

The Impact of Language on Cultural Identity: Implications for Linguistic Justice and Liberal Nationalism

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Abstract

Nationalist and anticolonial philosophers, theorists and activists such as J.G. Herder, Franz Fanon, and J.R. Jones have appealed extensively (though often tacitly) to linguistic relativity as the mechanism whereby culture and language are inextricably linked, exerting much influence on one another. Linguistic relativity is the view that language mirrors its users' cultural particularities and influences their thought processes in accordance with culturally rooted concepts, some of which are incommensurable. Its mobilising force lies in the idea that language is both a vehicle and an anchor for a People's cultural identity and continuity, and must therefore be preserved, promoted, and appropriated as a generator of national or cultural consciousness.

Despite the wealth of empirical evidence and analytic arguments that can be used to substantiate linguistic relativity, however, its relevance for questions concerning e.g. linguistic justice and the institutional embodiment of national and cultural identity remains severely under-explored. This is partly due to the multi (rather than inter) disciplinary status of its study; and partly due to the strong influence and legacy of incompatible 'universalist' theories of linguistic meaning, such as those influenced by British Empiricism and Chomskyan linguistics.

The purpose of this thesis, then, is to provide the missing link in two specific ways. First, it develops an empirically substantiated rational justification for linguistic relativity using both Wittgensteinian arguments and distinctions, and the experimental evidence to date. Second, it articulates linguistic relativity's implications for the contemporary debates concerning linguistic justice and the institutional embodiment of national culture. By way of context, the thesis also includes a substantial introductory chapter detailing the main historical and cultural contexts within which linguistic relativity has played a central role. Here, a particular emphasis is placed on the case studies of German Romanticism, anticolonial and national liberation literature, and Welsh linguistic nationalism.

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Introduction

The notion of language as constitutive of cultural identity has been at the forefront of several nationalist and anticolonial movements. These have ranged from the early 19th century German resistance to Napoleonic imperialism and the pre-independence revival of Icelandic national consciousness, to the 20th and 21st century national liberation, Pan-African, and postcolonial movements, to Welsh and Irish nationalisms, to name a few (see Fichte 1808; Tolkien 1955; Sartre 1962; Fanon 1952; Jones 1966; Sartre 1965, respectively).

Invariably, though often tacitly, linguistic relativity - the view that language mirrors its speakers' cultural particularities and influences their thought processes accordingly – is treated as a central and theoretically fundamental principle in such movements. The overarching supposition is that language is both a vehicle and an anchor for a People's cultural identity and continuity, and must therefore be preserved, promoted, and appropriated as a generator of national or cultural consciousness. When Fanon (1952), for instance, claims that the inferiority complex of colonized peoples is exacerbated by the suppression of their own indigenous culture by the imposition of the coloniser language, he is affirming the view that language is a repository of culture: linguistic imperialism *ipso facto* results in cultural displacement.

If linguistic relativity is true, then one needn't look far to see how language is constitutive of culture. Proponents of linguistic relativity start from the premises that (1) there are differences in conceptual repertoires across languages, and (2) the concepts embedded in language influence or determine thought. If these two premises are true, it follows that the speakers' thought processes differ according to which language they speak. On this view, then, language, culture, and thought are inextricably linked. As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, puts it: 'Language as culture is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history. Culture is almost indistinguishable from the language that makes possible its genesis, growth, banking, articulation, and indeed its transmission from one generation to the next' (1986: 15). Perhaps it is no wonder, then, that language has often been successfully appropriated to mobilise nationalist support. This inextricability of language, culture, and thought illustrated by linguistic relativity would help explain why cultural-linguistic groups such as the Welsh, Irish, Quebecois, Basque, Maori etc. have prioritised language in their respective drives for cultural and political recognition.

Problematically, however, none of the literature in this connection (except Herder, to whom we will return in Chapter 1) provides any justification nor detailed articulation of linguistic relativity; rather, the truth of linguistic relativity is simply presupposed, and the term is hardly mentioned. This failure to justify and provide a detailed articulation of the nature and relevance of linguistic relativity is problematic, since the truth of linguistic relativity is far from universally accepted (Pinker 1994, 2002); and it therefore cannot simply be assumed to be true. Indeed, it is incompatible with numerous psychologized views of linguistic meaning which posit an underlying universality to language and thought (e.g. Chomsky 1986; Fodor 1983; Carruthers 2006; Carey 2009).

Not only is the failure to justify linguistic relativity problematic from a purely academic perspective; it is also problematic from a political and ideological perspective. If the connection between language and culture is merely trivial, then appeals to the inextricability of language and culture in nationalist and nation-building movements, and the related appropriation of language as a vehicle for mobilising national consciousness, is unwarranted. Why invest so much time and resources into nationalist or multiculturalist-driven language planning, or demands for the political recognition of national minority languages, if language is not even constitutive of culture, but rather simply an instrumental device for conveying information?

Indeed, without a rational justification for linguistic relativity, it is difficult to see how e.g. preservationist language policies or the state promotion of national minority languages can be justified at all on the grounds of cultural identity. For on a merely instrumental view of language, one could communicate the exact same information in any other language, and no loss of meaning would occur as a result: the replacement of one language with another would result in no significant cultural loss. Moreover, even if language is taken to be an important element of culture, then without the robust explanation that linguistic relativity provides as to how/why this is so, it remains unclear why language should be prioritised at all over other elements of culture. If language is merely one among countless other cultural constituents, then why assign any more weight to it than e.g. an item in the national cuisine when it comes to the state promotion of national culture?

Take the Welsh Government's *Cymraeg 2050* Welsh language strategy, which aims to achieve a million Welsh speakers by 2050. The strategy states on several occasions that Welsh is a 'key component' and 'integral part' of Wales' contemporary culture (Welsh Government 2017: 60-66). Yet, according to the latest figures, less than a third of Wales' inhabitants are able to speak Welsh: speakers are currently estimated at ~29% (Welsh Government 2021). Moreover, the 2016 Welsh Election Study indicates that only 27% of the

Welsh population view the Welsh language as an important part of Welsh identity, while only 3% consider it to be the single most important part of what it means to be Welsh (Scully 2018). In the absence of a justification for the inextricability of language and culture, why should the Welsh electorate be strung along in relation to the strategy, given the evidence that most of them do not even agree with its driving assumption? Why not promote e.g. Bara Brith instead as a significantly more straightforward and less costly way of disseminating national culture?

Or take the East African Community (EAC)'s member states' promotion of Swahili to official language status. In 2015, Tanzania made Swahili the sole language of state school education, while in 2019, Memorandums of Understandings were signed between Tanzania and South Sudan to increase Swahili-medium provision in South Sudanese schools; and between Kenya and South Africa to teach Swahili in South African schools. These initiatives are part of the African Union's broader commitment to promoting Swahili as the Pan-African *lingua franca*; which itself is an instance of language decolonisation and cultural reclamation / reassertion. The political discussion surrounding the African states' recognition and promotion of Swahili is frequently framed in terms of furthering African identity, consciousness, and cultural integration¹. Speaking at the 2018 South African Economic Freedom Fighters' conference, for instance, the party's President Julius Malema claimed that:

“Decolonising Africa starts with [...] doing away with colonial symbols and colonial ways of doing things. We must [...] have a language that unites Africans like kiSwahili [which can] become a continental language and we do away with speaking to each other in English [...] Kiswahili has the power to expand to countries that never spoke it and has the power to bring Africans together. [...] We are confident that the teaching of Kiswahili in South African Schools will help to promote social cohesion with our fellow Africans”.²

If linguistic relativity is true, then the above nation-building, language revitalization, and decolonisation measures are surely appropriate, since promoting a language disseminates culture, thereby potentially fostering greater cultural unity and social cohesion. On the other hand, if linguistic relativity is false and language is merely instrumental, then these measures, insofar as their chief aims are cultural, are redundant: promoting a given language has no direct impact on the longevity or flourishing of its associated culture. Since the aims and driving assumptions of such nationalist and nation-building measures hinge on

¹ See the EAC's 2019 press release: <https://www.eac.int/press-releases/1513-au-partners-with-the-eac-to-promote-kiswahili-as-a-language-of-wider-communication-in-africa>

² <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/malema-wants-language-to-unite-africans-as-kiswahili-gets-depts-nod-17141694>

the truth of linguistic relativity, the question remains as to whether such movements are houses of cards, or based on a false consciousness, so to speak.

In terms of the contemporary normative academic literature on linguistic justice and the political recognition of national and minority cultures, much of it advances identity-based arguments for multilingual language policies such as equal treatment or status by public institutions (see e.g. Kymlicka & Patten 2003; Patten 2014, 2019; De Schutter & Robichaud (2015); Fishman (1999), May (2014) and Réaume (2000). Such arguments rely on a 'constitutive' view of language, according to which – as De Schutter puts it - 'language constitutes who I am, that my language and my identity are inextricably intertwined, that I cannot have concepts or views for which I do not have language' (2007: 8). This constitutive view entails that language is inextricably connected to people's cultural and personal identity; and moreover, the public recognition of that language is necessary to their dignity, self-esteem, or autonomy. As such, a common line of argument in the literature is that states should pursue language policies because of their contribution to realizing these liberal wellbeing goals.

However, as with the politically charged nationalist literature, this contemporary normative academic literature is equally bereft of a rational justification or detailed articulation of the constitutive view of language, on whose truth it hinges. While most language rights and multicultural theorists agree that most people have a significant attachment to their cultural identity, and that language is a major constituent of their culture, there is no clear consensus as to how or why this is so. With the limited exceptions of Peled & Bonotti (2016) and Taylor (2016), there is virtually no mention of linguistic relativity, let alone a justification. Neither is there any other explanation for why language should be viewed as a significant constituent of culture. This lack of clarity as to what explains or justifies this constitutive view leaves it unsubstantiated: the literature which appeals to it is therefore on shaky grounds. Perhaps it is no wonder, then, that recent articles have emerged calling for a departure from identity-based arguments for a multilingual public sphere in favour of arguments which emphasise the instrumental advantages of multilingualism (e.g. Rubin 2017). Indeed, without the explanatory link of linguistic relativity, it is difficult to see why identity-based arguments should receive much attention at all in the linguistic justice debate.

It is my contention that framing the constitutive view of language in terms of linguistic relativity is both advantageous and necessary to attaining sufficient clarity and credibility in the normative literature on the political recognition of national and cultural identity. The reason for this is that linguistic relativity is the most dense and direct expression of the constitutive view of language. Not only has it formed a central part of Herder's foundational

works in nationalist political thought (and therefore remains highly relevant to their influence and legacy in the field); it is also – as we shall see in Chapter 2 - the only explicitly-articulated, empirically substantiated, and testable mechanism for the constitutive view of language. As such, it is possible to draw, as this thesis does, on the wealth of experimental data which has proliferated during the past two decades in order to substantiate it; whereas the same cannot be done for the more loosely-characterised appeals to the constitutive view of language in more recent debates.

The purpose of this thesis, then, is to provide the missing link by (1) developing an empirically substantiated rational justification for linguistic relativity, and (2) articulating the implications of this for the contemporary debates concerning linguistic justice and the institutional embodiment of national culture. The thesis is divided into two parts, which themselves comprise five central chapters. The first part deals with empirical evidence and philosophical arguments in favour of, and against, linguistic relativity. This is done in a way that (1) clarifies just where the fundamental disagreements between both sides of the debate are; and (2) explains how Wittgensteinian arguments and distinctions, together with recent empirical evidence, collectively lend much credence to the linguistic relativity thesis while simultaneously removing the chief obstacle to its acceptance: the legacy of Chomskyan linguistics. The thesis' second part examines the relevance of linguistic relativity for the contemporary debates concerning the overlapping fields of linguistic justice and liberal nationalism³.

³ Liberal nationalism is the view that liberalism and nationalism are compatible with each other, and that the institutional embodiment of national culture helps to foster the social cohesion that is necessary to attaining liberal / social justice goals such as distributive justice, autonomy, and other welfare considerations.

Chapter 1: Linguistic Relativity and the Constitutive View of Language: An Historical Overview

Introduction

This introductory chapter provides an overview of (1) the historical and cultural contexts within which linguistic relativity has played a central role in nationalist movements; and (2) the nationalist and normative literature which hinges on linguistic relativity's truth. This overview will proceed in chronological order. It will begin with Herder whose works are foundational in both nationalist political thought and linguistic relativity; then, the anti/postcolonial works and their focus on linguistic imperialism and its effects. This is followed by a detailed examination of Welsh linguistic nationalism: here, the works of J.R. Jones (which provided much of its intellectual ammunition) will receive a thorough examination. Finally, I examine the contemporary linguistic justice and liberal nationalism debates.

The chapter is structured as follows. §1 examines the foundational contribution of Herder's and Fichte's works to nationalist political thought, linguistic relativity, and the interface between them. §2 examines the anti / postcolonial literature which draws on linguistic relativity and the constitutive view of language to convey the extent of cultural and psychological displacement caused by imperialism. §3 involves a case study of the works of J.R. Jones placed in the context of 20th century Welsh nationalism, and a comparison of their main themes with those of the German Romantics and anticolonial writers. §4 explains the directions in which the debate has since developed in the normative linguistic justice and liberal nationalism literature of the late 20th century to the present. Here, I identify the overlapping arguments of communitarian, liberal nationalist, and linguistic justice theorists, and argue that without an acknowledgment of the relevance and clarificatory advantages of linguistic relativity, their identity-based arguments for multilingual policies and cultural recognition are on shaky grounds.

§1. The Theoretical Origins of Linguistic Relativity: Herder and German Romanticism

The emergence of linguistic relativity as a coherent thesis can be traced back to works of the German Romantic philosophers; in particular Hamann (1730-1788), Herder, (1744-1803), Fichte (1762-1814), and Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835). Von Humboldt, for instance, stated that language is the 'formative organ of thought... Thought and language are therefore one and inseparable from each other' (Von Humboldt 1999 [1836]: §9); as well as being 'the external manifestation of the minds of the people. Their language is their soul, and

their soul is their language' (Humboldt 1971: 24). According to Fichte, '...we give the name of People to men whose organs of speech are influenced by the same external conditions, who live together, and who develop their language in continuous communication with each other' (Fichte 1808: 56). Since it is Herder's works that are most foundational in this area (Forster 2010), I shall summarise his main arguments for the view, as well as the related arguments he developed for cultural self-determination and nation/state congruence on the basis of these linguistic considerations.

Herder (1784) argued that every nation has its own unique cultural identity (*Volksgeist*) which is embodied in their respective languages. No national culture is superior to any other, and each nation should express its own cultural identity, rather than conform to e.g. French Enlightenment ideas such as Voltaire's (1756) claim that all cultures ultimately develop along similar paths leading from barbarism to civilisation; or the universalist idea that all peoples would benefit from the same linear type of 'progress' (Barnard 1969).

The notion of linguistic relativity is already somewhat implicit in the above idea of *Volksgeist*: if the *Volksgeist* is embedded in a People's language, and every People has its own distinctive national character, there is already a sense here in which language is 'the mirror of the people's spirit', so to speak. Herder writes in this connection: 'Has a nation... anything more precious than the language of its fathers? In it dwells its entire world of tradition, history, religion, principles of existence; its whole heart and soul' (cited in Berlin 1976: 165).

Rather than simply stating and assuming the truth of linguistic relativity, however, Herder, in his works spanning 1764-1799, advanced two theses which are central to the notion, as well as arguments to justify them⁴. The first concerns the essential dependence of thought on language; thought and language are inextricable in the sense that one can only think through the concepts embedded in one's language:

[Language is] the form of cognition, not merely in which but also in accordance with which thoughts take shape, where in all parts of literature thought sticks [*klebt*] to expression, and forms itself in accordance with this . . . Language sets limits and contour for all human cognition (Herder 1767-8, also cited in Forster 2010: 56).

Herder's second thesis is that linguistic meaning derives from use: the ways in which words are conventionally used within a given socio-cultural context determines their meanings. 'Let us seek the word's concept [...] according to the clear use [*Gebrauch*] of the name in its various times' (Herder 1782-3). If the meaning of a word is its use in language, and thought

⁴ Contrary to the common misconception, it is Herder, rather than Hamann, who deserves the most credit for developing these theses (Forster 2010).

is dependent on language, it follows that the speakers' thought processes differ according to which language they speak (providing that different languages embed different concepts); i.e. linguistic relativity. Since we think through concepts, and those concepts derive from cultural norms, it follows that we think in line with our linguistic community's cultural particularities⁵.

There are three further qualifications to Herder's precise characterisation of linguistic relativity. The first concerns the relation between sense perception and concepts; the second concerns 'reflection' (*Besonnenheit*); the third concerns the notion of language as a vehicle for historical and transgenerational cultural continuity. Regarding the first qualification, the relation between sense perception and concepts, Herder endorsed what Forster (2010: 71-2) calls a 'quasi-empiricist' view. That is: similar to the then dominant Lockean empiricist paradigm of concepts, according to which ideas are effectively copies of objects perceived through the senses (Locke 1689), Herder claimed that concepts are ultimately rooted in sense perception. All thinking originally 'arose from and through sensation, and also still bears, despite all distillation, rich traces of it' (Herder 2002 [1778]: 242).

According to this empiricist paradigm, external stimuli impinge on our senses, thereby causing us to experience them; and thereafter our minds store a copy of the perceived object or quality in the form of a mental image, which we then psychologically summon in all future cases where we think of it. For instance, when we initially see the colour red, our minds create and store a mental image / copy of the colour red. This mental image *is* our concept of red; and thinking about the colour red consists in re-summoning that mental image to our mind's eye, as it were. The relation between language and thought is that words are mere labels for ideas in the mind of the speaker: 'Words in their primary or immediate signification signify nothing but the ideas in the mind of him that uses them' (Locke 1689: III.2.2). On this account, the meaning of a word is the idea which corresponds to it, such that linguistic understanding consists solely in connecting a given word with its corresponding idea.

Crucially, however, unlike Locke (1689) and the remainder of the British Empiricists who thought that ideas derived from sense perception are *sufficient* for linguistic meaning and conceptual understanding⁶ Herder argued to the contrary that our perceptual experiences and concepts are inescapably dependent on language (Herder 1784–91, 1767–8, 1764). Whereas the British Empiricists assumed that thought is prior to and detachable from

⁶ The view that inner concepts or 'ideas' are sufficient for conceptual understanding has been decisively undermined by Wittgenstein's (1953) arguments, whose relevance will be articulated in Chapter 2.

language in that sense perception comes first, then concepts, then language, Herder argued to the contrary that thought is necessarily inextricable from language (Forster 2002: 178). Language provides the organising framework which integrates the data acquired through sense perception into intelligible concepts, which in turn enables us to perceive and think in a coherent, orderly manner (Herder 1784–91).

This process whereby language integrates the data acquired via perception into intelligible concepts is what Herder (1772) called *Besonnenheit* ('reflection'). A major function of *Besonnenheit* is that language enables us to recognise objects by bringing them into focus. The idea here is that perception unmediated by language would be excessively rich and indeterminate: our senses would be overwhelmed with an overflow of data which our cognitive faculties simply do not have the bandwidth to process. Without *Besonnenheit*, we would be overwhelmed by a sensory overload; the visual equivalent of a cacophony of sound, rather than the ordered reality which we experience instead. Moreover, without the range of concepts afforded to us by language, we would be unable to properly recognise and distinguish between different objects and their properties, since contours and boundaries would be indeterminate (Herder 1772). *Besonnenheit*, however, is the effect whereby language enables us to deploy attention in a way that prioritises relevant over irrelevant information; and consequently perceive things coherently as what they are in line with our concepts. Herder illustrates with the following example:

'Who can speak shapes? Who can sound colors? He takes the sheep under his groping hand [...] The sheep bleats! There, a characteristic mark of itself tears itself free from the canvas of the colored picture in which so little could be distinguished—has penetrated deeply and distinctly into the soul. 'Aha!' [says the language learner] 'Now I will know you again' (Herder 1772: 98, also cited in Ferber 2010: 218).

Language, then, facilitates a configuration (*Gestalt*) of otherwise indeterminate data that creates a 'unity out of multiplicity' (*Ideas* 118). In modern parlance, this is known in cognitive science as the three overlapping processes of attentional weighting, perceptual learning, and configural processing. Attentional weighting is the process whereby attention is deployed to the parts of the stimulus which are most relevant to the task in hand, particularly when it involves making high-level discriminations or categorisations (Ransom 2020). Perceptual learning is the process whereby repeated exposure or expert knowledge about a given stimulus (/stimuli) results in enduring changes to our perceptual systems which enable us to make rapid and reliable judgements about it (*ibid.*). Configural processing, relatedly, involves perceiving the relations between features of an object to bring about a unified *Gestalt*.

Take face recognition, for instance: we routinely make snap-judgements about people's emotions, personalities, attractiveness etc. on the basis of their faces; and these judgements often differ according to cultural norms, repeated exposure, and individual preferences⁷. These different cultural norms, preferences, frequency of exposure etc. result in differences to how attention is distributed across the face's surface (attentional weighting), thereby affecting the saliency with which we automatically see certain features at the expense of others (perceptual learning). This, in turn, brings about differences in configural processing. Consequently, the *Gestalt* of a person's face often differs across individuals according to culture, repeated exposure, background knowledge, and aesthetic preferences, among other variables. Another common-sense example of *Besonnenheit* is sports. It is reasonable to assume that a figure skating expert sees an elite-level figure skating performance differently from a person with an untrained eye: their knowledge of the different techniques involved enables them to see the details in a more intricate and fine-grained manner. Sense perception, then, is mediated by concepts: differences in conceptual repertoires (and the languages that embed them) result in corresponding differences in sense perception⁸.

The second function of *Besonnenheit* is that it involves a conception of linguistic 'rightness' which is exclusive to humans, and it distinguishes language from animal communication. Although animals can react to things around them, they cannot grasp things as what they are without a language. Language enables humans to describe, and all descriptive expressions are either right or wrong. The rightness or wrongness hinges on what the characteristics of the described objects actually are. It is a necessary feature of language that statements are truth-apt: we are continually responsive to the truth or falsity of our statements; and this rightness/falsity depends in turn on the defined features. By contrast, animals simply respond to signals in order to achieve immediate goals. This requires no sensitivity to the issue of 'intrinsic rightness', whereas using a language does (Herder 1772)⁹. *Besonnenheit*, then, ensures that language and reality approximately align.

The third and final qualification to Herder's characterisation of linguistic relativity is the historically embedded nature of language. Language does not emerge from within a vacuum; rather, it develops through the course of history so as to cumulatively embed the concepts, metaphors, and idioms etc. of its speakers. As Herder puts it: 'the whole soul, the

⁷ See e.g. Cousins et al. (2020) which finds that impaired configural processing in Parkinson's patients impairs their ability to detect facial emotions, or Tabak & Zayas (2012) which finds that configural face processing enables subjects to rapidly judge people's sexual orientation.

⁸ This effect is also known in contemporary cognitive science as 'cognitive penetration'. See Vetter & Newen (2014, 2017) for a detailed survey of studies which document instances of it.

⁹ See also Charles Taylor's remarks regarding this feature of *Besonnenheit* (Taylor 2016: 7-11).

whole manner of thinking, of [a person's] begetters gets communicated to him with the language' (PW 142, also cited in Patten 2010: 665).

Take, for instance, the widely used English figurative expression 'taken aback', which refers to the psychological reaction of being somewhat startled or offended. The central, literal use of this term was originally nautical: a ship was said to be 'taken aback' when its sails were abruptly blown 'aback' against the masts due to an unexpected change in the direction of the wind, such that the sails and masts which supported them risked collapsing. Or take the Shakespearean expressions 'break the ice' and 'faint hearted' (*The Taming of the Shrew* and *Henry VI*, respectively). These among countless other examples illustrate how language embeds its speakers' cultural pasts: the historical and cultural prominence of the British Navy and Shakespeare's literary innovations, for instance, are reflected in contemporary everyday English. Although most English speakers may not explicitly think of the British Navy or Shakespeare when using such expressions, the fact of their existence illustrates how historically accumulated concepts become compressed into language, thereby providing the speakers with ready-made conceptual frameworks.

This historical dimension to linguistic relativity drastically increases the degree to which language embeds culture: it is not only present cultural particularities that are embedded in language; it is also the sum total of the surviving concepts and turns of phrase derived from its speakers' historical pasts. This is the sense in which language is a source of transgenerational cultural continuity: its prolonged use ensures that the culture-specific concepts it embodies are transferred from one generation to the next, thereby reinforcing cultural continuity. This is not to imply that language is a timeless or static phenomenon. Language is invariably fluid, dynamic, and context-dependent: loan words, conceptual changes, and neologisms are part of its definition. [Indeed, Herder acknowledges these as signs of a living, healthy culture (SW 5: 134-35)]. The term 'microaggression', for instance, didn't exist until the 1970s; and the term 'trans' used to unequivocally mean 'across', whereas its contemporary use usually amounts to a shorthand for 'transgender'. Cultural changes, then, bring about corresponding linguistic changes. Nonetheless, the fact remains that such conceptual changes occur in a comparatively piecemeal manner; and are necessarily integrated and subsumed within the context of the language's broader organizing framework, which itself remains relatively constant and permeated with both historic and present cultural particularities.

§1.1 Herder's Linguistic Relativity-Derived Normative Political Conclusions

The empirical evidence and further analytic arguments for linguistic relativity will be examined in Chapter 2. For present purposes, however, we can thus far conclude that Herder's characterisation of linguistic relativity - which predates experimental linguistics by two centuries - is highly multifaceted and rife with prescient subtle distinctions. What, then, are the normative conclusions that Herder drew on the basis of linguistic relativity? These are: (1) cultural self-determination; and (2) the promotion of the nation state as the ideal political unit. In what follows, I briefly examine the reasoning behind these two conclusions, and highlight their inextricable connection to linguistic relativity.

First, the case for cultural self-determination. Herder was a democratic republican who emphasised the importance of universal suffrage and collective democratic deliberation: 'it [the state] will hear every voice and will stimulate and awaken the activity of people according to their various tendencies, sensitivities, weaknesses and needs' (Herder SW 17: 122, also cited in Spencer 2007: 97). A democratic republic, according to Herder, is the form of government that is most conducive to realising individual and collective creativity, freedom, reason, and flourishing, which collectively amount to what Herder terms *Humanität* (Barnard 1965: 81; Spencer 2007: 98).

What, more specifically, does the concept of *Humanität* amount to? Simplifying somewhat, it is the standard of human perfection, happiness, or fulfilment of human nature which all individuals and cultures strive towards. This involves 'freely and rationally exerting one's powers and capacities in response to the challenges that one faces, and of experiencing a sense of joy and contentment in the process' (Patten 2010: 671). Every People has its own distinctive standard and interpretation of *Humanität* (SW 14: 10) which is gradually achieved through people's individual and collective choices and actions in response to their own cultural, social, and natural environments. Moreover, achieving *Humanität* and furthering collective human knowledge and advancement depends on interacting and learning from the successes and mistakes of other cultures (SW13: 117-18).

The case for cultural self-determination is based on the above considerations. Since different cultures have different conceptions of *Humanität*, as well as different social and environmental conditions for attaining it, it is co-nationals that are best positioned to determine their own cultural trajectories. Although there will inevitably be differences within nations as to how to achieve *Humanität*, it is likely, as Patten (2010) argues in his analytic reconstruction of the reasoning, that there will be more clustering of happiness conditions and cultural ideals among co-nationals than across different nations due to e.g. shared language, institutions, and similar environments. Hence the importance of cultural self-determination: collective decision-making among co-nationals is more likely to be effective

and conducive to cultural advancement, and less likely to lead to mistakes and fragmentation than the proxy decision-making of imperial powers, authoritarian ruling elites, or indeed the collective decision-making of a body politic comprised of several different nationalities.

It is also on the basis of these considerations regarding cultural self-determination that Herder made the case for a nationally bounded state as the ideal political unit (Patten 2010). State borders should ideally be coterminous with national borders so as to enable co-nationals to engage in collective decision making in accordance with their shared interests, sensibilities, and conception of *Humanität*. For there is, on balance, more clustering of these shared features among co-nationals than among peoples spread across different nations (Herder 2002: 297). Although we can retrospectively infer that federal or unitary systems may be viable alternatives to a fully-fledged sovereign state in situations where the latter is impractical, Herder's explicit recommendation is that 'the most natural state [*Staat*] is ... one people [*Volk*], with one national character' (Herder 1966 [1800]: 249). By the same token, states whose borders encompass multiple peoples – insofar as they restrict a people's ability to determine their own internal affairs and cultural development - lack legitimacy:

'an empire consisting of one nation [*Das Reich Eines Volks*] is a family, a well-ordered household: it reposes on itself, for it is founded on nature, and stands and falls by time alone. An empire forcing together a hundred peoples and a hundred-twenty provinces is a monstrosity and no body of state' (Herder 1966 [1802]: 325, also cited in Patten 2010: 659).

Thus it can be seen that Herder's nationalism in no way amounted to national chauvinism; rather, he was a cultural egalitarian who defended the rights of all nations to self-determination while strictly opposing the cultural domination or subjugation of indigenous peoples. This should not, however, be confused with the notion that all cultures are exclusively positive and are thereby immune to criticism: nations 'may have the most sublime virtues in some respects and blemishes in others' (Herder 1877-1913: 505-6). Furthermore, Herder's emphasis on the value of national culture does not involve the assumption that all nations are internally homogenous, characterised by a deterministic and essentialist view of culture. On the contrary, Herder acknowledged the internally heterogenous and dynamic nature of national cultures; he also promoted diversity and interaction within and between nations (Herder 1877-1913: 212).

How, then, do these arguments for cultural self-determination and nationally bounded states derive from linguistic relativity? The answer here is straightforward: recall that Herder's main motivating reason behind these two claims is that there is, on balance, more clustering of

ideas, sensibilities, and values etc. among co-nationals than across different cultural groups. The reason for this, as Patten (2010) usefully illustrates, is language, and more specifically: linguistic relativity. Recall that linguistic relativity claims that different languages reflect their speakers' cultural particularities (both historic and present) and influence their thought processes accordingly. Language reflects its speakers' beliefs, institutions, and practices, which vary across different cultures due to the different historical and cultural contexts with which those languages are intertwined.

In Latin, for instance, there is a diverse selection of words which denote the act of killing in comparison with many other languages, e.g. *interficere*, *necare*, *mortificare*, *occidere*, *trucidare*, to name a few, with minor differences in their connotations. For instance, *interficere* is often used in the context of battles; *mortificare* means 'to make dead'; *trucidare* means 'to butcher.' No doubt that this is a reflection of the somewhat more nuanced attitudes that the Romans had towards different styles of killing in comparison with many other cultures. Such examples (among others that will be examined in Chapter 2) illustrate how different languages embed different concepts which reflect the speakers' cultural norms. Given the inextricability of language and thought, it follows that the members of a given cultural-linguistic community think in line with the ready-made conceptual framework afforded by their language. Hence the greater probability that there will be more clustering of ideas, sensibilities and values etc. among members of the same cultural-linguistic community: 'whoever was raised in the same language, who poured his heart into it, and learned to express his soul in it, he belongs to the nation (*Volk*) of this language' (Herder 1971 [1795]: 294-5, also cited in Patten 2010: 667).

§1.2 Fichte: Linguistic Relativity, Etymological Opacity, and Cultural Chauvinism

It is important to note that Herder was writing in a context where 18th century Germany was undergoing significant cultural, political, and linguistic fragmentation. Politically, it was divided into numerous small provinces under the Holy Roman Empire with little overarching unity. Linguistically, the German language was becoming increasingly localised and fragmented: each province had developed its own dialect which was often mutually incomprehensible from that of the neighbouring province. Culturally, German culture was becoming increasingly dominated by French influences, while the French language was fast becoming the main European language of culture and education. Resultantly, the German language became increasingly confined to the lower classes, thereby reinforcing cultural shifts among the literate classes. Indeed, German intellectuals had come to view their own language as inferior due to its relegation of status, and the influence of French intellectuals who claimed that the French language is superior (Juliard 1970: 84).

Herder's linguistic relativity-inspired insistence that a flourishing culture requires its members to speak their own language and be true to their own indigenous culture can therefore partly be seen as motivated by a resistance to the increasing domination of Europe by French culture, and the contemporaneous subordination of the German language. As mentioned, however, this was not a manifestation of national chauvinism, but rather a reasoned awareness of the detrimental impact of the imposition of a foreign culture and language upon indigenous peoples.

Fichte (1762-1814), on the other hand, built upon these insights concerning linguistic relativity and the corrosive effects of cultural and linguistic displacement, and appropriated them for a comparatively chauvinistic form of nationalism, according to which national identity depends on the purity of the nation's language. In *Addresses to the German Nation* (1808), for instance, Fichte bemoans the prevalence of loan words and loan translations in the German language, which he viewed as major contributing factors to the fragmentation and disunity of German culture (given its inextricability from the language) for the following reasons.

First, the figurative or connotative dimensions of language. Since the connotative and metaphorical meanings of words derive from the cultural context in which they have been created, the excessive adoption of loan words and loan translations into a host language impoverishes it by undermining its expressive force and cultural authenticity. This is because the figurative meanings associated with the loan words in their original contexts become lost in translation, thereby creating opacity in meaning and resulting in confusion among the host language's speakers. When metaphors are transplanted from one cultural-linguistic context into another, it is likely that they will lose much of their relevance, expressive force, and comprehensibility. Since language is rooted in its native culture, its figurative meanings are often only comprehensible / relevant within that same culture. Consequently, the excessive adoption of loan words and translations at the expense of near-equivalent terms coined from the host language's own resources causes the host language to lose much of its natural lucidity and footing in its cultural home. This, according to Fichte, amounts to being 'severed from its living root' (1808: 68) and 'enshroud[ing] the hearer in darkness and incomprehensibility' (1808: 71).

Second, this relative incomprehensibility and linguistic impoverishment is compounded when the language from which the words are borrowed is itself lacking in cultural and historical continuity, e.g. due to linguistic imperialism or sub/superstrate influences (i.e. the domination or displacement of one language by another due to relative imbalances in prestige and status). Here, Fichte distinguished between 'primitive' and 'derived' languages. Primitive

languages are those which remain continuous with their direct ancestors, spoken 'without interruption' by the same cultural-linguistic community (1808: 61). German, according to Fichte, is the prime example of such a primitive language, rivalled only by Greek in the European context (1808: 61-68) [however, several other European languages could also be added, including Welsh, Irish Gaelic, Breton, Danish, or Icelandic, for instance]. By contrast, derived languages lack such cultural-linguistic historical continuity, since they are the result of the intermixing of culturally divergent languages.

The prime example of a derived language that Fichte invokes is French. In the French case, much of the Gaulish language was initially displaced by Latin under the Roman Empire, resulting in the emergence of the composite Gallo-Romance language. Then, the invasion of France by the Germanic Franks and Burgundians caused further linguistic dissonance. The Germanic settlers adopted much of the Gallo-Romance language spoken by the French natives, while the French natives in turn adopted most of the Germanic Frankish language. The result was the emergence of Old French, which was a variant of Old Frankish intermixed with Gallo-Romance. The problem, according to Fichte, is that this language shift caused both the French and Germanic settlers to adopt words which they didn't fully understand, given the incomprehensibility of their roots and figurative meanings. This, in turn, caused the French to lose their cultural authenticity and develop in its place a cultural and moral degradation, including a 'lack of seriousness about social relations, the idea of self-abandonment, and the idea of heartless laxity' (Fichte 1808: 67).

By contrast, the speakers of 'primitive' languages such as German, according to Fichte, have retained their cultural continuity through the course of history, and have therefore avoided falling prey to the confusions caused by the superimposition and merging of different languages whose roots and figurative meanings are largely opaque to the speakers. As mentioned, these confusions include being unsure of the roots and connotations of their words, thereby not fully understanding their meanings [which, according to Fichte, are rife with Latin perversions anyway]:

I take as my example the three notorious words, Humanity, Popularity, and Liberality... Without a scholarly study of antiquity and of its actual language they [the French] understand the roots of those words just as little as the German does. Now if, instead of the word Humanity [*Humanität*], we had said to a German the word *Menschlichkeit*, which is its literal translation, he would have understood us without further historical explanation, but he would have said: "Well, to be a man [Mensch] and not a wild beast is not very much after all" (Fichte 1808: 53).

Clearly, the cultural chauvinism and anti-French prejudice displayed by Fichte in above passages do not warrant neutral treatment, and they must therefore be read in their proper historical and cultural context. The *Addresses* were delivered in the wake of the Battle of Jena, which saw the French defeat and occupy Prussia which, until then, had been the only remaining German state not yet subjugated by France under Napoleonic rule. Fichte's anti-French polemic which portrays the German people as culturally distinctive and superior to the French, then, must be understood against the background of this French imperial invasion. They are an attempt to instil a sense of national pride in the German people and generate a unified national consciousness in the face of desperation brought about by severe imperial humiliation. Thus there is a sense in which the Anti-French prejudice of the *Addresses* is unsurprising when read in light of its proper historical context. It is also important to note that this prejudice does not by itself undermine the text's tremendous influence on the regeneration of German national consciousness which was central to the eventual unification of Germany in 1871; and indeed on the wider political evolution of nation states in 19th century Europe and beyond (Turnbull 2018: 19-21).

Despite the context-dependent cultural chauvinism of the *Addresses*, it is worth examining in more detail the primitive/derived distinction presented above. It is undeniable that the idea is presented by Fichte in an inflamed, charged and grossly exaggerated manner. The claim that German is the sole 'living' European language is clearly false; and presenting the matter in terms of linguistic 'purity' where foreign neologisms are equated with linguistic corruptions or perversions is misleading and cannot be accepted. Nonetheless, the question remains as to whether the excessive use of foreign neologisms, or speaking a composite, 'derived' language such as French or English results in confusions about the figurative meanings of one's words, or diminishes the degree to which the language is representative of its speakers' culture. In what follows I examine this question using English and Welsh as representative examples of derived and primitive languages, respectively.

Given that approximately three quarters of the English vocabulary has been derived from Latin, Greek, and French / Anglo-Norman, with only approximately a quarter of it being Germanic (Finkenstaedt & Wolff 1973), it qualifies as a derived language. By contrast, the Welsh language qualifies as a primitive language since it evolved directly out of Britain's native language, Brythonic, and is therefore a culturally continuous indigenous tongue which typically confines its vocabulary to its own native roots. The question, then, is whether the Welsh language is more semantically transparent than English. Does the fact that Welsh vocabulary is mainly comprised of words with Welsh roots, while the English vocabulary is mainly comprised of words with Latin, French, and Greek roots mean that English speakers' understanding of much of their own vocabulary is comparatively compromised?

There is certainly much to be said about this suggestion. Although it would be absurd to suggest that one must necessarily understand the roots of one's words in order to understand them at all, there is arguably a nontrivial degree of opacity between the form and meaning of many English words which results in *some* incomprehensibility. Being a competent English speaker doesn't enable one to work out the meanings of compound words whose constituents have been imported from other languages; neither does it enable one to work out the meaning of their roots. Since (1) understanding a word's root enriches one's knowledge of its meaning, and (2) most English speakers have no such knowledge, it would seem to follow that most English speakers' understanding of much of their own vocabulary is somewhat compromised.

Consider 'cacophony' (*kakos* + *phone*, Greek), for instance. How could you possibly work out its meaning unless you already had the relevant knowledge of Greek? By contrast, the Welsh equivalent *drygsain* (*drwg* (bad / evil) + *sain* (noise)) wears its meaning on its sleeve. Similarly, there are indeterminately many English words whose meanings are roughly identical but which have been derived from different languages. Among these are e.g. brotherhood (Anglo-Saxon) and fraternity (Latin), whereas the e.g. Welsh equivalent *brawdoliaeth* has a uniform use. This often results in a lack of consistency in the root that is then used in semantically related words: sea / sailor (Anglo-Saxon); nautical (Latin, *nauta*); maritime (Latin, *mare*). This, once again, can prevent many English speakers from being able to fully understand the meanings of their words, since they generally have no knowledge of the stem's meaning, and this is exacerbated by the unpredictability and inconsistency in the use of the stems in conceptually related words.

