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A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THEORIES OF NATIONALISM

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This thesis considers the main theoretical positions within the contemporary sociology of nationalism. These can be grouped into two basic types, primordialist theories which assert that nationalism is an inevitable aspect of all human societies, and modernist theories which assert that nationalism and the nation-state first developed within western Europe in recent centuries.

With respect to primordialist approaches to nationalism, it is argued that the main common explanation offered is human biological propensity. Consideration is concentrated on the most recent and plausible of such theories, sociobiology. Sociobiological accounts root nationalism and racism in genetic programming which favours close kin, or rather to the redirection of this programming in complex societies, where the social group is not a kin group.

It is argued that the stated assumptions of the sociobiologists do not entail the conclusions they draw as to the roots of nationalism, and that in order to arrive at such conclusions further and implausible assumptions have to be made.

With respect to modernists, the first group of writers who are considered are those, represented by Carlton Hayes, Hans Kohn and Elie Kedourie, whose main thesis is that the nation-state and nationalism are recent phenomena. Next, the two major attempts to relate nationalism and the nation-state to imperatives specific either to capitalist societies (in the 'orthodox' marxist theory elaborated about the turn of the twentieth century) or to the processes of modernisation and industrialisation (the 'Weberian' account of Ernest Gellner) are discussed.

It is argued that modernist accounts can only be sustained by starting from a definition of nationalism and the nation-state which conflates such phenomena with others which are specific to the modern world. The marxist and Gellner accounts form the necessary starting point for any explanation as to why the nation-state is apparently the sole viable form of polity in the modern world, but their assumption that no pre-modern society was national leaves them without an adequate account of the earliest origins of the nation-state and of nationalism.

Finally, a case study from the history of England argues that both the achievement of a national state form and the elucidation of crucial components of a nationalist ideology were attained at a period not consistent with any of the versions of the modernist thesis.

SOCIOLOGY OF NATIONALISM: MARXISM AND NATIONALISM:
SOCIOBIOLOGY AND NATIONALISM

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Chapter One

Introduction

The Importance of Nationalism and the Nation State

Nationalism has been one of the most potent of the ideologies which have helped to shape the modern world - probably the single most important one. In the English language ordinary names for states carry the assumption that these are nation states. Thus we speak not of inter-state relations, and only rarely of inter-governmental ones, while the normal designation is of international relations. A major forum for such relations is the United Nations, successor to the League of Nations. Country and nation are near synonyms, and so on.

The twentieth century has seen the application of technology to warfare between states constituted in national terms which has resulted in World Wars of a scope unprecedented in human history (1). Yet this carnage is a product not only of a quantum leap in the technology of warfare, but also of a sea-change in attitudes. Governments now find it easier than ever to undertake the mass mobilisations of their populations to undertake the sacrifices entailed by warfare, sacrifices justified and accepted in the name of a paramount national interest - in many western European countries the acceptance of the legitimacy of mass conscription into "national service" occurred in the period between 1870 and the

beginning of the First World War (Weber, 1979, ch 17; Dallas and Gill, 1985, chs 1 - 5).

Yet the phenomena associated with nationalism have received less critical attention from social scientists than other changes which have marked the modern period: the religious mutations of protestantism and secularisation; the intellectual changes associated with the growth of the scientific outlook; the impact of industrialisation, all take up far greater amounts of library shelving.

Most theorists of modern societies take nations and nationalism for granted. For them it is a domain assumption (Gouldner, 1971, ch 2) that, in the modern world at least, societies are (normally) nations. That this is a domain assumption is indicated by the casual way in which the terms society and nation are used interchangeably by many social scientists:

It might be said that a society is but the collective name for a number of individuals. Carrying the controversy between nominalism and realism into another sphere, a nominalist might affirm that just as there exist only the members of a species, while the species considered apart from them has no existence; so the units of society alone exist, while the existence of society is but verbal. Instancing a lecturer's audience as an aggregate which by disappearing at the close of a lecture, proves itself to be not a thing but only a certain arrangement of persons, he might argue that the like holds of the citizens forming a nation. (Spencer, 1877, p 465)

Another reliable indication comes from an examination of the treatment of the subject in introductory textbooks for social science undergraduates. Of the basic sociology and politics textbooks I myself purchased as an undergraduate, Dahl (1976); Lewis et al (1978); Giddens (1971); Rex (1961) have no index reference to either, and Coulson and Riddell (1970) lacks an index but also discusses this matter only in passing or not at all.

There is one reference to nationalism in Bottomore and Nisbet (eds, 1979), which turns out to be to a bare assertion that this doctrine has proved more attractive than socialism for the working classes of advanced societies (p 626). Cohen (1968) and Nisbet (1966) contain sketchy discussions, but the only ones with anything more than this both come from that hybrid discipline, political sociology: Dowse and Hughes (1972) and Bottomore (1979) both summarise what has come to be known as the modernist thesis. (2)

Turning to those social theorists who do discuss nationalism and modernism more extensively, two main trends can be identified. The first, and dominant one, asserts that the phenomena under consideration are specific to the modern world. As will be discussed more thoroughly in the chapter devoted to modernists, there are significant variations among adherents of this trend as to the

precise date of origin of the nationalist phenomenon, though there is agreement on two points: that this date was some time in recent centuries, and that the location of this breakthrough was somewhere in western Europe, from where the phenomenon has now been diffused on a global scale.

A major variant of this trend is the marxist argument that nationalism is specific to capitalist societies. It is often assumed that this argument originates with Marx and Engels. Appendix Two therefore discusses the comments of Marx and Engels on nationalism and the nation state, and argues that contrary to this assumption their attitude was actually similar to that of those who take the existence of nations and nation states as a domain assumption.

The second trend, which includes most nationalists but few recent theorists of nationalism, asserts that the phenomena are a primordial and unavoidable aspect of human sociality. The commonest forms in which such arguments are made explicitly rests on claims that these phenomena derive from the biological constitution of humans. (3)

It will be argued that both of these approaches to the nationalist phenomenon are flawed. Before getting on to the substantive task of discussing the two in more detail, however, it is necessary to clarify the terminology which will be

used. The discussion of the nationalist phenomenon is made enormously convoluted by the rich and overlapping series of concepts relevant to it. Before explaining the way these concepts will be used here, one other matter needs to be made clear.

In common usage nationalism has perjorative connotations, and patriotism positive ones (interestingly, this relative evaluation is reversed for most marxists). One result of these connotations is that the term is often used in an extended sense to denote adherence to any kind of aggressive ideology which is being denigrated:

[Nationalism] is often used to denote any kind of collective selfishness or aggressiveness of which the writer or speaker disapproves. It has become a perjorative term; used in contrast to the respectable word 'patriotism'. In fact, 'I am a patriot: you are a nationalist'. (Seton-Watson, 1977, p 2)

A prime example of this usage of nationalism comes in George Orwell's essay, *Notes on Nationalism*, in which positive nationalism, loyalty to some actual or potential nation state is only marginally distinguished from such other forms as transferred nationalism - including Communism, Political Catholicism, Colour Feeling, Class Feeling and Pacifism - and negative nationalism (Anglophobia, Antisemitism and Trotskyism).

One effect of all these ideologies or doctrines is, like nationalism, to divide humanity

into the sheep and the goats, the saved and the damned, the in-group and the rest. However, the principles they set up for making this choice are different from the criteria used by nationalism taken in its usual sense. If this route is followed, it makes it more difficult to ask questions about whether there is anything distinctive about the bases of group formation which are characteristic of nationalism in the more specific sense, and even to ask whether there are any connections between these forms of ideologies and nationalism.

The order in which the concepts will be taken is as follows. First to be considered will be the nation state, and how such states are to be differentiated from other forms of polity. Next a brief discussion of nations; then the nature of nationalism as a doctrine or ideology. Finally, this chapter will conclude this chapter with a discussion of the relationship of nationalism to race and ethnicity.

The Nation state

Contemporary states (4) share two main characteristics which tend to distinguish them from most polities throughout human history. The first is the sheer scale of the populations in all but a handful of tiny principalities which have survived through historical accidents, and which now continue

only through parasitism on their larger neighbours. The second (from which there are much larger deviations in practice than for the first) is the asserted cultural homogeneity of their populations.

The first criterion serves to distinguish modern polities from stateless societies and such forms of state societies as a tribe, a commune, or a polis. Such societies, which tend to have a high degree of cultural homogeneity among their citizens (probably to a greater degree than any modern nation), approximate to communities, *Gemeinschaften*.

(5) It is possible that, like Athens with women, metics and slaves, not all of the adult population is admitted to full membership of the community. Thus it follows that the total population of such societies can be several times an upper limit of about 50,000 as the maximum size of the actual citizen body. It is difficult to specify "several" fully, beyond a stipulation that this total population will still be numbered in, at most, hundreds of thousands.

This criterion of scale as a factor distinguishing national from communal polities is common among theories of nationalism. A.D. Smith argues that this definitional component derives from contingent historical factors:

The reason why it has become a definitional feature is, I think, historical: France and England, the first nation states and the models for

all others, were large in scale and size, and in all respects 'successful'. (Smith, 1971, p 323, footnote 93)

Gellner (1983, p 34) derives an unspecified minimum size for a nation state from the functional imperative that the population must be sufficiently large to support the type of educational pyramid required in a modern society. But probably the main reason given for the choice is economic - the need for a state which can support a viable internal market and the other infrastructural concomitants of an industrialised economy (Braudel, 1984, Tivey, 1981b; see also the discussion of the marxist version of the modernism thesis in chapter three). In these economic arguments reasons are rarely advanced as to why the "sufficiently large" state should be specifically national in form.

Nation states and communal polities share similarities in that the political unit and the cultural one are the same. A "foreigner" is an alien both in political and cultural terms. Primordialist analyses of nationalism rest on the assumption that these similarities are so basic that the formations of in-groups in these two forms of society are nearly or fully identical. In distinguishing communal societies from nation states it is not the intention here of resolving this question in the other direction by conceptual fiat, but of leaving the way open for a future fuller discussion of this matter.

The criterion of cultural homogeneity versus heterogeneity serves to distinguish nation states from empires. (6) In both of these the population is greater than in communal societies, so the constitution of a unified polity is necessarily based on the existence of a state structure. Empires, however, differ from nation states in that the unification is more purely political. This distinction is more difficult to apply in practice than that on the other dimension, but the ideal-typical case is as follows.

An empire is a polity with a large territory and subject population in which there is little cultural homogeneity within the subject population as a whole. I shall not be delving into the complexities of the definition of culture, but take it here in a common-sense way as revolving essentially around the main features which crop up in discussions of the subject in the context of definitions of nationality, ethnicity and the like; common language, common religion, and an elaborate "mythology" which creates a complex imagery of the specific historical experiences which have constituted the bases of ethnic/national distinctiveness (see Smith, 1986b for a critique of the centrality of analytical focus on language as the main diacritical mark of the boundaries between ethnic groups or nations). So, typically, in an

empire the population will be divided into a whole series of segments speaking mutually unintelligible languages, and holding different religious beliefs, who do not share a single mythology of a common past.

Again typically, one of these many languages will be used as the language of the overall administration - sometimes this will be the language of the people whose trail of conquest led to the establishment of the empire or a scriptural language which is no longer a demotic vernacular. No deliberate attempts are made to impose this language on the subject populations as a whole, though it is highly likely that local elites which are integrated into the imperial administration will develop a fluency in it, and possible that the prestige of the language, as the language of rule, will mean that some of the subject populations as a whole do so also. (7) Similarly, there may in general be a toleration of a plurality of religious beliefs and practices, so long as these are not held to undermine the stability of the overall imperial order, like the radical monotheism of Jews and Christians in the Roman Empire (St Croix, 1974).

Thus empires are marked by a situation where cultural diversity is normally allowed to continue relatively unchecked by the ruling elites, unless particular forms of cultural expression are believed to pose a specific threat to the stability of the

imperium, or to impede its objectives. The existence of an overall political rule may create some pressures towards cultural homogenisation, but these are relatively slight and such processes occur only over a prolonged period. It is possible that the main policy of the imperium is to encourage the cultural diversity among its subjects, on the ground of divide and rule; and that such a policy might involve a two-tier system of political organisation, with segmentary provinces, based on cultural units or on the territorial units in existence in the period immediately prior to conquest by the empire, at a level below that of the imperial administration. (This account of an ideal-typical empire is heavily based on Gellner, 1983, ch 2, modified to also fit the European colonial empires).

In contrast the situation in an ideal-typical nation state is something like the following. The whole population speak the same language (probably this should be relaxed slightly, to mutually intelligible dialects of a common language). This state of affairs has been achieved partly through deliberate efforts by the state to impose it (the most important, though still not the sole, instrument for this in the modern world is through a compulsory educational system).

If this model is drawn from abstraction from the actual features of modern states, the matter of a

common religion is considerably complicated by the existence of the trend for the secularisation of society, and in particular the effects this trend have on the policies of states. One decisive factor in establishing the classical nation states of Western Europe was the establishment of a national religion, with the creation of a national church as an arm of the state which was increasingly asserting its sovereignty (compare the use of different forms of Islam as a method of maintaining political legitimacy by elites in states as diverse as Libya, Iran and Pakistan in recent years).

In this phase there were various measures used to employ state power to ensure that dissidents complied with the national religion. In the longer term the potential for conflict created by religious cleavage has meant that the longest-established nation states have withdrawn from imposing a single religion on their subjects, redefining national unity not as the acceptance of a common religion, but as the acceptability of a plurality of forms of belief and unbelief. The polar types in which this secularisation of the state has been achieved are represented by the Constitution of the United States and by the pillarisation of the Netherlands, where the whole organisation of society is built on the creation of four sets of segmentary institutions (one for each of the three main denominations, and the

fourth secular) with the state itself the only major institution of Dutch society spanning all segments. (Bagley, 1973, ch 1)

In summary, the division of polities into the types identified is on the basis of the following matrix:

		Degree of cultural heterogeneity	
		Low	High
		£*****£	£*****£
Large		£	£
	Nation	£	£ Empire
		£	£
Size of population		£*****£	£*****£
		£	£
	Communal	£	£ Unlikely (8) £
Small		£	£
		£*****£	£*****£

This matrix, and indeed the discussion to date, has ignored the problems posed by the fact that no state in the modern world does have the degree of cultural homogeneity required by this model. Some of the complications this raises will be discussed in the next section.

Nations

We can now discuss what it is that differentiates nations from other forms of groups. Following from the communal polity/nation state distinction, the first criterion will again be the size of the group, which will again be taken to be of such a magnitude that most fellow group members will necessarily be anonymous to any particular individual group member.

(9)

The second necessary criterion, therefore, is that the basis for the formation and reproduction of the group is that its members share a common culture. But there are major problems, which have so far been postponed, in pinning down what precisely is signified by this term common culture. The sheer variety of cultural criteria which have been used effectively at different times to assert the definitions of membership of nations is so diverse as to defy any classification which has any usefulness. Most definitions of a nation have therefore approached the problem from the other end. A nation is any group who believe themselves to form a nation and can be mobilized as a result of this belief. As Weber puts it:

If the concept of a 'nation' can in any way be defined unambiguously, it certainly cannot be stated in terms of empirical qualities common to those who count as members of the nation. In the sense of those using the term at a given time, the concept undoubtedly means, above all, that one may exact from certain groups of men a specific sentiment of solidarity in the face of other groups. Thus the concept belongs to the sphere of values. Yet there is no agreement on how these groups should be delimited or about what concerted action should result from such solidarity. (Gerth and Mills, eds, 1948, p 172)

From a more recent writer:

Thus I am driven to the conclusion that no 'scientific definition' of a nation can be devised; yet the phenomenon has existed and exists. All that I can find to say is that a nation exists

when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they formed one. (Seton-Watson, 1977, p 5)

However, two sorts of qualifications must be made to this sort of definition, both of which will serve to bring the model to a closer approximation to the current real world. The first relates to the strict requirement of political independence, while the second raises some of the many problems of "common culture".

One reality of the modern world is that many national groups, while they are of a size which is distinctively greater than communal societies, are also in a situation where the possibility of full political independence is less than promising. Thus among the "minority" nationalist movements of contemporary western Europe many are divided into a moderate wing which is demanding or has already attained a federalist territorial division of the existing central state, and an extremist wing demanding full independence. It is not possible here to judge which of these two has correctly assessed the political and economic constraints in any particular case. But this matter should not be prejudged by denying the title of nationalist to the former type of movement.

It is possible to make the case that the Flemish and the Walloons in Belgium, or the Scots, Welsh and English in Britain (the complications of

Northern Ireland are yet another matter) are of different nationalities despite sharing a common citizenship. But this raises further problems which lead on to the second set of qualifications.

The modernist thesis about nationality rests, with some of its adherents, on arguments that there are strong pressures in modern societies that there should be high levels of cultural homogeneity among all citizens. This implies that when a modern state is divided into territorial sub-units based on cultural differences, such a society has strong potentials for the dynamic of separatism to go further. While such "consociational societies" are not necessarily marked by any higher degree of social and political instability than those which do more closely approximate to a uni-national model, they are more likely to be so (Bagley, 1973; Covell, 1985; Greenwood, 1985).

This problem is both alleviated and exacerbated by the multi-faceted nature of culture, which means that possible lines of cleavage into culturally constituted groups are many and, often, inconsistent. That is, depending on what are taken as the defining features of the common culture, different individuals will be counted as the members of the group in question. Linguistic and religious boundaries are rarely more than imperfectly correlated at best. Before the imposition of

standard national languages in recent centuries, linguistic frontiers also tended to be relative (at least to speakers of different dialects within the same overall family). (10)

This multiplicity of possible cultural criteria for the delimitation of nations means that the number of potential nations is vastly greater than the number of viable states. One exceedingly rough calculation concludes that even using solely linguistic criteria to determine potential nations, the number of these is about ten times as great as the number of viable states (Gellner, 1983, pp 43 - 45). The number of nationalisms which are effectively asserted in the modern world is nothing like this number, even when established separatist and devolutionist movements are added to those which have achieved political independence.

The existence of a common culture alone, whichever criteria are chosen to denote commonality, is the mark only of a potential and not an actual nation. The move from potentiality to actuality only takes place when many (and how many is left for later discussion) of the individuals who share the cultural characteristics believe that these characteristics define them as members of a nation. Such a result tends only to be achieved as a product of a more or less conscious political and cultural movement in a situation where its propaganda is likely to have mass

appeal.

A full discussion of the conditions under which such movements tend to become viable would be a major task. It would require elucidation both of the necessary and sufficient conditions in which a "sufficiently rich" historical past can be elaborated into myths of common historical origin (Smith, 1986b), and an enquiry into the necessary and sufficient present social conditions which are such as to create the possibility of a mass resonance for such mythologies (e.g. Gellner, 1983). It is hoped that later chapters will throw some further light on these matters. For the moment the discussion will move on to a focus on the political ideas common to nationalist movements.

Nationalism

There are a whole series of problems with discussing nationalism. The first is that the name is in fact used of two different types of political doctrines: one of which is concerned with the way all polities should be constituted; and the second only with the way mine should be. Most analysts of nationalism concentrate on the former doctrine, which might be more precisely expressed, following Lenin and Woodrow Wilson, as the right of all nations to self-determination. (11) Thus: "Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political

and the national unit should be congruent" (Gellner, 1983, p 1). In A.D.Smith's comprehensive definition, the core components of this doctrine are elaborated further:

The core nationalist *doctrine*, on the other hand, is constructed from a few far-reaching propositions:

1. Humanity is naturally divided into nations
2. Each nation has its peculiar character
3. The source of all political power is the nation, the whole collectivity
4. For freedom and self-realisation, men must identify with a nation
5. Nations can only be fulfilled in their own states
6. Loyalty to the nation state overrides other loyalties. (Smith, 1971, p 21) (12)

If actual nationalist movements are considered, they translate each of these propositions from the general to the particular (apart from the first, which is inherently general in form). Claims are made not, or at least not centrally, about nations in general, but about *our* nation. Furthermore, such claims do not necessarily entail, either in logic or in practice, the generalised, or right to self-determination, version of nationalist doctrine which is most discussed by most theorists.

The full relations of the two levels of the doctrine are that support for the generalised version entails (probably in logic, certainly in practice) acknowledgement of the legitimacy of some specific nationalisms (not necessarily all, for it can always

be claimed that some specific movement does not represent a "genuine" nation - the complexity and arbitrariness of the cultural criteria for nationhood means this can often be done). Specific nationalist movements tend to invoke the generalised doctrine when this is likely to gain external support, outside the group they aim to mobilise as their nation, for their objectives, and not to bother with the generalised doctrine when it does not have this potentiality or when they do not need such support.

The second type of problem in discussing nationalism as a form of political doctrine is its incompleteness as a basis for the formulation of specific policies:

It will be immediately apparent from this list of propositions [the one given above - DA] that nationalism, unlike Marxism, does not furnish a complete theory of social change or political action. It does not even define the 'unit of population proper to enjoy a government exclusively its own'. This is exactly the point at which supporting 'theories' are needed, to suit the occasion. I would contend that we ought not to take these additions at their face value, but to see in them lines of action adopted to the situation of their proponents. To do anything else: to mistake for example the linguistic or 'organic' version for the core doctrine of nationalism, is to risk tilting at windmills and imposing on nationalism a unity and rigour and completeness which it does not possess. (A.D. Smith, 1971, p 21)

Smith is here far too generous to Marxism. It, like all other political doctrines, has basic principles

which apply only if, as rarely happens in this complex world, other things are held equal. When this condition is not met all doctrines require additional theories, or a Holy Office, to give an authoritative prescription of appropriate action.

Thus Burkean conservatism is based on the principle that institutions which are the product of prolonged historical evolution will in general have achieved an optimal form, and are best not tampered with, but accepts in specific instances that institutions have outlived their usefulness and should therefore be reformed. Hence there is a need for further elaboration to enable followers of such a doctrine to decide which are the outmoded institutions, and what kinds of reforms are appropriate.

Similarly, the basic principle of classical liberalism, that the freedom of action of any individual must be maximised, is limited by a clause which states that this should be so only while the ways in which the individual acts do not infringe on the corresponding liberty of others. Once again additional theoretical elaborations are required, and space is opened up for a considerable range of specific doctrines which meet the overall framework (e.g. compare J.S.Mill with Herbert Spencer). All political doctrines, from the divine right of kings, to marxism, are to a greater or lesser degree open to

interpretation in this way.

Having said that, however, there is still a substantial point which Smith is making which is relevant. All political doctrines are incomplete to a greater or lesser extent, but nationalism as I have defined it up until now is incomplete to a far greater extent than most. There are two major points of incompleteness at which additional theorisation is developed to give a doctrine which is sufficient for practical guidance to action. These are in the specifications of the criteria which determine membership of the particular nation, and in the portrayal of its particular character.

It is the first of these which is normally taken to divide theories of nationality into the characteristic sub-varieties, such as the linguistic and organic types which Smith alludes to. In practice it is probably the claims about particular national characteristics which are the more important, for claims to specify the particular national genius of any particular people are implicit or explicit assertions of the appropriate forms of political and social regime for them - indeed one deep level of political conflict is frequently through contests over the effective presentation of alternative imagery about a national character.

The *mythomoteurs* (Armstrong, 1982, Smith, 1986b) of the putative common history of the ethnic

or national groups, which may rest on elaboration and interpretation of episodes which were genuine historical events, are the most common if not invariable form for moving from the thin or purely rationalistic version of a specific nationalist ideology to more fleshed-out forms capable of mass appeal. It is with these claims (almost invariably mythical in the derogatory sense) to shared descent and a common history that the claims to the boundaries of the national community are set. The content of this asserted common history is of a share of episodes which create an imagery of the national virtues which carry implicit messages for the appropriate forms of political and social organisation required to maintain, or more frequently restore, the peculiar genius of the national character.

Nations; Races; Ethnic Group

Finally this chapter concludes with a problem of great importance: what has been the relationship of the nationalist phenomena so far discussed to race relations or ethnic relations? The cultural characteristics which are supposed to distinguish ethnic groups are precisely the same as those used to differentiate nations, yet the distinction between ethnic groups and nations is by no means clear in the writings of ethnicity theorists (Barth, 1969; Khan,

1979; Lyon, 1972, 1973; Wallman, 1979; Watson, 1977). Races are normally taken to be groups distinguished by spurious phenotypical characteristics such as skin pigmentation (see Kuper, 1975; Montague, 1972; Gould, 1980; UNESCO, 1983 for discussions of the significance of human phenotypical differences) but even here, it will be argued below, there are grounds for considering the relationship of such situations to the dynamics of nationalism.

It might thus appear that the sociology of nationalism and the sociology of race or ethnic relations should be closely connected sub-disciplines. That the two forms of intergroup conflict are closely related is asserted by a whole range of writers on both nationalism and racism, who start from theoretical approaches as diverse as sociobiology (van den Berghe, 1981), rational choice theory (Banton, 1983) and structuralist marxism (Miles, 1982a, 1982b). Despite these individual contributions there are few systematic connections between the two fields. (13) I will therefore begin by discussing what theorists in the two fields have had to say about the other.

There has been a lively debate from the theorists of nationalism, which has centered on the relationship between the doctrines of nationalism and racism. The concern has been to decide whether claims that nations are to be identified as separate

stocks is a genuine form of nationalism - and specifically whether Nazism is to be included as a particularly repulsive form of nationalism, or was something else entirely.

There have been a spectrum of positions taken in this debate. At one extreme is that of Kedourie, who seems to be saying that only ideologies which include some component which claims to distinguish nations on the ground of biological factors are really nationalist (1966, pp 71 - 74). At the other extremity is the earlier argument of Smith (recently he has asserted (1986b, p 26) that skin colour can form the basis for group differentiation and thus the formation of cultural differences), that the different assumptions of nationalist and racist doctrines are such that they do not overlap, and must be carefully distinguished (Smith, 1971, pp 87 - 93). Somewhere between come probably a majority, who take racism as one, usually particularly pathological, form of nationalism.

The cultural criteria used to identify nations are far from simple. When the validity of these cultural criteria is backed by pseudoscientific assertions that they derive from the biological constitution of the group members, this does not produce changes to the extent that we now have to talk about a new doctrine, but at most about one variety within the doctrine. Since the mid

nineteenth century the specific presumptions of racist and purely culturalist doctrines may have diverged, but in general the collectivities they have identified and glorified have converged. In the heyday of racial categorisation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century "splitters" among racial theorists tended to identify separate races with separate established nations. The races identified by "lumpers" were usually in practice the arithmetical sums of the populations of several existing states - with the frequent implication that boundaries, especially in Europe, had marginal imperfections in their correlation with racial boundaries. Thus, despite the formal divergence of assumptions between racist and nationalist doctrines, the two have tended to appear to reinforce each other.

