



ETHNIC TOURISM AND NATIONALISM IN WALES

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Abstract: This paper examines the role of ethnic tourism in nationalist movements. The colonial experience is a double victimization in that cultural devaluation often accompanies material conquest and exploitation. Nationalist rhetoric reflects this experience, projecting a dual message of historical injustice and cultural reevaluation. This study focuses on the potential of ethnic tourism in Wales to serve as a medium for the nationalist message, by projecting an image of the Welsh both as victims of injustice and as bearers of a distinctive culture. Analysis of Welsh attractions suggests that tourism provides a resource for the nationalist movement, by furnishing yet another outlet for its message. **Keywords:** ethnic tourism, ethnic image-making, Wales, internal colonialism, staged authenticity.

Résumé: Tourisme ethnique et nationalisme au pays de Galles. Le présent article examine le rôle du tourisme ethnique dans les mouvements nationalistes. L'expérience coloniale est une double victimisation étant donné que la dévaluation culturelle accompagne souvent la conquête et l'exploitation matérielles. La rhétorique nationaliste reflète cette expérience en projetant un double message d'injustice historique et de réévaluation culturelle. Cet article se concentre sur les possibilités du tourisme ethnique au pays de Galles pour servir de véhicule pour le message nationaliste, en projetant une image des Gallois comme victimes d'injustice et comme porteurs d'une culture distinctive. Une analyse des attractions galloises suggère que le tourisme constitue une ressource pour le mouvement nationaliste en créant encore un débouché pour son message. **Mots-clés:** tourisme ethnique, développement de l'image ethnique, pays de Galles, colonialisme intérieur, authenticité montée.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary ethnic movements with roots in a colonial past must contend with the residual effects of two forms of victimization (Hechter 1975; Horowitz 1985). First, a legacy of economic exploitation and political oppression leaves the colonized group in a position of material disadvantage. Second, material forms of colonial domination tend to be accompanied by cultural devaluation, or the definition the group's culture as "backward" or "inferior." As a result, these groups' struggles are waged on two fronts. On the one hand, subordinated groups attempt to secure power and other resources as a way of overcoming the more tangible forms of victimization. On the other hand, they also confront the task of rehabilitating their cultural image, both to shore up solidarity within the group and to increase the group's status. Consequently, the "message" of this kind of movement is a dual one, com-

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prising both demands for redress of concrete historical injustices, and the revaluation of the group's culture (Banton 1983:196; Bracey, Meier, and Rudwick 1970:xliv-xlv; Hechter 1975; Horowitz 1985).

Ethnic tourism, in which a group and its distinctive culture are the main attraction (van den Berghe and Keyes 1984:344), can serve as a resource in both the material and cultural aspects of ethnic struggles. By marketing itself to interested outsiders, a marginalized group can improve its position economically, through the creation of employment and entrepreneurial opportunities (van den Berghe 1992:235). It can also acquire new political leverage *vis-à-vis* the state: if the state stands to gain from tourist revenue attracted by a group's cultural distinctiveness, suppression of that distinctiveness may be transformed into support (Graburn 1984; Wood 1984).

Most important for this analysis, however, is that tourism can also provide a group with a medium through which to broadcast a message about itself, its history, and its culture (MacCannell 1973). The visual and performing arts and literature are means of projecting attractive aspects of an ethnic image, yet the audience reached through these "media" may be dominated by fellow-ethnics. The ethnic image projected through tourism reaches an outside audience, and because attractions typically display aspects of a group's history and culture, they can provide an important opportunity for ethnic image construction and projection (Roosens 1989). When group members exercise some control over the content of this image (e.g., through a regional tourism board), then tourism has the potential to play a strategic role in a campaign for cultural revaluation and preservation.

What might this kind of tourism look like? The argument of this paper is that it can become a resource in an ethnic struggle when the message broadcast through its medium is consistent with that of the ethnic movement, which in turn reflects the particular forms of victimization experienced by the group. In the case of overseas or internal colonialism, this victimization will be both material and cultural. Thus, tourism contributes to the dissemination of the colonized group's message to the degree that attractions display the history of the group's conquest and domination by the colonizer, and the attractive features of the group's culture.

This study will examine the extent to which this argument holds true for tourism in Wales, which has a history as an internal colony of England (Davies 1989; Hechter 1975), an enduring nationalist movement and a well-developed ethnic tourism industry. Data for the study were gathered during fieldwork conducted during the summers of 1992 and 1993, and were derived from participant observation, interviews, brochures and guides distributed to tourists, and policy documents and studies published by the Wales Tourist Board (WTB) and other organizations.

THE COLONIAL LEGACY

Internal colonialism, as defined by Hechter (1975), is characterized by two key features. First, political domination of the peripheral region by the core is coupled with economic exploitation. Wealth generated

through the extraction of raw materials in the periphery is siphoned off by the core; the periphery thus remains economically underdeveloped and dependent. The second feature is the cultural distinctiveness of the peripheral region, the alleged "backwardness" of which frequently provides the core with a justification for the colony's economic dependency, and for the cultural division of labor. This way, the periphery's culture becomes associated with inferiority and economic failure, and while ethnic elites may seize opportunities to assimilate into the core group, this situation also proves fertile ground for cultural revaluation movements (Banton 1983), in which the periphery attempts to "reactively assert its own culture as equal or superior to that of the relatively advantaged core" (Hechter 1975:10).

