

Introduction

Jacob Aall and the Two Faces of Dano-Norwegian Patriotism

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Jacob Aall was born in Porsgrunn, Norway in 1773, son of a local merchant, member of a prominent and well-to-do family. He was gifted and ambitious, and like all those who sought higher education in the Dano-Norwegian kingdom – and could afford it – he was sent to Denmark for schooling, first to Latin school in Nyborg, later to the University of Copenhagen, where he studied theology. He passed his state exam in theology in 1795, and returned home to Porsgrunn to an unfortunate debut as a preacher. Thereafter he set his sights on the natural sciences and undertook an extended study tour of the Continent with focus on Germany. With capital inherited from his father, Aall and his brother then bought an ironworks in Nes, which he successfully ran, later with the help of his son, until his death in 1844.

Aall was unusually engaged in the social and political questions of his time. He was present at the drafting of the Norwegian constitution in 1814 and served six different terms as representative to the national Parliament. He was also an active author, who produced works on Norwegian culture and politics and was both a translator and commentator of the Nordic sagas. Among his political treatises are *Patriotic Ideas* (1806), *On Culture in Norway with Regard to the Norwegian University* (1813), and his masterwork, *Recollections as a Contribution to Norway's History* (1844–45).

Thus, on the one hand, Jens Johan Hyvik's *Patriotic Ideas: Jacob Aalls Concept of Nation 1799–1814* presents a conventional update on an

essential set of events in Norwegian history, namely the period immediately preceding the Napoleonic wars, the independence of Norway from the Danish kingdom and the process of nation-building, begun in the early years of the 19th century and concluded in its final years. On the other hand, the study of the life and works of Jacob Aall presents evidence of a conceptual anomaly. It suggests that the notion of the national, central to Aall's understanding of modernity and the coming-of-age of Norway, contains two disparate, but necessary sides. This ambivalence of the national comes forth on varying levels and at varying stages of Aall's personal chronology and in the history both of the Dano-Norwegian union and the Norwegian nation-state.

Hyvik's book is original in that, while it charts the intellectual biography of a significant cultural figure at a turning point in Norwegian political history, it necessarily provides a map of the concepts that informed the self-understanding of that era. When we explore Jacob Aall's understanding of the nation, we necessarily understand the constellation of concepts and ideas, interests and identities that support it and its use in the political life of the Dano-Norwegian public sphere. 'Patriotism', 'nation' and 'constitution', are all moving targets, notions that must be understood in their own right and as a part of a grand and complex evolution of Norwegian identity.

The virtue of a new evaluation of Aall and authors like him is the advent of both new theories of nationalism and new empirical material within the fields of sociology, social anthropology, and cultural studies. National identity, cultural identity, ethnic difference, modes and logics of belonging and exclusion have reopened the study of Norwegian nation-building to new forms of research and understanding of process interest, and the link between *ethnographic* discoveries and *political* and *juridical* institutions mandated in their names. By re-reading the life and works of Jacob Aall we also re-read a chapter in the history of the concept of nation and review the intellectual change accompanying the hard geopolitics in the process of Norwegian independence.

A first formulation of the main opposition implicit in the concept of the nation connects the culturally or ethnically based collectivity – the Norwegian, on the one hand, and the rational, institutionalised form through which it becomes visible, on the other. We leave aside for the moment both the question of whether such an essential substance actually has any existence and whether the institutions created in the name of such a substance served any or all of the tasks they were created to. As Hyvik points out early in his analysis, the turn-of-the-century origin of

this opposition is Friedrich Meinecke's 1908 distinction between *Kulturnation* and *Staatsnation*. Meinecke's opposition has gone through many incarnations in the course of the short 20th century, restated in various analogies, and retooled for use in various disciplines of the social sciences and humanities. Similarly, historical analyses of nation-building processes in 19th century Europe have been rewritten in terms of a German versus a French model of collective identity and interest. The 'Romantic' understanding of the nation is frequently opposed to the 'Enlightenment' understanding, even debates over the correct project of European construction opposes a 'German model' of *laissez-faire*, non-political consolidation to a 'French model' of politicised and to some extent democratised government.

This opposition guides the interpretation of the life and works of Jacob Aall in the crucial period surrounding the birth of the Norwegian nation-state out of the disintegration of the Dano-Norwegian union. The result is, aside from the significant historical value of this rewriting of the life times of Aall, the revelation of the ambivalence in the opposition between the 'critical rational' model and the organic, ethnic and racial model. The unspoken conclusion in Hyvik's text is a meta-theoretical one, which turns common historiography on its head: The opposition between culture nation and political nation applied to early Norwegian modernity brings us less understanding about the 'reality' of the Norwegian, than it does about the 'reality' of the opposition between cultural and political rationality.

