Nationalism

Edited by
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Preface

This reader on nationalism is an attempt to provide students with some idea of the many contributions that have been made by scholars from several disciplines in this rapidly expanding field of learning. For a long time the study of ethnicity and nationalism has been treated with reserve, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world. But the situation is now being swiftly remedied, and we are witnessing a remarkable growth of rich and penetrating works on every aspect of ethnicity and nationalism in all parts of the world. Given the explosion of ethno-nationalist sentiment and activity everywhere, the need for intensive study based on comparative analysis has become pressing. It is in this spirit that the present collection of some of the key texts in the field to date is offered.

Any attempt to encompass so vast a field as nations and nationalism is bound to be highly selective. We are all too conscious of the fact that limited space has made it necessary to prune our extracts and omit important material and contributions. The field of ethnicity and nationalism is expanding at an exponential rate and it is impossible to bring together in a single volume all the relevant new (as well as older) findings and explorations in this vast terrain. Where we have not been able to include important writers, we refer the reader to the Select Bibliography for each section, though even here it has proved impossible to include the writings of all those scholars whom we should have liked to acknowledge.

We are also conscious of the fact that some aspects of the field are undergoing radical change. This is especially true of the new work on gender and ethnicity, cultural studies and post-modern conceptions of the nation, and globalization and nationalism. To do justice to these and other issues would require a second volume. We are also aware that we have not paid sufficient attention to the important areas of nationalism and religion, race and nation, language and nation, and war and nationalism. All of these deserve separate intensive treatment.

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Turkey presents the clearest case of bureaucratic nationalism. In this country the possibilities for the development of various kinds of nationalism were the most limited in all of eastern Europe. There was neither an aristocracy nor a middle class in the Ottoman Empire, and the clergy could not espouse nationalism, an ideal that clashed with Muslim theology and political theory. The intellectual and political life of the Turks in the Ottoman Empire was limited almost entirely to the military and civil servants, including students of the schools that trained people for jobs in the bureaucracy. Ideas of change and reform were limited to this circle and always had the improvement of the state’s administrative organs and international position as its goals. Nationalism developed slowly under these circumstances. At first it was not an independent philosophy or movement, but simply an additional tool in the hand of those who tried to reorganize the bureaucratic machinery and strengthen the state. The first Turk who separated nationalism from bureaucratic reform and treated it as an issue by itself was Ziya Gökalp (1875–1924) whose first writings appeared in 1911, but his ideas failed to influence the Turkish masses, although they shaped the thinking of many of his politically minded contemporaries, including Mustafa Kemal. It was the latter who tried to make nationalists of the Turks, but even he insisted on a special kind of nationalism that suited his plans and his vision of his country’s future. His government promulgated the official nationalism of the Kemalist movement and opposed all its other manifestations. Not until the second half of the 1920s do we find significant nationalistic manifestations in Turkey that are free from bureaucratic sponsorship.

Popular nationalism, which could also be called populist or egalitarian nationalism, emerged in Serbia and Bulgaria. In these lands the long years of Ottoman rule had a leveling effect. The nobility had disappeared except in Bosnia and Macedonia where conversion to Islam had saved the estates of certain families. Not too numerous, these Muslim Slavs did not appear to differ from the feudalary and later hereditary Turkish landlords until the linguistic issue became important in the eyes of the Serb and Bulgarian nationalists. But because the lands that these people inhabited were not incorporated into Serbia or Bulgaria until the twentieth century, when nationalism was firmly enough established to be able to handle the seeming contradiction presented by the speech and faith of these people, their existence had little influence on the nationalism of Serbs and Bulgarians during its formative period. During these years the growing Slav merchant class was still too small to offer leadership. When it did, as in Bulgaria in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, it was both idealistic and realistic enough to develop an egalitarian policy. The views of the great peasant masses were, as those of this class usually are, basically democratic and directed mainly against landlordism. The facts that the landlords were mostly foreigners and that the traditional institutions and language of the peasantry had survived centuries of foreign rule thanks to the millet system furnished the ingredients for the development of popular nationalism.

This type of nationalism was developed by the native lower clergy and the Serbs and Bulgarians, mainly merchants, who lived outside the borders of the Ottoman Empire. The clergy’s grievances and goals were similar to those of the peasantry, from which most of them sprang. In their case, diocese took the place of land and foreign bishops that of the foreign landlords. The Serbs of the Vojvodina and the Military Border, the Bulgars in Istanbul, Russia, Wallachia, and later Serbia furnished the required sophistication and the theoretical nationalist justification that shaped the native ingredients into popular nationalism. Under the existing social and economic conditions this was the only form of nationalism that could go beyond theory in Serbia and Bulgaria. As in the aristocratic nationalism of Hungary and Poland, the popular nationalism of Serbia and Bulgaria was subsequently diluted by princes, bureaucrats, and the advocates of the middle class, but it never lost its basic approach and character. Bulgaria was called ‘the peasant state’ with good reason. It takes little imagination to find one of the reasons for the grave difficulties Yugoslavia had to face between the two great wars of this century in the conflicting approaches to nationalism that the major nationalities of this country favored. Serbia’s basic popular approach was weakened and became partly aristocratic when Beograd (Belgrade) tried to dominate Zagreb and Ljubljana. Neither approach suited the Croats whose approach was a mixture of the aristocratic and bureaucratic, nor the Slovenes, whose nationalism was bourgeois. Three different approaches to nationalism produced three different views of the state that their union had created. The tendency of the broad approach represented by the pan-movements, in this case Yugoslavia, was replaced and reversed when the varying nationalisms of three disparate peoples had to be reconciled within one state structure. Nationalism, which originally justified the demands for independence and union, revealed itself as a force that found its goal in itself.

They demand control over the state, as the highest available instrument of power, and strive for their political self-determination. The birthday of the political idea of the nation and the birth-year of this new consciousness, is 1789, the year of the French Revolution.¹

Two hundred years after the French Revolution no serious historian and, it is hoped, no one who has read up to this point in the present book, will regard statements like the one quoted above as other than exercises in programmatic mythology. Yet the quotation seems a representative statement of that 'principle of nationality' which convulsed the international politics of Europe after 1830, creating a number of new states which corresponded, so far as practicable, with one half of Mazzini's call 'Every nation a state', though less so with the other half, 'only one state for the entire nation'.² It is representative, in particular, in five ways: in stressing linguistic and cultural community, which was a nineteenth-century innovation, in stressing the nationalism that aspired to form or capture states rather than the 'nations' of already existing states, in its historicism and sense of historic mission, in claiming the paternity of 1789, and not least in its terminological ambiguity and rhetoric.

Yet while the quotation at first sight reads like something that might have been written by Mazzini himself, in fact it was written seventy years after the 1830 revolutions, and by a Marxian socialist of Moravian origin in a book about the specific problems of the Habsburg empire. In short, while it might be confused with the 'principle of nationality' which transformed the political map of Europe between 1830 and the 1870s, in fact it belongs to a later, and different, phase of nationalist development in European history.

The nationalism of 1880-1914 differed in three major respects from the Mazzinian phase of nationalism. First, it abandoned the 'threshold principle' which was central to nationalism in the Liberal era. Henceforth any body of people considering themselves a 'nation' claimed the right to self-determination which, in the last analysis, meant the right to a separate sovereign independent state for their territory. Second, and in consequence of this multiplication of potential 'unhistorical' nations, ethnicity and language became the central, increasingly decisive or even the only criteria of potential nationhood. Yet there was a third change which affected not so much the non-state national movements, which now became increasingly numerous and ambitious, but national sentiments within the established nation-states: a sharp shift to the political right of nation and flag, for which the term 'nationalism' was actually invented in the last decade(s) of the nineteenth century. Renner's quotation represents the first two, but (coming from the left) very distinctly not the third of these changes.

There are three reasons why it has not often been recognized how late the ethnic-linguistic criterion for defining a nation actually became dominant. First, the two most prominent non-state national movements of the first half of the nineteenth century were essentially based on communities of the educated, united across political and geographical borders by the use of an established language of high culture and its literature. For Germans and Italians, their national language was not merely an administrative convenience or a means of unifying state-wide communication, as French had been in France since the ordinance of Villers-Cotterets in 1539, or even a revolutionary device for bringing the truths of liberty, science and progress to all, ensuring the permanence of citizen equality and preventing the revival of ancien régime hierarchy, as it was for the Jacobins. It was more even than the vehicle of a distinguished literature and of universal intellectual expression. It was the only thing that made them Germans or Italians, and consequently carried a far heavier charge of national identity than, say, English did for those who wrote and read that language. However, while for the German and Italian liberal middle classes language thus provided a central argument for the creation of a unified national state—in the first half of the nineteenth century this was not yet the case anywhere else. The political claims to independence of Poland or Belgium were not language-based, nor indeed were the rebellions of various Balkan peoples against the Ottoman Empire, which produced some independent states. Nor was the Irish movement in Britain. Alternatively, where linguistic movements already had a significant political base, as in the Czech lands, national self-determination (as opposed to cultural recognition) was not yet an issue, and the establishment of a separate state was not seriously thought of.