The fact that English is permeated with lexical transplantations can also enable its speakers to create the illusion that what they're saying is more sophisticated than it really is. This is because their use of a loan word can have extra-linguistic nuances when, for instance, that word has been imported from another language with which they're unfamiliar. There is nothing in the word's form that gives one a clue as to what it actually means, and this can create a certain sense of mystery and / or confusion which can easily be mistaken for profundity. As Orwell puts it in 'Politics and the English Language':

'Scientific, political and sociological writers [in particular], are nearly always haunted by the notion that Latin or Greek words are grander than Saxon ones, and unnecessary words like *expedite*, *ameliorate*, *predict*, *extraneous*, *deracinated*, *clandestine*, *sub-aqueous* and hundreds of others constantly gain ground from their Anglo-Saxon opposite numbers' (Orwell 1946).

By contrast, the transparency of meaning found in more 'primitive' languages which limit their roots to their own pre-existing linguistic resources precludes any such illusion. This is because understanding the root(s) automatically enables one to understand the meaning, such that attempting to sound more sophisticated or conveniently vague by using a conceptually equivalent synonym will not straightforwardly bring about the desired effect. Here we have another sense in which English speakers' understanding of words can be somewhat compromised at times.

The foregoing considerations illustrate that the degree to which different languages reflect their speakers' historically rooted culture (and correspondingly, the degree to which linguistic relativity applies) varies across languages, according to whether they are comparatively 'primitive' or 'derived'. Recall that linguistic relativity states that language mirrors its users' cultural particularities by embedding both literal and figurative meanings which mirror their users' culture. When the connotative nuances arise from the meanings of the words' roots, the inability to understand the roots' meanings can limit one's ability to fully understand the words, particularly their figurative meanings. This is due to the opacity that is often found between the form of a word and its corresponding meaning: the form tells one nothing about the meaning when the root has been imported from a different language of which the average speaker of a 'derived' language has no grasp.

What Fichte's primitive / derived distinction illustrates, then, is that composite, derived languages such as English are less representative of their speakers' *indigenous* cultural identity than 'primitive' languages, given the relative historical disconnect between the language and culture. Hence, linguistic relativity applies to derived languages to a lesser degree: it is a matter of etymological opacity vs etymological transparency. The same is true of other *linguae francae* which, as the result of linguistic imperialism, are spoken by several different cultures, and are therefore not entirely continuous with their speakers' respective histories; neither are they altogether specific to those cultures. The relevance of language to cultural identity, then, is weighted differently across nations, depending on the degree of continuity between the language, culture, and history of its speakers, and the degree to which the language is specific to its speakers.

Although Fichte's views on language advanced in the *Addresses* have not yet received the careful scrutiny and consideration they deserve by scholars (presumably because of their chauvinistic elements), they nonetheless contain original distinctions and insights which are as relevant to contemporary nationalism debates and movements as they were in 1808. Moreover, since Herder and Fichte's arguments were developed against the background of French cultural domination and imperial invasion, it would not be surprising if there were

several points of mutual reinforcement and fruitful comparison to be drawn here with the later anticolonial literature of the 20th century. In what follows, I examine this category of literature and uncover several such points of similarity and mutual reinforcement in relation to the writers' use of linguistic relativity.

§2. Anticolonial Views on Language and Identity

The national liberation and Pan-Africanism literature of the 20th century is rife with arguments and depictions of the corrosive effects of linguistic imperialism on the subject peoples. The denial of the use and value of indigenous languages is presented as one of the colonisers' primary means of oppression: it devalues and suppresses their lived culture and ways of thinking. By the same token, the imposition of the coloniser language compels the subject peoples to internalise and think in line with the coloniser's culture, a culture which is both racist and alien to them. This, in turn, enables the coloniser to get under the skin of the colonised, thus reinforcing their sense of inferiority from within, via the language, as it were (see Fanon 1952; Memmi 2016; Sardar 2008:15, for instance). Linguistic relativity is central to the arguments advanced in this connection: the reason that linguistic imperialism is claimed to be a major dehumanising colonial tool is precisely that language is a repository culture; the wrong kind of culture, in the anti-colonial context.

A comprehensive analysis of the anticolonial literature which draws (tacitly) on linguistic relativity to highlight the corrosive effects of linguistic imperialism is beyond the scope of this thesis. Rather, I shall provide a synoptic overview of the main arguments which I take to be relevant to furthering our understanding of the adverse psychological and impact of linguistic imperialism on those subjected to it (this relevance also partly extends to other instances of language shifts which need not necessarily be colonial, such as languages which are becoming increasingly endangered or eroded in the face of globalisation, such as Icelandic).

There are three types of argument which I shall examine here. *Pace* David Boucher's (2020) classification, these are: (1) indigenous languages as the prime vehicles of culture; (2) the appropriation and modification of the coloniser language as a medium for expressing indigenous culture; and (3) the elevation of creole languages as the prime vehicles of cultural authenticity. Each of these arguments draws heavily on linguistic relativity / the constitutive view of language as a driving assumption behind their psychological revelations and political agendas. Moreover, the three types of argument are not mutually exclusive, but rather carry differences in emphasis and purpose.

§2.1. Indigenous languages as the prime vehicles of culture

The arguments which fall under this category typically advocate the revival or promotion of indigenous languages. Indigenous languages are taken to be the authentic cultural expressions of the peoples / nations in question, and a failure to revive / promote them is to deny the colonised people their own cultural consciousness, voice, and dignity. The French-Tunisian revolutionary writer Albert Memmi (1920-2020), for instance, argued that the colonised who receive a formal education are subjected to further alienation and cultural oppression, since the language of instruction is that of the former coloniser¹⁰. What this means is that the culture / 'memory' of the coloniser, rather than that of the colonised is handed down to the colonised through the process of education. This is by virtue of being taught in the language of the former coloniser, which embeds the coloniser's culture (Memmi 2016: 190).

The psychological consequences of this are catastrophic. To avoid illiteracy, the colonised must immerse themselves in the coloniser language and use it for all educational, industrial, administrative, technological, and bureaucratic purposes, while their native language is marginalised from public life. The effect of this is that the native tongue of the colonised becomes inferiorised: its subordinated status and exclusion from public life, together with its necessity for communication and progress, mean that it is assigned little if any value in its own country. This, in turn, causes the colonised to become ashamed of his / her mother tongue, thereby internalising the sense of inferiority assigned to it by the former coloniser (Memmi 2016: 150-1). This sense of inferiority is further reinforced by the fact that it is predominantly the former coloniser's language that is used in public spaces: street, road, and railway signs, place names, official documents, etc: the colonised is made to feel 'like a foreigner in his own country' (ibid., also cited in Boucher 2020). In other words, these everyday symbols which mediate national/cultural identity and tacitly reinforce the citizens' sense of that identity [what Michael Billig (1995) calls 'banal nationalism'] remain those of the former coloniser. Insofar as the former coloniser's language continues to dominate public spaces and life, then, the colonial legacy continues to be tacitly reinforced given the ubiquity of its language, among other manifestations of neo-colonialism.

Further, adopting the coloniser language causes the speaker to become embroiled in an internal cultural rift: the native mother tongue is the one which carries all the emotional weight and cultural spontaneity; however, its subordination and exclusion from public life causes that emotional and cultural spontaneity to become crushed. To get a job, express oneself in public, or develop a social network beyond the private or rural realm, one must

¹⁰ Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1957) was written in response to the decolonisation of Tunisia and Algeria from French rule in 1956; however, he claims that its relevance extends to all instances of colonialism (Memmi 1991: 145).

become disconnected from one's native mother tongue, and the result of this is a 'cultural catastrophe' not only for the individual, but also for the collective expression of that culture, including the creative arts (Memmi 2016: 152). Nothing short of a revolution, Memmi claims, will succeed in redressing this cultural demise and enable the colonised to reclaim their own cultural heritage (2016: 194).

Similar arguments can be found in Freire & Macedo (1987), Thiong'o (1986) and Fanon (2008). Freire & Macedo (1987), for instance, argue that teaching literacy in the former coloniser's language [Portuguese, in Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, and Guinea-Bissau] is to perpetuate and instil a neo-colonial elitist mentality in the formerly colonised. This, once again, is because the coloniser language is constitutive of the coloniser culture. As such, not only does teaching literacy in Portuguese result in the continued colonisation of minds of the formerly colonised; it also severely hinders their ability to develop a culturally authentic literary means of expression, thereby preventing them from reconstructing and reclaiming their own historical and cultural voice. While political decolonisation may have been accomplished in a literal sense, psychological and cultural colonisation continue to persist not least via the institutional entrenchment of the coloniser language.

In a similar vein, Thiong'o emphasises the importance of literature for preserving, disseminating, and transmitting the cultural, historical, and artistic inheritance of a People: the images and metaphors which fashion its mental universe, so to speak (1986: 15-17). Since language is inextricably linked to a People's cultural and mental universe, the imposition of the coloniser language has resulted in the destruction and devaluation of the native culture of the colonised in favour of European substitutes (ibid.). Thus it is no accident that Thiong'o writes predominantly in his native Kenyan language Gikuyu, given his insistence that one should write in one's indigenous language to help rediscover and resume its associated culture. This, in turn is a necessary starting point to combating the various manifestations of neo-colonialism which continue to persist in African states.

A major influence underpinning these arguments by Memmi and Thiong'o is Fanon, who in his *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008 [1952]) argued that speaking the coloniser's language (French in Fanon's case; however, he claims that the same is true of every colonial system (Fanon 2008: 9,15)) involves adopting and participating in the coloniser's world / civilisation at the expense of one's own. 'A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language' (Fanon 2008 [1952]: 18). Further: 'To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture' (ibid: 25).

The reason that language is such a powerful weapon for getting under the skin of the colonised, according to Fanon, is that its forced adoption causes the colonised to internalise

the racist culture it embeds. Not only does this deprive the colonised of their own cultural particularities and ways of thinking; it also forces them to internalise the Western culture(s) which 'gave birth to colonial racism, and European racist structures' (Sardar 2008: 15). The problem here is that since it is the coloniser language and its associated culture that carry the status, prestige, and respect, the black person wants to be like the coloniser (Fanon 2008: 15-16, 25). Indeed, mastering the coloniser language is the ultimate benchmark of 'measuring up' to that culture: 'The Antilles Negro who wants to be white will be the whiter as he gains greater mastery of the cultural tool that language is [...] [he] wants to speak French because it is the key that can open doors which were still barred to him fifty years ago' (Fanon 2008: 25).

However, given the patent racism that is deeply intertwined with the coloniser's language, culture, and linguistic imperialism, the black person cannot properly express him / herself in that language. The more they try, the more they emulate their oppressors and adopt their world view which, given its inherent racism, reinforces the inferiority complex already instilled in them via colonialism. [Fanon takes it to be part of the definition of colonialism that the imposition of the coloniser language inculcates an inferiority complex in the subjugated People 'by the death and burial of its local cultural originality' (Fanon 2008: 9)].

This internal cultural-linguistic rift among the colonised also has political consequences. Take the Negritude movement of the 1930s-50s, whose aim was to generate a Pan-African black consciousness among African and black diaspora peoples so as to reassert and reclaim the value and dignity of African cultural heritage, values, and traditions. Boucher (2020) attributes to Fanon (1952) a veiled criticism of the Negritude movement in relation to the above argument about the black person's masterful use of the coloniser language resulting in their increasing emulation of the coloniser culture. The problem here is that the Negritude movement was conducted in French; there is a sense in which this was self-defeating. That is: the movement's aim was to generate and assert black consciousness *against* the racist and allegedly superior European culture; however, doing so through the medium of French actually perpetuated the same European culture that they sought to reject.

Thus it can be seen that the arguments of Memmi, Thiong'o and Fanon overlap in their emphasis on the catastrophic psychological and cultural consequences of the forced adoption of the coloniser language. Their commitment to the view that indigenous languages are the prime vehicles of culture leads them to conclude that adopting the coloniser language automatically results in cultural alienation, causing the colonised to become alienated from their mother tongue (which is a repository of their culture), and / or attempt to

emulate the coloniser. This, in turn, is taken to perpetually reinforce the inferiority complex of the colonised: by using the coloniser language to try to overcome their inferiorised status, the colonised unwittingly imbibe the same culture which (mis)represents them as inferior. Thus the most direct way of overcoming this problem is to revive and promote indigenous languages in order to tackle the problem at its root.

§2.2. Appropriation of the Coloniser Language

Whereas the above arguments which take indigenous languages to be the prime vehicles of culture imply that the only way of securing cultural reclamation and reassertion is to revive and promote indigenous languages, others have been more pragmatic in their approach. The following arguments by Amílcar Cabral, Aimé Césaire and Salman Rushdie, for instance, defend the appropriation and modification of the coloniser language as an alternative medium for expressing and reviving indigenous culture. These arguments were developed in contexts where reviving an indigenous language was simply not an option. That is: given the arbitrariness with which state borders were drawn under European colonialism, there was no single language comprehensible to the majorities in question e.g. in India and most African states. Moreover, because of their exclusion from the public and literary realms, local vernaculars often lacked the literary and phonetic unity necessary for cross-regional communication in the drive for national liberation.

This latter point was emphasised by the Guinea Bissauan nationalist revolutionary Cabral who, in his directives to his African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, claimed that the national liberation struggle should be conducted in Portuguese. The reason here is that, unlike the indigenous languages of Balanta, Creole etc., Portuguese is sophisticated enough to coordinate the struggle (Cabral 2016: 136). Central to Cabral's drive for national liberation was the insistence that indigenous culture must be disseminated through rigorous education in order to combat the ignorance brought about by imperial rule and thereby facilitate a process of 're-Africanisation'. Colonial rule 'cannot be sustained except by the permanent and organized repression of the cultural life of the people in question' (Cabral 1974: 1974: 12). While indigenous languages can be revived in the future, their contribution to indigenous development and national consciousness would be impractical until independence and cultural / educational advancement are first achieved through the appropriation of Portuguese (Cabral 2016: 136).

What these insights highlight is that, even in situations where reclaiming a People's cultural identity requires the revival and promotion of their indigenous languages, the practical obstacles to achieving this (e.g. lack of literary standardisation, absence of a single language

intelligible to the majority population etc.) mean that the only feasible option is to appropriate the coloniser's language. *Prima facie*, however, this revolutionary appropriation of the coloniser language as a starting point to securing cultural reclamation appears paradoxical. On the one hand, it is supposed to help dismantle the coloniser's cultural domination, while on the other hand, the prevalence of the coloniser language is largely the *source* of that cultural domination¹¹.

This paradox, however, can arguably be partly dissolved by considering the other ways that language has been taken to embed culture. The Martinican politician and Negritude writer / campaigner Césaire, for instance, argued that the French language can be appropriated and transformed so as to express the cultural heritage and lived experience of its black diaspora (Césaire 2000: 83). Specifically, he drew on the surrealist tradition to reflect the experiences of black people as against the 'rational' dominant European paradigm, thereby transforming or 'exploding' the French language (ibid.) by integrating African images and ideas into it.

In a similar vein, Sédar Senghor (another Negritude writer and later Senegalese President) attributes to Birago Diop's book *Contes d'Amadou Koumba* (1947) the success of replicating and transplanting the spirit and elegance of traditional African fables into French prose. As Thiong'o puts it: Diop's retelling of the tales in French manages to preserve 'all the virtues of negro-african languages' (Thiong'o 1986: 7). The Nigerian poet and novelist Chinua Achebe (1975) makes a similar point, arguing that the English language is capable of expressing his African experiences as long as it is modified appropriately in accordance with African innovations. Likewise, another Nigerian poet and novelist, Gabriel Okara argues that the sustained dominance of English in (former) British colonies has actually resulted in its partial absorption of African culture, thereby invigorating the English language with African uniqueness. The Nigerian and West African varieties of English, for instance, have gradually acquired their own cultural distinctiveness (Okara 1963).

Ultimately, these arguments suggest that given enough modification and appropriation, *linguae francae* such as English and French can be appropriated and remade so as to begin to embody the culture of the formerly colonised. Although linguistic imperialism may initially have caused much cultural displacement, the gradual domestication of the coloniser language in a new cultural context means that this displacement need not necessarily be all-encompassing and permanent. Indeed, these points are made explicitly by the likes of

¹¹ Cabral himself sidestepped this paradox by denying that language is a repository of culture: 'language isn't evidence of anything, but an instrument for men to relate with one another, a means for, speaking, to express realities of life and of the world' (Cabral 2016: 134-5, also cited in Boucher 2020). However, Cabral provided no argument for this denial; and indeed, as we shall see in Chapters 2 and 3, the notion that language is purely instrumental and detachable from culture is false.

Salman Rushdie and Yasmin Alibhai-Brown regarding Indian English. Rushdie (1991) argues that English has now been spoken in India for long enough as to have absorbed much Indian culture. It has effectively been domesticated, remade, and appropriated for Indian purposes. Alibhai-Brown (2020) takes this idea a step further, arguing that the Indians managed to appropriate the English language to resist colonialism, imaginatively turning the colonisers' own language against them. The reason that they were able to do this was because the English language is uniquely malleable and porous, capable of absorbing endless words and concepts from other languages, thereby proving to be highly adaptable in indefinitely many cultural contexts (Alibhai-Brown 2015: 211).

It is questionable whether the degree to which English (and presumably other *linguae francae*) can be reinvented so as to altogether cease to be a source of cultural displacement is as high as Alibhai-Brown claims it to be. However, it is undeniable that given their fluid and dynamic nature, languages clearly are malleable enough to adapt to new cultural settings and thereby become somewhat repurposed in line with that culture. Neologisms, loan words, and loan translations are part of its definition: no language remains static across different historical and cultural contexts. Moreover, if meaning is essentially dependent on use (which it is, as we shall see in Chapter 2), then given that different cultures have different uses for words, it is inevitable that transplanting a language into a new cultural context results in diachronic conceptual changes. Therefore, it is arguably an exaggeration to present the linguistic imperialism-induced cultural displacement of colonised peoples in such absolute, uncompromising terms as the likes of Fanon and Memmi do.

On the other hand, however, this exaggeration is dwarfed by that of Alibhai-Brown: to claim that the coloniser language can be repurposed to such an extent that it ceases to exert cultural domination altogether overlooks the historically rooted dimension of language. That is: language develops through the course of history so as to cumulatively embed the concepts, metaphors, and idioms etc. of its native speakers. To impose the coloniser language is to impose the coloniser's historically accumulated conceptual repertoire. Although the colonised can repurpose the language for different present uses in line with their own culture, the fact remains that this occurs within the context of the coloniser language's broader ready-made conceptual framework, which itself is discontinuous with the indigenous culture of the colonised. The gradual repurposing of the language, then, is certainly an improvement; however, it nonetheless remains interconnected with the coloniser's conceptual framework, most of which remains comparatively constant.

Nonetheless, Alibhai-Brown does raise an important point regarding the somewhat *sui generis* malleability of English; i.e. the ease with which it absorbs loan words and cultural

innovations. As a *lingua franca* which falls into Fichte's 'derived' category, English is a composite language where an estimated 80% of its vocabulary has been imported from other languages (Stamper 2017). As mentioned in §1, the fact that the English language is a vast amalgamation of loan words with only a minority of it deriving from Old English / Anglo-Saxon suggests that it is less representative of an indigenous English culture than comparatively 'primitive' languages whose roots are transparent to their speakers. It is also worth noting that the other language which anti/post-colonial theorists have claimed to be capable of embodying the culture of the colonised is French, which is also a composite and highly etymologically mixed *lingua franca*. Thus it would not be surprising if the reason behind the confidence of e.g. Césaire in the French language's ability to effectively replicate African culture is that its etymologically mixed nature and widespread historical use as a *lingua franca* makes it less representative of French culture in the first place, and therefore more capable of adaptation.

What the arguments examined in this section illustrate, then, is that the absolutism of Fanon and Memmi regarding the corrosive effects of linguistic imperialism on the indigenous peoples' cultural integrity cannot be applied across the board. In situations where a single indigenous language cannot be used for national liberation or decolonisation purposes (whether due to linguistic disunity, literary underdevelopment, or other variables) a compromise must be found. The above arguments which defend the revolutionary appropriation of the coloniser language highlight one such compromise. That is: the coloniser language is either presented as a temporary instrumental means to an end, where indigenous languages will be revived once national liberation has been achieved; or as a tool to be actively repurposed as a vehicle for partly embodying the culture of the colonised.

§2.3. The Promotion of Creole Languages as Vehicles of Culture

A middle way between the treatment of indigenous languages as prime vehicles of culture, and the appropriation of the coloniser language for cultural reclamation, is a third type of argument which concludes that creole languages are often the prime vehicles of culture. Creole languages differ from their pidgin counterparts in the following respect. Whereas pidgin languages are grammatically simplified variants of other languages which develop between two or more groups who have no single language in common but need to interact for (usually) trade purposes, creole languages are proper languages in their own right. They evolve out of the prolonged use of pidgin dialects to become stable natural languages with

their own standardised grammatical and syntactical structures, such as in Nigerian Creole or Jamaican Patois.

The reason that creole languages are taken to be authentic embodiments of the culture of the colonised is that they have been actively developed by the speakers in their unique historical circumstances. Unlike the straightforward cases of linguistic imperialism where the imposition of the coloniser language compromises the cultural-linguistic integrity of the colonised, the creolisation of a pidgin language brings about an emergent new language which is not directly derivative of that of the coloniser. Since Creole languages mainly evolved in the sugarcane and rice slave plantations of the Americas (and to a lesser extent Africa and Asia) via the prolonged interactions of displaced and enslaved black people with tradespeople, white settlers, and labourers, there is a sense in which creole languages have acquired an indigenous and culture-specific status among their speakers.

This process of 'transculturation' enables creole languages to become the vehicles for the embodiment of the culture of the (formerly) colonised, thus partly dissolving the 'indigenous v coloniser language' dichotomy. Although creole languages are not, strictly speaking, based on indigenous roots, they have arguably been actively moulded in line with the culture and history of their speakers for long enough as to acquire a new indigenous status. Jamaican Patois, for instance, developed on the slave plantations in the 17th century out of prolonged interaction between the West African diaspora who spoke various Niger-Congo languages, and the slave owners' English dialects which exerted the dominant, superstrate influence due to their perceived prestige and socio-economic advantage (Irvine 2004). This amalgamation of African and English dialects resulted in a form of pidgin English which subsequently became standardised into what is now the native language of most Jamaicans. Indeed, the majority of Jamaicans identify strongly with Jamaican Patois, considering it to express their sense of self (Bryan 2004); and recent surveys and petitions¹² indicate that most Jamaicans support the promotion of Patois to official status¹³.

Despite the culturally authentic and effectively indigenised status of creole languages, however, they have widely been viewed as vulgar and coarse degenerations of European languages, rather than distinctive languages in their own right (Rodríguez & Tate 2015). This is likely due to the socio-economic poverty conditions of the emergence and evolution of

¹² See <https://www.loopjamaica.com/content/petition-calls-government-make-patois-official-language>

¹³ This drive for the enshrinement of Patois as an official language also involves the increased literary standardisation of Patois, including the publication of a Patois translation of the New Testament in 2012. As Courtney Stewart, the manager of the translation project contemporaneously put it: "The language is what defines us as Jamaicans. It is who we are - patois-speakers". See: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-16285462>

creole languages (Tria et al. 2015), rather than factors that are intrinsic to creole languages themselves. To draw a comparison: Romance languages emerged in a similar manner: the superstrate influence of Latin caused most subject peoples of the Roman Empire to abandon their indigenous languages in favour of Vulgar Latin intermixed with the substrate influences of their local vernaculars (ibid.). Yet, none of the Romance languages are viewed as coarse degenerations of Latin. This singling out of creole languages as 'degenerations' is what DeGraff (2003) refers to as 'creole exceptionalism', which has been a dominant albeit misleading assumption both within and beyond mainstream linguistics. Indeed, the term *patois* literally means 'rough speech' in French.

The rejection of the perception of creole languages as vulgar degenerations of European languages resulting from ignorance and inferiority was a central principle in the Caribbean *créolité* movement of the 1980s. Whereas the Negritude movement had characterised the identity of the African-descent Caribbeans in terms of African heritage, the *créolité* movement moved beyond this and emphasised their unique historical, linguistic, and culturally heterogenous identity (Bernabé, Chamoiseau & Confiant 1989).

This movement was based primarily on the philosophy of Edouard Glissant (1981, 1990, 1996, 1997a, 1997b, 2002) regarding creolization. Whereas earlier writers such as Braithwaite (1971) characterised creolization in a literal sense; i.e. the diachronic process of different ethnic groups and cultures intermixing and cohabiting, thereby being mutually implicated in a process of cultural and linguistic 'indigenization', Glissant (1996) denied that creolization was an *inevitable* outcome of sustained cultural-linguistic intermixing and applied the term primarily to the colonial context. Specifically, he claimed that the tensions and struggles associated with the Caribbean slave plantation societies are unique necessary conditions in the (unforeseeable) emergence of creole, and the 'transculturation' it involves. That is: the concept of creolization cannot be detached from the world of colonisation, slavery, inequality, and exploitation which gave rise to it (Glissant 1996: 18). Creolization reflects the Caribbeans' active resistance to that exploitation, and provides the basis for a 'supple theory of non-essentialist identity formation and transnational belonging' (Ahmed et al. 2003: 279).

The *créolité* (creoleness) movement, then, sought to capture the specificity of the Caribbean people not in terms of African descent, but rather in terms of their *créolité* (Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant 1990: 10). Language is central here: the Caribbeans' unique historical circumstances, creative vibrancy, and 'complex, troubled unfinished relation to history', as Stuart Hall (2015) puts it, are inextricably bound up with their creole languages. By claiming that Caribbean cultures are essentially 'translated societies', Hall objects to the

Negritude notion of a return to an African cultural consciousness by emphasising that 'no translation achieves total equivalence'; indeed, in any translation, 'the original is impossible to restore' (Hall 2015: 16). In other words, the Caribbeans' distinctive cultural-linguistic identities cannot be detached from their colonial history of slavery, inequality, and exploitation, and their innovative active resistance to it.

It can be seen, then, that linguistic relativity has (tacitly) been central to the anti-colonial literature of the 20th century. The emphases by Fanon and Memmi on indigenous languages as the prime vehicles of culture; by Césaire and Rushdie on the ability of *linguae francae* to be remoulded in line with indigenous culture; and by Bernabé, Chamoiseau & Confiant on the *sui generis* ability of creole languages to embody Caribbean culture all centre around the question of linguistic relativity's locus. That is: whereas they all (with the possible exception of Cabral) assume that language embodies culture and influences thought accordingly, they differ with respect to (1) the precise psychological consequences; (2) the political implications; and (3) the malleability of language in relation to cultural authenticity.

Having examined the linguistic dimension to the national liberation and decolonisation literature of the 20th century, let us now turn to the Welsh case study of linguistic nationalism. Given that Wales was colonised by (Norman) England, it is unsurprising that there are some noteworthy similarities here: the arguments (which, like the anticolonial genre, are underpinned by linguistic relativity) emphasise the following effects. First, the internal cultural-linguistic rifts that Welsh speakers are claimed to experience regarding the inferiorized status of Welsh in comparison to English. Second, the absence or undermining of forms of 'banal nationalism' in public life and manifested in the anglicisation of place names. Third, the equation of the revival of the Welsh language with the corresponding revival of Welsh culture and nationality.

§3. Welsh Linguistic Nationalism: Saunders Lewis and J.R. Jones

The Welsh nationalism of the 20-21st centuries is a relevant but underexplored case in that it has been significantly influenced by an amalgamation of linguistic relativity considerations, anticolonial ideas, and related philosophical influences concerning the constitutive view of language. The linguistic dimension to Welsh nationalism gained currency with the establishment of the Welsh nationalist party Plaid Cymru in 1925. The party's founding aims were Home Rule and the promotion of Welsh to official language status in Wales; though the latter aim received by far the greatest priority due to the overwhelming influence of its founding member and poet, novelist, translator, historian, and Nobel Prize nominee

Saunders Lewis (Ross 2005: 236). During WW1, Lewis became convinced under the influence of Maurice Barrès' works that:

'the only way to cultivate your own personality as an artist and develop your own resources is to return to your roots [...] And I think it was Barrès – after Yeats and the Irish – that turned me into a convinced Welsh Nationalist. Then, I decided I had to master Welsh and read Welsh literature' (Lewis 1961).

Like the anticolonial arguments of Freire & Macedo (1987) and Thiong'o (1986), a major part of Lewis' linguistic nationalism was informed by the need to write in one's own native language and establish a continuity with the existing body of indigenous literature (and the cultural heritage it represents), which Lewis argued had not properly fed into the Anglo-Welsh genre (Jones & Thomas: 1973). Lewis' conversion to nationalism involved the realization that his fate as a Welsh writer was necessarily bound up with the fate of the Welsh language (Griffiths 1989: 11). As such, he viewed the two goals of promoting Wales' literary cultural authenticity and effecting political change regarding the language as mutually inextricable. Since the only major nationalist movement, the *Cymru Fydd* home rule pressure group, had dissolved at the turn of the 20th century, and Wales-specific questions had been all but excluded from the 1924 general election (Davies 2007: 499), there was effectively no overt, compelling political consciousness of a Welsh national identity, let alone one that emphasised the language. The establishment of Plaid Cymru in 1925, therefore, was the first step to redressing this.

The near-exclusive focus of Plaid Cymru on language is, once again, the consequence of a tacit commitment to linguistic relativity. Lewis, who can reasonably be credited with being the founding father of modern Welsh nationalism (Griffiths 1989:94; Miles 1973: 19), started out from his realisation that language is a vehicle of culture, as illustrated by his remarks concerning returning to one's cultural-linguistic roots being a necessary condition of literary authenticity. As Plaid Cymru's president from 1926-39 whose influence dominated Plaid Cymru's formative years, Lewis's commitment to Welsh as the prime vehicle of Welsh culture had a profound effect on the party's trajectory. Indeed, it 'informed the dominant discourse of Welsh political and cultural nationalism throughout the [20th] century' (Jones 1996: 31). Take the following remarks, for instance:

...it is only a monoglot Welsh speaking Wales that is consistent with the aims and philosophies of Welsh nationalism... To believe otherwise is self-deceit and a refusal to face the truth. Therefore, if we wish to fight at all for the Welsh language, we must fight seriously for the continuance of the monoglot Welsh-speakers... We wish to free Wales from English grasp [and] de-anglicise Wales (Lewis 1933: 65).

This equation of Welsh culture with the Welsh language is nothing if not linguistic relativity. Moreover, that culture A cannot be properly represented in language B was a recurring theme in his writings. Upon disowning his own drama *The Eve of St John* (1921) which he had attempted to write in an Anglo-Welsh idiom by replicating the rhythms and grammatical patterns of Welsh in English diction, he concluded that Anglo-Welsh is in fact 'the horrible jargon of men who have lost one tongue without acquiring another... no feebler stuff is spoken in these islands' (cited in Griffiths 1989: 6). Relatedly, Lewis also expressed a suspicion of Anglo-Irish. In response to the suggestion that Wales could learn from the Irish Sinn Fein movement which succeeded despite the near erosion of Ireland's native tongue (the implication is that the Irish language is not necessary to the continuation of Irish national identity), he approvingly cites the following passage by a friend:

'Losing a mother tongue does not change a people at one stroke. The poison works slowly but it results in death. In our Irish case the effects of the evil were hidden over the course of a century by the clear threat of another evil, oppression from without. That oppression has now ceased, but the old poison is still at work in the Irish body. And if the Irish people do not awaken to understand the evil that lies in the loss of their language, it is perfectly possible that there will not be an Irish nation in a century's time. Perhaps the Irish Republic shall remain, but a republic is one thing and a nation another.'
(Lewis 1947, also cited in Jones 1996: 32).

Ultimately, the reclamation of the Welsh language is presented by Lewis as the *conditio sine qua non* of reviving a Welsh national consciousness and securing Welsh cultural continuity and longevity. As the above passages illustrate, it is impossible, according to Lewis, for a native culture to persistently survive in another language. Rather, the partial success of replicating e.g. Irish or Welsh culture in English, and the culture's prospective survival therein, can be accounted for by the notion that the embodiment of Irish or Welsh culture in English is in fact parasitic on the continued existence of the native tongue. That is: over time, the decline of the native tongue will eventually result in the evaporation of the associated native culture from these 'hybrid' dialects.

Similar to the arguments of Fanon and Memmi examined in §2, Lewis' conviction that indigenous languages are the prime vehicles of culture (such that promoting them is a necessary condition of securing cultural reclamation and continuity) is uncompromising. Another noteworthy similarity is the emphasis on the inferiority complex instilled by imperial conquest: according to Lewis, Plaid Cymru's chief aim was to 'remove...from the Welsh their inferiority complex...eradicate from our country the mark and disgrace of her conquest' (Davies 2007: 538-9, my translation). Removing this inferiority complex, in turn, necessarily

requires promoting the Welsh language. [However, this was not viewed by Lewis as sufficient: his programme also emphasised the centrality of revising the self-perception of the Welsh as of one of the founding countries of European civilisation (Davies 2007: 539), mainly through the influence of the high-brow literary innovations of the Middle Ages.]

Given Lewis' linguistic extremism (for lack of a better term) and foundational place in modern Welsh nationalism, then, it is little wonder that language has dominated Welsh nationalism since 1925 to the present. Although Plaid Cymru had very little *formal* political impact during Lewis' presidency in the 1920s and 30s, its media and broadcasting influence gave it a significant pressure group function, and sowed the seeds of later political influence. The impact of Lewis' 'propaganda' on Welsh politics was also supplemented by instances of symbolic activism. In 1936, for instance, Lewis and two other Plaid members set fire to an RAF bombing school which had recently been installed by the UK government despite the protests of half a million Welsh people. The government's demolition of the farmhouse Penyberth (which the bombing school replaced) was a major Welsh cultural heritage site: it was home to centuries' worth of prominent patrons and poets. The disregard for Wales' cultural heritage, the fact that the construction began on the 400th anniversary of England's annexation of Wales, and the judge's derogatory attitude towards the Welsh language in the criminal trial, were seen in the Welsh public eye as major instances of recurrent English oppression. Hence this act of arson became enshrined as a central defining feature of modern Welsh-speaking history (Davies 2007: 540).

Lewis' greatest influence, however, was his public address 'Tynged yr Iaith' [Fate of the Language] which was delivered in Welsh on the radio in 1962. In it, Lewis predicts the imminent extinction of the Welsh language in the face of the continuous decline in Welsh language speakers, provides an historical and political analysis of the status of Welsh language, and urges radical political action. The impact of this lecture was profound. In addition to sparking numerous protests, demonstrations, and various acts of civil disobedience, it kick-started the formation of *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg* [The Welsh Language Society] the same year (Davies 1994: 649).

Cymdeithas yr Iaith, whose first president was Lewis himself, is the Welsh language pressure group whose campaigning was pivotal in shaping the trajectory of Welsh nation-building. This resulted in the creation of the Welsh language radio station Radio Cymru (1977), the television channel S4C (1982), and the Welsh Language Acts of 1967 and 1993, the latter of which gave Welsh equal status with English in Welsh public life. This linguistic dimension to the Welsh nation building project has since become increasingly consolidated,

as evidenced by the likes of the Welsh Government's 2050 Welsh language strategy, for instance, which aims to achieve a million Welsh speakers by 2050¹⁴.

Throughout the 1960s, the main philosophical influence on the early formative years of *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* (Welsh Language Society), was J.R. Jones, whose works will be examined in the following section. Jones built on Lewis' ideas concerning the inextricability of language and national identity and the conflict between Welshness and Britishness, and the detrimental psychological impact of linguistic decline and displacement; and gave them a more overtly philosophical twist. As Lewis puts it:

'...this new young movement received an inspiring and nourishing leader and prophet in the greatest social thinker raised in our Welsh Wales this century: the professor J.R. Jones. J.R. Jones' books and pamphlets are the classics of our nationalism today. It is he who bestowed grandness upon the campaign of the Welsh Language Society against the disgrace of the investiture of Prince Charles in Caernarfon...' (Preface to the second edition of *Tynged yr Iaith*, Saunders Lewis, June 1972, my translation).

§3.1. J.R. Jones

Jones' works are underpinned by two fundamental principles: (1) language as an inextricable feature of national identity; and (2) the need for cultural roots in one's own nation. These principles are central to the arguments that Jones develops regarding the detrimental psychological effects of cultural displacement and the necessity of language for sustaining culture. Principle (1) is assumed by Jones as an axiomatic truth, while principle (2) is based on Jones' philosophical account of personal identity and human nature. It is clear that Jones' view of language amounted to linguistic relativity, since his main book on the necessity of language for safeguarding cultural longevity, *Prydeindod* [Britishness] (1966), begins with a definition of a nation in terms of language (+ territory & sovereign state), where language is defined as:

'the source of their [a People's] spirit, which is their language: not as a medium or technique for communication as much as a tradition, an inheritance enriched by the succession of the centuries – 'language' in the sense ascribed to the word when it is

¹⁴ These Welsh language planning initiatives have gained currency despite the Unionist outlook of the Welsh Labour Party (which has been in government since the enactment of the Government of Wales Act 1998). The incursion of the language/identity link (which emerged via the nationalist and often anti-Unionist tradition) into Welsh Labour government policy is testament to the entrenchment of its far-reaching influence.

claimed that the whole of a People's cultural past has been compressed into their native language' (Jones 1966: 10, my translation).

To further explain what he means by language in this culturally significant sense, Jones cites the following passage by 19th century Icelandic linguist Tómas Sæmundsson: 'Languages are the chief distinguishing marks of peoples. No people in fact comes into being until it speaks a language of its own; let the languages perish and the peoples perish too, or become different peoples' (Jones 1966: 11, also cited in Tolkien 1955). In the epigraph to *Prydeindod* (1966), he cites Herder: providence 'separated nationalities not only by woods and mountains, seas and deserts, rivers and climates, but more particularly by languages, inclinations and characters'; and similar passages from Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation* (1808: 56). In so doing, Jones aligns himself with the language-centric nationalism of the German Romantics, which itself is underpinned by linguistic relativity.

Jones defines the concept of nationality in terms of a set of necessary conditions (*clymau cra*) in his two foundational texts on the topic: 'Y Syniad o Genedl' [The Idea of a Nation] (1961) and *Prydeindod* [Britishness] (1966). Here, Jones claims that a native language is a necessary condition of a People: 'it is a necessity for a People that they speak their own native language' (1961: 5, my translation). A People, in turn, is a necessary condition of a nation, which itself is defined in terms of three necessary conditions: (1) a distinctive territory, (2) a native language (or languages); and (3) either a sovereign state (in Jones 1966:1), or a People's consciousness of their own historical pasts (in Jones 1961:7).

The language and territory, moreover, must 'interpenetrate' each other in the sense that they continually permeate each other (1966: 13). What this metaphor means is that the indigenous language must not only be used in the private sphere, but also in the public life and spaces of its speakers. That is to say, the language must be used in the administrative, legal, economic, educational, and political (etc.) transactions of its speakers over a significant length of time, such that the language reflects public life / spaces, and *vice-versa*. The paradigmatic example of interpenetration that Jones provides is place names: 'the names they gave in their own native language to their mountains and vales, their rivers and villages' (1966: 14). A similar underscoring of the cultural importance of language in public spaces is also found in Friel (1980), whose play *Translations* depicts the Irish struggle against English cultural imperialism largely as an attempt to resist the imposition of translations and transliterations of local place-names into English. These imposed Anglicisations are viewed as both literal and symbolic instances of dispossessing native peoples from their sources of cultural rootedness and pride, given the extent to which language reflects their culture. As the postcolonial Nigerian novelist Gabriel Okara puts it:

'from a word, a group of words, a sentence and even a name in any African language, one can glean the social norms, attitudes and values of a people' (1963: 15).

Returning to Jones' definition of nationality: what is the nature of the third necessary condition of an historical consciousness? Jones distinguishes between two types: implicit consciousness and explicit consciousness. Explicit consciousness refers to the awareness of 'learned and high-brow' people of their history through their 'literary, religious, antiquarian, or purely historical interests' (Jones 1961: 10). Implicit consciousness, on the other hand, is for the 'common, unenlightened, and uneducated' masses (1961: 9, my translation): their consciousness is mediated through cultural and national institution and symbols. To acquire it, they must 'perceive it daily in objective media which are a constant background to their lives' (1961: 10, my translation). According to Jones, such symbols do not exist in Wales, though they do exist in England, for instance the 'Monarchy, the Capital City, the Royal Palace, the Houses of Parliament, the Big Ben, the Armed Forces, the Large Ships and so on' (ibid.).