Even the presumptions are not so distinct as tends to be suggested by those who argue they are radically different. Social Darwinists, for example, argued that culture was determined by biological difference, and in turn that cultural differences were the sign (and the basis for the operationalisation of procedures for hierarchical ranking) of biologically distinct populations. (Miles, 1982b, pp 285 - 286)

In so far as the appeal to pseudoscience appears to be authoritative, and to underwrite the

existence of absolute differences between groups this gives the possibility of gaining support for xenophobic movements which are particularly virulent. It is here that links between nationalism and racism are most important.

Arguments about the existence of a 'new racism' (Barker, 1981; Duffield, 1984; Lawrence, 1982), which opposes the presence of New Commonwealth immigrants and their descendants as settlers in Britain on the ground that this presence gives rise to inevitable and unacceptable conflicts created by the presence of numerous culturally distinct groups in the same society, pose particularly sharply this problem of the dividing line between nationalist and racist ideologies (Miles, 1987). In so far as such arguments are based solely on assertions of cultural conflict, and despite the claims of the inevitability of such conflict being given a biological gloss drawn from popularised sociobiology, they would seem to fall on the nationalist side of this divide.

To justify the term 'new racism', to demonstrate that it is similar though not identical to earlier forms of racism such as that justified by Social Darwinists, it is necessary to show the presence of two further assumptions. The first, which in itself is still nationalist rather than racist, is that cultures are not merely different but unequal: specifically, in the present context, that

the supporters of the 'new racism' assert the "superiority of the British way of life", in general terms, or at least as an adaption to the social conditions of Britain itself. The second and crucial assumption, which would take more extensive documentation from 'new racist' writings to substantiate, is a deterministic, or quasi-deterministic, linking of culture with descent.

From this assumption it follows that the vast majority of Black British citizens will inevitably be incorporated, through the inescapable fact of their descent, into inferior cultures, or into cultures unsuitable for, and incompatible with, life in Britain. If the 'new racism' does rest on some such postulate, then it becomes sufficiently similar to older forms of racism, both in the internal logic of the ideas, and in the capacity of these ideas to serve as the justification for inequitable treatment of stigmatized groups, to be classed as a form of racism.

In another version of an argument that nationalism and racism are totally distinct, B.Anderson makes a significant contrast between the types of abusive epithets each uses for out-groups:

A word like 'slant', for example, abbreviated from 'slant-eyed', does not simply express ordinary political enmity. It *erases nation-ness*, by reducing the adversity to his biological physiogomy. ... The character of this vocabulary may become still more evident if it is

contrasted with other Vietnam-War-period words like 'Charlie' and 'V.C.', or from an earlier era, 'Boches', 'Huns', 'Japs' and 'Frogs', all of which apply only to one specific nationality, and thus concede, in hatred, the adversary's membership in a league of nations. (B.Anderson, 1983, pp 135 - 136, original emphasis)

One possible implication of this contrast, which is not developed by Anderson, is that the forms of denigration characteristic of racism, by reducing the stigmatized to their biological physiogamy, reduce them also to beasts, to non-humans. In contrast, the nationalist epithets applying to one specific nationality would carry the implication that whatever the strange and nasty foreign ways of the 'other', they are still accepted as possessing some shreds of common humanity.

Turning to the understandings of the relationship between racism and nationalism within the dominant schools within English race relations sociology, the trends which will be considered are those which argue that race relations situations are products of particular forms of class situations, and common themes which occur in the writing of Michael Banton and Robert Miles, who, despite other major differences of approach, both assert a particularly extreme (in the dating of the emergence of nationalism) version of the modernist thesis.

The derivation of racism from particular forms of class oppression is the starting point of almost

all marxist analyses of racism. Until recently, most marxists argued that racist ideologies were a product of forms of class exploitation specific to capitalist societies (for the original source of this thesis, see Cox, 1970). Although such arguments have tended to share assumptions that racism is to be explained by its eufunctionalities for the capitalist order, a number of different economic and social benefits have been proposed as being important.

The most frequently identified economic eufunctionalities are asserted to derive from the existence of groups within the proletariat which are rendered more than normally powerless by racial stigmatisation (and possibly additionally by denying them legal and citizenship rights which are available to other proletarians) has the effect that higher rates of surplus value can be exacted from such groups (Nikolinakos, 1973; Castles and Kosack, 1972; 1973; Castells, 1979). (14) An alternative economic argument is that divisions between black and white workers reduces the capacity of both to bargain effectively for improved wages and conditions with employers (Roemer, 1979). In the first scenario white workers may share some of the benefits gained by the bourgeoisie from the excessive exploitation of the black sub-proletariat. In the second scenario all workers lose.

The other main form of explanation is

political. Racism is a method whereby bourgeois or petty-bourgeois politicians whip up xenophobia among workers, thereby dividing the latter and avoiding a situation where they unite to abolish exploitation (Cox, 1970).

One major defect shared by at least the simplistic versions of these explanations derives from their functionalism. Even if it is accepted that in capitalist societies racism does have these effects this does not constitute proof that the eufunctions for the capitalist order are the cause, and not an unexpected by-product, of racism. The models contain two gaps: consideration of feedback mechanisms which might explain the reproduction or the origin of racist ideologies through the benefits they brought to the capitalist order, and consideration of the possible dysfunctions of racism for a capitalist social order. (15)

Consider those marxists who stress the centrality of political factors. It may be in the interest of dominant classes to divide those they exploit on xenophobic lines, though when these divides reach the pitch of hysteria they have the effect of raising intergroup conflict to levels where stability may be threatened anyway. What still needs to be explained is why the exploited themselves should accept such methods of categorisation, contrary to their own long-term interests. In more

sophisticated versions of such arguments, these problems are met in part in relating this to perceived struggles for desired and limited resources internal to exploited classes, and to the articulation of these struggles both materially and ideologically by states (Hall, 1978; CCCS, 1982a; see also Elster, 1985, for a critique of arguments in the work of Marx himself combining the simplistic and sophisticated models as defined above).

However, these more considered accounts have been concerned not with racism as such, but with different specific forms of racism. In practice these have been analyses not just of specific forms, but of situations (postwar Britain) of mutation of one form of racism into another. The initial credibility of racial categorisations has been given in the situation, and has not been examined by them.

Recent marxist attempts to conceptualise racism have also included an attempt to develop a more coherent alternative to this class derivation approach, in the work of Ben-Tovim and Gabriel. In a series of articles which elaborate a eurocommunist (16) analysis of racism (Ben-Tovim and Gabriel, 1984; Gabriel and Ben-Tovim, 1978) they have made a series of criticisms of the previously prevailing marxist paradigms, but they also seem increasingly to have worked themselves into a position of denying that racism derives from underlying structural constraints

of any kind.

Class derivation theories of racism are not confined to marxists. There are several Weberians who take a similar starting position, but the attention here will be confined to Rex. In his approach, race relations situations originate in the complex class structure of colonial societies. Such situations are marked by differing forms of exploitation at the centre and the periphery (Rex, 1983, chs 2, 3), commonly accompanied by the possession of differential legal rights for groups descended from the populations of the two areas.

This approach represents an advance beyond previous class-derivationist analyses of racism in several respects. The structural contexts within which racist ideologies are elaborated are not reduced to one single form of class structure, although a sufficient 'family resemblance' is diagnosed between such structural contexts to provide the basis of an explanation as to why they should be conducive to the emergence of racist ideologies.

Secondly, the Weberian framework used by Rex allows him to approach the elaboration of racist ideologies as the active response of particular groups situated within specific forms of structural contexts. He can thus avoid the great simplicities of the cruder versions of economistic marxism which present racism as the inevitable outcome of some

forms of class exploitation, seemingly produced without human intervention, without falling into the alternative pole which portrays the elaboration of racist ideologies as apparently having little or no connection with structural features of the societies within which such doctrines are disseminated (Banton, 1977; Banton and Harwood, 1975).

Finally, this approach allows Rex to define racist ideologies not solely through the presence of specific, and historically evanescent, doctrinal content (Banton, 1977), nor solely with reference to material social effects, regardless of how such effects are justified, as in many uses of the concept of institutional racism (see J. Williams, 1985 for an unpacking of this concept). Rex's definition of a racist ideology is focussed centrally on the content of the ideas (deterministic ascription of group membership), but the significance of this content derives from its social significance, as the potential source of justifications or rationalisations for the invidious treatment of stigmatised groups. One result of this definition is that ideologies based on biological theories are not the sole form of racism.

The basic definition Rex gives to delimit race relations situations is one in which three conditions should be met: that the situation should be one of "severe competition, exploitation, coercion or

oppression"; that this is a matter of conflict "between groups, with only limited possibilities of mobility from one group to the other"; and that this intergroup structure is "rationalised ... by means of a deterministic theory of human attributes, of which the most important type historically had been based upon biological and genetic theory" (Rex, 1983, p viii).

The move away from claims that racist theories are necessarily based on explicit assertions of phenotypical differences as the marker of group boundaries is one of the strengths of this approach. In particular it then becomes easier to understand situations where phenotypes are not explicitly used as markers of intergroup boundaries, although it still seems to be acting as an operational definition (Rex, 1973, appendix to ch 17; this possibility is further elaborated in Reeves, 1983, with the concept of sanitary coding). (17)

Despite the power of this approach there are a number of ambiguities which can usefully be further clarified. How precisely can normal and abnormally severe forms of competition, exploitation or oppression be distinguished? It is not disputed that this contrast is meaningful. Domestic slavery, chattel slavery and wage slavery do differ in the extent to which the subordinate classes must suffer direct oppression. It is difficult, however, to

differentiate two basic forms of class relation, the one involving only normal levels of oppression, exploitation or the like, while the other form is abnormally severe in these respects.

Indeed, this contrast only works fully when the normal state is assumed to be the situation prevailing in a developed capitalism, complete with substantial measures of political rights for the (indigenous, male) working classes. It is less than clear that the forms of exploitation faced by the working classes, even in the now-advanced countries, during the initial course of the industrial revolutions were normal or abnormal.

In this period there were theories, closely allied with contemporary elaborations of the inferiority of non-Europeans, which sought to justify the inferior position of indigenous working classes within the metropolitan West itself as resulting from biological causes. Such theories once seemed to have been left behind in an earlier and less enlightened epoch, but have undergone a recent revival. (e.g. Herrenstein, 1977; Wilson, 1975) While there are undoubtedly connections between the popularity of such arguments and the appeal of racist ones, this does not make them equivalent.

Another problem area is the apparent applicability of the definition to the situation of women; they as a group are subjected to particular

forms of exploitation and oppression, and for most women in most societies, particularly severe forms thereof; where there is no possibility of mobility into the more privileged group; and where this situation is frequently justified by deterministic theological or biological theories. Yet sexism is not normally considered to be a type of racism (though again like deterministic theories of class membership, there may be situations conducive to racism and sexism's common acceptance and mutual reinforcement).

Confining the discussion to capitalist societies the factor which distinguishes class and gender conflicts from race relations situations is that the groups which are identified as inferior are nevertheless still accepted as members of the nation, albeit sometimes as less than full members. Racism denies this possibility (or, as with the situation of the racial minorities in present-day Britain, admits it only formally - 'naturalisation' allows legal rights, but not full acceptance). The importance of barriers to mobility in producing race relations situations is not just in their quantitative effect, though this is relevant, but in the type of barrier which is erected to hinder mobility: a reduction in the ability for denizenation.

Something apparently similar to this proposed link between race and nation is a feature of the

common ground between Michael Banton¹ and Robert Miles. Their argument is that both racism and nationalism can be dated in their fully elaborated forms from the mid nineteenth century, although this elaboration incorporated themes which had had a long history in western Europe (Banton, 1977; Miles, 1982a; 1982b). Nationalism and racism start out with assumptions which are formally different, but their effect is mutual reinforcement.

The argument for the modernity of the two doctrines, and the relatively late dating of this breakthrough as compared with other proponents of the modernity of both nationalism and racism, hinges very heavily on assertions that the concepts of race and of nationalism did not take on their modern meaning until this time (Chapters Three and Four will include a fuller discussion of similar arguments applied to the concepts of nation and nationalism).

Miles develops this analysis of the interrelation between nationalism and racism in the direction of a new-wave, anti-economistic marxist analysis, in which the interests which underpinned this development were those of the bourgeoisie:

A Marxist analysis would develop Poliakov's reference to the developing nationalism throughout Europe in the nineteenth century stimulating a search for, or, more accurately, creating in thought, separate and distinct 'races', by arguing that the appropriation and development of these ideas was carried out by the aspiring capitalist class who saw the formation

of a nation state as a central requirement for the successful development of capitalism. (Miles, 1982a, pp 100 - 101)

However, once Miles has demolished the economic explanations of such interests characteristic of most previous marxist thinking, there is very little clear about what, if anything, is new about how he locates racism as being in the perceived interests of capitalists.

Banton's own more recent work uses a version of rational choice theory to argue that once groups have formed on a racial basis, conflict between them is likely to be particularly severe, and that the use of phenotypical markers to delimit group boundaries is likely to remove one of the methods by which individual group members could opt out of such conflicts through opting out of the group.

Footnotes to Chapter One

1) The permanent possibility of a nuclear interchange between the two superpowers threatens to raise this destructiveness to an unimaginably higher level. One indication of this increase in the scale of destructiveness of warfare is in the change of meaning of 'decimate', which is now used, where vestiges of its derivation remain, for the killing of nine out of ten.

2) In the period following the French Revolution, there arose in Europe a number of thinkers who rejected the premisses on which they believed the Revolution had been based. That the political involvement of the ordinary members of a society leads to despotism; that men are moved largely by irrational forces; and that there are distinct, relatively unalterable 'national characters' which explains much of what happens in history - these were prominent among the items of the new orthodoxy. Out of this intellectual matrix developed the new discipline of sociology. (Barry, 1970, pp 8 - 9)

3) See Appendix One for further arguments that the work of Clifford Geertz and Edward Shils, commonly designated as 'primordialist', shares assumptions with modernism as it has been defined here.

Appendix One also discusses a third and intermediate position, 'perennialism', embodied in the recent work of John Armstrong and Anthony Smith. The approach of the perennialists (particularly in

the more recent and conceptually elaborate version of Smith) is very similar to that developed in the present work. Neither Armstrong's nor Smith's book was consulted prior to the initial submission of this thesis: Armstrong because of difficulties in obtaining a copy, and Smith because its publication coincided with the initial submission.

The Armstrong/Smith position therefore converges, incompletely, on the one set out here here which was initially developed independently. The Appendix discusses both the similarities, and the differences of detail, between the present arguments and those of Armstrong and Smith.

4) In what follows a central assumption is that the boundaries of societies are those of polities.

5) The upper limit to the population of such a society is set such that all the full members of the community, a group which I will denote by the term "the political nation" or "citizens" (terms which I shall use for all forms of polity to denote those who are the politically effective members: the latter term carrying the implication of someone who is the possessor of formal and judicial rights, but who is not necessarily fully accepted by his or her peers, the former implying this as well) can deliberate together to arrive at collective decisions. Such

deliberation is probably possible only for a body the size of the Athenian Assembly or smaller, i.e. of the order of magnitude of 50000 (Finley, 1973).

6) With the further complication that the colonial empires of recent centuries were formed by conquest around the core of a national state. Here the nationalism of the colonialists imposed limits, varying in strictness between one European empire and another, but present in all cases, on the assimilation of even the pre-conquest ruling classes of the conquered.

7) When the western Roman Empire collapsed, only the populations in the Basque country and Britain reverted to languages based on those current before their Roman conquests, while in the rest the modern "Romance" languages derive from dialects of Latin. In the British Empire English became the dominant language in the British Isles themselves (though this is complicated by nationalist attempts to impose this situation: but note that even in Eire, where the policy is now to encourage bilingualism, English is still the dominant language) and in the ex-colonies (North America and Australasia) of settlement. In Asian and African ex-colonies English is essentially a language of elites.

8) In the sense that such societies are unlikely to be stable over the long term - or if they are stable they will tend to undergo a comparatively rapid process of cultural homogenisation.

9) ... I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community - and imagined both as inherently limited and sovereign.

It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them; yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.

... It is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. ...

It is imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. (Anderson, 1981, pp 15 - 16)

10) Except where neighbouring peoples spoke languages across 'linguistic chasms' separating major language families dialects of neighbouring areas were mutually intelligible, with this decreasing with distance. Going from this situation where the linguistic descendant of one such dialect was raised in status to that of the national language was often a process where linguistic barriers were raised to correspond to contingent political ones.

Once the third of the three main claims to a

common culture - common historical destiny - is invoked, the criteria are made even more vague: virtually any territory and its population can be claimed to be linked and destined for nationhood on the basis of some (mis)reading of say the history of the past millenium (Greece and Israel both base their historical claims on readings which go back more than twice as far).

- 11) "Part of the difficulty is that one tends unconsciously to hypostatize the existence of Nationalism-with-a big-N - ... and then classify 'it' as an ideology." (Anderson, B., 1983, p 15.)

The distinction between the general and the specific doctrines of nationalism which is developed in the following section, and the stress on the importance of the specific form, is similar to Breuilly's rewriting of Smith's definition aimed at "eliminating all propositions involving *explicit* generalisations beyond the particular nation to which the particular nationalist belongs." (1982, pp 1 -2, original emphasis)

- 12) It will be argued below that the third point must be qualified, or the whole collectivity differentiated from the whole population. To make this identification is to assert that some form of democratic or populist doctrine is a necessary component of nationalism. This "proves" the

modernist thesis by definitional fiat.

13) This may be due simply to the normal processes of compartmentalism of separate sub-disciplines, but it may be heightened by contrasts between the prevailing values of their practitioners. That racialism is in some sense irrational is almost a constitutive assumption of the sociology of race relations. The rationality or irrationality of nationalism is more widely debated.

14) This type of theory tends to be specifically concerned with the mass immigration into postwar western Europe, and tends to be combined with other, and generally inconsistent, economic benefits: that the presence of migrant workers results in the saving of the costs of social reproduction, that they act as a reserve army of labour, and their presence permits the upward mobility of indigenous workers one. The 'Williams thesis' (Williams, 1962) where racism is explained as originating from a need to justify slavery, that is a form of exploitation which is qualitatively different not merely quantitatively more severe, is a far more solid attempt to establish a materialist explanation of the origins of racist ideologies.

Even this, like all accounts which portray racist ideologies as emerging in the capitalist

epoch, is difficult to reconcile with the denigration of non-European peoples which formed a significant strand in European thought for several centuries before the rise of capitalism, or the beginnings of the Atlantic slave trade (see Chapter Four, Footnote 1).

15) The more complex functionalist method used by Sivanandan (1982) involves discussion of both the eufunctionalities and the dysfunctionalities of racism for the capitalist class, but tends to alternate between stress on the one or the other depending on estimates of the immediate political situation.

16) Ben-Tovim and Gabriel, and their collaborators Ian Law and Kathy Stredder, are all supporters of the Labour Party. The designation of their approach as eurocommunist is not intended to establish guilt (or praise) by association, but merely to establish the parallels between their work and other recent critiques of 'fundamentalist marxism'.

17) Miles also argues that because racial distinctions are biologically spurious, if sociologists use the term at all the effect is to give credibility to such false and damaging theories. It might be possible to substitute terms like

'racially constituted fraction of the working class' in academic discourse, but outside of this rarified atmosphere it is necessary to use 'race' to argue race is a spurious categorisation. In effect this is a form of idealism which imagines that racism will disappear if only everyone would stop using the word race.

Chapter Two

Biological Theories of Nationalism: The Ethnic Phenomenon

Among those (including nationalists themselves) who assert that nationalism is a primordial feature of human social life, the most frequent justification for this argument rests on claims that this situation is caused by the biological constitution of our species. (1) As the biological sciences have advanced the detailed form of such arguments have varied. Because of considerations of space this chapter will be confined to the discussion of one specific biological argument. It will therefore discuss explanations of nationalism which base themselves on the most recent and most rigorous theory of animal sociality: sociobiology.

The school of sociobiology is a recent one. The distinctive biological principles which provide its foundation were first elaborated fully in the 1960s (Hamilton, 1964; Trivers, 1971). Its founding charter as a distinctive school, E.O.Wilson's book *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* was published in 1975. Adherents of the trend have since published a mass of articles and books aimed both at specialists in a whole range of academic disciplines and at the general public. The

distinctive feature of sociobiology as a school lies in the explanation it gives of the evolutionary origin of social behaviour in all social animals.

The main interest of the school for people other than biologists comes from claims that the methods which it has derived for the explanation of the social behaviour of other species can be extended to provide (partial) explanations of a whole range of social behaviours in our own species. One set of phenomena which many sociobiologists claim to have explained in this manner are those classed under the headings of nationalism and/or racism. The sociobiological explanations proffered for these phenomena vary greatly in the degree of elaboration and sophistication, while being remarkably similar in their basic argument.

This chapter will therefore concentrate on one particular presentation, that of Pierre van den Berghe's *The Ethnic Phenomenon*, which has been chosen as the most thorough sociobiological discussion of the roots of nationalism and racism, and as the most sociologically sophisticated example of such a discussion. Before discussing the specific application of the methods of sociobiology to the roots of nationalism, it will be necessary

to say something about what these methods are.

Sociobiology

The intellectual root of the sociobiological synthesis lies in the distinctive answer to one single question in terms of the logic of evolutionary biology. This question is the fundamental one of how any form of (animal) social life is possible at all; of why any individual organism does not continually pursue its immediate self-interests in such a way as to put it into continual conflict with all other organisms. This may be termed the generalised Hobbesian problem of order: generalised in that the counterfactual war of all against all is not confined, as in Hobbes himself, to the human species. Thus the question is how is it possible for any two individual members of any species to co-operate?

In one version of sociobiological theory, which has been called the hard version, it is assumed that this question is equivalent to a related but separate problem: how is it possible for an individual to behave altruistically towards another member of the same species? (2) Sociobiologists further assume that the basic answer to this question is the same for all species - answer the

generalised Hobbesian question, and Hobbes' question is therefore answered too:

The most fundamental question posed by the social sciences is the question of human sociality itself, or what has often been called 'the problem of order.' Why and under what conditions do humans cooperate? Why is not human existence a war of all against all, at least not all of the time? Cooperation and conflict have long been regarded in the social sciences as two sides of a single reality, but it is now becoming apparent that human sociality is a special case of animal sociality in general. Humans, in short, compete and cooperate for much the same reasons as other animals. (van den Berghe, 1981, p 6)

Before discussing how sociobiologists do answer this question, it is necessary to say something about the legitimacy of the question itself. This is because one major strand of the arguments of the critics of sociobiology implies that the question itself is ideological. This critique, which derives from comments from Marx and Engels about the intellectual roots of Darwinism, claims that the war of all against all is a phenomenon which is characteristic only of one particular form of human society, that of capitalist social formations. But the problem of order which is faced by such societies is projected both onto other types of human social formations, and onto non-human sociality:

Since Hobbes, at least, the

competitive and acquisitive characteristics of Western man have been confounded with Nature, and the Nature thus fashioned in the human image has been in turn reapplied to the explanation of Western man. The effect of this dialectic has been to anchor the properties of human social action, as we conceive them, in Nature, and the laws of Nature in our conceptions of human social action. (Sahlins, 1976, p 93) (3)

The clear posing of the problem of order may derive from particular forms of competitive individualism characteristic of capitalist social orders, and even the concepts through which some versions of the game theoretic solutions to it are elaborated may have a similar origin (capital, investments ...). But the underlying structure of the problem can be stated without such assumptions, both for the question of order and the question of altruism. Indeed it will be argued later that one problem of sociobiology is that it is not rigorous enough in sticking to the "capitalist" model (of pure kin selection, which will be discussed shortly) - though if it did follow this rigour it would be at the cost of non-applicability to social groups whose members are not all directly kin to one another, i.e. all large-scale human societies (the present argument is an elaborated version of that made by Vernon Richards (1980), which has already been rejected as impossibly demanding by van den Berghe (1980)).

The problem of order can be stated in the

following terms. Assume a situation in which there are only two individuals, each of whom has a choice between just two courses of action, the one purely selfish and the other cooperative. The first necessary condition for the cooperative action to be possible is that it must produce an increased benefit, so that each of the pair can have a net gain if they do cooperate.

If the net payoff in the case where both individuals behave selfishly is taken as the base-line for measurement, and thus set to zero, the net payoff in the case where both behave cooperatively must thus be positive for each. It is also necessary to specify the payoffs in the situations where one behaves cooperatively but the other does not. The easier of these to specify is the net benefit to the erstwhile cooperator of a cooperator/defector couple. In general, cooperation entails costs, albeit ones which are less than the benefits accruing if both cooperate. If the erstwhile cooperator has still had to carry such costs, but the expected benefits are not forthcoming because the other defected, the net payoff will be negative.

Finally, what of the payoff for the defector in this situation. S/he has not paid the costs associated with cooperation, so having a net gain at least as great as when both behaved selfishly. It is

frequently the case in potential cooperative situations that a defector can still reap some or all of the gains of the cooperative behaviour of others (such gains are termed "free rider gains" within game theory, and much of the literature of game theory is devoted to discussing the problems they raise). Even if the defector is not able to accrue the full benefits it would have got had it cooperated, s/he has not had to pay the costs of cooperation. Her/his net benefit (in many but not all situations) is greater than would be gained by cooperating. The interaction then assumes a particularly intractable form, of a "Prisoners' Dilemma", for the situation has been set up to be one in which the rational response of both individuals is to behave selfishly, although each would benefit if neither did so. To see how this comes about let us look at the calculus of relative advantage for one of the individuals, who reasons as follows.

The other has two alternatives, to behave selfishly or cooperatively. If the other acts selfishly and I cooperate I will pay the costs that this entails, but not reap any of the gains. In this situation I am therefore better off if I act selfishly. Alternatively should s/he act cooperatively, I still do better (reaping the free rider gains) by acting selfishly. Whichever course s/he chooses, I am better off acting selfishly than

cooperating. The other participant of course faces precisely the same options, with the result that each individual acting rationally will opt to act selfishly, and the possible gains from cooperation will never be achieved. Individual rationality produces an outcome which is less than optimal for either individual.

It should be noted that the stated assumptions are not sufficient to produce this result on their own. It is also necessary to assume that the interactors cannot communicate so as to develop a binding agreement as to their choice of actions. And if this payoff structure refers not to one isolated interaction, but to a series of actions which can be repeated an indefinite number of times, such "communication" may be achieved by an individual adopting a strategy of behaving cooperatively in the first game, and thereafter continuing this strategy only if the other player has acted likewise. (Rappaport and Chamman, 1965)

In psychological experiments on human subjects this strategy has been found to be common. Finally, the discussion has been posed as if the attainment of the rational solution is a conscious and intentional process, and it makes a world of difference whether this is actually the case (in 'sociology') or not (in evolutionary biology). In a conscious process it is possible for actors to become aware of the paradox

that acting in response to the imperatives of individual rationality produces an outcome which is less than optimal individually - it may be possible that the actors can somehow adopt some form of collective rationality which will lead to a higher payoff for each than before. This route to the optimal, unstable, equilibrium is only possible with some awareness of the paradoxes of the structure of this "game".