In the following summary introduction I will suggest that Hyvik's historical reconstruction and analysis of the concept of nation as it takes form in the writings of Jacob Aall, functions as a silent deconstruction of the very concept of nation. As I will try to demonstrate in what follows, the 'cultural' reveals itself again and again in Aall's work as the necessary substrate of politically institutionalised collectivity and that, reciprocally, a certain kind of original political rationality lies at the very heart of any understanding of national self based on culture or ethnicity.

Hyvik's central concept for the analysis of Aall's work in this light is *patriotism*. Hyvik points out that patriotism was an essential principle for any and all who were engaged in social questions in the latter part of the 18th century. The image of patriotism is one of rational universality, of common sense and virtue in opposition to feelings and the irrational. The patriot follows the ideal of the citizen, whose individual interests are inseparable from the interests of the collectivity: civil society. Thus

it is clearly an Enlightenment-oriented understanding of patriotism that dominates. Even though the emotional and even spiritual background of patriotism gives it the force to engage individuals in the support and advancement of rational civil society, this aspect is left unspoken, buried in the etymology of a concept that leads back to the 'paternal', to the familial, as the foundation of collective well-being.

Yet as the concept of nation gained currency in Denmark in the 1770's, the concept of patriotism was modified somewhat and the mixed notion of national belonging became enriched by that of a state-oriented civil allegiance. The force of belonging was given a new, double foundation. This double understanding of belonging was particularly important in the Dano-Norwegian union. Denmark-Norway was a double realm, two nations combined in one nation. The civil privileges and obligations of Danish society, in particular for a young Norwegian-born intellectual like Jacob Aall, schooled on Danish soil, stand in a complex relation to the privileges and interests of ethnic Norwegian society. This is the complex axis of Hyvik's analysis: Civil patriotism requires allegiance and attention to a collectivity that extends beyond the ethnic national. Aall is *both* Danish *and* Norwegian: Danish in as far as Norwegian and Norwegian through the recognition of the Danish crown.

On the one hand, patriotism was at once structured as a fidelity to the universal values that apply to all citizens of the state according to the principles of rational governance and social form. On the other, it was an obligation to engage oneself in the realization of one's own cultural identity in a movement aiming at crystallizing Norwegian national sovereignty based on the presumption of a Norwegian cultural nation. Patriotism, in the form revealed by Jacob Aall and many of his contemporaries – national patriotism, contains both these essences and both these functions simultaneously.

What fascinates about Hyvik's analysis with regard to national patriotism in the writings of Aall is that it shows signs of the same double structure one finds in contemporary arguments about European identity and the possibility of a European constitution. The European experiment, by all measures different from the Dano-Norwegian at the close of the 18th century, struggles to align itself with a new concept applicable and coherent in terms of the new kind of allegiance to be found on the European continent, among the EU member states, and among those aspirants to European expansion. The much debated notion of 'Constitutional patriotism' was coined by Habermas in the

midst of constitutional debates in the Federal Republic of Germany surrounding the question of the legitimacy of the Maastricht Treaty. It consolidates the pragmatic call in the EU for a bureaucratic, rational, universal and yet centralized form of governance, with the need to develop a subjective consolidation of Europeanness, a feeling of belonging and a willingness to adopt agendas on the European level that transcend national interests.

Patriotism before 1807

The ambivalence of the national can be traced back to the concept of 'patriotism' analysed by Hyvik in the first section of his study. The inner tension in the Dano-Norwegian cultural and political situation was one in which the Dano-Norwegian union comprised the Danish nation and the Norwegian. We say 'nation', but the concept of nation at the close of the 18th century had hardly matured and crystallized into the bureaucratically organized late-modern constellation of politics, economics, legal institutions, and, not the least, the monopoly of violence, which is commonplace today. The cultural foundations of the nation, its basis in national myth, national language, national 'character', and national 'genius' held far more force than in our globalized present where migration, communication technology and global economy contribute to a general detachment of national culture from civic identity. The Dano-Norwegian kingdom unites Denmark and Norway, and yet it is Denmark, which holds political and cultural hegemony over the union. Danish functionaries administer the Norwegian provinces. Those – like Aall – who enjoy the benefit from higher education, do so in Denmark. Norway has no 'national' university until 1811 (and this is, as we shall see, one of the major issues of Aall's social engagement), and lastly, the dominant written language of Norway is in practical terms Danish. All the central instruments for both constructing and imposing systems of universal value and understanding originate from the Danish culture. To this dominant political-cultural entity, Norway is only one particular element. It is a part of the Union, an inferior part, but nonetheless a component, which also exercises an influence on the national self-understanding of Danes. At the same time, Norway – as Hyvik (with Aall) underscores – is, at the end of the 18th century, a culture in its own right: universal over a certain field of Norwegian. Norway thus occupies

a strange position in the cultural landscape of its time, a position that will mark all its cultural debates up until the present. It is both part of a universal political union and aspirant to a unique political destiny, a beneficiary of a foreign culture and originator of its own, both continental and Nordic.