However, since the later eighteenth century (and largely under German intellectual influence) Europe had been swept by the romantic passion for the pure, simple and uncorrupted peasantry, and for this folkloric rediscovery of 'the people', the vernacular languages it spoke were crucial. Yet while this populist cultural renaissance provided the foundation for many a subsequent nationalist movement, and has therefore been justifiably counted as the first phase ('phase A') of their development, Hroch himself makes it clear that in no sense was it yet a political movement of the people concerned, nor did it imply any political aspiration or programme. Indeed, more often than not the discovery of popular tradition and its transformation into the 'national tradition' of some peasant people forgotten by history, was the work of enthusiasts from the (foreign) ruling class or elite, such as the Baltic Germans or the Finnish Swedes. The Finnish Literature Society (founded 1831) was established by Swedes, its records were kept in Swedish, and all the writings of the chief ideologue of Finnish cultural nationalism, Snellman, appear to have been in Swedish. While nobody could possibly deny the widespread European cultural and linguistic revival movements in the period from the 1780s to the 1840s, it is a mistake to confuse Hroch's phase A with his phase B, when a body of activists devoted to the political agitation in favour of the 'national idea' has
come into existence, and still less his 'phase C', when mass support for 'the national idea' can be counted on. As the case of the British Isles shows, there is, incidentally, no necessary connection between cultural revival movements of this kind and subsequent national agitations or movements of political nationalism, and, conversely, such nationalist movements may originally have little or nothing to do with cultural revivalism. The Folklore Society (1878) and the folksong revival in England were no more nationalist than the Gypsy Lore Society.

The third reason concerns ethnic rather than linguistic identification. It lies in the absence—until quite late in the century—of influential theories or pseudo-theories identifying nations with genetic descent. We shall return to this point below.

The growing significance of the 'national question' in the forty years preceding 1914 is not measured simply by its intensification within the old multinationals empires of Austria-Hungary and Turkey. It was now a significant issue in the domestic politics of virtually all European states. Thus even in the United Kingdom it was no longer confined to the Irish problem, even though Irish nationalism, under that name, also grew—the number of newspapers describing themselves as 'national' or 'nationalist' rose from 1 in 1871 through 13 in 1881 to 33 in 1891—and became politically explosive in British politics. However, it is often overlooked that this was also the period when the first official recognition of Welsh national interests as such was made (the Welsh Sunday Closing Act of 1881 has been described as 'the first distinctively Welsh Act of Parliament') and when Scotland acquired both a modest Home Rule movement, a Scottish Office in government and, via the so-called 'Goschen Formula', a guaranteed national share of the public expenditure of the United Kingdom. Domestic nationalism could also—as in France, Italy, and Germany—take the form of the rise of those right-wing movements for which the term 'nationalism' was in fact coined in this period, or, more generally, of the political xenophobia which found its most deplorable, but not its only, expression in anti-Semitism. That so relatively quiescent a state as Sweden should in this era have been shaken by the national secession of Norway (1905) (which was not proposed by anyone until the 1890s) is at least as significant as the paralysis of Habsburg politics by rival nationalist agitations.

Moreover, it is during this period that we find nationalist movements multiplying in regions where they had been previously unknown, or among peoples hitherto only of interest to folklorists, and even for the first time, notionally, in the non-western world. How far the new anti-imperialist movements can be regarded as nationalist is far from clear, though the influence of western nationalist ideology on their spokesmen and activists is undeniable—as in the case of the Irish influence on Indian nationalism. However, even if we confine ourselves to Europe and its environs, we find plenty of movements in 1914 that had existed hardly or not at all in 1870: among the Armenians, Georgians, Lithuanians and other Baltic peoples and the Jews (both in Zionist and non-Zionist versions), among the Macedonians and Albanians in the Balkans, the Ruthenians and the Croats in the Habsburg empire—Croat nationalism must not be confused with the earlier Croat support for Yugoslav or 'Illyrian' nationalism—among the Basques and Catalans, the Welsh, and in Belgium a distinctly radicalized Flemish movement, as well as hitherto unexpected touches of local nationalism in places like Sardinia. We may even detect the first hints of Arab nationalism in the Ottoman empire.

As already suggested most of these movements now stressed the linguistic and/or ethnic element. That this was often new can be readily demonstrated. Before the foundation of the Gaelic League (1893), which initially had no political aims, the Irish language was not an issue in the Irish national movement. It figured neither in O'Connell's Repeal agitation—though the Liberator was a Gaelic-speaking Kerryman—nor in the Fenian programme. Even serious attempts to create a uniform Irish language out of the usual complex of dialects were not made until after 1900. Finnish nationalism was about the defence of the Grand Duchy's autonomy under the Tsars, and the Finnish Liberals who emerged after 1848 took the view that they represented a single bi-lingual nation. Finnish nationalism did not become essentially linguistic until, roughly, the 1860s (when an Imperial Rescript improved the public position of the Finnish language against the Swedish), but until the 1880s the language struggle remained largely an internal class struggle between the lower class Finns (represented by the 'Pennonene' who stood for a single nation with Finnish as its language) and the upper-class Swedish minority, represented by the 'Svecmen' who argued that the country contained two nations and therefore two languages). Only after 1880, as Tsarism shifted into its own russifying nationalist mode, did the struggle for autonomy and for language and culture come to coincide.

Again, Catalanism as a (conservative) cultural-linguistic movement can hardly be traced back further than the 1850s, the festival of the Jocs Florals (analogous to the Welsh Eisteddfodau) being revived not before 1859. The language itself was not authentically standardized until the twentieth century, and Catalan regionalism was not concerned with the linguistic question until the middle or later 1880s. The development of Basque nationalism, it has been suggested, lagged thirty years behind that of the Catalan movement, although the ideological shift of Basque autonomism from the defence or restoration of ancient feudal privileges to a linguistic-racial argument was sudden: in 1894, less than twenty years after the end of the Second Carlist War, Sabino Arana founded his Basque National Party (PNV), incidentally inventing the Basque name for the country ('Euskadi') which had hitherto not existed. At the other end of Europe the national movements of the Baltic peoples had hardly left their first (cultural) phases by the last third of the century, and in the remote Balkans, where the Macedonian question raised its bloodstained
head after 1870, the idea that the various nationalities living on this territory should be distinguished by their language, was the last of many to strike the states of Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria and the Sublime Porte which contend for it. The inhabitants of Macedonia had been distinguished by their religion, or else claims to this or that part of it had been based on history ranging from the medieval to the ancient, or else on ethnographic arguments about common customs and ritual practices. Macedonia did not become a battlefield for Slav philologists until the twentieth century, when the Greeks, who could not compete on this terrain, compensated by stressing an imaginary ethnicity.

At the same time—roughly, in the second half of the century—ethnic nationalism received enormous reinforcements, in practice from the increasingly massive geographical migrations of peoples, and in theory by the transformation of that central concept of nineteenth-century social science, ‘race’. On the one hand the old-established division of mankind into a few ‘races’ distinguished by skin colour was now elaborated into a set of ‘racial’ distinctions separating peoples of approximately the same pale skin, such as ‘Aryans’ and ‘Semites’, or, among the ‘Aryans’, Nordics, Alpines and Mediterraneans. On the other hand Darwinian evolutionism, supplemented later by what came to be known as genetics, provided racism with what looked like a powerful set of ‘scientific’ reasons for keeping out or even, as it turned out, expelling and murdering strangers. All this was comparatively late. Anti-Semitism did not acquire a ‘racial’ (as distinct from a religio-cultural) character until about 1880, the major prophets of German and French racism (Vacher de Lapouge, Houston Stewart Chamberlain) belong to the 1890s, and ‘Nordics’ do not enter the racist or any discourse until about 1900.