There is an important sense in which the problem of order as set forth here is a non-problem. Van den Berghe asks, "Why is not human existence a war of all against all, at least not all of the time?" (1981, p 6) In reality neither human society nor any form of animal society have ever been characterised by a war of all against all. The Hobbesian problem of order does not ask how it is possible for all members of the social group to cooperate, but how it is possible for any cooperating coalition of any kind to form at all.

The immediate and practical problem of order in both human and animal societies is one of regulation of conflicts between groups or coalitions - what could be termed the Aristotelian problem of order (Aristotle, 1962, Book 5; Finley, 1975). But it is at least possible that answers to the Hobbesian question may shed some light on the more realistic one also - indeed, the hard version of sociobiology

does set out a powerful, though for humans inadequate, explanation of the basis for the formation of cooperating subgroups within a competitive social order

As has already been said, the sociobiologists tend to equate the problem of order with the problem of the source of altruism. Indeed, it is with the latter more specifically that this trend began. The precise problem was the elaboration of an evolutionary mechanism which could explain the phenomenon of "self sacrifice". Among many species of social animals, whether insects, birds, or mammals, individual members of the group will engage in behaviour which tends to endanger their own lives while enhancing the survival chances of other members of their group.

Thus when a flock of birds is threatened by a predator outlying members of the flock who spot the predator will sound an alarm call. For the rest of the flock the warning gives a chance to disperse, and thus increases probability of survival; for the bird sounding the alarm, it may increase the chances the predator may notice it - and therefore gives it a lower survival probability than if it had tried to sneak away silently (for other examples see Wilson, 1975, pp 121 -129).

Sociobiology originated in the critique of an earlier explanation of such phenomena: the theory of

group selection. In this theory the unit on which natural selection operates is a total population of interbreeding organisms. Self-sacrificing individuals maximise the survival of the species as a whole, and therefore their existence can be predicted as the likely outcome of evolutionary development.

Apart from the functionalist and even teleological nature of this argument (i.e. the assumption that what will benefit the species will be evolved to meet it), and related to it, there is a further problem, the lack of specification of the positive feedback mechanism which will guarantee the actual existence of the desirable behaviour. It is at this point that it is best to begin the sociobiological critique.

The main assumption of this critique, shared by group selectionists and sociobiologists, is that any altruistic behaviour is controlled genetically. If the further assumption is made that the gene(s) controlling this behaviour are carried by some but not all members of the population, as must be the case at some stage if the behaviour is an evolved one, then the following problem arises. Those individuals which are altruistic are more vulnerable to an early death than their selfish group members (at least in the absence of other, probably unlikely, benefits given by these genes). When predators attack it will be those with the altruistic genes

which are eaten, and those without them which survive. In meeting their premature fates, the altruistic individuals will tend to leave less descendants than the others, so in each generation the proportion of altruistic genes in the total gene pool will diminish, with the trend being towards total disappearance. (4)

This critique questions the mechanism whereby altruism develops, and on this level it is devastating. On the group selectionist model where the unit on which natural selection operates is the total population, altruism is a rarely inaccessible optimum. But the argument which demonstrates that this is indeed so is one which has already begun the shift (which is actually made explicitly by sociobiologists) to making the individual organism the unit on which the logic of natural selection is operative. This assumption is used by sociobiologists not just in their critique of group selection, but as the basis for an alternative explanation of "altruism".

This argument starts from the fact that organisms share a proportion of their genetic material with their kin. If the altruistic behaviour is such that it increases the survival chances of such kin, and therefore the probability of their producing descendants for the next generation, then depending on the proportion of genetic substance they

share with the altruist their numbers, such behaviour might increase rather than decrease the proportion of its genes in the next generation.

Thus, among mammals, siblings have on average half their genetic substance in common. An animal faced with the choice of a self-sacrificial "suicide" and the certain death of a number of its siblings will be likely to maximise the proportion of its genes in the gene pool of the next generation by opting for suicide if the number of siblings threatened is more than two. In sociobiological jargon this process is termed the maximisation of "inclusive fitness" - fitness being defined as the passing on of genetic material to succeeding generations, and the inclusive referring to this process happening also through kin passing on that proportion of genetic material which is shared with the individual. (5)

This kin selection basis for altruistic behaviour can be formalised into a precise mathematical formula which can be used to determine whether, in any particular situation, altruistic behaviour will increase the inclusive fitness of the individual. This formula is:

$$k > 1/r \quad (\text{Wilson, 1975, p 118})$$

where k is the benefit to the beneficiaries'

reproductive success divided by the costs to the altruist's reproductive success r is the average coefficient of relationship to the ensemble of beneficiaries.

Unlike group selectionism this theory provides a mechanism whereby mutation(s) favouring 'altruism' are likely to be diffused through a population should they occur - but only on the condition that the organisms adhere to the calculus set out in the equation. If they behaved in ways deviating from the prescriptions of the equation during the intermediate stage when only part of the population carried the gene, the beneficiaries would be those individuals without the gene. In this situation the most likely outcome would be the elimination of the gene or its reduction to mutational levels. Both altruism when the circumstances are such that the equation bans it, and the avoidance of altruism in circumstances where the equation calls for it, will tend towards this result.

Thus the hard, kin selection / inclusive fitness version of sociobiology is a very strong theory of the evolutionary basis of sociality. It is strong in that its predictions are rigorous while being based on parsimonious assumptions. For organisms where the social unit is essentially a kin grouping (most spectacularly for the social insects) it would seem to a non-specialist that the

assumptions are themselves plausible, and the predictions in conformity with actual behaviour. One of the central arguments below will be that this theory is not applicable to human societies. But first it is necessary to detail the second pathway sociobiologists identify for the evolution of cooperation with individuals other than kin. This they call "reciprocal altruism".

In kin-altruism, the sacrificing individual benefits through the gains which accrue to its kin, and does not require direct recompense to engage rationally in the behaviour. Reciprocity is applied to the situation where the cooperating individuals are not related, and where the rationale for the cooperation is "I'll scratch your back if you'll scratch mine".

The argument is still "sociobiological" in that the costs and benefits of cooperation are still measured in the same terms as before; inclusive fitness is still the accounting unit. An organism is still treated as a gene's way to make another gene. But the addition of this second explanatory principle creates a number of problems. The strength of the kin selectionist theory was the number of forms of cooperation it totally ruled out - this is the source of its high predictive content. The addition of the reciprocity principle wipes away this advantage at a stroke. With the combination of the two principles

any form of cooperation or conflict can now be given a rational gloss.

In a population composed of altruists the kind of benefit which is the only one recognised by sociobiologists will not come about. Even in a population which was divided between altruists and others, the altruists would only benefit if they could guarantee that the benefits of their altruistic behaviour were confined to the sub-group of altruists (sociobiologists have developed a whole stream of convoluted Just So stories (6) about conflicts between "cheats" and "altruists", with cheats evolving behaviours to exploit altruists, altruists evolving behaviour to avoid cheats, and the whole thing spiralling in a cycle of increasing sophistication).

Kin selection is, if it is valid, a genuine solution to the problem of order. Reciprocity is not. It merely poses the problem in different terms. It is clearly the case that if cooperation between any two individuals is to be explained by individual rationality, each of the individuals involved in the transaction must have a net gain in some benefit through participation. (7)

Putting it another way, the game which is being played must not be a zero sum one. But the game posited by sociobiologists is precisely that. If the winnings are measured by the proportion of



genes in subsequent generations, then the total payout in all circumstances other than extinction of the population is invariably unity. The other immediately biological measure of fitness which could be proposed, total size of population in the next generation, while it avoids the zero-sum problem, is a return to a group selectionist criterion, though with a putatively individualist mechanism - the validity of the sociobiological argument against group selection also carries full weight against any direct derivation of fitness from reciprocity towards non-kin. (8)

I have tried to show that the combination of the sociobiological theories of kin selection and reciprocity raise major problems. There is still a further one which must be detailed. Reciprocity is at the foundation of all rational interest or game theoretic explanations of cooperation. Sociobiology differs from other such accounts (e.g. the sociological one provided by Banton, 1983, which covers much the same aspects of human behaviour as van den Berghe, i.e. nationalism and racism) not in the underlying logic of argument, but in the nature of the benefits of cooperation which are identified.

Furthermore, if the benefits identified are of a tangible material nature they are likely also to result in gains to the absolute, if not the relative, reproductive potential of the individuals to which

they accrue. Male slave owners of female slaves may increase their inclusive fitness through their ability to exploit them sexually (van den Berghe, 1981, ch 6), but they also gain in their material well-being through the control of the fruits of their labour, or have their lust for power gratified. In such situations the importation of the concept of inclusive fitness seems to me to be less parsimonious than the reliance on the more obvious material benefits.

But it is not true that all forms of human cooperative behaviour are motivated by the expectation of material benefits anyway. Van den Berghe gives the following explanation of religion:

The ultimate forms of collective self-deceit developed by our species are religion and ideology. Religion is the denial of mortality. ... In state societies, religion itself broadens its functions to become an ideology. State religions are no longer simply answers to the existential fear of death, but rationalizations for the status quo and, therefore, a form of ideology. (1981, p 9).

This argument (incidentally a breathtaking example of vulgar marxism) makes no mention whatsoever of the criterion of inclusive fitness.

However, the main point is that this argument is a purely sociological one (I would add a weak one as well). This shift in levels of explanation is common in van den Berghe (and that the sociological explanations take the form of vulgar marxism is also

characteristic). The method which seems to be being employed is one where, if the situation is one where benefits accrue to kin, he asserts that kin selection is operative ("nepotism" in his terminology); where the benefits are not restricted specifically to kin, then the explanation will be based on biological reciprocity, but where even this is not applicable, the account will be purely sociological.

This method gives the arguments an apparently high plausibility. Van den Berghe also asserts a rationale behind this method, in his conception of the three realms of gene, environment and culture (pp 5-6: the last is only applicable to human sociality) and their dialectical interrelationship:

Culture is important but not all-important. It cannot be divorced from either ecology or genetics. All three levels are intertwined. Genes are selected through environmental pressures, and they impose limits on culture. Culture grows out of biological evolution and responds to multiple environmental forces, but it also shapes the ecology and therefore also the biological evolution of our entire planet. Nothing is gained by trying to maintain a categorical distinction between nature and nurture. (p 6, original emphasis)

The basic model of the interaction of genetic, environmental, and cultural determinism which van den Berghe puts forward is actually similar to the "dialectical" model proposed by radical biologists in their critiques of sociobiology (e.g. Rose, Lewontin and Kamin, 1984, esp ch 10). The implication of this

sort of model is that it is not possible to partition the explanations of behaviours, with one set being explained biologically, and another environmentally, and, for humans a third set culturally. Explaining phenomena within any interactionist model faces deep problems in trying to identify primary causes, as in general it can be said that, starting from the interactionist model there would be a presumption that for any particular phenomenon, all factors of the theoretically relevant types might enter into the explanation.

When he moves from discussions of methodology to actual theorising van den Berghe tends to follow the methods of other less sophisticated sociobiologists, in explaining particular behaviours *either* biologically or environmentally/culturally (his sophistication in this comes from the fact that a lower proportion of his arguments are biological, and a higher proportion sociological). This will become evident when I discuss his theory of nationalism and racism, which is a two-stage model, with behaviour being programmed for purely biological reasons in the first stage, and the "running" of this program producing two different types of results depending on varying environments in the second stage.

In fact, van den Berghe, despite an explicitly interactionist methodology, tends to have a real

methodology in which there is a hierarchy of determinisms, with ontological priority corresponding to historical priority. Our behaviour is programmed into us to ensure maximal fitness in the environmental conditions faced by hunter-gatherer societies (as if such societies all faced a similar environment, or were restricted to a small set of behavioural repertoires for that matter) ...

The divergence of types of behaviours among humans is vastly greater than for any other known species. Indeed it is so diverse that it seems to me that any claim that human behaviour is under direct genetic control is already highly implausible, and the alternative argument that what our genes determine is our ability to learn behaviours (Gould, 1980, chapter 32) becomes more plausible.

Most sociobiological explanations of human behaviour tend to take a particular form. First a set of behaviours is identified which is allegedly universal in human societies - and the identification is of behaviours, not of actions:

A final problem of description, closely related to the use of metaphor, is the conflation of different phenomena under the same rubric. The classic that preoccupies sociobiologists and their predecessors is aggression. Originally meaning simply an unprovoked (but not necessarily irrational) attack of one person on another, aggression has come to have also a political meaning, the attack of one state on another, ultimately embodied in war. It is a reflection of the reductionist program

of sociobiology that organized political aggression is seen as the collective manifestation of aggressive feelings of individuals against individuals Yet warfare in state-organized societies has little to do with prior individual feelings of aggression. ... People kill each other in wars for many different reasons, not the least of which is that they are forced to do so by the political power of the state. (Rose et al, 1984, pp 250 - 251)

Sociobiologists repudiate any interest in the multiplicity of alternative motives for any given form of behaviour. The position taken is an extreme form of behaviouralism, which is strongly sceptical about asserted motives:

My book, on the other hand, takes the position that the cultural institutions of kinship, far from being independent of behaviour (and its biological underpinnings), are derivations and codifications of behavioural patterns. (van den Berghe, 1979, p 8)

To some extent the tradition in psychology known as behaviourism has corrected some of these biases by insisting that what people do is more important than what they say they do. (van den Berghe, 1979, p 3) (9)

This injunction to attend more to what people do than to what they say is ambiguous. It can be read as a reminder that social scientists should always be aware of the possibility of discrepancies between an individual's actions and the public justifications of their actions. The more contestable reading is that such discrepancies are the norm, that "motives" are rationalisations and not rationales for actions (it

is surely no coincidence that van den Berghe uses the term "derivations" to describe the relation of cultural institutions to behaviour - a word which to sociologists must suggest Pareto's usage to describe *post hoc* rationalisations).

From Family to Nation

Van den Berghe's explanation of the phenomena of racism and nationalism take the form of a typical evolutionary Just So story, and one which is easily recounted. The decisive stage is the presence, for most of the period of existence of the human species, of small, stateless hunter-gatherer societies. These groups are constituted on the basis of kinship:

Indeed, nearly all of the small-scale, stateless, human societies are groups ranging from a couple of hundred to a few thousand people, defined almost entirely by ties of descent and marriage. (p 22, my emphasis)

The group so constituted is what traditionally is termed a tribe: "a group characterized by internal peace, preferential endogamy and common ancestry (real or *putative*)." (op. cit., my emphasis) "Tribe" has pejorative overtones, and van den Berge states that this is his justification for coining the neologism "ethny" to replace it (this also implies that the phenomena denoted by the earlier neologism "ethnicity" derive from the dynamics of the entity he has renamed).

An ethnic group is normally a kin group on two

levels. At the highest or remotest level (most of the members of) the whole ethnic group are related. Within the group there is normally a series of sub-units (clans) each of which is constituted by an extended family whose members are more closely related to each other than they are to the rest of the tribe as a whole. These clans exchange women, with the precise patterns of exchange varying depending on the system of descent adopted in these societies. Tribes are never pure kin-groups:

Some women are captured from neighbouring ethnies. Conquest and peaceful migration periodically mix populations, and newcomers may be fictively related by adoption. It is very difficult and quite exceptional, however, for an ethny to form if the core of the group is not made up of people who know themselves to be related to each other by a double network of ties of descent and marriage. Ethnicity is thus defined in the last analysis by *common descent*. (pp 23-24, original emphasis)
(10)

Van den Berghe's claim is that these exceptions are marginal. It will be argued below that any one of them is sufficient to put into question the hard, kin-selection version of sociobiological theory, which is the version which gives his argument its persuasive appeal, and that the combination of these qualifications is devastating for his theory. First van den Berghe's full argument will be elaborated.

The next stage of this argument is far from explicit, but seems to go as follows.

Hunter-gatherer ethnic groups were prototypical Gemeinschaft. The mechanisms whereby our genes programmed us to behave in ways which would ensure kin selection are indirect. The method through which kin selection operated was through the recognition of the individuals with whom one carried out regular face to face interactions, who became the recipients of favourable treatment.

The neurological wiring of our brains limits the number of individuals we can know in sufficient depth to reciprocate with them in this way, with an upper limit of about 500 (van den Berghe, 1981, p 25), that is, about the size of the extended family/clan subgroup within a hunter-gatherer tribe. In modern societies where the number of acquaintances an individual makes over the course of a lifetime vastly exceeds this number, once we get beyond this limit we are restricted by our programming to responding to this situation with responses where we either: "slough off old acquaintances to allow new ones, or we simply fake familiarity and conviviality beyond our intellectual and emotional capabilities." (van den Berghe, 1981, p 25)

While the ethnic group consists of what is basically a kin group this rule has the effect of favouring one's kin, in accordance with the prescriptions of kin selection. (11) However, this pure form of kin selection programming is only

relevant in small hunter-gatherer societies. With the development of agriculture some ten thousand years ago, large states half as recently, and the industrial revolution a mere two hundred years or so ago, the basic unit of human society expanded enormously, and the effects of the programming to ensure kin selection were necessarily modified.

In these large (agricultural, state, or industrial) societies the number of individuals we have to interact with, to decide whether we will cooperate with or not, is expanded enormously. The previous decision rule for deciding this question (do we know the individual in a face to face manner) no longer works. New rules are needed.

The kin-selectionist programming means that the criteria which are to be built into these rules have to be ones to ensure that we favour others who are more closely related to us, and fail to favour - or even exploit - those who are less related. There is a major problem at this point. Van den Berghe repeatedly states that even in the hunter-gatherer stage: "in many cases, the common descent ascribed to an ethny is fictive." (1981, p 27), and in the "national" or "racial" ethnic groups of larger-scale societies kinship is more fictive or metaphorical than real:

If kinship in the most restrictive circle of the nuclear family is sometimes a biological fiction, it is little wonder that the greatly

extended kind of kinship implicit in ethnicity should often be putative. The larger the ethny, the more likely this is. Clearly, for 50 million Frenchmen or 100 million Japanese, any kinship they may share is highly diluted, and known to be so. Similarly, when 25 million Afro-Americans call each other 'brothers' and 'sisters,' (sic) they know that they are greatly extending the meaning of these terms. The enormous ethnies, running into millions of members, that characterise industrial societies are limiting cases, far removed from the evolutionary prototype of a few hundred people that we have been talking about. (van den Berghe, 1981, p 27)

Thus such societies are divided into large-scale ethnic groups, each of which has a myth of common kinship. This division into ethnic groups does not necessarily correspond to that between polities. The membership of one of these groups must be marked by outward and visible signs (because the definition of membership as those one "knows" no longer suffices), and because there are some situations where "one literally shoots first and asks questions later" (van den Berghe, 1981, p 28) these ethnic markers have to be ones which can be quickly and reliably read. Van den Berghe asserts, without any clear justification, that this restricts such markers to three main forms, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and whose relative weight varies in different contexts.

The three forms of marker are "race", differential adornment and differential behaviour patterns:

First, one can pick a genetically transmitted phenotype, such as skin pigmentation, stature (as with the Tuzi of Rwanda and Burundi), hair texture, facial features or some such "racial" characteristic. Groups that are socially defined by genetic phenotypes are called "races", and societies that put emphasis on biological traits to differentiate groups within it can be called "racist".

Second, one can rely on a man-made ethnic uniform. Members of one's own group are identified by bodily mutilations and/or adornments carried as visible badges of group belonging. These markers range from clothing and headgear to body painting, tattooing, circumcision, tooth filing and sundry mutilations of the lips, nose and earlobes.

Third, the test can be behavioural. Ethnicity is determined by speech, demeanor, manners, esoteric lore or some other proof of competence in a behavioural repertoire characteristic of the group. (van den Berghe, 1981, p 29, original emphasis.)

The process of distinguishing between ethnic in-groups and out-groups, ethnocentrism, derives from one impulse, genetically programmed into the human behavioural repertoire during the hunter-gatherer stage of evolution. This impulse can manifest itself in variant forms which are distinguished by the specific methods of marking membership of in- and out-groups. These different specific forms or manifestations of the ethnocentric impulse are elicited in different environmental contexts. Where adjacent populations have visible phenotypical distinctions, these will serve as markers. Ethnocentrism here takes a "racial" form. Where such

differences are absent other markers must perforce be used - here ethnocentrism takes a "national" form.

In discussing the racial form of ethnocentrism, van den Berghe is asserting that a specific form of social behaviour, the labelling and hierarchical grading of groups on the basis of phenotypical characteristics, has biological roots. He stresses that the characteristics chosen are picked for their social relevance, and that such markers are essentially arbitrary, especially in biological terms:

It is also important to stress that phenotypes chosen for social relevance, while often clearly visible markers of genetic origin, are typically biologically trivial in terms of fitness, abilities, aptitudes and temperament - indeed anything of social consequence. (van den Berghe, 1981, p 29)

In this theory, at least one normal prop of racist doctrines, that it is possible to make invidious ranking between groups distinguished on the basis of phenotype, is explicitly repudiated. The stress is on the common biological propensities, not only of humans, but of all social animals (van den Berghe, 1981, pp 29-30). The phenotypical differences chosen as markers are typically trivial in terms of anything of social consequence.

Secondly, unlike most other theories which claim racist behaviour derives from human biological propensities van den Berghe says that the use of this

specific form of marker is the (statistical) exception rather than the rule in human societies. The marker selected, whatever form it takes, is used to separate a more or less closely interrelated population from neighbouring ones. Most of the time the rates of migration between neighbouring groups are such as to create gentle genetic gradients between them, such that the variability of genotypes and phenotypes is greater within groups than between neighbouring groups.

In this situation phenotypical markers will be useless as aids to discrimination of in-group membership. (van den Berghe, 1981, pp 31 - 32) Such markers will only come into their own when there have been migrations of populations across large distances, over a short period and involving relatively large numbers, such that there are gross phenotypical populations between neighbouring (and therefore potentially conflicting) groups. Even here, the 'miscegenation' which typically accompanies conquest will erode the clarity of these distinctions over the course of two or three generations unless strong barriers are erected to prevent this. (van den Berghe, 1981, p 32)

That human populations vary phenotypically is a fact of biology, not of sociology, and it may perhaps even be true that in some sociological accounts of the origins of the use of 'race' as a

group marker there has been insufficient mention of such factors as a necessary but not sufficient condition for the development of 'race relations situations'. However, this is not some blinding new revelation. If race relations situations are normally ones where different groups are distinguished phenotypically, it is trivially obvious that such situations can only arise when clearly phenotypically distinguishable populations interact.

Of course, it is rarely good to ignore the obvious, and the result in this case, in my opinion, is to leave matters unclarified in such a way as to make the sociobiological claims more credible. The main thrust of biological and sociological critiques of racism has been that such theories are wrong/irrational: the genetic variations between such groups are irrelevant in that there is no evidence that such variations have any effect on socially relevant characteristics. Apart from all the problems of scientifically identifying distinct races, there is no evidence that 'races' can be ranked hierarchically by means of attributes such as intelligence.

What this still leaves open is the possibility that, while 'races' may not be distinguishable on any hierarchical scale, 'races' are still real entities in that the members of these large anonymous populations are more closely related to all other

members of their own group than to any members of another group.

Such an assumption seems to me central to van den Berghe (and indeed in other sociobiological accounts which claim that racism is rational in kin-selective terms). That is, the crucial assumption is that the phenotypical variations are valid markers of groups which tend to have significant genotypical variation as well. Thus favouring individuals unknown to me who share my phenotype is favouring the ones who are (statistically) more likely to have a higher proportion of their genes in common with me. In kin selection terms such behaviour will pay off.

The (biological) problem with this is that the genes which control the types of phenotypical variations which have actually served as markers of 'races' involves only a small proportion of the total genetic material. Van den Berghe's crucial assumption that when populations have been living in close proximity for a long period intra-group genetic variation exceeds inter-group variation, but that major migrations reverse this ordering, is incorrect.

(12)

Thus the use of such phenotypical markers as a measure to distinguish one group distantly related, and others not at all so, will come out with the wrong conclusions almost as often as the right ones.

The use of such markers - all the types of markers identified by van den Berghe - will have only tiny effects on the inclusive fitness of those who adopt them. Indeed, such effects are likely to be so tiny that the use of such markers is almost certainly not rational in terms of the cost/benefit equation which is at the core of the kin-selectionist version of sociobiology.

When such markers are used to discriminate outside of the field of known kin, they are almost as likely to result in acts which favour an individual less related than they are one more closely related. It should be stressed here that the definition of relatedness has shifted from the normal sociobiological one of closeness of common descent, which only works with fairly close kin, to one based on proportions of genotype in common. When populations are defined as large groups of many thousands and upwards, where claims of common ancestry are necessarily (for good biological reasons) fictive, discrimination between them is irrational on kin-selective, inclusive fitness grounds.

If this is so, it would leave a dilemma for sociobiologists. For they are 'strict' Darwinists. Every trait which can be explained by evolutionary origins is explicable because of the evolutionary benefits it brings. Yet the diacritical markers of

race and nation do not bring such benefits. The markers are not as van den Berghe claims 'good' tests of kinship; they are extremely unreliable and poor ones. There are two possible responses to this dilemma. One (as when van den Berghe repeatedly claims that the markers are good ones) is to deny it. 'Nations' and 'races' are biologically real in that there is a greater degree of interrelatedness between their members than with outsiders. These claims are simply not consistent with the evidence of modern biology.

The other way out is the 'uncontrolled juggernaut' theory. During the hunter-gatherer stage of human evolution kin-selection implanted in us basic instinctive urges to distinguish between 'us' and the rest - this was the mechanism through which it worked. At that stage it did work, because the basic social groups were family groups.

With the formation of larger-scale basic social groups the object of the mechanism has become displaced onto populations which in biological terms are not in any meaningful way kin at all. The result is that the mechanism does not serve the individual's evolutionary interests in the way it was 'intended' any longer - we are now fairly indiscriminate in whether we behave nepotistically, favouring those who actually are our kin, or 'nepotistically' in favouring those who are not kin at all but are

fictively given this status. Evolution takes time, and no humans have had enough of this since their ancestors were in hunter-gatherer societies for instincts to have changed to those appropriate to the new environment which is constituted by large anonymous societies.