Prima facie, it is unclear why Jones thinks that such symbols ('banal nationalism', in Billig's (1995) terms) are altogether absent from Wales, considering the existence of the national Eisteddfod, the football and rugby teams, the flags, and the universities etc; each of which existed in the 1960s. One can only conclude, therefore, that Jones' remark is somewhat exaggerated and intended in a comparative sense in relation to England. This is particularly so considering the role of the mass media in disseminating national culture: whereas an abundance of such media existed in 20th century England, the same could not be said for Wales. Indeed, in addition to the shortage of print media, there was no Welsh language radio station or television channel until 1977 and 1982, respectively.

Regarding the above definition of a nation, it is somewhat strange that the three conditions that Jones lists – a distinctive territory, language, and sovereign state (1966) or historical consciousness (1961) – are presented as necessary, considering how some are amiss from most nations. Jones acknowledges this objection, citing Ireland (absence of language) and the Jews (absence of territory) as examples. However, he claims to overcome this difficulty by replying that a nation can lose some of these elements while still nonetheless remaining a nation, as long as the People's historical consciousness persists (1961: 5-6). Now it might be thought that there is an inconsistency here: if a People is necessary to a nation and language is necessary to a People, how can a nation exist without a language? Take away

the language and the People will disappear; take away the People and the nation will disappear¹⁵.

It would not be surprising if Jones in fact replicated this reply concerning the Jews from Herder (1783), who depicts the Jews as a paradigmatic example of a People with a national character, despite not sharing a common language or territory. The Jews' national character, according to Herder, resides in their common belief in e.g. the law of Moses, reverence for forefathers, common poetry and chants: 'all the fraternal members [are] connected together, until the tribunal judge[s] them all in Jehovah's name' (Herder 1783, also cited in Eggel et al. 2007: 58). In a similar vein, Jones writes that:

'The Jews' history contains literatures in their ancient language, but, most especially, a traditional religion and body of practices, rituals and ways of living and of thinking. This gave the Jews, despite their dispersion, a kind of persistent spiritual essence. And it is within that essence that their nationality has been preserved.' (Jones 1961: 133, my translation).

The reason that Herder's remarks do not run into the same difficulties as those of Jones, however, is that Herder never sought to define peoples or nations in terms of necessary conditions or 'essences'. It is a common feature of the 20th century analytic philosophy which Jones was writing in to attempt to provide one-size-fits-all definitions in terms of necessary (and sufficient) conditions. However, the problem with this, as Wittgenstein (1953) decisively demonstrated, is that most things simply do not have a fixed, timeless, or context-independent meaning that can be encapsulated in a few words: most concepts do not have sharp boundaries. Take for instance the above example of a nation, or games, or tallness, or beauty (etc. etc.), whose meanings vary considerably according to context. Like most concepts, they have no exhaustive or one-size-fits-all definition. What Wittgenstein (1953) replaced this definitional Platonism / essentialism with is the notion of a family resemblance definition (*alias* cluster concept). This involves characterising a concept in terms of disjunctive and often wide range of criteria, only a weighted number of which need to be satisfied to identify the target phenomenon. Had Jones formulated his definitions using the family resemblance model, his definitions could have avoided being undermined by the

¹⁵ Jones qualifies his remarks in this connection by claiming that in the event of the extinction of the Welsh language, Wales as a distinctive territory would remain, but its identity would eventually morph into an assimilated Anglicised substitute. He acknowledges the cultural significance of Welsh dialects among the English-speaking Welsh, but claims that their continued existence are parasitic on the corresponding continuation of the Welsh language, whose speakers are fast declining (Jones 1966: 17). These remarks are in line with Saunders' Lewis's claim that 'the poison works slowly' (Lewis 1947, also cited in Jones 1996: 32).

recurrence of counterexamples, since family resemblance definitions allow for internal fluidity while nonetheless remaining informative.

As D.Z. Phillips (1995) and Walford Gealy (2009) argue in their respective articles on J.R. Jones, it was a recurrent source of tension in Jones' works that he never quite abandoned this definitional Platonism and essentialism, which was a symptom of his training in the British Empiricist tradition. However, it is important to note that even through Jones' tendency to provide rigid definitions (characteristic of his time,) and related over-generalisations does cause his work to run into certain difficulties when read through a strictly analytic lens, this does not by itself undermine the broader relevance of his ideas. For, as mentioned, they could be reformulated in a non-essentialist manner.

The Need for Cultural Roots

Regarding the second driving principle in Jones' work, the need for roots in one's own nation, Jones (1961) claims that it is the absence of an historical consciousness among the Welsh that is responsible for the erosion of their nationality. 'When a People's past recedes out of their sight such that they no longer know the path to it, it is no longer evident to them whence they came, nor what People they are' (Jones 1961: 9). Consequently, 'their sense of nationality becomes increasingly ambiguous and confused. This is happening to many people in Wales' (ibid.).

Jones elaborates on this cultural erosion in 'Cristnogaeth a Chenedlaetholdeb' [Christianity and Nationalism] (1963) and *Prydeindod* (1966) where he predicts that the uprooted Welsh are in danger of declining back to barbarism and lurking in the shades of primitive life (Jones 1963: 1-2). Here, he merges the spiritual and national decline of the Welsh, insisting that they are mutually inextricable: 'We now face the emergency of the erosion of the nationality of the Welsh people. And it is clear enough that this is a spiritual emergency' (ibid.). An example of this spiritual degeneration is found in *Prydeindod*:

'Imagine a countryside girl coming into the town of Carmarthen to work. She was raised in an expressive Welsh which gave her some mental breadth. But in the town she "tries to conceal the fact that she is Welsh" and turns to speaking an impoverished English slang (*bratïaith*), meagre in resources, which stifles her spirit, debases her sensibilities, and shrinks her mind until she melts in the end into the unvaried and vacuous swarm of pop songs and betting papers' (Jones 1966: 42, my translation).

Such spiritual degeneration is also intertwined with the unravelling of mental health (ibid.). The above depiction is presented by Jones as representative of ever-increasing sections of Wales' population. Elaborating on the inner psychology of the countryside girl, he claims that, unbeknown to her, a 'world' began to enclose upon her, relentlessly imprinting upon her subconscious mind a different identity, according to which it is English, somehow, that is 'important' and 'right'. Her urban environment continually reinforces and 'suggests' this identity to the point where her intrinsic Welsh identity becomes a 'skeleton in her closet', perpetually dislodged in her mind 'just as a man might step out of his own body, leaving it standing like an empty cage' (Jones 1966: 42). What arises from such internal identity rifts, in turn, is the cultivation and internalisation of an inferiority complex, resulting in 'self-deprecation and an excessive preparedness to conform' (Jones 1966: 43).

Jones' depiction of such psychological consequences is based on his insistence for the need for roots in one's own nation, which itself derives from his account of personal identity and human nature, explained in terms of subjective experience and 'microcosms'. More specifically, personal identity is characterised in a quasi-Hegelian manner, whereby 'a person's consciousness resides in the fact that the world exists for him and so, as it were, assembles itself as experience for him' (1963: 6). This involves a subject/object distinction characteristic of the work of the 19th/early 20th century British Hegelians, which he described 'not so much the mind confronting its objective field but rather comprehending it in such a way that it included it' (cited in Gealy 2009: 71). Placing ambiguities aside for present purposes, it appears that Jones' view of personal identity essentially amounts to the relation between on the one hand a person's subjective viewpoint of the world, and on the other hand the world as it is 'given' to us within its historically and culturally contingent parameters.

Central to this account of personal identity is his notion of human nature according to which we all need 'a microcosm which not only introduces to us the psychic heritage of the ages but is also situated within the ages' (1963: 3) since 'but for being psychically connected with what I shall call 'structures of universality' it is clear that man would not have created his civilisations; he would still be lurking in the shades of primitive life'(ibid.). Moreover, these 'structures' must be 'integrated into the 'composition of the essences of his microcosm', and he must become part of a 'track in time which is greater in scope than the track of his own lifespan, the track of his family lineage, that is, he must sense the time flow within a Track which spans the ages' (1963: 4). The largest unit in which this can happen, according to Jones, is one's own nation (ibid.).

The idea here is that civilised life depends on people being rooted in a cultural setting which makes evident their cultural heritage and the importance of its transgenerational continuity.

On this view, both individuals and nations comprise microcosms, which are essentially unique, unprecedented, and non-exchangeable interpretations and experiences of the world (1963: 6). Jones ascribes the primary sense of 'microcosm' to the individual, and subsequently extends the concept to the nation: 'I aim... to establish the place of the nation in a value measure that is based on the main value of the individual' (1963: 5). The value of the individual, in turn, is explained in terms of death: when an individual dies, this brings to an end his unique, non-revivable interpretation of the world as configured in his experience (1963: 6). The same applies *mutatis mutandis* to the destruction of a nation, which belongs to the 'same class of evils' as the destruction of individual life, since 'each of them is also a kind of unique interpretation of the world' (1963: 7).

Prima facie, it might appear that these remarks commit a logical fallacy: from the fact that individuals (who comprise nations) are 'microcosms', it doesn't follow that the nations themselves are also microcosms. This reasoning jump is known as the fallacy of composition, which is usefully illustrated by following line of reasoning: 'every sheep has a mother; therefore, the whole flock has a mother'. A more charitable interpretation, however, would involve a reconstruction of Jones' likely reasoning by basing it in his account of language. If language is, as Thiong'o (1986: 15) puts it: 'the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history', then providing that language is a significant constituent of the nation in question, there is a sense in which the nation can be seen as an aggregate-level microcosm. That is: the language (= a significant part of the nation) cumulatively embeds the surviving concepts of bygone generations; thus an imprint of the deceased's microcosms / world outlooks is transmitted across generations via the language's sustained use. (Indeed, this primary attribution of the concept 'microcosm' to language in particular is emphasised in Jones' 'Cenedligrwydd a Chrefydd' (1970).

Britishness

In *Prydeindod* (1966), Jones argues that the Welsh national identity is fundamentally incompatible with British identity, and that attempts by the Welsh to identify with the latter have resulted in epic-scale pathological psychological symptoms. According to Jones, Britishness, which is the 'ideology' that Britain is a genuine nation which can provide the uprooted Welsh with cultural roots, is based on a delusory false consciousness, since it is actually in fact the English identity in a misleading guise. This delusion is unconscious and has become embedded in the minds of the uprooted Welsh through 'generations' worth of inferiority and hysteria-driven wallowing in the idea' (1966: 36). Given its unconscious

nature, this belief brings forth large-scale pathological reactions' (ibid.), such as the defensive and militant anti-Welshness displayed by segments of the Welsh population.

Here, Jones refers to the fact that psychologists have shown that militancy is a symptom of 'unconscious anguish' lurking in a 'deep hiding-place'; and concludes that it is unconscious anguish about their uprooted nationality that is at the root of the Welsh's anti-Welsh militancy (1966: 36-7). More specifically, the source of this militancy is (1) the desire of the Anti-Welsh Welsh to identify with the British nationality; and (2) their unconscious realisation that, given its delusory nature, they cannot in fact find sustenance in such an identity. This causes significant frustration, since on the one hand, they mislead themselves to believe that they belong to the British 'nation'; while on the other hand, they know deep down that it is impossible in principle for them to identify with it, given that it is, in reality, simply a cover for English nationality.

It is difficult not to wonder how Jones thinks he knows about this 'unconscious anguish' which is 'lurking in a deep hiding-place'. If the anguish is unconscious, how can he know of its existence? If (1) there is no way of proving the alleged source of the militancy in question given its unconscious nature; and (2) there is no evidence to suggest that the Anti-Welsh Welsh would agree that this is the source of their militancy, it might be concluded that Jones' diagnosis is simply armchair psychology and sociology.

A more context-sensitive interpretation, however, would factor in the fact that such appeals to unconscious and hidden psychological driving forces were mainstream in mid-20th century academia given the then dominant Freudian paradigm, according to which human behaviour is analysed in terms of unconscious thought processes and repressed desires (Freud 1915). The problem with using such a paradigm as a scientific explanatory tool, however, as Karl Popper (1962, 1974) later demonstrated, is this. It opens up the flood gates to indefinitely many (potentially mutually incompatible) explanations, none of which can be falsified given their conveniently unconscious nature; and this in turn prevents science from progressing by its standard process of elimination. To count as scientific, therefore, a theory must be sufficiently testable and precise to be potentially falsified by disconfirmatory evidence, rather than being moulded in an *ad hoc* manner to selectively fit reality, while only seeking confirmatory evidence.

Since Jones was writing before Popper's contribution to our understanding of the scientific method became mainstream, his appeals to unconscious thought processes as explanations for behavioural patterns among the Welsh is understandable, given their perceived scientific status at the time. It is also important to note that the same Freudian paradigm was used extensively by the roughly contemporaneous anticolonial writers; and so the resultant

objections are by no means exclusive to Jones' work. [Indeed, Freudian psychoanalysis is altogether central to Fanon's works whose influence has been pivotal in the wider postcolonial genre.] It is also worth emphasising that, despite their non-falsifiability, it would be negligent to overlook the significant mobilising influence of such arguments on anticolonial and national liberation movements, as well as Welsh nationalism: their political mileage is testament to their resonance. Therefore, despite some of the difficulties which arise from these arguments when looked at from a strictly technical perspective, these do not by themselves undermine the substance of their broader vision about the significance of language, cultural roots, and the detrimental effects of cultural displacement.

It can be seen, then, that there are several recurring points of similarity between the arguments of Fichte whose context was French imperialism; anticolonial writers whose context was European imperialism; and 20th century Welsh nationalist writers whose context was English colonialism and its legacy. Of particular note is their respective emphases on: inferiority complexes, the equation of cultural decline with moral or spiritual degeneration, and the detrimental psychological impact of the subordination of indigenous languages and their marginalisation from public life. Their continuity is usefully underscored by Jones' (1996) depiction of the plight of the countryside girl, which merges some of these overlapping themes as follows. First, the notion that her comprehensive absorption of English corrupts and debases her spirit and sensibilities resembles Fichte's (1808) remarks on French. Second, her compulsion to conform to English culture to 'get ahead' and the resultant internal rift which suppresses her spontaneity resembles Memmi's (1957) parallel remarks on the psychological impact of the sustained dominance of the coloniser language in public spaces and life. Finally, the attribution of these and related symptoms to an imperialism-induced inferiority complex as articulated at length by Fanon (1952) is a frequently recurring common denominator. Each of these themes, in turn, derives from the writers' unanimous reliance on linguistic relativity as a fundamental driving principle.

§4. The Contemporary Normative Debate: Linguistic Justice and Liberal Nationalism

Having examined the main uses of linguistic relativity as a driving principle in the literature of 18th to 20th century nationalist and anticolonial movements, I now turn to the contemporary normative literature on language rights and the institutional embodiment of cultural identity. As mentioned in the thesis' introduction, much of it draws on the constitutive view of language to advance identity-based arguments for multilingual and preservationist language policies; however the constitutive view is characterised in an excessively loose manner. This

leaves the arguments which appeal to it on shaky grounds, which in turn leaves them susceptible to numerous modernism and constructivism-inspired objections.

The overwhelming majority of the recent language rights literature has emerged in the liberal, rights-based vein (Schmidt 2014). Liberal theorists who advocate a multilingual public sphere do so largely on the basis of the link between a minority group's language and its collective cultural identity (e.g. Kymlicka and Patten 2003; Patten 2014, 2019; Van Parijs 2011). They argue that certain minority languages should be granted e.g. official language recognition by the state, or equal treatment or status by public institutions, because of their indispensable contribution to liberal values such as individual autonomy (e.g. Kymlicka 1989; 1995) or the 'fair opportunity for self-determination' (e.g. Patten 2014; 2019). Other notable examples of liberal identity-based justifications for minority language rights can be found in De Schutter & Robichaud (2015); Fishman (1999), May (2014) and Réaume (2000), to name a few.

One significant point of division between these theorists' works, however, is the scope of the applicability of their theories concerning the protection of minority language rights. Specifically, they differ with respect to their answers to the following question. Should all minority languages be granted equal recognition within a nation state, regardless of whether or not they are indigenous / historically rooted; or should indigenous and historically rooted languages be prioritised over those of e.g. immigrant populations? Theorists such as Will Kymlicka (1989, 1995) and Stephen May (2008, 2014) distinguish between the rights of national/indigenous minorities, and non-indigenous ethnic minorities; and they assign different weights to each group, prioritising the rights of indigenous linguistic communities over those of their immigrant counterparts. Conversely, the likes of Alan Patten (2014, 2019) and Helder De Schutter (2017) argue in favour of equal cultural recognition of minority cultures, which involves the equal granting of minority language rights, regardless of whether or not the group in question is indigenous and historically rooted.

It is important to note, however, that support for a multilingual public sphere is not universal across the multiculturalism and language rights literature. Indeed, there is no shortage of theorists who take the opposite view that the appropriate response to the problem of linguistic diversity is to achieve a monolingual public sphere, where one *lingua franca* should be declared official and used by public institutions as the medium for accessing public services and conducting business transactions. The prime examples here are Brian Barry (2001), Thomas Pogge (2003), and Laitin & Reich (2003).

The debate over whether the mono or multilingualism public sphere policy model should be favoured is driven by an underlying commitment to one of three (broadly construed)

categories concerning the nature of language and its relation to its speakers. These categories are: constitutive, instrumental, and intrinsic (De Schutter 2007). Support for a multilingual public sphere tends to be correlated with a constitutive view of language, whereas support for monolingualism tends to emphasise language's instrumental features.

According to the constitutive view, 'language constitutes who I am, that my language and my identity are inextricably intertwined, that I cannot have concepts or views for which I do not have language, and that language allows me to express or articulate things that I could not have without having language' (De Schutter 2007: 8). This constitutive view entails that languages are inextricably bound up with their speakers' personal identities; and as such, the failure to grant those languages a public recognition would undermine the speakers' e.g. dignity, self-esteem, or autonomy.

According to the instrumental view, languages 'should be primarily seen as tools to perform non-linguistically defined things' (De Schutter 2007: 9). As such, 'government interference in the domain of language is only legitimate in so far as it attempts to bring about these non-linguistic goals' (ibid.). These non-linguistic goals include the likes of social mobility and democratic deliberation (e.g. Barry 2001; Pogge 2003; Rubin 2017; Weinstock 2003). It is important to note, however, that such theorists do not usually deny the connection between language and identity; rather, they just don't see it as a basis for evaluating policy options.

A third view, which overlaps with the first, is the intrinsic value view, where languages are seen as 'morally valuable in themselves, independently of the value their speakers attach to them' (De Schutter 2007: 10). On this view, normative justifications for language preservation can be given independently of any reference to their contribution to individual and social interests such as dignity, autonomy, or democratic stability (see Phillips 1993; Crystal 2000; Rockefeller 1994; Musschenga 1998). Sociolinguist David Crystal (2000), for instance, argues that, like many works of art, languages are intrinsically valuable in that they are products of human creativity and ingenuity, and there is a sense in which they function as a vault of their speaker's collective history, traditions, and ideas. From this, Crystal draws the conclusion that they are morally valuable in their own right. However, as Léger and Lewis (2017) point out: political theorists tend to reject such an approach since 'it is a morally problematic position as it creates a situation where languages are treated as entities that can place problematic moral duties on their speakers, and indeed other individuals and communities' (Léger & Lewis 2017: 8).

Léger and Lewis are right to highlight these apparent difficulties with the 'intrinsic worth' view of language. This is not to deny that they are indeed products of human creativity and ingenuity, or vehicles for their speakers' cultural pasts. However, the problem presumably

lies in the status of the 'valuable in their own right' claim. If that were true of languages, independently of the value that speakers attach to them, then one would have to accept the counterintuitive position that dead languages are of equal worth to living languages. Moreover, if the *sole* reason that they are intrinsically valuable is because they are products of human creativity and ingenuity, then such a justification for ascribing moral value to them would also have a natural extension to other products of human creativity and ingenuity, such as atomic bombs. Although the intrinsic worth view could presumably be reformulated to avoid such objections – and indeed its degree of overlap with the constitutive view is vast in any case - these *prima facie* complications suffice to justify bracketing it for present purposes.

§4.1 Tracing the Overlap: The Communitarian Critique and Liberal Nationalism

The language rights debate cannot be understood in isolation from its immediately preceding and largely overlapping ancestor: liberal nationalism, which itself cannot be understood in isolation from its own overlapping ancestor; namely the communitarian critique of liberalism which emphasised the 'politics of recognition' and 'politics of identity'. Here, communitarians (such as Taylor 1989; Sandel 1982; Macintyre 1981; Walzer 1983) objected to the atomized and individualistic conception of the self that appeared to be implicit in the works of liberals such as Rawls (1971) and Nozick (1974). Whereas Rawlsian liberalism emphasised the primacy of individual autonomy and liberty to pursue life choices, communitarians objected that this overlooks the fact that individuals are largely constituted by their family ties, civil society associations, and compatriots. These, they emphasised, are prerequisites for individual choice and autonomy.

Charles Taylor (1989, 1994), for instance, drew on the Hegelian view that one's identity is largely developed through intersubjective communication with others, and the Burkean emphasis on the relation between individuals and the civil society associations which contribute to their identity and freedom. The normative issue that such communitarian critiques highlighted was that politics should not only be concerned with attaining the background conditions for individuals to exercise their own autonomous choice, as contemporaneous liberalism had it. Rather, it should also be concerned with sustaining and promoting the cultural and social attachments which make the liberal values of freedom and autonomy possible in the first place.

Liberal nationalists subsumed and domesticated these insights into the liberal framework: Kymlicka (1995) and Tamir (1993) claimed that cultures provide a 'context of choice' by delineating meaningful life choices for citizens, while Miller (1995) argued that national

culture is a prerequisite of the social cohesion that is necessary to attaining social justice. These and other contributions by liberal nationalists were pivotal in overcoming the main charges levelled against the received liberalism by communitarians at the time. Rather than abandoning the dominant liberal framework, they incorporated into it the communitarian emphasis on the dependence of personal identity, self-esteem and dignity on culture.

Much of the language rights literature, in turn, developed from the liberal nationalists' emphases on the necessity of culture for individual autonomy, self-esteem, and dignity etc. largely via the works of Kymlicka (1989, 1995) much of whose liberal nationalism was expressed in terms of language rights. Since language is viewed as constitutive of culture and culture is viewed as constitutive of personal identity in the liberal nationalism literature, then given its communitarianism-inspired emphasis on the necessity of culture to individual autonomy and wellbeing etc., language also became viewed as necessary to these liberal goals. Hence the reliance of much of the language rights literature on the constitutive view of language.

§4.2 Lack of Clarity Concerning the Link Between Language, Culture, and Personal Identity

While most liberal nationalists and language rights theorists agree that most people have a significant attachment to their cultural identity, of which language is a constituent, there is scant clarity as to what, if anything, *grounds* such an attachment. Kymlicka, for instance, claims that 'the causes of this attachment lie deep in the human condition'; and 'a full explanation would involve aspects of psychology, sociology, linguistics, the philosophy of mind, and even neurology' (Kymlicka, 1995: 90). Tamir claims that such an attachment gives meaning to our actions, thereby enabling people to feel part of 'something whose existence seems to extend back into time immemorial, and forward into the indefinite future' (1993: 90). Miller, on the other hand, refers to the undeniable fact that 'people generally do exhibit such attachments and allegiances' (1993: 4); and takes the Humean view that the onus is on others to produce counter-arguments against such common-sense beliefs and attachments, rather than on proponents of those attachments to provide a rational justification in their favour lest they be dismissed 'out of hand' (ibid.).

Thus although liberal nationalists uniformly agree that people do typically have a strong attachment to their culture, there is no clear or shared view as to what grounds such an attachment – nor indeed how strong that attachment is – other than the fact that it is a part of the human psychology, a source of meaning, or part of common sense, so to speak. I shall argue in Chapter 4 that linguistic relativity can be used as a basis for redressing this ambiguity by highlighting the necessary clustering of language, culture, and history. For

present purposes, however, it suffices to emphasise that overcoming this ambiguity is of crucial importance to the language rights debate. For the two related questions of (1) whether national culture is a significant part of personal identity; and (2) whether language is a significant vehicle for that culture, have significant knock-on effects on the normative conclusions to be drawn about the importance of language rights for sustaining the cultural longevity of national minorities.

What, then, are the liberal nationalists' specific views on culture? Clarifying this is necessary to a proper understanding of the constitutive view of language used in the linguistic justice literature, since it is culture that is transmitted through language, contributing to one's personal identity, and thereby making language 'constitutive' in the first place. The starting point here is Kymlicka's works (1989; 1995) which effectively created a foundation for other liberal nationalists to build upon (Kaufmann 2000: 1087).

Kymlicka advances a notion of 'societal [=national] culture' which 'provides its members with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational religious, recreational and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres' (1995: 76). It has both subjective and objective dimensions, which are 'not just shared memories or values but also common institutions and practices' (ibid.). They also 'tend to be territorially concentrated and based on a shared language' (ibid.). He distinguishes between national and immigrant minorities, and ascribes societal culture exclusively to national minorities – which he defines as indigenous cultural groups which form an 'intergenerational community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language and history' (Kymlicka 1995: 18). Thus language is viewed as central to the cultural identity of national minorities, since they are typically '*based on a shared language*' (Kymlicka 1995: 76, my italics).

Miller (1995), on the other hand, defines nationality in terms of five elements which include both subjective and objective factors, including e.g. the shared belief among co-nationals that they belong together; the experience of a shared history; and a common public culture which includes language and social conventions. Although Miller's definition of nationality is less centred on the objective feature of language than that of Kymlicka (presumably because Miller's discussion of nationality centres more around distributive justice and social cohesion, rather than the group-differentiated rights of minority nationalities) he nonetheless does grant it significant weight. Tamir also defines culture in terms of both a subjective sense of national consciousness, and objective features including history, language, religion, and territory (1993: 65-74), adding the qualification that it is a cluster concept (ibid: 75); i.e. family

resemblance: although a weighted number of the defining criteria must be satisfied, some can be missing, varying case-by-case.

Again, however, although liberal nationalists stress the link between language and culture by incorporating the former into their definitions of the latter, there is insufficient explanation as to what, exactly the nature and strength of that link is. As we shall see, this is problematic because it leaves liberal nationalism vulnerable to the related objections that national culture is defined in overly objective and homogenous terms, and that liberal nationalists privilege it over other cultures in an unwarranted manner. Unless the link between language, culture, and identity can be articulated more robustly – which it can, as I shall argue in Chapter 4 – such objections will retain their relevance.

§4.3. Objections to Liberal Nationalists' Characterisation of Culture

What, then, are the main manifestations of the objections mentioned above? The objection from the unwarranted prioritising of national culture is perhaps most comprehensively articulated by Tomer Perry (2014), who argues the contexts of choice which Kymlicka claims are preconditions of autonomy do not actually need to be societal cultures, as defined by Kymlicka in the linguistic, historical, and territorial sense. Rather, individuals are typically 'members of different cultural groups which provide different contexts for different choices as well as meaningful forms of identification' (2014: 6). Indeed, other, non-national 'comprehensive cultures' can be just as, if not more, prominent or influential for their members as national cultures (Perry 2014: 44).

The conclusion here is that there is no special justification to be made for the state recognition of (national) cultural minorities and their respective language rights on the basis of their contribution to autonomy. This is because the same line of reasoning found in the 'context of choice' argument would also have to apply to an indefinite number of other non-national 'comprehensive cultures' which often transcend national boundaries, such as LGBTQ groups, religions, or sports fan bases – which often provide equally meaningful 'contexts of choice' for their members. Thus it seems arbitrary to prioritise societal cultures over other 'comprehensive cultures' as Kymlicka does: liberal nationalists 'privilege national cultures and identities in an unwarranted manner' (Perry 2014: 31).

What drives Perry to deny that national identities are prior to, or should be assigned greater weight than other non-national identities is his modernism-inspired claim that 'national identities are not something we 'happen to have.' (2014: 3). Rather, they are products of

nation-building enterprises which – often coercively – advance and impose national culture and identity through e.g. educational curriculum reforms and monolingual policies – often at the expense of competing identities and cultures. The result of this is that the strong element of cultural homogeneity and unity that Kymlicka attributes to societal cultures is not ‘genuine’ (Perry 2014: 37). Rather, it is the result of coercive nation-building enterprises resulting from mass industrialisation and modernisation, rather than bottom-up ethno-cultural factors.

Similarly, Gerson & Rubin (2015) emphasise the imagined, invented, and modernisation-induced nature of national identity to object that liberal nationalists’ definitions of culture are conveniently vague. They claim that although liberal nationalists acknowledge constructivist interpretations of nationality (alongside objective features), this in fact enables them to ‘absolve themselves from the charge of setting up a fictional entity as an objective reality... [by claiming that their] national cultures are openly imagined and invented’ (2015: 201). Two problematic consequences emerge as a result. The first is that the state promotion of one or a few cultures prioritises one interpretation of national culture over others (1995: 202), thereby causing relative power imbalances, and unfairly discriminating against those who do not identify with the state’s national culture. The second problem concerns democratic deficit: the absence of an ‘objective core’ or ‘final, objective definitions’ of national identity (2015: 203) makes it too fluid and ‘loose’ to be scrutinised. This prevents democratic deliberation and rational analysis from taking place: ‘national culture relies on being partially opaque to such processes.’ (2015: 203).

A third type of critique is that defining culture partly in terms of objective features such as language and history – as liberal nationalists do - is to ‘essentialise’ cultural groups (see e.g. Patten 2011, 2014; Phillips 2010; Moore 2020). As Alan Patten puts it: ‘all of the usual features that are taken to define culture run foul of the problems of internal variation and external overlap: The relevant features are not shared by all and only the members of the groups’ (Patten 2011: 736). In other words, cultures are invariably heterogenous such that attempting to define them in terms of language, beliefs, history or behavioural norms will always be susceptible to counterexamples and instances of definitional overshoot. Even within cultural groups, what may appear on the surface to be shared practices and behavioural norms turn out to be highly diverse: for each of these, ‘there will be several publicly established meanings that people enact in their behavior’ (Patten 2011: 737). Thus the sheer extent of internal variation and external overlap within and across cultures appears to suggest that any attempt to define them in terms of shared objective features is to fail to pick out the right distinguishing marks, or commit the fallacy of essentialising.

These objections collectively illustrate that the relative lack of clarity among liberal nationalists as to why language and history should be weighted so significantly in their definitions of culture leaves them vulnerable to a myriad of counterexamples and problematic consequences. These problems, in turn, are carried forward into the language rights discourse: arguments which draw on the constitutive view of language are informed by the liberal nationalists' views of culture (which is what is transmitted through the language, thereby making it constitutive in the first place). In Chapter 4, I shall argue that linguistic relativity highlights the necessary clustering of language, culture, and history; thereby explaining (1) why language should be assigned greater weight than other, non-national elements of culture; and (2) the nature and strength of the link between national culture and personal identity. This, I shall argue, goes a significant way towards overcoming the above objections. What this section has highlighted, meanwhile, is that in the absence of a detailed articulation of the relevance of linguistic relativity as an explanatory link, liberal identity-based arguments for a multilingual public sphere, and the arguments of liberal nationalists which inform them, are both on shaky grounds.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the main historical uses of the constitutive view of language [underpinned by linguistic relativity] in their respective cultural and political contexts, and the contemporary political theory literature which draws on it. With the exception of Herder, none of the literature in this connection has provided any justification – neither analytic nor empirical – for linguistic relativity; and consequently, its status as an axiomatic driving principle appears unfounded. Thus the various arguments in the nationalist and anticolonial literature examined which provide detailed and vivid depictions of the detrimental consequences of cultural-linguistic decline and displacement remain susceptible to the objection that they are houses built on sand, so to speak, given their unjustified reliance on linguistic relativity. The same applies *mutatis mutandis* to the contemporary normative literature on linguistic justice and liberal nationalism.

It must be noted that highlighting the assumed status of linguistic relativity in these literary genres in no way undermines their merit as insightful and influential contributions to our understanding of the corrosive psychological effects of cultural-linguistic displacement, and the human need for cultural roots and recognition. Indeed, it could even be argued that there is a sense in which the far-reaching resonance of these texts is itself testament to their truth. Another qualification which must be acknowledged is that the purposes of the nationalist and

anticolonial texts have been highly political and context-dependent, rather than purely academic; so we should not expect to see painstaking academic justifications of linguistic relativity in them. Nonetheless, a purely academic evaluation of the broader relevance of such texts does warrant and demand a thorough examination of the empirical evidence and analytic justifications for their central driving principle of linguistic relativity. This, therefore, is what this thesis aims to provide.

Finally, it might be questioned whether such a detailed examination is altogether necessary considering the foundational works of Herder in the field of linguistic relativity, which have already been examined in this introductory chapter. Yes: as we shall see in Chapter 2, since the days of Herder, linguistic relativity has evolved into a major topic in experimental linguistics; and it remains far from universally accepted given the somewhat fragmented and multi rather than interdisciplinary status of its study. To bridge this gap, therefore, we shall now turn to examining the empirical evidence for linguistic relativity, together with the analytic justifications and clarificatory tools which, I argue, the works of Wittgenstein provide. This will go a significant way towards providing the rational justification which has so far been missing from the nationalist, anticolonial, and political theory works in question; which, in turn, will provide the requisite groundwork for articulating the implications of linguistic relativity for linguistic justice and liberal nationalism in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 2: Appropriating Wittgenstein for Linguistic Relativity

Introduction

What is the relation between language and cultural identity? One way of addressing this question is to situate the answer on a spectrum where, on the one end, language mirrors its speakers' cultural particularities and influences their thought processes (linguistic relativity, *alias* Sapir-Whorf hypothesis). As Gumperz & Levinson put it: 'the semantic structures of different languages might be fundamentally incommensurable' such that 'language, thought and culture are deeply interlocked' (Gumperz & Levinson 1996: 2). On the other end of the spectrum, language makes no significant contribution to cultural identity, such that if a specific language were to die out, then other things being equal, no significant cultural loss would ensue (linguistic universalism).

As illustrated in Chapter 1, linguistic relativity has figured extensively as a key driving principle in nationalist and anticolonial movements and political thought from the 18th century to present. It is viewed as a vehicle of a People's cultural identity and an anchor for their cultural continuity; and is therefore often promoted and appropriated as a generator of national or cultural consciousness. The problem, as we saw, is that none of the literature in this connection contains any arguments or evidence in favour of linguistic relativity¹⁶. This tendency to presuppose linguistic relativity's truth, recall, is unsustainable, since not only is it far from universally accepted (Pinker 1994, 2002); it is also incompatible with influential views of linguistic meaning which posit an underlying universality to language and thought. These include Noam Chomsky's (1965, 1986) theory of Universal Grammar, and other nativist or modular accounts such as those of Fodor (1975, 1983), Carruthers (2006), Keller & Keller (1996), Carey (2009), and Spelke (2003). These accounts' incompatibility with linguistic relativity lies in their claims that thought is realized through innate, universal, and

¹⁶ There are a few exceptions here, such as Peled & Bonotti (2016) and Taylor (2016). However, the former is highly limited in its treatment of linguistic relativity, citing some contested studies purporting to document the phenomenon before articulating its possible consequences for political thinking in linguistically diverse societies. Taylor (2016) is a promising addition to the debate; however the book's main focus is a cumulative case against reductionistic scientism and social and linguistic atomism rather than linguistic relativity as such. Although the book contains a rich exposition of the constitutive and culture-ridden aspects of language, the chapter devoted to linguistic relativity is limited in its scope. The discussion is confined to historical and largely outdated examples such as Hopi and Yucatec, where the data is largely anecdotal and grammatical, rather than the wealth of experimental data which has proliferated during the past decade.

biologically hardwired language, grammar, or concepts, and is therefore largely independent of and unaffected by differences across natural languages.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to pave the way to bridging this disciplinary gap between the work in linguistics and philosophy which substantiates linguistic relativity, and the work in political theory and nationalism literature which hinges on linguistic relativity's truth. What, specifically, are the justifications in linguistics and philosophy that can help inform this particular category of literature? The starting point to answering this question is to clarify the definition, evidence, and arguments for linguistic relativity; each of which will be examined in this chapter.

Rather than being a mere exercise in exposition, however, this chapter will also highlight and address a central problem with the linguistic relativity literature to date. That is: despite the wealth of recent studies substantiating linguistic relativity, and despite their continually increasing methodological robustness, there remains much ambiguity concerning (1) whether there exists a causal link between the documented cross-cultural differences in language and cognition; and (2) the likely scope of linguistic relativity; i.e. the extent to which it occurs. Until these two points of unclarity are addressed, it will remain equally unclear what degree of work (if any) linguistic relativity can justifiably do in the political theory and nationalism literature which presupposes its truth. As such, the question remains whether there is a sense in which that literature, with its reliance on the truth of linguistic relativity, is a house of cards.

With respect to (1), the problem facing many studies purporting to document linguistic effects on non-linguistic cognition is, to put it simply, correlation does not by itself imply causation. While many studies have decisively established the existence of nontrivial cross-cultural differences in both cognition and language, demonstrating that these differences are causally connected – i.e. the result of linguistic relativity - remains a challenge. Take Fausey & Boroditsky (2011), which shows that English speakers, who are more likely than Spanish speakers to use agentive language to describe accidental events, are more likely to successfully recall people associated with accidental events e.g. dropping a flower vase. Although this study successfully establishes linguistic and cognitive differences between both populations in a specific domain, and is therefore suggestive of linguistic relativity, it does not by itself *prove* that the cognitive differences are the direct result of the linguistic differences, as opposed to other, independent cultural variables (see Everett (2013) for a detailed discussion of the widespread nature of this methodological shortcoming).

The most direct way of establishing the required causal link would be to demonstrate that thought is essentially dependent on and bounded in its scope by language. If thought is

essentially dependent on language, then in cases where significant cross-cultural linguistic and semantically related cognitive differences exist, then (questions of causal overdetermination aside) it follows that the cognitive differences are directly caused by the corresponding linguistic differences; i.e. linguistic relativity. By contrast, if thought is not essentially dependent on language, then the cross-cultural cognitive and linguistic differences which are usually taken to be manifestations of linguistic relativity could just as easily be the result of other, non-linguistic factors.

However, research in psycholinguistics does not typically take this route of invoking the inextricability of language and thought, since it is widely accepted that animals (Tomasello & Herrmann 2010) and prelinguistic infants (Wynn 1992) share a variety of cognitive skills and processes with language-using humans. This, in turn, is usually taken to undermine the language-thought dependence thesis (Everett 2013: 9). Put crudely: if thought is dependent on language, then what accounts for the fact that non-linguistic beings can think? The way that experimenters proposing candidate cases of linguistic relativity usually aim to get around this difficulty is to observe correlations between cross-cultural differences in both language and cognition using methods such as eye-tracking and forced-choice tests, then attempt to inductively establish a causal link by cumulatively eliminating other potential confounding variables. This is certainly an improvement on earlier work which often relied on anecdotal or merely grammatical evidence, or identified cross-cultural linguistic / grammatical differences and effectively assumed that apparent cognitive differences were directly caused by them. However, the indirectness of this method does present a significant obstacle to establishing the likely scope of linguistic relativity due to the laborious, time-consuming, and relative inconclusiveness of the extortionate number of studies it would take to achieve a reliable estimate.

Regarding the related unclarity as to the likely scope of linguistic relativity, it is also somewhat problematic that most of the comprehensive studies which evidence strong cases of linguistic relativity are of non-Western, non-industrialized societies such as the Amazonian Pirahã (Everett 2005, 2008), the Aboriginal Pormpuraawans (Boroditsky & Gaby 2010), and Madagascar (Dahl 1995). These studies highlight significant differences in the societies' languages and comprehension regarding number, spatial orientation, and time compared with western and industrialized societies. While these and similar studies are promising candidate cases of linguistic relativity, it is difficult to generalize from these relatively isolated and 'exotic' cases to other, more industrialized societies. Indeed, given the globalisation-induced cultural homogeneity across WEIRD (western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic) societies, it may appear problematic to infer that there are analogous relativistic effects to be observed among, say, speakers of French and German, or Welsh and English.

