “Plaid Cymru is coming under attack over its claims that it has never sought independence for Wales” and paraphrased Mr. Wigley’s position. The BBC News stick seemed to have stirred up a hornets nest, for leader of the Liberal Democrats in Wales, Mike German,
was portrayed as countering with references to Plaid Cymru documents in which the
latter party advocated independence:

The Liberal Democrats have produced quotations from past Plaid Cymru
documents which they say prove that Welsh nationalist leaders, including
Mr Wigley, have repeatedly used the word "independence" over the years.
Welsh Lib Dem leader, Mike German, said Mr Wigley could not escape
the fact that Plaid Cymru was born out of a desire to break away from
England. ‘But the people of Wales know that wriggly Wigley and his
cohorts live in never never land. A breakaway Wales is not practical,
economic or desirable. It would not work’, he said.

The article continued, reporting that the Labour Party had entered the fray:

Labour took the same tack, accusing Plaid of trying to trick voters over
hidden ambitions to separate Wales from the rest of Britain. Peter Hain,
the Welsh Office minister spearheading Labour’s drive, claimed Plaid
Cymru had even wiped out references to independence from its Website.
‘We have proof that Website pages have been removed, previous general
election manifestos hidden from view and a new membership card
airbrushed of its references to separatism. ‘There is hard evidence of a
clumsy campaign by Plaid to censor its own beliefs for public
consumption’, he said.

Plaid Cymru spokesman Ieuan Wyn Jones spun the issue as the use of “smear tactics”
and Mr. Wigley was quoted as accusing the Labour Party of “deliberately using every
ploy to keep away from the economic agenda”.

Nowhere in the literature the party produced prior to the 2001 election of
Members of (the UK) Parliament, Plaid Cymru’s “Manifesto”, is there a suggestion that
the party would advocate secession, since even application for member-state status would
occur only after receiving popular approval in a referendum. Clearly, Plaid Cymru’s
agenda is comprehensive, with many of the specifically Welsh-oriented initiatives being
inapparent without background knowledge of Wales. The party's agenda—which
addresses agricultural issues, the water resources that originate in Wales, bilingualism, Welsh-medium television, poverty and health issues that are proportionately higher than for England, and the coal mining history – combines issues specific to Wales.

The next day, BBC News again featured Plaid Cymru (though more explicitly this time, since it featured other parties as well) by providing a kind of summary of the party's positions on the issues of “Health”, “Education”, “Nationalism”, “Europe”, “Economy”, “Environment”, “Transport”, and “Agriculture”. This material was taken from the party “Manifesto”, while the sections on nationalism and Europe were also taken from those statements that were printed on April 9, 1999 and attributed to Mr. Wigley, as quoted above. However, the BBC News story on April 20, 1999 that featured Plaid Cymru did not mark the end of the political exchange. That public exchange resumed two weeks later, on the eve of the election.

Two days before the Assembly elections, on May 4, 1999, BBC News published a story with the bizarre headline, “Lib Dems rule out Welsh separatism”. It is bizarre because it is unlikely the Liberal Democrats ever seriously considered advocating that Wales should become a separate state. The news agency was covering what was, of course, a nearly last minute effort to portray Plaid Cymru as a separatist party:

Paddy Ashdown has made it clear the Liberal Democrats will ‘not be party’ to any attempts by Plaid Cymru to make Wales independent from the UK. The Lib Dems could hold the balance of power in the Welsh Assembly if both Labour and Plaid fail to win an overall majority in the elections on Thursday. But the Lib Dem leader dismissed any talk of a political alliance with Plaid Cymru until the nationalists made a clean break from separatism. ‘The Lib Dems will not be party to any move that leads to the break up of the UK—forget it’, said Mr Ashdown.
The article implicitly represented Plaid Cymru, restating the responses already quoted above by party leader Mr. Wigley and party spokesman Mr. Jones: separatism and independence were not issues of any current debate. Interestingly, no Plaid representatives were quoted, but their position on separatism was nonetheless fairly represented.

One more attempt by the Liberal Democrats to confuse voters was made on the day of the election, May 6, 1999, via BBC News. In an article entitled “Divorce is costly—Lib Dems”, the specter of separatism comes again to haunt the nationalist party. Once again, the news agency represents the Plaid Cymru position that that there was no secessionist agenda. However, the article ends with explicit reference made to Plaid Cymru documents that supposedly advocated Welsh secession. According to this election day article, the Labour Party had (apparently in the late April stage of the controversy) revealed a statement from Plaid Cymru's 1983 election manifesto, which said the party “supports the right of every nation to enjoy independence”.