Van den Berghe, like most sociobiologists, does not clearly adopt one of these two alternatives, but makes statements which suggest both. A series of crucial ambiguities are set up: the most important relates to the meaning of 'nepotism': whether this refers to the favouring of those who actually are close kin, where the criteria for relationships are within the realm of biology, or whether it implies non-kin who are socially defined as 'fictive' kin are favoured. The rigorous assumptions of sociobiology are such as to totally separate the two cases, and to say that only the former is rational. But by blurring this distinction van den Berghe manages to suggest that the second is a derivative form of the first. To repeat once again, in sociobiological terms it is its negation.

A strict application of the kin-selectionist version of sociobiology leads to the conclusion that nationalism and racism are either impossible or irrational. In fact, if the first assumption is chosen it would lead to the conclusion that all forms of human sociality which, unlike the norm for the

sociality of other animals, include non-kin and routinely include situations where such non-kin gain relative to kin, are impossible. Violations of the basic rule are routine in all known human societies (this is the burden of the anthropological evidence in Sahlins (1976, ch 11)). I find it very significant that no sociobiologist (and in particular van den Berghe, whose sociological work is marked by a strong liberal opposition to racism and nationalism, and whose sociobiological work still shows evident repulsion with them) has stated clearly that these phenomena are irrational. To discuss why this is so, it is necessary to reconsider the ideological dimensions of sociobiology.

Ideology and Ethics

Most of this chapter has been confined to a discussion of the merits and demerits of sociobiology as a purely scientific theory. However, a major reason for the successful mass popularisation of such an esoteric biological theory as sociobiology must be related to its implications for the possible resolutions of strongly contested political controversies.

Sociobiologists vary in the explicitness with which they draw political conclusions in their work. When replying to critiques of sociobiology (and in particular the criticisms developed by radical

biologists who claim sociobiology is nothing but a form of capitalist ideology) they tend to claim that they are merely scientists elucidating facts, and that it is up to others to draw whatever conclusions they can from these facts (the 'Los Alamos defence'), or even that the inevitable incommensurability between 'is' and 'ought' means the theory has no inevitable implications for human behaviour, and in particular for political choice, at all. However, in more expansive moments it is clear that the ambition of many sociobiologists is to develop a scientifically adequate code of ethics (Wilson, 1975, pp 562 - 564).

Sociobiologists tend to use two main sorts of arguments to claim that the status quo is natural. The simpler is just to claim that it is inevitable, and the more sophisticated the assertion that it is possible to constrain individuals to behave differently, but only at the cost of loss of efficiency. In both cases the assumption is that doing what comes naturally is also doing what is best (the two differ in that the former gives best an absolute, and the latter merely a relative, meaning). 'Is' might not imply 'ought', but clearly 'cannot' does imply ought not; and even if the argument is that changes cause a loss of efficiency this creates a strong presumption against them. They need not be ruled out entirely in this case, but much more

detailed argument is needed about the precise extent of the loss of efficiency, and the precise gain in other benefits. When assertions are made that such changes will lead to loss of efficiency, the implication is that the extent of this will be so great as to seriously question the alternative.

One problem with this, even if the biological determination of behaviour is granted, is that the alternatives of simple impossibility and loss of efficiency do not exhaust the logical possibilities. A third possibility is that constraints which repress the spontaneous form of natural behaviour may lead to an increase in efficiency, even when viewed from the standpoint of the individual subjected to such constraint. This sort of assumption is central to the argument of Hobbes.

In *Leviathan* the natural instincts of men in the state of nature are such as to produce a perpetual warfare of all (heads of family groups) against all. There is: "continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short." (Hobbes, 1968, p 186). With the social contract, the designation of an absolute sovereign, the formation of a Commonwealth, all of this changes - it is now possible to pursue the pacific arts. The result is thus a clear and massive gain in 'efficiency'.

The relation of these two states to men's

natural biological impulses is quite complex. The first fundamental law of nature is stated to be

That every man, ought to endeavour
Peace, as farre as he has hope of
obtaining it; and when he cannot
obtain it, that he may seek, and use,
all helps, and advantages of Warre.
(1968, p 190, italicised in original)

The result of this one fundamental law is that the state of nature form a stable equilibrium unless all within it combine together to make the contract, for until they do so the state of war is inevitable.

The first clause, the endeavour for peace, also allows for the possibility of the contract, but no more than the possibility. Only if all men move from one level of rationality, of maximally defending their interests within the war of all against all, to a higher level, is the contract and the more efficient metastable equilibrium which results from it possible.

Thus, so far we have what is clearly a theory of biological potentiality rather than strict determinism, in the terms I laid out earlier. Now comes Hobbes' own twist to the argument. Many 'natural' attributes of men can only be manifested in a Commonwealth. Indeed at this point a very hard opposition is drawn up between 'the laws of nature' and 'our natural passions':

For the Lawes of Nature (as
Justice, Equity, Modesty, Mercy, and
(in summe) *doing to others, as we
would be done to,*) of themselves,
without the terrour of some Power, to

cause them to be observed, are contrary to our naturall Passions, that carry us to Partiality, Pride, Revenge and the like. (Hobbes, 1968, p 223, original emphasis)

For here is the rub. Men's civilized nature is just potentiality, and is only realisable in specific environments. The natural passions, on the other hand, are determined. It is inevitable that they will continually come to the surface. It is of course from this specific twist that Hobbes deduces the conclusion that sovereignty in a commonwealth must be invested absolutely in a single individual: that while the gains in efficiency from a commonwealth are great, only the continual repression of pure egoism can avoid reversion to the state of nature.

Chapter Four will argue that Hobbes asserted that commonwealths naturally took the form of nations. Not much has changed. In the sociobiologists there is a more explicit development of arguments that people of differing phenotypes are less likely to form part of a single commonwealth, and some qualifications about the extent to which, in situations where the definition of groups is on a national basis, individuals can 'cheat', manipulating the presentation of their ethnic identity so as to gain variable, situationally specific benefits.

On the sole criterion of rationality admitted in sociobiology, of increased inclusive fitness, the

maximising of direct and indirect descendents in future generations, the separation between groups of the scale of nations and races is simply irrational. One implication of this is that if such phenomena do have a rationale, it is not one which can be explained by the particular principles of sociobiology - and indeed any rationale they may have is going to be limited to some extent.

The other important implication is that there is an urgent need to explain why no sociobiologist has reached and explicitly spelled out this logical conclusion of the theory. This is not a matter of 'ideology' in the sense of partisan political passions producing a selective interpretation of the evidence (a model of ideology which once again goes back to Hobbes). While it is abundantly clear that some of the leading theoreticians of sociobiology do have political biases which align them with the new right, and while ideologists, from the editorial writers of conservative newspapers to fascists have played a significant part in its popularisation (13) the real danger from sociobiology comes from its seeming cognitive power: not that it can be used to persuade those who are already disposed to accept all the current hierarchies of power that these are biologically justified, but that it can persuade those not so disposed that they are inevitable.

These arguments are specious, but

demonstrating that they are involves complex and technical rebuttal. Sociobiology has the advantage of a (relatively) simple model of the evolutionary bases of human behaviour. Simplicity is of course one mark of a good scientific theory (and equally it is something which is very difficult to define precisely), though this must be combined with the need, which sociobiology does not meet when it is applied to human groups, of clear criteria as to how it should be applied. It is this defect of sociobiology, and not the mere biases of (some of) its proponents which makes it both bad science (at least in its application to human groups) and a bad basis for arguing the 'best' form of social order.

Footnotes to Chapter Two

1) Appendix One argues that the version of 'primordialism' associated with Edward Shils and Clifford Geertz does, unlike the sociobiologists draw a conceptual distinction between ethnicity and nationalism. Shils and Geertz assert that ethnicity is ubiquitous (Shils confusingly uses the term nationality), but like the modernists recognise the distinctiveness of the forms of nationalism which have developed over the past couple of centuries or so.

For the purposes of a critique of sociobiological arguments in this chapter, the postulate of the ubiquity of ethnic ties has been left unchallenged to concentrate on the presumed derivation of these ties from those of kinship. The ubiquity of ethnicity is also more fully discussed in Appendix One.

2) The difference is that for cooperation there is (normally) some form of direct benefit accruing to the individual - as will be shown show later this is a necessary but by no means sufficient condition for explaining cooperation from a rational interest perspective.

For altruism, as indicated by the common sense meaning of the term, there is no obvious 'payoff' to the individual who indulges in the behaviour. It is

an inbuilt assumption of all forms of rational interest theory: that selfishness has ontologically priority:

The assumption that agents are selfishly motivated does, however, have a methodological privilege, for the following reason. For non-selfish behaviour, for example altruism, to be possible, some other agent or agents must be selfishly motivated, but not vice versa. Non-selfish behaviour is logically parasitic on selfishness, since there can be no pleasures in giving unless there are selfish pleasures in having. (Elster, 1985, p 9)

The assumptions of rational choice theory then tend towards the making of a further step, where the rewards to the altruistic individual are themselves defined as selfish ones - an assumption that selfishness is not merely privileged, but ubiquitous. Once this step is taken, the analysis of altruistic behaviour takes the form of an unmasking of its real selfish roots. Altruism is not only reduced to a form of selfishness, but perhaps one of the less attractive forms at that, in that it masquerades as something else.

While the founders of sociobiology use the term 'altruism' in this sense of masked selfishness, this implication is removed in van den Berghe, who substitutes 'nepotism'.

3) Chapters III and IV of this work argue that successive stages of biological theorising parallel

the internal changes within capitalist social formations, with sociobiology corresponding to the stage of fully developed commodity production.

4) This account is greatly oversimplified. In more rigorous models it is possible to develop assumptions in which populations of altruistic individuals could evolve. The necessary assumptions, however, are in general implausible. See Wilson (1975) pp 106 - 117 for the general case, and Boorman and Levitt (1980) for greater elaboration and additional arguments that conditions conducive to group selection may have been present in hominid evolution.

5) "*Genetic fitness* The contribution to the next generation of one genotype in a population relative to the contribution of other genotypes. By definition, this process of natural selection leads eventually to the prevalence of genotypes with the highest fitness." (Wilson, 1975, p 585)

"*Inclusive fitness*" The sum of the individual's own fitness plus all its influence on fitness in its relatives other than direct descendants; hence the total effect of kin selection with reference to an individual." (Wilson, 1975, p 586)

6) This term is used by Steven Rose to point to the speculative nature of sociobiological explanations of

human traits. Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories* give similarly speculative, but Lamarkian, explanations for the anatomical peculiarities of various animals.

7) This is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. For it to be worth my while to cooperate I have to be sure before I do so that you will do the same, so that I will not be put in the situation of paying the costs then not getting the expected benefit. And if I believe you are going to behave cooperatively then I can try to act as a free rider, reaping the gains of your altruism without paying the costs - and precisely the same logic faces you.

There is a further problem with "altruism" as deferred reciprocation, in that it introduces the question of time preferences. In direct cooperation there is no time lag between paying the cost and receiving the corresponding benefit. It is rational to prefer jam today to jam tomorrow, so the net benefit must be greater (normally by some incalculable amount) for deferred reciprocation to be acceptable.

8) Unlike the kin-selectionist case, where diffusion of the hypothetical gene throughout the population eventually achieves a state where no individual receives any direct net benefit, this is not a "paradox" arising from the fallacy of composition,

but a genuine problem.

Reciprocal altruism is not individually accessible in a pure 'prisoners dilemma' situation, that is without the possibility of recognition of the individuals with the commitment to reciprocate. Like group selection it therefore requires conditions for its realisation (a sufficiently developed central nervous system to recognise conspecifics as individuals; ecological conditions conducive to the possibility of repeated situations of potentially advantageous co-operation with the same conspecifics (Boorman and Levitt, 1980)) which seem too restrictive to use reciprocal altruism as a general explanation of animal sociality.

It seems likely that such conditions conducive to the emergence of reciprocity were more relevant to the evolution of some mammalian species. The individual inaccessibility of reciprocity means that if such behaviour is to form an evolutionary stable strategy it must rest on a *conscious* calculation of the balance of costs and benefits. It cannot rest therefore on direct (instinctive) genetic control.

9) Many of the new wave of advocates of biological explanation of human behaviour seem to be arguing that Skinnerian behaviouralism is the necessary foundation for the culturalist approaches which they counterpose to their own. See, for example, Freeman

(1984).

10) As with many varieties of marxism, the last analysis here has the result of validating a result which is not entailed by the previous analysis.

11) This is in fact extremely implausible: the whole point about kin selection is that it only works if kin are favoured precisely to the extent of the closeness of their relationship; brothers should be more favoured than cousins, and these more favoured than second cousins, and this to the extent determined by the equation.

12) Recent investigations of molecular geneticists have shown that whenever groups are defined as large and anonymous, whether such groups are 'nations' or 'races', the largest coefficients of variation of genotype are greater within than between groups.

13) See Barker, 1981 for documentation on this, which sometimes comes perilously close to arguing for guilt by association

Chapter Three

Nationalism as a characteristic of 'Modern' Societies

This chapter will discuss the analyses and theories which claim that nationalism and nation states are essentially modern phenomena. Support for such arguments can be divided into two types of claims. The first appears to be essentially empirical: that nationalism and related phenomena were either entirely absent from, or such minor features of, pre-modern societies that they can safely be ignored for them, while conversely the nationalist phenomena have been a central feature of the modern world. This will be the first type of argument covered.

It will be argued that, below the apparent empiricism, such assertions rest on conceptual definitions of nationalism which conflate this with other ideologies which were exceptional outside the modern world. This chapter will confine its attention to a consideration of the conceptual adequacy of this version of the modernist thesis. The conceptual foundation achieved through this will then be used to argue, in the following chapter, that nationalism was a significant force in the English middle ages.

The other form of backing for the modernist thesis, which will also be discussed in this chapter, rests on arguments that 'modern' societies have specific functional requirements which require that

the foundations of states should be along national lines. In the marxist version of this theory, which, as Appendix Two documents, does not originate with Marx and Engels (in fact it originated around the turn of the twentieth century) such functional needs are specific to capitalist societies, while in the 'Weberian' version elaborated recently by Ernest Gellner they apply to all industrialised and industrialising societies, capitalist and socialist.

Something similar to the marxist and Gellnerite models is needed to explain the ubiquity of the nationalist phenomenon in the modern world, but the precise nature of the functional relationship between nationalism and the transition to modernity in these models must be rethought (a process which also involves a reconsideration of the relationship between functional and intentional reasons for the success of the nationalism which is proposed in these models).

The Modernity of Nationalism Thesis

It was claimed in Chapter One that the primordial nature of nationality was one of the founding, and indeed central and constitutive, assumptions of the nineteenth century discipline of sociology. This assumption was by no means confined to sociology. The foundations of history as an academic discipline in the same period were based on these self-same

premisses:

To collect the relics of the past, written and unwritten, became a universal passion. ... nationalism was probably its most important stimulus ... (Hobsbawm, 1962, p 345).

While it is not true that all nineteenth century thinkers shared this assumption of the primordality of nationalism (Lord Acton's 1867 conservative and anti-nationalist essay is frequently cited) the exceptions were few and far between. In twentieth century academic studies of nationalism the dominant assumptions of those who have devoted time to such study have been precisely the opposite. The stress has been that nationalism is an essentially modern phenomenon.

This section will look at theorists whose primary thrust is a simple assertion of the specific modernity of nationalism. The writers who will form the centre of attention are the historians Carlton Hayes, Hans Kohn, and Elie Kedourie, who have been the most influential exponents of this thesis, at least within the English-speaking world. The next two sections will continue by considering two of the main attempts to explain this supposed phenomenon by claiming that nationalism corresponds to deep imperatives which are specific to modern societies: the classical marxist theory and Ernest Gellner's Weberian reworking of this. (1)

Although Hayes, Kohn, Kedourie and other

modernists share an insistence that nationalism is a phenomenon which originated some time within the past few centuries, there is still a wide ranging disagreement on the precise dating of its emergence within this period.

The precise dates of nationalism's genesis are a matter of dispute: Kohn tends to favour 1642, Acton the 1772 Partition of Poland, Kedourie 1806, the date of Fichte's famous Addresses to the German nation in Berlin. Most, however, opt for 1789 - with the proviso that the Revolution served merely to bring together the elements of the nationalist idea, which were brewing up throughout the previous two centuries. (Smith, 1971, p 28)

These divergences, of course, are partially a reflection of differences in the detailed definitions of nationalism which are employed in addition to the always complex problem of delimiting the first emergence of a particular phenomenon. Nevertheless, the definitions of nationalism employed by our three theorists do have a sufficiently similar common core, which is the incorporation of some form of 'democracy' as a necessary component of nationalism. It will further be argued that given that such democracy has never been a characteristic of large scale state societies until the past few centuries this definition entails the conclusion of the modernity of nationalism which has indeed been drawn from it.

The earliest of our three theorists was Carlton Hayes, whose work was done in the inter-war

period. His argument rests on a conceptual distinction between nationality and patriotism, both of which he assumed to be primordial phenomena, and the specific form these take within modern nationalism. This distinction is best approached through his specific understanding of nationality.

'Nationality' carries a whole battery of separate meanings. In its 'legal' sense a question about an individual's nationality is equivalent to a question about which state's passport the individual is entitled to carry. The second major meaning derives from the nineteenth century nationalist context, and was used to make the distinction between the western European nations, which towards the end of that century had in the main achieved the umbrella of their own independent states, and the eastern European peoples, the nationalities, who aspired to this condition but had not yet achieved it. While related to both these meanings, Hayes' use of the term is different again:

In general, however, 'nationality' is far less ambiguous than 'nation' and is most commonly and can be most properly used to designate a group of people who speak either the same language or a closely related group of dialects, who cherish common historical traditions, and who constitute or think they constitute a distinct cultural society. (Hayes, 1954, p 5)

Thus, in effect, a direct substitution of 'ethnic group' whenever Hayes uses the term 'nationality'

will make for increased clarity for the modern reader. There is no necessity for each such ethnic group to form the basis for a separate state, or not until modern times.

In this sense, a nationality may exist without political unity, that is, without an organised sovereign state of its own, and *vice versa*, a political state may embrace several nationalities, though the tendency has been pronounced in modern times for every self-conscious nationality to aspire to political unity and independence. (Hayes, 1954, p 5)

Ethnicity then is primordial, but nationalism which harnesses ethnicity to the sovereign state is something different and specific, and should be considered as such.

The other dimension which Hayes asserts the necessity of considering is the variability of objects on which the primal emotion of patriotism can be focussed. It would seem that this term is used to denote any form of loyalty to an in-group, and again the stress is that it is not only not necessarily a nation state which is the recipient of this loyalty, but not even necessarily an ethnic group at all:

Patriotism, which nowadays we connect with nationality, has been historically more closely related to other loyalties of man Patriotism did become a marked feature of fixed and ancient life, but even then it was seldom a patriotism which reached throughout the length and breadth of the country where people of like speech had their homes; it was rarely a national patriotism. (Hayes, 1954, p 23)

The evolutionary scheme which is developed is one where patriotic loyalties are initially directed to an individual's immediate locality, but gradually extend to encompass a state, which at this stage is not based on a particular nationality:

Patriotism at an early date was extended in application from one's native locality to one's political country, from an immediate place to the person of a military or political leader, and hence to the idea of a state. But among ancient peoples, and medieval also, the sway of political and military chieftains infrequently coincided with any particular nationality, and consequently patriotism often changed from local sentiment to imperial pride without passing through an intermediate national stage. (Hayes, 1954, p 24)

Thus nationalism, as distinct from nationality, requires two historically uncommon and independent conditions. The first is the coincidence of the population of a state and an ethnic group, the second that the community to which individuals owe primary loyalty should be this state, with an implied third condition uniting the other two - the reason for this choice of allegiance must be because the state is a national one.

Thus the link with the state is not merely a matter of the population of a given state being aware of their distinctiveness. Such awareness was present in antiquity, but its basis was common religion, not (linguistic) nationality:

Antiquity knew not nationalism as we know it. Ancient Egyptians were

united in the bonds of a common loyalty to the sacred River Nile and to the sun-sprung Pharoah, but the ordinary dwellers in Thebes or Memphis, though probably quite aware of their common nationality, hardly felt that the claims of their nationality were superior to the claims of their Pharoah and their priests ... (Hayes, 1954, p 26)

The Jews were no exception to the rule of antiquity, despite the perfervid rhapsodies of contemporary Zionists. A re-reading of the Hebrew scriptures should show that the 'chosen people' did not think of themselves as singularly blest and set apart simply because they spoke Hebrew and lived in Palestine and constituted a national state. ... The Jews were a 'chosen people' because they believed in Yahweh and the law revealed by Him, and the foreigner who would proclaim in the words of Ruth to Naomi that 'Thy God shall be my God' was admitted to full membership without embarrassing questions as to racial stock or linguistic accomplishment, or as to whether the quota of immigrants from the applicant's nation was full. (Hayes, 1954, p 27) (2)

Nationalism was "hardly more in evidence" in medieval western Europe, where the factors militating against it included lack of safe and easy means of communication, a near universal divorce between learned and vernacular languages, a near-universal influence of a 'world' religion, and "an almost universal non-existence of strictly national states." (p 33)

"Splendid vernacular literatures" began to be written in Europe from the fourteenth century, with Dante and Chaucer. This process expanded and

gathered momentum in the next two centuries. In about the same period the creation of a series of sovereign proto-national states was achieved by absolutist monarchs: the Tudors, the Valois and Bourbons, the Habsburgs, the Avizes, and the Vasas. The England, France, Spain, Portugal and Sweden they created were "fairly large, fairly homogeneous, and absolutely independent". (p 34)

These absolutist monarchs were the first symbols of national unity:

Monarchy played a leading role in exalting national consciousness and national sentiment. The monarch was the symbol of national unity and independence, and in him resided national sovereignty. Indeed 'monarch' and 'sovereign' were interchangeable terms It was about the institution of the monarchy that national traditions grew up, and it was under the patronage of individual monarchs that much national literature was produced. (Hayes, 1954, p 35)

National sentiment and national consciousness had existed from at least the later middle ages. But the factors listed a couple of paragraphs ago meant they had but limited significance. It was only with the political changes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that these sentiments became more important, both because monarchs were now willing to mobilise them, and because the new states which had formed in this period were for the first time truly national:

From the middle ages dated among

European peoples a quickened and quickening national consciousness. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in many parts of Europe, the states of Sweden, Denmark, Holland, France, Spain, Portugal, and England, were really national. Each of these states comprised a definite geographical area inhabited by populations which were marked off from their neighbours by a difference of speech; each possessed an independent political organisation and pursued an independent economic policy; and the citizens of each cherished peculiar customs and traditions. (Hayes, 1954, p 40) (3)

Thus, so far, we have seen Hayes' model of the evolution of nationalism is a three stage one. In the first stage nationalism is totally absent. If it is apparent, in for example the states of antiquity, this is a misconstrual of what are (at least in the specific counterexamples he gives) loyalties based on ties of religion not language. (4)

The second stage comes in the later middle ages in western Europe. Here there is some evidence for the existence of national consciousness and national sentiment, but a whole number of factors, of which probably the most important is that the current states did not correspond perfectly to a national model, limited the significance of such sentiments.

The third stage came, again in western Europe, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. On the one hand a key series of the states in this area now do correspond in effect to the national model (5), and on the other hand the strong and dynamic

dynasties at the head of these states furthered nationalism both by their presence as symbols of the unity and strength of the nation, and by deliberate manipulation of this symbolism to solidify their support.

The fourth stage in Hayes' model is one in which the French Revolution proclaims a fusion of nationalism and democracy, thus providing the impetus for the dissemination of nationalism outside its original cradle. I will come back to this stage in Hayes' model after a briefer discussion of Kohn and Kedourie.

Kohn can be summarised more quickly, for the arguments have only minor variations from those of Hayes. Again the stress is that the 'natural' territorial units and collectivities evoking loyalty prior to seventeenth century Europe were either much smaller or much larger than a nation:

This love of the homeland, which is regarded as the heart of patriotism, is not a 'natural' phenomenon, but an artificial product of historical and intellectual development. The homeland which a man 'naturally' loves is his native village or valley or city, a small territory well known in all its concrete details, abounding in personal memories, a place through which his life was generally lived throughout its whole span. (Kohn, 1944, p 8) (6)

[In the middle ages] religion was universal. Its dominance left no room for any decisive influences of nationalism. Practically all learning was in the hands of the clerics who used one common language, Latin.

People looked upon everything not from the point of view of their 'nationality' or 'race', but from the point of view of religion. Mankind was divided not into Germans and French and Slavs and Italians, but into Christians and Infidels, and within Christianity into faithful sons of the Church and heretics. (Kohn, 1944, p 79)

Towards the closing of the medieval period national states begin to be established. However, even this does not lead to nationalism. More precisely, what it does lead to is a number of individuals who can be interpreted as nationalists, but these are dismissed. It is unclear whether the ground for dismissal is that such individuals were genuine nationalists before their time, or whether it is anachronistic to construe them as nationalists at all:

Towards the end of the Middle Ages national states began to take shape, and the first foundations for the future growth of nationalism were laid. A few individuals wrote and acted in a way which would justify claiming them for nationalism. But they were isolated individuals, extremely interesting as forerunners, but without any immediate influence upon their people and their time. [So far the first criterion for dismissal. Now without warning we switch to the second - DA.] It would be misleading to interpret sayings and deeds of the later Middle Ages or of early modern times in the light of modern nationalism, instead of trying to understand them under their own conditions. Some of the examples adduced to prove the existence of nationalism in the later Middle Ages, if seen in their context, allow an entirely different interpretation. [This is no doubt true, but concrete

examples might help. Instead there is a switch back to the first criterion - DA.] Pertinent and interesting utterances in the sources may have been preserved for the very reason that they expressed attitudes unusual for the time. (Kohn, 1944, p 79)

The original formation of national states came about through actions taken for non-nationalistic reasons of state. For example, Henry VIII "established the national Church in its beginning supported by reasons of state rather than by the life-giving forces of nationalism." (p 157) However, the combination of an already existing national state and the Civil War led to the premature emergence of a full-blown nationalism in England. This was the only nationalism to emerge before the French Revolution, and its precocity has given it a *sui generis* character ever since:

But the birth of nationalism in the Puritan Revolution determined and still determines the character of English nationalism. England was the first country where national consciousness embraced the whole people. It became so deeply engrained in the English mind that nationalism lost its problematic character with the English. (Kohn, 1944, p 178)

After this lone example, there was then a lull. Only towards the end of the eighteenth century is there a rise of nationalism in a series of other countries. This rise culminates in, and is re-energised by, the French Revolution, which begins the process of the global dissemination of nationalism.