As such, the likely scope of linguistic relativity remains unclear, and the (often tacit) appropriation of the theory in the relevant nationalism and political theory literature remains largely unsubstantiated.

The solution I propose is to highlight the relevance of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language for redressing obstacles (1) and (2). As mentioned, the linguistic relativity studies to date do not provide sufficient evidence that the cross-cultural cognitive differences observed are directly *caused* by the linguistic differences in question. Establishing such a causal link could, however, be achieved if it were shown that thought is in fact dependent on language. It is to this end, then, that Wittgenstein's thesis that 'the meaning of a word is its use in the language' (1953: §43) can be advantageously brought to bear on the topic. I shall argue that in addition to being empirically substantiated, Wittgenstein's view of linguistic meaning and language acquisition also provides a robust *a priori* justification for the claim that language and thought are inescapably interwoven and co-dependent. Furthermore, Wittgenstein's liberal, holistic conception of language provides a basis to overcoming the main reason that is typically taken to undermine the language-thought dependence thesis; namely the overlap between the cognitive capacities of humans and non-linguistic beings such as animals and infants.

The chapter will be structured as follows: §1 and §2 provide a definitional breakdown of linguistic relativity, a survey of the main arguments and evidence in favour of it, and an articulation of the nature and relevance of psychologised accounts of linguistic meaning which are incompatible with it. §3 examines Wittgenstein's critique of psychologised accounts of linguistic meaning, and applies his related critiques to the psychologised accounts' two main versions: (1) the view that thought is realised through picture-like representations, and (2) the view that thought is realised through language-like representations. §4 examines Wittgenstein's positive account of language acquisition and linguistic meaning, the empirical evidence in its favour, and its relevance for linguistic relativity. §5 addresses common objections to the linguistic relativity thesis using further, related Wittgensteinian distinctions. The chapter concludes that importing the Wittgensteinian arguments and distinctions into the linguistic relativity debate and the normative literature which presupposes its truth is advantageous in two main respects. First, it can be used to overcome the main obstacle to accepting the inextricability of language and thought; and second, it provides the rational justification for linguistic relativity which has so far been missing from the normative literature.

§1. Linguistic Relativity: Untranslatability

Proponents of linguistic relativity start from the premises that (1) there are differences in conceptual repertoires across languages, and (2) the concepts embedded in language influence or determine thought. If these two premises are true, it follows that the speakers' thought processes differ according to which language they speak, and the linguistic relativity thesis is thereby affirmed. Where the ambiguity resides, however, concerns the *degree* to which the two premises are true. Proponents of linguistic relativity define the thesis in a robust sense, where language is characterised as a repository of its speakers' culture-specific traditions, sensibilities, practices, and values. As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, puts it: 'Language as culture is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history. Culture is almost indistinguishable from the language that makes possible its genesis, growth, banking, articulation, and indeed its transmission from one generation to the next' (1986: 15).

The notion that language is a repository of culture which influences thought carries much intuitive appeal. Take the word 'cool', for instance. Although there were individuals who merited the description before, say, the African-American Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and 30s, it is clear that the cultural influences (particularly in music and dance) which emanated from this movement caused the concept to gain widespread currency. Consequently, the ubiquity of the terms 'cool' and its opposite 'uptight' has enabled us to conceive of ourselves and our behaviour increasingly in such terms.

However, intuitive appeal alone is not sufficient for substantiating linguistic relativity; and the precise extent of the difference between linguistic categories and concepts across languages remains indeterminate. If the degree of difference turns out to be trivial, then linguistic relativity, which is invariably characterised in robust rather than trivial terms, cannot be properly substantiated. Similarly, if language only influences thought to a negligible degree, then linguistic relativity will be seen to be so weak that there would be no purpose in invoking it as a principle in nationalism / postcolonial literature and movements. Additionally, key assumptions that inform contemporary political theory would turn out to be ill-founded. In any case, there would be little reason to accept the crucial recurrent notion that language is a vehicle or an anchor for its speakers' transgenerational cultural particularities.

What, then, are the arguments and evidence for the two premises in question? Beginning with premise (1), namely that lexical and conceptual differences exist across languages, the central idea is this: there are many cases where it is difficult or impossible to translate words or expressions from the source language to the target language without losing much of the

literal or connotative meaning: exact conceptual equivalence across languages is often elusive. This is known in translation studies as the problem of untranslatability, which is well-documented in both academic studies and common-sense illustrations.

One frequently cited example concerns the term 'love': in New Testament scholarship, for instance, it is often noted that there are at least three senses of the word at use in Ancient Greek: *φιλία*, *στοργή*, and *ἄστοργος*. Each of these distinguishes between degrees of affection and friendship; but translating them into their only English near-equivalent 'love' causes these conceptual nuances to become lost in translation. Another example is the German term *schadenfreude*, which is used by English speakers as it has no direct translation. This term is usually taken to mean the satisfaction or pleasure felt at someone else's misfortune, and it embeds within it cultural attitudes which differ from those articulated in the near English equivalent of 'getting their just deserts', with differing moral undertones. Another is 'bromance', which is specific to English and is typically mistaken for homosexuality in other cultures.

The list of terms whose literal meanings evade direct translation is expansive. Moreover, untranslatability is not confined to the lack of literal conceptual equivalents across languages: it also occurs in relation to connotative meaning and grammatical patterns such as gender. Cubelli et al. (2011: 449), for instance, illustrate this difficulty by citing Ivan Krylov's attempt to translate Jean de la Fontaine's version of *The Ant and the Grasshopper* into Russian. Since grasshopper is feminine in French but masculine in Russian, Krylov had to change it to dragonfly: allegedly, the depiction of the grasshopper's frivolous and light-hearted attitude would otherwise have become lost in translation.

The most rife form of untranslatability, however, concerns connotative meaning. In situations where achieving literal, denotative conceptual equivalence across languages is straightforward, connotative meaning is often lost in the process. Take the Welsh term *urddas*, which denotes a mixture of strength, elegance, and dignity. The term *urddas* has no direct translation, given its particular connotations and undertones. Whereas *urddas* connotes aristocracy or military grandeur, its near English equivalent 'strength, elegance and dignity' does not. Moreover, figurative, idiomatic, humorous, and other expressive uses of language are often laden with connotative untranslatability. This is particularly evident in the case of poetry, whose prime purpose is to fuse sound patterns with isomorphic images, aspects, and associations. As Octavio Paz (1992) puts it:

...it is generally, albeit reluctantly, conceded that it is possible to translate the denotative meanings of a text but that the consensus is almost unanimous that the translation of connotative meanings is impossible. Woven of echoes, reflections, and the interaction

of sound with meaning, poetry is a fabric of connotations and, consequently, untranslatable. (Paz 1992: 155)

It might be objected that, poetic and literary examples aside, connotative meaning (as opposed to literal, denotative meaning) is trivial at best, and epiphenomenal in relation to meaning at worst. While word connotations may trigger certain associations with some degree of regularity, it doesn't strictly follow that they affect the overall meaning of lexical items, apart from their possible aesthetic or rhetorical 'add-on' functions. Such an objection, however, is misguided. In the study of framing effects, for instance, there is extensive evidence that presenting logically equivalent concepts using different words whose connotations enhance the saliency of some aspects of reality over others significantly impact the way that people conceptualize a given topic, as well as the choices they make on its basis (Kahneman 2011; Kahneman & Tversky 1984).

Framing is a familiar and widely used technique, particularly considering the widespread use of spin in politics, media and PR; indeed, it is one of the most discussed concepts in communication studies (Benert & Beier 2016, Cacciatore et al. 2016). Simon & Jerit (2007), for instance, argue that exposure to articles framing the partial-birth abortion debate in the US using the term 'baby' as opposed to 'fetus' increased support for banning the practice, while using the term 'fetus' instead of 'baby' decreased support. Another widely cited study is Bartels (1998), which argues that in the mid-1970s, 44-48% of Americans claimed that they would 'not allow' a communist to give a speech, while only 22% claimed that they would 'forbid' communists from doing so. Although the terms 'not allow' and 'forbid', and 'baby' and 'fetus' (in the study's context) are conceptually equivalent in a literal, denotative sense, their differing connotations cause subjects to conceptualise the issue in hand in mutually divergent ways.

Given that connotative meanings affect how items are conceptualised, and given the undoubtedly high degree to which connotative untranslatability exists across languages, it is reasonable to conclude that premise (1) – that lexical and conceptual differences across languages exist – is true to a nontrivial degree. Although it remains indeterminate what the *exact* scope of both denotative and connotative untranslatability is to date, experimental progress is being made. Jackson et al. (2019), for instance, studied the linguistic networks of 24 emotion terms across 2474 languages using concept colexification (i.e. the phenomenon whereby the same word denotes different though usually related meanings, e.g. clear = transparent, evident, remove, etc.), and found significant crosslinguistic variation in colexification patterns. This was interpreted as signifying significant cross-cultural variation in

the speakers' conceptual associativity¹⁷ in relation to emotions; and moreover, it helps to further explain the significant cross-cultural variation in emotional experience documented in studies such as Mesquita et al. (2016) and Heyes (2019).

Despite the continually expanding evidence base for significant cross-linguistic variation in denotative and connotative semantics, and the related differences in conceptual colexification, however, such studies and common-sense examples are not by themselves sufficient for linguistic relativity. For, as previously mentioned, untranslatability across languages does not by itself guarantee corresponding cognitive differences among the speakers; it must also be shown that the cross-linguistic differences in question *cause* corresponding differences in semantically related cognition for it to count as linguistic relativity. We shall now turn, therefore, to examining the most direct way in which this causal link can be substantiated; namely the evidence and arguments for the inextricability of language and thought.

§2. Linguistic Relativity: The Inextricability of Language and Thought

Recall that the thesis that thought is dependent on and bounded in its scope by language was originally articulated by the German Romantics, whose foundational works in nationalist political thought defined nationality in terms of language and the culture it embeds. Herder, (1744-1803), Fichte (1762-1814), and Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), for instance, considered language to be an expression of the spirit of a nation (or a people, in instances where such cultural units had not been integrated into the political unit of a nation state). Von Humboldt, for instance, stated that language is the 'formative organ of thought... Thought and language are therefore one and inseparable from each other' (1988 FIC:54); as well as being 'the external manifestation of the minds of the people. Their language is their soul, and their soul is their language' (Humboldt 1971: 24). According to Fichte, '...we give the name of People to men whose organs of speech are influenced by the same external conditions, who live together, and who develop their language in continuous communication with each other' (Fichte 1808: 56).

Such characterisations of linguistic relativity are particularly strong, identifying national consciousness with language and implying that mental states are so constrained by language as to be imprisoned within it. While such a strong form may have been more

¹⁷ The reverse has also been shown to be true: Xu et al. (2020) demonstrate in their analysis of 250 languages that conceptual association patterns / conceptual relatedness predict corresponding colexification patterns.

plausible in the 19th century when ethnic groups or ‘peoples’ were more culturally homogenous, strong linguistic relativity has by now largely been abandoned by mainstream linguists in favour of more moderate formulations (Ahearn 2011: 69). The reason for this is twofold: first, cultural identities are much more fluid and porous than their 19th century equivalents due to accelerated globalisation; as such it is something of an exaggeration to claim that each language still embeds a distinctive culture. Second, the consensus that non-linguistic beings are also capable of thought has caused them to abandon the view that language and thought are inextricably connected. Consequently, they typically advance more moderate formulations of the theory, according to which language merely influences and imposes some constraints on thought¹⁸ (Everett 2013: 9-10).

Before examining the arguments and evidence in favour of the inextricability of language and thought, it is necessary to recall the nature and genesis of the opposite view – linguistic universalism – according to which language is an instrumental, information-encoding device which is detachable from, rather than constitutive of, culture and nonlinguistic cognition. This is because the truth of linguistic relativity depends on the falsity of linguistic universalism / the mutual independence of language and thought, and it is the falsity of this position that the Wittgensteinian arguments articulated in this chapter will cumulatively establish.

Linguistic universalism gained much currency via the works of the British Empiricists, particularly Locke and Hume. In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1975 [1689]), for instance, Locke develops an account of the mind according to which all mental states are comprised of ‘ideas’, which are complexes of mental images, each of which are proxy to the objects (whether external or mental) which they represent. External stimuli impinge on our senses; and thereafter our minds store a copy of the perceived object(s) in the form of a mental image, which we then psychologically summon in all future cases where we think of it.

The relation between language and thought (articulated in Book III), is that words stand for ideas in the mind of the speaker, such that the meaning of a word just is the idea that corresponds to it. ‘Words in their primary or immediate signification signify nothing but the ideas in the mind of him that uses them’ (III.2.2). On this account, linguistic meaning is neither public nor communally derived; linguistic understanding consists solely in connecting a given word with its corresponding idea. Furthermore, language is only contingently

¹⁸ For some recent examples of studies purporting to evidence this moderate formulation, see Chen (2013) argues that languages that grammatically associate the future and the present tend to foster future-oriented economic behaviour. Wierzbicka (2014) argues that in the Anglosphere, academics in the social sciences and the humanities are becoming increasingly locked in a conceptual framework grounded in English; while Bylund & Athanasopoulos (2017) argue that one’s native language affects one’s perception of time.

connected to cognition, since cognition is both epistemically and temporally prior to language: ideas (which comprise concepts) are formed on the basis of sense perception, and are thereafter labelled with words. Needless to say, this view of linguistic meaning is incompatible with linguistic relativity, since it denies that thought and language are inextricable (the former is prior to the latter); and it entails that linguistic meaning is private, individualistic, and detachable from culture.

Although this view is no longer held in its original, introspection-based ‘armchair psychology’ guise, it would be misleading to suppose that its influence has declined significantly, not least due to the persistence of its legacy in cognitive science, linguistics, and the philosophy of mind. Kosslyn (1980, 1982), for instance, advances a ‘pictorialist’ account according to which thought is realized through the medium of inner, picture-like representations. Fodor (1975, 1983) and Pylyshyn (1981a, 1981b, 2003) articulate an analogous account whereby humans think through the medium of language-like representations called ‘mentalese’ or ‘language of thought’ (LOT). In a similar vein, Chomsky’s theory of ‘Universal Grammar’ claims that there exists a uniform and innate set of linguistic principles embedded in the brains of all humans, covering – on some formulations (it has been perpetually reformulated) - grammar, speech sounds, and meaning (Chomsky 1983). These are generated not by natural languages, but rather by a hypothetical autonomous module of the human brain called a ‘language acquisition device’ (Chomsky 1965: 25).

A thorough articulation of the above accounts is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, suffice it to say for present purposes that, just as the Empiricists’ ‘inner-object’ conception of the relation between thought and language is incompatible with linguistic relativity, so too are these accounts, particularly in their denial of the principle that thought is dependent on language¹⁹. Whereas linguistic relativity involves the necessary condition that thought is dependent on external natural languages, UG and LOT deny this by alleging that linguistic meaning is internal and psychological: it is UG or LOT that generate, determine, and constrain our range of linguistic abilities, rather than the external communally developed natural languages themselves. The same applies *mutatis mutandis* to the pictorialist view: if thought and conceptual understanding can be realized through picture-like representations, then meaning is internal and psychological; natural languages are only contingently connected to thought; and conceptual understanding can occur independently of language.

¹⁹ Although there is a sense in which Chomsky’s UG and Fodor’s LOT state that thought *is* dependent on language, i.e. an ‘inner’ language or grammar, it is natural languages, rather than these alleged ‘language-like’ theoretical postulates, that are relevant to linguistic relativity.

§3. A Wittgensteinian Critique of Psychologised Views of Linguistic Meaning

What, then, are the Wittgensteinian arguments that can be brought to bear on this cluster of private, psychologised views of linguistic meaning? Wittgenstein's most significant contribution to the philosophy of language, mind, and psychology was his sustained critique of referentialism (i.e. the view that words have meaning in virtue of referring to things), and its application to the relation between language and mental states. The force of this series of arguments against referentialism, and their significance for psychologised views of linguistic meaning, lie in their articulation of the highly problematic and incoherent consequences that emerge from such accounts, once their consequences are followed through to their extremes.

One immediate problem with psychologised views that emerges is this: if linguistic meaning is merely psychological, private, and conceptually independent of behaviour or external convention, how can we know whether others have the same understanding of words as us? That is to say, how can it be known whether what person A means by e.g. the term 'pain' is the same as what person B means by it? As far as person A is aware, person B might just as easily be ascribing the term to a different inner sensation, such as 'pleasure', and there would be no way to check, since it is impossible to access others' private thoughts. Taken as evidence, characteristic behavioural manifestations such as grinding one's teeth, hyperventilating, and moaning, for instance, would all be redundant, since on the private view, they are not part of the meaning of pain; neither do they constitute criteria by which to ascribe it to others. Rather, it is only private mental states that constitute the meaning of the concept, strictly speaking. This, given its outright inaccessibility to others, is of no use whatsoever: 'a wheel that can be turned though nothing else moves with it, is not part of the mechanism' (Wittgenstein 1953: §271).

The private, psychologised view of linguistic meaning, then, yields the consequence that there is no reliable way of knowing whether people understand and use their terms consistently with one another. As far as anyone is aware, we could all be regularly talking at cross-purposes, while usually being under the illusion that we are on the same page, so to speak, intersubjectively. Now it might be supposed that this is simply a bullet that we have to bite: philosophical reflection reveals that, contrary to the popular assumption, we cannot know whether people understand and use their words consistently with one another. *Prima facie*, this does not by itself undermine the internal coherence of the psychologised view; rather, it merely yields radical and unwelcome epistemic consequences. Indeed, this is the conclusion that Locke drew (III: VI: 28-36). However, this supposition is misguided:

Wittgenstein further dissects the psychologised view in what has come to be known as the 'private language argument' (1953: §§244–271), so as to show that it is in fact internally incoherent and self-defeating. The above bullet is not on the menu, so to speak.

This argument shows that, *contra* psychologised views of linguistic meaning, thought is not detachable from language, and inner 'ideas', or language/picture/like representations are not sufficient for conceptual understanding. Simplifying somewhat, the main iteration of the argument runs thus. Suppose that a person living in solitude spoke a private language which he himself invented, and which was necessarily incomprehensible to others. 'The words of this language are to refer to what can be known only to the speaker; to his immediate, private, sensations. So another cannot understand the language' (1953: §243). If connecting words with inner concepts were sufficient for linguistic understanding – as psychologised views of linguistic meaning claim – then such a scenario should at the very least be conceivable without turning out to be self-undermining. The question, then, is whether this scenario is possible in principle, or whether it turns out upon scrutiny to be incoherent. Wittgenstein argues for the latter.

In §258 he outlines the following scenario in which it is momentarily supposed that such a private language is a genuine and internally coherent possibility. Suppose that the solitary person kept a diary solely for the purpose of recording his own private sensations. With each occurrence of an ineffable sensation which he terms 'S', he writes 'S' in the diary; this is supposed to ensure that the right connection between the word and sensation is both established and maintained for future use.

The problem that emerges, however, is: how can the private linguist know whether he is continuing to use the word correctly in future cases? As far as he is aware, he might have unwittingly started connecting 'S' with a different sensation from the original one; and there would be no way of checking its accuracy. This is because there would be no external, public criteria of correctness for the private linguist to consult. It might seem to him that he is using the word correctly, but this is not the same as using it correctly in reality (indeed, there is ample evidence that memory distortion is rife: see e.g. Brady, Schacter, & Alvarez (2018); Dewhurst, Anderson, & Berry (2018); and Maswood & Rajaram (2018) for recent examples of such studies).

Checking one's own memory alone for the 'right' meaning would be 'As if someone were to buy several copies of the morning paper to assure himself that what it said was true' (§265). Indeed, even the meaning of the word 'right' might not be stable or consistent, for the private linguist might have unwittingly started to connect the word with a different concept from the

original one. 'Whatever seems right will be right', and 'that only means that here we can't talk about "right"' (§258).

What this illustrates is that the inner, psychologised account of linguistic meaning is self-defeating. If what determined linguistic meaning were inner, psychological words, pictures, or ideas, which themselves are subject to change, then necessarily, the language would be unintelligible to its user. For without external criteria of correctness, one could be inadvertently mistaken about the correct meaning of an indeterminate number of one's own words, including the word 'correct', with no reliable criterion for checking its accuracy.

Moreover, it is an inextricable feature of language that we presuppose that word meanings usually remain stable and consistent. But one cannot rationally state that one's use of words might be inconsistent while simultaneously presupposing that they are in fact consistent. For to do so is itself inconsistent. Herein lies the self-defeating status of the inner, private conception of the relation between thought and language.

It is clear, then, that psychologised views of linguistic meaning which claim that inner psychological states (whether they take the form of inner ideas, pictures, or words) are sufficient for conceptual understanding are self-defeating, once their consequences are pushed to their extremes. Since the previously mentioned psychologised accounts claim that conceptual understanding is realized specifically through either picture-like or language-like representations, it is also appropriate to consider how Wittgenstein's arguments apply specifically to these individual views, in addition to the foregoing generalised objection. In what follows I consider each of these in turn.

First, the pictorialist view of conceptual understanding articulated primarily by Locke (1975 [1689]) and Hume (1999 [1748]). Recall that according to this view, concepts are formed on the basis of sense perception: we perceive objects and events, and thereafter our minds store copies of these experiences, which are then summoned to the mind's eye in all future cases where we think of them. This is not only true of external objects, but also inner mental states: we learn the meanings of, say, 'longing' or 'pain' by introspecting into our own minds; sensations, feelings and moods, for instance, are inner mental states, inaccessible to others, and conceptually independent of their behavioural manifestations. Analogous versions of this view can be found in the influential works of e.g. Kosslyn (1980, 1982), Fodor (1975, 1983) and Pylyshyn (2003) which, although more complex, nonetheless belie the underlying assumption that inner pictorial or language-like representations are sufficient for meaning and conceptual understanding.

One immediate difficulty with this cluster of views is that pictures don't wear their meanings on their sleeves. As Wittgenstein (PI:139) points out, pictures need to be interpreted, and the

same picture can be interpreted differently. For instance, a picture of a person kneeling down can represent an act of submission, prayer, tripping up, working out (lunges), or stretching, *ad infinitum*. Pictures, therefore, don't have meaning in their own right, independently of interpretation: two people can hear a given word and experience the same mental image, yet understand the word differently while interpreting the image differently. Similarly, different images can represent the same thing: person A may envisage a sketch of the Egyptian landmass while thinking of Egypt, while person B may think of Egypt while entertaining a mental image of the Egyptian flag, yet both are thinking of Egypt. 'From it [a picture] alone it would mostly be impossible to conclude anything at all; only when one knows the story does one know the significance of the picture' (Wittgenstein 1953: §663).

A second difficulty with the pictorialist view of conceptual understanding is this. If it were true that concepts resembled mental images, such that speaking while understanding one's words involved the activation of a series of the relevant mental images, how would it be possible for one to be aware of each image while speaking? When one gives a complex speech full of qualifiers and subordinate clauses, for instance, how could the endless reel of inner images possibly catch up with the complex content conveyed in the speech? Whereas such a pictorial system may *prima facie* appear plausible when applied to simple, isolated words or sentences, any increase in their complexity yields a corresponding increase in implausibility.

The same degree of implausibility applies to language-like representations. This problem, which Schroeder (2018: 13-14) usefully terms the 'paradox of the instantaneous experience of complex contents', runs thus. How can a highly complex concept, such as chess, (with all its details and rules) be instantaneously represented (whether in pictorial or linguistic format) in one's mind as soon as one thinks of it? Again, while such a notion may appear intuitive and credible at first glance, further scrutiny reveals that its plausibility and coherence rapidly crumble upon inspection.

Take the following analogy, presented in §185 of the *Philosophical Investigations*. Suppose that a school pupil is asked to write down the series of even numbers under the order '+2' indefinitely, and does so until reaching the number 1000. Thereafter, however, upon being asked to continue in the same way, he begins to write 1000, 1004, 1008, etc. When the teacher interrupts and tells him that he has deviated from the rule, and should have continued in the same way, he replies that he did go on in the same way, and doesn't understand what the teacher means. The point here is that complex concepts such as rules cannot possibly be instantaneously experienced or represented in their full complexity: how can the infinite series of numbers possibly have been experienced or represented in the

teacher's mind when he gave the order '+2'? The fact is that it is immersion in the practices which give rules their meaning – a type of 'knowledge-how' – that accounts for their understanding, rather than sheer mental representation. In short, *contra* the psychologised view of linguistic meaning, mental representations, whether pictorial, linguistic, or symbolic in a different mode, cannot in general be sufficient for conceptual understanding.

The take-away message from the above arguments is that the view that thought is somehow extricable from language is internally incoherent and self-defeating. Recall that linguistic relativity is characterised in terms of two necessary conditions (which are jointly, though not individually, sufficient). These are (1) untranslatability across languages, and (2) the inextricability of language and thought. It has already been established that untranslatability across languages is true to a nontrivial degree, and the arguments explored in this section cumulatively establish that thought is not in fact detachable from external, natural languages, which itself implies that thought and language are indeed mutually inextricable. To further substantiate this view, and to understand its specific implications for linguistic relativity, however, it is necessary to articulate what, exactly, Wittgenstein's replacement view of linguistic meaning is, as well as its empirical substantiation. These will be examined in following section.

§4. The Wittgensteinian View of Linguistic Meaning: Implications for Linguistic Relativity

The Wittgensteinian view of linguistic meaning is that 'the meaning of a word is its use in the language' (1953: §43), such that what gives words their meaning is in fact the circumstances under which we speak, and the social conventions which constitute those circumstances. Thought, in turn, is derivative of this: 'When I think in language, there aren't 'meanings' going through my mind in addition to the verbal expressions: language itself is the vehicle of thought' (1953: §329). Linguistic understanding does not consist in connecting words with ideas in the privacy of one's own mind. Rather, it consists in having the ability to use language competently, in line with public, conventional use. Language is interwoven with forms of life (i.e. behavioural and social conventions), and it is these which give rise to meaning: 'the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life' (1953: §23). Language acquisition, in turn, consists in learning how to use words competently in line with the social practices which frame their various purposes; for it is social practices which determine words' meanings and standards for use.

This point can be further illustrated by a consideration of the circumstances under which we judge that others misunderstand words. Take the word 'pain': if a person continually ascribed it to people who were e.g. laying bricks, we would not hesitate before deciding that they had misunderstood the concept, because their use of it systematically deviated from the ordinary, conventional one. Our criteria for correctness, then, are the ordinary ways in which words and expressions are used; not whether the word happens to be used in conjunction with the right inner idea or representation. Characteristic behavioural manifestations of (e.g.) pain are part of the term's meaning. While it is true that there are cases where people experience pain without displaying any of the typical behavioural signs (e.g. invariably in ballet performances), these are exceptions to the rule. Indeed, the very fact that this phenomenon is conventionally characterised as pain *suppression* shows that our central, paradigmatic points of reference are the default cases which do involve pain behaviour.

To reiterate: the significance of this is that a private, psychological account of linguistic meaning cannot possibly be true, since language is neither abstract nor detachable from forms of life; rather, it is inescapably grounded in them. The very possibility of language hinges on the possibility of correct and stable use; and correct use hinges in turn on external, public convention and human nature. This reinforces the inextricability of language and thought thesis, since, given that language cannot be detachable from thought, it must therefore be constitutive of it: linguistic meaning is 'interwoven with nonlinguistic activities' (Glock 1997).

This has significant consequences for linguistic relativity, since it shows that differences in non-linguistic activities across different linguistic communities are necessarily accompanied by differences in the languages' conceptual repertoires. Linguistic relativity states that 'language, thought and culture are deeply interlocked' (Gumperz & Levinson 1996), such that language influences one's thought in line with the cultural particularities of one's linguistic community. We think through concepts; and those concepts are permeated with the cultural particularities of our linguistic communities. Cross-cultural differences, then, are reflected in the speakers' languages, which in turn has a feedback effect on cognition; i.e. linguistic relativity.

It is important to note that the Wittgensteinian 'meaning as use' view of language is not reductive: it does not deny that psychological states play a part in conceptual understanding; neither does it claim that mental states can somehow be *reduced* to their corresponding behavioural manifestations. Rather, it simply claims that mental states are not by themselves *sufficient* for conceptual understanding, since (1) there is an inescapable conceptual link between language, thought, and forms of life; and (2) our grasp of concepts which is

necessary for linguistic competence requires immersion in the forms of life which give them their meaning.

Another important qualification concerns the role of history. Linguistic relativity states that language embeds culture which is historic as well as present: it is taken to be a source of intergenerational cultural continuity, as can be seen in Thiong'o's claim that language is 'the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history' (1986: 15). It may appear, however, that Wittgenstein's account involves a presentism that does not make room for this. If linguistic meaning is derived from cultural and behavioural norms, then surely the culture / behaviour is causally prior to language, such that it is only *present* forms of life which give words their meanings? In such a case, it would appear that any historically-derived connotative leftovers in language are simply superfluous add-ons, which are epiphenomenal in relation to overall meaning and conceptual understanding.

However, this objection overlooks the bidirectional symbiotic relationship between language and culture/thought. The Wittgensteinian view does not claim that language is a one-way system whereby forms of life influence language and thought, but not *vice-versa*. Rather, it claims that there is no strict conceptual divide to be drawn between them. This is perfectly compatible with the claim that historically-accumulated concepts – which are embedded in language – influence or help sustain cultural norms, which in turn have knock-on influences on the speakers' range of linguistic and cognitive capacities²⁰. Although language *acquisition* involves the causal primacy of actions and instincts over language, this does not in turn rule out any subsequent corresponding causal influence of language over thought and behaviour.

This is substantiated by the fact that language does not emerge from within a vacuum; rather, it is sustained through intergenerational use and continuity, and is permeated with metaphors and idioms imported from literature, which themselves affect connotative meanings. We have already seen that connotative meanings do affect thought and behaviour (e.g. Simon & Jerit 2007; Bartels 1998); and the same is true of metaphors and idioms, which frame thought processes (thereby affecting decisions / behaviour) by highlighting certain associated semantic domains at the expense of others. Nowhere is this more widely used than in political persuasion, where the effects of metaphorical frames on people's political reasoning have been documented at length over the past two decades by

²⁰ Indeed, the following remark by Wittgenstein strongly suggests an explicit endorsement of the historical dimension to linguistic meaning. 'Language is like 'a maze of little streets and squares, of *old and new houses*, and of houses with additions, *from various periods*; and this surrounded by a multitude of new borroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses' (1953: §18, my italics).

Ottati et al. (2014), Charteris-Black (2006), Musolff (2014), and Boeynaems et al. (2017), to name a few.

To summarise, then: linguistic relativity, which has it that language, thought and culture (both historical and present) are interlocked, is substantiated by the Wittgensteinian account of linguistic meaning; the account substantiates the inextricability of language and thought thesis, and is compatible with (and indeed implies) cross-cultural differences in language and cognition. Moreover, it is also compatible with the influence of historically-accumulated linguistic nuances (manifested mainly in metaphors, idioms, and connotative meanings) on thought; and indeed this influence is evidenced by the aforementioned studies.

§4.1 Empirical Evidence for the Wittgensteinian View

In addition to being explanatorily advantageous and analytically justified from an *a priori* perspective, however, does the Wittgensteinian view of linguistic meaning and language acquisition also have an empirical basis? Yes: there is an increasing volume of empirical literature substantiating it, and indeed, Wittgenstein's work is becoming increasingly influential in neuropsychology (Moyal-Sharrock 2009). A thorough examination of this literature is beyond the scope of this chapter; however, it suffices for present purposes to explain some of the main studies and their significance.

One of the most significant contributions over the past two decades is the work of linguist Daniel Everett on the hunter-gatherer Amazonian tribe, the Pirahã. In his 'Cultural Constraints on Grammar and Cognition in Pirahã' (2005), Everett explains how the Pirahã language embeds striking features of the Pirahã culture, and consequently determines significant aspects of their cognition. The grammar of the Pirahã language, for instance, has an 'immediacy-of-experience constraint' (2005: 26); namely the absence of a capacity to talk about or think of events in the distant past. This is evident from the fact that the Pirahã language lacks the following features:

'number, numerals, or a concept of counting and of terms for quantification, the absence of color terms and embedding, the extreme simplicity of the pronoun inventory, the lack of a perfect tense, the simplicity of the kinship system, the absence of creation myths, the lack of individual or collective memory of more than two generations past, and the absence of drawing except for extremely crude stick figures representing the spirit world claimed to have been directly experienced' (Everett 2005: 25).

The conclusion that Everett draws is that the 'immediacy of experience' aspect of this isolated, hunter-gatherer tribe, and the fact that 'they have no craving for truth as a transcendental reality' (Everett 2008) show that there is simply no *use* for such concepts, and this is why they aren't reflected in the grammar or vocabulary of the Pirahã language. The Pirahã language has no numbers (everything is conceived of as relative), recursion (i.e. the grammatical function whereby simple linguistic structures can be recycled so as to be embedded in more complex sentences, e.g. the basic phrase 'water is H₂O' can be embedded into the more complex sentence 'it wasn't always believed that water is H₂O'), capacity to talk about events in the distant past etc., precisely because there is no *use* for such terms in their particular cultural setting. Consequently, the members of the Pirahã tribe are unable to think in such terms.

Concluding that it is the Pirahãs' cultural constraints that bring about the corresponding conceptual constraints, Everett explains that these findings provide 'striking evidence for the influence of culture on major grammatical structures' (2005: 25). These findings are nothing if not confirmatory evidence for the Wittgensteinian thesis that meaning is use, and that language and thought are dependent on and bounded by linguistic communities' forms of life. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this study is also 2-in-1 in that it substantiates the inextricability of language and thought thesis, as well as evidencing cross-cultural linguistic incommensurability.

In addition to the above substantiation of the meaning-as-use view, there is also a considerable and increasing volume of literature in cognitive science documenting the comparatively recent 'statistical learning' approach to language acquisition (see e.g. Bishop (2014, also cited in Moyal-Sharrock 2017), Dye (2010), and Perruchet (2019) for some recent examples). This is the process whereby children pick up and systematise language based on the dominant frequency of forms and probabilistic patterns of word distributions in their surroundings. This enables them to ignore the inconsistent variations in the input while systematising and reproducing the more consistent and reliable patterns. This further supports the Wittgensteinian view that language and linguistic meaning are essentially social in that they are based on linguistic conventions and regularities.

Another mutually reinforcing approach to communally derived language acquisition in linguistics is the interactionist theory, which is what it says on the tin. Children receive much linguistic reinforcement and corrective feedback from those they interact with, and this wealth of corrective data has a high explanatory mileage. Schoneberger (2010), for instance, shows that child language acquisition is highly constrained by both direct and indirect corrective feedback from the adults they communicate with. Moerk (1994), moreover,

presents a meta-analysis of 40 studies documenting the efficacy of corrective data on child language acquisition which confirms the statistical significance of the 40 papers' conclusions. Each of these studies documenting the statistical learning and interactionist theories reinforce the Wittgensteinian view, since they illustrate the essential dependence of language on external, social, and interpersonal behaviour and convention.

Wittgenstein's account of linguistic meaning and language acquisition was not proposed as a comprehensive scientific hypothesis or a 'theory' as such, since on his account, philosophy (properly conducted) does not yield exciting discoveries or theories (Wittgenstein 2005: 419). Rather, it serves to disentangle the webs of convoluted and often sophisticated conceptual confusions which arise from subtle misuses of language, unwarranted stipulations and assumptions, and latent reasoning fallacies which collectively yield philosophical 'theories' which purport to be innovative. 'While thinking philosophically we see problems in places where there are none' (Wittgenstein 1974: 47). The Wittgensteinian method, then, amounts to converting 'disguised nonsense to something that is patent nonsense' (1953: §464) so as to dismantle illusions and provide common sense-based reminders of how language and concepts are used and understood (1953: §127).

However, there is a different sense in which Wittgenstein's insights on linguistic meaning and language acquisition can be considered to count as 'theory'. That is: a reconfiguration of how the subject-matters of misleading philosophical theories (or scientific accounts permeated with philosophical confusion) are presented and interpreted, often according to pre-philosophical commonsensical knowledge of what is always 'before our eyes' (1953: §§122, 415). Since philosophical confusions are not confined to the academic discipline of philosophy, but rather are present in most disciplines, it is perfectly appropriate to apply his insights to linguistics and cognitive science as has been done in the above examples. Therefore, the above empirical evidence, taken together with the analytic, *a priori* justifications for the essential dependence of thought on language, constitute a robust case for the second necessary condition of linguistic relativity; i.e. the inextricability of language and thought.

§5. A Wittgensteinian Response to Objections to Linguistic Relativity

So far, we have seen that the two necessary and jointly sufficient conditions of linguistic relativity - cross-linguistic untranslatability and the inextricability of language and thought - are substantiated by both *a priori* rational justifications and extensive empirical evidence from linguistics, cognitive science, and anthropology. However, recall from this chapter's

introduction that a major obstacle to psycholinguists accepting the language-thought inextricability thesis is the consensus that animals and infants share several cognitive capacities with humans, despite not speaking a language (Everett 2013: 9). How, then, can the Wittgensteinian view of linguistic meaning and language acquisition account for this overlap, so as to remove the above barrier to accepting the inextricability of language and thought?

The answer to this difficulty lies in an elaboration of what, exactly, Wittgenstein meant by language; particularly in relation to the status of behaviour. Wittgenstein continually emphasised that language is not restricted to words or symbols, but rather includes gestures, reactions, instincts, and patterns of behaviour. Natural languages stem first and foremost out of pre-linguistic or proto-linguistic primitive and instinctive forms of behaviour/life: 'The origin and the primitive form of the language game is a reaction; only from this can more complicated forms develop' (Wittgenstein 1993: 395). Indeed, 'Our language-game is an extension of primitive behaviour' (Wittgenstein 1970: 545).

These primitive behavioural patterns and instincts are 'steady ways of living, regular ways of acting' that are common to all humans (Wittgenstein 1993: 397), such as crying in response to pain, laughing in response to amusement, sympathy in response to someone else's suffering, etc. Moreover, the aspects of language which grow directly out of such behavioural patterns effectively amount to modifications or refinements of such behaviour. A frequently cited example of such a modification is the transition from crying to expressing one's pain with words, such that the words eventually replace the crying habits (1953: 244). This process of replacing primitive and pre-linguistic reactions and instincts is brought about by a process of training, whereby children's caregivers teach and reinforce the behavioural refinements through e.g. example, reward, and punishment (Wittgenstein 1969: 77). In addition to being a common-sense reminder of how first languages are actually learnt, this characterisation is further supported by the interactionist view of language acquisition mentioned in the previous section.

The significance of this holistic conception of linguistic meaning and language acquisition for the above barrier to accepting the inextricability of language and thought is this. It removes any sharp conceptual divide between the linguistic and cognitive capacities of mature humans, and those of pre/non-linguistic beings such as animals and infants. For there is an inescapable continuity between on the one hand pre-linguistic forms of behaviour and cognition, and on the other hand natural languages. That is: natural language and advanced cognition develop from primitive behavioural patterns and instincts so as to modify and replace them with increasingly sophisticated, diverse, complex, and abstract concepts.

Indeed, these primitive reactions and instincts constitute ‘the prototype of a mode of thought’ (Wittgenstein 1980: 916). The overlap that exists between the cognitive skills of mature humans and pre-linguistic infants, then, is accounted for by the fact that it is simply not true that infants are devoid of any kind of linguistic capacity, once a more liberal conception of language is employed.

The same applies *mutatis mutandis* to animals, with the clear exception that unlike infants, they don’t proceed to replace or refine their primitive behavioural patterns with natural languages. Indeed, Wittgenstein likens pre-linguistic infants to animals in the sense that their primitive instincts and reactions are similar, and that training infants to refine their reactions resembles the process of taming and training animals to do certain things via stimulus-response conditioning, using example, reward, and punishment (Wittgenstein 1969: 77). As Danièle Moyal-Sharrock points out, this has caused e.g. the developmental psychologist Michael Tomasello ‘to realize that – contrary to current primatologist dogma – apes’ gestures, not their vocalizations, are the precursors of human language (2008, 53-5)’ (Moyal-Sharrock 2010: 292).