Hyvik shows the degree to which Aall's concept of patriotism fits into a complex constellation of varying understandings. Both the dimensions we have mentioned are alive and well in the body politic of the turn of the century. We see a civil-type 'state patriotism' (Sneedorff), a 'national ideal with romantic undertones' (Rothe), a 'rational patriotism' (Arentz) and a doubly-bound concept of fatherland, both 'natural' and 'civil' (Brun).

For Aall himself, the period up to the turning point in the Napoleonic conquests on the continent – 1807 – Hyvik sees Aall's concept of patriotism as predominantly oriented toward the Union, that is, toward a holistic allegiance integrating, without visible incoherence, both an organic belonging to the Norwegian cultural tradition and a loyalty to the civil society of the Dano-Norwegian union. If there is an evolution in his understanding of patriotism and the meaning of his Norwegian identity, it is most certainly from the rationalistic toward the Romantic, though Romanticism was a nascent concept in the early years of the 19th century, and gained inroads only toward the middle of the century. The gradual movement was from hegemony of the state-oriented, civil ideal toward the national-patriotic. And yet one orientation complements the other. In particular, the ability to advance organic or ethnic claims to belonging is guaranteed by the rational ones. It is clearly the early discovery of Aall and others that Enlightenment-inspired notions of freedom, equality, rights and representation serve just as well as Romantic notions of collective identity as they do anti-rational legitimisations of ethnic groupings. This double bind in the concept of patriotism spills over into a moral dilemma for Aall. Even though the Enlightenment ideal enables the subjective, Romantic national impulse, it places Aall between what he himself calls 'love for country and friends' and the 'utility' that he could realize by living in his own homeland, Norway. The wonderful irony of the opposition is that the 'love for country and friends' refers to his adopted home, Denmark, while his position of 'utility' is associated with his true, 'organic' national origin, Norway.

Patriotism during the war years

An immediate result of the Napoleonic excursions across Europe was a consolidation of Norwegian identity. The geopolitical alignment during the war years pitted Denmark against Sweden, leaving Norway in an unsure position. Hyvik notes that, although Aall expresses national Romantic sensations in his retrospective analysis of the years between the outbreak of war and the Norwegian national declaration, he expressed scepticism to the general wave of patriotism that built up in Norway in the first years of the war.

This is also the period in which Aall composed his *Patriotic Ideas* (1808–1809) and thus in the period during which he first had a more direct participation in open debate, and in the activities of the public sphere. Hyvik's reconstruction shows that Aall's nationalism was stronger than ever in this work. The difference of interest for us, however, is the conception of 'national interest' in the name of which and on the grounds of which Aall engages himself. The well-being of Norway is clearly determined by material conditions that may be bettered through resorting to utilitarian tactics. At the same time, the ambivalence of the expression 'national well-being' preserves a space for the subjectivism that seems to slowly emerge from Aall's Enlightenment guise. 'Nation' is gradually subjectivised in a fully national-patriotic way, yet in fusion with instrumental, utilitarian terms: 'the nation's forces', 'the nation's benefit', 'the nation's affair', 'the nation's wealth', 'the nation's culture', etc. The patriotic mission is an instrumental matter.

The pendulum swings back again toward the Romantic mode of national self-constitution in the following years, when Aall seems to once again accept and admire a type of national patriotism, in this case based on concrete argumentation in favour of a national university and a national bank, arguing (in what today would be called a 'functionalist' vein), that these institutions will, through their own development, lead to create national cohesion and eventually to the formation of national identity. Patriotism is thus seen as one road toward a higher quality of life, a higher standard of living, higher well-being. National patriotism is again cast in a utilitarian schema in order to give impetus to a national (Romantic) consolidation. Here, however, the tools are rational and anti-Romantic.

In the years between the Battle of Jena and the decline of Napoleon's culture-imperialistic destiny on the Continent the national question in Norway was debated on pragmatic and functionalist grounds. Those,

like Aall, whose aim it was to bolster the national cause, worked to reinforce its institutions in the belief that institutional consolidation would bring about the development of a national identity and thus national legitimacy. This proto-functionalist approach eventually leads to the establishment of the Norwegian bank in 1814 and the first Norwegian university in 1811. Aall argued for the latter on two grounds. First, he was confident that the introduction of what he called "culture" as well as continental traditions of European "science" would raise the pride and honour of those living in Norway. The "intellectual gifts" with which nature had already furnished Norwegians, he felt, made them perfectly suited to receiving both. Second, he felt that the Norwegian national welfare remained nature's unfulfilled promise. The qualities and gifts granted to Norwegians by the goodness of nature make them morally eligible for higher rewards than they have now.

