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Provincialising Scandinavia

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When Dipesh Chakrabarty's book, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference, (PE)*, was published in 2000, it spawned intense debate over universalism versus particularism, and over the relationships connecting the Enlightenment, Eurocentrism, modernity, colonialism and capitalism. These terms, which capture the global dominance of Europe over the last five centuries, are by their immense broadness as categories, contested, and Chakrabarty's work is far from the first attempt to make a critique of their applicability. Indeed Chakrabarty's book, as a critique of the theoretical terrain inside which the relationships between Europe, colonialism, and postcolonial and post-imperial Europe are contested, is not a watershed of the magnitude of Edward Said's *Orientalism*.

Yet, to some extent Chakrabarty departs from the same premise as Said, although Chakrabarty sees the terrain through a debate over historicity and the legacy of the Enlightenment.¹ Another significant difference is between Said's focus on the Oriental other as a distorted mirror image of an idealised European self, and Chakrabarty's focus on India, and what provincialising Europe means to Indian academic 'mental' decolonisation efforts.² Hence, *PE* is about India, not Europe. However, just as Said's Oriental mirror implied a different Orient than the reflected image of Europe, provincialising Europe also implies a process of provincialising within Europe. And just as *Orientalism* met with academic resistance because of its implied (rather than manifest) alternative Orient to that of the European representations, *PE* has met with hostility because of its supposedly monolithic treatment of the European Enlightenment.

¹ See for example Lazarus, 'The Fetish of "the West" in Postcolonial Theory', 43-64, in *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies*, edited by Crystal Bartolovich, Port Chester, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 59-64.

² The term 'mental' here refers back to Ngugi's early postcolonial watershed text, 'Decolonizing the Mind', which was particularly important to the realisation that the process of decolonization, albeit overtly connected to physical emancipation when Ngugi was writing, nonetheless was an equally important mental process.

This article is concerned with the implications of Chakrabarty's points regarding historicism and with the general theoretical setting of *PE* for conceptualisations of European modernity. Then, it considers some of these conceptions' relationship within a Scandinavian context, both as an illustration of how quite different responses to modernity, capitalism and colonialism developed in various regions of Europe, and as an illustration of the need to disentangle these contextualised responses. *PE* has been a motivating factor behind both the Nordic Colonial Mind project which induced this volume of *Kult*, and *A Historical Companion to Postcolonial Literatures: Continental Europe and its Empires* (2008). A desire to be more specific that the heterogeneous term Nordic allows explains my preference for *Scandinavia*, over *the Nordic countries*. Scandinavia is more or less heterogeneous depending on how one understands the position of the Sami people in Norway and Sweden, and the inclusion of the Faeroe Islands and Greenland in the (Danish) Commonwealth (*Rigsfællesskabet*). (The reality of the linguistic, cultural, economic and political Danish dominance is undeclared in the institution of the *Rigsfællesskabet*.) My interest is primarily in the Scandinavian countries as decentred European powers, which urgently seek to position themselves closer to the European metropolitan cultures.

Provincialising Europe in Europe

In 2008, *PE* was republished with a new preface, which Chakrabarty devotes to criticism the book received in India. This is not surprising given the analytical focus in the book on India. In addition, the new preface, also draws attention to how *PE* inspired work that examines the significance of a historical European-driven globalisation, through colonialism and imperialism, not only for ways of rereading European history, but also for ways of understanding contemporary Europe:

In summary then, *PE* is a product of globalization. Globalization was its condition of possibility... it would only be fair to acknowledge how globalization, particularly in Europe and in European studies, has taken this book into exciting intellectual territories that I could not have foreseen. As European scholars and Europeanists have struggled to make sense of the changes happening in the continent and in their own spheres of studies, as they have engaged in discussions of European futures after globalization and addressed

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issues such as “Fortress Europe” versus “multicultural Europe,” new avenues of inquiries have opened up. In their search for languages with which to understand the place of non-European immigrants and refugees in Europe, the question of Turkey’s inclusion in the EU, and the place of postsocialist Eastern Europe, they have turned to models of postcolonial thinking to see if there are insights to be drawn... (*PE*, xix)