Nationalism as we understand it

is not older than the second half of the eighteenth century. Its first great manifestation was the French Revolution, which gave the new movement increased dynamic force. Nationalism had become manifest, however, at the end of the eighteenth century almost simultaneously in a number of widely separated European countries. (Kohn, 1944, p 3)

Nationalism, arising in the eighteenth century in Western Europe, has spread into the furthest corners of the earth; wherever it has gone, it has shaped human thought and human society in its image. The age of nationalism is world-wide in its manifestations; though nationalism is only one of the determining forces of the age, it is important and inclusive enough to warrant calling the age starting with Rousseau and Herder, with the American and French Revolutions, the Age of Nationalism. (Kohn, 1944, p vii)

The extra component which Kohn injects into his definition of nationalism, which leads him even more firmly than Hayes into a 'late' dating for its origin will again be postponed until I have discussed our third theorist, Kedourie, who, as we shall see, adheres even more firmly to an even later dating.

This 'later' dating of Kedourie is the aftermath of the French Revolution:

Nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It pretends to supply a criterion for the determination of the unit of population proper to enjoy a government exclusively its own, for the legitimate exercise of power in the state, and for the right organization of a society of states. (Kedourie, 1966, p 9)

The absence of nationalism before this time is

asserted mainly through an argument (also alluded to more briefly by Hayes and Kohn, and many other subsequent modernists) that the precursors of the word 'nation' carried a radically different conceptual loading before this period.

In particular, the original Latin root began by referring to some grouping smaller than a modern nation - though it is not clear whether he is saying it was smaller than an ethnic group, or smaller than a large-scale state. In the middle ages a transmutation of meaning led to its application to communities now far wider than present-day states and ethnic groups.

Natio in ordinary speech originally meant a group of men belonging together by similarity of birth, larger than a family, but smaller than a clan or people. [Smith (1986b, p 230, footnote 3) states that the Romans used *natio* of "distant, backward communities", and *populus* only of themselves] Thus one spoke of the *Populus Romanus* and not of the *natio romanorum*. The term applied particularly to a community of foreigners. Medieval universities were, it is well known, divided into 'nations': the University of Paris had four nations: *l'honorable nation de France*, *la fidele nation de Picardie*, *la venerable nation de Normandie*, and *la constante nation de Germanie*; these distinctions in use within the university, indicated places of provenance, but in no way corresponded either to modern geographical divisions, or indeed to what is now understood by 'nations'. (Kedourie, 1966, p 13)

These nations, and similar ones which provided the method of organisation of Papal Councils in this

period (approximately the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries) tended to include people drawn from what would now be regarded as many quite separate nations. The 'German' nation of both the Council and the University included Scandinavians and English. Italy (a collection of separate city states in this period) was one of the four nations in the Council but, with Iberia, a component of the French nation in Paris.

The next modification was to denote a collectivity, usually pejoratively: "Thus Machiavelli speaks of the ghibelline nation, and Montesquieu refers to monks as the pietistic nation." (p 14) (7) Yet another extension of the term began to link it to particular states - not yet to the whole population of such states, but the small minorities of such populations who were allowed some role in the normal political processes:

A nation came to be understood as that body of persons who could claim to represent, or elect representatives for, a particular territory at councils, diets, or estates.
(Kedourie, 1966, p 14)

As late as the encyclopedists, this basic political criterion of inhabitants of a particular state is the one which is operative. They injected additional meanings through an increasingly overt assertion that the submerged masses were also part of the nation, and should not simply be subjects. However, this 'democratic' rethinking still did not lead to the full modern nationalist panoply. For it still did

not entail any specific connections with ethnicity, language or whatever.

'What is a nation?' asked Sieyes. 'A body of associates living under one common law and represented by the same legislature.'

Such a claim is both simple and comprehensive. A nation is a body of people to whom a government is responsible through their legislature; any body of people associating together, and deciding on a scheme for their own government, form a nation, and if, on this definition, all the people in the world decided on a common government, they would form one nation. (Kedourie, 1966, p 15)

Of course a single world state has been something of a non-starter to date. The other logical conclusion which can be drawn from this doctrine is the corollary of the first one: that if a group of people currently living as subjects or citizens of a state decide to opt out, transferring their allegiance either to an alternative existing state or to a newly created one, this is permissible, though deplorable in view of its subversion of order.

This doctrine, however, is still not nationalism, although some later nationalists may fall into confusion and view it as such

[The Whig theory of nationality, exemplified by J.S. Mill and Woodrow Wilson] assumes not so much that humanity ought to be divided into independent, sovereign states, as that people who are alike in many things stand a better chance of making a success of representative government. So paramount is the preoccupation with individual rights and freedom in this doctrine that Acton, in his essay on *Nationality*, after discussing the

differences between what may be called the Continental and what may be called the Whig theory of nationality, came to the conclusion that the best state was one where several nationalities lived together in freedom. (Kedourie, 1966, pp 132 - 133) (8)

In Kedourie's argument true nationalism only arises with a later specification of the nature of the collectivities which have the asserted right and indeed duty to exercise this option of separatism, and the elaboration of notions of the subordination of the individual to the collectivity to which they 'naturally' belong.

Kedourie's identification of one specific, 'organic' form of nationalist ideology with nationalism *fout court*, and his still more surprising claims that this ideology derives from the philosophy of Kant, have been thoroughly criticised elsewhere (Gellner 1964, 1983; Smith, 1971). Reading his work, however, the impression created is that his central concern is with the destabilising effect of what can loosely be called democracy, with political principles which allow the legitimacy of broad masses to question existing political orders, and to remake them, instead of leaving the delicate and complex work of maintaining ever shifting balances of power to small elites who alone are able to manage this.

Kedourie's specific interest in nationalism seems to follow from this having been the most successful incarnation of the modern democratic

spirit. It is perhaps relevant to note the historical context of Kedourie's work was in the period of struggles for colonial independence. His introduction to the collection *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (Kedourie, 1970) makes clear his distress at the upheavals attendant on these struggles, and his identification of nationalism as the root cause of the problem. These Burkean yearnings for the stability of the old order puts Kedourie in a minority among modern theorists of nationalism. But his stress on the connections between nationalism and the entry of the mass of the people into political life is more general. This is the time to return to the work of Hayes and Kohn.

For Hayes, it would appear, the link between nationalism and democracy was one between two ideologies which emerged at about the same time, and which appeared to be mutually reinforcing:

If people were to govern themselves, they must understand one another and be able to read and speak a common language. Nationality has thus provided a practical basis for democratic government, and democratic government, or the striving for it, has fostered nationalism. Hayes, 1954, p 48

While this combination of temporal coincidence and compatibility led to strong links between nationalism and democracy, these links were not absolutely necessary. Both before the French Revolution and subsequently it was possible to have nationalism in

the absence of democracy.

The English had, if anything, a livelier national consciousness in the eighteenth century than the French, but the strong national prejudices of Englishmen for a time prevented them from appropriating the political democracy which was the ally and abettor of modern nationalism. (Hayes, 1954, p 56)

It would seem that the democratic dogma as accepted by the French Revolution was immediately re-enforced by instruments which proved to be the instruments of nationalism, and that these instruments were then appropriated by other peoples with or without the original political dogma. In the nineteenth century democracy spread fast, but nationalism spread faster. (Hayes, 1954, p 49)

What is merely a more or less contingent combination in Hayes becomes the central constitutive component marking nationalism in Kohn:

The growth of nationalism is the process of integration of the masses of the people into a common political form. (Kohn, 1944, p 4)

Nationalism is inconceivable without the ideas of popular sovereignty preceding - without a complete revision of the position of ruler and ruled, of classes and castes. (op. cit., p 3)

Few of the modernists follow Kohn in such a direct equation of nationalism and democracy. Indeed a central question which the modernists are raising is the ambiguous and complex relationship between nationalism, democracy and liberty, with the main divisions between modernists being along the lines of the various ways they understand these relationships.

Kedourie, as we have seen, portrays these relationships in the most clear-cut terms: the yoking of nationalism to democracy is the major threat to liberty in the modern world. Kedourie's version effectively takes the nationalisms of the established great powers for granted. It is the subversion of these by rival nationalisms which lead to independence movements that he deplors.

The mirror image of this view comes in the analysis of nationalism which has been dominant among twentieth century marxists, the most influential founding statements of which are examined in the next section. Here it is the great power nationalisms which are regarded as the danger to liberty, in their provision of a rationale for continuing imperial exploitation abroad and muting of class conflict at home. (9)

For most of the modernists the relationship of nationalism and democracy is less simple. The central metaphor through which this is expressed is of nationalism as 'the modern Janus'. (10) But while there are various explorations of the extent to which nationalisms in different times and places have promoted or retarded democracy, in the sense of universal suffrage, competitive pluralistic elections and the like, there is a general agreement that a fundamental characteristic of nationalism is its rhetoric derives political legitimacy from the whole

people, as a basic contrast with the situation of all previous large-scale state societies: "The source of all political power is the nation, the *whole collectivity*." (Smith, 1971, p 21, my emphasis)

The Capitalism/National Thesis: Classical Marxism

The argument, within marxism, that modern nationalism and nation states derive from the economic imperatives of the capitalist mode of production, and were instituted by the bourgeoisie for this reason during the period when it was consolidating its social and political power, originated at around the end of the nineteenth century within the Second International. The capitalism/nationalism thesis was promoted by the left wing of the Second International, who managed to monopolise the rhetoric of marxist orthodoxy. For the attitudes of other currents in the International, actually closer to that of Marx and Engels than the "classical" left, see Bauer (1978), Connor (1984, chapter 2), and Nimni (1985a, 1985b).

In all the protagonists of this approach (the originator appears to have been Kautsky, but the most readily available texts in English translation are from Luxemburg, Lenin and Stalin) the arguments are strongly marked by the economism which is characteristic of the marxism of this period, in which the necessity, if not the immediate dynamics,

of political processes are deduced directly from supposed economic imperatives.

Whenever Lenin or Luxemburg want to go beyond assertions that nation states begin in the period of nascent capitalism they do so by referring their readers to Kautsky. The greatest elaboration of this thesis in texts in English translation comes in the texts of the debate between Lenin and Luxemburg about the future prospects of nationalism and nation states.

Thus in a series of articles in which Luxemburg is asserting that marxist parties should not normally ally themselves with nationalist movements, she begins by situating nationalism by referring to Kautsky's demonstration that it is a purely bourgeois phenomenon:

Kautsky enumerates three factors, which, according to him, make up the 'roots of the modern national idea,' as found in the rise of the modern state in all of Europe. These factors are: the desire of the bourgeoisie to assure for itself an internal or domestic market for its own commodity production; second the desire for political freedom - democracy; and finally the expansion of the national literature and culture to the populace. (Luxemburg, 1976, p 159)

Nationalism is not to be equated with an identification with an ethnic or cultural group - a phenomenon which predated the era of nascent capitalism by an unspecified number of centuries. The involvements of such movements in specifically

political life, in aspirations to form nation states, is what was important, and "the connections between those movements and the bourgeois era is unquestionable." (Luxemburg, 1976, p 160)

However, while nationalism is both a characteristic and progressive feature of nascent capitalism, the established capitalism of the early twentieth century has created a different situation. Firstly the most advanced powers are no longer creating their own internal markets, but a unified world market. Their economic and political power is such that economic and political independence is no longer viable for most erstwhile nations. Secondly this process was coinciding with one of increasing conflicts in which the bourgeoisie who led nationalist movements are opposed not to old ruling classes above them (thus giving their struggle a progressive historical content) but to the proletariat below (a new and even more enlightened political class, and one which had little to gain from separatism).

In so far as the first of these objections was relevant nationalism was utopian; in so far as the second, it was also reactionary. This (virtually) unqualified condemnation of contemporary nationalist movements was extreme even for the left wing of Second International marxists. The slightly different arguments which, owing to Bolshevik

success, have come down to later generations as the orthodox marxist analysis of nationalism, shared many common assumptions.

Stalin's catechismal 1913 article on the national question is even more firm than Luxemburg in locating the origins of nationalism in the economic imperatives facing a nascent bourgeoisie:

The chief problem for the young bourgeoisie is the problem of the market. Its aim is to sell its goods and emerge victorious from competition with the bourgeoisie of another nationality. Hence its desire to secure its 'own', its 'home' market. The market is the first school in which the bourgeoisie learns its nationalism. (Stalin, 1936, pp 14 - 15)

Nationalist struggles are fought between ruling classes. The precise constellation of classes involved in such conflicts varies. In one case a nationally oppressed urban petty bourgeoisie fights the big bourgeoisie of the dominant nation; in another it is rural capitalists seeking liberation from alien landlords; while in a third a whole 'national' bourgeoisie unites against a foreign nobility. When, as invariably happens, such movements are met with repression the bourgeoisies of the oppressed nations have to appeal to 'their' peasants and proletarians to come to their aid.

While the economic interests of a nascent bourgeoisie are crucial in providing the initial momentum for national formation, and while a common

economic life remains one definitional feature of a nation thereafter, nations are not simply economically constituted collectivities:

A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture.

It goes without saying that a nation, like every other historical phenomenon, is subject to the law of change, has its history, its beginning and end.

It must be emphasised that none of the above characteristics is by itself sufficient to define a nation. On the other hand, it is sufficient for a single one of these characteristics to be absent and the nation ceases to be a nation. (Stalin, 1936, p 8)

The original economic theory has at least the merit of clarity and simplicity - though there are some problems with fitting it, in such simple forms, to the actual course of European development (not to mention elsewhere).

Turning to Lenin, the initial argument is again the same.

Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with national movements. For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose population speak a single language, with all obstacles to the development of that language and its literature eliminated. Therein is the economic foundation of national movements. Language is the most important means of human intercourse. Unity and unimpeded development of language are the most important conditions for

genuinely extensive commerce on a scale commensurate with modern capitalism, for a free and broad grouping of the population in all its various classes, and lastly for the establishment of a close connection between the market and each and every proprietor, big and little, and between seller and buyer. (Lenin, 1970a, p 598)

This assertion is 'demonstrated' through a citation from the same pamphlet of Kautsky ("Nationality and Internationality") which Luxemburg had also used as the guarantee of the orthodoxy of her position, the target of Lenin's polemic here:

The national state is the form *most suited* to present-day conditions [i.e. capitalist, civilized, economically progressive conditions, as distinguished from medieval, pre-capitalist, etc.]; it is the form in which the state can best fulfil its tasks. (Quoted in Lenin, 1970a, p 599. The bracketed interpolation, and probably the emphasis, are Lenin's).

Lenin's critique of Luxemburg is then developed through the elaboration of a two-stage model, in which the transition to the economic development which capitalism brings is achieved through the agency of nationalist movements which must be activist, democratic and progressive, while in the second stage this political dynamism is lost. The implication is that these two stages take a parallel form in each country regardless of the timing of the transition to capitalism:

... clear distinction must be drawn between the two periods of capitalism, which differ from each other as far as the national movement is concerned.

On the one hand, there is the period of the collapse of feudalism and absolutism, the period of the formation of the bourgeois-democratic society and state, when the national movements for the first time become mass movements and in one way or another draw all classes of the population into politics through the press, participation in representative institutions, etc. On the other hand, there is the period of the fully-formed capitalist states with a long-established constitutional regime and a highly-developed antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie - the period that may be called the eve of capitalism's downfall. (Lenin, 1970a, p 602)

This schema about the two stages is further elaborated by specification of the political characteristics of the two periods:

The typical features of the first period are: the awakening of national movements and the drawing of the peasants, the most numerous and sluggish section of the population, into these movements, in connection with the struggle for political liberty in general, and for the rights of the nation in particular. Typical features of the second period are: the absence of mass bourgeois-democratic movements and the fact that developed capitalism, in bringing together nations that have already been drawn into commercial intercourse, and causing them to intermingle to an increasing degree, brings the antagonism between internationally united capital and the international working-class movement to the forefront. (Lenin, 1970a, p 602)

The timing of these two stages in different parts of the world created (at the time Lenin was writing) a threefold division. The first group of countries have passed completely through the first and are now

decisively into the second stage. These include not only most of western Europe (Lenin, 1970a, p 606) and the United States (Lenin, 1969, p 163), but also Japan (Lenin, 1970a, p 600). The second group is located in "Eastern Europe: Austria, the Balkans, and particularly Russia" (Lenin, 1969, p 163). They only really entered into the first stage around the turn of the twentieth century, and had still not completed it. Finally there were the colonies and semi-colonies, which showed early indications they were about to enter the first stage.

Ernest Gellner: Nationalism and Modernisation

The decisive assumption of Gellner's theory of nationalism is of the uniqueness of the historical transition which has produced 'modern', 'rationalised', 'industrialised' (terms which he uses more or less interchangeably) societies. Despite the specific social problems which are characteristic of modern societies, the historic achievements of this transition are such that once it has been made somewhere it becomes the model to be emulated everywhere:

We may view traditional societies with nostalgia or disgust; be enchanted by their beauty, or revolted by their cruelty. It doesn't matter: they no longer present a viable alternative. (Gellner, 1964, p 68)

There are considerable variations in the timing of attempts to emulate the successes of those who have

already passed over this 'hump', and the laggards may develop rather different recipes for achieving the transition than those adopted by the forerunners - trying in this way to avoid the horrors which accompanied the processes of industrialisation in its initial form.

Within this approach the contrast between pre-modern Gemeinschaft agrarian societies and modern industrial Gesellschaft societies, and the unevenness of development which has produced a world in which the two continue to co-exist, becomes the fundamental basis for an explanation of the origins of nationalism, so it will be as well to begin with a description of how this contrast is drawn.

In pre-modern societies the first noteworthy feature is that the vast mass of the population, who of necessity are directly involved in agricultural production, are illiterate. The fundamental social unit in which the lives of such people are lived, a tribe or village, is far smaller than the boundary of a culture (constituted on grounds of common language, religion, or whatever) which is asserted to form the fundamental social unit, the nation, in the age of nationalisms. Each village or tribe is a 'cell' of the culture, equivalent to any other such cell. (Thus an anthropologist who parachutes down into such a village can credibly claim to be producing a study of the culture as a whole, while a sociologist or

urban anthropologist who parachutes into a town in a modern society can only claim to produce a case study.)

Historically, literacy is a product of agrarian societies, deriving from the needs of ruling groups: "The written word seems to enter history with the accountant and the tax collector" (Gellner, 1983, p 8). But within agrarian societies the ruling class and the literate (two groups which do not necessarily have a totally overlapping membership) form small minorities within the total population, and are rigidly separated from the mass of agricultural producers. Considering specifically the ruling class for a moment, the political units of rule vary enormously in agrarian societies:

Roughly speaking, however, one can divide them into two species, or perhaps poles: local self-governing communities, and large empires. On the one hand there are city-states, tribal segments, peasant communes and so forth, running their own affairs, with a fairly high political participation ratio (to adopt S.Andreski's useful phrase), and with only moderate inequality; and on the other, large territories controlled by a concentration of force at one point. A very characteristic political form is, of course, one which fuses these two principles: a central dominant authority co-exists with semi-autonomous local units. (Gellner, 1983, p 13)

Thus the situation is one where there is no relation between the boundaries of polities and those of cultures. Looking for the moment at the cultures of

the illiterate masses, and at language as the most easily operationalised marker of separate cultures, the communal polities at the local 'pole' are far narrower in geographical scope than those of particular cultures, while the empires at the other 'pole' tend to incorporate the speakers of many different languages and dialects, while rarely terminating at linguistic boundaries.

To consider the culture of the ruling classes and the literate it is necessary to discuss the impact of literacy. The presence of a tiny literate elite leads to the creation of a literate high culture which is radically distinct from the low cultures of the masses. Although this divide is possible only because access to the texts which carry the high culture are accessible only to the literate few, it tends to be encouraged by the ruling class as a whole, especially within empires. This is because the existence of this divide reinforces horizontal lines of cleavage in general, and thus helps to mark out and justify the distinctiveness of the natural rulers.

This 'function' of emphasising the distinctiveness of the literate culture is made most clearly when the language which is chosen as its medium is an archaic, sacred language - e.g. Sanskrit, medieval Latin or Koranic Arabic. When such a language is the basis for a widespread

literate culture it allows the literate members of ruling groups in the same or different polities who speak mutually incomprehensible vernaculars to communicate. Where such languages are used, this tends to be in regions which are broader even than empires, as do 'high' religions which draw their authority from within the literate high culture - religions of the book or Holy Writ. The successful 'universal' languages listed above are all in the first place the language of the sacred book or books.

This high religion may prescribe different practices for different functional segments of the ruling class, in particular prescribing different duties to those whose main functions respectively are to fight and to pray. But it will be universalistic in spreading across many polities. There are variations in the responses of the clerisy to the folk practices of the illiterate mass, but these variations fall within a spectrum between active denigration in the interest of establishing a monopoly on access to the sacred against the competition of the folk shamans, to indifference.

(11) This process implies that the clergy are acting as advocates for what are essentially a series of different religions, going under the same name, directed to the conditions and mentalities of different classes - even the division between those who fight and those who pray mentioned above, and the

implication that the *religious* duties of the former are less onerous, is already a step in this direction.

However, even when the response was one of active denigration, it was doomed to failure. The illiterate masses could not gain proper access to the purity of the holy texts. So until the coming of industrial society where the masses become literate, it is impractical to make demands that the masses internalise the rigorous norms such texts prescribe. (Gellner, 1983, pp 10 - 11)

Thus when the two major types of feature which distinguish cultures are considered, neither is likely to have boundaries which are correlated with those of states, as is demanded by modern nationalism. More precisely there are some rare examples where the two sets of boundaries appear to coincide. But the strong dynastic states on the Atlantic seaboard of medieval Europe (Gellner, 1964, p 173) and China (Gellner, 1983, p 141) arose through unusual concatenations of circumstances, and may not really be anticipations of modern nations and nationalism anyway. Most importantly, if any ideologue in an agrarian society (before anyone elsewhere had made the transition into modernity/industrialisation) had argued along the lines of modern nationalists it is likely no-one would have even understood what they were arguing,

and it would certainly not have been in the interest of anyone to follow them.

All that the rulers of agrarian societies were concerned about was that the peasantry should continue to accept their subordination, and in particular to continue to pay their taxes. Peasants speaking a different language from them posed no major problems, and indeed helped to underline the distinctiveness on which they rested their claims to privilege. For the peasants, the vital concern was the content of the rule, whether it was harsh and oppressive, or, on the contrary, it still left them enough of their produce, after taxation, for survival. The language through which the rule was articulated was irrelevant to such concerns.

The contrasting picture of modern society begins from the characterisation of this as the "society of perpetual growth" (Gellner, 1983, p. 24). This entails novel features to the division of labour within such societies. While it is possible that the specialisation of skills specific to different occupations diminishes when, compared with the 'highest' stage of pre-modern societies, there is a massive increase in the sheer range of necessary specialisations.

Furthermore, the dynamism of economic development is such that within the course of any particular human lifetime whole sets of established

skills will become obsolete, and many new skills will be required. Thus there is a tremendous multiplication in the number of specialisms and the pace of their introduction, while at the same time there may be some reduction in the differences between neighbouring specialisms.

The division of labour in agrarian societies was one in which the vast majority of the population - not just the peasants, but also craftsmen and even warriors - could learn the skills which could be applied in their lifelong occupation through apprenticeship. For most of them literacy was irrelevant, and the pace of economic and social change was such that there was a reasonable expectation that skills learnt in youth would suffice throughout their active lives. Education needed to be a more formal process only for the more literate minority.

A modern division of labour requires a very different form of educational system. In place of specialised training, on the job, what is needed is a more generic type of training. Basic literacy and numeracy (Gellner stresses only the former), and perhaps some basic understanding of technical processes, are now wanted so that any individual can be subsequently initiated into the more specific skills of any particular occupation, while leaving open the possibility that they can later be

re-trained, to learn new skills should their old ones become obsolete.

In this system any specific skills only come towards the end of a prolonged educational process, at a relatively advanced age. The main function of education is to instil universal literacy. So education must not merely be opened to all citizens, to take advantage of if they choose, it must be imposed on all citizens. And apart from the alternative paths at the final end of the education system, where individuals opt for training in the different specific skills, it must impose the same generic skills in all individuals.

There is only one institution which has the resources to support such a universalistic education system, and with the power to compel those recalcitrant individuals who lack the enthusiasm for the benefits of education to undertake it voluntarily to do so anyway. This is the state. Once the state becomes involved in providing a universal education system there are powerful economic constraints which tend to ensure that, within the territory controlled by any particular state, this education is carried out through the medium of a single culture, which it therefore acts to promote.

The first of these constraints is the requirement of the economic system that all who enter it should be qualified on one common scale, based on

a common training (apart from the final frills). Only if the qualifications produced by the educational system are on such a common scale are they useful as a means of assigning individuals into different jobs. Secondly, there are considerations which arise from economies of scale within the educational system itself. These economies of scale dictate not only that the educational system of any particular state will tend to be the carrier of one culture, and in particular of one language, but also set a definite (but not precisely defined) lower limit on the size of viable modern states. Only a political unit big enough to support the full pyramidal structure of a modern educational system, from primary to graduate schools, is viable. The apparent exceptions to this rule only continue by parasitism on the educational systems of their larger neighbours. There are also constraints which determine the possible upper limits of viable states, but nothing is said about their nature. (Gellner, 1983, p 34)

The discussion of modern societies has so far been in terms of features they all share. But the core of Gellner's thesis concerns not modern societies, but *modernising* societies - those in the process of making their great leap forward in a global context where others have already made this leap. The move from the general economic imperatives

underlying the nationalist phenomenon to a more rounded sociological account is predicated on the assumption that industrialisation has already happened elsewhere.

This model is derived from nationalist movements of what Gellner terms the 'Habsburg type'. The initial exemplars of this type were the movements for autonomy or succession from the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this model nationalist movements derive their support mainly from two social classes: the intellectuals and the 'proletariat' (a term which in Gellner sometimes but not invariably also includes the peasantry: for a more detailed analysis of the social composition of many of the movements Gellner draws his model from, see Hroch, 1985). While Gellner repeatedly asserts that the devotion of these groups to their national culture is not instrumental but derives from deep emotional attachment, the crux of the explanation lies in the instrumental rewards their nationalism brings.

For intellectuals in an industrialising region, the formation of an independent nation state brings rapid and direct improvement in their career prospects. Their position in the multi-national empire which is posited as the location for the independence movement is at best that of small fish in a big pool, and at worst they may face

discrimination which prevents any possibility of their access to high posts. With independence they are the natural leaders of the new state - they automatically become big fish in a small pool.

For the proletarians independence holds out the promise that industrialisation will be more rapid. These hopes, unlike those of the intellectuals, are destined to disillusion. Independence does mean that development is more rapid, but the hunt for capital to finance this leap is likely to be at the expense of further sacrifices from the proletarians. However, once the breakthrough into a fully industrialised society has been achieved, in two or three generations, the descendents of the proletarians do gain benefits.