This tension between the foreign "cultural" and domestic "natural" parallels to some extent – between the rationalistic and national Romantic, both contained, as we have seen, in Aall's concept of the patriotic. The opening of Norway to culture and science will permit Norwegians to fully unfold and realize their naturally endowed qualities. By raising the level of education through the founding of a national university, Norwegians will be capable of becoming more naturally Norwegian, more authentic, closer to themselves. In contrast to the Danish, the Norwegian culture is identical to its nature. And yet this nature requires culture in order to become the nature that it already is. The knowledge and culture provided by education and the welfare provided by the formation of a national bank will permit Norway to freely unfold as nature.

Aall expresses his patriotism by insisting on Norway's cultural and material development through the development of institutions of culture and banking. The patriotism described by Hyvik is thus not only a composite of the Enlightenment ideals of rationality and the national Romantic ideals of subjective freedom; it is also an assemblage of a double conception of development: a functional notion of education and political economy as vehicles for a national Romantic construction. One structural reason for this ambivalence is that Aall is careful to discriminate between the Norwegian nation and the notion of a Norwegian nation-state. The Norwegian as a cultural and natural collectivity can very well exist within the bounds of the Danish state. Even though the rhetorical impulse of *Patriotic Ideas* is constant, the word "state" never

appears. This ambivalence is further intensified by the fact that Aall also considers the Danish union as a "nation".

Hyvik proposes an interpretation of this situation by introducing a third essential opposition in Aall's national poetics, that between "general utility" and "proper utility". The former refers to the utility created in relation to the general interests of the collectivity as the basis of political decisions. The latter refers to the traditional Enlightenment notion of the transformation of the moral questions of larger social or cultural contexts by reducing them to questions of utility for the individual actor based on his/her own subjective position. According to Aall, in Hyvik's reading, the passage from the latter to the former is the consolidation of individual patriotic feelings in the collective impulse of a national assembly or unification. Utilitarian social and moral theory flows into theories of national patriotism and national revival through an interpretation and reduction of the notion of collective good to a sentimental or spiritual substance. The collective "benefits" of the national movement to be derived from the Norwegian collectivity far outshine the drawbacks of union.

The ambivalence of the national in Aall's theory of patriotism extends the earlier form we observed in his writings on Norwegian collective identity. Enlightenment utility theory and national Romanticism do not clash in the case of Norway, but instead they form a reciprocal supplement. Rationalism and Romanticism form the Janus-face of one and the same movement. These conventionally divergent angles of justification show themselves again and again to be far from distinct. Aall's innovation is his reconciliation of two ideologies of reason and culture.

Aall's application of utilitarian social theory flows into his general engagement toward Enlightenment philosophy. This is explicit in his reference to the program of philosophical Enlightenment. The Romantic force of the Norwegian national cause refers repeatedly to typical Enlightenment motifs in Aall's *Patriotic Ideas*. The "cultural ideal" is one of them; the significance of "progress" is another. Both take the form of an endless, paradoxical circle.

The cultural ideal is a dominant feature both in the period preceding the formation of the Norwegian nation state and in the formative years of nation-building. It expresses the terms of a more or less classic paradoxical circle: In order to attain the status of a full-fledged nation, a people requires a certain level of culture (*dannelse*); yet the condition of attaining such a national culture is nationhood. In Aall's context,

"culture" is to be understood as a certain self-understanding, self-consciousness, and knowledge of one's tradition, of one's place in history, of one's relation to others. It includes a certain level of scientific self-understanding as well: a consciousness of the "state-of-the-art" of one's nation, of society, and culture. In typical arguments both before and after the national breakthrough, the Danish elite in Denmark and the cultured elite class on Norwegian soil generally held it to be impoverished and underdeveloped, and considered this lack to be the greatest impediment to nation-building. National Romanticism responds by underscoring a different conception of "culture". Culture in the alternative sense is the pre-rational, pre-national, indeed prehistoric substance that grants the force of legitimacy to the national project. Culture is the ethnic foundation of a collectivity, the roots and traditions that give it cohesion, the language and customs that establish and enforce the borderline between one collective identity and the other. If one adopts this organic, ethnic definition of culture, the stakes of nation-building are quite different. In that case, it is the rootless, coldly rational intelligentsia that has no foundation for its claims to nationhood. The cultural elite is reconstrued as so many bureaucratic functionaries. The tension is never completely resolved in the course of Norwegian nation-building. It forms the background for parliamentary battles, institutional questions and, not the least, the matter of the Norwegian national language.