Thus the main barrier to accepting the second necessary condition of linguistic relativity (the inextricability of language and thought) dissolves once the less chauvinistic Wittgensteinian conception of language is employed at the expense of the overly restrictive conception which confines the linguistic capacity to the verbal expressions of natural language. The notion that thought is dependent on language can accommodate the cognitive capacities of infants and apes, once it is highlighted that their primitive behavioural patterns and instincts are in fact precursors of language, rather than being detachable from it.

Another objection to linguistic relativity concerns the notion of cross-linguistic incommensurability. If linguistic relativity is conventionally characterised in terms of cross-linguistic incommensurability which has corresponding consequences for cross-cultural cognition and behaviour, then why is there is so much cross-cultural uniformity to human cognition and behaviour? Indeed, given that on the Wittgensteinian view, language develops out of primitive instincts and reactions which are common to all humans (Wittgenstein 1970: 545), how can it be consistently claimed that different languages and cultures are mutually incommensurable? The answer here is that incommensurability is a relative, rather than absolute term. There is nothing inconsistent about claiming that there exists much cross-cultural and cross-linguistic universality in relation to human nature and forms of life which are common to all humans. The incommensurability, rather, applies to higher-level cultural variations across linguistic communities. The degree of variation (and correspondingly, incommensurability), in turn, differs across cultures according to e.g. how industrialised or

culturally homo/heterogenous they are; but to the extent that such differences are non-trivial, linguistic relativity continues to apply.

A further objection concerns *linguae francae* and dialects. What accounts for the fact that several different cultures manage to remain distinct from one another, despite speaking the same language due to their historical legacy of imperialism? It would be highly implausible to suggest that the Spanish speakers of, say, South America and Spain share the same culture simply by virtue of speaking the same language. In a similar vein, what accounts for the regional variation in dialects, and the concomitant cultural variations? Although, strictly speaking, it is the same language that is spoken across regions, the variation in dialects and culture is often significant, such that it would be equally implausible to suggest that they share the same culture solely by virtue of sharing the same language.

Here, it is necessary to distinguish between different languages in the sense that they are mutually incomprehensible to a nontrivial degree, and different languages in the sense of being formally or politically recognised as different languages. Likewise in relation to the term 'same' language: it is important to distinguish between 'same language' in the sense of a single, formally recognised language, and 'same language' in the sense of being a distinctive and homogenous speech variety. Take Arabic, for instance. Although it is formally recognised as a single language, the degree of cross-regional variation in Arabic dialects is profound, such that they are often mutually incomprehensible. Correspondingly, although languages such as Hindi and Urdu are formally recognised as mutually distinct, their degree of similarity and mutual comprehensibility is particularly high; more so than many dialects of the same language, such as Arabic.

What these distinctions highlight is that the classification of two speech varieties as either separate languages or separate dialects can often be arbitrary in relation to the linguistic criteria themselves; and indeed, such classifications are often premised on political rather than linguistic considerations. Therefore, the cross-cultural variation across speakers of the 'same' languages – particularly *linguae francae* – is compatible with linguistic relativity once it is realised that what is formally classified as a separate, distinctive language is often in fact an umbrella term for a constellation of different speech varieties, some of which are mutually incomprehensible. It is therefore misleading to think that (1) formally recognised languages are necessarily distinctive, separate languages in their own right; and (2) formally recognised languages are invariably internally homogenous.

Take Indian English, for instance: Salman Rushdie, recall, argues that despite the cultural displacement that the imperial imposition of English on India originally caused, it has now been spoken in India for long enough as to have absorbed much Indian culture. It has

effectively been domesticated, remade, and appropriated for Indian purposes (Rushdie 1991, also cited in Boucher 2020). If this is in fact the case, then it would be misleading to classify it as the 'same' language as British English in any strict sense of the term. It is reasonable to further assume that the same effect and the same principle applies to different variations of English and other *linguae francae*.

This point is further reinforced by the Wittgensteinian view of language: a consequence of the view that language is interwoven with forms of life and that linguistic meaning stems primarily from social and behavioural conventions is this. Even if linguistic imperialism initially causes significant cultural displacement, the social norms of the colonised society will nonetheless eventually become intertwined with the coloniser language so as to partly embed the concepts / forms of life of the colonised society²¹. The broader relevance of this to the objection from *linguae francae* and dialects is that on the Wittgensteinian view, what may superficially appear to be the 'same' language spoken by different cultures is not in fact the same language at all in any strict sense of the term. Rather, the degree of cross-cultural variation among speakers of the 'same' language is commensurate with the degree of semantic variation across each version of the formally recognised language. Since the dialects of Spanish spoken in South America and those spoken in Spain are not the 'same language' in any strict linguistic sense of the term, the objection that linguistic relativity is undermined by the purported fact that the 'same' language is spoken by different cultures is based on a false premise.

Conclusion

On the basis of the arguments and distinctions examined in this chapter, we are now in a position to answer the two related points of unclarity set out in the introduction. These are: (1) whether there exists a causal link between the documented cross-cultural differences in language and cognition; and (2) the likely scope of linguistic relativity. Regarding (1), recall that a major limitation of studies of linguistic relativity is that it has so far been difficult to establish a causal link between the documented cross-cultural differences in language and

²¹ It would be misleading to suppose, however, that this is equivalent to a complete conceptual transplantation between the original coloniser language and the form adopted by the colonised society. In their study of cross-linguistic untranslatability of emotion terms, for instance, Jackson et al. (2019) show that a significant predictor of similarity of emotion terms is the geographic proximity of language families. This suggests that the environmental and cultural contexts in which languages develop have long-term consequences for the range of concepts (and their interconnectedness with cognate concepts) that languages diachronically embed. Applied to Indian English, this suggests that it is not only Indian culture that it embeds, but also English culture etc.

semantically related cognition, for the reason that the inextricability of language and thought cannot be assumed. This, in turn, is because of the consensus that animals and infants share some of the same cognitive skills as humans, despite being non-linguistic. Regarding (2) the inconclusive nature of many linguistic relativity studies presents a seemingly insurmountable obstacle to establishing the likely scope of linguistic relativity: the persuasive relativistic effects observed in non-industrialised societies (Everett 2005, 2008; Boroditsky & Gaby 2010; Dahl 1995) cannot be generalised across WEIRD societies.

What the Wittgensteinian arguments and distinctions explored in this chapter illustrate, however, is that these two obstacles can be overcome by using the arguments and evidence for the social, de-psychologised account of linguistic meaning. This account, together with Wittgenstein's decisive undermining of psychologised views of linguistic meaning, establishes that language and thought are indeed inextricable. This in turn removes obstacle (1); and furthermore, Wittgenstein's liberal, holistic account of language removes the main reason for psycholinguists' rejection of the language-thought inextricability thesis by showing that language is continuous with, and an extension of, the primitive instincts and behavioural patterns of animals and infants.

What, then, are the consequences here for the likely scope of linguistic relativity? While it remains the task of anthropologists and psycholinguists to continue developing the evidence base that is necessary to providing a complete answer to this question, there is nonetheless good reason to suppose that cross-cultural relativistic effects are significant to the extent that they substantiate the robust terms in which linguistic relativity is usually characterised. We have already seen in §1 and §4 that cross-linguistic untranslatability is rife, particularly in relation to connotative meanings, and that connotative and metaphorical differences do affect cognition, as evidenced by e.g. the study of framing effects. Given that the existing data already show that untranslatability occurs to a significant degree across WEIRD societies (and to a much greater degree in non-industrialised societies), and given the inextricability of language and thought, we can thus far conclude that relativistic effects are sufficiently strong to justify the robust terms in which linguistic relativity is typically characterised.

The upshot of this for the nationalist and political theory literature which either presupposes linguistic relativity's truth, or defends claims which hinge on it, then, is this. Acknowledging the growing evidence base, together with the Wittgensteinian account of linguistic meaning and language acquisition, provides a rational justification for their otherwise unjustified explicit or implicit use of it as a central principle in their literature. This, in turn, goes a significant way towards immunising that literature from the charge that there is a sense in

which it is a house of cards, as it were. The positive case for linguistic relativity developed in this chapter, however, does not by itself address the universalist and nativist accounts of language acquisition inspired by Chomskyan linguistics which are incompatible with linguistic relativity in a sufficiently direct or detailed manner. It is to these remaining obstacles, then, that I shall now turn to in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: A Methodological Critique of Chomsky: Implications for Linguistic Relativity

Introduction

Chapter 2 was concerned with developing a positive case for linguistic relativity using the Wittgensteinian arguments, distinctions, and relevant empirical evidence to date. To briefly recap: linguistic relativity depends on two necessary conditions: cross-linguistic untranslatability, and the inextricability of language and thought. We saw that there is extensive evidence in linguistics and translation studies for cross-linguistic variation, particularly in relation to connotative meaning. Regarding the inextricability of language and thought, I argued that Wittgenstein's (1953) decisive objections against psychologised views of linguistic meaning, together with his empirically substantiated communal account of language acquisition (Wittgenstein 1953, 1970, 1993) constitute a robust justification for it. Collectively, the evidence for cross-linguistic variation, together with the empirically substantiated Wittgensteinian case for the inextricability of language and thought, are demonstrative of linguistic relativity. This, in turn, provides the rational justification which has thus far been missing from the nationalism and political theory literature which presupposes or hinges on linguistic relativity's truth.

One remaining obstacle which was not explored in detail in Chapter 2, but which is nonetheless perceived by many to undermine linguistic relativity, however, is Chomskyan linguistics and its legacy. The friction between linguistic relativity and Chomskyan linguistics is considerable; indeed, Chomskyan linguistics' widespread acceptance led to a tendency among researchers over the second half of the 20th century to overlook the phenomenon of linguistic relativity on theoretical grounds (Everett 2013: 21). Cross-cultural variations in language and cognition were too often treated not as manifestations of linguistic relativity, but rather as 'surface-level' phenomena which could effectively be reduced to a limited set of features of an underlying universal grammar (ibid.). As Gumperz & Levinson put it: Chomskyan linguistics became the dominant paradigm in American linguistics at the *expense* of linguistic relativity (1996: 3-6).

Universal Grammar (UG), the central feature of the Chomskyan paradigm, is a theoretical postulate comprising a set of innate, universal, and biologically hardwired grammatical principles which are common to all humans and which function independently of natural languages (Chomsky 1965, 1986). UG is realised through a hypothetical, functionally defined 'module' of the brain called the 'Language Acquisition Device' (LAD). This

'generativist' paradigm, in turn, has inspired a sizable number of further analogous universalist and psychologised accounts of language, such as those developed and/or endorsed by Fodor (1975, 1983), Pylyshyn (1981a, 1981b, 2003), Pinker (1994; 2002), Carey (2009), and Spelke (2003). Their incompatibility with linguistic relativity lies in their claim that thought is realized through innate and universal language, grammar, or concepts, and is therefore largely independent of and unaffected by differences across natural languages. Natural languages, on this view, have no significant effect on non-linguistic cognition.

As we saw, there is little awareness of the literature on linguistic relativity in the nationalism and political theory literature to date which hinges on linguistic relativity's truth. Given this, it is perhaps unsurprising that there is even less awareness of incompatible universalist accounts such as Chomsky's UG and its descendants in that literature. There is, however, one partial exception here: Charles Taylor's *The Language Animal* (2016) (in the sense that although the book itself does not address political theory it is a contribution to the oeuvre of an author who has contributed significantly to that literature). Here, Taylor develops a cumulative case against linguistic universalism; i.e. the view that language is detachable from culture, and is a purely instrumental device whose sole function is to encode information and describe reality. Indeed, such is Taylor's persistence at undermining linguistic universalism that he claims to refute its remaining fragments. In place of universalism, he develops a rich exposition of the manners in which language is constitutive of culture (a central tenet of linguistic relativity); though this is not, for the most part, framed in terms of linguistic relativity. Indeed, Taylor's treatment of linguistic relativity is limited: it is largely restricted to historical and outdated examples such as Hopi and Yucatec, where the data are largely anecdotal and grammatical, rather than experimental.

Relatedly, and more importantly for this chapter, there is a central omission from Taylor's case against linguistic universalism: Chomskyan linguistics and its legacy. Although Taylor cites a number of Chomsky's influential contributions to linguistics, on not one occasion does he provide a detailed explanation or rebuttal of their unwarranted universalist strands. Rather, he simply draws attention to the fact that Chomskyan linguistics is incomplete: it is 'very far from exhausting the functions, uses, and potentialities of language' (2016: 88-89). Moreover, 'the linguistic functions which theories of [...] innate grammar have mainly tried to explain [...] cannot be exercised independently of the other [linguistic] functions (2016: 89). However, Chomsky's work, I shall argue, is committed to elements of linguistic universalism which are incompatible with linguistic relativity and the constitutive view of language which Taylor seeks to conclusively establish.

Taking as its starting point the incompatibility of Chomskyan linguistics and its descendants with linguistic relativity / the constitutive view of language, then, this chapter will be concerned with the following two objectives. First, I shall provide a detailed explanation of where, exactly, the incompatibility between Chomskyan linguistics and linguistic relativity lies. Second, I shall engage in a detailed examination of UG – Chomskyan linguistics' central feature – and argue that it violates two principles which are central to the scientific method: falsifiability and Occam's Razor²². This, in turn, will have a knock-on effect on the further universalist accounts which have descended from UG: if their chief ammunition (Chomskyan linguistics) is shown to be untenable, then the carpet will be pulled from underneath them, so to speak.

The significance of this chapter for linguistic relativity and the constitutive view of language, then, is that it tackles the main point of friction between linguistic relativity and universalist accounts -namely Chomskyan linguistics - thereby removing the main obstacle to accepting linguistic relativity. The starting point to achieving this aim is to assimilate the relevant linguistics and anthropology literature to date which – I shall argue by drawing on Karl Popper's (1959, 1962, 1974) foundational work concerning the scientific method - illustrates Chomsky's violation of the falsifiability principle. Regarding Chomskyan linguistics' violation of Occam's Razor, I shall argue, *pace* Daniele Moyal-Sharrock (2017) that a consideration of Wittgenstein's empirically substantiated model of language acquisition reveals that grammar is generated not by the brain, but rather by a linguistic community's practices. This, in turn, dissolves the puzzle to which UG is supposed to be a solution, such that consequently, UG is no longer needed for explaining its target *explanandum*. Finally, I shall explain how this undermining of Chomskyan linguistics enables Taylor's *Language Animal* – the only substantive work to date which spans the interface between the comparatively recent linguistics / philosophy and political theory literature on the constitutive view of language - to achieve its principal aim. That is: refuting the 'remaining fragments' of the universalist and reductionist account of language which conflicts with the constitutive view of language and linguistic relativity. The spin-off consequence here is that the universalist view of language which Taylor (2016) cumulatively argues against does not even attain its scientific goal successfully, since its chief ammunition of Chomskyan linguistics is fundamentally at odds with the scientific method.

²² The principle of falsifiability is that any statement that alleges to be scientific must be capable of being falsified in principle (Popper 1959). Translated into practice, the principle requires that, in testing a hypothesis, we should look for an effect not only in places where the hypothesis requires it to occur, but also in places where the hypothesis requires it to not occur. See e.g. Firestone & Scholl (2016: 7) for a recent articulation of the importance of this principle. Occam's Razor is the principle that formulating an explanation should never involve multiplying complexity or entities beyond necessity.

The chapter will be structured as follows: §1 outlines the constitutive view of language and its relevance to linguistic relativity; §2 provides an overview of Chomskyan linguistics and its main descendants, and explains where, exactly, their incompatibility with linguistic relativity lies; §3 explains how Chomskyan linguistics violates Occam's Razor using arguments and clarificatory distinctions based on Wittgenstein's empirically substantiated account of language acquisition; §4 explains how Chomskyan linguistics further violates the falsifiability principle by tracing the instances where Chomsky has reformulated the definition of UG in an *ad hoc* manner in response to disconfirmatory evidence that has emerged in linguistics and anthropology; §5 assimilates the considerations adduced to conclude that acknowledging the unscientific status and empirical falsity of UG removes the chief obstacle to accepting linguistic relativity and the constitutive view of language. This, taken together with the positive arguments for linguistic relativity advanced in Chapter 2, warrants a stronger emphasis to be placed on the constitutive view of language - and, *a fortiori*, linguistic relativity - in the normative literature on linguistic justice and the political recognition of national culture.

§1. The Constitutive View of Language and its Relevance to Linguistic Relativity

The constitutive view of language is the notion that there exists an inextricable connection between language, culture, and subjective experience. As language rights theorist De Schutter puts it: 'language constitutes who I am, that my language and my identity are inextricably intertwined, that I cannot have concepts or views for which I do not have language' (2007: 8). This is the view held by liberal language rights theorists such as Will Kymlicka (1995), Alan Patten (2014), and Stephen May (2014) who advance identity-based arguments for a multilingual public sphere; as well as liberal nationalists and communitarians such as Yael Tamir (1995) and Alasdair Macintyre (1988) whose ideas fed into that normative language policy literature. Although the constitutive view of language is central to linguistic relativity, the two are not identical. One can believe, for instance, that language is central to culture for philological reasons, without thereby being committed to the relativistic view that there exists much cross-linguistic incommensurability and corresponding cross-cultural cognitive variation. Indeed, linguistic relativity is scarcely mentioned in the linguistic justice or cultural recognition literature; and those who do mention it typically fall short of providing a proper characterisation or justification for it, thereby significantly underselling its relevance and persuasiveness.

As a result, there is insufficient clarity as to what, exactly, the nature and strength of the link between language and culture is; and problematically, this leaves open the question of just how inextricable the connection between language and culture actually is. If the link between language and culture is merely tenuous, then there is little reason to use it as an identity-based justification for a multilingual public sphere or preservationist language policies. Indeed, it would appear to make little sense to prioritise language on anything other than instrumental grounds, which is the route taken by the likes of Barry 2001, Pogge 2003, Laitin & Reich 2003, who advocate a monolingual public sphere while effectively overlooking language's constitutive functions altogether. In light of the unclarity concerning the constitutive function of language, then, perhaps it is unsurprising that theorists such as Rubin (2017) have recently called for a departure from identity-based arguments in favour of arguments which emphasise the instrumental advantages associated with multilingualism.

Given that it is Taylor (2016) who has produced a substantive piece of political theory work which articulates language's constitutive function in a way that can be used by others to better bridge this gap, then, it is appropriate to begin by explaining what, exactly, his defence of it involves. Taylor frames the debate in terms of a dichotomy between the universalist 'HLC' (after Hobbes, Locke, Condilliac) view, according to which language is purely instrumental, and the constitutive 'HHH' (Hamann, Herder, Humboldt) account, according to which language contributes towards shaping much of reality, such as politics, art, ethics, philosophy, and society itself.

The HLC is characterised as an 'enframing' theory, where language is viewed as just one element 'within the framework... of human life, behaviour, purposes, or mental functioning'. Such a framework can be 'characterised independently of language' (2016: 3). It is attributable primarily to Hobbes, Locke, and Condilliac, who viewed language as an instrumental, information-encoding device which is detachable from, rather than constitutive of, reality. Recall, for instance, Locke's (1975 [1689]), account of thought, according to which all mental states are comprised of 'ideas', which are complexes of mental images, each of which are proxy to the objects (whether external or mental) they represent. On this view, there is no necessary connection between language, thought, and reality. Thought (comprised of ideas) is prior to language, and words are simply instrumental devices which serve to convey their corresponding ideas.

The HLC is incompatible with both the constitutive view of language and linguistic relativity: it claims that linguistic meaning is an individualistic phenomenon, whereby words derive their meaning from the ideas acquired through one's perceptual and introspective experiences, rather than external, culture-laden linguistic conventions. Secondly, natural languages

neither condition nor influence their speakers' mental states, since ideas are both epistemically and temporally prior to language.

Taylor argues that although the original formulations of the HLC view have long been discredited, a number of its central assumptions have survived into both modern linguistics and post-Fregean philosophy, surfacing in the works of e.g. Donald Davidson and Ferdinand de Saussure, and proving to be the dominant paradigm of language in the said disciplines. Taylor's central critique is that although the HLC successfully describes and analyses one important use of language, to reduce language to its encoding function is both misleading and erroneous. For such a function is just 'one province in a larger country' (2016: 83), and the accounts' naturalistic²³ and scientific tendencies are unwarranted in their attempt to extend the 'paradigm status of science' to domains to which it doesn't apply (2016: 83-84). In other words, the constitutive functions of language are not, in principle, reducible to merely descriptive or physicalist explanations.

The HHH view, by contrast, is a 'constitutive' theory according to which language makes possible 'new purposes, new levels of behavior, new meanings' which cannot be characterised independently of language. As such, 'it is the antitype of the enframing sort' (2016: 4). On this view, language is inextricably connected to reality, and contributes towards shaping much of it. Drawing on Herder's *Treatise on the Origin of Language* (1772), for instance, Taylor endorses the thesis introduced in Chapter 1 that 'language makes possible a different kind of consciousness' which Herder called 'reflection', or *Besonnenheit* (2016: 6).

Besonnenheit is the feature of human language which enables us to grasp things as what they are. It involves a conception of linguistic 'rightness' which is exclusive to humans, and it distinguishes language from animal communication. The idea here is that although pre/nonlinguistic beings can react to things around them, they cannot grasp things as what they are without a language. Language enables humans to describe, and all descriptive expressions are either right or wrong. The rightness or wrongness hinges on what the characteristics of the described objects actually are. It is a necessary feature of language that 'we are continuously responsive to rightness, and that is why we always recognize the relevance of a challenge that we have misspoken' (2016:7). When a word applies, it does so 'because of the defined features, else it is not properly a word' (2016: 8). By contrast, animals simply respond to signals in order to achieve immediate goals. This requires no sensitivity to the issue of 'intrinsic rightness', whereas using a language does. Using a

²³ Naturalism, as Taylor defines it, is the tendency 'to model the study of man on the natural sciences' (Taylor 1985: 1).

language amounts to 'operating, as it were, in another dimension': the 'semantic dimension' (2016: 11).

Another way in which *Besonnenheit*, (or 'reflection') is linked to reality is that it enables us to focus on objects by recognising them with language. 'Instead of being overcome by the ocean of sensations as they rush by us, we are able to distinguish one wave, and hold it in clear, calm attention. It is this new space of attention... of focused awareness... which Herder wants to call 'reflection' (2016:12). In other words, without the ability to use language to bring things into clear focus, we would be confronted with the visual equivalent of a cacophony of sound, rather than the ordered reality that we experience instead.

It is in this manner, then, that Taylor characterises the constitutive view of language; and it is by articulating such constitutive functions of language that he thereby aims to undermine the HLC view: they are consequently shown to be misleadingly sparse. It is also worth noting that the HHH entails linguistic relativity, while the HLC rules it out. This is evident from the fact that according to the HHH, language, society, and experience / thought are intertwined, and influence one another. HLC, on the other hand, denies this because of the underlying universality it attributes to language and its relation to thought. It is not surprising, then, that Taylor's book cumulates in a discussion of the implications of the HHH for linguistic relativity.

However, in his discussion of the import of the HHH for linguistic relativity, Taylor only explains which areas of language the linguistic relativity thesis applies to in light of the considerations adduced in the rest of the book. Somewhat surprisingly, he does not explain how the 'refutation' of the HLC removes the main obstacle to the acceptance of linguistic relativity. Rather, he concludes that it is 'issues of human meanings' and 'footings and social structures' (2016: 328) that linguistic relativity is most pertinent to, whereas it is irrelevant in relation to different ways of using colour and number vocabularies (2016: 322-324).

However, this mere taxonomy of which areas of language linguistic relativity applies to constitutes a significant underselling of the issue, since, as this chapter argues, the HLC is fundamentally incompatible with linguistic relativity while the HHH fundamentally entails it. Correspondingly, linguistic relativity is the most direct and theoretically dense expression of the constitutive function of language. Given this, it would have been more directly beneficial for Taylor to have shown how the HLC and its modern manifestations are untenable from the outset, and how the main criticisms of it simultaneously reinforce the case for the HHH and, by extension, linguistic relativity. This, then, is precisely what this chapter proposes to contribute. Turning to the topic of Chomskyan linguistics and its legacy, then, we shall now see how, exactly, the theory and its descendants are incompatible with linguistic relativity and the constitutive view of language.

§2. Chomskyan Linguistics and its Universalist Elements

Universal Grammar (UG), recall, is a nativist view of language according to which there exists a uniform and innate set of linguistic principles embedded in the brains of all humans. These comprise 'the sum total of all the immutable principles that heredity builds into the language organ. These principles cover grammar, speech sounds, and meaning' (Chomsky 1983), and are generated by a hypothetical autonomous module of the human brain called a 'language acquisition device' (LAD) (Chomsky 1965: 25). UG was originally formulated as a proposed solution to the so-called 'poverty of the stimulus' (*alias* 'logical problem of language acquisition') puzzle. According to it, an explanation needs to be given for why there exists a mismatch between children's limited linguistic input and subsequent output. Put differently, why are children able to generate an indeterminate number of well-formed sentences on the basis of the comparatively limited instances they've been exposed to?

Chomsky's solution is to posit a 'Language Acquisition Device' (LAD) which is a functionally defined module of the brain whose purpose is to enable children to learn a language properly with minimal exposure to natural languages. Minimal exposure to a given natural language enables LAD to recognise which language it is, set the right grammatical parameters for it (Chomsky 1965), and thereby enable the child to construct well-formed sentences. This is because all humans are endowed with UG, which is a universal and static set of grammatical principles lodged in the brain in advance of any use or application.

Upon receiving the linguistic input, the LAD 'transforms' the 'surface-level' sentences from the natural language into their corresponding 'underlying structure' – the latter being universal across all language users (Chomsky 1957). Thus the UG enables all the 'surface-level' idiosyncrasies of natural languages to be reduced to a semantically and syntactically equivalent 'deep structure' which is uniform across all humans. '...once you've learned the vocabulary items and fixed the grammatical parameters for English, the whole system is in place. And the general principles genetically programmed into the language organ just churn away to yield all the particular facts about English grammar' (Chomsky 1983).

Since these linguistic principles are innate and universal, and are responsible for generating our manifold linguistic capacities, they are explanatorily prior to natural languages. That is to say, it is principally these innate and universal principles which reside in the brain that generate, determine, and constrain our range of linguistic abilities, rather than the natural languages themselves. Consequently, conceptual and grammatical differences across natural language have no significant effects on their users' cognitive processes, since

linguistic meaning is generated first and foremost by the brain, rather than by the e.g. social conventions of a linguistic community's practices.

Although the *loci classici* of this universalist, nativist (i.e. the view that language and / or grammar is biologically hardwired and therefore innate) approach are Chomsky's texts spanning from the 1950s to the present, it has also been adopted by various other linguists, psychologists and philosophers, including Fodor (1975, 1983), Carruthers (2006), Keller & Keller (1996), Carey (2009), Spelke (2003), and Pinker (1994; 2002). Fodor, for instance has developed an influential account according to which humans think in an inner, private 'language of thought' (LOT) called 'mentalese' which is universal across all humans, and functions independently of the natural languages that humans actually communicate in.

Just as UG is incompatible with linguistic relativity, so too is LOT. For, as Steven Pinker states in *The Language Instinct* (1994), thought, being realised through LOT, is independent of natural languages. Since LOT is epistemically prior to natural languages, the latter cannot condition thought in accordance with a linguistic community's cultural particularities, since it is through LOT, rather than the natural languages themselves, through which thought is realised. A further consequence here is that, on the LOT account, even if there were a 'fundamental incommensurability' across natural languages, this would have no consequences for how the speakers actually think.

Another field which draws extensively on Chomskyan linguistics is evolutionary psychology, where the positing of innate capacities is rife. Cosmides and Tooby (1992), for instance, use the Fodorian modularity thesis to argue that all humans are endowed with a 'cheater detection module', which involves the use of a specific algorithm which enables humans to actively search for and identify cheaters in their social environments. Additionally, Mark Baker (2001) argues that children are endowed with an innate set of 'parameter settings' which enable them to automatically recognise which ones apply to their own mother tongue, thereby enabling them to speak correctly by default. For further examples, as well as a recent comprehensive overview of the Chomskyan legacy in modern linguistics, see Hornstein et al. (2018).

That these descendant theories take their inspiration from Chomsky's revolutionary contribution to linguistics in the 1950s and 1960s is evident from the following examples. Take, for instance, the 'modularity of mind' thesis (Fodor 1983), and Carruthers' (2006) magnified version of it, which claim that the mind is comprised of functionally-defined autonomous and informationally encapsulated computational 'modules' dedicated to the execution of specific tasks (e.g. language processing, visual perception etc). These are inspired by Chomskyan linguistics in that they are claimed to have an innate and universal

basis. And just as Chomskyan linguistics claims that the abstract principles of UG are causally prior to natural languages in generating our linguistic capacities, modular accounts such as LOT assign the same causal priority to universal and biologically hardwired language-like representations. Again, these function independently of natural languages, such that cross-linguistic variations have no direct effect on the speakers' thought processes.

The reason for focusing primarily on Chomsky's UG in this thesis, then, is that its undermining will have a knock-on effect on the plausibility of the various other nativist theories it has inspired. For if these theories whose ammunition is Chomskyan linguistics cannot get off the ground without an underlying commitment to Chomsky's universalist nativism (whether in relation to concepts, grammar, or vocabulary), and Chomsky's nativism has been shown to be untenable, then the carpet will be pulled from underneath them. This is because the nativism and psychologism they assign to language – and on which their theories' truth hinge – will be shown to be untenable.

It might be objected that none of the above shows that UG is incompatible with linguistic relativity, for the following reason. Granted, insofar as UG posits a universal set of 'underlying' grammatical principles which are invariant across all humans and independent of natural languages, there cannot be any 'fundamental incommensurability' in relation to grammar. But this doesn't show that there cannot be any incommensurability across the *vocabularies* and associated concepts of different natural languages. UG by itself doesn't rule out the existence of incommensurable concepts across different languages; and granting that such a difference exists, linguistic relativity appears to remain possible.

There are two reasons why this objection does not stand. First, Chomsky himself has admitted that 'the child has a repertoire of concepts as part of its biological endowment and simply has to learn that a particular concept is realized in a particular way in the language'. Moreover, '[w]hen you read the huge Oxford English Dictionary ..., you may think that you are getting the definition of a word but you're not. All you are getting is a few hints and then your innate knowledge is filling in all the details and you end up knowing what the word means' (Chomsky 2000), also cited in Moyal-Sharrock (2017)).

Thus it appears that Chomsky's UG also has a natural extension to vocabularies: it implies that there is no real incommensurability of concepts across natural languages either, since those concepts are 'innate', and part of our 'biological endowment'. The second reason why UG is incompatible with linguistic relativity is this. If grammatical principles can exist independently of use and application, then there cannot be a necessary connection between language, experience, and reality – since language's central feature – grammar – could exist

independently of experience and reality. This is incompatible with the constitutive view of language, which denies such a possibility; and the truth of the constitutive view is necessary for linguistic relativity.

§3. Applying Occam's Razor

It is clear, then, that Chomskyan linguistics and its descendants belie a universalism which is fundamentally incompatible with linguistic relativity and the constitutive view of language. In order to address this obstacle, then, we shall now turn to the relevance of Occam's Razor to Chomskyan linguistics. In what follows, I shall argue, *pace* Daniele Moyal Sharrock (2017), that a consideration of Wittgenstein's account of language acquisition reveals that grammar is generated not by the brain, but rather by a linguistic community's social conventions. Moreover, a less chauvinistic account of what constitutes language – as seen by the Wittgensteinian distinctions explored in Chapter 2 – reveals that there is in fact no such puzzle as 'poverty of the stimulus' in the first place. *A fortiori*, I shall further argue that this dissolution of the puzzle underlines the superfluous nature of the UG postulate; and accordingly, it will be seen to violate Occam's Razor.

Moyal-Sharrock's critique of UG is twofold. The first point to note is that it is simply not true that children learn the ability to form grammatically correct sentences on the basis of limited linguistic data. She writes: 'There is hardly a day when I don't hear some of the errors made in the following sentence: 'I'm feeling more better than I done yesterday though I'm not my bestest; but still, I should of went to the gym'. (2017: 11). If it were true that the LAD could recognise the relevant language, set the right parameters for it, and thereby automatically enable people to form grammatically correct sentences, then why are so many children and adults alike unable to speak grammatically? 'Such errors are much too frequent and consistent to be dismissed as slips of the tongue' (2017:11).

The second critique put forward by Moyal-Sharrock is that UG is simply not required for explaining language acquisition. On the Wittgensteinian account, grammar is not a set of universal abstract principles lodged in the brains of all language users. Rather, it is the sum total of 'the rules or bounds of sense that determine, and are embedded in, our use of language as a result of the evolution of languages in the various cultures of human life.' (2017: 23). These rules 'do not pre-exist language but are inextricably bound up with its practice' (*ibid.*). Once it is realised that grammar is grounded in social and behavioural conventions, and that the latter are constitutive of linguistic meaning, the assumption that the linguistic data available to children is degenerate and sparse is simply not true.

Moyal-Sharrock writes: 'contra Chomsky, first-language acquisition is essentially social; it requires that at least one member of the linguistic community mould the child's primitive reactions [...], bringing the child, through a process of enculturation, to assimilate, conform to and apply the standards of correctness of its linguistic community.' (2017: 21). Grammar is nothing more complicated than 'rules for the use of words [...] exhibited in human discourse, in explanations of meaning, in corrections of errors, in what counts as accepted usage' (Hacker 2010: 29, also cited in Moyal-Sharrock 2017: 24).

Thus it is not just words in isolation which constitute language; it is also the behavioural and cultural norms of one's linguistic community. Recall from Chapter 2 the Wittgensteinian account of language acquisition, according to which language is not restricted to words or symbols, but rather includes gestures, reactions, instincts, and patterns of behaviour. Natural languages stem first and foremost out of pre-linguistic or proto-linguistic primitive and instinctive forms of behaviour, such as crying in response to pain, laughing in response to amusement etc. (Wittgenstein 1993). Natural languages develop directly out of such behavioural patterns, and effectively amount to modifications or refinements of such behaviour, e.g. the transition from crying to expressing one's pain with words (1953: 244). This modification is brought about by a process of training, whereby children's caregivers teach and reinforce the behavioural refinements through e.g. example, reward, and punishment (Wittgenstein 1969: 77). This common-sense view, in turn, is further substantiated by the interactionist (Moerk 1994) and statistical learning (Bishop 2014, also cited in Moyal-Sharrock 2017; Dye 2010; Perruchet 2019) approaches to language acquisition used in experimental linguistics.

This, then, is the sense in which UG violates Occam's Razor: once it is realised that children's linguistic input is not limited to words, but also includes behaviour and interpersonal instruction, there is no such problem as 'poverty of the stimulus'. For the data is much more diverse than Chomsky makes it out to be. As such, UG is a superfluous postulate in that it is simply not required to explain the linguistic capacity of children: the linguistic data that infants and children are exposed to are in fact remarkably *rich* once the holistic Wittgensteinian conception of language and grammar is employed. Consequently, there is no such mismatch as Chomsky claims exists between children's linguistic input and the vast number of well-formed sentences they proceed to be able to generate: UG is excess theoretical baggage.

Although Moyal-Sharrock does not frame her argument in terms of a violation of Occam's Razor, her paper nonetheless contains ample evidence and argumentation to justify this charge. Occam's Razor states that formulating explanations should never involve multiplying

complexity or entities beyond necessity, but as Moyal-Sharrock's paper shows, Chomsky's UG does both. I further add the following: UG is presented as a scientific explanation, but since it violates Occam's Razor – a central principle in the scientific method - it cannot live up to its own self-proclaimed scientific status.

It might be objected that there is insufficient reason to prioritise Wittgenstein's account of language acquisition over that of Chomsky. Granted, if the Wittgensteinian view is true, then it does show that Chomsky's account is built on a pseudo-problem and that it resultantly violates Occam's Razor. But why believe that Wittgenstein's account is in fact true and Chomskyan linguistics false? Indeed, if Chomsky's account is true, then it surely undermines Wittgenstein's account by showing that language is not socially derived; neither does it include extra-linguistic features such as gestures, reactions and instincts, as Wittgenstein (1953, 1970, 1993) claims. Indeed, including these extra entities would appear to indicate that it is in fact Wittgenstein's view, rather than that of Chomsky, that violates Occam's Razor.

To answer this objection, it is necessary to recall both the interactionist and statistical learning approaches to language acquisition mentioned above, and the *a priori* objections to psychologised views of linguistic meaning found in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (1953: §§244–271) examined in Chapter 2. These objections conclusively establish that the idea that inner 'ideas' or language-like representations (including abstract grammatical principles such as those of UG) are somehow sufficient for linguistic understanding is internally incoherent and self-defeating. Furthermore, in addition to being undermined from an *a priori* perspective, Chomsky's account has – as we shall see in the following section - been falsified by empirical studies such as those of Daniel Everett (2005, 2008) which themselves simultaneously further substantiate the Wittgensteinian view. In what follows, then, it will become increasingly clear that it is the Wittgensteinian view that the evidence leans heavily in favour of, while that same evidence further illustrates both the falsity and unscientific status of Chomsky's account.

§4. Applying the Falsifiability Principle

In his 'Cultural Constraints on Grammar and Cognition in Pirahã' (2005), Daniel Everett established that there exists an exception to the UG postulate 'out in the wild'. As expounded previously, Everett's research on the Amazonian hunter-gatherer tribe, the Pirahã, revealed that the Pirahã language lacks recursion; i.e. the grammatical function whereby simple

linguistic structures (e.g. 'water is H₂O') can be recycled so as to be embedded in more complex sentences (e.g. 'it wasn't always believed that water is H₂O').

The fact that Pirahã lacks recursion is of paramount relevance to UG, since according to Chomsky, UG is supposed to generate a universal capacity for recursion in natural languages by default. Hauser, Chomsky & Fitch (2002), for instance, claim that recursion 'is recently evolved and unique to our species' (2002: 1573), and that UG, or the 'Narrow Language Faculty' (FLN) as they refer to it in this paper, contains recursion as its sole fundamental feature. 'At a minimum, then, FLN includes the capacity of recursion' (2002: 1571). According to Chomsky, then, the recursion function is the *sine qua non* of UG, which itself is supposed to explain the language capacity. Thus if UG were true, then all natural languages would have to include recursion as one of their most fundamental grammatical functions.

However, Everett's research reveals that there exists an exception to it in the Pirahã language; and indeed other exceptions have also been documented, such as in the Iatmul (New Guinea) language (Foley 1986), and the Wari' language (Everett & Kern 1997). These exceptions conclusively disprove UG. For it only takes one counterexample to falsify a theory which alleges to be universal; and Everett's work provides that counterexample. As Everett puts it, UG, which includes recursion as one of its necessary properties, 'is either falsified or it has no empirical content' (Everett 2016).

We have already seen in §3 that UG violates Occam's Razor since a consideration of Wittgenstein's account of language acquisition dissolves the puzzle to which UG is supposed to be a solution by showing that there is no such 'poverty of the stimulus' in the first place, once a less chauvinistic account of language is employed. Once this is realised, it can be seen that UG does no explanatory work. Moreover, Everett's empirical work illustrates another way UG 'should be excised by Occam's Razor' (Everett 2016): its superfluous nature is emphasised by the fact that it fails to explain the target phenomenon. That is to say: if UG – with its central feature of recursion – is supposed to explain the (alleged) universality of recursion across languages, then what accounts for the fact that there are languages which do not even have recursion?

In addition to this, Everett's research also indicates that Chomsky's defence of UG also violates another criterion that is central to the scientific method: falsifiability. This criterion and its importance for the scientific method was articulated at length by Karl Popper (1959), who distinguished between its logical form, and its applied methodology. The logical form is the basic requirement that 'it must be possible for an empirical scientific system to be refuted by experience' (1959:19). It must be emphasised that it is not, of course, this version of the

falsifiability principle that Chomsky's theory of UG violates. Since – as it has been shown above – research by the likes of Everett (2005, 2008) has indeed falsified UG, it would be bizarre to claim that UG is unfalsifiable when it has in fact been falsified.

The type of falsifiability that UG violates, rather, is methodological falsifiability; i.e. the applied methodology of the falsifiability principle. This is the requirement that, in formulating a theory, scientists should design experiments aimed at falsifying it, and actively search for disconfirmatory evidence rather than the selective cherry-picking of evidence which confirms it. The epistemic virtue of this method is clear: if the theory continually manages to withstand repeated attempts to refute it, then the probability of it being true – or the degree of confidence with which it can be rationally believed to be true - will increase accordingly.