The case of Wales fits this model well; it is "a classic example of an internal colony" (Davies 1989:60; Hechter 1975; but see Griffiths 1985: 203-207). After centuries of conquest, rebellion, and reconquest, Wales was annexed by England in 1536, bringing its history as an autonomous political unit to a close. Furthermore, union marked the beginning of a sustained campaign of cultural homogenization by the central state. The Welsh language was banned for administrative and legal purposes, and children were punished for speaking Welsh in the schools. The Welsh gentry rapidly became anglicized, so that a cultural division was superimposed on the class division, with Welsh culture increasingly identified as inferior, and associated with the "backward" lower classes. In 1866, for example, *The Times* asserted that "the Welsh language is . . . the curse of Wales . . . its prevalence and the ignorance of the English language have excluded the Welsh people from the civilisation of their English neighbours" (quoted in Stephens 1976: 158-159).

A cultural division of labor evolved in Wales well before the industrial era, with English and anglicized Welsh dominating a Welsh-speaking peasantry (Ragin 1979:623). It was the emergence of industrial capitalism, however, that made possible the large scale transfer of wealth from periphery to core. The expansion of the south Wales coal fields in the mid-1800s stimulated the migration of some 400,000 people from rural to urban Wales (Osmond 1985:xxviii), creating a new ethnic proletariat, as coalowners grew culturally and geographically remote. By the early 19th century, "[t]he great majority of the coalowners . . . were undeniably Welsh by birth; most of their share capital seems to have been local in origin rather than drawn from the public capital market. But their Welshness often ended there" (Morgan 1981: 69).

The virtually insatiable demand for coal led to the rapid industrial development of south Wales, and provided jobs in abundance. Yet conditions in the mines were appalling, and instances of unrest were frequent and sometimes violent. Living conditions in the mining towns were spartan, but most serious of all was the fact that south Wales's economy was utterly dependent on coal. The valleys offered virtually no other source of employment, and as a result, when depression hit in the 1930s and the demand for coal dried up, unemployment rates soared, reaching 38% in 1932 (Osmond 1985:xxx).

Hechter's internal colonialism thesis (1975) has been the subject of

some controversy (see Hechter 1985 for a comment on this controversy), as has its application to Wales. There is no need to enter into this debate here; for the purpose of this analysis, the utility of the approach is chiefly heuristic in that it highlights the fact that Wales's peripheral status has had both material and cultural consequences. Some critics (Griffiths 1985:203-207) have argued that the Welsh suffered no exploitation on a national basis, that is, beyond that suffered by the working class in England. Unquestionably, conditions in English mines were also appalling, but for the Welsh, economic exploitation was coupled with derogatory ethnic stereotyping. Furthermore, the fact that much of the wealth created in Wales was diverted into England had an adverse impact on the development of the Welsh infrastructure, a disadvantage experienced by the region as a whole. A strictly class-based analysis would not capture these additional aspects of the Welsh experience.

The decline of the mining industries (slate as well as coal) continues to impose a serious economic hardship, particularly as agriculture, Wales's other major industry, is in decline as well. The region is struggling to diversify its economy, and tourism is making a significant contribution to this effort. In 1991, the Wales Tourist Board estimated that the industry employed approximately 9% of the total workforce, and was one of the few industries in Wales exhibiting signs of long-term growth (WTB 1991a:6-7). The quality of employment in the tourism industry is an ongoing concern, however; since most jobs in tourism fall into the "service sector" category, they tend to offer low wages and little security or opportunity for advancement.

England's aggressive campaign of cultural homogenization has also had enduring consequences, both within and outside Wales. Within the region, there has been a steep decline in the number of Welsh speakers, to 19% as of the 1981 census (Balsom 1985:3). Welsh speaking is a critical ethnic marker, and the language is a valued aspect of Welshness even to non-Welsh speakers (Bourhis, Giles, and Tajfel 1973; Giles and Taylor 1978; Wenger 1978), approximately half of whom identify themselves as "Welsh," as opposed to "British," "English" or "other" (Balsom 1985:4). This situation has fostered a lingering ambivalence about Welsh identity, and raised the potential for intra-ethnic conflict (Giles and Taylor 1978; Osmond 1985).

In England, as a senior staff member of WTB has noted, attitudes toward the Welsh language and culture range from ignorance and indifference to outright hostility; school children are taught little about Wales, and the media continue to portray the Welsh in derogatory ways (personal communication in 1992). In a column that appeared in the *Evening Standard*, for example, Wilson asserts that most English people find the Welsh "dingy, untalented and sly," and, further, that "the Welsh have never made any significant contribution to any branch of knowledge, culture or entertainment . . . Even their religion, Calvinistic Methodism, is boring" (1993:4). In another column, this time in *The Times*, Bernard Levin refers to a militant Welsh nationalist as a "boyo" and a "fierce little fellow" (1990:16). In the same piece, Levin contemptuously describes Owain Glendŵr, a Welsh national hero who led a revolt against England in 1400, as "a singularly absurd figure,

not above giving himself toy titles, starting with Prince of Wales. The English mopped him up in no time." The stereotypes and stigma associated with Welshness have proved difficult to dislodge, and further contribute to the ambivalence surrounding Welsh identity. The nationalist poet R. S. Thomas concludes, "we are second-class citizens. And that status creates a very real feeling of inferiority among us" (1992:10).