The question of "progress" preoccupies Aall in a similar, though less complex, vein. Belief in progress, in the improvement of the welfare of the Norwegian people as a result of the national movement and national construction, represents his version of rational Enlightenment justification for the Norwegian national project. Rational utility theory, incarnated as political economy, national planning, and development gives full support to the "rational patriotism" supported by Aall. Yet here again the Enlightenment rationality of progress in Aall's utilitarian theory of nation building soon reveals its debt to the national Romantic model. As Hyvik shows, Aall analyses a number of different areas of development, from farming, to shipbuilding, to small industry, trade, finance, education, etc. He suggests a number of formal and informal measures to be taken in order to support and further these activities on the national level, openly associating the Enlightenment with optimism about the ability to rationally steer industry with the aim of improving welfare. The key to the future, he argues, and the grounds for optimism about it, is the availability of well-organized principles of management, administration of

resources, both human and material. The sciences of industry, objectivity and sober analysis were the correct and most valuable grounds for patriotism. Aall contrasted this brand of patriotism with the kind he saw as leading Napoleon astray in his campaigns of 1807–1813. The patriotism he built his campaign upon and cultivated amongst his followers and those he vanquished was "irrational". The fact that Napoleon made use of the new technologies of war made available by advances in science, is not of direct interest for Aall. Nor does he comment the "negative" patriotism enabled by Napoleon's defeat in 1813. Thus though Hyvik aptly documents the absence of explicit Romantic images in Aall's work, his Enlightened patriotism reveals, as is typical for writing of his day, a deep entanglement with the Romantic mode.

Thus, from the beginning of Aall's authorship and up until 1814, when Norwegian national sovereignty became a reality, national Romantic patriotism was considered undesirable, a threat to the rationality not only of Enlightenment principles of individuality and democracy, but also to the practical benefits of popularising Enlightenment innovations in science and technology, market capitalism and education. At the same time, from Aall's point of reference, there was no contradiction between the notion of political rationality, with all that it implies in terms of nation-state sovereignty, and the continuation of the Danish union, which subjugated Norway to a foreign government. Aall differentiated between the rational-individual elements of Enlightenment thinking and those that carried implications for national or transnational collectivities. Granted, the Enlightenment was, at least for Aall, not yet politicised to the extent it would be at the moment of Norwegian independence. We will see, however, that this variety of selective Enlightenment would in a sense be transferred to the Norwegian struggle for national identity after 1814.

Naturally enough, as the Napoleonic campaign tended toward conclusion, the Norwegian public sphere became increasingly dissatisfied with the union arrangement. The Enlightenment ideal of patriotism, which had driven Aall's work in the first decade of the 19th century, came increasingly into conflict with the national sentiments of Norwegians. In *On Culture in Norway* from 1813, Aall again emphasized his conviction about the importance of the national as the bedrock for Norwegian interests. But now his views were aimed directly at the burgeoning national Romanticism on Norwegian soil. "National pride", he insisted, is nothing less than a "ridiculous vice". Enlightened patriotism remained virtuous, while prideful patriotism was characterized as

the contrary. Pride, he argued, was not the "child of Enlightenment". Advancing a nation's own goodness is nothing but "impure" patriotism. Building upon his differentiation between enlightened patriotism and national Romantic patriotism, Aall saw a clear line between "just" pride in one's nation and "unjust" pride, "pure" nationalism and "impure" nationalism. The former remained the traditional, classical, rationalist mould, based on the utilitarianism of the collective interests, the latter appealed, in Aall's view, only to utility of self-interest.

The movement toward a distinction between "rational" and "irrational" patriotism becomes strengthened throughout *Patriotic Ideas* as well as in the rest of his work. Rational patriotism is characterized as "authentic" patriotism. It corresponds to the moral impulse to instrumentalize and systematize Norway's infrastructure in order to raise the level of national welfare, organize its institutions to the benefit of all Norwegians, and, not the least, erect conduits for transmission of culture. This stands in contrast to "irrational patriotism", the name Aall uses for national Romantically inspired patriotism. This brand of patriotism is emotional, instinctual, based on ethnic or linguistic categories, undemocratic, free from empirical control and scientific method. The very expression, "irrational patriotism" is meant as a slap at the Napoleonic campaigns, built upon charisma and reactionary sentiment. The historical irony of the Napoleonic episode remains, however, to be fully explained: Although the Napoleonic impulse was largely motivated by an anti-Enlightenment, reactionary movement and the force of charisma of one man, the web of civil institutions created by Napoleon in France after 1797, and elsewhere as the campaigns wore on, more than anything in that century gave institutional sturdiness to the modern nation state. The intrinsic, minutiae rationality of the Napoleonic code and its attendant institutions changed the way we think about civic organisation, changed the nature of democracy in the direction of Enlightenment principles of rights and rule of law. The 19th century insistence on the opposition between Enlightenment and national Romanticism melts into thin air in the person of Napoleon. Contemporary debates on European construction resurrect this opposition and demonstrate that little progress has been made.