The links between racism and nationalism are obvious. ‘Race’ and language were easily confused as in the case of ‘Aryans’ and ‘Semites’, to the indignation of scrupulous scholars like Max Muller who pointed out that ‘race’, a genetic concept, could not be inferred from language, which was not inherited. Moreover, there is an evident analogy between the insistence of racists on the importance of racial purity and the horrors of miscegenation, and the insistence of so many—one is tempted to say of most—forms of linguistic nationalism on the need to purify the national language from foreign elements. In the nineteenth century the English were quite exceptional in boasting of their mongrel origins (Britons, Anglo-Saxons, Scandinavians, Normans, Scots, Irish, etc.) and glorying in the philological mixture of their language. However, what brought ‘race’ and ‘nation’ even closer was the practice of using both as virtual synonyms, generalizing equally wildly about ‘racial’ ‘national’ character, as was then the fashion. Thus before the Anglo-French Entente Cordiale of 1904, a French writer observed, agreement between the two countries had been dismissed as impossible because of the ‘hereditary enmity’ between the two races. Linguistic and ethnic nationalism thus reinforced each other.

It is hardly surprising that nationalism gained ground so rapidly from the 1870s to 1914. It was a function of both social and political changes, not to mention an international situation that provided plenty of pegs on which to hang manifestos of hostility to foreigners. Socially three developments gave considerably increased scope for the development of novel forms of inventing ‘imagined’ or even actual communities as nationalities: the resistance of traditional groups threatened by the onrush of modernity, the novel and quite non-traditional classes and strata now rapidly growing in the urbanizing societies of developed countries, and the unprecedented migrations which distributed a multiple diaspora of peoples across the globe, each strangers to both natives and other migrant groups, none, as yet, with the habits and conventions of coexistence. The sheer weight and pace of change in this period would be enough to explain why under such circumstances occasions for friction between groups multiplied, even if we were to overlook the tremors of the ‘Great Depression’ which so often, in these years, shook the lives of the poor and the economically modest or insecure. All that was required for the entry of nationalism into politics was that groups of men and women who saw themselves, in whatever manner, as Rutians, or were so seen by others, should become ready to listen to the argument that their discontents were in some way caused by the inferior treatment (often undeniable) of Rutians by, or compared with, other nationalities, or by a non-Rutian state or ruling class. At all events by 1914 observers were apt to be surprised at European populations which still seemed completely unresponsive to any appeal on the grounds of nationality, though this did not necessarily imply adherence to a nationalist programme. US citizens of immigrant origins did not demand any linguistic or other concessions to their nationality by the Federal Government, but nevertheless every Democratic city politician knew perfectly well that appeals to the Irish as Irish, to Poles as Poles, paid off.

As we have seen, the major political changes which turned a potential receptivity to national appeals into actual reception, were the democratization of politics in a growing number of states, and the creation of the modern administrative, citizen-mobilizing and citizen-influencing state. And yet, the rise of mass politics helps us to reformulate the question of popular support for nationalism rather than to answer it. What we need to discover is what precisely national slogans meant in politics, and whether they meant the same to different social constituencies, how they changed, and under what circumstances they combined or were incompatible with other slogans that might mobilize the citizenry, how they prevailed over them or failed to do so.

The identification of nation with language helps us to answer such questions, since linguistic nationalism essentially requires control of a state or at least the winning of official recognition for the language. This is plainly not
equally important for all strata or groups within a state or nationality, or to every state or nationality. At all events problems of power, status, politics and ideology and not of communication or even culture, lie at the heart of the nationalism of language. If communication or culture had been the crucial issue, the Jewish nationalist (Zionist) movement would not have opted for a modern Hebrew which nobody as yet spoke, and in a pronunciation unlike that used in European synagogues. It rejected Yiddish, spoken by 95% of the Ashkenazic Jews from the European East and their emigrants to the west—i.e. by a substantial majority of all the world’s Jews. By 1937, it has been said, given the large, varied and distinguished literature developed for its ten million speakers, Yiddish was ‘one of the leading “literate” languages of the time’. Nor would the Irish national movement have launched itself after 1900 into the doomed campaign to reconvert the Irish to a language most of them no longer understood, and which those who set about teaching it to their countrymen had only themselves begun to learn very incompletely.

Conversely, as the example of Yiddish shows, and that golden age of dialect literatures, the nineteenth century, confirms, the existence of a widely spoken or even written idiom did not necessarily generate language-based nationalism. Such languages or literatures could see themselves and be seen quite consciously as supplementing rather than competing with some hegemonic language of general culture and communication.


By definition, ethnoregional movements rest upon regional claims to ethnic distinctiveness. This is what distinguishes ethnoregionalism from other kinds of regionalism couched solely in terms of material demands. Ethnic distinctiveness results from the imputation of meaning and honor to linguistic, religious, or phenotypical markers. Though the nature of any ethnic identity is to some extent dictated by the kind of marker with which it is associated, the fact is that such identities can be established on the basis of a wide variety of these markers. Further, the meaning of the same marker can vary in different social settings. Thus the distinction between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland is clearly an ethnic one, but in France it carries with it no parallel connotation. There is more hostility and mistrust between Flemings and Walloons in Belgium than there is between German and French speakers in Switzerland. Last, it is noteworthy that in an area of Celtic nationalism in the British Isles there should be so much of a Welsh problem, yet so little of a Cornish one. That the solution to this last problem cannot be due to linguistic factors is clear from examination of the Irish and Scottish cases, where ethnic identification persists despite the nearly universal adoption of the English language.

The explanation of all of these puzzles must lie in the realm of history: the history of relations between Protestants and Catholics must be very different in Ireland than in France. But this is as vacuous a solution as it is unexceptionable. In what fundamental respects do the histories of these groups differ?

In order to answer this question it is necessary to have a theory of ethnic group formation. There are an infinite number of differences between the histories of any two peoples. Thus, serious exploration of the causes of differing patterns of intergroup relations must be guided by a theory that directs special attention to a small number of significant factors, allowing the vast number of remaining ones to be ignored because they are held to be causally insignificant.

Elsewhere, Hechter1 attempted to sketch out a simple theory of this kind. In Internal Colonialism it was argued that ethnic solidarity among any objectively defined set of individuals is principally due to the existence of a hierarchical cultural division of labor that promotes reactive group formation. This kind of a cultural division of labor is typically found in regions that have developed as internal colonies. While the majority of the ethnoregional movements in Western Europe appear to have emerged in just such regions’ several important examples—among them the movements in Scotland,1 Catalonia, and the Spanish Basque regions—do not easily fit this model. In more recent work1 a second, and equally important segmental dimension of the cultural division of labor was identified; this leads to interactive group formation. It will be seen that this second dimension has special significance for these apparently anomalous cases of Western European ethnoregionalism. Reactive group formation is largely a function of the group’s relations with other groups in its environment, while interactive group formation is at least potentially capable of being determined by the group itself.

The first (hierarchical) mechanism contributing to the formation of the ethnic groups is the extent to which group membership determines individual life chances. The greater this is, the greater the psychic significance of ethnicity for the individual—and, by extension, for the group as a whole. Alternatively, when one’s life chances are seen to be independent of inclusion in a particular ethnic group, the subjective significance of membership in that group will tend to recede or to disappear altogether. In societies where individuals are assigned to occupations solely onascriptive criteria, ethnic identity will be equally strong among all groups. But this is far from the situation in the capitalist democracies of Western Europe. In these societies ethnic identity will tend to be strongest among those groups placed at the bottom of the stratification system. This is because the structure of life-
with hostility to the French, though, interestingly, neither the Prussian nor the German national anthem). They formed up facing representatives of each class who held flags decorated with oak leaves, which had been bought with money collected in each class. (The oak had associations with Teutonic-German folklore, nationalism and military virtues—still remembered in the oak leaves which marked the highest class of military decoration under Hitler: a suitably Germanic equivalent to the Latin laurel.) The head boy presented these banners to the headmaster, who in turn addressed the assembly on the glorious days of the late Emperor William I, and called for three ringing cheers for the reigning monarch and his empress. The boys then marched under their banners. Yet another address by the headmaster followed, before the planting of an imperial oak (Kaisereiche) to the accompaniment of choral singing. The day concluded with an excursion into the Gruenwald. All these proceedings were merely preliminaries to the actual commemoration of Sedan Day two days later, and indeed to a scholastic year amply punctuated by ritual gatherings, religious and civic. In the same year an imperial decree was to announce the construction of the Siegesallee, linking it with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Franco-Prussian war, which was presented as the rising of the German people 'as one man', though 'following the call of its princes' to 'repel foreign aggression and achieve the unity of the fatherland and the restoration of the Reich in glorious victories' (my italics). The Siegesallee, it will be recalled, represented exclusively the Hohenzollern princes back to the days of the Margraves of Brandenburg.