The Nationalist Response

Welsh nationalism has, at varying times and to varying degrees, addressed both the cultural and material consequences of colonization. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the emphasis was primarily cultural, with renewed ethnic sentiment appearing among both elite and masses. The Nonconformist movement had a tremendous impact in Wales, and this impact was not confined to the spiritual realm (Jackson 1990). A byproduct of the Nonconformist movement was a resurgence of interest and pride in "Welshness" among the common people, while the gentry rewrote and romanticized Welsh history, and celebrated and invented Welsh cultural traditions (Morgan 1983). The Welsh elite in London were particularly eager to overcome the negative stereotypes associated with the Welsh, and promoted a romantic image of agricultural Wales. In so doing, however, they ignored the material troubles of industrial Wales, creating an ideological vacuum that had to be filled by nationalists in the 20th century (Davies 1989).

The nationalist need to address both the cultural and material legacies of colonialism is reflected in the history of Plaid Cymru, the National Party of Wales. Founded in 1925, Plaid Cymru's primary mission initially was one of cultural revaluation: "Our main task is a spiritual one. It is to restore a sense of Welsh nationhood, a feeling of pride in our own people, a pride in the greatness of our heritage" (Lloyd 1949, cited in Davies 1989:30). By the 1960s, however, party leaders and activists recognized the need to address the political domination and economic exploitation that underlay the devaluation of Welsh culture. Thus, while cultural preservation remained a key objective, the party took a greater interest in economic and political issues, and, in the 1970s, pursued more aggressively the goal of self government (Davies 1989). In 1979, however, a referendum on a proposed Welsh elected assembly was overwhelmingly defeated, and Plaid Cymru continues to enjoy only marginal electoral support. Yet, as Balsom and his collaborators have shown, there is significant latent or secondary support for Plaid Cymru, especially in certain parts of Wales; that is, a substantial number of Welsh voters consider Plaid Cymru to be their party of second choice, or otherwise express support for the party's goals (Balsom, Madgwick, and Van Mechelen 1983). Electoral statistics tend to understate the importance of nationalism in Wales. As one political scientist at The University of Wales pointed out, it is important to bear in mind that Welsh nationalism is "politically unsuccessful, but institutionally pervasive" (personal communication in 1992).

While Plaid Cymru has pursued nationalist goals through institu-

tionalized means, a number of other organizations have resorted to more radical tactics in an attempt to stem the tide of anglicization, and shift the balance of political and economic power in the direction of Wales. Beginning in the 1960s, Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg (the Welsh Language Society) held sit-ins, painted out English words on road signs, and bombed public buildings and water pipelines. This campaign has been credited with the 1967 passage of the Welsh Language Act, which gives Welsh official parity with English (Davies 1989), and Cymdeithas yr Iaith continues to function as a political pressure group concerned mainly with language issues. In 1979, a more extremist group called Meibion Glyndŵr, or "Sons of [Owain] Glyndŵr," began an arson campaign directed at English second and retirement homes in Wales, which not only threaten the Welsh character of some communities, but also drive property values out of the reach of most Welshmen. Additionally, according to one political scientist, a number of letter bombs have been received by estate agents in Wales and England who sell Welsh properties to English buyers, as well as by shops catering to tourists within Wales, and local Conservative party offices have also been targeted (personal communication in 1992).

These organizations vary greatly in terms of ideology and strategy, yet the two themes of cultural revaluation and consciousness of material victimization recur in them all (Stephens 1976). Whether tourism can be used as a resource in the dissemination of the dual nationalist message depends on whether these themes also appear in the ethnic images projected in Welsh tourist attractions.

Tourism in Wales

The Wales Tourist Board (WTB), established in 1969 under the Development of Tourism Act, is an independent statutory body that coordinates the planning, development, and marketing of Welsh tourism (WTB nd:3). According to its official policy statement, "the Board seeks to develop and market tourism in ways which will yield the optimum economic and social benefit to the people of Wales. Implicit within this objective is the need: to sustain and promote the culture of Wales and the Welsh language [and] to safeguard the natural and built environment" (WTB nd:7). The terms "optimum benefit" and "people of Wales" were chosen to convey the Board's commitment to development that brings long term advantages to the region as a whole rather than short term profits to a few individuals (WTB 1991c:5). Furthermore, cultural preservation is a recurring theme in WTB's policy statements:

It is not our intention at the Tourist Board to attract the largest possible number of tourists at the expense of our heritage, our language, and culture . . . [The CELTICA 1991] festival has given a special opportunity to draw together all kinds of activities, cultural as well as historical, *to create a strong image*, especially abroad . . . It is our aim to show the visitor that Wales is a bilingual country (WTB 1991b:4, 7; emphasis added).

