

Fiche

The English-speaking world has known numerous waves of immigration and its territory has been built through generations of people coming from different regions of the world. A legacy, an origin, roots are most of the time a subject of pride and of recognition. They claim their sense of belonging, they assert their cultural and ethnic origins.; This is patriotism, that is to say a love and a respect for their homeland.

Celebration of a legacy

Many communities, many populations indeed celebrate their cultural heritage through literature, art, sports, traditions, food, even their daily routine and gestures: each difference, each particularity can be a proof of their **singularity**.

For instance, Walter Scott, in his novels and poems, such as *Rob Roy* or *Ivanhoe*, enhances the national narrative. Through his characters, he pays tribute to his homeland, Scotland, using the great figures of the nation to put forward the pride of being a Scot, of having a Scottish lineage. This was shown in the movie *Braveheart* by Mel Gibson when he **extols the merits of** William Wallace who became the hero of the nation.

The recognition of a Scottish spirit is also expressed in cultural movements like the Celtic Revival, a variety of movements and traditions in the 19th and 20th centuries that saw a renewed interest in aspects of Celtic culture. Artists and writers drew on the contents of Gaelic literature or Welsh-language literature. Traditions like the Highland Games can also be a proof of an assertion of a certain heritage: it aims at celebrating the Scottish culture through sport. It consists in watching bagpipes players parading, people wearing kilts, tug of war, toss the caber, etc.

A memorial heritage

This legacy is also prominent through the construction for the **preservation** of a **memorial heritage**, passed on from one generation to another, a **beacon of knowledge** whose aim is to **enlighten** the world, with architecture, culture, art or nature. The preservation of the great national parks in the USA like Yellowstone for example, are part of the heritage that needs to be kept intact in order to show to the future populations the grandeur of a nation and the beauty of a country; that is why the park rangers were created. Furthermore, in the United Kingdom, organizations like the National Trust still exist, and commemoration days like the Poppy Day are preserved. They are **landmarks**, or **milestones** in the History and the culture of a country. It is even more important for the immigrant communities as it helps them maintain a link with their homeland while enriching the culture of the country hosting them. This is what we can find in events like the *Notting Hill Festival* in London. It celebrates and illustrates **multiculturalism** in the UK. We can refer to Columbus Day in the US that is quite controversial because it only shows one aspect of the American culture while putting aside another, that of the natives and their longing to have their Indigenous Day. Through the celebration of their origins, we can frankly wonder if the idea of multiculturalism is at stake in the UK and in the USA.

Celebration as a fight

Besides, this celebration can go beyond a simple claim and can rapidly become a fight, a struggle to defend a territory or a border or to preserve a threatened heritage or culture as is the case with Native populations or minorities. In fact, **the Stolen Generation** in Australia greatly harmed the Aborigine culture. White people had indeed orchestrated an organized abduction, consisting in taking the Aborigine children away from their families to place them in white institutions with the aim of assimilating and converting them to Christianize: it was a way to "whiten" them and to make this native population disappear. The same happened with other native populations, such as the Maoris in New Zealand, the Native Americans in the USA, the Inuit in Greenland and in Canada, for whom the respect of their cultural and environmental heritage is a question of survival.

Closer to us, the fight between Northern Ireland and The Republic of Ireland concerning their border and their territories is quite symptomatic of this notion of cultural anchoring. The **period of the Troubles** has indeed marked the landscape and the spirits of many Irish men and women since each one of them had a member of their family touched, wounded or even killed during this conflict for the reunification of the two Irelands. Songs like *Bloody Sunday* by U2 or *Zombie* by the Cranberries or even *Nothing compares* by Sinéad O'Connor are examples of the mounting tension between the protestants and the Catholics, a tension that is still perceptible nowadays. It has become a matter of pride and territory and neither side wants to retreat since it would mean the end of their dreams and the end of their identity.

The identification of a territory is essential for many artists or writers who spend much of their time and career representing their homeland, their mother country, whether to praise it through odes and eulogies or to give a nostalgic if not critical vision. For instance, Willa Cather in *My Antonia* relates the toughness and the determination of pioneers and the nostalgia linked to this past. It is the story of a young orphan, Jim Burden (Burden like having a weight on his shoulders) who goes to live in the great plains of Nebraska with his grandparents. Once there, he meets the elder daughter of a Czech family, Antonia and the novel follows the life of these two characters while describing the way America was built by the first immigrants and pioneers.

Withdrawing into ourselves?

Actually, claiming a part of the territory and asserting our cultural origin can lead to some polemics, and can make people **stray from their mainstream path**. It can even lead to xenophobia or to people withdrawing into their shells. We can for instance allude to the confederate legacy in the southern states of the USA, a legacy that is symbolized by what happened in Charlottesville a couple of years ago. Afro- Americans and Civil Rights activists wanted to remove the statue of General Lee, the hero of the Confederacy during the Civil War. This figure was indeed controversial because it still symbolizes a period when slavery was tolerated and accepted in the southern states; therefore, it still reinforces the idea of a rampant racism. White supremacists refused to remove the statue and it ended with a confrontation between the KKK and the black activists that resulted in the killing of a young lawyer who was run over by a racist lunatic.

We can also quote all the events that are linked to the Brexit which was a way for the conservatives and the Ukip (the far-right movement led by Nigel Farage in the UK) to preserve their insularity, their singularity and above all their identity and national sovereignty.