A comparison of the French and German innovations is instructive. Both stress the founding acts of the new regime—the French Revolution in its least precise and controversial episode (the Bastille) and the Franco-Prussian war. Except for this one point of historic reference, the French Republic abstained from historical retrospect as strikingly as the German Empire indulged in it. Since the Revolution had established the fact, the nature and the boundaries of the French nation and its patriotism, the Republic could confine itself to recalling these to its citizens by means of a few obvious symbols—Marianne, the tricolour, the 'Marseillaise', and so on—supplementing them with a little ideological exegesis elaborating on the (to its poorer citizen) obvious if sometimes theoretical benefits of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Since the 'German people' before 1871 had no political definition or unity, and its relation to the new Empire (which excluded large parts of it) was vague, symbolic or ideological, identification had to be more complex and—with the exception of the role of the Hohenzollern dynasty, army and state—less precise. Hence the multiplicity of reference, ranging from mythology and folklore (German oaks, the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa) through the shorthand cartoon stereotypes to definition of the nation in terms of its enemies. Like many another liberated 'people', 'Germany' was more easily defined by what it was against than in any other way.

The study of the processes by which ethnic groups and nations are formed has been beset by a persistent and fundamental conceptual difference among scholars concerning the very nature of the groups involved, namely, whether they are 'natural', 'primordial', 'given' communities or whether they are creations of interested leaders, of elite groups, or of the political system in which they are included. The primordialist argues that every person carries with him through life 'attachments' derived from place of birth, kinship relationships, religion, language, and social practices that are 'natural' for him, 'spiritual' in character, and that provide a basis for an easy 'affinity' with other peoples from the same background. These 'attachments' constitute the 'given' of the human condition and are 'rooted in the non-rational foundations of personality.' Some go so far as to argue that such attachments that form the core of ethnicity are biological and genetic in nature. Whatever differences in detail exist among the spokesmen of the primordialist point of view, they tend to unite upon the explicit or implicit argument: that ethnicity, properly defined, is based upon descent. Since, however, it is quite obvious that there are very few groups in the world today whose members can lay any serious claim to a known common origin, it is not actual descent that is considered essential to the definition of an ethnic group but a belief in a common descent.

There are some aspects of the primordialist formulation with which it is not difficult to agree. Even in modern industrial society, let alone in pre-modern or modernizing societies, most people develop attachments in childhood and youth that have deeply emotive significance, that remain with them through life either consciously, in the actual persistence of such attachments in the routines of daily life, or embedded in the unconscious realms of the adult personality. Such attachments also often provide a basis for the formation of social and political groupings in adult life for those for whom they have a continuing conscious meaning in their daily lives. Even for those persons, particularly in modern societies, who have been removed from their origins or have rejected their childhood identifications, such attachments may remain available in the unconscious to be revived by some appeal that strikes a sympathetic psychic chord.

It is difficult, however, to travel much further than this with the primordialists. First of all, it is clear that some primordial attachments are variable. In
multilingual developing societies, many people command more than one language, dialect, or code. Many illiterate rural persons, far from being attached emotionally to their mother tongue, do not even know its proper name. In some situations, members of linguistically diverse ethnic communities have chosen to change their language in order to provide an additional element in common with their group members. In other situations, ethnic group members have deliberately shifted their own language and educated their children in a different language than their mother tongue in order to differentiate themselves further from another ethnic group. Finally, many people, if not most people, never think about their language at all and never attach any emotional significance to it.

Religious identification too is subject to change—and not only by modern cosmopolitan man engaged in enlightened spiritual quests. Shifts in religious practices brought about under the influence of religious reformers are common occurrences in pre-modern, modernizing, and even in post-industrial societies. Sometimes such shifts are clearly designed to promote internal solidarity and external differentiation from other groups.

Even one's place of birth and kinship connections may lose their emotional significance for people or be viewed negatively. A psychoanalyst might argue that these attachments at least pursue men through life and must always remain as potential sources of affective involvement with others. Yet, millions of persons have migrated by choice from their native places in both modern and traditional societies and, while many have retained an emotional attachment to their place of origin, many have chosen to assimilate to their new society and have lost any sense of emotional identification with their homelands. For those who do not migrate, one's place of birth identifies a person, but a sense of identity based on attachment to one's region or homeland usually does not become a politically significant matter for those who remain there unless there is some perceived discrimination against the region and its people in the larger society. Moreover, even the 'fact' of one's place of birth is subject to variation. A person is born in a particular village or town, but one is not born in a 'region', for a region is itself an artificial construct. A person may be born in Savannah, Georgia, and not consider himself a 'Southerner'. It is also possible obviously for 'Southerners' to be born out of their region. Insofar as kinship connections are concerned, the range of genuine kin relationships is usually too small to be of political significance. Fictive kinship relationships may extend the range of some ethnic groups rather broadly, but their fictive character presumes their variability by definition. Consequently, even the facts of birth' are either inherently of no political significance or are subject to variation.

As for the argument that it is not place of birth or kinship or mother tongue or native religion that defines ethnicity but a belief in a common descent that draws on one or more of these attachments, it must be conceded that the argument stated in this general form is not without force. Many ethnic communities do explicitly proclaim or implicitly assume that the underlying basis of their unity is shared descent. It is not at all difficult to find a broad spectrum of such communities. Broad as the spectrum may be, however, it will still not suffice to encompass all the culturally-defined collectivities whose members lay claim to special privileges because of some shared cultural features and who are united internally by their attachment to them, unless we define common descent so broadly as to include shared historical, linguistic, or religious experiences. In the latter case, however, we do nothing more than redefine descent to equal shared cultural features.

There are two more serious objections to the primordialist point of view on ethnicity. One is the assumption that sometimes accompanies it that the recognition of distinct primordial groups in a society is sufficient to predict the future development of out of them of ethnic communities or nations. This assumption, which is associated principally with the early European ideologists of nationalism, is no longer widely held even by their primordialist descendants, for it is clearly an untenable proposition. A second point of view is more widely held, namely, that ethnic attachments belong to the non-rational part of the human personality and, as such, are potentially destructive of civil society. This notion suffers from two defects. One is that it ignores the possibility that an ethnic identity may be felt or adopted for rational as well as affective reasons to preserve one's existence or to pursue advantage through communal action. The second is the assumption that primordial attachments are more dangerous to civil order than other kinds of potential conflicts, presumably because of their highly emotive character. However, there is no empirical evidence to warrant the view either that primordial conflicts have produced more disruption in civil societies than economic, class conflicts or that the former conflicts are less amenable to compromise than the latter.

While many primordialists will concede that some aspects of culture are changeable and that the boundaries of ethnic groups may be shifted in the course of social and political movements that promote their interest, they stand firm on one point, namely, that ethnic groups properly so-called are groups based on distinctive cultures or origin myths or patterns of exchange with other groups that have core features that persist through time. Even this bedrock position of the primordialists poses problems for the student of comparative ethnic movements. For one thing, while some ethnic groups do draw upon old and rich cultural heritages with a persisting core, many movements create their cultures after the fact, as it were. If, on the one hand, there are groups such as the Jewish people whose social and political identities have undergone innumerable transformations while a core culture has been retained and transmitted over the millennia by the rabbinate steeped in the Talmudic tradition and by ordinary believers following their daily 'self-defining routines', there are sufficient examples of other groups whose core
cultures are less easy to identify, but that have nevertheless formed a basis for cohesive and sometimes successful ethnic and nationalist movements. The mushroom growth of ethnic political movements in the United States in recent times provides at least a few examples of the latter sort that are more than ephemeral in nature.\(^{12}\)

A second difficulty with the bedrock primordialist position is that, even where there is a persisting core culture, knowledge of its substance may not be of much use in predicting either the development or the form of ethnic movements on behalf of the cultural groups in question. Certainly a knowledge of the core religious cultures of orthodox Judaism or of traditional Islam in India would have suggested that the least likely possibilities would have been the rise of a Zionist movement or of the movement for the creation of Pakistan, for the traditional keepers of those cultures, the rabbinate and the ulama, have consistently argued that a secular national state is incompatible with either religion. Of course, both the rabbinate and the ulama have been largely responsible for the persistence of Jewish and Islamic communities wherever they have persisted, but they are communities differently defined and bounded than are Israel and Pakistan.