While in the past, tourism and cultural preservation would have been seen as irrelevant to each other, the emphasis now is on “sustainable” or low impact tourism, and the language is seen as an important part of the natural environment (personal communication with WTB in 1992). A report on sustainable tourism prepared by WTB’s director of research and corporate planning emphasizes the potential contribution of tourism to economic diversification in rural areas, thus preventing depopulation and the weakening of traditional communities. In addition to its educational function, the report notes that “tourism has done a lot to improve the countryside environment by finding new uses for old buildings, thereby preventing dereliction, and by restoring traditional and rural crafts” (1991c:9). An address by WTB’s chairman to a parliamentary tourism committee echoes this theme: “In Wales I believe tourism does help to preserve the Welsh culture in fragile rural communities by creating jobs, which in turn help to stem depopulation” (WTB 1991a:6).

One example of how WTB actively tries to promote the language is the “Sense of Place” project, which is a grant-in-aid scheme to increase the number of bilingual signs displayed by businesses (personal communication in 1992). While these signs do remind visitors that they are in a culturally distinctive area, skepticism remains in some parts as to whether such schemes increase the profile of the language enough to offset the cultural costs associated with bringing large numbers of English speakers into Wales. As one member of the Welsh Language Society put it, “this whole thing with the ‘Sense of Place’ is that tourism is actually, in the long run, undermining the bloody place it’s supposed to be giving a sense of!” (personal communication in 1993).

A former marketing director for WTB, who has also conducted research on the impact of tourism in Wales and been involved independently in the industry, has also expressed reservations about WTB’s bilingual signage scheme: “They’re still obsessed with the idea of having bilingual signs up, and this ‘sense of place,’ which is cosmetic; it’s purely superficial” (personal communication in 1993). He argues that the real need is for an economic program that will bring more Welsh speakers into the tourism industry, where they are currently underrepresented, especially among managers and entrepreneurs. This underrepresentation not only has economic implications, but also affects the image being projected:

If the Tourist Board say, “Come to Wales because it is different, come to Wales because it is Welsh, in Wales you’ll find a warm Welsh welcome, I think that one could challenge that in many, many parts of Wales. Because there isn’t a warm Welsh welcome. There isn’t a *Welsh* welcome, to a great extent. And for that reason, I think that there’s this question of integrity: are we saying the truth (personal communication in 1993).

A less superficial, more meaningful approach, according to the above source, would be one where visitors encounter Welsh being used in a natural way, namely by Welsh speakers conducting businesses that tourists patronize. The incorporation of more Welsh speakers into the industry would not only make an economic contribution to Welsh

speaking communities, but also provide tourists a more authentic encounter with Wales's distinctive culture:

It won't just be a question of sticking up a bilingual sign outside. They can do that, but that also should be an indication that the people who live inside are people who speak Welsh, and who think in Welsh, and have got attitudes that are peculiar to the Welsh people, and know the historical and cultural context, know something about Welsh history, and *feel* Welsh as well (personal communication in 1993).

Tourism promoters walk a fine line, however, in promoting an image of Wales as culturally distinct from England. This distinctiveness is an asset in overseas marketing, as it offers an experience of a traditional, even somewhat "exotic" culture within the safety and comfort of the United Kingdom. Attitudes toward Welsh culture among the English are not uniformly positive, however. Within the domestic market, especially among those who have not been to Wales, there is evidence to suggest that the idea of an ethnically distinct, bilingual region within the United Kingdom sometimes arouses hostility (Schlackman Research 1984; Wanhill 1992:66). Yet a three-town survey of tourists within Wales, most of whom were English, indicated that a substantial proportion were drawn to the area by the Welsh language and culture, 24% 36% in the two towns located in *Y Fro Gymraeg*, the Welsh speaking heartland (ECTRC 1988). Marketing strategy is further complicated by the fact that, while overseas visitors stay longer, spend more, and are expected to increase in number faster than domestic visitors, the UK domestic tourism still supplies the majority of tourists to Wales—8.5 million in 1990, compared to 680,000 overseas tourists (Wanhill 1992:1,67).

Thus WTB's image-making task is a complex one, and the images are increasingly being tailored to specific sectors of the tourist market. The Board continues to emphasize the cultural distinctiveness of Wales in its overseas marketing, and a document titled "1993/94 Overseas Marketing Plans" presents market analyses and objectives for 10 countries, with specific messages and themes to be emphasized in the promotion of Wales. A couple of examples will illustrate the types of images being promoted:

In the case of France: Wales needs to capitalise on the movement towards the "green north" and position itself as a value for money, accessible alternative to Scotland and Ireland. Wales needs to be portrayed as a green, Celtic country and myths and legends should be used to enhance Wales' romantic appeal. The French should perceive Wales as a centre for outdoor activities and country pursuits (WTB 1993:20).

In the case of Spain: We need to convey the intimate rural beauty of Wales, together with the warmth of the Welsh people. Essentially Wales needs to be positioned as ideal for the independent traveller with a sense of adventure. We need to portray our rich culture with an emphasis on the Celtic connection. Wales should be seen as a new destination with something different to offer (WTB 1993:29).