Here Chakrabarty signals an urgency to address Europe’s contemporary global woes, and the realisation that this cannot be separated from understanding a previous European global intervention, namely colonialism. In other words, the contemporary global flows of capital and labour represents, in decisive ways, continuity to former flows – the global past has shaped the framework of the global present. This condition has been the working premise of postcolonial theory, and it forms a central point of departure for this article. The idea is to develop a more differentiated assessment of the relationship between modernity, capitalism and colonialism, through a focus on the ways in which European modernity, capitalism and colonialism looked different at different moments in history, and how vastly dissimilar conditions prevailed in disparate parts of Europe for attending to these issues. I am following Frederick Cooper’s point here that

nineteenth-century Europe was immersed in struggles within and among many parochialisms and many universalities. Secularism was more often beleaguered than triumphant; ancien régimes and aristocracies didn’t die out on the guillotine. The balancing of the universalized rightsbearing individual against questions of “difference” was a vital debate within and after the Enlightenment. Intellectuals who called themselves modernists between 1890 and 1930 were in “revolt against positivism, rationalism, realism, and liberalism,” something lost in the stark opposition between Enlightenment reason and the “posts” in vogue today. (Cooper, 20)

Cooper’s point is part of a more sustained analysis of *PE*, which he criticises for collapsing post-Enlightenment into a singular modernity. However, this kind of critique can be levelled at any attempt to render, in one book, the entire legacy of European Enlightenment, colonialism or any of these encompassing terms. As such, it is difficult to escape the feeling that Cooper designates Chakrabarty’s project as impossible, because it is doomed to fall into sweeping generalisations. Though it seems Cooper misses an essential point. Chakrabarty’s undertaking is not to give an alternative account of post-Enlightenment Europe, but to take point of departure in a widely recognised European centrality

to post-Enlightenment thought in academia, also in the post-colonies, and from enter the terrain of his actual analysis. The analysis itself is directed against prevailing accounts and understandings of Indian modernity.

Yet, when returning the gaze from the European Enlightenment legacy/modernity installation in India, to instead focus on the implications for provincialising Europe in Europe, Cooper's warning about the dangers he sees in making universalist claims in relation to understanding European Enlightenment, modernity, coloniality and capitalism is far more pertinent:

Too ready identification of an actual Europe with post-Enlightenment rationality not only leaves out the conflict and uncertainty within that continent's history, but also the extent to which even such constructs as bourgeois equality were not some essence of the West but products of struggle. The ascension of a liberal idea of a rights-bearing individual over the equally liberal idea of rights as earned by the civilized behavior of a collectivity reflected the labors not only of a Toussaint L'Ouverture or a Frederick Douglass, but of unnamed ex-slaves, dependent laborers, and colonized peasants who revealed the limits of colonial power and defined alternative modes of living and working in the crevices of authority. (Cooper, 21)

It is difficult to disagree with this assessment. Chakrabarty probably would not, even if it were directed at his work. However, the passage betrays peculiar discursive inconsistencies. The initial insistence on the need to differentiate European experiences of modernity, as they were 'products of struggle' is curious, as all the struggles singled out occurred in the colonies. The European experience again collapses into a monolith, and Cooper falls into the same trap as Chakrabarty. What *is* interesting about Cooper's point, but hardly a revelation in postcolonial thought, is the reading of European modernity as produced through a struggle in the metropolitan centre and in the colonial periphery rather than constituted as an inner, national territorially configured struggle. Through C.L.R. James's well-known reading of the interconnections between the Haitian Revolution and the French Revolution, *The Black Jacobins*, it is equally possible to question whether it is feasible to understand European modernity separately from colonialism. Colonies provided careers for the European middle classes. They were the

raw material for Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment thinking on the development of European society and this thinking was then immediately afterwards cast as universal.