Do these criticisms of the primordialist perspective then mean that any cultural content should be removed entirely from the concept of ethnicity? Is ethnicity to be seen from the extreme instrumentalist point of view as the pursuit of interest and advantage for members of groups whose cultures are infinitely malleable and manipulable by elites? Are ‘ethnic conflicts’ merely ‘one form in which interest conflicts between and within states are pursued’,\(^{13}\) and ethnicity ‘a communal type of organization which is manipulated by an interest group in the course of its struggle to develop and maintain its power’?\(^{14}\) And is culture change part of ‘a bargaining process’ that can be understood best in terms of a market model by which ethnic group leaders and members agree to give up aspects of their culture or modify their prejudices for the right price?\(^{15}\) The statements just cited come from a literature that tends to treat cultural factors in ethnic movements as epiphenomenal. Abner Cohen in fact has written about groups that create cultural markers for purposes of internal communication with each other in secret societies and dominant cliques.\(^{16}\)

The fact that new cultural groups can be created for purposes of economic and political domination, however, does not mean that the primordialist perspective is not relevant to our understanding of ethnic groups with long and rich cultural heritages. In other words, one possible route toward reconciling the perspectives of primordialists and instrumentalists may lie in simply recognizing that cultural groups differ in the strength and richness of their cultural traditions and even more importantly in the strength of traditional institutions and social structure. The persistence over time, for example, of religiously-based communal institutions among Jews and Muslims wherever they are found means that these cultural groups always form potential bases for ethnic movements. However, the mere persistence of the core religious traditions of such groups as these offers no prospect for predicting whether or when ethnic movements will arise among them and whether or not such movements will be effective in mobilizing their members. Such cultural persistence suggests only that it is likely that the groups can be mobilized on the basis of specific appeals and not others and that, when ethnic appeals are made, the pre-existing communal and educational institutions of the groups will, if made available for the purpose, provide an effective means of political mobilization. In short, the values and institutions of a persisting cultural group will suggest what appeals and symbols will be effective and what will not and may also provide traditional avenues for the mobilization and organization of the group in new directions. Nevertheless, the leaders of ethnic movements invariably select from traditional cultures only those aspects that they think will serve to unite the group and that will be useful in promoting the interests of the group as they define them. When they do so, moreover, they affect the self-definition of the group and its boundaries, often to such an extent that the ethnic community or nationality created out of a pre-existing ethnic group may be a very different social formation from its progenitor. Or, in the case of groups that have had a sense of identity and community even before ethnic mobilization takes place and that contain elites whose traditional right to define the group and its boundaries are well-established, ethnic mobilization led by others than the traditional elites will introduce into the group conflicting definitions of its essence and extent.

Consequently, whether or not the culture of the group is ancient or is newly-fashioned, the study of ethnicity and nationality is in large part the study of politically induced cultural change. More precisely, it is the study of the process by which elites and counter-elites within ethnic groups select aspects of the group's culture, attach new value and meaning to them, and use them as symbols to mobilize the group, to defend its interests, and to compete with other groups. In this process, those elites have an advantage whose leaders can operate most skillfully in relation both to the deeply-felt primordial attachments of group members and the shifting relationships of politics.

The differences of viewpoint between primordialists and instrumentalists have also found expression among South Asia specialists in their efforts to interpret and explain ethnic and nationality movements there. The differences have been most pronounced in discussions of the origins and development of Muslim separatism and the Pakistan movement. From the primordialist point of view, which was also the view of the leaders of Muslim separatism, Hindus and Muslims constituted in pre-modern times distinct civilizations destined to develop into separate nations once political mobilization took place. The differences between the two cultures were so great that it was not conceivable that assimilation of the two could take place and that a single national culture
could be created to which both would contribute. The contrary view is that the cultural and religious differences between Hindus and Muslims were not so great as to rule out the creation of either a composite national culture or at least a secular political union in which those aspects of group culture that could not be shared would be relegated to the private sphere. From this point of view, Muslim separatism was not pre-ordained, but resulted from the conscious manipulation of selected symbols of Muslim identity by Muslim elite groups in economic and political competition with each other and with elite groups among Hindus.11

This issue has recently been joined again in an exchange between Francis Robinson and me. Although Robinson and I agree on many aspects of the Muslim separatist movement, an apparent difference persists concerning the relative weight to be assigned to the pervasiveness of Islamic values, to the strength of Muslim religious institutions, and to the extent to which a Muslim identity existed in the nineteenth century as constraining factors on the possibilities for Hindu-Muslim cooperation and on the freedom of Muslim elite groups to manipulate symbols of Muslim culture in the political process. Robinson argues that 'the religious differences' between Muslims and Hindus in the nineteenth century, before social mobilization began, 'were fundamental' and that some of those differences, such as on idol worship, on monotheism, and on attitudes toward the cow 'created a basic antipathy' between the two communities 'which helped to set them apart as modern politics and self-governing institutions developed in town, district and province.' The Muslims of Uttar Pradesh (UP), primed by these fundamental religious differences, already conscious of themselves as a separate community, and aware that they were a minority, 'feared that the Hindu majority would not only interfere with their religious practices such as cow-sacrifice, but also...would discriminate against them' on such matters 'as education and employment.'12 In short, Hindus and Muslims in nineteenth-century India were separate religious communities predisposed towards, if not necessarily pre-ordained as, separate national groups. If it was not a foregone conclusion that Hindus and Muslims would go separate ways politically, it was unthinkable that the separate identities of either group could be subordinated or assimilated to the other.

Robinson's argument is not entirely inconsistent with the model developed in my Language, Religion and Politics in North India which, although it emphasized the roles played by elite groups in manipulating cultural symbols to create political identities, did not ignore either pre-existing cultural values or inter-group attitudes as factors influencing the ability of elites to manipulate particular symbols. In fact, the model developed in Language, Religion and Politics did not take off from an extreme instrumentalist perspective or from the assumption that either elites or the groups whose interests they claim to represent are cultural blank slates. Rather, it began with the following question: Given the existence in a multi-ethnic society of an array of cultural distinctions among peoples and of actual and potential cultural conflicts among them, what factors are critical in determining which of those distinctions, if any, will be used to build political identities? In the model developed in Language, Religion and Politics, the factors emphasized were the roles played by particular elite groups, the balance between rates of social mobilization and assimilation between ethnic groups, the building of political organizations to promote group identities and interests, and the influence of government policies. However, it was assumed that the pre-existing cultures or religious practices of ethnic groups are infinitely malleable by elites.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the specific origins of nationalism, it may be useful to recapitulate the main propositions put forward thus far. Essentially, I have been arguing that the very possibility of imagining the nation only arose historically when, and where, three fundamental cultural conceptions, all of great antiquity, lost their axiological grip on men's minds. The first of these was the idea that a particular script-language offered privileged access to ontological truth, precisely because it was an inseparable part of that truth. It was this idea that called into being the great transcontinental sodalities of Christendom, the Ummah Islam, and the rest. Second was the belief that society was naturally organized around and under high centres—monarchs who were persons apart from other human beings and who ruled by some form of cosmological (divine) dispensation. Human loyalties were necessarily hierarchical and centripetal because the ruler, like the sacred script, was a node of access to being and inherent in it. Third was a conception of temporality in which cosmology and history were indistinguishable, the origins of the world and of men essentially identical. Combined, these ideas rooted human lives firmly in the very nature of things, giving certain meaning to the everyday fatalities of existence (above all death, loss, and servitude) and offering, in various ways, redemption from them.

The slow, uneven decline of these interlinked certainties, first in Western Europe, later elsewhere, under the impact of economic change, 'discoveries' (social and scientific), and the development of increasingly rapid communications, drove a harsh wedge between cosmology and history. No surprise then that the search was on, so to speak, for a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together. Nothing perhaps more precipitated this
Nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye. Such an image of the nation—or narration—might seem impossibly romantic and excessively metaphorical, but it is from those traditions of political thought and literary language that the nation emerges as a powerful historical idea in the west. An idea whose cultural compulsion lies in the impossible unity of the nation as a symbolic force. This is not to deny the attempt by nationalist discourses persistently to produce the idea of the nation as a continuous narrative of national progress, the narcissism of self-generation, the primeval present of the Volk. Nor have such political ideas been definitively superseded by those new realities of internationalism, multinationalism, or even 'late capitalism', once we acknowledge that the rhetoric of these global terms is most often underwritten in that grim prose of power that each nation can wield within its own sphere of influence. What I want to emphasize in that large and liminal image of the nation with which I began is a particular ambivalence that haunts the idea of the nation, the language of those who write of it and the lives of those who live it. It is an ambivalence that emerges from a growing awareness that, despite the certainty with which historians speak of the 'origins' of nation as a sign of the 'modernity' of society, the cultural temporality of the nation inscribes a much more transitional social reality. Benedict Anderson, whose Imagined Communities significantly paved the way for this book, expresses the nation's ambivalent emergence with great clarity:

The century of the Enlightenment, of rationalist secularism, brought with it its own modern darkness … [Few] things were (are) suited to this end better than the idea of nation. If nation states are widely considered to be 'new' and 'historical', the nation states to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past and … glide into a limitless future. What I am proposing is that Nationalism has to be understood, by aligning it not with self-conscious held political ideologies, but with large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which—as well as against which—it came into being (p. 19).