In domestic marketing, WTB is more cautious in playing the culture card. Unpublished attitudinal research conducted by WTB suggests that English resistance to Welsh culture is strongest among the middle socioeconomic groups. In WTB's most recent "image building campaign," therefore, ads aimed at these groups omit cultural references and focus exclusively on scenery, accommodations, and so on (personal communication in 1993). Ads run in London, targeting the affluent Southeast and overseas tourists, do include culture in a small way, showing for example a photo of a men's choir alongside the shots of valleys and beaches. This campaign has been successful in England, but unpopular in Wales because its slogan, "Now There's Wales for You," uses a stereotypically Welsh pattern of speech. While WTB is changing the slogan, the experience suggests that a campaign aimed specifically at a Welsh audience is needed (personal communication in 1993).

The nature of tourism development in Wales has also attracted the attention of nationalist organizations. In its report on tourism in Colwyn, North Wales (*Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg* nd), the Welsh Language Society opposes tourism development in rural areas on the grounds that it poses a threat to fragile Welsh-speaking communities. The Society does, however, recommend sensitive, Welsh-oriented development of a traditional seaside resort:

Colwyn Bay should be developed as a Welsh resort by encouraging the use of Welsh on a large scale through its shops, including selling goods which use the Welsh language. Encouragement should be given to the talented local Welsh people to provide evening entertainment for the tourists, etc. There are very wide possibilities here, and advertising of these events should be aimed not only towards England, but especially perhaps, to Welsh people and to people from abroad who are looking for something different and special (*Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg* nd:5).

Plaid Cymru, the National Party of Wales, has also concerned itself with the images of Wales projected through tourism. Dafydd Wigley, Plaid Cymru MP for Caernarfon, served on the Select Committee of Welsh Affairs when it produced a report on tourism in 1987. Wigley wrote an alternative report, in which he states that one of the chief objectives of tourism should be "to bring knowledge of Wales and Welsh identity and hospitality to the consciousness of the people within and outside Wales" (Wigley 1987:xxxvi). Wigley shares with the Welsh Language Society a concern about the potential adverse impact of tourism on traditional Welsh communities and culture, yet he also sees tourism as an opportunity. He notes that Wales does not have a strong image overseas, and suggests that tourism is an underexploited resource for cultivating such an image:

How many hotels in Wales have scenes depicting Welsh landscape, culture or history? How many restaurants provide live Welsh music? How many pubs have pictures of the Welsh rugby team or Ian Rush? If we do not have a coherent image of ourselves within Wales is it surprising that we have difficulties in projecting a clear image to the

outside world? The Wales Tourist Board must be helped by other public agencies and by private companies to create a new "hard image" Wales (Wigley 1987:xxxvii).

This brief analysis of Welsh tourism development suggests that, while consensus regarding strategy and emphasis remains elusive, there is a great deal of interest in many quarters in using tourism to promote and protect Welsh culture, to consciously and deliberately craft the messages about Wales that are sent through the medium of tourism. The next question for this analysis concerns the content of those messages: do the twin themes of historical victimization and cultural revaluation, central to the message of the nationalist movement, appear in the major tourism attractions as well? If the hypothesized ethnic images are apparent in the castles, industrial museums, and cultural and folk museums—the most heavily promoted historic and cultural attractions in Wales—then tourism has indeed become another medium through which the nationalist message is transmitted.

Ethnic Image-Making in Tourist Attractions

A decisive point in the cycle of conquest, rebellion, and reconquest of Wales prior to its annexation in 1536 was reached in the late 13th century, when Edward I of England subdued the rebellious Welsh prince, Llewelyn II. Edward secured his regained territory with a series of castles, which are among the best preserved and most concentrated collections in Europe, and which serve as powerful reminders of Wales's history as a conquered nation. Caernarfon Castle is one of the most well-known, since it was the site of the investitures of Prince Edward (later Edward VIII) in 1911, and of Prince Charles in 1969. A multimedia exhibit on the latter event is generally celebratory in tone; yet a reminder of the old conflict also appears. The oath sworn by Prince Charles is displayed, along with the observation that this was the same oath "Llywelyn resolutely refused to swear and it led Wales into war."

Another exhibit notes that, during Edward I's time, "(t)he Welsh were forbidden to live inside the [city] walls and had to settle outside." Furthermore, "(t)he castle and walled town of Caernarfon, planted in the most hostile part of Wales by a powerful and ruthless English king, was of necessity planned as a mighty, impregnable fortress." The history of Wales's conquest and rebellion is recounted in considerable detail, and in a film one Welshman describes the castle as "that most magnificent badge of our subjection."

Other castles were built prior to Edward I's campaign, to defend the border between Wales and England. Abergavenny Castle, built in the late 11th century, was the site of what a tourism brochure (Monmouth Borough Council 1992) describes as "one of the most terrible atrocities in the long history of the border wars" (1992:4). A local Welsh leader, Seisyll ap Dyfnwal, had taken the castle and killed its Norman lord; eventually, in order to establish peace, Seisyll agreed to return the castle to the heir. The brochure describes how the latter "invited Seisyll, his son Gruffudd and other Welsh leaders to Abergavenny Castle

but, when they entered unarmed, had them slaughtered out of hand. He then attacked nearby Castle Arnold and killed Seisyll's infant son in his mother's arm" (1992:4).