The Norwegian Historical Realm

Jacob Aall's reflections on the ethical and rational character of patriotic images of belonging reveal how strands of Enlightenment patriotism and Romantic patriotism resist abstraction from one another and indeed are co-determinate. Patriotism's double face mirrors the ambivalence of the Norwegian national movement in Aall's writing. Aall remains a stringent unionist while at the same time bringing Enlightenment principles to bear on pragmatic matters of the general welfare of the Norwegian people. This ambivalence of the patriotic impulse in the Norwegian national movement rests upon an even more fundamental ambivalence: the very essence of the Norwegian. Like the question of the destiny of the Norwegian territory in the union period, controversies abound over the origin and nature of the Norwegian. Again the stakes are extremely high. Either by way of rationalistic claims about the rights and privileges of self-determination or by the organic arguments based on the genealogy of a people, the question of what the Norwegian is precedes political decisions about its future status.

Aall's *Patriotic Ideas* is permeated by the slogan "Norway for Norwegians", and yet the meaning of the phrase remains caught in a tension. Norway is both a part of the Danish union and a "historical realm" in its own right. Of course, theories of pre-national identity are today commonplace in Norwegian sociological and anthropological literature. The identity of the Nordic peoples can be consolidated in histories of language, traditions, customs, etc. giving way to a more or less essentialist conception of the Norwegian. In Aall's terms, Norway is a *historical realm*, a deep historical consolidation of territory, customs and language. The deeper and stronger such ties between territory and cultural identity can be established, the more solid the strength of that identity in the present.

The correlation between *Norway*, this space or territory and the *Norwegian*, a cultural, linguistic or ethnic substance, advanced and supported by the study of the historic realm, holds political consequences, in the eyes of Aall and others, for the future of the Danish union. By the end of the union period (1536–1814) Norway had both the status of an integral member of the union *and* a historical realm with its own autonomous past and destiny. Denmark was without doubt the hegemonic power, and the question of Norwegian autonomy, through the union period, but particularly in the post-revolutionary years, was

always a question of rebellion, revolution and ultimately of emancipation.

Nonetheless, the image of Norway as a historical realm did not cause the uproar in the Danish court that one might expect. The modernized (post-revolutionary) ideology of the Danish monarchy had made space for the notion of state-patriotism. Indeed it exploited the ambivalence of patriotism we have mapped out in order to give modernized impetus to the dynastic power. The stakes were sky-high: Should the Danish crown succeed in bolstering the monarchical principles of hereditary right by inscribing them in the post-revolutionary principles of democratic sovereignty, then dynastic might would retain *carte blanche* privileges for the unforeseen future. The response of many monarchs was to establish a parasitic relationship to the hereditary legitimacy of historical realms.

The historiographic, and thereby scientific right-hand of the Norwegian national movement in the early years of the 19th century was the Norwegian Historical School. Aall had no formal attachment to this movement, but seems to have adopted its principles with few reservations, equating "homeland", "fatherland" with "nation" and "state" with little reservation. In this context the notion of autonomy was essential for Aall. The measure of Norway's identity, its self-presence, as well as of the modernity of the political institutions that govern it is its *autonomy*. Thus, on the one hand Aall decries, in *Patriotic Ideas*, that Norway's autonomy was lost at the moment it became integrated into the Danish kingdom in 1397. On the other hand, he emphasizes the importance and meaningfulness of Norway's autonomy in his arguments for the establishment of a Norwegian national bank. Autonomy in the latter case is something that can grow and change. In the former case, it is an unchangeable essence. Both of these conceptions contribute to Aall's understanding of the uniqueness of the Norwegian historical, cultural and political situation.

In the midst of his resolve for the Dano-Norwegian union, Aall expressed clearly that there was a Norwegian identity, a national particularity that stretched both deeply into the cultural and linguistic past and comprised a vast ensemble of local culture and local language in the present. Such a position equipped Aall with a palette of images and concepts available to him to describe his present. The most prominent and overtly canonized are those associated with nature. At the same time, the *meaning* of Norwegian history such as Aall interpreted it, was both

wound up in the particularity of its singular past, and in the wealth of the union that organizes its present.

The utility theory of union

Aall's use of utility criteria and the principle of rationality produces a double effect. Depending upon the level of application, the philosophy of utility provides arguments both for the preservation of the Dano-Norwegian union and for the national sovereignty of Norway. The utilitarian arguments of the kind that strengthened Aall's support for a degree of Norwegian autonomy in the form of economic progress and instrumentalisation, simultaneously served his arguments and observations in favour of continued association with the Danish union. Though he considered the union's existence to be self-evident, he was highly critical of its make-up, policies, self-evaluation and self-criticism. He expressed clear and principled ideas about the just consideration of the interests of others, about the conditions of life, and about the need to make reason of the last and final measure of the propriety of the Dano-Norwegian relationship. The rationality of the union would be the guarantee of its success. In the crux of the national question, the utility of the union made arguments for it persuasive.