The nation's 'coming into being' as a system of cultural signification, as the representation of social life rather than the discipline of social policy, emphasizes this instability of knowledge. For instance, the most interesting accounts of the national idea, whether they come from the Tory Right, the Liberal high ground, or the New Left, seem to concur on the ambivalent tension that defines the 'society' of the nation. Michael Oakeshott's 'Character of a modern European state' is perhaps the most brilliant conservative account of the equivocal nature of the modern nation. The national space is, in his view, constituted from competing dispositions of human association as societas (the acknowledgement of moral rules and conventions of conduct) and universitas (the acknowledgement of common purpose and substantive end). In the absence of their merging into a new identity they have survived as competing dogmas—societas own universitas—imposing a particular ambivalence upon all the institutions of a modern state and a specific ambiguity upon its vocabulary of discourse.' In Hannah Arendt's view, the society of the nation in the modern world is 'that curiously hybrid realm where private interests assume public significance' and the two realms flow unceasingly and uncertainly into each other 'like waves in the never-ending stream of the life process itself'.

Yes less certain is Tom Nairn, in naming the nation 'the modern Janus', that the 'uneven development' of capitalism inscribes both progression and regression, political rationality and irrationality in the very genetic code of the nation. This is a structural fact to which there are no exceptions and 'in this sense, it is an exact (not a rhetorical) statement about nationalism to say that it is by nature ambivalent.'

It is the cultural representation of this ambivalence of modern society that is explored in this book. If the ambivalent figure of the nation is a problem of its transitional history, its conceptual indeterminacy, its wavering between the 'family', then what effect does this have on narratives and discourses that signify a sense of 'nationness': the heimlich pleasures of the hearth, the unhedinlich terror of the space or race of the Other; the comfort of social belonging, the hidden injuries of class; the customs of taste, the powers of political affiliation; the sense of social order, the sensibility of sexuality; the blindness of bureaucracy, the strait insufficiency of institutions; the quality of justice, the common sense of injustice; the language of the law and the parole of the people.

The emergence of the political 'rationality' of the nation as a form of narrative—textual strategies, metonymic displacements, sub-texts and figurative strategies—has its own history. It is suggested in Benedict Anderson's view of the space and time of the modern nation as embodied in the narrative culture of the realist novel, and explored in Tom Nairn's reading of Enoch Powell's post-imperial racism which is based on the 'symbol-fetishism' that infests his febrile, neo-romantic poetry. To encounter the nation as it is written displays a temporality of culture and social consciousness more in tune with the partial, overdetermined process by which textural meaning is produced through the articulation of difference in language; more in keeping with the problem of closure which plays enigmatically in the discourse of the sign. Such an approach contests the traditional authority of those national objects of knowledge—Tradition, People, the Reason of State, High Culture, for instance—whose pedagogical value often relies on their representation as holistic concepts located within an evolutionary narrative of historical continuity. Traditional histories do not take the nation at its own word, but, for the most part, they do assume that the problem lies with the interpretation of 'events' that have a certain transparency or privileged visibility.
To study the nation through its narrative address does not merely draw attention to its language and rhetoric; it also attempts to alter the conceptual object itself. If the problematic ‘closure’ of textuality questions the ‘totalization’ of national culture, then its positive value lies in displaying the wide dissemination through which we construct the field of meanings and symbols associated with national life. This is a project that has a certain currency within those forms of critique associated with ‘cultural studies’. Despite the considerable advance this represents, there is a tendency to read the Nation rather restrictively; either, as the ideological apparatus of state power, somewhat redefined by a hasty, functionalist reading of Foucault or Bakhtin; or, in a more utopian inversion, as the incipient or emergent expression of the ‘nation-popular’ sentiment preserved in a radical memory. These approaches are valuable in drawing our attention to those easily obscured, but highly significant, recesses of the national culture from which alternative constituencies of peoples and oppositional analytic capacities may emerge—youth, the everyday, nostalgia, new ‘ethnicities’, new social movements, ‘the politics of difference’. They assign new meanings and different directions to the process of historical change. The most progressive development from such positions takes a discursive conception of ideology—ideology (like language) is conceptualised in terms of the articulation of elements. As Volosinov said, the ideological sign is always multi-accenual and Janus-faced.4 But in the heat of political argument the ‘doubling’ of the sign can often be stilled. The Janus face of ideology is taken at face value and its meaning fixed, in the last instance, on one side of the divide between ideology and ‘material conditions’.[...]

It is the project of Nation and Narration to explore the Janus-faced ambivalence of language itself in the construction of the Janus-faced discourse of the nation. This turns the familiar two-faced god into a figure of prodigious doubling that investigates the nation-space in the process of the articulation of elements: where meanings may be partial because they are in medias res, and history may be half-made because it is in the process of being made; and the image of cultural authority may be ambivalent because it is caught, uncertainly, in the act of ‘composing’ its powerful image. Without such an understanding of the performativity of language in the narratives of the nation, it would be difficult to understand why Edward Said prescribes a kind of analytic pluralism as the form of critical attention appropriate to the cultural effects of the nation. For the nation, as a form of cultural elaboration (in the Gramscian sense), is an agency of ambivalent narration that holds culture at its most productive position, as a force for ‘subordination, fracturing, diffusing, reproducing, as much as producing, creating, forcing, guiding’.5

I wrote to my contributors with a growing, if unfamiliar, sense of the nation as one of the major structures of ideological ambivalence within the cultural representations of ‘modernity’. My intention was that we should develop, in a nice collaborative tension, a range of readings that engaged the insights of poststructuralist theories of narrative knowledge—textuality, discourse, enunciation, écriture, ‘the unconscious as a language’ to name only a few strategies—in order to evoke this ambivalent margin of the nation-space. To reveal such a margin is, in the first instance, to contest claims to cultural supremacy, whether these are made from the ‘old’ post-imperialist metropolis, or on behalf of the ‘new’ independent nations of the periphery. The marginal or ‘minority’ is not the space of a celebratory, or utopian, self-marginalization. It is much more substantial intervention into those justifications of modernity—progress, homogeneity, cultural organicism, the deep nation, the long past—that rationalize the authoritarian, ‘normalizing’ tendencies within cultures in the name of the national interest or the ethnic prerogative. In this sense, then, the ambivalent, antagonistic perspective of nation as narration will establish the cultural boundaries of the nation so that they may be acknowledged as ‘containing’ thresholds of meaning that must be crossed, erased, and translated in the process of cultural production.

The ‘locality’ of national culture is neither unified nor unitary in relation to itself, nor must it be seen simply as ‘other’ in relation to what is outside or beyond it. The boundary is Janus-faced and the problem of outside/inside must always itself be a process of hybridity, incorporating new ‘people’ in relation to the body politic, generating other sites of meaning and, inevitably, in the political process, producing unmanipulated sites of political antagonism and unpredictable forces for political representation. The address to nation as narration stresses the insistence of political power and cultural authority in what Derrida describes as the ‘irreducible excess of the syntactic over the semantic’.6 What emerges as an effect of such ‘incomplete signification’ is a turning of boundaries and limits into the in-between spaces through which the meanings of cultural and political authority are negotiated. It is from such narrative positions between cultures and nations, theories and texts, the political, the poetic and the painterly, the past and the present, that Nation and Narration seeks to affirm and extend Frantz Fanon’s revolutionary credo: ‘National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension’.7 It is this international dimension both within the margins of the nation-space and in the boundaries in-between nations and peoples that the authors of this book have sought to represent in their essays. The representative emblem of this book might be a chiasmatic figure of cultural difference whereby the anti-nationalist, ambivalent nation-space becomes the crossroads to a new transnational culture. The ‘other’ is never outside or beyond us; it emerges forcefully, within cultural discourse, when we think we speak most intimately and indigenously ‘between ourselves’. Without attempting to précis individual essays, I would like briefly to elaborate this movement, within Nation and Narration, from the problematic unity of the nation to the articulation of cultural difference in the construction.
of an international perspective. The story could start in many places: with David Simpson's reading of the multiform 'body' of Whitman's American populism and his avoidance of metaphor which is also an avoidance of the problems of integration and cultural difference; or Doris Sommer's exploration of the language of love and productive sexuality which allegorizes and organizes the early historical narratives of Latin America which are disavowed by the later 'Boom' novelists; or John Barrell's exploration of the tensions between the civil humanist theory of painting and the 'discourse of custom' as they are drawn together in the ideology of the 'ornamental' in art, and its complex mediation of Englishness; or Sneja Gunew's portrayal of an Australian literature split between an Anglo-Celtic public sphere and a multicultural counter-public sphere. It is the excluded voices of migrants and the marginalized that Gunew represents, bringing them back to disturb and interrupt the writing of the Australian canon.