This argument of course is an extensive one, and I do not claim a novel position. Much of the debate over the applicability of generalised terms shows the inability to produce an overview that will not either lend itself to a critique of its universalist ‘pretences’, or alternatively be accused of dedicating too much attention to one particular context, whose analytical points then implicitly are considered universal. Yet, to me at least, there is no way of dealing with this except for an insistence on the uniqueness of the particular, and the realisation that the particular is part of a pattern, and that this pattern has to be exposed. In the following discussion, I examine the broader question of the colonial shadow world’s influence on European modernity, through a focus on a specific part of Europe, namely Scandinavia. In my reading Scandinavia represents both a test of the extent of the specific applicability of ‘European modernity’ to its geopolitical constituent parts, and an opportunity to begin to look from a regional perspective at how Europe may indeed productively provincialise itself.

Provincialising Scandinavia

The project of provincializing Europe must realize within itself its own impossibility... I ask for a history that deliberately makes visible, within the very structure of its narrative forms, its own repressive strategies and practices, the part it plays in collusion with the narratives of citizenships in assimilating to the projects of the modern state all other possibilities of human solidarity... This is a history that will attempt the impossible: to look toward its own death by tracing that which resists and escapes the best human effort at translation across cultural and other semiotic systems, so the world may once again be imagined as radically heterogeneous. (*PE*, 45-46)

Following Chakrabarty, I explore how Scandinavia might be provincialised; initially, this may occur in two different but interrelated ways. The first entails examining Scandinavia’s degree of peripheral status in relation to the European metropolitan centres. The second requires the examination of what forms of colonial modernities were peculiar to Scandinavia, and what forms were metonymic parts of a greater European experience. These two interconnected processes of provincialisation need to be mapped out in greater detail. Specifically, in the discussion below, I study a process as vast and

heterogeneous as modernity through a narrow lens. Consequently, I examine the articulation of modernity as thought systems which bore a direct relationship with events, for example how political philosophy texts were used as starting points for articulating colonial systems, which were then established.

It is not difficult to provincialise Scandinavia, both internationally and in relation to Europe, if provincialise means to draw attention to Scandinavia's peripheral rather than central position in relation to 'the West' or Europe as discursive centres of power. As geopolitical actors, the Scandinavian countries have occupied marginal positions since the early 1800s, in the case of Sweden arguably since the early 1700s. Sweden's loss of its European possessions was an outcome of the defeat by the Russians at the start of the 1700s; but the rise of Great Britain, during and after the Napoleonic wars, sealed the fate of the Scandinavian countries as power brokers. Within European historiography, marginalisation is the result of the loss of substantial military prowess accompanied by a loss of cultural influence on major developments in Europe.

Walter Mignolo and Enrique Dussel have discussed marginalisation within Europe in relation to the power shift from Renaissance Europe, with a Mediterranean power base, to the Enlightenment, with a power base in Northwestern Europe.³ Their analyses firstly raise fundamental questions concerning the origins of modernity, which they see as intrinsically linked to colonialism and capitalism. They secondly posit two modernities, an earlier Mediterranean based Renaissance modernity and a later Enlightenment Northwest European modernity; arguing for the necessity of understanding the crucial differences between the nature of the two forms of modernity including, historically, culturally, geographically and religiously. In other words, the first modernity was significantly more than a precursor for the second. And thirdly, they establish that neither modernities can be understood as regionally endemic modernities, but result from the imperial-colonial contact. This trajectory consciously, but also inevitably, problematises any singular reading of European

³ See also Roberto M. Dainotto, *Europe (in Theory)*, London: Duke University Press, 2008, for a sustained argument not just in relation to the shift in the power balance in Europe from south to northwest, but also for the interesting argument that Southern Europe was not only marginalised in the accounts of the northwest European own perceived success, it became in fact an internalised, oriental, European other.

modernity, in terms of its temporal and geographical cradle, and in terms of its intrinsically European origins. These findings relate to the work of various postcolonial Anglophone thinkers, not least that of Stuart Hall; his point about the Caribbean, as the first site of the modern, is an instance of convergence.