Neither the intellectuals nor the proletarians are inevitably destined to support nationalist movements. Where individual assimilation into the dominant culture is possible, many take this option. Learning a new language, even in adulthood, is quite possible if there is sufficient incentive to do so. Where there are incentives for assimilation to the dominant culture, the important barriers to outsiders doing this come from within the dominant culture. To the extent that there are such barriers the members of the 'minority' culture are more likely to make the collective effort to achieve separation.

These barriers to assimilation are termed

'social entropy'. The extreme form of social entropy comes when the empire contains minority cultures whose members can be distinguished on the basis of mere appearance regardless of the cultural patterns they adopt. If individuals with such 'entropy-resistant traits' tend to continue for a prolonged period to be concentrated at distinctive positions within the occupational pyramid, whether the top or the bottom, this will pose severe threats to the stability of a modern society. However, to be successful such traits have to appear to originate naturally - the hypothetical example given is that: "a society contains a certain number of individuals who are, by an accident of heredity, pigmentationally blue" (Gellner, 1983, p 65). Thus 'racial' divisions are a particularly obdurate form of national division.

Other traits, such as religion or language divides, may appear to have this entropy resisting character - the time-scale within which this appears to be true may indeed be sufficient for setting up independent states using these traits as their shibboleths. But while changing a language or religion may be difficult, changing skin pigmentation to assume the markers of the dominant culture is impossible.

The classic form of nationalism occurs when the barriers to assimilation do not take this

absolute form, but are nevertheless great. Gellner develops this scenario through a parable about the Ruritaniens, who are a people who are a dependent portion of the population of the Megolomanian Empire when the story begins. At this stage they are speakers of a whole series of more or less mutually intelligible dialects, living in slightly separated pockets of the Empire. Towards the end of the nineteenth century a number of Ruritanian intellectuals became the vanguard of the Ruritanian nationalist movement when they began to elaborate a Ruritanian high culture, transforming the folk culture of the peasantry in the process.

Schoolmasters collected the oral songs of lament of the peasantry, which became known internationally when they provided the themes for the music of the great national composer L.. Philologists produced the definitive dictionary of the Ruritanian language, which not only traced its roots back to the original division of Indo-European tongues, but also served as a means of unifying the separate dialects.

Shifts both in the internal power relations, with the mobilisation of a politically significant nationalist movement, and in the European-wide balance of power - the defeat of Megolomania in the First World War, then the incorporation of Ruritania into the Soviet sphere of influence at the end of the

Second - led to Ruritania coming into existence (currently as a Popular Socialist Republic).

In this model the markers which are taken to delimit cultures are essentially, though not totally, arbitrary. They are essentially arbitrary in that the important function they serve is to set out claims for a sufficient population and a sufficient territory to maintain a viable state. The linguistic, religious, or other identifiers of a nation only work if they mark a group which is viable according to this imperative.

Given the diversity of pre-existing dialects, and the complex overlapping of these boundaries with religious ones, the places these lines come to be drawn depend on cultural and political mobilisations. Yet they are not totally arbitrary, because it is only to the extent that these cultural and political mobilisations are successful in appearing to weld together the pre-existing diversity of folk cultures, and of overcoming local particularisms into a unified national political movement, that a separate state becomes viable.

Within a broader typology of the situations within which nationalism becomes a factor, there is a briefer discussion of two other types of nationalisms, with significant differences from the 'Habsberg' type. The first is a nationalism which develops in the context of an already developed, post

Renaissance and post Reformation (or counter Reformation) high culture, but in the absence of a large state, of the type needed for viability in the modern world, as an umbrella over this culture. Here the formation of such a state required the unification of a number of fragmented statelets. This model corresponds to the unifications of Germany and Italy in the nineteenth century.

The third case is of diaspora nationalism. In pre-modern societies the members of some cultures played the role of middleman minorities - of pariah groups performing despised or otherwise socially restricted functions. In agrarian societies the position of such groups is reasonably secure. They may be subject to special forms of oppression to make sure their powerful knowledges do not encourage them to aspire to more than their acknowledged due, but such oppression must be limited, for their presence is essential for doing the necessary tasks no-one else is willing to take on.

With the coming of modern societies, the position of such groups is extremely serious. Unless they were literally pariahs their tasks in pre-modern societies would tend to mean that even in such societies they had a high literacy ratio, and thus would be more similar to the Germans and Italians than the Ruritaniens in having a long-established high culture. But unlike the Germans, Italians or

Ruritanians, their dispersal in a diaspora left them without a 'natural' territorial state to which they could lay claim.

In a modern society there are no longer any occupations, certainly none requiring access to powerful knowledge, which merit the degree of social disapproval which upheld their previous specialised functions. Their position ceases to be a (partially) tolerated minority. As to other potentially nationalist situations the path to assimilation may be more or less open, and, if it is, many minority individuals will follow it. But it tends to be less rather than more open, and to the extent to which this is the case, the members of such minorities have literally nowhere to go, and their situation is particularly tragic.

The Modernity of Nationalism: a first critique

The claim of the modernists that nationalism can be dated essentially from about the time of the French Revolution can be resolved into a series of more specific claims, both conceptual and empirical. The first conceptual claim which distinguishes all modernists from primordialist theorists of nationalism, as defined in Chapter One, is a careful distinction between nationalism and ethnic solidarity in general.

For modernists nationalism is a very

distinctive and historically rare form of ethnic solidarity, a form which is focussed on, and mobilised by a, notionally, ethnically exclusive state. It seems to me that the modernists are in general correct to claim that both the fact of, and the desire for, correlation between state and ethnicity are unusual and important historically, and that it is this specific nexus rather than some more generalised ethnic loyalty which is closer to the ordinary meaning and usage of 'nation', 'nationalism' and their related concepts.

The next level of argument developed by the modernists involves a greater elaboration about the absence of nationalism in states prior to the French Revolution. Here their arguments are somewhat more diverse. The marxists discussed earlier in this chapter simply assert that nationalism only came into being at the start of the bourgeois epoch. Writers like Hayes, Kohn and Kedourie add some flesh to these bare assertions. Finally in Gellner's work the necessary absence of nationalism in pre-modern societies is established theoretically on the grounding of a typological contrast between these and modern societies.

However, Gellner's theorising is premised on the assumption that these previous writers have established the fact of the absence of nationalism in pre-modern societies. Their claims to have done so

must first be examined, before turning to Gellner's account.

We have seen that, while there is something of a consensus that neither the civilizations of antiquity nor the states of the European Middle Ages were marked by nationalism, the justifications for this claim varied and this gives rise to corresponding variations in the willingness to see 'anticipations' of modern nationalism in various ancient events.

Thus for Hayes the biblical Jews' self-image as the 'chosen people' was not a precocious example of nationalism because the basis for group identification was religious and not linguistic. Kohn is dismissive of the portrayal (at least as old as Shakespeare's *Henry V*) of the Hundred Years War as a national conflict:

This war, carried out by adventurers with no national character, was a war between two royal families rather than between two nations. It is possible that the struggle against the bands in the service of the King of England, known as the 'English', may have led to a rise in national sentiment, but this is not certain. The demonstrations of hostility to the English may have arisen from a sense of local patriotism. (Kohn, 1944, p 112)

It would not be fair to contrast this with the message of that other modernist, George Bernard Shaw, whose *Saint Joan* portrays Joan as the first modern nationalist, and the Hundred Years' War as the

crucible in which modern nationalism was formed. But even if Shaw's eccentricities are disregarded, other modernists present a more nuanced picture of this period than Kohn.

In the fifteenth century, in the last stages of the Hundred Years' War, there was, both among the English and the French, a heightened national consciousness. Joan of Arc was not a legitimist; she did not fight for the Valois Charles VII against the Plantagenet Henry VI merely because she thought he had a better title to the French throne. She wanted to drive the English out of France. And the English of that time already saw themselves as the conquerors of a foreign country. (Plamenatz, 1973, pp 26 - 27) (11)

Some of these confusions arise because of the slightly variant definitions of nationalism, which enable one writer to see its harbingers, particularly in the middle ages, where another denies it totally. However, this problem is enormously compounded by the frequent use of concepts of 'national sentiment' and 'national consciousness' which are distinguished from nationalism as such.

These concepts are mobilised to suggest that while there were individuals in the middle ages who had ideas and sentiments similar to those of modern nationalism, they were still somehow less than modern nationalists. In this 'somehow' there is a wealth of ambiguity. The first suggestion is that such ideas were the monopoly only of a small and insignificant minority. This minority is always left unidentified,

and the reasons for its adoption of such a perverse set of ideas left unexplored.

Second, the very terminology of 'national sentiment' and 'national consciousness' suggests an implicit contrast with nationalism as such even where this distinction is not drawn explicitly. The suggestion is created that while such sentiments had a family resemblance of some kind to later full-blown nationalism, they also differed from it in ways which are crucial. There is a *prima facie* case for expecting differences of this kind. But once again there is a failure to explore the nature of such differences.

The third strategy (combined in Kohn by a kind of conceptual slippage with the second) is an assertion that apparent manifestations of nationalist sentiment in the middle ages or in antiquity are in fact better understood as something completely different. Again the problem with this is not in the general statement as such. Care is necessary in order to avoid anachronisms (indeed, my doubts about the modernists building of 'democracy' as a necessary component of nationalism arise from my belief that this is itself an anachronism).

This third strategy assumes that loyalties in the middle ages were directed at entities either much wider or much narrower in scope than modern nation states, and therefore could not have been directed at

some intermediate unit. The existence of such loyalties, to 'world' religions and to restricted localities, is incontestible. The implicit assertion that such sentiments have tended to disappear more recently is more dubious.

In place of one 'world' church there are now, and have been throughout the age of nationalism, a whole host of international and transnational institutions which presume to claim the loyalties of millions, from regional military alliances to erstwhile global sectoral communities like international science. While such international institutions today, like the medieval Church, provide the framework for possible career patterns for a small minority who can therefore enter directly into the communities they claim to embody, and thus feel a direct and strong loyalty to them, for the vast mass of their proclaimed memberships any loyalties will be a by-product of a more local orientation.

However, it is the minority who have the option of such careers who are articulate and literate, and whose attitudes are recorded for posterity. Turning to the other end of the spectrum, to localism, I am again doubtful about the clarity of the distinction which tends to be made by the modernists. There seems to be a fair case for arguing that it is likely that in most agrarian societies a large proportion of the population would

live out their whole lives both physically and mentally circumscribed within the narrow horizons of a village or valley.

The process of modernisation opened up a wide range of channels of communication - an unprecedented mass movement of populations, universal educational systems, a readily available national literature and newspapers, and sometimes a universal (male) conscription (Anderson, 1981; Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1962, chapter 7; Weber, 1979). All of these have been instrumental in the abolition of the isolation of rural life. These changes are undoubtedly both real and significant. Whether this transition took the precise form the modernists assert is more questionable.

Firstly, if the logic of this common argument is correct its implication would be that the symmetry drawn by modernists about the two focuses of loyalty before the age of nationalism is questionable. In so far as the majority were trapped within the constraints of localism it is dubious to identify one homogenous set of loyalties to a 'world' religion shared in common by this majority and the mobile upper strata of the relevant clerisy. Carrying this argument further, it would seem likely that those who did identify with religions like Christianity as a 'world' religion were a numerically insignificant but substantively decisive minority.

Any claims that evidence from pre-modern times shows the universal grip of religion must be qualified with the knowledge that for most such times and places the main sources of evidence are church functionaries. I am not denying the significance of the 'brotherhood of Christendom' in medieval Europe. What I am suggesting is that the logic of any valid argument for its significance also suggests something more is needed to dismiss nationalism in the same period than asserting it was the monopoly of a minority.

Secondly, while the revolution in communications which have accompanied modernisation have, at least in an ideal-typical world, absolutely modified the position of the mass, the change in situation for some minorities has been more relative. Geographical mobility was intrinsic to the 'careers' of the higher echelons of the feudal military and clerical elites (the peripatetic courts which only settled down in the later middle ages) and of merchants. On *a priori* grounds if nothing else it is also likely that these were the groups whose members were likely to consider pilgrimages more extensive than those to the local shrine. It is within these circuits, and within their nodes (the towns and cities which formed the points of intersection of the circuits, where even the more settled populations would be open to broader influences than their

village peers) that loyalties broader than the narrowly local can more reasonably be expected.

The argument so far has assumed the validity of the ideal-typical model of an essentially static agrarian society. But the extent to which all agrarian societies have always corresponded to this model is also open to doubt (Macfarlane, 1978). This is a question which needs to be answered by further detailed empirical research.

Finally, the contrast between a localism which was a characteristic of pre-modern societies and a nationalism of modern ones must be questioned for its assumption that localism has somehow been abolished in the latter state. On the contrary localism and regionalism remain as significant forces even in the most advanced of modern states. (13)

This digression on localism has returned again to what I think is the central problem with modernist theories: the specification that nationalism must be an ideology of the majority, and at least in this minimal sense democratic. It is clear that democracy in this sense (populism is perhaps a better term) in large scale societies is something which has been original to the modern world created by the dual revolution.

Furthermore, the diffusion of the nationality principle outside of its original locus of a handful of states on the Atlantic seaboard of Europe (which

happened to include the twin seats of the dual revolution (14) has occurred in close relation to the parallel diffusion of such populism. Once 'democracy' had been invented, a close relationship to nationalism was always likely, and nationalism's stress on specificity and mobilisation of ethnic conflict made it equally likely from the start that the relationship would be an ambiguous one, in which nationalism was the dominant partner.

While the ties between democracy and nationalism have been close, if not as universal as some of the modernists imply, this has not been a simple consequence of some abstract correspondence between them. Rather it was a product of the global context of their diffusion from their original point of origin. Neither doctrine logically entails the other, though reactions within the periphery against their domination by super-powers are likely to try to combine the two.

Turning now from the assertion that nationalism is purely modern to the two theories which draw on general models to attempt to explain this, I will first deal briefly with the classical marxist model. This theory was probably the first full-scale attempt to try to deal with nationalism as a historically contingent phenomenon. However, both the chronology and the social location of the origins of nationalism were essentially merely asserted. The

truth of the theory did not need to be demonstrated by empirical historical research - it was enough that it corresponded to the evolutionism of the teleological and economistic marxism of the period.

The only place where there was some significant expansion of this model in pre-1918 economistic marxism was, of all places, in Stalin's famous pamphlet. While this went along with the general model of an indigenous middle class revolting against foreign rule, there was some empirical recognition that in different social formations different middle class groups were central to this process. If this insight is added to an awareness that the appeals of the intermediate layers were not always successful in mobilising the plebians alongside them (Hobsbawm, 1962, p 169), we come closer to recognising that the abstract model of an intellectual/plebian alliance such as is mapped out in the Gellner/Nairn theories must be fleshed out as a somewhat different class constellation in each specific case.

After the first world war, and in response to the Russian Revolution, marxists began a process of questioning of this unilateral relationship between capitalism and nationalism. The theorisation of the possibility that the national democratic revolution could take a socialist as well as a bourgeois form was cut short by the Stalinisation of the communist

movement, and its increasing subordination to the 'national' interests of the Soviet regime.

As the great half-century stasis in marxist thought intervened, its proponents universally lost an attitude of critical detachment to nationalism. In the official communist movement there was an increasing complicity with nationalism, originally deriving from the diplomatic needs of the Soviet state, but reinforced after the second world war and the success of a series of further revolutions/national liberation struggles which produced the polycentric replacement of a monolithic movement in the name of different 'national roads to socialism' (Claudin, 1975). Opposition marxists, where they could not latch on to mass movements which were invariably nationalist, were left in splendid isolation, increasingly denouncing the nationalism of the official communists in terms of an abstract internationalism.

In both the marxist capitalism/ nationalism thesis and Gellner's more elaborated theory, nationalist movements succeed because their success is functional in promoting economic development. These models are not necessarily functionalist, in that in both models there are (less than clear) assertions that some groups *perceive* these benefits of nationalism, and this is used as part of the explanation of the success of nationalisms.

Neither the marxist adherents of the capitalism/ nationalism thesis nor Gellner are particularly interested in the specific content of nationalist ideologies. Once they have demonstrated the rational functions of economic development which are served by the establishing of nation states, their analysis stops. The irrational and emotional appeals built on a mystical and more or less spurious history are ignored.

The case could indeed be made that at least since the middle of the nineteenth century (say from the elaboration of List's conception of a national economy) there has been a conscious awareness of the potential for economic progress inherent in the formation of a strong independent national state.

There are three points worth noting about these nationalist theories of the economic benefits of nation states. Firstly, the strongest strand in such theories has concerned the immediate economic benefits of independence, and specifically the protection of 'infant industries'. This corresponds more closely to the marxist than the Gellner model of the benefits of a nation state.

Secondly, such economic benefits of nationalism are always presented by nationalists as derivative. The structure of the argument is that given the existence of our nation its potentialities can be enhanced in the following ways. Devotion to

the nation is said to come first for non-economic reasons, with economic effects as an added bonus.

And thirdly, there is a problem, if nationalism is based on perceptions of its economic benefits, of how this first came to be perceived. In Gellner's model, where nationalism is a feature of attempted modernisation in a world where other examples of modern societies already exist, this question is apparently answered by reference to the examples given by the first countries to achieve the breakthrough.

Thus the 'wave' of nationalisms which he takes as central in his model, the 'Ruritanian' (essentially twentieth century) nationalisms, could and indeed did draw on experiences of nationalist struggles such as that for German unification, which helped Germany become the most advanced industrial nation in the early twentieth century. This learning need not imply a direct imitation of the chosen exemplars - modifications can be made to fit different conditions, and to avoid what are perceived to be avoidable evils of the experiences chosen as exemplars. While this process of diffusion may fit very well with some more recent nationalist movements, its general application would lead to a problem of infinite regress.

The economic arguments of the 'Ruritanians' may be traced back to their model of the German

success, with subsequent nationalisms similarly drawing on the Ruritanian experiences. But when the argument is traced back much beyond the Germans we are getting into the problem of the *sui generis* nature of the first breakthroughs into industrialisation. We have seen that in Kedourie's explanation of the success of the nationalist phenomenon this problem of infinite regress is avoided by assertions that nationalism arose when German philosophers misunderstood what had been happening in the French revolution, and produced a set of mistaken ideas which have subsequently swept the whole world. But Kedourie's explanation, unlike those of Gellner and the marxists, gives no real reason for the success of these irrational ideas.

The next chapter will argue that prior to both the 'modernisation' and industrialisation of one of the early exemplars of a nation state, England, the state took on a national form, and that there was a widespread assumption already in this pre-modern period that the division of states along national lines was *natural*. These earliest exemplars of nation states and industrial nations present an anomaly for theories of the functional connection of modernity and nationalism. This anomaly is more considered in (contradictory) statements in Gellner than in the marxists, so these will now be discussed.

At times Gellner implies that even those

countries which achieved the breakthrough to modernism already had nationalist sentiments present at (or even before) this transition:

It is, of course, possible that the individualist, mobile spirit preceded by many centuries, in one society at any rate, the coming of industrial order That would not contradict our thesis, though it might throw light on the emergence of national sentiment in England. (Gellner, 1983, p 91, footnote)

On the other hand the typology of nationalisms considers, in addition to the three cases mentioned so far where the transition to modernity is marked by ethnic differentiation of one form or another, a fourth case in which there is no ethnic differentiation between ruler and ruled. The actual period of transition in such societies is marked by acute class conflict, but once this phase has been passed "ethnically unmarked, gradual class differences remain tolerable." (Gellner, 1983, p 94) This form of transition is conducive to liberalism, not nationalism.

A fuller application of Gellner's theory to the British case has been made by Nairn, a marxist who adopts Gellner's rather than the capitalism/nationalism model. Nairn argues that the pioneering transition to capitalism in England meant that there was no need for the development of a full-blooded nationalism there. Therefore the form of English nationalism which has evolved has a particularly

underdeveloped and reactionary character (Nairn, 1981, chaps 1, 6, 7). The tenability of these models will be discussed in the next chapter.

Footnotes to Chapter Three

1) A third commonly canvassed theory, which portrays nationalism as filling a psychic need created by secularisation will not be discussed. Even if the social psychological assumptions on which this theory is based are valid - and I am extremely doubtful of this - there are no adequate explanations why it should have been the ritualism and emotionality of nationalism and not some other forms of ritualism and emotion which replaced those of no longer credible religions.

2) For evidence that proselytes' rights were in fact considerably less than those of long-established Jewish descent and the significance of the keeping of pedigrees to enforce the criterion of descent for admittance to full communal rights, see Jeremias, 1967, part IV.

3) Tudor England incorporated Welsh-speaking Wales but not the Anglophone lowlands - similar anomalies could be found for most of the rest of this list.

4) Some modern nationalisms are also based on ties of religion rather than language - the Bosnians of Yugoslavia are now recognised as a national minority: the characteristic which distinguishes them is not

linguistic, nor even that of current religion, but that their forebears were Moslem.

A more extensive critique of the exclusive concentration on a linguistic criterion of national boundaries is developed in Smith (1986b, p 27).

5) Of the two criteria the population one is dubious, the absolute sovereignty one less so in so far as both the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation tended this way

6) See Appendix One for a discussion of various claims that such localism was not an invariable feature of all pre-modern societies.

7) In noting how Machiavelli and Montesquieu use "nation" in these ironical senses, Kedourie deflects attention from the relation of the central thrust of both theorists' work to core components of the nationalist problematic. The practical problem which inspired Machiavelli's political theory was the desire to unite Italy into a single sovereign state, while Montesquieu's climatic determinism seeks to explain the origins of different national characters.

8) Higher on the first of these pages Kedourie quotes Mill: "Where the sentiment of nationality exists in any force there is a *prima facie* case for uniting all

members of the nationality under the same government, and a government to themselves apart."

9) In third worldist and world economy versions of marxism this last clause would read the ending of class conflict within the metropolis because all are capitalists there.

10) From the twin-faced Roman god, who is used by Nairn (1981, ch 9) to symbolise the ambivalence of nationalism.

11) A third logical and substantive alternative which Gellner does not mention is that the clerisy attempt to actively incorporate the folk practices of the masses, e.g. as in the promotion of cults of local saints in medieval catholicism. (Thomas, 1971)

12) He continues by saying:

But nobody in France was concerned to preserve French customs and French ways of life, not to speak of the French language, against English influences felt to be excessive. There was no danger in the fifteenth century that France would be anglicised, and nobody thought of such a danger.

While this qualification would not apply to most of the nationalist movements of our own century, it would apply equally to some of the characteristic nationalisms of the nineteenth century.

13 In England, the historic divisions between north and south, dating from the Northumbrian kingdom and then the Danish realm, persisted through the fusion of Saxon with Anglo-Norman cultures in the late Middle Ages into Tudor and Stuart times; and, with the onset of industrial capitalism, was accentuated in the nineteenth century and remains a fairly salient feature of economic and social life in England up to the present time, so that the terms 'two nations' and 'working class culture' have lost none of their resonance, despite the assumption of a wider cultural and historical unity. (Smith, 1986b, p 73)

14) "Dual revolution" is used by Hobsbawm (1962) to denote the near temporal near-coincidence of the 'Industrial Revolution' in Britain and the political 'Revolution' in France. The dominant current emphasis is one which minimises the significance of these twin events or processes. Thus an influential article by Raphael Samuel (1973) documents the continuing importance of artisan production methods in Britain until the later nineteenth century. Smith (1986b, pp 131 - 134) speaks of a triple revolution, a more prolonged process which achieved a state-wide integration of the division of labour, a more systematically controlled administrative system, and a qualitative increase in the level of cultural co-ordination.

The present argument is also based on the assumption that the transition to modernity (initially in the form of capitalism, later also

'actually existing socialism') was not achieved in a single brief rupture, that the process of transformation has to be analysed on a long time scale, involving consideration of a long prior existence of earlier ruptures. While the dual revolution may have marked just one stage of a prolonged process, it was not mere reification which made these processes catch the imaginations of their contemporaries. The dual revolution was the first public drama of the transition.

Chapter Four

The Origins of English Nationalism

We have seen in the previous chapter that there is disagreement, among those who assert that nationalism is a modern phenomenon, in their datings of its origins. We also saw that some of these arguments rest on claims that the modern *concepts* of nation or nationalism had no equivalents in medieval western Europe. One section of this chapter will discuss the meanings that were given to the ancestral forms of nation, and will argue that while these were by no means identical to the modern ones, the opposite view of radical incommensurability cannot be sustained. The final set of distinctions on which the modernist thesis rests is one which is frequently posed as that between nationalist sentiment and nationalism proper.

The precise details of this argument vary, but its general thrust includes three subsidiary themes: that nationalism is something more than xenophobia, that in the middle ages loyalty to the nation was less important than loyalties to units both larger and smaller than the nation, and that any nationalist sentiments which can be identified were held only by a small number of exceptional individuals. The result of these three sets of arguments is that a critique of the modernist thesis requires rather more than a demonstration that there were sentiments similar to those of nationalists articulated in

medieval Europe: that in itself is fairly easy. What is also needed is some demonstration of their significance.

Xenophobia in the Middle Ages is not difficult to find. Thus there seem to have been persistent and deep-rooted beliefs that one sign of the lesser humanity of foreigners was their possession of tails:

The legend that the English had tails was centuries old. When, in the spring of 1436, they were finally expelled from Paris, the French collaborators who had supported the regime were driven out of the city to cries of, 'After the Foxes! Have their tails!' (Hindley, 1979, p 30)

Many saw the Irish in a similar light. They lived 'like beasts' thought the Elizabethan Barnaby Rich; 'in a brutish, nasty condition', said Sir William Petty. They ate raw flesh and drank hot blood from their cows. The Irishman's animal nature had been discovered long before those Victorian caricatures which depicted him with simian features. In the 1650s a captain in General Ireton's regiment told how, when an Irish garrison was slaughtered in Cashel in 1647, they found among the bodies of the dead 'divers that had tails near a quarter of a yard long'; and when the tale was challenged, forty soldiers came forward to testify on oath that they personally had seen them. (Thomas, 1984, pp 42 - 43)

It has even been argued, in parallel with some of the arguments about more recent functions of nationalism, that xenophobia sometimes served as the cover for the release of quite other, economic, tensions. From the fourteenth century there was a substantial community of European merchants resident in London, who were

the subject of regular mob attacks (including one during the course of the Peasants' Revolt in 1381):

Anti-Italian riots were common in London, mainly for economic reasons ... (Davies, 1976, p 17)

The merchant community dressed its xenophobia with specious economic arguments. For the mob virtually any pretext would serve. The continuance of English power in France, a source of considerable pride, depended in the last resort on the alliance with Burgundy. At the Treaty of Arras in 1435 the duke dramatically overturned the alliance in favour of France, and the Flemish community in London received the news with considerable apprehension. (Hindley, 1979, pp 25 - 26)

Previous chapters have argued, on lines similar to those of the modernists, that nationalism is more than xenophobia. In particular, two further conditions must be met: that the ethnic in-group identified should correspond to the membership of an (actual or putative) single large state; and that the sentiments must constitute one of the grounds for claims of the legitimacy of this state. These are still vague criteria, difficult to operationalise. Hopefully they will be somewhat clarified by the following discussion of the other two points of the modernist claim.