In each of these 'foundational fictions' the origins of national traditions turn out to be as much acts of affiliation and establishment as they are moments of disavowal, displacement, exclusion, and cultural contestation. In this function of national history as Bistellung, the forces of social antagonism or contradiction cannot be transcended or dialectically surmounted. There is a suggestion that the constitutive contradictions of the national text are discontinuous and 'interruptive'. This is Geoff Bennington's starting point as he purs (with a certain postmodern prescience) on the 'postal politics' of national frontiers to suggest that 'Frontiers are articulations, boundaries are, constitutively, crossed and transgressed'. It is across such boundaries, both historical and pedagogical, that Martin 'Thom places Renan's celebrated essay 'What is a nation?'. He provides a careful genealogy of the national idea as it emerges mythically from the Germanic tribes, and more recently in the interrelations between the struggle to consolidate the Third Republic and the emergence of Durkheimian sociology.

What kind of a cultural space is the nation with its transgressive boundaries and its 'interruptive' interiority? Each essay answers this question differently but there is a moment in Simon During's exposition of the 'civil imaginary' when he suggests that 'part of the modern domination of the life-world by style and civility ... is a process of the feminisation of society'. This insight is explored in two very different contexts, Gillian Beer's reading of Virginia Woolf and Rachel Bowlby's study of Uncle Tom's Cabin. Gillian Beer takes the perspective of the aeroplane—war machine, dream symbol, icon of the 1930s poets—to emphasize Woolf's reflections on the island race, and space; its multiple marginal significations—land and water margins, home, body, individualism—providing another inflection to her quarrels with patriarchy and imperialism. Rachel Bowlby writes the cultural history of readings of Uncle Tom's Cabin, that debate the feminization of American cultural values while producing a more complex interpretation of her own. The narrative of African freedom, she suggests, displays the same ambivalence that constructs the contradictory nature of femininity in the text. America itself becomes the dark continent, doubly echoing the 'image' of Africa and Freud's metaphor for feminine sexuality. George Harris, the former slave, leaves for the new African state of Liberia.

It is when the western nation comes to be seen, in Conrad's famous phrase, as one of the dark corners of the earth, that we can begin to explore new places from which to write histories of peoples and construct theories of narration. Each time the question of cultural difference emerges as a challenge to relativistic notions of the diversity of culture, it reveals the margins of modernity. As a result, most of these essays have ended up in another cultural location from where they started—often taking up a 'minority' position. Francis Mulhern's study of the 'English ethics' of Leavisian universalism pushes towards a reading of Q. D. Leavis's last public lecture in Cheltenham where she bemoans the imperiled state of that England which bore the classical English novel; an England, now, of council-house dwellers, unassimilated minorities, sexual emancipation without responsibility. Suddenly the paranoid system of 'English reading' stands revealed. James Snead ends his interrogation of the ethics and aesthetics of western 'nationalist' universalism with a reading of Ishmael Reed who 'is revising a prior co-optation of black culture, using a narrative principle that will undermine the very assumptions that brought the prior appropriation about'. Timothy Brennan produces a panoramic view of the western history of the national idea and its narrative forms, finally to take his stand with those hybridizing writers like Salman Rushdie whose glory and grotesquerie lie in their celebration of the fact that English is no longer an English language. This, as Brennan points out, leads to a more articulate awareness of the post-colonial and neo-colonial conditions as authoritative positions from which to speak Janus-faced to east and west. But these positions across the frontiers of history, culture, and language, which we have been exploring, are dangerous, if essential, political projects. Bruce Robbins' reading of Dickens balances the risks of departing from the 'ethical home truths' of humanistic experience with the advantages of developing a knowledge of acting in a dispersed global system. Our attention to 'aporia' he suggests, should be counterpointed with an intentionality that is inscribed in poros—practical, technical know-how that abjures the rationalism of universals, while maintaining the practicality, and political strategy, of dealing professionally with local situations that are themselves defined as liminal and borderline. America leads to Africa; the nations of Europe and Asia meet in Australia; the margins of the nation displace the centre; the peoples of the periphery return to rewrite the history and fiction of the metropolis. The island story is told from the eye of the aeroplane which becomes that 'ornament' that holds the public and the private in suspense. The bastion of Englishness crumbles at the sight of immigrants and factory workers. The great Whitmanesque
sensoryium of America is exchanged for a Warhol blowup, a Kruger installation, or Mapplethorpe’s naked bodies. ‘Magical realism’ after the Latin American Boom, becomes the literary language of the emergent post-colonial world. Amidst these exorbitant images of the nation-space in its transnational dimension there are those who have not yet found their nation: amongst them the Palestinians and the Black South Africans. It is our loss that in making this book we were unable to add their voices to ours. Their persistent questions remain to remind us, in some form or measure, of what must be true for the rest of us too. ‘When did we become “a people”? When did we stop being one? Or are we in the process of becoming one? What do these big questions have to do with our intimate relationships with each other and with others?’

[Introduction to Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), The Nation and Narration (Routledge: London, 1990), 1–7.]

FLOYA ANTHIAS AND NIRA YUVAL-DAVIS

48 Women and the Nation-State

Women’s link to the state is complex. On the one hand, they are acted upon as members of collectivities, institutions or groupings, and as participants in the social forces that give the state its political projects in any particular social and historical context. On the other hand, they are a special focus of state concern as a social category with a specific role (particularly human reproduction). It is important to note, however, that these roles cannot be understood in relation to the state reproducing itself, or that any absolute control by the state would be achievable, given women’s incorporation at a number of other social levels within civil society and in the economy.

A number of attempts to conceptualise the link between women and the state have focused on the central dimension of citizenship and how, far from being gender-neutral, it constructs men and women differently. Thus the feminist and socialist feminist critique of the state and state theorisation has advanced from one which points to the way the state treats women unequally in relation to men. There now exists a theoretical critique of the way the very project of the welfare state itself has constituted the ‘state subject’ in a gendered way, that is as essentially male in its capacities and needs. However, different forms of the state and different states even within the same form, involve the posititing of a different constituency for ‘citizenship’. The notion of citizenship focuses on the way the state acts upon the individual and does not address the problem of the way in which the state itself forms its political project. Therefore it cannot on its own attend to the social forces and movements that are hegemonic within the state. This applies also to the state’s relationship to women. ‘Citizenship’, on its own, does not encapsulate adequi-

ately the relations of control and negotiation that take place in a number of different arenas of social life.

When we come to discuss the ways women affect and are affected by national and ethnic processes within civil society, and the ways these relate to the state, it is important to remember that there is no unitary category of women which can be unproblematically conceived as the focus of ethnic, national or state policies and discourses. Women are divided along class, ethnic and life-cycle lines and in most societies different strategies are directed at different groups of women. This is the case both from within the ethnic collectivity and from the state, whose boundaries virtually always contain a number of ethnicities.

While we have argued against the links between women, the state and ethnic/national processes taking any necessary form we can nevertheless locate five major (although not exclusive) ways in which women have tended to participate in ethnic and national processes and in relation to state practices. These are:

(a) as biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities;
(b) as reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups;
(c) as participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture;
(d) as signifiers of ethnic/national differences—as a focus and symbol in ideological discourses used in the construction, reproduction and transformation of ethnic/national categories;
(e) as participants in national, economic, political and military struggles.

Different historical contexts will construct these roles not only in different ways but also the centrality of these roles will differ.

Before giving a further explication of the above categories, a word of caution is necessary in relation to the use of the term ‘reproduction’. We consider this concept as problematic on more than one ground. First of all, its use in the literature includes many and indeed inconsistent meanings, from a definition of women’s biological role to explanations of the existence of social systems over time.

Even more importantly, the term ‘reproduction’ has been criticized as being tautological on the one hand, often implicitly assuming that ‘reproduction’ takes place, and static on the other hand, therefore unable to explain growth, decline and transformation processes (women act as both maintainers and modifiers of social processes). By retaining the term ‘reproduction’, however, in the depiction of some of the then central roles women play we wished to locate our work in relation to the literature which deals with human and social reproduction. Feminist literature on ‘reproduction’ has dealt with biological reproduction, the reproduction of labour power or state citizenship, but has generally failed to consider the reproduction of national, ethnic and racial categories.
We shall now describe in more detail the range of policies and discourses which can be included in each of the five categories noted earlier.