The question of one versus two modernities, and the importance of imperial-colonial processes as central to both modernities, is critically significant in defining Scandinavia's position in relation to modernity. To interrogate the relationship between Scandinavian modernity, European modernity, and modernity *per se*, is to examine internal Scandinavian developments of European and non-European influences. A consideration of what links Scandinavian to European modernity begins with recognising that Scandinavian thought was marginal to Renaissance and Enlightenment thought, even as it participated in colonial exploits, sought out, and obviously was influenced by both Renaissance and Enlightenment thought. With the somewhat ambiguous exception of Carl von Linné, no Scandinavian thinkers were, or have been considered, central figures of European learning in either epoch. So if, following Chakrabarty, the premise of provincialisation entails the questioning of dominant European centres of thought, which were interested in the non-European other, but were unable to accommodate the perspective of the other, or even stronger, built on the very process of excluding the other in order to justify colonialism, Scandinavia is already provincialised..

The European intellectual centres were interested in the non-European other, but were unable to accommodate the perspective of the other, or to build on the very process of excluding the other in order to justify colonialism that is, both physically and intellectually. Locke's justification of colonisation in the 'empty' America is one example of the former, whereas, the dismissal of alternative thought systems, while premising one's own view on a rationality grounded idea of European supremacy is an example of the an intellectual justification. Nevertheless, of course, Scandinavia followed suit in the misapprehension by the pantheon of European thinkers of the non-European other. This realisation leads to a second examination concerning a more heterogeneous perception of European forms of modernity and their relationship with colonialism. Chakrabarty's work is suggestive; rather than offering concrete advice as to what the process of provincialising Europe might

include. One indirect way of proceeding from *PE* is to work out the European implications of the advice he provides for the Indian provincialisation of European thought.

Alternatively, we can return to his staunch critic, Frederick Cooper, who purposely suggests three directions for the type of research required:

Can one really provincialize Europe? One way to do so is to dig more deeply into European history itself, and there is no more central myth to be dissected than that of narrating European history around the triumph of the nation-state. Much recent scholarship has exaggerated the centrality of the nation-state in the “modern” era, only to exaggerate its demise in the present... If one wants to rethink France from its colonies, one might argue that France only became a nation-state in 1962, when it gave up its attempt to keep Algeria French and tried for a time to define itself as a singular citizenry in a single territory. A fuller version of the story of European colonial empires in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can also come from telling it alongside the histories of the continental empires with which they shared time and space, the Habsburg, the Russian, and the Ottoman, and those empires that lay outside Europe, notably the Japanese and the Chinese, not to mention two powers with wide reach and an ambivalent sense of themselves as imperial powers: the United States and, after 1917, the Soviet Union. (Cooper, 22)

It is worth dwelling on this passage, because it offers a triple layered critique of a Eurocentric thought paradigm. Firstly, it questions the idea of national identity as simply derived from the establishment of a narrative of an internal organic national development that relies, for its persuasiveness, on a general point about a European predisposition to ideals of citizenship for which there is no historical evidence. Secondly, it draws attention to how different versions of Europe are challenged, dependent on whether they speak to the notion of ‘triumphant’ national spaces, or comparatively, they speak about that of empires (which also invites the question how overseas empires may be thought about in comparison to European empires and empires in other parts of the world). Thirdly, and most importantly, it suggests that readings of European national spaces cannot, in many cases, be carried out without due attention to those national spaces’ participation in the larger European enterprise of colonialism. This is particularly true for those countries with overseas colonies, without considering the extent to which colonial cultural priorities necessitated by the execution of power in order to keep control, fed back into the

nascent nationalism of late 18th and first half of 19th century European nation-states. In more contemporary terms this is clearly the point Cooper establishes, when he argues France only becomes a nation after the loss of Algeria. A similar statement can be made in relation to Portugal whose turn to a democratic based citizenship nation was enabled by the carnation revolution. The grounds for this revolution owed much to Portugal's futile colonial wars in Africa.