The story of Wales's conquest by England and the heroic resistance of the Welsh is repeated in countless brochures, guidebooks, and displays associated with the castles. It is also told at the medieval or Victorian banquets staged by several castles, where tourists eat traditional Welsh food and are entertained with traditional music. At Cardiff Castle, the evening begins with the host telling the story of Owain Glyndŵr, leader of the last great rebellion against the English in 1400-1410. On the night the banquet was observed, the audience (composed chiefly of American tour groups) was left in no doubt that the Welsh rebels were the heroes of the story, and spontaneously cheered at the word "Welsh," and hissed at the word "English." The host pointed out that one thing a large number of countries — including Wales, the United States, and the others represented that night — have in common has been the need, at some point in their history, "to get rid of the English."

The story of the 1400 rebellion is also told at the Owain Glyndŵr Interpretive Centre, located in the town of Machynlleth, where Glyndŵr held a parliament in 1404. The Centre consists of a large room containing a few period-costumed mannequins; the walls are lined with placards that summarize Welsh history from AD 400. One of these links history and culture: "Prophetic poetry in Welsh was composed at various times of crisis in Wales from the ninth century to the seventeenth century. The poems were mainly political and proclaimed the longing for freedom of a threatened or subjected nation." Another focuses on the larger castles: "The King spent an enormous sum on these castles and they are evidence of the force used to conquer Wales and the strength of Welsh resistance to this conquest." A giftshop adjoining the main room sells books that provide a more detailed history lesson, while a free brochure ("Owain Glyndŵr—Machynlleth") describes Glyndŵr as "a man whom the Welsh held in awe"; "[r]evered as the last native Prince of Wales, he inspired a national uprising and revived the hopes of an independent Wales."

It would certainly be difficult for a visitor to this center or any of the major castles of Wales to remain ignorant of Wales's history as a conquered nation. Yet a more recent and perhaps even more powerful story of Welsh victimization is told at the numerous mining museums, where the scars of Wales's industrial history are on display. Big Pit Mining Museum, a preserved coal mine near the southern town of Blaenafon, is one of the best examples. The museum was developed by the Wales Tourist Board, the National Coal Board, and other agencies, "to preserve a characteristic and evocative element of the industrial heritage of Wales, for the education and enjoyment of a wider public" (WTB 1979:4). Another key goal was to improve the income, employment opportunities, and infrastructure of this economically depressed area.

Developers were especially concerned with providing as authentic an experience as possible. To that end, the surface buildings have not been altered, and the underground tours are led by ex-miners (WTB 1979):

[Tourists] see the pit as if it were frozen in time on a Sunday, with a skeleton force of maintenance men making sure everything is in order for another working week. Authenticity is the keynote. The place has, quite deliberately, not been prettified. There are no cosmetic touches at Big Pit, whose surface buildings remain as they were when this was a working colliery, warts and all (Big Pit Mining Museum 1992:28).

The attempt to avoid "prettifying" the mine has been entirely successful; it is a depressing place. While the guides tell of the comradery and improvised entertainment that were part of life underground, they also tell gruesome stories of accidents, child labor, unsuccessful strikes, and perpetual debt to the company store. At one point in the underground tour, visitors are enclosed in a short section of the tunnel, with doors closed on either side, and asked to turn off their lanterns. For a few minutes, in complete darkness, the guide tells how a child of seven would often have to wait in this condition until a maintenance man came to relight the lantern, since matches were forbidden underground.

Even in the main tunnels the ceilings are quite low, so that visitors have to stoop through much of the tour. The guides point out, however, that the miners spent much of their time in tunnels so narrow that they had to work lying prone. A guidebook sold in the museum's shop elaborates on this theme, showing pictures of women and children crawling through tunnels 22-28 inches high, with small tramloads of coal strapped to their backs. The accompanying text dwells at some length on the subjects of child labor, fatal accidents, futile strikes, and the devastating unemployment that came with industrial decline, citing a 1927 rate of 55% in Blaenafon (Big Pit Mining Museum 1992:16-17, 26). As 89% of visitors take the underground tour and about a third buy a guidebook (WTB 1984:14-15), the harshness of work in Wales's major industry is not likely to be lost on visitors to Blaenafon.

Another important message is that the profits generated in the mines were not invested in the mining communities. At another South Wales mining museum, the Rhondda Heritage Park, a film claims that "coal made Cardiff another Chicago," and lists some of the great projects built there with coal profits. The Marquess of Bute, who made from Rhondda coal the fortune that turned Cardiff into a major city, was not even Welsh but a Scotsman. (This point is also made on the tour of Cardiff Castle, owned by the Butes until it was turned over to the city of Cardiff in 1947. The guide mentioned that this created lasting resentment among the residents of Cardiff, who see the castle as "a huge symbol of capitalism.") The film goes on to say that all of this was "a far cry from the streets of the Rhondda," the clear implication being that the miners were generating a great deal of money, and seeing very little of it. Tourists in both Blaenafon and the Rhondda can see for themselves the primitive housing in which mining families lived. Additionally, terraced housing from Merthyr Tydfil, another mining community, has been moved to the Welsh Folk Museum near Cardiff, bringing the same message to tourists who do not venture beyond the capital.