Aall's fond justification of the 'utility' and 'rationality' of the union is a demonstration of the national bias in the measure of utility. Yet Aall's enlightened rationality cuts both ways. First, it articulates the right and utility of a national community to decide upon its own political fate (national self-determination); second, it supports enthusiastically the rational necessity of the more advance and progressive state to determine what institutional arrangement can provide the most utility.

In Aall's discussion of the Dano-Norwegian, emphasis on the rational benefits of the Union is nonetheless made contingent upon the Norwegians loyalty to it. The subjective force behind adherence to the Union is, however, not accidental. It is, asserts Aall, the very condition for its utility. The *practical* necessity of the Union is bound up with the subjective emotional cohesion holding the Union together. It is "love" for the King and "love" for the Union that in the end give the Union the force necessary to realize the rational elements, by which Aall characterizes it. Aall develops a rhetoric of the familial ties in order to describe the emotional relations binding Denmark and Norway. Loyalty to "our

Danish brothers" and "our sister land" was the essential affective basis for loyalty to the Crown. That loyalty functioned in turn as an apology for Aall's adherence to the construction and development of Norwegian national institutions. On the one hand, it might be argued that Aall simply contradicts himself, that he advances his rational theses about the significance of utility at the expense of his strong, but sometimes badly suppressed feelings of loyalty to his homeland. On the other hand, the double meaning of the Union and of Norwegian adherence to it shows similarity to a conceptual pattern we have seen before. What we earlier described as the ambivalence of the discourse of national Romanticism, is reflected in a kind of ambivalence in Aall's utilitarian theory of union. The rationale for union is utility. Union serves the rational interests of Norway and provides a sound basis for its enlightened development. At the same time, that rational utility would never see the light of day if the subjective, emotional, indeed national Romantic motifs were not *already* in place providing the basis for the interest that is subsequently rationalized through the utility theory of union. The Union serves the *rational* interests of Norway, but that very interest – arguably like any interest – was, from the outset, a subjective force.

Some critics in Denmark attacked Aall for this double-edged argument, seeing in it either a dangerous incoherence or simply a thinly veiled lack of loyalty to the Crown. His reasoning was criticized and he was suspected of indirectly attacking the Union and all that it stood for. At the same time *Patriotic Ideas* showed the degree to which the foundation on which unionists stood was itself already fractured. They argued for the Union on the basis of the need for personal loyalty to the Crown (and utility). Norwegians should feel personal attachment to the Union. And yet these personal feelings of loyalty were most naturally justified by the objective, rational, utilitarian value of the Union. The force of the feeling of allegiance had its foundation in the objective utility of belonging. Thus the ambivalence of the national-utility theory of union found other expressions in the discussions on the Union on the eve of Norwegian independence in 1814. It was neither an invention of Aall, nor the result of any kind of incoherence in Aall's concept. It was already generally *implicit* in the arguments made in favour of union as part of the foundation of such arguments. Throughout the years leading up to the Treaty of Kiel in 1814, the question of the *interest* of the Norwegian people was both the central issue for Aall and the axis about which the ambivalence of national constructions revolved. The relative incoherence of this tension from our point of reference, seeming to argue simultane-

ously for and against the establishment of a sovereign Norwegian state, is resolved by shifting the point of reference, from subjective notions of belonging, to pragmatic objective determinations of material welfare. In terms of the need for a national cohesion, by and large *subjective*, the Danish Crown was a desirable solution. In terms of the more objectively considered economic and technological needs of the Norwegian people, the development of autonomous Norwegian institutions, primarily bank and university, national initiatives were necessary though they did not immediately imply separation from Norway (but without separation from Denmark).

Engagement and Reform

In the years leading up to the Treaty of Kiel, Aall became active in several attempts at launching organized national movements in Norway. Through his participation in these movements, he clearly gave body to his own nationalist inclinations. Yet his engagement in the Norwegian national cause continued to build upon a two-tiered conception of the nation. Hyvik evokes two moments in this engagement. The first is what he calls the "loyal opposition" of 1809; the second is the initiative he takes toward establishing a local Society for the Advancement of Norway's Welfare in the county of Arendal/Nedenes.

Aall was the owner and operator of an iron works in his home county. He saw the daily struggle to find supplies for himself and those close to him as an expression of his national patriotic position on a personal level. His utility theory of belonging was reconfirmed on the level of private sustenance. Among other things, the Napoleonic campaign begun in 1807 and the following British blockade led to enormous problems in the supply of food and other goods to the more distant territories of the Dano-Norwegian Union. In 1809 Aall argued that the differences in availability of material goods should form the basis of a difference in foreign policy. The particularity of the Norwegian material situation, compounded by the proposition by others to unify Norway and Sweden, merited a particular set of political actions proper to Norway's interests. Attention to Norway's special interests, he argued, would only serve the interests of the Union. His engagement in local patriotism was an expression of devotion to the good of the Union. At the same time, the difficulties he encountered in supplying himself and

others with necessary supplies lead Aall to formulate a number of reforms relative to the independence of the Norwegian supply policies. The war on the Continent manifested itself as a war for self-preservation in the Norwegian provinces, a war for autonomy in terms of material well-being.