Historically, it is also possible to come up with examples that show how important events or processes in Europe derived at least partially from events and processes in the colonies. C.L.R. James established conclusively the links between the Haitian Revolution and the French Revolution, and Gauri Viswanathan showed in *Masks of Conquest* how the introduction of a British canonical education policy in India complete with British literary history, predated the teaching of British literary history in Britain itself. Simon Gikandi adds to this point when he states that one cannot really conceive of British identity outside its imperial connotations.

The question is, what does this imply in a Scandinavian context, where the empires were small or by the mid-19th century non-existent. Here the Scandinavian differences quickly become material. Sweden sought to make itself independent of colonial trade when it became clear it was no longer a significant player in international politics, even to the absurd attempt by Linné, among others, to cultivate tropical crops in Sweden. Norway went from its position as part of the Danish-Norwegian kingdom – where it was instrumental for example, in the commercial backing of Bergen merchants, and for instance, in the recolonisation of Greenland (through the work of the missionary, Hans Egede) – to becoming part of Sweden, albeit with extensive home rule. All the colonies of the former Danish-Norwegian kingdom fell to the Danes; and Denmark became the only actual, if minute, Scandinavian empire. This suggests that Denmark is the obvious candidate, in a search for colonial influence on domestic Scandinavia. Yet, in Denmark there is scant historical evidence that suggests overseas colonial administration directly shaped domestic issues. Nonetheless, when the abolition of the slave trade was under discussion, towards the end of the 1700s, arguments linked slavery to the peasants' mandatory labouring for the land-based aristocracy. Another example would be the way in which

domestic sugar producing crop and refineries in Denmark replaced sugar plantations towards the end of the 19th century; preparing the way for the end of colonialism in the Virgin Islands through the substitution of their single most important product for Danish consumption. (The Danish industry magnate, T.G. Tietgen, owned refineries in the Virgin Islands, but also established sugar refineries in Denmark specifically for producing sugar from Danish crops.)

Dwindling Scandinavian influence and status, especially after the Napoleonic wars, led to the loss of all Danish colonies in the tropics by 1915. In the North Atlantic the Second World War unravelled the Danish empire. Iceland became independent in 1944, and the Faeroe Islands stayed in the Danish realm (after a referendum in favour of independence in 1946 was rejected by the Danish government). Any decolonial aspirations in the north were reigned in by making both the Faeroe Islands and Greenland equal partners (in name at least) in the *Rigsfællesskabet*. The Danish 'possession' of Greenland represents the most direct example of (post)colonial influence on the domestic scene, as the Thule Air Base not only gave Denmark disproportionate influence in NATO due to the base's immense strategic importance, an importance that has continued until at least the end of the Bush administration in 2009 with its emphasis on Thule as an integral part of the misguided missile shield project.

Until now, I have discussed mainly political processes. Cultural influences of colonies on metropolitan centres should also be considered. There are difficulties in separating Danish attitudes to colonials from the attitudes of other European empires to their colonials. Racist attitudes can be as readily established in, for example, a Swedish context. Physical possession of an overseas empire need not make a key difference in respect of racism. Cultural attitudes and national self perceptions seem grounded in a pan-European, rather than in a specifically Danish, Swedish or Scandinavian, context. Still, an important lesson from Said's *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism* is that cultural attitudes cannot exist without a relationship that feeds them with fresh images to preserve the underlying implications of the longer view. These narratives are nourished by a mix of influences from academic and popular works of European observers, made available to a Scandinavian audience. Locke's work

on property and Kant's ideas about cosmopolitanism not only have a pan-European appeal. They have also outlived their original context to become central texts on how Europe conceives itself. Implicitly rather than overtly, they are also key texts for Europe's understanding of its 'others'.