While the castles and mining museums convey vivid impressions of the harshness of Welsh life over the centuries, there are dozens of folk culture museums around Wales that both teach Welsh history and celebrate Welsh traditions. The town of Pontypridd has a small cultural and historical museum where, in addition to seeing the usual furniture, clothing, and farm implements, visitors can watch videos recounting aspects of Welsh history. One of these, titled "Nonconformity in Wales" (Pontypridd Cultural and Historical Museum 1990), focuses on the rise and role of the chapels, but also is unusually explicit about 19th-century ethnic and class divisions: "The ironmasters and landlords were English, Anglican, and Tory. The workers in the new industrial towns and the small farmers were Welsh, Nonconformist, and Liberal; and this majority had no vote" (1990:13-14). In another video, "Dr. William Price, 1800-1893," the central figure is described as "one of a group who, each in his own way, attempted to hold on to a Welsh cultural identity in the teeth of Victorian cultural imperialism" (Pontypridd Cultural and Historical Museum 1990:9). A part of this "cultural imperialism" was the "wholesale theft of [Welsh] history . . . a small number of able self-educated men were determined to try to ensure that the Welsh did not go down as just a footnote in English history" (nd:8).

The largest of the folk culture museums is the Welsh Folk Museum, mentioned above, which is a branch of the National Museum of Wales. This is a 50-acre open-air museum with about 30 traditional buildings, including cottages, mills, tanneries, and so on, moved from their original sites and re-erected on the museum grounds. These show the life of the common people over several centuries, while the manor house and grounds show the life of the wealthy. Museum staff demonstrate traditional crafts such as wool spinning and saddle making. There is also a large gallery housing exhibits on Welsh history and culture, including music, folklore, costumes, and crafts, as well as the eisteddfod, the most important Welsh cultural event.

An eisteddfod ("session") is a gathering at which literary and musical competitions are held, scholarly papers about Welsh culture are read, and all manner of social and political commentary is made. The eisteddfodau were originally meetings at which the bards, guardians of Welsh culture, examined, licensed, and disciplined their ranks. The first recorded eisteddfod was held in 1176, but by 1700 the institution was dying out, along with the bardic order. In the 19th century, however, it was revived by romantic nationalists, and infused with invented Druidic "traditions" (P. Morgan 1983). Thus, in its current form, the eisteddfod is essentially modern; interestingly, the exhibit at the Welsh Folk Museum candidly admits this, as does a similar display at the Ceredigion Museum in Aberystwyth. The latter comments that "This ceremony bears probably no relation to the rites of the Druids, as was at one time thought, but it has now acquired an antiquity of its own."

Authentic or otherwise, the chairs, bardic regalia, prize purses, medals, and other accoutrements of the eisteddfod are colorful and uniquely Welsh. Together with the traditional clothing, music, and crafts displayed in folk museums all over the region, they certainly

underscore the distinctiveness and drama of Welsh culture. Furthermore, the audience seems to appreciate the performance: in the three-town survey of tourists mentioned previously, respondents indicating that Welsh culture is an important or very important attraction for tourists in Wales ranged from 44% to 75% (ECTRC 1988).

The juxtaposition, within the tourism industry, of the most appealing elements of Wales's culture and the most appalling elements of its victimization creates a picture of Wales that bears a striking resemblance to that conveyed in nationalist rhetoric. Thus, Welsh has become a "reconstructed ethnicity" which, according to MacCannell, emerges when groups "begin to use their former colorful ways both as commodities to be bought and sold, and as rhetorical weaponry in their dealings with one another" (1984:385). Before drawing conclusions about the utility of tourism as a medium for the nationalist message, however, it is appropriate to consider some of the negative aspects of tourism, and the degree to which these may limit its usefulness as a resource in the process of ethnic image-making.

Staging Authenticity

Ethnic tourism differs from other kinds of tourism in that the product being offered is an experience of the authentic, unspoiled, and exotic culture of the "natives," as well as an escape from the alienation of modern industrial society (MacCannell 1973). The irony of the situation is that the presence of the tourist destroys the very thing he seeks, by changing the "unspoiled natives" into "tourees" (van den Berghe and Keyes 1984:345-346). The source of tourees' appeal lies in their "otherness," that which distinguishes them from the tourist (van den Berghe 1992). The interest of tourists creates a market for this "otherness" by putting tourees' culture, even tourees themselves, up for sale.

If, however, tourees are to profit in this exchange, they must package their product in a way that will appeal to the buyer. To the degree that this packaging alters the nature of the product, the authenticity sought by the tourist becomes the "staged authenticity" provided by the touree (MacCannell 1973). The staging of ethnicity for the appreciation of a tourist audience places new external constraints on cultural expression: "when an ethnic group begins to sell itself, or is forced to sell itself, as an ethnic attraction, it ceases to evolve naturally" (MacCannell 1984:388). Cultural development is, to some extent, driven by consumer demand, which can force its expression into limited and often stereotyped forms (Roosens 1989:46-47).