The criterion of methodological falsifiability is one of the distinguishing marks between science and pseudoscience – the latter being characterised by searching only for confirmatory evidence, thereby selectively representing reality to fit the theory (examples include Freudian psychoanalysis (Popper 1962: 37) and Marxism (ibid.), both of which – because of their lack of precision – are 'elastic enough [...] to evade any further attack' (1962: 449)). This usually goes hand-in-hand with the *ad hoc* moulding of the theory to make room – *post hoc* – for otherwise incompatible evidence, thereby 'refusing to acknowledge any falsifying experience whatsoever' (Popper 1959: 19). It is largely 'the readiness to look for tests and refutations', then, which distinguishes "'empirical" science from non-science, and especially from pre-scientific myths and metaphysics' (Popper 1974: 980-981).

It is this second, methodological sense of the term 'falsifiability' that Chomsky's work on UG violates; as we shall see in the following examples. In 1983, Chomsky's definition of UG was: 'the sum total of all the immutable principles that heredity builds into the language organ. These principles cover grammar, speech sounds, and meaning' (Chomsky 1983). By 2002, the definition had changed considerably, with most of the earlier principles and notions - including 'deep structure' and 'surface structure' present in *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965) - having been discarded. Indeed, UG had now been reduced to the FLN (the 'Narrow Language Faculty') which just is recursion, and nothing else (Hauser, Chomsky & Fitch 2002).

Moreover, by 2005, after Everette's presentation of a counterexample in 'Cultural Constraints on Grammar and Cognition in Pirahã' Chomsky had decided that recursion no longer has to be present in language. Rather, it has now become the ability to think recursively, rather than the linguistic capacity to do so: 'it [Pirahã] surely does not affect the argument that recursion is part of the human language faculty: [...] our language faculty provides us with a toolkit for building languages, but not all languages use all the tools'

(Fitch, Hauser & Chomsky 2005: 203-204). This is despite the fact that recursion is, even according to Chomsky's reformulated definition, the sole fundamental feature of the human language capacity.

But this new reformulation is *ad hoc*, at the very least. As linguist Arika Okrent puts it: 'If you claim that recursion is the essential feature of language, and if the existence of a recursionless language does not debunk your claim, then what could possibly invalidate it?' (Okrent 2017). Moreover, Everett points out that Chomsky's admission that recursion may not be present in all languages, even though it is supposed to explain their existence, shows that 'There is simply no empirical connection any more to linguistic data if this "recursion is a state of mind" view is adopted' (Everett 2016).

This new qualification to the UG theory also directly contradicts Chomsky's earlier view, (e.g. 1963), which was that empirically acquired counterexamples could falsify UG. Everett, for instance, writes: 'In Chomsky's earlier writings, he claimed that if two grammars produce the same surface strings (weak generative capacity [i.e. set of all strings generated by a given grammar]), we can still test them by examining the predictions of structures they predict for the strings (strong generative capacity [i.e. the 'structural descriptions' generated by the grammar])' (Everett 2016).

Thus it is clear that the posts have been shifted on several counts in Chomsky's development / moulding of his UG theory. The methodological application of the criterion of falsifiability requires that the definition of the theory or target phenomenon cannot be moulded *ad hoc* in the face of disconfirmatory evidence, while still retaining its scientific status. But this precisely what Chomsky's reformulations of UG have done. For instance, as soon as the Pirahã counterexample was presented, UG soon became the ability to think recursively, rather than having the linguistic capacity to do so. If this change of definition is not *ad hoc*, it is difficult to know what is.

Methodological falsifiability also requires that the propounding of any scientific theory must be accompanied by a receptivity towards attempts to disprove it. That no such receptivity has been shown by Chomsky is clear from the following case. Rather than acknowledging that Everett's disconfirmatory evidence constitutes a pressing challenge to the tenability of UG, Chomsky has both changed the definition of UG, and launched *ad hominem* attacks on Everett, calling him e.g. 'an irrelevant, mistaken charlatan', to name one example (Chomsky 2009, also cited in Everett 2017). These examples are nothing if not violations of methodological falsifiability: repeated *ad hoc* reformulations of the theory in light of disconfirmatory evidence, and evasive deflections of the relevant counterexamples and challenges to UG.

This same evidence that falsifies and undermines the scientific status of Chomskyan linguistics also illustrates the truth of the Wittgensteinian view. The research conducted on the Pirahã tribe, for instance, shows that the Pirahã's immediacy-of-experience cultural feature means that there is no use for the capacity to talk about events in the distant past; hence its absence from their language. The same is true of the lack of features such as cardinal and ordinal numbers, and specific terms for colours (Everett 2007). These among other examples show that since there is no *use* for such concepts in the Pirahã culture, they are not reflected in their language. This reinforces the Wittgensteinian view that language is socially derived and dependent on use: it arises from and is regulated by the social and cultural norms of its speakers.

The interactionist and statistical learning views of language acquisition which undermine UG also reinforce the Wittgensteinian account. The statistical learning view, according to which children internalise and systematise language based on the probabilistic patterns of word distributions in their environments (Perruchet 2019), shows that linguistic meaning is essentially social in that it is based on social conventions and regularities. The mutually reinforcing interactionist view, moreover, according to which children learn language on the basis of extensive corrective feedback and interaction with their immediate caregivers, illustrates the essential dependence of language on social and interpersonal behaviour and convention.

Finally, does Wittgenstein's account violate the principle of falsifiability? Before answering this question, it is worth recalling that Wittgenstein's account of language acquisition was not presented as a scientific hypothesis or theory, but rather a common sense-based reminder of how languages and language acquisition actually work (Wittgenstein 1953: §127). As such, it might be supposed that the Wittgensteinian view is exempt from being answerable to the demands of falsifiability, given that it does not purport to be scientific in the first place. However, since it involves positive claims about the nature and functioning of language, it surely warrants similar scrutiny. This is because (1) it is being discussed in the context of scientific evidence; and (2) the epistemic virtue of falsifiability is no less relevant here: being susceptible to and able to withstand attempts to be disproved strengthens the plausibility of a theory, regardless of whether it is presented as scientific.

Beginning with the first, literal sense of the term falsifiability: it is clear that Wittgenstein's account does meet this criterion, since it is indeed testable and capable of being falsified in principle. If it were shown, for instance, that children were capable of learning their first language without immersion in the social and behavioural conventions from which - on the Wittgensteinian view - languages derive their meanings, then Wittgenstein's positive

account of language and language acquisition would indeed be falsified. Regarding the second, methodological sense of falsifiability, there is no sign that it contravenes this either. First, the relevant evidence has so far been confirmatory while the universalist accounts which *could* have potentially undermined it have been shown to be unsound. Second, the account has remained the same since its introduction in the *Philosophical Investigations* (1953): there have been no *ad hoc* exegetical shifting of the posts in response to unexpected evidence.

§5. Conclusion: Implications for Linguistic Relativity and the Constitutive View of Language

It can be seen, then, that Chomsky's theory of UG violates both Occam's Razor and the methodological application of the falsifiability principle. The above evidence from linguistics and anthropology, taken together with the Wittgensteinian account of language acquisition, collectively establish the following two conclusions. First, the richness of the linguistic data that children are in fact exposed to while learning their first language shows that there is no such thing 'poverty of the stimulus' that needs a solution to explain it; therefore UG is a superfluous postulate which violates Occam's Razor. Second, the discovery of languages such as Pirahã which lack recursion falsifies UG which predicted that, owing to UG, every language would contain recursion as its sole feature; and moreover, Chomsky's subsequent subtle remoulding of the theory violates the methodological application of the falsifiability principle.

Now that the chief remaining obstacle to accepting linguistic relativity has been removed, then, it is appropriate to turn to the question of what, exactly, are the implications here for the constitutive view of language and its place in the wider body of literature on linguistic justice and the political recognition of national or societal cultures. As we have seen, Taylor's *Language Animal* (2016) – the only substantive work which spans the interface between the constitutive view of language and the political theory work to which it applies - does not, for the most part, frame the case for the constitutive view of language in terms of linguistic relativity. Rather, it articulates (with varying degrees of clarity) some of the manners in which language is culture-ridden and constitutive of reality. We shall also see in Chapter 4 that language rights theorists such as Kymlicka (1995), Patten (2014, 2019), and May (2014) who advance identity-based arguments for a multilingual public sphere typically affirm the constitutive view of language without providing any major disaggregation of or justification for it. Furthermore, liberal nationalists such as Miller (1995) and Tamir (1995) whose

communitarianism-inspired works on the political recognition of national culture fed into the linguistic justice literature, do not explain the relations between language, culture, and their constitutive functions in any detail either.

It is my contention, however, that framing the constitutive view of language in terms of linguistic relativity is both advantageous and necessary to attaining sufficient clarity and plausibility in the normative literature on the political recognition of national and cultural identity. The reason for this is that linguistic relativity is the most dense and direct expression of the constitutive view of language. Not only has it formed a central part of Herder's foundational works in nationalist political thought (and therefore remains relevant to their influence and legacy in the field); it is also the only explicitly-articulated, empirically substantiated, and testable mechanism for it. As such, it has been possible to draw on the wealth of experimental data which has proliferated during the past two decades in order to substantiate it; whereas the same cannot be done for the more loosely-characterised articulations of the constitutive view of language.

Indeed, without the clarity and substantiation that linguistic relativity provides in relation to the nature and strength of the constitutive function of language, there appears to be little reason to use it as a basis for justifying multilingual or preservationist language policies on identity grounds. As we saw in Chapter 1, the absence of the acknowledgment of linguistic relativity from the normative literature on language policy and the political recognition of national / societal culture leaves it susceptible to a cluster of recent objections. These include the charge of 'essentialising' national culture (Patten 2011, 2014), prioritising national culture over other types of identity goods which have nothing to do with nationality or ethnicity (Perry 2014), and democratic deficit (Gerson & Rubin 2015). The dissolution of the legacy of Chomskyan linguistics provided in this chapter clears the way for these objections to be addressed in the following chapter, and for the normative literature which emphasises but leaves insufficiently justified the connection between language and culture to be placed on more robust foundations.

Chapter 4: Reconfiguring the Linguistic Justice Discourse in Light of Linguistic Relativity

Introduction

The majority of recent language rights literature has emerged within the liberal, rights-based tradition (Schmidt 2014). Its chief focus concerns the rights of minority language speakers relative to their majority language-speaking counterparts, where the minority/majority distinction refers not only to numbers, but also to relative differences in status, prestige, influence, and power (May 2018). The minoritisation of languages is usually associated with wider histories of conquest and colonialism, in addition to the coercive drives for linguistic homogeneity that have been characteristic of the nation-building enterprises of recent centuries (Kymlicka 2001; May 2016). The field of language rights, therefore, is a direct response to these processes which cause language shifts and loss, resulting in 'hierarchies of prestige', as Liddicoat (2013) puts it.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, language rights theorists who defend minority language rights via arguments for a multilingual public sphere do so largely on the basis of the link between a minority group's language and its collective cultural identity. Minority languages, it is argued, should be granted e.g. equal treatment by public institutions or official status, because of their indispensable contribution to liberal values such as autonomy (Kymlicka 1989; 1995) or the 'fair opportunity for self-determination' (Patten 2014; 2019). These arguments, in turn, are driven by an underlying commitment to the constitutive view of language, according to which 'language constitutes who I am, that my language and my identity are inextricably intertwined' (De Schutter 2007: 8). The idea here is that languages are inextricably linked to their speakers' personal identities, and so failing to grant minority languages public recognition tends to undermine the speakers' dignity, self-esteem, or autonomy.

Recall that linguistic justice arguments such as the above are informed by their overlapping ancestor: liberal nationalism; specifically, its conception of national culture. In its various guises, liberal nationalism claims that national culture (which is partly defined in terms of language), is both compatible with liberalism, and a pre-requisite for attaining key liberal values such as autonomy or justice. Kymlicka (1995) and Tamir (1993), for instance, argue that cultures provide a 'context of choice' by delineating meaningful life choices for citizens, while Miller (1995) argues that national culture is a prerequisite of the social cohesion that is necessary to attaining social justice. These arguments, in turn, fed into the language rights

discourse via the works of Kymlicka (1989, 1995) whose emphasis on language as a significant constituent societal [i.e. minority national] culture gave these autonomy and dignity-based arguments new expressions in the language rights domain. Hence the liberal nationalist conception of culture was carried forward into the linguistic justice discourse in the form of the constitutive view of language.

Such views, however, have not been received without criticism, and two immediate questions that arise are: first, just how inextricable is the connection between language and culture? Second, what, more specifically, *grounds* a people's attachment to their culture, thereby making it constitutive in the first place? These questions are of no minor relevance, since if language's constitutive function is to be used as a basis for justifying minority language rights, then there had better be a sound justification in its favour. Relatedly, if an attachment to a healthy national / societal culture is said to be central to a person's self-esteem and dignity, there had better be a reasonable degree of clarity as to how this is so. As we saw in Chapter 1, however, there is insufficient clarity among liberal nationalists regarding these two questions. While they affirm that people do typically have a strong attachment to their culture, there is no clarity as to how or why this is so, other than the fact that it is a part of the human psychology (Kymlicka 1995: 90), a source of meaning (Tamir 1993: 90), or part of common sense (Miller 1993: 4).

An analogous unclarity is found in the language rights literature regarding the link between language and cultural identity. Stephen May, for instance, claims that although there is no *inevitable* correspondence between language and identity, real-world evidence suggests that such a correspondence often does exist: otherwise, how can we explain e.g. students' martyrdom for the right to establish Bengali as the national language of East Pakistan in 1952? (May 2015: 137). Van Parijs, meanwhile, simply claims that any respect owed to languages is derivative of a prior respect owed to individuals 'who happen to have that language as an important component of their collective identity' (2011: 146). However, despite May's nuanced treatment of sociolinguistic evidence for the attachment of many cultural groups to their languages, and Van Parijs' use of this attachment as a basis for justifying his 'parity of esteem' principle (i.e. equal respect for languages with which people identify), there is no explanation as to what *grounds* these attachments.

Indeed, the relative lack of clarity surrounding the answers to these questions has led to a number of recent articles calling for a departure from identity-based arguments in favour of arguments which emphasise the instrumental advantages associated with multilingualism. Aviad Rubin (2017), for instance, objects to the extensive use that political theorists have made of identity-based arguments for the justification of minority language rights. He claims

that the glaring disconnect that exists between such normative work on language policy and planning, and the actual language policies enforced in nation states, is testament to their failure to achieve any tangible real-world impact. Rather than emphasising the link between a minority group's language and its collective identity, he concludes, scholars and activists would do better to draw on justifications which appeal to the instrumental advantages of language.

There is no consensus among the likes of Kymlicka, Tamir, nor indeed other liberal political theorists who defend the cultural rights of national minorities (such as jurisdiction over their own land and language, a degree of national self-determination, and even state subsidisation of some cultural traditions) as to what, exactly, the national / societal culture – which is said to be inextricably connected to individuals' autonomy, dignity, and self-esteem – actually is. As I shall argue, this is problematic because it leaves them susceptible to modernism and constructivism-inspired charges of the unwarranted prioritising of national culture (Perry 2014), essentialising culture (Patten 2011, 2014; Moore 2020), and democratic deficit (Gerson & Rubin 2015).

In this chapter I argue that linguistic relativity helps to overcome such charges, since it highlights the necessary clustering of language, culture, and history. *Pace* nationalist scholar Anthony Smith (1998)'s ethnosymbolism approach, which successfully established that the 'imagined' and 'modernity-induced' character of national identity cannot be understood in isolation from the political exploitation of 'real' and historically-grounded ethnic symbols, values, and traditions, I shall argue that Gerson & Rubin (*inter alia*)'s insistence that the national / cultural identity which liberal nationalists appeal to is not 'tacit' or 'arbitrary'; rather, it is grounded in an historical past. As David Miller puts it: although national identity has many imagined aspects, and is subject to continual revision and reshaping, it is also partly based on a real (if often selective) historical past: 'it is an identity that embodies historical continuity. Nations stretch backwards into the past' (1995: 23).

Articulating the relevance of linguistic relativity will result in the following advantages. First, it provides a rational justification for the constitutive view of language by specifying the mechanism whereby language and culture are intertwined; as well as how they exert much influence on thought and personal identity. Second, it enables us to see why language should be weighted more heavily than other identity goods in the normative literature on the institutionalisation of cultural and national identity. Finally, it explains how language, culture, and history are interconnected. Acknowledging this clustering of cultural identity constituents goes a significant way towards deflating constructivist and modernist-inspired objections to the legitimacy of the institutionalisation of national culture. For the 'imagined', 'invented', and

'opaque' status that they assign to national culture is a misleadingly incomplete characterisation of it.

This chapter will be structured as follows. §1 and §2 introduce three recurrent types of criticism of the liberal nationalism view. The first is an objection to the unwarranted prioritising of national culture; the second is an objection from alienation and the deliberative democratic deficit caused by the institutionalisation of national culture; the third concerns the charge of 'essentialising' cultural identity. §3 explains how linguistic relativity highlights the necessary clustering of language, culture, and history, thereby consolidating the link between language, culture, and personal identity; and providing a justification for the constitutive view of language. §4 uses these considerations to reply to the objections outlined in §1-2. §5 considers additional objections to the use of linguistic relativity as an explanatory link. I conclude that liberal nationalists are right to emphasise language and history as significant constituents of national culture, and that their arguments for the institutionalisation of that culture are not undermined by the standard objections outlined. The significant spin-off of this for the language rights literature is that identity-based arguments for a multilingual public sphere are much more relevant and appropriate than Rubin (2017) and others claim; though this is on the condition that they can be substantiated by linguistic relativity.

§1. Two critiques: the unwarranted prioritising of national culture and democratic deficit

Recall that Kymlicka's 'context of choice' argument states that, since culture delineates people's range of life choices and 'makes them meaningful to us' (Kymlicka 1995: 83), an attachment to a healthy culture is therefore a precondition of personal autonomy, which itself requires an intelligible but limited range of choices. This argument is part of Kymlicka's justification for the group-differentiated rights of national minorities: it illustrates how the realisation of autonomy – which is central to liberalism – hinges on a person's access to the culture which they happen to have been inducted into. In his 'Autonomy, Culture, and Nationality' (2014), however, Tomer Perry objects to Kymlicka's notion of societal culture, claiming that its role in providing individuals with 'contexts of choice' can just as easily be fulfilled by other 'comprehensive cultures' which have nothing to do with nationality.

The bottom line of Perry's objection is that the contexts of choice which Kymlicka claims are preconditions of autonomy do not actually need to be societal cultures, as defined by Kymlicka in the linguistic, historical, and territorial sense. Rather, individuals are typically

‘members of different cultural groups which provide different contexts for different choices as well as meaningful forms of identification’ (2014: 6). Indeed, other, non-national ‘comprehensive cultures’ can be just as, if not more, prominent or influential for their members as national cultures: personal identities are robustly plural. Indeed, ‘There are various [non-national] groups and collective identities who embody a set of values and norms which prescribe behavior over the full range of human activities’ (Perry 2014: 44).

The conclusion to be drawn here is that there seems to be no special justification to be made for the political recognition of (national) cultural minorities and their respective language rights on the basis of their contribution to autonomy. This is because the same line of reasoning found in the ‘context of choice’ argument would also have to apply to an indefinite number of other non-national ‘comprehensive cultures’ which often transcend national boundaries, such as LGBTQ groups, religions, or sports fan bases – which often provide equally meaningful ‘contexts of choice’ for their members. There is no reason then, Perry concludes, to prioritise societal cultures over other ‘comprehensive cultures’ as Kymlicka does: liberal nationalists ‘privilege national cultures and identities in an unwarranted manner’ (Perry 2014: 31).²⁴

Crucially, what drives Perry to deny that national identities are prior to, or should be assigned greater weight than other non-national forms of identity is his modernism-inspired claim that ‘national identities are not something we “happen to have”’ (2014: 3). Rather, they are products of nation-building enterprises which – often coercively – advance and impose national culture and identity through e.g. educational curriculum reforms and monolingual policies – often at the expense of competing identities and cultures. The result of this is that the strong element of cultural homogeneity and unity that Kymlicka attributes to societal cultures is not ‘genuine’ (Perry 2014: 37). Thus he concludes that ‘Kymlicka’s definition of societal culture is either implausible, on the terms of his own theory, or incoherent’ (2014 :7).

What, then, is Perry’s reason for denying that national culture is anything other than a spin-off of nation-building enterprises, and concluding that it should therefore not be assigned greater weight than other types of culture? His discord relates to the ‘ideosyncratic’ [idiosyncratic?] way in which Kymlicka defines nations and cultures, claiming that he diverges from the relevant literature on national identity by using these two terms as

²⁴ A similar objection can be found in Vincent (1995), who argues that, even if national cultures do constitute a part of personal identity, there is no reason why they should deserve respect or, *a fortiori*, political recognition over and above other constituents of identity. He writes:

‘People may have neuroses, recurring odd fantasies, unpleasant or harmless habits, which may have been communally derived (even from a national culture or historical tradition – like duelling, cannibalism, genital mutilation, racial contempt or infanticide), but surely we would not automatically render them respect simply because they constitute part of an autonomous person?’ (Vincent 1995: 290)

synonyms. This, he claims, overlooks the fact that nations are not 'merely cultures' and indeed the culture that Kymlicka attributes to them is largely created / fabricated (rather than being already given) as part of a group's aspiration for political autonomy. He writes in this connection:

'The existence of shared cultural characteristics is therefore the result of intentional and often coercive actions [...], partially justified in the name of the alleged cultural unity. But the pursuit of policies aiming to achieve cultural unity in the face of resistance is a clear sign that such unity is absent. It is also a reason to doubt its genuineness where it appears to exist' (Perry 2014: 37).

The idea here, then, is that basing national identity on objective features such as a shared language or culture is misguided. Cultural and linguistic homogeneity (where they exist) within nations are the result of nation-building enterprises occurring as a result of modernisation and mass industrialisation, rather than bottom-up ethno-cultural factors. To properly evaluate this view, however, it is important to first summarise the modernist account of national identity formation, according to which, as Ernest Gellner hyperbolically puts it, nationalism 'invents nations where they do not exist' (Gellner 1964: 168). On this account, national identity is simply a by-product of modernity; namely the transformation of agrarian into industrial society; rather than – as Anthony Smith puts it – the 'universalisation of a pre-existing political and social norm' (Smith 1983: 280-2).

Indeed, it is now consensually agreed by most nationalism scholars that national identities are largely products of modernisation, arising from industrial developments such as print capitalism and standardised education. Developments such as the standardisation of education and the proliferation of the printing press played crucial roles in the creation of a national consciousness by assimilating many regional dialects into a standardised national language, and disseminating narratives – thereby enabling co-nationals to envisage themselves as part of a shared cultural-linguistic community.

Ernest Gellner's account of the origins of nationalism, for instance, states that, prior to the industrial revolution, agrarian polities or empires did not need nationalism, since there was no need for the elites and peasants to share a sense of a common culture to function harmoniously. However, ever-increasing industrialisation went hand-in-hand with an ever-increasing need for a national culture. The increased social and geographical mobility and individualism that the novel modes of production brought about detached many people from their otherwise default familial and corporate ties. As such, being inducted into a sense of sharing a common culture was necessary for social cohesion, insofar as it mitigated the social unrest that industrialisation created. Developments such as the

standardisation of regional dialects into a unified 'national' language via e.g. standardised education and the printing press helped to facilitate this.

On the modernist view, then, national identities arose from the need (arising from industrialisation) for a shared culture to sustain the modern demands of increasingly semantic work, and social order. National identities are not 'natural' or given; rather, they are the result of nationalism movements: 'imposition of a high culture on society, where previously low cultures had taken up the lives of the majority, and in some cases the totality, of the population' (Gellner 1983: 57).

This modernist account of national identity, then, is what provides the chief ammunition for the main objection that Perry advances concerning the unwarranted prioritising of national culture. It lends credence to the notion that national identity is mainly imagined, not 'genuine', and lacking in historical legitimacy. Basing it on language, culture, and shared history as liberal nationalists do is misguided: not everyone considers these features to be central to their national identity; and those who do only do so because it has been imposed on them from above, so to speak.

§1.1 Democratic Deficit Caused by the Institutionalisation of National Culture

The motivation behind Gerson and Rubin (2015)'s critique concerning democratic deficit echoes that of Perry (2014). In a similar manner, they draw on the works of constructivist nationalism scholars such as Anderson (1991), Gellner (1983) and Hobsbawm (1990) who view national identity as a modern invention whereby people merely *imagine* themselves to be part of a nation with its own traditions and language extending back through history. Gerson and Rubin concede that theorists such as Kymlicka and Miller—who make extensive use of the notion of national culture—are overtly aware of these constructivist interpretations in their works. However, by acknowledging them, they manage to 'absolve themselves from the charge of setting up a fictional entity as an objective reality... [by claiming that their] national cultures are openly imagined and invented' (2015: 201). Nonetheless, they still assign an unwarranted weight to objective features such as language and history.

The main critique that Gerson and Rubin advance against this background is this. Given their support for pluralism and cultural heterogeneity, it is somewhat unbecoming and even ironic that the likes of Kymlicka and Miller support the prioritisation of one, or a few, cultures by the state. Drawing on Bauman (1997) and Benhabib (2002), they further add

that the institutionalisation of one or a few cultures by the state apparatus also 'favours a single generation's perception of its national culture over the choices of subsequent generations of the same nation' (1995: 202). This nation-building exercise actually results in a relative power imbalance, as well as unfair discrimination between the entitlements of those who belong to the state's national culture, and those who do not. There is no place for this, they claim, in a liberal democracy which purports to uphold egalitarian values.

Such nation building examples occur despite the fact that the constructivists' works have established that 'nationality has no objective core' (2015: 203). That is to say, national identity's intangible, invented, and imagined character makes it a concept with extremely flexible boundaries, lacking in any 'final, objective definitions' (ibid). Although the cultural nationalists in question (mainly Kymlicka, Tamir, Miller) believe that this is an advantage because it allows for much internal fluidity, variation, toleration, and choice within cultural boundaries, Gerson and Rubin effectively object that this is a cop-out. They write:

'national culture is characterised not by debate, but by its absence. This absence has to do with that dynamic, loose attribute of national culture that cultural nationalists underscore – its lack of final, objective definitions. Deliberation, like rational analysis, exposes the apparently self-evident to external view. Analysis and deliberation are verbal. They depend on signs whose meaning is fixed and accessible to all. National culture relies on being partially opaque to such processes.' (2015: 203).

The problem, then, is that this supposedly tacit and somewhat arbitrary characterisation of national culture makes it immune to scrutiny, deliberation, and indeed legitimate election. Here we have a fundamental conflict between liberalism's emphasis on democracy (one of whose central features is public deliberation), and the supposed national culture's tacit and undebatable character, to which members of the nation are supposed to implicitly consent. Rather than being compatible with liberalism in virtue of its flexibility and inclusivity, then, national culture's inability to be debated because of its elusive nature creates serious tension for those who claim that its institutionalisation chimes with liberalism.

It can be seen, then, that although Perry and Gerson & Rubin differ with respect to which particular problematic consequences of liberal nationalists' views of culture they emphasise, their objections are nonetheless motivated by the same type of concern. That is: that the national / societal culture which theorists such as Kymlicka, Tamir, and Miller draw on is not genuine, but rather invented and problematically intangible. They each draw on the work of constructivist nationalism scholars (principally Anderson and Gellner) to underline the point that national culture / the idea of nationality is a recent invention

rather than something 'given'. From here, they advance different arguments which include the central premise that the institutionalisation of one or a few national cultures is unwarranted, not least since such national cultures are 'subjective' and the result of top-down coercive efforts to achieve cultural unity and linguistic homogeneity via the state, rather than natural or pre-existing phenomena based on objective features such as language or historical interpretation.

§1.2 The Relevance of the Ethnosymbolist Paradigm

A thorough reply to this critique requires a detailed consideration of the nature and relevance of linguistic relativity, which will be examined in §3. However, it is also worth noting in the meantime that the force of these two critiques can also be diminished somewhat by a consideration of the decisive work of historian Anthony D. Smith concerning the ethnosymbolism explanatory paradigm. Ethnosymbolism has it that the 'imagined' and 'modernity-induced' character of national identity cannot be understood in isolation from the political exploitation of 'real' and historically grounded ethnic symbols, values, and traditions (Smith 1998). Although the ideology of nationalism is a modern development, the concept of a nation which is inextricable from nationalisms can in fact be 'traced back to pre-modern ethnic communities' (Smith 1989: 340).

Take English national identity, for instance, which is inescapably bound up with institutions and traditions which long predate the existence of a modern British state. The common law tradition of England and Wales, for instance, - which is part of the English national identity in particular - has been a major contributing factor to the development of modern British Euroscepticism (Smith 2006). English common law is a bottom-up system, embodying a vast history of real-life disputes and remedies. Judicial precedents are created on a case-by-case basis; and the *ratio decidendi* - the reason behind the decision - becomes legally binding (or persuasive, depending on the court in which it was formulated) on future cases. It is the sum total of such laws which reflect real-world disputes that constitutes the common law.

The fact that each law reflects a just remedy for a just grievance, arising out of real-life disputes, is what makes the common law system distinctively bottom-up. It has continued to arise directly out of society at least since the end of the 9th century, when Alfred the Great compiled pre-existing English laws into a codified document. This contrasts sharply with the Roman law tradition which characterises EU legislation: it is top-down in that it is comprised of abstract principles to be applied to legal cases in the future. The binding nature of EU law on British courts is a source of tension in that it is seen as a

manifestation of the European Commission's encroachment on Britain's 'political and possibly, cultural spheres' (Smith 2006: 435). Crucially, however, the English common law long predates modernity – but yet it has been widely 'regarded as one of the distinctive hallmarks of Englishness and as an integral part of English political culture' (Smith 2006: 440) since the 13th century, up to the present day. Moreover, it is partly this that explains Eurosceptics' resistance to the identity of a supranational organization such as the EU being imposed on the UK, thereby subsuming national loyalties and identities (ibid: 434).

If it were true that national identity is an exclusively modern invention with 'no objective core', as Gerson & Rubin (2015: 203) put it, and as Perry (2014) and others in the same vein assume, then it would be impossible to explain English Euroscepticism partly in terms of the historically embedded commitment to the common law tradition, as Smith does. But Smith's ethno-symbolism approach established that there usually *is* an objective core to national identities in addition to their invented and subjective aspects. This approach decisively challenged the 'dominant modernist paradigm of Eric Hobsbawm, [and] Ernest Gellner' (Kaufmann 2018: 237), thereby sparking a new consensus among nationalism scholars that national identity is based on objective as well as subjective factors.

The import of this for the objections by Gerson & Rubin and Perry which state that institutionalising national culture at the expense of other cultures is unwarranted – either because it causes a democratic deficit, or because it should not be granted greater weight than other, non-national cultures, is this. The carpet can be pulled from underneath them, so to speak, once it is realised that they hinge on an unreformed and discredited modernist and constructivist paradigm which alleges that national identity is merely invented, and that it lacks an any noteworthy objective dimension. For these modernist and constructivist paradigms are no longer tenable in their unreformed guises, as the works of Anthony Smith established.

§2. The Charge of Essentialism

A third standard critique of liberal nationalism's treatment of culture is that basing culture on objective features such as language and collective history is to 'essentialise' cultural groups (see Appiah 2005; Phillips 2010; Patten 2011, 2014; Moore 2020). The charge of essentialism, as Margaret Moore puts it, is that using the concept of culture to refer to a group is problematic because 'it suggests that the group is determinate, bounded, and

homogenous' (Moore 2020: 189)²⁵, when in fact it is not. In a similar vein, Patten writes that 'all of the usual features that are taken to define culture run foul of the problems of internal variation and external overlap: The relevant features are not shared by all and only the members of the [cultural] groups' (Patten 2011: 736).

The idea here is that cultures are invariably heterogeneous – indeed to such an extent that attempting to define them in terms of 'essential' features such as shared language, beliefs or history, is both erroneous and misguided. One can easily imagine, for instance, two plumbers living in Britain and France, who probably have more in common with each other than with e.g. an Attorney General from their own nation. Given the likely extent of the cultural divergence between the plumbers and the Attorney Generals, then, to attribute some homogeneous culture to each of them based on the language or history that they share with their respective compatriots would seem unfounded, and a case of essentialising each culture.

Moreover, this charge of essentialising is not only aimed at language and history; it is also aimed at behavioural conventions among cultural groups. Patten extends this problem to the notion of a shared set of cultural norms: for each practice and behavioural norm, 'there will be several publically established meanings that people enact in their behavior' (Patten 2011: 737). This is problematic because either way, the extent of the disagreement among such groups about the relevant meanings shows that 'the contours of shared cultures are going to look nothing like the contours of the groups that are typically thought of as cultures' (ibid.), or even more problematically: the divergent understandings are such that we are left with no basis for distinguishing different cultures. The problem that such critiques highlight is that accounting for cultures in terms of specific beliefs, values, and meanings does not manage to 'track the cultural differences that are commonly supposed to exist' (ibid.) because of the sheer extent of the differences within, and overlap across cultural groups.

Recall that Kymlicka's definition of societal culture is an 'intergenerational community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language and history' (Kymlicka 1995: 18). The 'essentialising' objection poses a *prima facie* challenge to it – and indeed the definitions of other liberal nationalists who draw on similar objective features – because of the following problem. If it were true that cultures can be

²⁵ Although Miller's (1995) concept of national culture is presented in an explicitly non-essentialist manner by using a family resemblance definition, Moore argues that, taken by itself, this nonetheless falls prey to the two problems of individuation and persistence. These are, respectively: the failure to provide a mechanism for distinguishing between different cultures; and the failure to explain the persistence of cultures over time in the face of significant changes. In other words, the loose and fluid nature of a family resemblance definition makes it difficult to pin down a proper understanding of different cultures which isn't problematically elusive.

defined in terms of e.g. shared language and history, then how can we account for members of those cultures who have no historical awareness, or don't view their language as a significant distinguishing mark of their culture? Moreover, given that there is often a high degree of internal variation and external overlap within and across cultures, it seems perfectly plausible to suppose that a British man and a Frenchman who are plumbers can have more in common with each other than with their respective compatriots. It would appear, then, that the liberal nationalists' definitions of culture -insofar as they appeal to the said objective features – don't quite manage to pick out the right distinguishing marks.

What these objections highlight is that the relative lack of clarity among liberal nationalists as to why language and history should be weighted so significantly in their definitions of culture leaves them vulnerable to a myriad of counterexamples and problematic consequences. In addition to pointing out the relevance of the ethno-symbolist approach, then, which goes some way towards explaining why history should be granted significant weight, the remainder of the paper will focus on linguistic relativity. Explaining its relevance for both the liberal nationalists' definitions of culture, as well as the constitutive view of language, will provide a stronger basis for replying to the objections explored in this section. The problematic consequences of liberal nationalists' definition of culture put forward by the likes of Perry, Gerson and Rubin will thus lose much more of their relevance.

§3. The implications of Linguistic Relativity for the Liberal Nationalist View of Culture

Linguistic relativity has significant implications for the liberal nationalists' view of culture. Recall that liberal nationalists' definitions of culture include objective features such as language and history, in addition to subjective dimensions such as imagining themselves as part of a wider national community which 'embodies historical community' (Miller 1995: 22). This characterisation which draws on some objective features is not universally accepted, as indeed the criticisms noted in the preceding section illustrate. However, linguistic relativity, as we shall see, emphasises and consolidates the objective dimension to national identities.

Linguistic relativity highlights the necessary clustering of language, culture, and history, such that these can no longer be detached from one another. Recall Herder's characterisation of linguistic relativity in terms of (1) the essential dependence of thought on language; and (2) linguistic meaning deriving from use. His justification is that thoughts are articulated through concepts, and concepts / word meanings are determined by word usages, both historic and present. Given that different linguistic communities have different uses for words (deriving from different cultural norms), those historically accumulated cultural differences will be

embedded in their languages. On the basis of these considerations, we are now in a position to make the following inference. Words and expressions refer to a cultural-linguistic community's various historically accumulated concepts, and those concepts are intertwined with that community's cultural norms. We think through concepts; and so our thoughts, which are comprised of such concepts, are also intertwined with our cultural-linguistic community's cultural norms.

The upshot of this is twofold. First, it shows that – in cases where a national / societal culture has a shared language – their language, culture, and history cannot be detached from one another. This is because language embeds concepts that mirror the speakers' culture; and those concepts have been accumulated through the course of history. As such, the language – which embeds the sum total of such concepts – is the vehicle which mirrors the linguistic community's culture, both historic and present. Hence the necessary clustering of language, culture, and history. Secondly, this results in a more de-individualised conception of personal identity. It is uncontroversial that the main feature of personal identity is thought. Since the concepts through which people think are interwoven with their linguistic community's cultural particularities, their thoughts are also interwoven with those cultural particularities. This consolidates the link between culture and personal identity, thereby justifying the constitutive view of language.

What, then, are the implications here for liberal nationalism? First, defining culture partly in terms of the objective features of shared language and history is appropriate, since language, according to linguistic relativity, is a repository of its speakers' history and culture. Second, the liberal nationalists' emphasis on the indispensable contribution of national culture to personal identity; and the 'politics of recognition'-inspired conclusions they draw from this to support the institutionalisation of national / societal culture is not 'unwarranted', as e.g. Perry (2014) and Gerson & Rubin (2015) have argued. Rather, the clustering of language, culture, and history, highlighted by the impact of language (and by extension culture) on thought and personal identity, collectively establish that national culture – particularly where language figures centrally in its definition – should be assigned greater weight than other, non-national constituents of culture.

§4. A Reply from Linguistic Relativity to the Three Charges of Unwarranted Prioritisation of National Culture; Imaginary National Identity; and Essentialising

Recall Perry (2014)'s objection, which is that Kymlicka and other liberal nationalists prioritise national culture in an unwarranted manner. This is because, first, there are other

comprehensive cultures such as football fan bases and LGBTQ+ (and therefore why assign more weight to language or history?) which have equally important identity-formation functions. Second, national identities are actually the result of nation-building enterprises which coercively enforce cultural homogenisation measures at the expense of other competing cultures. Perry concludes that there is no legitimate reason to prioritise national cultures over other comprehensive cultures, because (1) their centrality to people's personal identities is debatable; and (2) why should an invented, imagined identity take precedence over other ones?

Perry commits the fallacies of indifference / inference across categories / faulty generalization. The fundamental flaw in his argument relates to the assumption that language and history can be assigned the same weight as other attributes which people take to define their cultural identities. Upon scrutiny, this assumption turns out to be erroneous, particularly once the relevance of linguistic relativity is taken into consideration. As we have seen, it is implicit in linguistic relativity that 'language [...] is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history' (Thiong'o 1986: 15).

The empirical studies and the public, social view of linguistic meaning that e.g. Everette's and Wittgenstein's works illustrate show that language embeds its speakers' cultural norms, beliefs, outlooks, and the conceptual resources which represent these attributes become compressed into the language through the course of history. Linguistic relativity states that different languages have different conceptual resources, and this influences the speakers' thoughts / beliefs accordingly. It follows from this that language anchors a people's cultural continuity: it is the golden thread which explains the clustering of language, culture, and history.

The direct reply to the objection from the unwarranted prioritisation of national culture, then, is this. It is simply not true that the language and history which liberal nationalists appeal to is equally relevant to a people's cultural identity as other cultural attributes which have no relation to nationality. Language (and the history it embeds) is *prior* to other culturally-relevant attributes because people necessarily think through its medium in line with the historical lineage it embeds; and this is the prior context within which they form other beliefs and interests (which they conceptualise through the medium of that language).

Gerson and Rubin (2015), recall, claim that the cultural identity which Kymlicka and other liberal nationalists appeal to is formulated in a way that is, *prima facie*, somewhat arbitrary and even inconsistent. It seems strange that they accept the seminal works of the modernist and constructivist nationalism scholars according to which national identity is a recent

invention, stemming from the mass industrialisation of European societies, as well as the ideal of national self-determination which gained currency after the French Revolution.