Europe is, to paraphrase Chakrabarty, simultaneously an entity independent of the rest of the world, and a totality that can explain history's evolution. And although Scandinavia is peripheral to the European system (and it is a system, albeit with internal frictions) it imports this system and culturally translates it. A moment of cultural translation is independent of the actual historical moment, but also acutely aware of its own specific situatedness. To build on Said's crucial distinction between manifest and latent Orientalism, I can distinguish an overt moment of racism from the longer history of racist stereotypes in the Danish Cartoon Crisis. The longer history of derogatory representations of Muslims is unnecessary to the cartoons' material existence, but vital to their circulation. The controversy was, for many 'ethnic' Danes, a chance to emphasise the positive connotations of freedom of speech, rather than identify the insulting and derogatory stereotypes on which the cartoons drew. The cartoons would have had less appeal in Denmark without the negative images of Muslims established in the aftermath of September 11. The Danish national cartoon crisis was really international, in its dissemination (riots in the Middle East, boycotts of Danish products) and in its origins.

To return to the idea of Scandinavia simultaneously importing and culturally translating European thought systems using another example, that of political philosophy; for example, that of Kant, or of Locke, is another way of thinking through Chakrabarty's ideas as paraphrased above. The individual, thinking of the Enlightenment philosophers, provided a conceptual basis for a search for Scandinavian thinkers within Scandinavia. The cult around Linné and Grundtvig are two of the more conspicuous instances of the search for prominent thinkers. No attention, however, was paid to the examples used by the Enlightenment philosophers typically drawn from travellers' accounts, of exotic non-European peoples encountered around the globe. An interesting case of this is found in the account of black humans with tails, brought, some scholars suggest to Kant's texts on geography by a Swedish

captain, via Linné. Linné uses the account to create yet another of his specimens of creatures not fully human, laying down the groundwork for the later 19th century based scientific, or biological, racism. If this suggests knowledge also travelled from Swedish periphery to European metropole, this may initially seem to be the case. However, Linné's system of thought, outside his pedantic universe of plant taxonomy, was rejected by contemporary and later scholars. In this way his status as a peripheral Enlightenment scholar was cemented. To go further into this moment of cultural translation here would necessitate looking specifically how the ideas that came to Scandinavia, and those that travelled in the opposite direction, dealt with the question of, for example race and non-European otherness, but no such history exists, and it lies outside the scope of this article to consider the matter.

Instead, I conclude this article by considering how the moment of cultural translation may be understood in a contemporary context. A starting point would be to see if contemporary scholars have begun to look at the legacy of dominant centres of European thought during the Enlightenment and the Renaissance and the questionable ideas of the non-European other on which they were built. Part of this work lies indirectly behind the project of *The Nordic Colonial Mind*, (which in this current volume of *Kult*, however, is more preoccupied with images, representations in media, literature, history and popular culture). However, I suggest another departure, which I think will go to challenging the terrain on which Scandinavian self-perceptions were built. But to do this we need to move from Scandinavia to the Nordic countries, a move that will significantly change the perspective, since it includes in its ambit the domestic indigenous populations (Sami peoples), (previously) colonised indigenous populations (Greenlanders), and prior colonies (Finland, Iceland and the Faeroe Islands).

From Scandinavian to Nordic

Throughout this article, I have referred to Scandinavia rather than the Nordic countries, even though the focus of this volume of *Kult* has been on Nordic Europe. The privileging of Scandinavia over the Nordic makes sense from a position of contemporary relative homogeneity, and to a lesser extent historically. In the context of colonialism, all three Scandinavian countries were imperial centres, Norway more peripherally so than the others. The Scandinavian countries are famous for their

international activism after World War Two. This interventionist policy has been built primarily around the idea of the Scandinavian welfare model as an egalitarian model to be exported to the Third World through development aid. At least this was the case until the dismantling of the welfare model began to take its toll on the Scandinavian countries. The end of the Cold War internationally and the rise of the EU led to new configurations of power, new alliances, and new priorities.