The next one is that the main forms of loyalty, or of effective community which claimed loyalty, in medieval Europe, pertained to units either larger (Christendom) or smaller than those of nations:

Yet whatever their strange foreign ways, the Irish, Italians, French, were, at least in theory, reckoned as all members of Christendom, that great family of peoples who held a privileged place in the plans of the Creator. (Hindley, 1979, p 4)

And on the other hand

England was riven by sectional interest; economic rivalry between town and country (about the competition of sweated rural labour), were far more immediate issues for most English artisans than were the malpractices of foreign merchants. More generally, hatred between northerners and southerners was intense and played its part in politics.

London in 1461 closed its gates to the queen's northern army for fear of spoil 'for the people in the north rob and steal and be appointed to pillage'; while a southern chronicle thought that Richard III's distribution of land to northerners bulked high among his sins, 'to the disgrace of all the people in the south'. (Davies, 1976, p 17)

There are several problems with this. One is an operational matter of deciding, when there are several alternative communities claiming the loyalty of men and women, which is the decisive one. In situations where alternate loyalties dictated different courses of action - when the commands of the King and the Pope conflicted - it would be possible to look at how many followed the dictates of each (though of course there are massive problems about more specific reasons which may have caused their choices). Outside of such comparatively rare situations backing claims that one particular level was the decisive focus of loyalty is more difficult.

(1)

The more major problem is that even in modern times nationalism does not claim that the nation is the only acceptable form of community, only that it is the most important such form in periods of 'national emergency'. Nationalists today are among the first to promote forms of community broader (the West, the Commonwealth, the Atlantic alliance, Europe) and smaller (regions) than the nation. Indeed, one important way in which nationalist programmes differ (and an important clue to their class location) is precisely in the different forms of international and subnational communities they defend.

The mere existence of such international and subnational loyalties in the middle ages is therefore not the important fact. Much writing in the modernist tradition rests on assertions that these were more important than loyalties to the state. In as far as this could be demonstrated it would at the very least impose major limitations on any claims of nationalism in this period.

The final argument is that there is evidence of nationalist sentiments in the middle ages, but that it is confined to a small number of individuals, with the implication that such individuals were marginal:

Even before the age of
nationalism, we find individuals who

profess sentiments akin to nationalism. But these sentiments are confined to individuals. The masses never feel their own life - culturally, politically, or economically - to depend on the fate of the national body. (Kohn, 1944, p 10)

The result of this definition is that whenever some medieval expression of nationalist sentiment is identified it can be dismissed as the product of eccentricity. More careful consideration is needed here.

This chapter will be arguing that nationalism was significant in medieval England. This claim will not rest on assertions that the majority of the population were motivated by such ideas. In the first place there is little direct evidence from this period on which to base any firm assertions about the beliefs of the illiterate masses at all.

Indirect arguments lead to the most probable conclusion that for the overwhelming majority for most of the time, except perhaps when individuals were conscripted to fight in foreign wars, locally constituted communities and local economic conflicts were the main focus: what prevailed was, in Marx and Engels' over-graphic phrase, "the idiocy of rural life". The importance of warfare in promoting consciousness of national differences in medieval Europe is discussed by Hertz (1940); for the peculiarities in the constitution of the English armies in this period, and the early development of

patriotic propaganda to justify their musters, see Keeney (1947).

Does this show that nationalism was not a significant force? I am not convinced. In this period the vast majority of men (not to mention women) were on or beyond the margins of political life, where political is defined in terms of power struggles which had more than the most localised applications. That the broad masses may only have been tangentially infected by sentiments of nationalism - and that medieval concepts of nationalism gave only the most marginal consideration to such masses - are symptoms of the absence of any kinds of democratic or populist politics in that period. I have argued that definitions of nationalism which make it dependent on beliefs being shared by such masses are anachronistic.

It has recently been shown that even in the prime exemplar of modern nationalism (and of liberal democracy), France, the full integration of the rural masses into the national community was not achieved in 1789, but only in the half-century or so following the Franco-Prussian war (Weber, 1979). Significant pockets of regional and local particularism still survive in England and France, in combination with the central nationalism, in addition to the less than fully incorporated nationalisms of the peripheries.

The argument here will be that nationalist

sentiment in the middle ages was not eccentric in that those who can be shown to have had such beliefs were among the minority who were politically effective - the ruling class; that such attitudes were not isolated to a few individuals among this ruling class, but spread to at least a large minority within it (though the nature of the evidence is such that the size of this grouping is difficult to specify more precisely); and that such attitudes were significant in that they formed one rationale (whether as cause, justification, or legitimation) for state policies.

The Realm of England

A territory corresponding roughly to modern England was first united, under common rule, following its conquest by the Roman Empire, which incorporated it as a province. Later this province was divided into first two, and subsequently four, separate ones. Similar procedures were followed with other peripheral provinces, to stop them from becoming power bases which could be used by aspirants to the Imperial throne. Following the withdrawal of the legions in the early fifth century, and the successive waves of invasions from barbarian peoples from the west, north and east, England was now divided for several centuries (myths of an Arthurian Romano-Celtic twilight apart) into a whole series of

shifting petty principalities.

Although major steps towards the unification of the country had begun under the West Saxon kings and Danish emperors, the absence of any secure system of dynastic succession before the Norman Conquest symbolised the fragility of this unification. (Anderson, 1974a, p 159) Administration through the division of the realm into counties was extended from Wessex itself to the Mercian midlands at some time in the tenth century, but was not at this time applied further north in modern Yorkshire or Northumbria (the peripheral status of the latter being further shown by its non-inclusion in the Domesday survey). The result of the Conquest was to establish a stable realm corresponding remarkably closely with the boundaries of England over nine centuries later.

Contrary to one popular myth, the Norman Conquest did not achieve victory in a sole decisive battle in October 1066 (though contrary to another, resistance to it did not take the form of a guerilla struggle of doughty Saxons led by Hereward the Wake). Throughout William's reign there were a whole series of challenges, both of revolts led by indigenous magnates and invasions by other aspirants to the throne (frequently in coordination). All such challenges were successfully repressed, and I shall be discussing shortly one of the effects of the measures taken to prevent their recurrence. Apart

from these, there has been only one temporarily successful foreign invasion of England (as distinct from the border raids which were frequent on the Marches) in subsequent centuries.

This was the invasion of southern England by Prince Louis in 1216 - 1217, which took place in the context of revolts against John in north Wales (led by Llewelyn ap Iorworth) and many of the barons (mainly based in northern England) and war with the Scots. (2)

The effect of the revolts during William's reign was the creation of a feudal regime whose ruling class was ethnically more homogenous and where political power was more centralised than its continental equivalents. In the early years following the Conquest William was prepared to follow the normal practices of his predecessors and contemporaries, and allow indigenous magnates to continue in their position on condition that they offer submission to him. Because of the revolts there was a sweeping dispossession of at least the highest ranks of the previous nobility, so that by the time of Domesday in 1086 only two Englishmen remained in the first rank of magnates, out of some fourteen or fifteen thousand.

A further result of this reorganisation was that the leading magnates held their lands, formally at least, as a result of grants from the monarch (a

situation also common, but not universal, on the continental mainland). Although there was localisation of administration until the abolition of the Marcher Lordships (when the county system was extended to these, and at about the same time to Wales, mainly in the administrative flurry which followed the Henrician reformation) the notional derivation of all authority from the crown, and the absence of the municipal liberties which were possessed by continental towns, considerably, though by no means entirely, reduced the practical scope of such regional and local autonomies. (3)

The second major point which must be remembered in discussing the territorial continuity of an English state from 1066, is that this state has always since that time laid claim to territory outside England. Even today, England is one of only two significant states in Europe whose official title, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, asserts the presence of a plurality of nationalities (the other is the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which articulates a rather different claim to the legitimacy of the unification of its many nationalities). Since 1066 there has only been one quarter-century period - following the loss of Calais in 1558 - when the English state has not ruled over territories outside the British Isles.

The ruling class which took control of England

was an Anglo-Norman one in more senses than a merely linguistic one (the language issue will be examined more closely in the next section). Most major landowners, including the king himself who continued to be Duke of Normandy, and as already mentioned, in this capacity the feudal subordinate of the king of France, had holdings on both sides of the channel. Many of the Norman and Angevin kings seem to have followed William's own precedent of trying to divide their patrimony, willing the Norman dukedom to one son and the English kingdom to another, but the two were united in the same person for sixty two out of the eighty eight years spanned by the Norman dynasty.

The success of the founder of the Angevin dynasty, Henry II (1154-89), in both the marriage alliance game and in warfare, extended the cross-channel empire to the incorporation of much of present-day France. Most of the territory gained was lost again by his successors, particularly during the reign of John and in the minority of his successor Henry III. The Capetian reconquest of this period achieved a situation where only one substantial English territory on the continental mainland remained: Gascony in south-western France.

Although the French monarchs from the thirteenth century tried several times to reconquer this region, it remained an English possession until the ending of the Hundred Years War - this

continuation was the product of the economic links between the region and England, which formed the main market for Gascon wine exports. (4)

The conquest and incorporation of other parts of the British Isles into the English polity was also a process proceeding unevenly through a series of advances and setbacks throughout the period under consideration (or rather, only achieved relatively bloodlessly for Scotland right at the end of the period considered in this chapter - in the yet more complex case of Ireland the process of conquest which began in about 1170 arguably never fully achieved a state of stable incorporation). What follows will therefore concentrate on the relationship with Wales.

England at the time of the conquest was already notionally a single realm. Wales was a collection of principalities varying in size according to the ambitions and abilities of their rulers. The boundaries with England were by no means well defined. From 1067 there were repeated English attempts at conquest, whether initiated by the current monarch or at the individual initiative of Marcher Magnates. The initial result of such attempts was to win control confined to areas of the border Marches, and south coastal lowlands around the Pembroke, Gower and Glamorgan peninsulae.

The military campaigns of Edward I in the late thirteenth century, which secured the submission of

the princes previously independent as subordinates of the English throne, meant that the recently conquered north and west (but not the longer held south and east) of Wales were divided into counties on the English model. This period also saw the introduction of English common law for English settlers and their descendants, but not the indigenous Welsh. During this period extent of English rule varied depending on the degree of unity and combativity of the Welsh princes.

Edward's conquest did not result in the imposition of a common administrative structure on Wales, still less one shared with England. (5) Such harmonisation as occurred was confined to the Crown lands of the north and west, while in the marcher lordships there was substantial local administrative autonomy. In both parts the Welsh were excluded from the commercial privileges of the burgesses of English-settled towns, and from high office in the secular and ecclesiastical administrations. These exclusions created the resentment which formed the basis for the last major Welsh revolt against English rule, led by Owain Glyn Dwr between 1400 and 1408, and led to repeated demands from the gentry for English denizenship after the defeat of that revolt (G.Williams, 1985, chap 5, argues that Glyn Dwr's revolt achieved the unification of the Welsh into a single nation).

Language

A single common language is the sign most frequently taken as the paramount marker of the existence of of a nation (but see Smith, 1986b for a critique of this linguistic definition of culture in most modern theories of nationalism). England was a multi-lingual state throughout the medieval period, when I am arguing the state took on a national form. It is therefore necessary to discuss the language question. 1066 will once again be taken as the starting point for the discussion.

The Celtic languages spoken in the British isles at this time included dialects or languages representing its two main branches, Brythonic or P-Celtic (Cornish, Welsh), and Goidelic, Gaelic or Q-Celtic (Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Manx). By the time of the Conquest the linguistic frontiers on the British mainland between Celtic and English were vague, and processes of Anglicisation were already under way.

Even in later centuries, however, when governments adopted deliberate policies to affect language, the processes of change of vernacular have been in the main long-term. In 1100 the linguistic frontier between English and Cornish was marked by Bodmin, and that in 1500 it was somewhere west of Truro, and not far from Falmouth, Cambourne and

Redruth. But Cornish only became extinct as a vernacular in the eighteenth century (Price, 1984, p 134). Manx suffered this fate as recently as 1974 when its last remaining native speaker, Ned Mandrell, died at the age of 97 (Price, 1984, p 71). Scottish and Irish Gaelics and Welsh survived long enough as both vernaculars and literary languages to become the targets for campaigns of revival in recent centuries. (6)

English prior to the conquest (histories of the language distinguish Old English from Middle English, with a seemingly arbitrary chronological line of 1100 between them) was divided into a number of distinctive dialects. (7) One of these dialects, the West Saxon one which was the one of the area of the Wessex kings who had achieved high kingship, had more or less achieved the status of a common written standard for administration and literature.

One effect of the Conquest was that English was for a period displaced as a significant written language. (8) There is some evidence for survivals of a West Saxon tradition: entries in this dialect in the Peterborough version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* continue to 1154 (Garmonsway, 1972), and it is claimed that Henry II's Charter of 1155, and Henry III's Provisions of Oxford (1285 - the first state documents issued in English since the early days of the Conquest) show clear marks of this tradition

(Strang, 1970, p 163).

When English began to re-emerge as a significant literary language from about the beginning of the fourteenth century (in the intervening period texts are rare, but not entirely absent) a common standard had been lost. Texts written in all the major regional dialects are known (e.g. Chaucer in Kentish; *Piers Plowman* in West Midland), and only from the fifteenth century, and helped by the introduction of printing towards the end of that period, are there the beginnings of a new common standard (south of the border).

The conquest introduced another distinct language into this situation - Norman French. The origins of Normandy as a dukedom itself went back only a century or so before the Conquest, when it was ceded as a fief by the kings of France to Northmen who were ethnically and linguistically similar to the contemporary settlers in the English Danelaw. Over the course of that century or so there had been a fairly rapid linguistic assimilation of the Normans, who spoke what had become a dialectal version of French by the time of the conquest.

With the displacement of English magnates in the aftermath of the Conquest, French, and Latin with its longer rooting, became the dominant literary languages. There seems to be debate among historians of the English language about when English once again

displaced Anglo-Norman, with some claiming that English had become a vernacular of significant numbers of the dominant classes as early as the twelfth century, while others claim that the main displacement did not come until the second half of the fourteenth century.

A major problem with these debates is that they seek to deduce vernaculars, and often the vernaculars of the majority no less, from purely textual evidence. Yet French continued as a language used in administration (e.g. in the Courts) long after it had ceased to be a true vernacular. (9) Latin was displaced by the vernacular as a medium for scientific publication at the beginning of the eighteenth century and as a medium of instruction in the ancient universities only in the nineteenth. A further problem comes in the need to make distinctions between different levels of familiarity of language: as far as texts are concerned, this has recently been done by M.B.Parkes, who distinguishes three levels of literacy:

that of the professional reader (the scholar or professional man of letters), that of the cultivated reader reading for recreation, and that of the pragmatic reader who need to read or write for business purposes. He confines his discussion to the second or third categories and argues for a steady expansion of lay literacy under these headings from the twelfth century. (Coss, 1984, p 49)

A resolution of the vernacular question, as far as

the surviving textual evidence permits, needs a similar set of distinctions between functional understanding, full bilingualism, or other intermediate forms of linguistic assimilation.

The continuing influxes of Francophones from the French domains delayed the process of Anglicisation of the ruling classes (though protests against this are one form of early evidence of the process, as we shall see). Another delaying factor was that most major landholders had holdings on both sides of the channel:

After the Norman Conquest a large number of men held lands in both countries. A kind of interlocking aristocracy existed, so that it might be more difficult for some of the English nobility to say whether they belonged more to England or the continent. Some steps toward a separation of their interests had been taken from time to time. (Baugh and Cable, 1978, p 127)

The most commonly cited of such steps which were claimed to be decisive were the loss of Normandy in 1204 (Baugh and Cable, 1978, p 119; Hoyt, 1957, p 444) and the decisions of Louis VIII and Henry III, early in the fourteenth century, forcing all landlords to opt for holdings only on one side of the channel.

Even earlier than this there are some indications of assimilation. The jurist Saccario, writing at the end of the twelfth century, is quoted as saying:

Now that the English and the Normans have been dwelling together, marrying and giving in marriage, the two nations have become so mixed that it is scarcely possible today, speaking of free men, to tell who is English, who of the Norman race. (*Dialogues of Saccario*, ed and trans C. Johnson, London, 1950, * quoted in Baugh and Cable, 1978, p 119)

By the middle of the next century, the reliance of the francophile Henry III on his French domains as a source for court and ecclesiastical appointments provoked protests:

Such are the persons to whom the King of England intrusts the care and guardianship of many thousands of souls, rejecting such a vast number of learned, prudent, and proper men as England has given birth to, who know the language of the natives, and how to instruct the ignorant. (From Matthew Paris, *English History*, quoted in Hassall, 1957, p 121)

The final source of evidence of the linguistic practices in medieval England comes from those texts which, at least from our modern perspective, are regarded as literary. From the middle of the twelfth to about the ending of the thirteenth centuries there was an efflorescence of writing in Anglo-Norman, having strong connections with the romance movement - a literary form designated by a linguistic tag, indicating that the key work was in dialects of French - and seemingly for consumption by courtly and noble circles on both sides of the channel.

A few English texts survive from this period (e.g. the *Brut* of Layamon, which will be discussed

more thoroughly in the next section), but about the beginning of the fourteenth century there was a fairly rapid shift, with the majority of vernacular texts being in the regional dialects of English. Many of these contain polemical justifications of the choice of language (which had also been characteristic of the Anglo-Norman texts):

þis ilk bok es translate
 Into Inglis tong to rede
 For the love of Inglis lede
 lede=people
 For the comun at understand,
 at=to
 Frankis rimes here I redd
 Communlik in ilka sted;
 sted=place
 Mast es it wrought for Frankis man
 mast=most
 Quat is for him na Frankis can?
 quat=what
 In Inghland the nacion
 Es Inglis man par in comun;
 þe speche þat man wit mast may spede;
 Mast arwit to speke war nede.
 Selden was for ani chance
 Praised Inglis tong in France;
 Give we ilkan þare langage;
 ilkan=each one
 Me think we do þan non outrage,
 To laud and Inglis man I spell,
 laud=ignorant/lay
 þat understandes þat I tell
Cursor Mundi, ll 232 - 250 quoted in
 Baugh and Cable, 1978, pp 137 - 138
 (10)

It has been claimed that when such works say that a substantial part of their audience know only English, this does not mean the lower classes, but some significant proportion of the nobility (Mehl, 1968, p 210, p 247). Indeed this shift has been seen not only as a sign of linguistic changes, but as an

indication of growing nationalist sentiment:

It has become increasingly popular to stress not only a spectacular growth in the audience for vernacular literature during the course of the fourteenth century but with it a literature, increasingly in the national language, of commonly shared concerns. (Coss, 1984, p 36)

This is something which a subsequent section of the chapter will try to demonstrate more fully. This section will conclude by discussing the latest theories as to who constituted the audience for the literary texts which will be the subject of the next section, as this also has some bearing on linguistic matters.

The traditional and increasingly discredited model was one where medieval literature was seen as the product of upward cultural diffusion with a three stage process. The subject matter which eventually achieves literary elaboration begins as folk tales among the lower classes, is then plundered for material by minstrels, then is finally worked up into full scale romances. Recent studies of work such as the Middle English romances have veered to assertions of how literary they are, and thus to a questioning of any role played by oral transmission. At the same time there has been a reconsideration of the audiences of such works, in which increasing stress is put on the importance of sections of the nobility and the gentry with strong roots in particular localities, and of their consumption of this

literature in their private rather than public functions (in the chamber rather than the hall). (11)

The next significant development seems to have been that French was ceasing to be a true vernacular in England towards the end of the fourteenth century:

However, by 1400 it had been taught as a foreign language in the business schools at Oxford for a generation. Further down the educational ladder, English was even being used as a medium of instruction by 1385 when the Oxford magister, John Trevisa, thundered that children in the grammar schools knew 'no more French than their left heel'. (Hindley, 1979, p 13)

This process seems to have reached a climax in the decade following Agincourt:

By the 1420s the great English nobles, among them royal dukes, were commonly writing in the language of the country. Perhaps this had something to do with the fever against France, but whatever the reason the habit was catching. In 1422 the London Brewer's Guild decided to keep its records henceforth in English because the king used 'our mother tongue for his letters missive'. (Hindley, 1979, p 14)

Literature

The identification of ethnic in-groups is justified in many societies through the elaboration of myths of descent (Smith, 1986b). A key difference between the mythology of modern nationalism and the mythologies of older forms of ethnic identity, in this respect, is one in which the myths are more firmly located in homogenous historical time, and sometimes

even more firmly rooted in historical evidence. In pre-modern ethnic groups, the typical form such a myth takes is of descent from the main tribal god, with the founder of the royal house claimed to be a few generations on in direct line of descent, and the rest of the people in cognate lines:

In the year of Christ's nativity 494, Cedric and Cynric his son landed at *Cerdicesora* with five ships. That Cedric was the son of Elesa, the son of Elsa, the son of Gewis, the son of Wig, the son of Fraewine, the son of Frithugar, the son of Brand, the son of Baeldaeg, the son of Woden. (Garmonsway, 1972, p 2) (12)

The main argument of this section will be that in medieval England the Arthurian cycle formed a transitional type of such a myth, and served as one vehicle for the elaboration of an English nationalism. (13)

The discussion of the medieval Matter of Britain will not be concerned with the literary merit of the texts covered, nor with the messages in the text other than those which directly concern the present theme. There will thus be no further mention of courtly love, or of whether the religious symbolisms are of Christian or pre-Christian origin. Finally, the question of the historicity of Arthur will be discussed only briefly.

Similarly, because of lack of space, the use of themes drawn from the Matter of Britain as sources for English nationalist myths beyond their initial

elaboration in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries will get little coverage. The Matter of Britain has subsequently been repeatedly drawn upon as the source for new versions of English nationalism appropriate to changing conditions. Two periods when such motifs were central to new elaborations of English nationalism were in the reigns of the Tudor dynasty and in the nineteenth century.

The Arthur myth was used as propaganda for the legitimacy of the, notionally, Welsh-descended Tudors. Although this was the period when the new critical historical techniques of the renaissance led to a widening of systematic doubts about the historicity of Arthur and the other characters of the Matter of Britain, such doubts were confined to a minority of Tudor historians (McKisack, 1971). Although none of the plays of Shakespeare concerns Arthur or his retinue, two are about other kings drawn from the Matter of Britain: Cymbeline and Lear. A recent study of Lear (Dutton, 1986) criticises the dominant 'pessimistic' interpretation of the play, and argues that the main motif is of national decline and renewal - for the general importance of myths of decline and renewal in the constitution of ethnic groups, see Smith (1986b, esp pp 50 - 58).

Similarly, in the nineteenth century more strictly Arthurian themes formed the basis for the

very different forms of English nationalism embodied in the poem-cycles of Tennyson (Kiernan, 1982), Blake or William Morris. In the twentieth century Arthur has even formed the basis for the English anti-nationalism of T.H.White.

In the present century there has been a minor industry devoted to the search for the real, historical Arthur. This search has ranged from the reputable (the most accessible recent works are Alcock, 1971, and the articles collected in Ashe et al (1968)) to the downright crankish. Frequently the latter dwell on the Glastonbury connection and the cycle tied with Arthur since the middle ages, about Joseph of Arimethea: see for example the full page advertisement in the *Observer* of 19/1/86 for the "first edition, of one of the most controversial books ever published: *Was Jesus of English Descent*" (Colour Section, p 32).

The evidence for any of the recent claims to have firmly identified the historical Arthur is, charitably, shaky. Thus the arguments of the section of Alcock (1971, chaps 2 - 3) which try to prove the historicity of Arthur pile conjecture onto possibility, and make a great contrast with the later sections of the book where scrupulous use is made of both the surviving textual evidence and archeological sources to illuminate the sociology of Britain at the time of the putative Arthur.

The most prolific recent publicist of the search for an historical Arthur meditates on his significance as follows:

Here is a spellbinding indestructible theme, national yet transcending nationality. For better or worse it has affected the history of the country where it began. It has survived eclipses and demolitions, and Britain cannot be thought of without it. Yet no conceivable movement or government could entrap it in a program. That is a comment on the limitations of movements and governments. The undying King is a strangely powerful reminder that there is Something Else. By nurturing that awareness, and a questing spirit, his fame may have its effect on human thinking. (Ashe, 1985, pp 192 - 193) (14)

The same author develops still further in a mystical-nationalist vein when he comes to the subject of Glastonbury:

Within Glastonbury's precinct Englishmen (as Anglo-Saxons were soon in effect becoming) mingled with Celts who continued to join the community, including Irish. In their united work and study, it may be claimed, the United Kingdom had its symbolic birth long before its political realization. (Ashe, 1984, pp 38 - 39) (15)

The evidence for the existence of an historical Arthur, even one so far removed from the figure of myth as Alcock's *dux bellorum* or war-band leader, is so slight and unreliable that it is impossible to construct a convincing argument either for the existence or non-existence of a real original for the later tales. What is more significant are the continuing efforts to prove his existence. The

spilling of so much ink to make a case from such flimsy evidence is yet another sign of the centrality of the Arthurian motif in the English/British nationalist mythology.

Lest this is thought an overly strong criticism of most recent popular books on Arthurian themes, it should be said that I found such books, with their normally clear recognition that the Arthurian literature of the middle ages had a nationalist dimension, helpful in the formulation of the following argument.

One conventional division of the subjects or themes of medieval literature is into three "Matters": of Britain, France, and Antiquity. The main subjects of the Matter of France were to do with the exploits of Charlemagne and members of his court, and, for the Matter of Britain, Arthur and the members of his court.

Both of these sets of themes were drawn on in medieval literature on a European scale. It was not a simple case of the matter of France being a subject only for a Francophone and Francolocal audience, and the matter of England only for an Anglophone or Angloloocal one (this wider popularity derives from the other Christian and chivalric themes in such cycles, which were relevant throughout feudal Europe). Although the English state, at the time most of the texts were written, was a cross-channel

one, and some of the French texts were thus produced by subjects of the English king, a series of systematic differences between the treatments of the cycles in the two languages has been noted, and sometimes even ascribed to nationalism. One is the rarity of works based on the matter of France in English:

It has often been noticed that only a very limited selection of the stories about Charlemagne were ever translated into English. Many of the original *chansons de geste* were stamped with a very nationalistic tendency and were for this very reason perhaps less attractive to the English adaptors who often tried to glorify their own history. (Mehl, 1968, p 152)

The contrast in the treatments of Arthurian motifs is not so much quantitative as qualitative. The three main and interlinked contrasts are that the French tradition contains full developments of all the motifs of courtly love and chivalry, while the English tradition is, according to taste, inferior in its crudity and lack of understanding of such motifs, or superior in its more realistic earthiness.