(a) Various forms of population control are the most obvious policies which relate to women as biological reproducers of members of collectivities. The fear of being 'swamped' by different racial or ethnic groups has given rise to both individual state and interstate policies which are aimed at limiting the physical numbers of members of groups that are defined as 'undesirable'. One form these take is represented most clearly in immigration controls. More extreme measures are the physical expulsion of particular groups and even actual extermination of them (e.g. Jews and gypsies in Nazi Germany). A further strategy is to limit the number of people born within specific ethnic groups by controlling the reproductive capacity and fertility of women. These range from forced sterilisation to the massive mobilisation of birth control campaigns. The other facet of such a concern is the active encouragement of population growth of the 'right kind', i.e. of the ethnic group dominant in the state apparatus. Calls for a 'White Australia' immigration policy or Jewish 'return' to Israel are supplemented at times of slack immigration or national crisis with active calls for women to bear more children so that no 'demographic holocaust' will take place. This encouragement is very often a question of using national and religious discourses about the duty of women to produce more children. (A popular Palestinian saying in Israel for example boasts that 'The Israelis beat us at the borders but we beat them in the bedrooms'.) However, in many cases, rather than relying on ideological mobilisation, the state establishes child benefit systems and other maternal benefits such as loans to this purpose. (The Beveridge Report for example cited fear for the fate of the 'British race' as the major reason for establishing child benefits in Britain.)

(b) Women are controlled not only by being encouraged or discouraged from having children who will become members of the various ethnic groups within the state. They are also controlled in terms of the 'proper' way in which they should have them—i.e. in ways which will reproduce the boundaries of the symbolic identity of their group or that of their husbands. In some cases (as until recently in South Africa) women are not allowed to have sexual relations with men of other groups. This particularly is the case for dominant-group women. Legal marriage is generally a condition if the child is to be recognised as a member of the group and very often religious and social traditions dictate who can marry whom so that the character as well as the boundaries of the group can be maintained from one generation to the other. In Israel, for example, it is the mother who determines whether or not the child will be considered Jewish. But if the mother is already married (or even divorced, but only by civil rather than by religious law) to another man, that child will be an outcast and not allowed to marry another Jew. In Egypt, on the other hand, a child born to a Muslim woman and a Copt Christian man will have no legal status.

(c) The role of women as ideological reproducers is very often related to women being seen as the 'cultural carriers' of the ethnic group. Women are the main socialisers of small children but in the case of ethnic minorities they are often less assimilated socially and linguistically within the wider society. They may be required to transmit the rich heritage of ethnic symbols and ways of life to the other members of the ethnic group, especially the young.

(d) Women do not only teach and transfer the cultural and ideological traditions of ethnic and national groups. Very often they constitute their actual symbolic figuration. The nation as a loved woman in danger or as a mother who lost her sons in battle is a frequent part of the particular nationalist discourse in national liberation struggles or other forms of national conflicts when men are called to fight 'for the sake of our women and children' or to 'defend their honour'. Often the distinction between one ethnic group and another is constituted centrally by the sexual behaviour of women. For example a 'true' Sikh or Cypriot girl should behave in sexually appropriate ways. If she does not then neither her children nor herself may be considered part of the community.

(e) Finally, and probably the category that requires least explication is the role that women have come to play in national and ethnic struggles. Women's role in national liberation struggles, in guerrilla warfare or in the military has varied, but generally they are seen to be in a supportive and nurturing relation to men even where they have taken most risks. In addition, the way in which national liberation struggles have articulated issues concerning gender divisions and women's liberation is a consideration here.

The explication of some of the central roles that women play in relation to national and ethnic processes must bear in mind three important elements. The first relates to the link between national ethnic processes and the state. We have noted already that the relationship between collectivities and the state is complex and will vary in different historical and social contexts. Whilst only rarely exclusively so, customary and religious norms and legislation, which usually construct women as primarily biological reproducers, will often be incorporated and reinforced by state legislation, although contradictions can exist also between state and religious legislation. Thus the sphere of 'civil society' and the sphere of the 'state' can link hands in the construction of women in some ways although in others they might be in conflict. In addition, the political projects of the state are often the outcome of tensions and conflicts within civil society and are carried by social classes or other social forces. In addition, the state will often identify and specify those groupings or social relations that it can legislate on but which it delineates as private and therefore essentially as an individual matter of choice or liberty in its specifics. Such is the case in relation to the family, for example. When we look at the role of women as markers of collective boundaries and differences and also as participants in
national, political and economic struggles we often find a contradiction—
women are constituted through the state but are also often actively engaged in
countering state processes.

Secondly, the central role that women play should not lead us to the fallacy
that women are attended to either only as women (i.e. in their ‘difference’
from men) or that all women, irrespective of class, age or family situation
are attended to in the same way. Often there may indeed be tension between, on
the one hand, treating women as ‘different’, say in certain of their capacities or
potentialities, and treating them ‘equally’ in others (e.g. as workers). Also an
‘equal’ treatment by the state in any number of capacities will not necessarily
lead to the destruction of a sexual division of labour in society more generally.
Notions of what are specifically women’s needs or duties often reassert them-
several in very traditional ways even in revolutionary societies. This clearly
requires the much wider discussion of gender relations. There is no space here
to review some of the central positions taken in this regard but we argue
elsewhere (Anthias & Yuval-Davis 1983) that gender divisions are irreducible
to class or other divisions. Clearly, for the purposes of our argument here it is
important to note that the state does not exclusively conform gender divisions
nor can they be seen only in the context of any specific state mechanisms at any
historical moment as they relate to the whole area of gender ‘differentiation’.

In addition, we find it vitally important to emphasise that the roles that
women play are not merely imposed upon them. Women actively participate
in the process of reproducing and modifying their roles as well as being actively
involved in controlling other women.

[Introduction] to P. Anthias and N. Yuval-Davis (eds.), Woman—Nation—State

Europeanness: A New Cultural Battlefield?

The nation-state is a political configuration of modernity. But modernity is a
curious condition, for in some respects it is characterised by flux and imper-
manence, what Baudelaire in his classic formulation identified as ‘the transitory,
the fugitive, the contingent’. It is this aspect of modernity that has been
emphasised in the recent vogue for ‘postmodernity’, whose proponents have
been apt to think that the old collectivities may no longer confer identities that
command special attention.

So, for instance, David Harvey⁴ has argued that the present phase of capital
accumulation results in a ‘reterritorialisation’ of social power which is part of
the spatio-temporal disruption of an earlier social order. These globalising or
universalising tendencies in contemporary capitalism, and the growth of post-

Fordist ‘flexible accumulation’ have placed ‘a strong emphasis upon the poten-
tial connection between place and social identity’. Socialist, working class,
racial and other groups opposing the reshaping of the world by capitalism find
it easier to organise in given places but not where it counts—over space (i.e.
globally). Such ‘regional resistances’ are inadequate to the task of creating
alternative structures, although by way of interpreting ‘a partially illusory past
it becomes possible to signify something of a local identity and perhaps to do
it profitably’ (through, for instance, the heritage business). This offers a very
slender basis for the construction of collective identities and, on this analysis,
the nation-state does not even figure as a relevant framework.

Other theories of postmodernity have quite explicitly argued for the obsol-
escence of the nation-state and heralded this as opening up potential new
spaces of tolerance for the ‘stranger’.⁷ Even on this analysis, however, the
search for community goes on. The contemporary quest for shelter from the
chill winds of ontological insecurity, of contingency, it has been argued, results
in what Michel Maffesoli⁸ has called ‘neo-tribalism’. Such tribes, we are told,
are formed ‘as concepts rather than integrated social bodies—by the multitude
of individual acts of self-identification. Such agencies as might from time to
time emerge to hold the faithful together have limited executive power and
little control over cooperation and banishment.’⁸

Such a view leads to the temptation to see national identity as on all fours
with other forms of group identity. It is precisely this that has lately been
encapsulated in the slogan of ‘neo-tribalism’. In its most popular variants this,
in some respects, acute perception of new forms of affiliation has degenerated
into seeing all collectivities as choosable life-styles or sub-cultures.

In a neo-tribal world, on this account, if we don’t like the company, we can
opt out. Nothing like the cohesive tribes of old. While this might well account
for many of the vagaries of everyday life in the advanced capitalist world, it
does not give us much purchase upon what we are presently witnessing:
namely ‘the rebirth of history’ in the former Soviet bloc and also in parts of the
west (or perhaps, now, the centre) – the reunification of Germany being the
most dramatic case in point.

In fact, some forms of collective identity are much more potent (and poten-
tially stable) than others as Alberto Melucci⁹ has argued. He observes that
‘ethno-national mobilisation’ understood as ‘the formation, maintenance and
alteration through time of a self-reflexive identity’ arises from the contradic-
tory realities of ‘post-industrial democracies’ in which there are both pressures
to integrate and a need for identity-building. Like Bauman, Melucci argues that
the nation-state system is exhausted, with decision-making moving to the
global and local levels. However, Melucci sees ethnic identities as particularly
powerful expressions of symbolic self-assertion, although as by no means
reducible to a single form: for instance, they may express the desire within a
given community to be recognised as legitimately different; alternatively they