Yet, if this provides a geopolitical logic for the choice of Scandinavia, a focus on the Nordic countries offers different possibilities, which interlock with this article's connection to the project on postcolonial, post-imperial Europe. In this discussion the first point to establish, is that the parts of the Nordic countries that lie outside Scandinavia have all been Scandinavian colonies. Whether Norway can be seen as a Danish (and subsequently a Swedish) colony, or as partner in the Danish-Norwegian kingdom, is a convoluted issue that cannot be adequately dealt with in this article. Norwegian nationalism has been premised on the idea of a prior semi-colonial status it was liberated from. However, compared to the rule Finland was subjected to, the Norwegian experience seems less colonial in nature.⁴

The second point is that the North Atlantic/Nordic colonies have all been regarded as natural extensions of the nation's territory rather than as 'overseas colonies'. (This view finds a parallel in imperial France's idea of Algeria as a natural extension of French territory, or as a French domain. And there is of course a curious example of this thinking in Norwegian claims to East Greenland as late as the 1930s.) The North Atlantic/Nordic colonies were seen as having quintessentially Nordic characteristics, not least in terms of Iceland, and to a lesser degree the Faeroe Islands, whose folk, as direct Viking descendants, were considered custodians of the Old Norse language. The frequent use of the polar bear in patriotic symbolism (for example, as used by the largest Danish film company, Nordisk Film), – despite the fact that polar bears can only be found outside the Scandinavian countries – represents a popular cultural example of the ready identification with the extreme north, as the true north, helped also by Scandinavian polar exploration. As for the former colonies, their status as colony

⁴ A similar discussion has taken place in Great Britain concerning the respective status of Ireland, Wales and Scotland. While there is little doubt about the status of Ireland, the Scottish situation is far more difficult to establish, primarily because of the Scottish participation in the exploits of the British Empire, but also other issues such as the Edinburgh's status as the pinnacle of British Enlightenment.

has had a fundamental influence on the development of a national consciousness, even if that was also developed, in part, in the metropolitan centre.⁵

Focus on the Nordic countries also reveals the Scandinavian countries in different light. The formation of national identity in the Scandinavian countries cannot be seen as an instance of isolated domestic development. Of course, a similar case can be raised concerning the international influences. The national revolution of the 1840s was a pan-European phenomenon and to view Scandinavian evolutions of a national consciousness (for example) as organic inner territorial developments begs the question, how influences can at the same time quite evidently exist, yet be ignored as decisive influences. To return to the formation of national identity in Scandinavia; a key consideration is what the possession of colonies meant in relation to what constituted the various national identities, and in respect not only to both Sweden and Norway of course, and also to an internal colonised people, the Sami. Interestingly, although there has been much recent focus on national identity, since the beginning of the latest wave of migrants to the Scandinavian countries, this self-questioning has preoccupied itself primarily with the narration of national identity as a unique, Scandinavian inner development. This inner development, for example in the case of Denmark, left the following question unformulated: what the possession of the Faeroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland and the German speaking Schleswig Holstein population (until the 1864 ceding); what this very different political-cultural-territorial reality might mean for how Danish national identity is conceptualised. Even if the Scandinavian relationship to empire is of an entirely different order to the British, the French and the Dutch, for example, it does not diminish the import of the role played by Scandinavian countries in the broader project of colonialism. Instead it invites those of us who work on the Nordic countries' relationship with colonialism, and its continuing presence in the contemporary post-imperial Nordic imagination, to write the Nordic colonial history into the various national narratives, and to ask how

⁵ The Greenlandic intellectuals cum political activists whose pressure on the Danish government paved the way for Greenlandic home rule in 1979 were educated partly in Copenhagen. Loftsdottir's article in this current volume identifies Copenhagen as the centre of the Icelandic nationalist movement. And Tom Nauerby in, *No Nation is an Island: Language, Culture and National Identity in the Faeroe Islands*, Aarhus: North Atlantic Publications, 1996, describes the nationalist Faeroese movement's strong power base in Copenhagen in the 19th century. Finland is the notable exception with its strong nationalist movement based in Finland itself. The importance of metropolitan centres to anti-colonial movements are not a case of Nordic exceptionalism. Hence London, Paris and Lisbon were centres of nationalist and anticolonial movements.

this legacy may be connected to contemporary Nordic internationalism, be it in the form of Nordic global intervention or in the Nordic reaction to global pressures on the Nordic countries.

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