Such influences are certainly at work in Wales. The Wales Tourist Board supports the work of traditional male voice choirs and folk singers, by providing grants that enable them to perform at home and abroad. While this support helps to preserve a cherished part of Welsh culture, some beneficiaries have privately expressed a degree of cynicism about it. Audience demand requires that they confine themselves to a traditional repertoire, making it difficult to push their art forward or advance musically (personal communication in 1992). Another example is a new "living history museum" near Cardiff, which recreates life in a 17th century household, with costumed staff members taking

the parts of family members and servants. The museum has attracted some criticism from Welsh speaking visitors because all conversation is conducted in English; while the original family might have spoken English, the servants would certainly have spoken Welsh. The museum is trying to recruit Welsh speaking staff, but there are few Welsh speakers in the area (personal communication with WTB in 1992). In any case, given the small proportion of Welsh-speaking visitors, and the hostility of many English tourists toward the language (Schlackman Research 1984), it seems unlikely that the museum will be able to maximize both authenticity and tourist appeal.

In an unusually frank discussion of the impact of tourism, one guidebook cites criticisms of the "museum-izing" of south Wales (Barrett 1990:69-72). The decline of the mining industry has sucked the economic life out of the valleys, and the communities that remain have become exhibitions for visitors who still have jobs. Critics such as Robert Hewison (1987) have expressed concern that industrial museums present an overly romantic version of a way of life that was never comfortable, and is now nearly extinct. Government employment schemes have put some ex-miners to work in the museums, but some of these express resentment at the prospect of representing a way of life that is no longer viable: "the unemployed of the 1980s paid to pretend to be the employed of the 1920s" (Barrett 1990:70).

Without a doubt, the valleys and other parts of Wales continue to suffer severely from the effects of industrial underdevelopment. Yet this charge that the museums romanticize both past and present is difficult to square with the images of mining communities conveyed in the museum tours and accompanying guides which, as discussed above, paint a very grim picture of the area's industrial history. As to the present, it would surely be a rather obtuse tourist who would miss the fact that the museums exist because the mines are *closed*. If the museums did not exist, many tourists would not venture into the valleys at all, and might well hold a more romantic picture of life there than the museums project.

A more serious consequence of the touristic "packaging" of Welsh history is the fact that responsibility for the uneven development of industry in the region, and the lingering effects of it, is never laid explicitly at the feet of the English. Instances of labor unrest are depicted as local matters, and not placed in a larger context of Wales's subordinate status as a colony of England. Since, as was mentioned previously, the majority of tourists to Wales are from England, such a direct approach would be a rather unpopular intermezzo in the tourist production. While the original conquest of Wales by England is sufficiently distant to obviate subtle handling, the message that Wales's current depressed status is the result of policies implemented in London is a part of the nationalist message that has not been transmitted through tourism.

CONCLUSIONS

The 20th century has seen attempts by a number of marginalized ethnic groups to resist the homogenizing influences of modernization,

and to preserve and revalue their cultural distinctiveness. The right of a people to define themselves culturally and to write their own history is a notion that has widespread currency in post-Enlightenment political thought, and is a critical weapon in nationalist ideology. As has been seen, Welsh nationalism has made use of this weapon, emphasizing in its rhetoric both the material and cultural forms of victimization that have shaped Wales's colonial experience. In the current ethnopolitical climate, both material and cultural forms of aggression are widely perceived as illegitimate. Thus, the nationalists' message constitutes a powerful moral argument for redress of these injustices by the aggressor state.

The degree to which this argument has succeeded in gaining material and cultural benefits for Wales is beyond the scope of this paper, which is concerned only with the question of whether ethnic tourism provides an additional outlet for the nationalist message. This analysis has shown that the castles and industrial museums of Wales, which are among its most heavily promoted attractions, together tell a compelling story of Welsh conquest and industrial underdevelopment. The folk museums provide the cultural counterpart, presenting Welsh culture in a positive light, and emphasizing its distinctiveness from English culture.

Together, these attractions create an image of a noble but conquered people, and one whose marginal status is largely the result of illegitimate English aggression going back many centuries. More recent instances of English aggression are, however, downplayed in tourism. Marshall McLuhan's dictum, that "the medium is the message," applies equally to tourism: it is not the place for polemic, but for subtle persuasion. Yet, because its somewhat toned-down message reaches an audience that otherwise might not be disposed to listen at all, tourism has the potential to make an important contribution to the task of ethnic image-making.

Whether nationalists themselves perceive tourism as a resource is a question requiring further research, but the limited evidence discussed above suggests that this position has gained some currency in the more established nationalist organizations (Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg *nd*; Wigley 1987). Of course, the answer depends in part on how one applies the term "nationalism," which covers a multitude of ideologies, goals, and strategies (Bracey, Meier and Rudwick 1970:xxvi-xxx). Whether the leadership of explicitly nationalist organizations in Wales appreciate the potential of tourism as a medium for their message, it is clear that many of the major tourism planners and developers, most of whom express some form of pro-Welsh sentiment, do see tourism this way. For them, tourism is a resource that not only can help the Welsh to recover from the material effects of economic dependence, but can also contribute to Welsh attempts to define their own history and identity, to project these to outsiders, and to preserve themselves as a culturally distinctive people. If, as this analysis suggests, they are correct in this view, then tourism has an important role to play in a type of ethnic conflict that is characteristic of the post-colonial era. □ □

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