

**Batna2 University**  
**Department of English**

**Course: CCL**

**Level: 1<sup>st</sup> Year LMD**

**Groups: 1/2/3**

**Semester 1/ Academic Year: 2021/2022**

**II. BRITISHNESS AND ENGLISHNESS**

**By: Kate Fox**

While I'm at it, this is a suitable place to apologize to any Scottish or Welsh people who (a) still regard themselves as British and (b) are wondering why I am writing about Englishness rather than Britishness. (I am referring here to real, born-and-bred Scots and Welsh, by the way, not English people.

While I'm at it, this is a suitable place to apologize to any Scottish or Welsh people who (a) still regard themselves as British and (b) are wondering why I am writing about Englishness rather than Britishness. (I am referring here to real, born-and-bred Scots and Welsh, by the way, not English people – like me – who like to boast of their drop of Welsh or Scottish 'blood' when it suits them). The answer is that I am researching and writing about Englishness rather than Britishness: Partly out of sheer laziness; partly because England is a nation, and might reasonably be expected to have some sort of coherent and distinctive national culture or character, whereas Britain is a purely political construct, composed of several nations with their own distinctive cultures; partly because although there may be a great deal of overlap between these cultures, they are clearly *not* identical and should not be treated as such by being lumped together under 'Britishness'; and finally because 'Britishness' seems to me to be a rather meaningless term: when people use it, they nearly always really mean 'Englishness' – they do not mean that someone is being frightfully Welsh or Scottish.

I only have the time and energy to try to understand one of these cultures, and I have chosen my own, the English. I realize that one can, if one is being picky, pick all sorts of holes in these arguments – not least that a 'nation' is surely itself a pretty artificial construct – and Cornish 'nationalists' and even fervent regionalists from other parts of England (Yorkshire and Norfolk

spring to mind) will no doubt insist that they too have their own separate identity and should not be bundled together with the rest of the English. The trouble is that virtually all nations have a number of regions, each of which invariably regards itself as different from, and superior to, all the others. This applies in France, Italy, the US, Russia, Mexico, Spain, Scotland, Australia – and more or less anywhere else you care to mention. People from St Petersburg talk about Muscovites as though they were members of a different species; East-coast and Mid-western Americans might as well be from different planets, ditto Tuscans and Neapolitans, Northern and Southern Mexicans, etc.; even cities such as Melbourne and Sydney see themselves as having radically different characters – and let's not start on Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Regionalism is hardly a peculiarly English phenomenon. In all of these cases, however, the people of these admittedly highly individual regions and towns nevertheless have enough in common to make them recognizably Italian, American, Russian, Scottish, etc. I am interested in those commonalities – like me – who like to boast of their drop of Welsh or Scottish 'blood' when it suits them). The answer is that I am researching and writing about Englishness rather than Britishness: Partly out of sheer laziness; partly because England is a nation, and might reasonably be expected to have some sort of coherent and distinctive national culture or character, whereas Britain is a purely political construct, composed of several nations with their own distinctive cultures; partly because although there may be a great deal of overlap between these cultures, they are clearly *not* identical and should not be treated as such by being lumped together under 'Britishness'; and finally because 'Britishness' seems to me to be a rather meaningless term: when people use it, they nearly always really mean 'Englishness' – they do not mean that someone is being frightfully Welsh or Scottish.

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**Assignment: After reading the text carefully, try to write few lines answering the question below.**

► **Do you think that regionalism may destroy the unity of any society?**