Similarly, the particularity of Norwegian interests relative to the Danish became pronounced in 1809 when Sweden announced an armistice with Napoleon. Both the Danish war effort and the British blockade of Danish ports continued. And yet both the political and geographic situation of Norway placed it in a position of less interest and relevance to Denmark. The momentary Swedish peace strengthened the Norwegian political identity. Discussion of a "separate peace" for Norway, independent of Denmark, became more widespread and, thereby, the conflation of a Norwegian political identity in opposition to the Dano-Norwegian. More and more Norwegian voices were raised in favour of joining Sweden in its armistice. Aall's position was to adopt an autonomous Norwegian foreign policy, thus interrupting the political union with Denmark. Aall's dialectical insight was clear: By severing the political ties with Denmark, the Dano-Norwegian Union could be protected and preserved, albeit on a different level. In 1809 Denmark-Norway achieved an informal armistice with England, making peace while still being allied with Napoleon.

Thus, as the particularity of the Norwegian political experience grew and developed its own autonomy, the universal validity of the earlier Danish political union was corrupted. At the same time, however, the generalization of Norwegian political autonomy rendered it a full-fledged member of the political union. The assertion of political particularity proved to be a stepping-stone to generalized political identity. The ambivalence of national identity persisted in the sphere of political union. The force of cohesion is resolved through the force of resistance and independence. Political Norway can *belong* to a union with political Denmark only when it has been *separated* from it.

In Aall's eyes, giving voice and political weight to Norway's own international policies would both support the Union and weaken the evolution of a Swedish coalition. Together with Michael J.P. Bille, a profiled marine officer at the time, Aall helped to organize a political action in favour of a governmental commission designed to explore the possibility for a separate peace. An appeal was formulated by Bille, and signed by many leading Norwegian figures.

The tension between loyalty to the Crown and engagement for the political interests of the Norwegian people once again became the form of expression for Aall's analysis of his times. Hyvik formulated this opposition somewhat apologetically as "loyal opposition with national elements", in appeal to the King to alter his Norwegian foreign policy. The coupling of loyalty and satisfaction of pragmatic political needs again appeared as an essential opposition, not an accidental one. Loyalty to the Crown was dialectically connected to the necessity of giving form to particular political actions destined to serve the interests of Norway alone. Subjectively steered loyalty was seen as a utilitarian mode of organisation. When Aall argues for the rational utility of the Crown, he resorts to arguments on the advancement of the Norwegian romanticized well-being. When he argues for the practicality of an independent Norwegian political setup in the face of traditional Union pragmatism, he sees it as a reflection of the depth, meaningfulness and cohesion of the Union.

Conclusion

Jacob Aall's conception of the national develops considerably across the crucial period 1799–1814. By underscoring the *constancy* of the varied sides of Aall's views on the Norwegian nation, Hyvik reveals the *ambivalence* at the very heart of the concept of the national. Aall's views on the Norwegian national core evolve in kind with the sophistication of analysis. Yet in the period from 1799 until the outbreak of the Napoleonic campaign of 1807, Aall's growing conceptual nuance exposes not only variations in the reception and understanding of the nationalist phenomenon, it also pries open the *internal* complexity of the very concept of the national. On the one hand, by developing forceful arguments about the needs and interests of the Norwegian people, he discovers that these interests challenge the nationality of that people. On the other hand, by sharpening his own arguments in favour of the Dano-Norwegian union, he rediscovers the essential national interest saturating its foundation. When, after the fall of Napoleon at Leipzig in 1813 and the international horse trade that eventually leads from the Treaty of Kiel to the constitutional convention at Eidsvoll, Aall permits himself to express national feelings on their own account, the concepts he argues with are attracted to a similar kind of ambivalence. Common to these two diachronically continuous expressions of national character is a

fundamental and well-practiced opposition between Enlightenment and national Romanticism. The Enlightenment ideals of rationalization, technology and progress rediscover themselves time and time again as the larger subjective, spiritual or cultural force, the national Romantic. Alternatively, the national Romantic vision of cultural and spiritual unity is ascribed, by Aall and others, to utilitarian values worthy of the best Benthamian analysis. These Enlightenment principles can be and are used as arguments both for and against the national according to the degree to which they are associable with the Romantic ideals that grant them power and cultural legitimacy.