Rather than being a pre-existing phenomenon 'stretching back into time immemorial', it was created by e.g. assimilation of regional vernaculars into a standardised language, and propagated through educational curricula reforms, the proliferation of the printing press, and increased social and geographical mobility. It gave rise to what Benedict Anderson (1991) terms 'imagined communities', where co-nationals envisage themselves as belonging to a national community despite never having met most of their compatriots nor knowing anything about them. Gerson and Rubin object that, given that liberal nationalists accept this, then one immediately wonders: why do they prioritise language and culture in the way that they do, thereby implying an objective, homogenous definition of national culture?

There is also an unwarranted assumption in Gerson & Rubin's argument. That is that the national culture that they appeal to is not just imagined, but also *imaginary*. The erroneous nature of this conflation and the false consequences that emerge from it can be seen clearly when one considers their argument in light of linguistic relativity. If language anchors a people's historical lineage, then even if it is mainly modernisation that explains the emergence of a more explicit awareness of cultural and linguistic unity and homogeneity, this does not emerge from within a vacuum.

Moreover, it is not even true that national culture emerged no later than the French Revolution as though it appeared *ex nihilo*. As the work of Smith has decisively established: the 'imagined' and 'modernity-induced' character of national identity cannot be understood in isolation from the political exploitation of 'real' and historically grounded ethnic symbols, values, and traditions. Rather, it is more often than not based on pre-existing national sensibilities which track genuine cultural particularities. It is also worth emphasising that in the case of many societal cultures to whom principles of linguistic justice apply, their drives for political recognition are actually informed by a *resistance* to the assimilation imposed by modern nation-state building. This is because their own indigenous identities existed prior to, and are not constituted by the state building measures in question: to the contrary, they have been excluded by it. Indeed, this is a large part of the motivation behind their respective drives for cultural recognition: we need cultural-linguistic rights regimes for them precisely because they have not been tied to these modernist processes.²⁶²⁷

To summarise the unwarranted nature of this assumption, then: there is a sense in which Gerson and Rubin have committed the genetic fallacy. That is the supposition that by

²⁶ I am grateful to Huw Williams for raising this concern.

²⁷ See J.R. Jones (1966) for an account of this difficulty in relation to the condition of the Welsh.

showing how a belief originated, one has somehow resultantly shown that it is thereby invalidated. Clearly, this does not follow, for it is logically equivalent to e.g. the claim that 'your belief that Chelsea will win the premiership is based on superstition; therefore, Chelsea won't win the premiership'. A glaring *non-sequitur* if there ever was one.

The third objection concerns essentialising. This charge, levelled at liberal nationalists, is that there is so much internal variation and external overlap within and across national / societal cultures that claiming as liberal nationalists do that they tend to be based on a shared language or history is simply a case of essentialising. What about members of such cultures who don't view their language or history as relevant? Moreover, the sheer variation in what members view as relevant to their identity, and in their behavioural conventions, are so heterogeneous, and overlap so much with other cultures, that claiming that they are based on such straightforwardly objective attributes as language or history would be to essentialise them.

However, a consideration of linguistic relativity and its consequences reveals that, just because not everyone sees themselves as being largely defined by e.g. their language and history, it doesn't follow they are right about it. To see how this is so, we need to briefly revisit the consequences of linguistic relativity. Linguistic relativity has it that the historically-accumulated and communally-derived conceptual resources embedded in a language influence the speakers' thoughts in line with them. This means that the most fundamental and prior part of people's personal identities – their thoughts – are also permeated with those cultural particularities, since they think through the concepts embedded in their language. Again, this provides the prior context within which people develop other beliefs and practices which they view as relevant to their cultural identity. However, these are secondary in comparison with language (and the historical lineage it embeds).

Kymlicka's solution appears to be right, then, as long as it is substantiated by linguistic relativity in the way articulated above. That is the solution that defining national / societal cultures in terms of such objective attributes as language allows for enough internal homogeneity while simultaneously granting external overlap and internal variation with respect to an indeterminate number of other factors. If it were true that language could be weighted equally with the other cultural attributes, then Kymlicka's solution would indeed run into the problem of essentialising, since there would be no reason to view language as an anchor which somehow grounds cultures which otherwise vastly overlap with each other. In such a situation, language would only be one among an indeterminately large disjunction of other factors; and its prioritisation would indeed be arbitrary to the extent that it would assign

an unwarranted 'essence' to the group members – many of whom do not view language as central or even relevant.

However, linguistic relativity, as I have argued, can be used as a rational foundation for justifying Kymlicka and other liberal nationalists' definition of culture in terms of objective features such as language and historical interpretation. For it illustrates that language is prior to the other attributes usually taken to be relevant to identity and culture. It also illustrates the fact that historically accumulated concepts, distinctions, turns of phrase and cultural outlooks etc. are embedded in language; thereby showing that language, culture and history are not detachable from one another as singular possible but not central constituents of culture.

§4.1. Linguistic Relativity's Implications for Patten's View of Culture

Alan Patten's (2011; 2014) 'social lineage' account of culture is more all-encompassing and inclusive than that of Kymlicka; and it was formulated as a response to the foregoing charge of essentialising. Rather than explicitly basing culture on e.g. shared language, beliefs, or sustained territorial occupation, he proposes a 'non-essentialist' view which stresses social lineage and intergenerational socialisation. In his *Equal Recognition* (2014), for instance, he claims that culture is constituted by 'an unbroken chain of intergenerational transmission' (Patten 2014: 50) in the sense that 'one generation of a culture is controlling the socialization of a new generation or group of newcomers', subjecting those newcomers to a common formative context (ibid.). This does not require a distinctive language or any particular set of beliefs or practices; rather, it simply requires a traceable lineage of intergenerational cultural continuity, brought about by being socialised within a formative institutional framework such as educational, legal, institutional, or family structures.

Patten's account is certainly advantageous insofar as it acknowledges the diverse range of processes that can contribute to the formative frameworks which safeguard the continued existence of cultures, while simultaneously avoiding the charge of essentialising.

Nonetheless, a consideration of linguistic relativity does cast doubt on just how relevant its *raison d'être* – namely avoiding essentialism while nonetheless remaining informative – really is. For, as mentioned, the implications of linguistic relativity reveal that the prioritisation of language over other cultural attributes does not actually result in the error of 'essentialising'. While it may be true that some members of cultures who do share a distinctive language do not see that language as central to their identity, it does not follow that they are right about it. The fact is that linguistic relativity shows that language (which

embeds culture and historical lineage) influences people's thought processes in line with their linguistic community's cultural particularities; and it cannot be denied that this is central to their identity because thought is the main feature of personal identity.

It might be objected that there are many national cultures where language is not in fact central to their identity: for instance, cultures whose main language is a *lingua franca*. Take America or Australia, for instance, whose main *de facto* official language is English; yet, it would be absurd to suggest that they therefore share the same cultural identity simply by virtue of speaking English. Indeed, the fact that English is the dominant language across the entire Anglosphere would seem to suggest that English is hardly relevant at all to the national identities in question. From this, it might be concluded that Patten is right to suppose that basing a definition of culture on, say, language is unrealistic and an instance of essentialising.

There are two replies to be made here. The first concerns the individuation of languages. As we saw in Chapter 2, it is often the case that what is formally recognised as a single language is in fact an umbrella category for a constellation of different speech varieties which vary in their degrees of mutual [un]intelligibility. For instance, Arabic is formally recognised as a single language; yet such is the degree of cross-regional variation across Arabic dialects that they are often mutually unintelligible²⁸. Thus the categorisation of different speech varieties into either dialects or distinctive formally recognised languages is often arbitrary and based on political rather than linguistic criteria. It is somewhat misleading, therefore, to attribute outright linguistic homogeneity across the Anglosphere: this overlooks the fact that English has been repeatedly remoulded and domesticated across different cultural contexts into several different culture-specific speech varieties.

The second, related, reply is that the family resemblance definition (which, recall, involves characterising a concept in terms of several optional criteria, only a weighted number of which need to be satisfied to identify the target phenomenon, and these can vary case-by-case) enables us to acknowledge that, like most other concepts, the concept of national culture does not have sharp boundaries. Thus although language is part of every national culture, its relevance will be weighted differently across different nations, according to whether the language is e.g. indigenous, culture-specific, or a *lingua franca*. As mentioned above, *linguae francae* are relevant to the extent that they have been domesticated so as to partly embody the host nation's culture, but the relevance can nonetheless be somewhat

²⁸ Conversely, languages such as Hindi and Urdu are formally recognised as distinct languages, despite being mutually comprehensible and sharing more similarities than certain dialects of other, formally recognised languages such as Arabic.

limited, due to varying degrees of culture-specificity and historical rootedness. Icelandic or Welsh, for instance, are clearly more relevant to the national cultures of Iceland and Wales than Australian English is to the Australian identity, simply because they are culture-specific, indigenous, and have been spoken as native languages for a vast length of time, thereby embodying a greater degree of cultural heritage.

Does this still leave us with the problem that Patten (2014) identified; namely that we are left with no basis for distinguishing different cultures? And *a fortiori*, does the family resemblance approach – which avoids the charge of essentialising - allow for so much flexibility and divergent understandings as to what features are most relevant to a national culture that we are simply taken back to square one, as it were, in being unable to account for the persistence of cultures over time, given that the relevant features are subject to change, as indeed Moore (2020) emphasises?

Not as such. Part of the significance of Wittgenstein's family resemblance definition is the way in which it shows that there is no *need* to define things in homogenous, generalised terms in most cases in the first place. The fact is that we can all point to examples of most concepts without being able to provide definitions; and the concept of national culture is no different in this respect (how else would Patten be able to claim that 'the contours of shared cultures are going to look nothing like the contours of the groups that are typically thought of as cultures' (2011: 737) before proposing his own definition, if he didn't already understand the concept?). Indeed, it is against the background of this 'craving for generality' that Wittgenstein advanced the family resemblance model (1953: §66).

By way of clarification, then: what this chapter has thus far argued is that language needs to be taken much more seriously and assigned significant weight in accounts of cultural identity / national culture; though this is not for the sake of providing a rigid definition – not least since doing so is usually superfluous. Rather, it is for the sake of highlighting the necessary clustering of language, culture and history – as illustrated by linguistic relativity - in order to (1) consolidate the objective dimension to national identities; and (2) justify and clarify the nature and relevance of the constitutive view of language.

Patten's likely view of language ought to compel him to accept linguistic relativity as a logical consequence of it in any case. As we have seen in Chapters 2 and 3, linguistic relativity is a logical consequence of the public, social account of linguistic meaning. Patten must accept the view that linguistic meaning is public [and therefore linguistic relativity], because he approvingly cites Clifford Geertz (1973: 12), who writes that 'culture is public because meaning is'. Deferring to Geertz, Patten writes: 'Geertz draws on well-known accounts in the philosophy of language to argue that the meaning of words is settled publicly, by social

conventions, and not by agreement of private beliefs' (Patten 2011: 2). Moreover, Patten has written approvingly on Herder's (and others') linguistic nationalism (Patten 2010, 2006) and the constitutive functions of language - though, strictly speaking, he doesn't frame it in terms of linguistic relativity.

Acknowledging the fact of linguistic relativity, then, together with the fact that definitions are not usually exclusive or exhaustive in the first place, removes the problem of 'essentialising' which Patten's social lineage account consciously avoids. There is no such mistake as 'essentialising' committed by emphasising language as a major constituent of national culture, as Kymlicka and other liberal nationalists do. As linguistic relativity illustrates, language is usually central to cultural and personal identity; and where a given culture does not have a *strictly* distinctive language associated with it, this can be accounted for in terms of the family resemblance definition, which allows for differences in relative weightings and exceptions to the rule.

§5. Two Further Objections to the Use of Linguistic Relativity as an Explanatory Link

Since this chapter has advanced what may be viewed as unconventionally strong claims about the extent to which language carries its speakers' cultural heritage, it is worth considering some further objections which may constitute major obstacles to accepting this view. The first concerns multilingual nations: if language is supposed to be assigned such significant weight in liberal nationalists' accounts national culture, how would this work in nations whose cultural/political identities are not built around a single language, such as Switzerland, Serbia, and Montenegro, to name a few?²⁹ Take the Belgian cultural identity, for instance: over a half of Belgians are native Dutch speakers while over a third are native French speakers. Yet if language is central to the Belgian cultural identity, which language should take precedence? Since French and Dutch reflect different cultures on the linguistic relativity view, it would seem arbitrary, at the very least, to associate one but not the other with Belgian national culture.

The most straightforward answer to this objection is that, since Belgium is a multinational state territorially and ethno-linguistically divided into Flanders and Wallonia [bracketing out Brussels for present purposes], Belgian national culture is an umbrella category encompassing both the Dutch/Flemish and French/Walloon identities. This is not to suggest that the overarching Belgian identity is purely 'civic', given that Belgians share nearly two

²⁹ I am grateful to David Miller for raising this point.

centuries' worth of history and (somewhat lapsed) Catholic religious tradition, for instance. However, there is a strong sense in which Flanders and Wallonia remain two distinct nations marked by entrenched cultural-linguistic divides and growing support for Flemish separatism, as evidenced by the two Flemish nationalist parties N-VA and *Vlaams Belang* topping the polls in the 2019 election.

Linguistic relativity consolidates the case for classifying e.g. Flanders and Wallonia as two different nations with different national cultures; however, it does not deny that Belgian identity constitutes an overarching and overlapping nation-state culture. Although the Belgian nation-state culture may be less 'thick' than the Flemish and Walloon identities it encompasses, this is perfectly compatible with the fact that it may be viewed by many as an overarching superordinate identity category within a 'nested identity' system. For instance, although surveys indicate that ~30% of Flemish people view themselves as primarily or exclusively Flemish, only ~27% view themselves as primarily or exclusively Belgian (Brigevich 2016). Only ~6% and ~12% view themselves as *exclusively* Flemish or Belgian, respectively (ibid.). This suggests that most Flemish people – just to take one example – view themselves as both Flemish and Belgian within a nested identity structure, where the overarching category of Belgian identity is mediated through the underlying Flemish cultural-linguistic identity. Linguistic relativity does not deny the possibility or existence of nested identities; rather, it simply emphasises the salience and significance of language within such multiple-identity structures.

The second objection to using linguistic relativity as an explanatory link is the problem of overreach or overshoot. If it is conceded that linguistic relativity applies to some speech varieties that are classified as dialects of formally recognised languages (e.g. Australian English or Quebecois French), does this not open the flood gates to an indefinite number of finer-grained instances of it, such as the in-group slang or jargon used in football support bases or industry? That is to say: if linguistic relativity can be applied across an indefinite number of cultural groups which have no relation to nationality as such, then how is it supposed to consolidate the liberal nationalist notion of national culture, and their argument that its state promotion should be prioritised over other, non-national instances of culture?

Here, it must be emphasised that the degree to which national (or national minority) languages carry their speakers' culture dwarfs the degree to which the same may be true of the in-group slang or jargon of football fan bases or industry. Languages stretch back for centuries or millennia, and so the extent to which they embed their speakers' culture is disproportionately greater than the extent to which this may happen within football fan bases. Furthermore, the *range* of cultural heritage that language embeds is vastly more

comprehensive than that of interest groups whose connection with national identity is trivial at best. As Kymlicka puts it: national ['societal'] culture 'provides its members with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational religious, recreational and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres' (1995: 76).

The same is not usually true of other forms of culture, which are by definition significantly less comprehensive. While there are clearly some part-exceptions to the rule here, such as devout religious practice³⁰ – these nonetheless invariably occurs within the wider context of the language, which itself provides the ready-made conceptual framework through which the religious worship etc. takes place. Thus the use of linguistic relativity as a justification for (1) consolidating national culture's objective dimensions of language and history (and their interconnectedness), and (2) the link between language, culture, and personal identity, is not undermined by the charge of overreach. For, as mentioned, the degree to which language embeds national culture significantly outweighs the degree to which it embeds other forms of culture which have little if anything to do with nationality or ethnicity.

Conclusion

The constitutive view of language presupposed by liberal language rights theorists who advance identity-based arguments for a multilingual public sphere hinges on the truth of linguistic relativity. For if it were false that language embeds its speakers' culture, and influences their thought processes accordingly, it would be hard to see why language should be assigned any major weight in the discussion regarding the public recognition of national / societal cultures. Language and culture would be detachable from one another, and language would not be a significant part of personal identity: one language could be replaced by another, and the speakers' cultural identity would remain intact.

³⁰ It is also important not to overlook the fact that national identities often interact with and are mediated via religious identities to such an extent that drawing a strict distinction between them is misleading. In the case of Wales, for instance, the Welsh language is rife with Christian concepts and idioms. In line with the Wittgensteinian view that language is grounded in practice, it can reasonably be concluded that this is because Christianity has played a central role in the Welsh national identity for two millennia. For instance, the Brythonic peoples - the direct cultural-linguistic ancestors of the Welsh who populated the British landmass before the Saxon invasions started – were Christianized in the 1st century under the Roman occupation. Then, in 1588, the Bible was translated into Welsh and distributed across all Welsh churches shortly thereafter; this in turn standardised the Welsh language in a largely Christian manner. Finally, Welsh Protestant Nonconformism played a central role in the revival of Welsh national consciousness, which itself was inextricably tied to the language, in the mid-19th century and onwards (Morgan 1982).

Such identity-based arguments are also largely informed by the liberal nationalists' conception of national / societal culture, where language is usually presented as a significant feature of it. The importance that language rights theorists assign to the political recognition of the languages of national minorities also tends to be inspired by the liberal nationalist argument that attachment to a healthy culture, and public recognition of that culture, is a necessary precondition of individual autonomy, liberty, and justice. As we have seen, however, there is no explicit acknowledgment of linguistic relativity nor its relevant consequences among liberal nationalists nor language rights theorists. This is problematic because their arguments draw on presuppositions about the link between language / culture and personal identity, whose truth actually hinge on the corresponding truth of linguistic relativity. These presuppositions are not erroneous; but without the acknowledgement of linguistic relativity's nature, evidence, and consequences for cultural and personal identity, the arguments will remain on shaky grounds, and susceptible to the objections examined.

The way to strengthen those foundations, I have argued, is to emphasise that linguistic relativity highlights the clustering of language, culture and history. This in turn clarifies the link between national culture and personal identity. Historically accumulated concepts which stem from the speakers' cultural and behavioural norms (both historic and present) are embedded in language; we think through concepts; and thought is the most central feature of personal identity.

This clustering of language, culture, and history can moreover be used to pull the carpet from underneath the standard arguments, which appeal to the unreformed constructivist and modernist idea that national culture lacks objectivity to motivate their objections from democratic deficit and the unwarranted prioritising of national culture. Aside from the fact that such unreformed constructivism has already been discredited by historian Anthony Smith (1998), linguistic relativity consolidates the objectivity of national culture. The historically accumulated concepts that language embeds derive from the behavioural and cultural norms, beliefs, and sensibilities etc. of its speakers. As such, language is a vehicle for objective intergenerational cultural continuity.

It can be seen, then, that there is no reason why identity-based arguments for a multilingual public sphere should be abandoned in favour of instrumental ones, as Rubin (2017) argues. As long as the nature and implications of linguistic relativity are acknowledged, the full relevance and merits of such arguments will be able to be clarified more persuasively, given their firmer foundations. In a similar vein, the overlapping and mutually reinforcing liberal nationalist justifications for the institutionalisation of national culture (which usually includes

language) will also be shown to be more persuasive, since linguistic relativity reinforces national culture's objectivity and centrality to personal identity.

Chapter 5: The Liberal / Conservative Nationalism Divide: A Distinction Without a Difference?

Introduction

Now that the relevance of linguistic relativity for both the constitutive view of language and the underlying liberal nationalist account of national culture has been brought to the surface, it is now appropriate to ask: what bearing does linguistic relativity have on the *liberal* component of liberal nationalism? The reflections on linguistic relativity examined thus far force us to rethink some key tenets of the contemporary political philosophy debate. As will be shown in this chapter, linguistic relativity, properly articulated, has a significant impact on how we view the ideological assumptions of liberal nationalism. It helps reveal that there is a tremendous degree of overlap between liberal nationalism and social conservatism, and that liberal nationalism must therefore seek other ways of distinguishing its ideological programme.

Prima facie, it may appear that the term 'liberal nationalism' is a contradiction in terms. Is not the state promotion of national culture an inherently conservative agenda, given that it necessarily involves cultural conservation? Such an assumption, however, would be misleading, since nationalist movements – whether their aims are self-determination, greater autonomy, immigration curbs, increased institutionalisation of national culture, or otherwise – never appear by themselves. Rather, they invariably overlap and interact with one of the accompanying ideologies of liberalism, conservatism, or socialism.

Take Belgium and Wales, for instance: while the separatist nationalisms of *Vlaams Belang* and to a lesser extent N-VA are emphatically conservative, their Welsh equivalent of *Plaid Cymru* frame their policy agendas in social-democratic liberal terms. Even the centre-left government of Denmark has recently advocated tighter immigration restrictions, with Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen declaring an aim to reduce asylum applications to zero on account of their threat to social cohesion³¹. These among other ambiguities present a justifiable opening for a detailed examination of what, exactly, is liberal about liberal nationalism; and furthermore, what bearing linguistic relativity has on this question.

Liberal nationalism, recall, is the view that liberalism and nationalism are compatible with one another, and that national culture is necessary for liberalism to achieve its normative political ends. It has received renewed attention of late (e.g. Erez 2018; Lenard and Miller

³¹ See <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/01/23/denmarks-pm-backs-zero-asylum-seekers-lurch-right/>

2018; Gustavsson 2019; Tamir 2019; Gustavsson and Miller 2020); largely due to the surge in national populist parties and candidates that the 2010s have witnessed. This surge is widely perceived to have fanned the flames of racism, xenophobia, and religious bigotry, and caused Vladimir Putin's (2019) recent verdict that western liberalism has "outlived its purpose" to gain much symbolic currency. The realisation that nationalism is ineliminable for the foreseeable future has reinforced the need for political theorists to articulate a form of nationalism which is compatible with the values of inclusivity and egalitarianism which liberal democracies aim to embody.

Accordingly, several works have recently emerged, aiming to highlight both the contemporary relevance and internal coherence of liberal nationalism. Tamir (2019), for instance, argues that liberal nationalism can serve as a middle way between destructive right-wing populism and neoliberal hyper-globalism which, throughout the twenty-first century, has accelerated the levels of inequality between rich and poor, intensified relative poverty levels, and caused some unwelcome cultural shifts within nation states. Liberal nationalism, she argues, has the potential to mitigate inequality, political polarization, distrust, authoritarianism, and other contemporary challenges to inclusive democracy. Gustavsson and Miller (2020), on the other hand, comprises a succession of multidisciplinary articles on the effects of national attachments on attitudes towards welfare policy goals; potential tensions between liberal nationalism and state neutrality on cultural matters; and the coherence of the notion of national culture given the prevalence of complex and nested cultural, religious, and multinational identities.

A noteworthy omission from the literature to date on liberal nationalism, however, is the lack of clarity as to what, specifically, is liberal about the content of the national culture whose state promotion liberal nationalists endorse. How should it be determined which aspects of national culture warrant institutional embodiment or state promotion, and in what way might that culture be described as liberal? As Gina Gustavsson (2019) notes, there is, at present, no analytic tool for properly distinguishing between liberal and conservative conceptions of national identity with adequate precision. Indeed, there is scant clarity as to what is liberal *at all* about the content of national identities that are presented in liberal terms.

This deficit of understanding is problematic for two reasons. The first is - simply - that the term liberal nationalism may turn out to be misleading at best, and a misnomer at worst. The second is that the renewed interest in liberal nationalism as a concessionary antidote to right-wing populism has occurred in a context where liberalism in its contemporary ideological sense is being overtly rejected left, right, and centre among populist parties, leaders, and voters. Indeed, with a few exceptions, very few of the ascendant populist

parties of the past decade are straightforwardly describable as liberal. However, if liberal nationalism is to bridge the gap between theory and practice and thereby achieve liberal nationalists' recently articulated goal of mitigating political polarization, distrust, and unrest, the renewed attention to its nature and contemporary relevance had better have a ready answer to the following question. To what extent is liberal nationalism compatible with the social conservatism³² that is widespread among national populist parties and their supporters?

The aim of this chapter, then, is to therefore clarify what, if anything, is liberal about the content of the national identity whose state promotion liberal nationalists endorse, and to what extent it can make room for moderate social conservatism. Put differently, can liberal nationalism consistently reject what are perceived by populist voters as the offending elements of liberalism while simultaneously remaining liberal in any ordinary sense of the term? In this chapter, I argue that recent attempts to delineate the contours of a specifically liberal national identity fail to show any significant differences between liberal and conservative accounts of national identity's content. A consideration of the implications of linguistic relativity exposes this in the most stark manner; and *a fortiori*, it suggests that the content of the national identity in question is in fact more conservative than liberal.

By critically engaging with Gina Gustavsson's (2019) typology for distinguishing between liberal and conservative conceptions of national identity, and Lenard's (2020) and Miller's (2020a, 2020b) attempts to characterize a specifically liberal national identity, I show how their criteria for identifying liberal conceptions of national identity apply equally to conservative accounts, thereby failing to properly demarcate the target phenomenon. The solution I propose is to highlight a different axis on which liberal nationalism differs from its conservative counterpart: democratic inclusivity. I further suggest that liberal nationalists would benefit from shifting the emphasis to this dimension in the future framing of their theory. This is necessary to attaining greater ideological transparency and bridging the gap between theory and practice (e.g. cultural policy); for influential political theory has rarely developed independently of political activity.

It should be noted that since the term 'liberal nationalism' encompasses a constellation of arguments by theorists whose background motivations and ideological commitments do not coincide in every respect, this chapter's scope is not exhaustive within the domain. Rather,

³² The term 'social conservatism' denotes the set of values typically held among national populist voters. These include the rejection of: excessively permissive immigration policies, the inflation of identity politics, the repudiation of communal ties in favour of self-centred individualism, multiculturalism, and the undermining of traditional social and national values such as the family unit, religion, and other civil society associations (see e.g. Inglehart 1997; Ford & Goodwin 2017; Norris & Inglehart 2019; Eatwell and Goodwin 2018).

in line with the recent scholarship, I shall focus on the works of David Miller as the prime example of liberal nationalism, since they contain the most extensive and analytic defence of its internal coherence, and their relevance has been carried forward and elaborated upon in the current debate. Correspondingly, I shall use the works of Roger Scruton as the chief example of conservative nationalism (or 'patriotism', as he calls it (Scruton 2002: 29-30)), since similarly, they contain the most elaborate and influential defence of conservative political thought and its contemporary relevance in the late 20th and 21st centuries.

The chapter will be structured as follows. §1 explains the relationship between national populism's ascendancy and liberal nationalism as a mitigating response. §2 argues that the term liberal has evolved and mutated into a different ideological category from its traditional classical and social-democratic senses, and that it is liberalism in its new ideological guise that is being rejected by populist voters. §3 critically engages with attempts by Gustavsson (2019), Lenard (2020) and Miller (2020a, 2020b) to specify the nature of a specifically liberal national identity, and argues that their distinctions apply equally to conservative accounts, thereby overshooting the target. §4 builds on the case studies of David Miller and Roger Scruton to argue that it is the *aims and formation processes* of national culture – rather than its content – that differ across liberal and conservative accounts. §5 challenges recent attempts to characterise liberal national identity as specifically public, arguing that a strict public/private divide cannot be upheld on liberal nationalism's own terms. §6 examines the central importance of linguistic relativity for liberal nationalism, and the extent to which it belies a strong element of social conservatism. The chapter concludes that it is the alternative axis of democratic inclusivity, rather than liberalism, that should be emphasised in the future reframing of the theory.

§1. Liberal Nationalism as a Response to National Populism

That the 2010s will 'go down in history as the Age of Populism' (Goodwin 2019) as a challenge to if not outright rejection of Western liberalism has been a much-repeated verdict of late. From the political advances of right wing and nationalist parties across Europe, India, Israel, and Brazil; to 2016's 'double disruption' of Brexit and Trump; to right wing parties topping the polls in Italy, France, Poland, and Hungary and the UK in 2019's European Parliamentary elections, to the electoral breakthrough of *Chega* in the 2021 Portuguese presidential election, one finds oneself hard-pressed to find examples of countries unaffected by so-called right-wing, nationalist, and populist candidates and movements.

The precise causes are varied and contested; however, it cannot be denied that they are both economic and cultural, relating largely to the increasing mismatch between class and value structures, and inclusive political representation. The economics-based explanations are familiar: neoliberal reforms such as financial and business deregulation, increased privatisation of the public sector, and tax cuts for the rich, coupled with the shocks of the 2008 financial crisis and the subsequent Eurozone predicament, have cumulatively eroded voters' trust in the political system, thereby inducing a populist backlash (Roubini 2016; Guiso et al. 2017; Rodrick 2018; Berman and Snegovaya 2019). As social-democratic parties moved continually to the right on economic issues and left on cultural issues, traditional working-class voters became increasingly misaligned with their previous partisan affiliations. This created a gap in the electoral market for populist parties to shift (nominally) to the left on economics while remaining on the right on cultural matters, thereby mobilizing support from the 'left behind' working and lower-middle classes (Berman and Snegovaya 2019, Gidron 2020).

In relation to culture, there has been a continually increasing value divide over recent decades between middle-class professionals, ethnic minorities, and graduates and the working classes and older white voters within Western democracies (Inglehart 1997; Tilley 2005; Kiss and Park 2014; Norris & Inglehart 2019; Eatwell and Goodwin 2018). Typically, the middle+ classes view high levels of multiculturalism and migration as core social strengths; race, gender, and sexuality discrimination as ubiquitous present-day evils; and individual freedom as a central value which should take precedence over communal ties. The working / lower middle classes and the older white population, on the other hand, tend to prioritise communal ties, national identity, and law and order, valuing cultural conservation over multiculturalism and *rapid* mass-migration (Ford and Goodwin 2017; Goodwin and Heath 2016).

The evidence indicates that the rapid demographic shifts caused by mass-migration have cumulatively undermined social cohesion, trust, and collective solidarity among lower middle and working class communities in western democracies (see e.g. Putnam 2007; Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; and Kaufmann and Goodwin 2018, Maggio 2020)³³. Given that communal ties and local attachments appear to be disintegrating, then, it is of little surprise that liberal

³³ Although Putnam's and Alesina & La Ferrara's findings have caused some controversy because they clash with conflicting research such as Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) and Stolle et al. (2008), a meta-analysis has since been produced by Kaufmann and Goodwin (2018) concluding that in 71% of the cases analysed, an increase in the minority share of populations was indeed associated with perceptions of threat. Overall, rapid demographic change induced by mass migration does appear to challenge social cohesion.

nationalism has been proposed as a *via media* between neoliberal globalism and the reactionary instances of populism which are excessively chauvinistic and xenophobic.

As noted, the evidence from political sociology indicates that lower middle and working socioeconomic classes prioritise communal ties and national identity over multiculturalism; and reject *rapid* mass migration and inflated identity politics. However, since the mainstream social-democratic parties with which they were previously aligned have tended to shift left on cultural issues and right on economics, they have turned increasingly to populist parties which have capitalized on this displacement. Problematically, however, the populist breakthrough is often intertwined with xenophobia, and cultural or religious chauvinism. Liberal nationalism, then, has been presented as an ideological middle-ground, since its communitarian underpinnings emphasise the necessity of communal ties and nationality to social cohesion, while simultaneously guarding against populism's questionable elements.

§2. Shifts in the Use of the Term 'Liberal'

To examine the attempts to specify the content of a liberal national identity with adequate precision and focus, it is necessary to clarify the different senses of the term 'liberal' that are currently used by liberal nationalists and populist leaders. As we shall see, their respective uses of the term are equivocal and mutually divergent; and without an accurate understanding of the different senses at use, it is extremely difficult to engage in a constructive dialogue about the nature and contemporary relevance of a liberal national identity.

Liberalism is an essentially contested concept with no fixed, uniform meaning. Although it is typically associated with a commitment to individualism, the rule of law, rationalism, minimal government, egalitarianism, government by consent and contractarianism, none of these distinguishing marks are strictly necessary, with the possible exception of individualism (see e.g. Waldron 1987: 128; Freedman 1996: 86; Alexander 2015: 985; Kelly 2015: 2).

Nonetheless, it is appropriate for analytic purposes to distinguish between its two main schools: classical and 'new' liberalism.

Classical liberalism's origins are associated with Locke's *Two Treatises* (1689), and Scottish Enlightenment economics, and its formal unity consists in two factors: individualism and freedom from arbitrary coercion (Vincent 1992: 29). Although the term liberal, in modern parlance, connotes welfarism and distributive justice, classical liberalism does not. On the contrary: its commitment to a self-perpetuating and self-regulating social and economic order free from centrally planned state interference *precludes* a socialist state. Indeed, classical liberalism's commitment to an unhampered market economy is what most closely

characterises its modern-day descendant: neoliberalism – which itself underpins the deregulation of capital markets, austerity, and public sector privatisation: the exact reverse of socialism.

The social-democratic new liberalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries differs from its classical counterpart in its denial of the individualistic atomism and self-regulating capacity of society. The good of the individual, new liberals emphasised, is inextricably linked to the good of the community, since the self is ‘penetrated, infected, characterized by the existence of others, its content implies in every fibre relations of community’ (Bradley 1927: 172). The denial of the self-regulating capacity of society, moreover, was driven by the realization that the social imbalances caused by industrialisation could not simply be redressed by voluntary charity; rather, they required state intervention. These ideas brought about the creation of the modern welfare state with the Liberal Party’s welfare reforms of 1906-1914, and influenced most West European social-democratic trends until the mid-1970s (Vincent 1992: 31).

It is this quasi-socialist new liberalism, rather than its classical and neoliberal counterparts, that fits Miller’s ideological bent. Miller rejects individualism in favour of communitarianism; and indeed, a prime motivator behind his liberal nationalism is social justice – which requires a statist rather than minimal government political system³⁴. However, although this ‘new liberal’ constituent of Miller’s liberal nationalism is compatible with the social-democratic sensibilities of populist voters, it remains unclear whether liberal nationalism can also accommodate their cultural conservatism. To properly address this question, we must first clarify how the term ‘liberal’ is being used by strong-man leaders in relation to national identity. For this directly illustrates what, roughly, the offending elements of liberalism and the socially conservative values held by populist voters are.

An examination of the political rhetoric surrounding the term ‘liberal’ by Orbán, Bolsonaro, and Putin reveals that it is neither classical nor new liberalism that is being rejected by populist leaders and voters. Rather, it is a revised sense which denotes a commitment to open immigration policies, multiculturalism, identity politics, and political correctness-induced restrictions on freedom of speech. This revised sense represents a noteworthy shift in the

³⁴ It must be acknowledged that the ‘classical v social-democratic liberalism’ and ‘individualism v communitarianism’ axes do not coincide tidily with each other. Rawlsian liberalism and Miller’s ‘new’ liberal nationalism, for instance, are both strongly social-democratic; however, only the former is individualistic. As Miller (2000: 99) points out, it is in fact possible to detach communitarianism and individualism from their typically accompanying ideologies. However, this is typically the exception rather than the rule: classical liberalism is strongly individualistic; and although Rawls’ (1971) social-democratic liberalism was bereft of communitarianism, the social-democratic ‘new liberalism’ he partly appropriated was indeed communitarian; as is Miller’s modern-day descendant.

terms of the current debate: the term 'liberal' has come to be seen as inescapably hostile to national identity and values.

Orbán's (2014, 2018) propagation of the notion 'illiberal democracy', for instance, involves contrasting liberal democracy with its 'illiberal' counterpart by emphasising their opposing attitudes towards multiculturalism, immigration, identity politics-induced political correctness, and traditional national values. Whereas illiberal democracy defends traditional values and norms inherited from Christianity such as 'human dignity, the family and the nation' (Orbán 2018), liberal democracy seeks to abolish nationality by prioritising open immigration policies and multiculturalism over national identity and state security (ibid.). Similarly, Putin's (2019) verdict that the 'liberal idea' has 'outlived its purpose' refers particularly to immigration, open borders, and multiculturalism. Likewise, Bolsonaro's rhetoric concerning liberalism involves rejecting 'inverted values, the bloated state and political correctness' (Bolsonaro 2019), and pledging to 'value the family, respect the religions and our Judeo-Christian tradition, oppose gender ideology, and preserve our values' (ibid.).

Such rhetoric, however, appeals to a notion of liberalism which is largely at odds with the traditional senses of the term. As Plattner (2019) rightly notes, multiculturalism, open immigration policies, and a flexible approach towards family law were rarely found in liberal democracies until the last half-century. Moreover, the few nations which did receive high levels of migration 'tended to favor assimilationist rather than multicultural approaches to integrating newcomers' (Plattner 2019: 11). Despite this, however, populists (most notably Orbán) misleadingly frame the debate in terms of a dichotomy between liberalism and national identity, where liberalism is characterised in terms of support for open immigration policies, multiculturalism, and identity politics – none of which have traditionally been associated with the term.

For the sake of clarity, then, it is necessary to further distinguish between (1) liberalism as a catch-all term for its traditional senses, and (2) liberalism in the revised sense which populist demagogues reject and denounce. Here, I shall refer to these as traditional liberalism and identitarian liberalism, respectively. Traditional liberalism and national attachments have co-existed in liberal democracies since the mid-19th century, and indeed their symbiosis has been defended by mainstream liberal figures such as J.S. Mill and Isaiah Berlin (see Miller 2005); hence, they are neither practically nor theoretically opposed to one another. By contrast, there are clear tensions between identitarian liberalism and national attachments. What is problematic, moreover, is this. By taking ownership of the term 'liberal' so as to imply that it is liberalism *in general* that is the problem, rather than the updated identitarian liberalism, strong-man leaders shift the posts of the debate. This in turn helps to partly mask

the illegitimacy of their dismantlement of elements of traditional liberalism, such as judicial independence and press freedom.

Miller's liberal nationalism, on the other hand, does not endorse liberalism in its revised ideological sense. Rather, he has argued extensively in favour of limits to immigration (Miller 2015, 2016a, 2016b), while his arguments for institutionalising national identity concern historically rooted majority cultures³⁵ (Miller 2020b). Miller also criticises inflated identity politics: it undermines national solidarity by causing people to 'affirm their singular identities at the expense of shared national identities' (2000: 79) and undermines its own cause by seeking a specifically political recognition of identities which are beyond the remit of politics (ibid.). While it is evident, then, that Miller's liberal nationalism does not belie the offending elements of liberalism, it remains to be seen whether it can accommodate the above social conservatism. It is this question that the remainder of the chapter will address.

§3. The Liberal/Conservative Nationalism Distinction

Where, then, does the border fall between liberal and conservative conceptions of national identity? To date, what has been viewed as liberal about liberal nationalism is that its arguments conclude that nationality is needed for attaining liberal *aims*. Tamir (1993, 2019), Kymlicka (1989, 1995) and Margalit & Raz (1990), for instance, argue that national culture is a precondition of individual autonomy. Miller (1995) and Tamir (1993, 2019) argue that national culture is needed to foster enough national solidarity for citizens to support institutions that realise justice. Canovan (1996), Miller (1995, 2000), and Moore (2001) argue that national culture is necessary to a properly functioning deliberative democracy which is inclusive and legitimate. So far, so unambiguous. But the question remains: what, if anything, is liberal rather than conservative about the *content* – rather than just the aims – of the national culture in question?

Before the discussion unfolds, however, it is necessary to identify the distinguishing marks of conservatism which are of relevance here. These are: an emphasis on tradition, institutional continuity, the socially embedded nature of individuals, scepticism about the reliability of human rationality, and a preference for gradual, rather than rapid social change.

Conservatism's roots lie in Burke (1790) and we shall later see that the social embeddedness element of Burkean conservatism significantly characterises both Miller and

³⁵ This also generalises across sub-state national minorities: Miller concedes that federal or unitary systems are appropriate for granting such groups autonomy for safeguarding their own sense of nationality (Miller 1995; 2000).

Scruton's ideological frameworks, thereby further blurring the boundary between their respective liberal/conservative conceptions of national identity. The focus of this section, however, will be confined to the positive attempts to distinguish between both accounts.

Gustavsson (2019) has recently proposed a framework for distinguishing between liberal and conservative conceptions of national identity which outlines five dimensions along which the content of the two can be distinguished. This framework is an analytically useful and ground-clearing blueprint; however, it is somewhat limited in its present form. For despite its comprehensive engagement with Miller's liberal nationalism, the discussion of its conservative point of comparison - Roger Scruton's work – is overly synoptic and fragmented. This is a likely result of the different aims of Gustavsson's paper, which contrasts liberal and conservative varieties of nationalism with constitutional patriotism; its greater breadth does not permit a more elaborate analysis. For the purpose of the present argument, however, further ideological excavation is needed for properly identifying any significant differences in kind between liberal and conservative accounts.

Gustavsson's framework comprises five dimensions along which liberal and conservative conceptions of national identity can be distinguished. These are: 1) whether national identity is defined by vertical or horizontal ties; 2) historical continuity (i.e. whether the national history is to be revered, taken as a starting point, or critically scrutinised); 3) whether the identity should be sustained in the public or private sphere; 4) whether the attitude citizens should cultivate towards their homeland should be one of piety or loyalty; and 5) whether national identity is changeable and enforceable. In what follows, I examine each of these in turn, with the exception of (3), which requires lengthier treatment and will be examined in §5 in the run-up to the decisive contribution of linguistic relativity to the debate.

First, the vertical/horizontal dimension to national identity. The ties that bind a nation together, Gustavsson explains, are vertical for the conservative nationalist, while being mainly horizontal for the liberal nationalist. That is to say, whereas conservative nationalists view national ties as linking people through common allegiance, reverence, or even piety for certain established authorities, liberal nationalists view the same ties as mainly horizontal in the sense that 'they link us to our fellow-nationals, in the present as well as in the past (Miller 1995: 124)' (Gustavsson 2019: 699).

Contrasting Scruton's statement that citizens should 'bestow authority upon the existing order' (Scruton 1980: 33) with Miller's notion of a common national membership whose meaning 'changes over time' – ideally via an inclusive collective conversation – such that 'No voice has a privileged status: those who seek to defend traditional interpretations enter the conversation on an equal footing with those who want to propose changes' (Miller 1995:

127), Gustavsson concludes that liberal nationalism ‘focuses on horizontal ties to our fellow-nationals rather than allegiance to national authority’ (2019: 701).

Although there may be some difference in degree here, a clear-cut distinction is harder to pin down. For conservative nationalism does not deny that we have horizontal ties to our present-day compatriots. Rather, it simply stresses the notion that one should look to history as the ‘best guide to understanding the present and planning for the future’, as Kekes (1997: 352) puts it³⁶. This is not equivalent to a tunnel-visioned and backward-looking dogmatic reverence towards the past; rather, it simply emphasises that political action should be planned in the spirit of *continuity* between the past, present, and future, such that society takes the form of a partnership between ‘those who are living, those are dead, and those who are to be born’ (Burke 1999: 193). In fact, there would be no point in looking to the past for present and future guidance if people didn’t consider their link to their present (and future) compatriots to be of equal importance. As Scruton puts it: citizens have a duty to pass on inherited values, customs, institutions to future generations so as not to ‘mortgage our future for the gratification of those who are living now’ (Scruton 1996).

Indeed, this begins to look rather similar to Miller’s continuity condition in his fivefold definition of nationality: national identities ‘stretch ‘back and forward across the generations’ [...] they always carry with them an irrevocable obligation to the past generations: that of continuing their work for the nation’ (1995: 27). To characterise liberal nationalism in terms of horizontal ties, and its conservative counterpart in terms of vertical ones is therefore to exaggerate the contrast here. For they both concede the relevance of national ties which span the past, present, and future; emphasise cultural and historical continuity within nations; and deny that historical tradition should be dogmatically adhered to in an uncritical manner. There are, however, some subtle differences regarding the precise *status* of history, tradition, and institutional authority in Miller and Scruton’s accounts; however, uncovering these requires a finer-grained contextual examination, which will be given in §4.

Regarding the second dimension to national identity – historical continuity – Gustavsson contrasts liberal and conservative accounts as follows. Whereas the conservative conception ‘requires a national identity that reveres and follows history, taking it as a given authority’ (2019: 703), the liberal conception takes ‘history as a starting point for an on-going process

³⁶ This is not to imply that there is a strict uniformity to the conservative positions of Kekes and Scruton; indeed, their respective approaches to the status of history and tradition differ in noteworthy respects. Conservatives such as John Kekes, Michael Oakeshott, and Kenneth Minogue endorse weaker, pragmatic, and purportedly non-ideological accounts which emphasise caution, pragmatism, and a wariness of unbridled rationalism in political reasoning. By contrast, Scruton’s conservatism involves a *programme* whereby history, tradition, and ideology have an explicitly prominent role in society (Scruton 2002). However, the extent of these differences is highly contested (Vincent 1994), and the Burkean partnership principle is common to all.

of change' (ibid.). Historical authority, according to Miller, resembles that of a cookery book: 'it lays out the existing principles of cuisine and provides a base from which experimentation and innovation are possible' (Miller 1995: 127).

It is instructive that Miller uses the example of a cookery book to illustrate the status of pre-existing principles in relation to the range of deviations that one can make from them. Cookery books contain time-tested recipes which have proven their success: the bad recipes didn't make it into the book. As such, any deviations that one makes from them must be done with due regard for the vast reservoir of pre-existing cooking principles which the recipes either mention or presuppose. One becomes competent at cooking through learning long-established 'set patterns', and it is only within this context that successful alterations can then be made. Just like conservatism, then, innovation and experimentation must happen relatively gradually, and with due regard to pre-existing, historically accumulated practices and principles.

The fourth dimension to national identity, concerning the attitude one should take towards one's homeland, is this. Whereas on the conservative view, reverence and piety are the attitudes that fellow-nationals should cultivate towards their homeland, liberal nationalism has it that it is loyalty, rather than piety, that should be encouraged. The distinction, according to Gustavsson, is that loyalty 'allows us to question and criticise, although it still demands that we side with and not against the object of our critique; that our goal be constructive criticism' (2019: 703-4); whereas piety, it seems, makes criticism a much 'trickier business' (2019: 704).

This distinction is a natural starting point in that, although an endorsement of loyalty towards the homeland is common among conservative and liberal nationalists alike, piety is not an attitude that liberal nationalists explicitly endorse. However, conveying the contrast in terms of a *boundary* between the permissibility / impermissibility of questioning is an exaggeration, since conservatives *do* allow for questioning and criticism of elements of national culture. Regarding national traditions, for instance, John Kekes writes: this is 'not to say that values and the political arrangements that reflect them cannot be rationally justified or criticized' (Kekes 1997: 359). Scruton, moreover, denies that conservatives adopt an attitude of unquestioning reverence towards national identity, claiming that it is 'compatible with all manner of change, provided only that change is also continuity' (Scruton 1984: 11). There is, nonetheless, a more subtle distinction regarding the (im)permissibility of questioning and scrutiny to be drawn here. However, understanding it requires a detailed examination of Scruton's underlying conservative framework; this will be examined in §4. In the absence of further excavation, however, there are no visible differences in kind between both accounts.

The fifth dimension - the (im)mutability of national culture – has it that conservative nationalists see national culture ‘as per definition immutable’ (Gustavsson 2019: 704), whereas liberal nationalists allow national culture to change over time; particularly when elements of the national identity are ‘repugnant to the self-understanding of one or more component groups’ (Miller 1995: 142). This is not to suggest that liberal nationalists’ attitude to change amounts to an ‘anything goes’ approach, since liberal nationalists view the common public culture as ‘something that can legitimately be enforced politically’ (2019: 704). The difference is rather a matter of degree: liberal nationalists welcome gradual and democratically-induced change, whereas conservative nationalists – according to Gustavsson – are averse to such change.

Again, it is certainly an exaggeration to claim that conservatives see national culture ‘as per definition immutable’; for we have already seen that conservatives *do* allow for cultural change (Kekes 1997: 359; Scruton 2002: 11). However, there are in fact stricter limits to the *degree* of permissible change on the conservative conception in comparison to its liberal counterpart. Scruton’s conservatism seeks to ‘uphold all those practices and institutions [e.g. the common law, established state, monarchy etc.] through which the habits of allegiance are acquired’ (Scruton 2002: 23); and it is only *within this context* that change can occur. It is not permissible on Scruton’s conservatism for traditional established institutions to be *overhauled*. Nonetheless, it is permissible to amend them in the spirit of continuity (2002: 37). Miller’s liberal nationalism, on the other hand, does not *in principle* prohibit such institutional overhauls, providing that they are democratically induced as a result of significant value changes among the electorate (Miller 2020a, 2020b).

These dimensions, then, do not by themselves manage to track any categorical differences in kind between liberal and conservative conceptions of national identity. Nonetheless, Gustavsson’s framework does pave the way to uncovering subtler differences in the *aims* and *formation processes* of national identity. Clarifying these differences, however, requires further excavation into the background ideological frameworks which motivate Miller and Scruton’s accounts. In what follows, I shall clarify these differences by examining their divergent views on institutional authority, rationalism, and elitism.

§4. Institutional Authority, Rationalism, and Elitism

So far, we have seen that there exists much convergence between liberal and conservative accounts of national identity: Miller and Scruton both see national identity as defined by both vertical and horizontal ties; both permit historical criticism; both allow for questioning and

criticism of national culture; and both permit cultural changes. Nonetheless, there are some differences in degree at play: conservative nationalism places tighter limits than its liberal counterpart on the criticism of, and changes to, national culture. What, then, explains these differences? Here, I argue that the explanation lies in Miller's and Scruton's divergent views on institutional authority, rationalism, and elitism.

Scruton (2002, 2005) argues that political legitimacy and civil order depend on a sense of membership and belonging which are underpinned by a recognition of the authority of our inherited cultural values and institutions, such as family, language, civil society associations, and established state institutions. State institutions, moreover, should perpetuate citizens' 'memory of that membership [and exalt it] into something natural, unchangeable and serene' (Scruton 2005: 112). For this recognition of the authority of national culture is a necessary precondition of citizens' sense of common membership, which in turn is necessary to the social cohesion that is required to foster civic virtue, national loyalty, allegiance, piety, and duties to future generations (Scruton 2005: 37).

The sense of the term 'authority' which Scruton employs must be made explicit here. Authority, as it is understood by ordinary people and functions as part of human nature, Scruton (2002) explains, has nothing to do with choice or contractual consent. Rather, it can be elucidated by considering its preeminent form: the familial authority of parents over their children. The bonds that exist between parents and children are unchosen and inexorable: by default, parents love and nurture their children, and are their primary formative influence. Correspondingly, children recognize and submit to their parents' authority and established power. The mutual obligations which emerge from such ties are not up for questioning, scrutiny, or reductive articulation; rather, they are founded in respect, honour, and piety: 'To neglect my parents in old age is not an act of justice but an act of impiety' (2002: 23).

It is authority in this sense that Scruton claims is necessary for both state institutions and the mediating institutions of civil society to embody. For it is authority of this kind that actually fosters allegiance and loyalty among citizens, thereby mobilizing them to non-coercively put aside individual interest for the benefit of the nation and fellow citizens, including future generations. And if this primeval sense of familial loyalty and obligation (which must be underpinned by authority) is to expand outwards 'from hearth and home to place, people and country' (2002: 23) while retaining its motivational force, state and civil society institutions must function as vehicles for the transmission of the inherited traditions, values, and customs which comprise national culture.

The main sense in which Scruton's conservatism is less permissive of questioning and criticism than its liberal counterpart, then, is that the very concept of authority is almost

ineffable and mystical because of its primeval and visceral nature. Just as familial authority precludes *radical* questioning and criticism of established familial ties, so too does the authority exercised by the state institutions preclude radical questioning. By contrast, Miller endorses no analogous notion of authority which precludes radical questioning. Rather, he has argued extensively in favour of deliberative democracy, claiming that national communities should be 'actively self-determining rather than subject to the authority of tradition' (Miller 2000: 105). National culture, moreover, is 'open to revision when the members deliberate collectively' (ibid.).

There is another underlying reason why Scruton's account is less permissive of questioning and criticism than that of Miller; namely, his Burkean scepticism concerning the human rational capacity and the reliability of its use in political reasoning. Crucially, however, this is neither a repudiation of reason nor a commitment to irrationalism; rather, it is based on arguments which turn on subtle distinctions between different types of reasoning. The general motivation behind such arguments is the refusal 'to condense intricate moral, social and political realities into a few principles or elements of an intellectual system' (Vincent 1994: 211). Conservatives therefore view the excessive use of abstract and theoretical reasoning in the political realm as both misleading and unreliable; hence their emphasis on a more cautious approach to politics whereby tradition (i.e. time-tested institutions and customs) is given greater weight. To understand why this is so, it is necessary to examine the conservative distinction between two senses of the term rationality.

Burke distinguished between, on the one hand, prejudice or principles, and on the other hand, abstraction (Burke 1987: 188-9). Prejudices are characterised not in terms of irrational bigotry, but rather in terms of pre-judgments³⁷. These are time-tested considered judgements and practical knowledge which humans have amassed throughout history – 'the supra-rational wisdom of the species' – as Kirk (1953: 365) puts it, which cannot be tidily formulated in a few words but are nonetheless deeply embedded in a nation's institutions, customs, and common sense. Abstraction, on the other hand, refers to intellectual systems or metaphysical reasoning (such as Lockean natural rights or utopian programmes) which

³⁷ This distinction has parallels among numerous other conservatives, not least Michael Oakeshott (1962) who distinguishes between practical and technical knowledge. Technical knowledge consists in principles or propositions which are susceptible of precise formulation, such as in mathematics and the natural sciences. Practical knowledge, by contrast, is interwoven with traditions and customary ways of life and is not susceptible of precise formulation because it encompasses physical skill, preferences, moral and aesthetic sensibilities etc. which cannot be compressed into tidy doctrines. Such customs and traditions provide us with 'intimations' (subtle historically-accumulated knowledge which is sometimes tacit or embodied) which guide political reasoning more reliably than technical knowledge. See also Joseph de Maistre's (1994 [1797]) distinction between 'reason' and 'intuition / instinct', and Justus Moser's distinction between 'thought' and 'life' (see Mannheim 1986: 139-40, cited in Vincent, 1994: 212).

purport to be detached from custom and tradition, and to start from a blank slate, but rather are misleading, artificial, and apt to lead to upheaval such as that witnessed across communist regimes. The key point here is that rationality of the 'abstraction' kind is likely to erroneously overlook relevant underlying factors such as customs, traditions and 'knowledge-how' (of the kind propounded by Ryle (1945, 1949)). Although these underlying factors may be partly tacit or intuitive, they have probably stood the course of time *precisely because* of an intrinsic rationality which is not immediately detectable to the superficial observer.

Scruton endorses Burkean prejudices, emphasising that they are not just arbitrary customs, but rather forms of knowledge containing the 'residues of many trials and errors' (Scruton 2014: 21). Since many elements of national culture – 'military honour, family attachment, the forms and curricula of education, the institutions of charity and good manners' (ibid.) - are tacit and not susceptible of precise articulation, criticising them is largely redundant and destructive. For doing so is likely to involve erroneously overlooking their intrinsic rationality: the 'accumulation of reason in society that we reject at our peril' (ibid.).

Miller shares no such wariness about the adverse consequences of the unreliability of the human rational capacity in democratic deliberation about cultural revision. However, he is not a rationalist about national identity either. Rather, he imposes limits on the permissible degree of scrutiny of national identity, which is 'in large measure inherited from the past, and not fully open to rational scrutiny' (Miller 1989: 70). This is a manifestation of his commitment to the Tocquevillian notion that a cohesive society depends on a sufficiently high level of cultural consensus (see e.g. the 1st epigraph to *On Nationality* (1995)). This consensus, moreover, is part of the necessary starting point for democratic deliberation to proceed (Miller 2000).

The main difference between Miller's and Scruton's approaches to rationalism, then, is this. Scruton's commitment to the Burkean prejudice/abstraction distinction rules out radical criticism and overhaul of time-tested elements of national culture, given the unreliability of human rationality in the political sphere. Miller's anti-rationalism, on the other hand, does not involve such pessimism about the human rational capacity and its use in democratic deliberation; rather, it places the burden of proof on those who wish to revise or discard elements of national culture. It also places constraints on the amount of criticism and change that can happen at a given time: much of national culture has to be taken for granted in order for discussions about its revision to be possible in the first place. To avoid a cacophony of competing claims and opposing viewpoints with no underlying unity or cohesion, it is

necessary to 'establish common parameters – questions that for this particular purpose are to be taken as settled' (Miller 2020b).

The final underlying point of division between Scruton and Miller's respective conceptions of national identity concerns elitism. According to Scruton, the national culture perpetuated in educational institutions should be of a distinctively high kind: 'art, literature, scholarship and philosophy that establish a shared frame of reference among educated people' (Scruton 2012). It should not be democratically decided, since 'the majority can't easily distinguish genuine culture, which is the province of a minority, from fake culture, which we can all acquire' (Scruton 2015). The democratisation of culture, moreover, results in the tyranny of the majority over the learned minorities; the trumping of hard-earned expertise by popular sentiment. Such is Scruton's wariness of tyranny of the majority that he endorses a doctrine of cultural trusteeship, so to speak, which places procedural limitations on democracy: constitutions should serve as obstacles against such tyranny, and we need a 'political discourse that conceals this fact from the majority' (ibid.).

Scruton's elitism also involves the propagation of myths to sustain social order and much of the received national culture. State institutions should generate their own ideology by maintaining appearances and conducting ceremonies which generate a symbolic depth resembling military honour and grandeur, whereby citizens experience 'something 'transcendent', which they may only partly understand' (2002: 156). Hence emerges the myth of the nation's 'absolute unqualified right to allegiance', which should be reinforced with every state manifestation of civil or military power, and should determine its forms of literature, religion, and art (2002: 157). The mythical status of such ideology, however, must only be revealed to the 'elite which recognises them', and concealed from the ordinary voter, since such disillusionment would instil them with doubt, and thereby threaten social order and cohesion (2002: 180-181).

This elitism is the main difference between Scruton and Miller's background ideological frameworks. Miller's democratic and egalitarian approach is altogether incongruent with Scruton's elitism: Miller continually emphasises equal citizenship whereby members deliberate collectively about their national culture's aims, purposes, and content, and are able to revise and reshape it collectively on an equal basis (Miller 2000: 105, 1995: 127). Accordingly, he rejects the idea that there can be 'privileged guardians of national identity' (2020a: 27). Moreover, although Miller, like Scruton, allows for the existence of certain myths which fulfil cohesive functions among citizens, such as 'reassuring them that they are the legitimate holders of the territory they occupy' (2020b: 16), such myths are not immune to

scrutiny; nor should the state legislate on how (if at all), they should be perpetuated (ibid: 16-17).

It is this contrast between egalitarian democracy and quasi-aristocratic elitism, then, that constitutes the main difference between Miller and Scruton's liberal and conservative conceptions of national identity. Moreover, it is this distinction that explains their somewhat divergent views on the permissible degree of criticism of and changes to national culture. Scruton's elitism precludes *radical* criticism and changes to established national culture because of his Burkean commitment to the unreliability of human rationality in the political realm - and his related pessimism about citizens' ability to cooperate cohesively without the myth of the nation's unqualified right to allegiance.

By contrast, Miller's egalitarian and democratic approach has it that the sustained institutionalisation of national culture should be conditional on citizens' present values: the democratic mandate is the court from which there is no appeal. Although critical scrutiny of, and changes to national culture must happen in a gradual and piecemeal manner (2020b), there is no obstacle in principle to a democratically induced overhaul of established institutions, providing that the majority have ceased to value them. Religious establishment, for instance, is taken to be an intrinsic good *only insofar* as most citizens continue to 'value the fact that their physical environment bears of the marks of their country's historic religion' (Miller 2020a: 32).

§5. The Public/Private Sphere Divide

With respect to the four dimensions of Gustavsson's framework thus far examined, closer ideological scrutiny has revealed that what explains the differences in degree between Scruton and Miller's accounts of national identity is their divergent background assumptions concerning rationality, institutional authority, and elitism. These background differences concern national identity's formation processes rather than content: Miller endorses inclusive deliberative democracy whereas Scruton endorses a quasi-aristocratic doctrine of cultural trusteeship. What, then, of the public/private sphere dimension which has been proposed a further distinguishing mark in Gustavsson (2019), and Lenard (2020)?

According to the public/private sphere distinguishing mark proposal, liberal nationalist's conception of cultural identity must be a strictly public identity in that, as Lenard (2020: 160) puts it, it 'defines members in public spaces' such as 'political spaces, [...] public parks, beaches, community centres, libraries, and roads.' This proposed distinction arises from the

fact that classical liberalism has traditionally treated the public and private spheres as independent from each other: government intervention is only permissible in the public sphere, whereas how one acts in private is mainly a matter of individual choice.

However, liberal nationalism's reliance on any kind of sharp boundary for distinguishing between the public and private spheres is problematic. Recall that liberal nationalists endorse the 'social embeddedness' communitarian view, according to which people are inescapably moulded by intersubjective communication and civil society associations. These Hegelian and Burkean foundations on which communitarians drew - and which then fed into liberal nationalists' works - cannot be overlooked here. What they highlight is that the public and private spheres are not independent or compartmentalized realms in the first place.

Gustavsson (2019: 703), for instance, writes that on the liberal nationalist view, faith, ritual and worship are matters which should be confined to the private sphere, thereby remaining beyond the reach of political intervention. But this overlooks the fact that they are symbiotically connected through the mediating influence of civil society. Languages, customs, and religions, for instance, are communally derived: they typically depend for their existence on being practiced in communal civil society institutions. Correspondingly, the formative influence of communal civil society institutions on individuals has a knock-on effect on their values and activities in the private sphere, and so the two cannot be straightforwardly detached.

Since liberal nationalists accept that individuals are moulded by their communities, cultural identity cannot be a strictly public identity which defines members in public spaces alone. The very fact that liberal nationalists endorse the communitarian insights precludes such a sharp distinction in the first place. This symbiosis of the public and private spheres highlights the fact that liberal nationalism cannot consistently detach them from one another on its own theoretical terms³⁸. Moreover, since the communitarian insights are themselves essentially Hegelian and Burkean, a strong element of conservative political thought has arguably been smuggled in through the back door, so to speak, into the liberal nationalist ideological compound.

³⁸ Although Lenard (2020) and Gustavsson (2019) present the distinction in political, rather than ontological terms, liberal nationalism's commitment to the ontological symbiosis of the public and private spheres makes the distinction problematically artificial here. Gustavsson (2019: 706) claims that according to liberal nationalism, Muslim veils cannot be democratically banned (since they are an outward expression of the private realm), but minarets can (since they form part of a shared public space). The problem here, however, is the arbitrariness of the classification of e.g. the *niqab* as pertaining primarily to the private realm: permitting the *niqab* (designed to be worn in public) represents part of a civic, public culture which (unlike say, France) permits the wearing of such garments. Correspondingly, while it may be true that the decision to wear the *niqab* originated in the private realm, the same could equally be true of decisions to build minarets.

§6. The Implications of Linguistic Relativity for the Liberal/Conservative Nationalism Divide

We have thus far established that while there appears to be no categorical difference between liberal and conservative nationalist conceptions of the *content* of national identity as such, there are some major differences in their aims and formation processes. What has been missing from our discussion so far, however, is the role of language and linguistic relativity in this. We have already seen in Chapter 4 that liberal nationalists view language as a major constituent of national culture (Kymlicka 1995: 76; Miller 1995: 27; Tamir 1993: 75). Therefore, given that on the linguistic relativity view, language is a *vehicle* for that culture, it is imperative to raise the following two questions with respect to its significance for this debate. First, does linguistic relativity have any bearing on the liberalism or conservatism of the content of national identity? Second, does it have a further bearing on the liberalism or conservatism of the formation process of national identity?

The answer to the first question regarding the content of national identity is straightforward. If language embeds historically rooted culture and influences thought accordingly, then this has knock-on consequences for the liberal nationalist conception of national identity's content. As we have seen, conservative conceptions of national identity emphasise historical continuity to a somewhat greater degree than their liberal counterparts. But if language figures in liberal nationalists' definitions of national culture, and language embeds historically rooted culture, then the degree of emphasis that liberal nationalists place on historical continuity – on the terms of their own definitions – increases as a result. That is to say: they advocate the state promotion of national culture; and since national culture includes language – which itself is a source of transgenerational cultural continuity - then the very promotion of the national language(s) *ipso facto* results in the partial perpetuation of cultural continuity. Thus the distinction between liberal and conservative conceptions of the content of national identity becomes all the more blurred.

What bearing, then, does linguistic relativity have on the formation process of national culture, on the liberal nationalist view? Recall that Miller defends an inclusive deliberative democratic process whereby citizens collectively decide which aspects of national culture warrant state promotion. However, given that democratic deliberation is usually conducted through the national language, this introduces some further conservative elements into the picture. That is: by using a given national language to conduct the democratic deliberation, the conversation is thereby partly biased in favour of, and thereby helps perpetuate, the historically rooted national culture with which that language is associated.

Take, for instance, a national conversation about potential reforms to the criminal justice system. In Welsh, the term for police is *heddlu*, which literally translates to ‘peace force’; by contrast, the English term connotes public order: this reflects the different historical contexts within which they have been used (see Jenkins 1977).³⁹ Given the prevalence of framing effects whereby connotative differences affect how topics are conceptualised (e.g. Kahneman 2011; Simon & Jerit 2007; Bartels 1998), it is reasonable to infer that the national conversation would be framed differently according to which language it is conducted in.

Or take as a further example the current debate about domestic violence legislation in Russia. Domestic violence, which is endemic in Russia, has been the subject of successive campaigns to criminalise it; yet, at present, Russia has no legal definition of domestic violence, and no distinction between violence perpetrated in one’s home, and violence afflicted elsewhere (Aleynikova 2020). Successive attempts to introduce a law banning domestic violence have repeatedly been met with strong opposition by various political figures, institutions, and civil society organisations, where it is claimed that the concepts of ‘violence’ and ‘family’ are ‘incompatible by definition’ (Yurtaev 2020). Thus the fact that there is no legal definition of domestic violence available, together with the lack of awareness of the concept of domestic violence as distinct from violence in general, frames and thereby biases the national debate in favour of the status quo, embedded in the Russian language (this is not, of course, to imply that domestic violence is permissible on the liberal nationalist view!).

What examples such as these illustrate is that, on the liberal nationalist view, the formation process of national culture is also somewhat more conservative than it initially appeared. While democratic deliberation clearly is a major mechanism for introducing changes to the national culture promoted by the state, the fact that the national language embeds much of that culture means that much of it is presupposed as a starting point in the deliberative process. This is not to imply that language is a straightjacket within which the speakers are necessarily trapped, and cannot revise their concepts. Clearly, a consciously acquired awareness of conceptual limitations or misleading connotations can and does result in top-down terminological changes; as frequently occurs in political correctness measures, for

³⁹ The criminal codes of *Cyfraith Hywel*, Wales’ indigenous (pre-conquest) legal justice system, placed a greater emphasis on restorative justice than its comparatively retributivist English counterpart. Under *Cyfraith Hywel*, punishment for murder, for instance, was monetary compensation to the victim’s family by the killer and his extended family (Davies 2007). Such examples suggest that the term *heddlu* (which connotes maintaining the peace) differs from its English ‘equivalent’ of police, precisely because of the more restorative nature of Welsh criminal justice. These divergent cultural outlooks, therefore, appear to be preserved in the languages.

instance. However, this nonetheless occurs within the wider context of the language, which constitutes the default and presupposed ready-made conceptual framework.

Returning to Miller's (1995) analogy of a cookery book: linguistic relativity (and the meaning-as-use view it entails) suggests that language is a source of historical continuity and authority. Like the cookery book, language comprises the time-tested concepts which have proven their usefulness: its ineffective or superfluous elements have not survived into modern parlance. Just as successful deviations from the cooking recipes cannot be made without presupposing much of the time-tested cooking principles, the same applies to language. That is: the cultural and related conceptual / linguistic changes must happen within the context of, and therefore continuously with, the pre-existing, historically accumulated concepts embedded in the language.

On the one hand, this reinforces the conservatism of the formation process of national identity: the democratic deliberation through which changes are proposed to the received understanding and state promotion of national culture actually presupposes much of that national culture. This, in turn, reinforces the criterion of historical continuity which was thought to be more characteristic of conservative conceptions. On the other hand, however, the underscoring of ordinary language as a source of historical authority and continuity also increases the democratically inclusive rather than elitist nature of the process whereby it is decided which aspects of national culture warrant state promotion. For, as illustrated by linguistic relativity, the socially embedded nature of language entails that linguistic meaning is bottom-up: it tracks the cultural norms and sensibilities of the majority population.

Conclusion

Thus the implications of linguistic relativity for the liberal nationalist view of national culture serve as an essential point in the cumulation of the argument, which I have articulated in this chapter, for the following conclusion. That is: what in fact distinguishes between liberal and conservative conceptions of national identity is not their respective contents, but rather their aims and formation processes, particularly in relation to democratic inclusivity – with significant political consequences. To recap, then: recent attempts to delineate the contours of a specifically liberal national identity either overshoot the target by applying significantly to conservative accounts, or collapse upon scrutiny on the terms of liberal nationalists' own communitarianism-inspired framework. This, however, is an advantage rather than a hinderance: it shows that liberal nationalism can indeed accommodate moderate elements of social conservatism. This is necessary in the recent context where liberal nationalism has

been proposed as an ideological middle ground which can help steer vast segments of the electorate away from far-right, ethno-nationalist, and populist parties which capitalize on their sense of cultural displacement.

Nonetheless, Gustavsson's typology does pave the way to uncovering some necessary distinctions between Miller and Scruton's accounts. I have characterised these underlying differences in terms of Miller and Scruton's divergent attitudes towards institutional authority, rationalism, and elitism; and highlighted the fact that the main point of division which makes it to the surface concerns Miller's democratic inclusivity (consolidated by linguistic relativity) versus Scruton's democratically exclusionary elitism. I further suggest that it is this alternative axis of democratic inclusivity that should be highlighted in the future framing of the theory, for it effectively captures the main underlying background differences between liberal and conservative accounts. It also explains the surface-level differences in degree brought out by Gustavsson's (2019) blueprint framework.

In terms of strategic reframing, I suggest that the term 'social-democratic nationalism' is a more appropriate and ideologically transparent term than liberal nationalism, for the following reasons. First, there is no major difference in kind between liberal and conservative conceptions of national identity's content; and the liberal nationalists' commitment to communitarianism and language as major constituents of national culture further emphasises this. Second, Miller's liberal nationalism is quasi-socialist in that it is largely driven by distributive justice considerations, and is also intrinsically democratic. Finally, the new, mutated meaning of the term 'liberalism' which connotes inflated identity politics, open borders, and communal ties etc. conflicts with liberal nationalism's spirit and letter. If liberal nationalism is to bridge the gap between theory and practice, thereby achieving the recently articulated goal of mitigating political polarization, distrust, and unrest, then, the minimal starting point is to reframe it using ideologically transparent language. This terminological change can only be a step in the right direction.

Conclusion

To consolidate this thesis' findings and reiterate the full relevance of the overarching argument, we shall now undertake a synoptic retracing of the progress achieved in each chapter. Chapter 1 provided a comparative overview of the main historical and cultural contexts within which linguistic relativity has played a central role, and the contemporary normative literature which presuppose its truth. We examined Herder's arguments for linguistic relativity, including the overlapping processes of *Besonnenheit*, *Gestalt*, and perceptual learning which, as we saw, have each found significant expression in contemporary cognitive science. We also traced the normative political conclusions that Herder drew on the basis of his arguments for linguistic relativity, such as those concerning nation/state congruence and cultural self-determination. From here, we proceeded to examine Fichte's distinction between primitive and derived languages, and I argued that retrospectively separating the distinction from Fichte's historically contingent context of anti-French cultural chauvinism can in fact leave us with a useful analytic tool for distinguishing between different degrees of linguistic relativity across different languages.

The anticolonial and Welsh nationalism literature examined in Chapter 1, moreover, provided a detailed insight into the various degrees and ranges of cultural alienation that linguistic imperialism has been taken to cause. Among these were: the cultivation of an inferiority complex in colonised (and formerly colonised) peoples; the equation of cultural-linguistic decline with moral or spiritual degeneration; the detrimental psychological impact of the subordination of indigenous languages and their marginalisation from public life; and the compulsion to conform to the culture of the (former) coloniser to 'get ahead'. Each of these themes appear in various guises in the works of Fichte, national liberation and postcolonial writers, and the literature of 20th century Welsh nationalism; despite their differing contexts of French imperialism, European imperialism, and English colonialism and its legacy, respectively. Finally, we examined the contemporary directions in which the overlapping debates concerning linguistic justice and liberal nationalism have developed, and saw how the absence of the justification and clarificatory advantages of linguistic relativity leave their identity-based arguments for multilingual policies and cultural recognition susceptible to numerous modernism and constructivism-inspired objections.

This background provided in Chapter 1, in turn, presented the justifiable opening to examining in Chapter 2 the available evidence and arguments in linguistics and philosophy which can be used to substantiate linguistic relativity, thereby fruitfully informing the nationalism and political theory literature which hinges on linguistic relativity's truth. Here, we saw that there are two necessary conditions to linguistic relativity which are jointly sufficient:

(1) cross-linguistic untranslatability; and (2) the inextricability of language and thought. Regarding (1), we saw that there are significant obstacles to achieving exact literal conceptual equivalence between the languages of WEIRD and non-WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) societies, as evidenced by cases such as the Amazonian Pirahã, the Aboriginal Pormpuraawans, and Madagascar. The most ubiquitous and significant forms of untranslatability, however, concern connotative and figurative meanings: we saw that different connotative and figurative meanings frame thought processes differently; as such, this aspect of linguistic relativity can indeed be applied to the languages of WEIRD as well as non-WEIRD societies.

Regarding (2) – the inextricability of language and thought – I further argued that Wittgenstein’s decisive arguments against psychologised views of linguistic meaning can be used to show that language and thought are indeed inextricable and co-dependent. I also explained how the Wittgensteinian view of linguistic meaning and language acquisition is substantiated by a wealth of empirical evidence, in addition to being justified from an analytic, a priori, perspective. Thus the analytic and empirical justifications for the two necessary conditions of linguistic relativity – untranslatability and the inextricability of language and thought – provided in Chapter 2 collectively establish its truth. This, in turn, constitutes the groundwork for substantiating the constitutive view of language used in the normative literature, since linguistic relativity is the most dense and only explicitly-articulated, empirically substantiated, and testable mechanism for it.

Chapter 3 built upon the arguments and findings of Chapter 2 to address the universalist and nativist accounts of language acquisition inspired by Chomskyan linguistics which are incompatible with linguistic relativity. Here, I argued that the linguistic universalism and psychologism of Chomskyan linguistics and its descendants have not only already been discredited by the succession of arguments by Wittgenstein collectively known as the ‘private language argument’; the core of Chomskyan linguistics – Universal Grammar – is also fundamentally unscientific. This is because it violates the two principles of Occam’s Razor and falsifiability (both the principle itself and its applied methodology). Using both empirical case studies and analytic considerations concerning the scientific method, this chapter cumulatively removed the chief remaining obstacle to accepting linguistic relativity. This, in turn cleared the way to examining the implications of linguistic relativity for the constitutive view of language and its place in the wider body of literature on linguistic justice and the political recognition of national or societal cultures, examined in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 4 examined the import of linguistic relativity, the contemporary language rights and largely overlapping liberal nationalist literature, where the latter continues to inform the

former. It was noted that despite a recent (albeit highly marginal) emphasis on linguistic relativity in the field of linguistic justice, the fundamental questions concerning its exact scope and relevance for accounts of cultural identity, and the normative policy implications of this remain severely underexplored. This chapter has therefore aimed to bridge this gap by making explicit the relevance of linguistic relativity for liberal nationalists' accounts of culture and the overlapping language rights literature. It was argued that an acknowledgement of the nature and relevance of linguistic relativity gives fresh ammunition to identity-based arguments for a multilingual public sphere. This in turn helps to immunise liberal arguments in favour of the political recognition of minority national cultures, and by extension languages, against frequently cited modernism and constructivism-inspired objections.

Chapter 5, finally, dug deeper into the liberal nationalism ideological compound by examining (1) just what, exactly, is liberal about it; and (2) what bearing does linguistic relativity have on its liberal (or indeed conservative or socialist) nature. Here, I argued that recent attempts to delineate the contours of a specifically liberal national identity fail to highlight anything distinctively liberal, as opposed to conservative, about its first-order content. For the criteria that such attempts propose typically apply almost equally to conservative accounts, thereby overshooting the target. However, the chapter undertook further ideological excavation, revealing that there is an alternative, second-order axis for distinguishing between liberal and conservative conceptions of national identity in terms of aims and formation processes: democratic inclusivity. Linguistic relativity significantly consolidated these findings in the following two ways. First, liberal nationalists' inclusion of language in their definitions of national culture places further emphasis on their (comparatively conservative) 'historical continuity' component of national identity, since language – as linguistic relativity highlights – is a source of transgenerational cultural continuity. Second, the intrinsically democratic nature of language, on the linguistic relativity view (i.e. it tracks the cultural particularities of the majority population), reinforces the 'democratic inclusivity' component of the deliberative democratic process through which it is decided what aspects of national culture warrant state promotion.

To summarise, then: we started out by noting the tremendous mobilising weight that linguistic relativity has carried in nationalist and anticolonial movements and literature from the 18th century through to the present day. Linguistic relativity has been persistently used as the basic foundational axiom underpinning the arguments concerning the centrality of language to cultural identity, the corrosive psychological effects of cultural-linguistic displacement, and the necessity of language for sustaining or revitalising the cultural longevity of its speakers. With the exception of the German Romantics, none of the nationalist, anticolonial, nor contemporary political theory literature in this connection

provides any justification for linguistic relativity, nor an articulation of its precise nature or scope. The same is true of political discourses surrounding language policy and planning, where the link between language and identity – as we saw in the cases of Wales and the East African Community, for instance - is presupposed and effectively presented as the *raison d'être* behind such measures.

This is not to suggest that the assumed status of linguistic relativity invalidates or undermines these movements and categories of literature. Clearly, Fanon's (1952) insights about the relation between language and the catastrophic psychological consequences of imperialism, Fichte's contribution to the regeneration of German national consciousness, and J.R. Jones' psychological breakdown of the internal effects of cultural-linguistic displacement, for instance, have all achieved significant influence. As such, it is reasonable to infer that their political mileage has itself been testament to their far-reaching resonance, which itself may be indicative of their truth.

However, it would be a mistake to conclude that these arguments and insights can therefore be detached or exempt from the need to provide a rational justification for their driving principle of linguistic relativity. For, as we have seen, linguistic relativity is far from universally accepted, and many people do not see their language as a significant part of their national identity in the first place. Moreover, if linguistic relativity is false and language is simply an instrumental device for conveying information, then the extensive identity-based language planning of postcolonial societies and sub-state national minorities is equally lacking in justification. Apart from achieving symbolic significance, institutionalising the language in question would have no significant impact on cultural cohesion or reassertion; any other language could perform the exact same function, and no loss of identity would ensue. Therefore, in the absence of a justification for linguistic relativity, the question does indeed remain as to whether the various literary categories and movements which presuppose it are built on sand as it were - and have thereby generated significant waves of false consciousness.

While one would not expect politically charged literature to justify linguistic relativity given that its purpose is not exclusively academic, it is, on the other hand, reasonable to expect such a justification to appear in the normative academic literature. Such a justification, as we have seen, has thus far been conspicuous in its absence. It is hoped, therefore, that the way in which this thesis has assimilated the empirical evidence to date, supplemented it with analytic justifications imported from Wittgenstein and Herder, and highlighted the relevance of linguistic relativity for the overlapping linguistic justice and liberal nationalism debates, has achieved considerable progress towards bridging this gap.

Just as the political literature would remain impoverished without the missing link of the justification for linguistic relativity, the normative academic literature would remain equally impoverished without an historical overview of the various political and cultural purposes to which linguistic relativity has been so powerfully applied. By combining the two in this thesis' overarching line of argument, therefore, I have sought to unequivocally underline their mutual relevance, so as to pave the way for potential future interdisciplinary collaboration which can proceed without the underlying concern that a significant part of its *raison d'être* might in fact be false.

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