Secondly, in the French tradition Arthur is to a greater or lesser degree a *roi faineant*, an idle king who recedes into the background and whose role is to provide the court which is the setting for the gallant deeds of members of his retinue; in the English tradition Arthur is very much a conquering king. Finally in the French tradition Lancelot is the leading member of the retinue; in the English

tradition this place belongs to Gawain (Kay takes this place in the Welsh traditon). (16)

The matter of Britain made a sudden appearance as literature with the production of the *History of the Kings of Britain* (*Historia Regum Brittanniae*), written by Geoffrey of Monmouth, and finished in the 1130s (Thorpe, 1966, p 9). (17) Although this book now gets such readers as it does mainly for its Arthurian section, its subject, as its name implies, is actually considerably longer term.

The book opens with a description of "Britain, the best of islands" (Geoffrey of Monmouth, 1966, p 53), culminating in a listing of its inhabitants who include "five races of people, the Norman-French, the Britons, the Saxons, the Picts, and the Scots." (op. cit., p 54), and then the plot begins. This starts with the tribulations of the Trojans exiled after their defeat by the Greeks, who are finally reunited by a great-grandson of Aeneas, Brutus, who, at the end of a successful war against the Greek oppressors, leads them to search for a new land to settle.

After landing at various intermediate destinations, including France, where they defeat the indigenous Picts and thus establish the first British claim to French territory prior to the presumed time of the French national myth of Trojan origin, (18) they finally arrive at Albion. Here the aboriginals are not humans but giants, including Gogmagog. These

are all exterminated by the Trojans, who then settle the land, renaming it after their leader. Cornwall is similarly renamed after his most valiant follower, Coreneus, and a capital city of Troia Nova established on the Thames (later to be renamed London in honour of the king, Lud, who defended it against the assaults of Julius Caesar).

The next section is one of several which is little more than a listing of who begat whom, and reigned next, where the main interest must be in the pseudo-derivations of place names (including that of Leicester from Leir, or Lear) which continue throughout. The next significant episode is the Roman conquest, or rather a series Roman conquests, the first of which is a British conquest of Rome, led by the brothers Belinus and Brennius. Only then come the Julian and Claudian conquests of Britain. Even during the period of Roman rule a British army succeeds in a second conquest of Rome itself, under king Constantine, who becomes Emperor, aided by many Roman nobles who have fled from the 'dictator' Maxentius.

Finally the Romans withdraw from Britain, whose inhabitants (or at least the Archbishop of London) have to call on their Breton cousins to supply them with a king. A second Constantine is offered and accepted. After a reign of ten years, during which he has three sons, he is assassinated.

The three sons are still young, and the eldest, Constans, is also a monk, so there is a struggle for the succession.

One of the contenders for the throne, Vortigern, uses a stratagem to get the innocent Constans crowned, and promptly becomes regent. He then instigates the murder of the king by the Picts, whom he promptly betrays, taking the throne himself, displacing the younger brothers Aurelius Ambrosius and Uther Pendragon, who had fled to Brittany for safety. Vortigern now begins to establish friendly relations with Saxons under Hengist and Horsa, who are sailing the Channel in their longboats, in the hope that they will protect his flanks against the disgruntled Picts, and Aurelius and Uther.

Cutting a very long story (including the obscure prophecies of Merlin which merit a longer treatment) short, the Saxons use the position of strength they have been put in to take control of the realm. Both Aurelius and Uther in their turn become kings of Britain and wage campaigns to expel the Saxons, and both are poisoned before they can complete this task.

Finally we reach the climactic reign of Arthur himself. This opens with a series of battles in which he defeats the Saxons and expels them. Then, allying himself with the king of Brittany, he proceeds to conquer Scotland. He pauses for a while,

and gets married during this interlude, then takes up the sword again to conquer Ireland and Iceland, and accept the submission of Gotland and the Orkneys who have no wish to be given similar treatment.

A second interlude follows, during which the chivalry of Arthur's knights becomes world famous, but this is ended when he decides that nothing less than an empire including the whole of Europe is enough. Another campaign follows, in which his armies successively conquer Norway, France, Aquitaine and Gascony. The final defeat of the Roman army has just been achieved to the west of the Alps, which Arthur is about to cross in triumph, when he hears of Mordred's treachery in marrying Guinevere and assuming the British throne. He returns to Britain, is mortally wounded in the resulting battle, and is carried off to Avalon.

The empire presumably instantly falls apart, and the Saxons return to Britain in an alliance with the sons of Mordred. In the final section of the book the last few British kings fight a rearguard action against the Saxons, and their African allies whose king Gormund has now conquered Ireland, until an Angelic Voice tells the last of the British kings, Cadwallader, that the fight is now lost. The British continue their opposition to the Saxons, but this is now a sign of their degeneracy. They become the Welsh: "this word deriving either [from one of two

mythical leaders], or else from their being so barbarous" (Geoffrey of Monmouth, 1966, p 284). It is now the Saxons who behave wisely, and are the rightful inhabitants and rulers of England.

The *History* was a bestseller in medieval terms. A listing in 1929 noted the existence of 186 Latin manuscripts, including 48 complete texts and two fragments dating from the twelfth century. Since then a number of other manuscripts have come to light (Thorpe, 1966, p 28). This should be contrasted with the situation for many other medieval texts, which are only known through the existence of a small number of copies. (19)

In addition to being directly copied, it also served as the inspiration for translations - perhaps adaptations would be more accurate - in a whole series of vernaculars. Welsh versions known as the *Brut y Brenhinedd* (Brut of the Kings) go back to the thirteenth century. (20) Even earlier, by the middle of the twelfth century there had been two renderings of the work in Norman French.

The first of these, the *Estoire des Bretuns* of Geoffrey Gaimar is now lost (apparently fragments of his sequel, the *Estoire des Engels* survive, but I have not managed to find any translation of them). The second, the *Brut* of Wace (who was the first to mention the Round Table) then formed the basis for the first adaptation into English, in the *Brut* of

Layamon, around the end of the twelfth century. These are works conventionally regarded as literary, but material drawn from Geoffrey also began to be incorporated into a long series of chronicles, from that written by "Alfred of Beverley, writing c. 1150, down to John Stow at the end of the sixteenth century" (Thorpe, 1966, p 29).

Wace's mid-twelfth century French version already showed traces of the particular treatment mentioned earlier as the French tradition - the courtly elements are lost again in Layamon. The main development of the French tradition came in the writings of Marie de France and Chretien de Troyes, also towards the end of the twelfth century.

There was some dissent even in the middle ages to Geoffrey's claims to have written a true history:

... at the end of the twelfth century William of Newburgh, with extraordinary perspicacity, accused Geoffrey of disguising under the honourable name of history the fables about Arthur which he took from the ancient fictions of the Britons and augmented out of his own head, and of writing to please the Bretons, of whom the majority were said to be so brutishly stupid that they look still for Arthur as if he would return, and will not listen to anyone who says he is dead. (Loomis, 1963, p 38)

However, no-one before the Tudor historians made a thorough critique to challenge his general acceptance. As has already been noted, even to the present day there are widespread beliefs that there is a real historical figure hiding there behind all

the myths, an attitude not far removed from that which prompted Milton to include the Brutiana in his History of Britain:

As Milton wrote at the beginning of the *History of Britain* which he published in 1670, 'The beginnings of nations, those excepted of whom sacred books have spoken, is to this day unknown. Nor only the beginning, but the deeds also of many succeeding ages, yea, periods of ages, either wholly unknown, or obscured and blemished with fables.' Uncertain what to do about Brutus the Trojan and his numerous progeny, Milton finally decided to include them on the ground that 'Relations heretofore accounted fabulous, have after been found to contain in them many footsteps and relics of something true, as what we read in the poets of the Flood, and giants little believed, till undoubted witness taught us all was not feigned'. (Hampson, 1982, pp 32 - 33)
(21)

Such then is the outline of the Arthur cycle as it was elaborated in texts written in the English state in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The next question is whether it constitutes a nationalist myth.

The cycle is clearly different from the ethnic myths of simple common descent which are characteristic of tribal ethnicity. It is not, as Tatlock described Layamon "the nearest thing to a traditional racial epic" (quoted in Jones, 1962, p xi). Although there are minor variations between the stories as recounted by Geoffrey, Wace and Layamon (and still more in later medieval, mainly anonymous, English versions) the basic outline of the story is

the same in all three. For example, one of the peculiarities of Geoffrey's version is the stress on the connections with Brittany. This has been used to argue that he was possibly of Breton descent, or that, at the very least, his links with Monmouth indicate that he was almost certainly of British (i.e. Celtic) descent. (e.g. Thorpe, 1966, p 13)

All of this is purely speculative. Even of his connection with Monmouth all that is known is that he signed himself *Gadfridus Monemutensis* - at best there is a presumption he was born there. But Monmouth was in the ethnically mixed border lands, not in unambiguously Welsh Wales, and as a town is likely to have had its population recruited from Anglo-Norman rather than Welsh ethnic groups (this does add support to the Breton hypothesis - such were included among the conquering retinue). Thus the status of Geoffrey's Breton descent, and of his presumed Breton sources, are as plausible inferences from the content of his tale.

Geoffrey's ethnicity is in doubt. He could have been singing the praises of the British as someone whose own descent was British. This does not fit either Wace or Layamon, who were Norman-French and English respectively not only in their choice of language, but ethnically. Layamon is the descendant of the very Saxons who were Arthur's prime enemy, and Wace, the Jerseyman who rose to high position in the

abbey at Bayeux by writing his *Brut*, was ethnically of a still later wave of conquerers and usurpers of the British. If we must use the 'race' terminology of a previous generation, an effective response to Tatlock comes from C.S.Lewis:

This brings us to an instructive paradox. In the opening lines the *Brut* [of Layamon] promises to tell the story of the *Engel* (13): actually it tells that of the Britons when they had been conquered, killed, and dispossessed. Even if the word *Engel* is merely a careless slip, it is no bad symbol of what is to follow. This poem, while Anglo-Saxon in style and temper, is wholly British in its conscious sympathies. For those Germanic invaders who were Layamon's real ancestors, and whose language he wrote, the *Brut* has hardly a good word to say. . . . We may suspect that the *Brut*'s view of the English invaders against whom Arthur fought has been much coloured by memories of a far more recent invasion. At l. 7116, significantly, it speaks of the Normans coming to England *mid heore nið crafte* [translated in a footnote as 'With their evil strength (or cunning)']. But no such explanation of British partialities is really needed. Centuries later when we no longer had cause to hate the Normans we still somehow accepted the Britons (as represented by Geoffrey) for our ancestors and delighted in this supposed link with Arthur, Cassibelaune, Brennes, and the Trojans. The consciousness of race, or (if you prefer) the illusion of race, seems hardly to have existed. (1966, pp 23 - 24)

Even if Geoffrey was of British descent, he was writing in justification of the English state, as was Wace. Their justification of this state had to be one which could survive the rupturing of ethnic

continuity which was the result of the Conquest.

All three of our authors, like most who are known from the twelfth century, were clerics. Geoffrey seems to have been based for most of his adult life at Oxford, where his signature appears on the list of witnesses of six surviving charters, dated between 1129 and 1151, all of religious foundations in the Oxford area. In two of these he signs himself *magister* (Duby, 1980, chap 19). He claims that Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford gave him the ancient book in the British language which he used as the source of the 'History', and that it was Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln who asked that he should write it (Thorpe, 1966, pp 11 - 12).

Dedications in the manuscripts vary, with the majority dedicated solely to Robert, Earl of Gloucester (a 'natural' son of Henry I). Seven also add a dedication to Waleran, Count of Mellent, and one surviving manuscript has as its first dedicee *Stephane, rex Anglie* and second one Robert (Thorpe, 1966, p 40). Geoffrey was made Bishop Elect of St Asaph, Flintshire, in 1151, and ordained the following year. He was probably an absentee (the area was in the throes of Owain Gwynedd's revolt at the time). In 1153 he was one of the bishops who witnessed the Treaty of Westminster between Stephen and Henry Fitzempress - the treaty which assured Henry III's accession to the English throne.

Wace describes his own origins in the *Roman de*

Rou:

If any one should ask who said this, who put this history into the Romance tongue, I say and will say to him that I am Wace of the island of Jersey, which lies westward in the sea, and is part of the fief of Normandy. In the island of Jersey was I born, and to Caen I was taken when I was a little lad, where I was put to the study of letters. Thereafter I studied long in [the Ile de] France; and after I returned from France I lived a long time in Caen. I busied myself; many of them I wrote, and many of them I made. (Jones, 1962, p vii)

Wace later describes himself as a *clerc lisant* (reading clerk), and as a *maistre*. Duby (1980, p 272) suggests that at some stage he was in these capacities part of the ducal household of Henry and Eleanor. In 1155 his *Brut* was dedicated to Eleanor (evidently gaining her attention enough to ensure the commission of a further, and unfinished, work detailing the history of the Dukes of Normandy, her ancestors, and his office in the abbey of Bayeux).

About Layamon less is known, in fact only what he himself says in the introductory lines of his poem (see Text 1 in Appendix Three). He was of less exalted status than Geoffrey and Wace, being a parish priest at Areley Regis, Worcestershire (Leatherbarrow, 1985).

There are thus indications of the courtly connections of two of the three original elaborators of the Arthurian cycle. Duby's recent discussion of

the Arthur cycle claims it played a key part in the construction of the ideological cement for the new social alliance of princes and knights as the dominant group within feudalism, with the chivalric reinterpretation of the imagery of 'the three orders' (1980, chaps 20 and 21), and in which Henry and Eleanor's French court is portrayed as the key location of this achievement (which is further rooted in the purely French dynastic contests between Capetian and Plantagenet).

Geoffrey's (and Wace's) History is propaganda, and it was not, originally, nationalist propaganda. Rather, the politics they espouse is dynastic. The claims they underwrite are those of the Anglo-Norman dynasty and its successor, the Plantagenets, and these are claims for expansion both within the British Isles (Duby is wrong about the *purely* French rationale here) and in continental France.

However, the basis on which this claim is made does have a logic which is proto-nationalist, if not fully nationalist. For its message is that the original inhabitants of Britain have a special charisma, epitomised but not reducible to that of their successive monarchs. With the Saxon conquest this charisma is transferred to the new peoples, and to their kings. That most British have lost this charisma is due to their degeneracy, that is by their continuing refusal to accept the Saxon monarchy - my

reading is that those who were prepared to drop their 'inveterate habit of civil discord' were still among the generate.

All this has parallel implications for the more relevant and more recent conquest, which can be taken as a sign that the Saxons in their turn have become degenerate, with wisdom passing to Norman and Angevin. But the charisma of the Normans and Angevins derives from their rule over a particular land, and the people within it. Their descent from Arthur is not a direct one of biology, but a spiritual one mediated by the territory which forms the common core of their respective realms, and one moreover in which any (free, male) inhabitant of this core territory can claim some smaller part of this charisma on the sole condition of allegiance to the currently legitimate dynasty.

This special emphasis on the land and its population as the source of special charisma is one of the marks of the myths of modern nationalism in contrast to those of earlier forms of ethnicity. (22) Even if Henry's preoccupations were primarily French, the way his propagandists went about establishing the legitimacy of these French claims involved concessions that his English subjects (i.e. in the English territory, regardless of ethnicity) had special rights to the protection of 'good laws'.

The English language *Brut* of Layamon may have

yet more interesting implications. It is permeated by a pattern of sub-political sentiment similar to that of Geoffrey and Wace. Unlike them, it seems unlikely that the priest of an obscure Midlands parish would have had contacts with courtly circles. The interpretation can only rest on such circumstantial reasoning, but the systematic confusion between 'British' and 'English', to which Lewis drew attention, may indicate the presence of English myths of ethnic identity, linked to the power and prestige of the (Anglo-Norman) English state, at a considerably lower level of the social hierarchy than could be included within the aristocracy.

In fact, the preoccupations of Henry (and his successors) were not quite so exclusively with France. For Henry Wales was also a significant problem. In 1191, acting on what some argue was the direct advice of Henry the monks of Glastonbury Abbey disinterred the purported bodies of Arthur and Guinevere:

Thus it was proved that Arthur was really dead [contrary to the claims of the Welsh that he would return again], and that his heritage belonged to the Plantagenets, in whose kingdom Glastonbury lay. (Ashe et al, 1968, p 7) (23)

These myths had far-reaching implications. In a land where a prolonged cultural integration between a series of ethnic groups, united under what, for many centuries, was to be in the main a stable single

state, the legitimacy of the state (and of its recurring adventures elsewhere) is drawn from the charisma not of descent, but of territory.

The main possessor of this charisma is the king, and in the second place his retinue, the Round Table (a feature introduced into the cycle by Wace, and implying that the king is merely first among equals of those who fight) which may include knights drawn from outside England. But some way behind, and in a manner which is far from clear, it also leaves open some small part for other inhabitants of the realm. But it is also clear (and this is one of the points where the French tradition, where the figure of Arthur himself recedes into the background, diverges) that the charisma of the king is dependent on him playing his legitimate part, in upholding good laws.

The cycle elaborates and underpins a compromise between the king and nobility, whose need for the unity such a compromise marks is rooted in the derivation of their legitimacy in the mystic ties with a particular land. In these mystic ties are the glimmerings of one strand in modern nationalism.

The looseness of specification of the actual compromise means that the myth can be revived, repeatedly, to assert other mystic unities of later classes ruling the same territory, whether this is the Tudor monarchs making their peace with a gentry

very different from the twelfth century nobility, a Tennyson whose proposed alliance was the Victorian aristocracy and bourgeoisie, or a (not yet communist) William Morris at last bringing the common people in.

Nation

One major strand of some arguments for the modernity of nationalism has been through datings of the origins of the *concepts* pertinent to such doctrines. In particular there is the argument, expressed most forcefully by Kedourie, that groups designated by *natio* in the middle ages were of radically different types from those designated in the modern world as nations.

It is asserted by many modernists that in the middle ages *natio* denoted a territory sharing common culture (with all the allusiveness this component of the definition entails) which is necessarily greater than that ruled by a single state. The previous discussion of these arguments went through some of these 'broad' uses of nation. What will be argued now is that the term was also used, even in the middle ages, in something close to its modern sense. This claim actually has three main components, which will be treated separately. These are that there was a medieval belief that the ethnic divisions of mankind are natural; that these divisions should and do correlate with the divisions between states; and

that the ancestral forms of 'nation' were applied in this context.

The linguistic division of humanity as a natural result of the tower of Babel (Genesis 11, 1 - 9) was a commonplace of the medieval (and 'early modern') world, with the Babel episode thus presented as a key one in history. The *Mappa Mundi* of Hereford Cathedral (c 1300) has Babel as its five key points of the earth on the central vertical line (along with the Garden of Eden, Jerusalem, Rome, and the Pillars of Hercules). (Moir, 1979)

A further, and early realised, possibility within such a set of assumptions is that some of the groups so differentiated are marked not just by different languages, but by particular merits. So a letter of Pope Gregory IX in 1239 can say:

... the son of God ... according to the division of tongues and of races ... has constituted diverse kingdoms, among which, as the tribe of Judah was granted the gift of a special benediction among the sons of the patriarch, so the kingdom of France is distinguished from all other peoples of the earth by privilege of honour and grace. (Quoted in Mundy, 1973, p 564)

Relating the assumptions of this passage to Smith's definition of the core nationalist doctrine, we can say that the first and second criteria (natural division into nations, peculiar character of each nation) seem to be met, as are at least some of the presumptions of the fifth (nations can only be

fulfilled in their own states).

Turning to the use of the word itself in English, which seems to have been rare before the Tudor period, the only uses I have found apply it to England. The earliest recorded use is in lines already quoted from the poem *Cursor Mundi* of about 1300 (which is cited by the Complete Oxford Dictionary as the first example of the modern use). The argument of the poem seems to me to be the following. There is a straightforward equation of realm and nation (l 232). Within this realm/nation the majority are purely Anglophone, so that the Francophone minority who can get the benefit of the original French versions of the poems being translated into English can also benefit from the English version, for their position as a linguistic minority means it is almost certain ('most therewith to speak have need' - l 235) that they would have to be functionally bilingual in English.

Thus here the common culture which is designated by nation here is a decidedly weak one. It is a linguistic bond, but one which unites a majority for whom the language of concern is their sole one, and others for whom it is a pragmatically accepted second tongue. Another pre-Tudor use in English was in a passage which is quoted in Appendix Three as Text 4, which discusses the languages in use in the British Isles in the middle fourteenth

century. In this text the survival of Welsh and Scottish languages is said to be caused by the failure of their speakers to mix with other nations (adding that the Scots were for some time allied with and living among the Picts, and so 'take after some of their speech'). Nation here seems to be used to designate straight linguistic groups.

The second use of 'nation' comes in the next paragraph, in the middle of the (overstated) case about the English (which seems to mean the inhabitants of the realm not the descendants of the Saxons) teaching their children to be monolingual in a foreign language, French, 'against the usage and manner of all other nations'. It is unclear here whether 'nation' refers to an ethnic category or to a political one; whether the contrast is drawn with the practices of the French people or the French kingdom.

Slightly later, when the discussion has turned to the diversity of dialects within English and the extent of their mutual comprehensibility, this is made more specific. The bracketed, section which is an interpolation by the medieval translator, John of Trevisa, which asserts that the dialectal variations in France are as great as in England, the unit of comparison is made explicit. It is the realm, identified with a core ethnic group.

Finally, this section will turn briefly to an important Papal Council at which the meaning of

nation was debated, to give some further indications of the ambiguities it carried. As was shown in the previous chapter, many of the institutions of the Papacy were organised by *natio*, that is into 'factions' each of which included the subjects of several polities. In particular the Papal Councils in the middle ages worked on this system. Such a system was established some time before 1300, and in the early fourteenth century the clergy at such Councils were divided into six nations, of France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Britain, and Scandinavia (Dacia) (Mundy, 1973, p 347, quotes this division as operative at the Council of Vienne in 1311-12). Shortly afterwards the number of nations was reduced from six to four by the incorporation of Britain and Dacia into Germany (in the Papal letter *Vas electionis* of 1335, loc. cit.).

In 1415 the Papal Council convened at Constance to heal the Great Schism. The Spanish delegation were late at arriving at the Council, and those initially present were divided on procedural matters, with Germans and English favouring the elaboration of a plan for reform of the church prior to the election of a new pope, and the numerically much larger French and Italians favouring the business being taken the other way round. The Anglo-German delegations first successfully proposed voting should be by *natio*, not by simple head count

which would ensure the defeat of their proposals, but as this left them still outvoted two to one, now claimed that the British should be separated from the Germans, and replace the missing Spanish to make the fourth natio. There was then a debate in which the English made the case that Britain was a *natio*, and the French that it was not.

The first pamphlet of the English lists: "Some salient facts of England's long and noble history ..." (Hindley, 1979, p 12) and its glorious geography:

Aided by the uncertainties of contemporary geography, their own ignorance of the outlying parts of their own country, and the fair assumption that the foreign delegations knew even less, they claimed that Britain was bigger than France. In addition, they asserted that it had more subject kingdoms, more dukedoms and other temporal lords, more cathedrals, more monasteries, more collegiate churches and more ecclesiastical provinces. Hindley, 1979, p 12

Their final claim was the one most foreign to modern nationalism: that Britain was shown to be a *natio* because of the diversity of languages spoken there. Five are listed: English, Welsh, Irish, Vasconish (Gascon or possibly Basque) and Cornish - French is not mentioned (compare this list of the five languages to Geoffrey of Monmouth's list of the five races of Britain cited above).

The French reply was based on numerous detailed arguments. The Welsh, supposed subjects of

the English king, do not obey him (Glyn Dwr's revolt had been put down less than a decade earlier), while the Scots, with a king of their own, were also not members of the English nation (i.e. both of these objections are premised on the identification of nation with realm, the territory of a specific polity).

In the final English response heavy weather was made of the fact that the original incorporation of Britain into the *natio* of Germany had been the work of a French Pope. It flatly denied the lack of allegiance of the Welsh to the English king, ignoring the rebellion and instead noting the number of Welsh Prelates on the English delegation. Of the Scots, it argued that they shared a common language with the English, and that political obedience does not constitute proof or disproof of nationhood - the Duke of Burgundy notoriously ignored the king of France's authority (this was the year of Agincourt, when the Burgundians were allied with the English against the French), yet the Burgundians undoubtedly belonged to the French *natio*.

The resolution of this debate involved the development of a more specific conceptualisation:

While the French were prepared to concede England the status of a *natio particularis*, being a small state governed directly by only one ruler, they denied the application of the term *natio principalis* which should properly be reserved for large bodies politic with several political

obediences within their frontiers.
(Hindley, 1979, p 31)

In the course of this debate both sides are drawing on three definitions of a nation - as a purely linguistically unified entity, a purely politically united entity, and as the coincidence of these - when it suits their purposes. Given their propagandist purposes, each side draws in different ways on all these logically incompatible strands.

It is not clear whether the final conceptual distinction resolves these inconsistencies, that is the extent to which nations either particular or principal are ethnically homogenous (if the former are, we are approaching the modern concept of a nation). Given the propagandist purposes of both sides in the debate, and the ethnic fragmentation of the states they were considering, it should not be surprising that in laying hold to any arguments to justify themselves they adopted an incoherent conception of nation. Most modern states are also considerably more ethnically diverse than the prescriptions of nationalists suggest, and even contemporary nationalists have been known to make the occasional lapse into inconsistency in arguing that all subjects of a particular state are therefore fellow nationals.

Even in the later middle ages the concept of nation did not have the specificity of its modern descendant. But neither did it have the radically

incommensurable meaning which is asserted by some proponents of the modernism thesis. It had applications for denoting groups differentiated by vernacular (in application to Catholic Europe, religion was not a marker of distinct culture - and I have not found examples of its application outside this area, which may perhaps itself be significant), or as the subjects of different realms. Thus the term carried several shifting meanings, one of which was far closer to our contemporary one than the modernists claim.

Reformation

In what is probably the dominant interpretation of English history, the establishment of the English nation was a result of Henry VIII's declaration of independence from the Pope:

The patriotic aspects of the Reformation must have struck contemporaries far more forcibly than any doctrinal change. The king became in theory as well as in practice head of church and state: the concept of national sovereignty arose as an incident of foreign policy. (Hill, 1967, p 21)

This is not to minimise the effects of the Henrician Reformation. On the contrary its result was to move England closer to the modern conception of a nation state. But this was not the creation *ab initio* of a nation. It was only because England was already a (less exact) approximation to a national state that

this was the result of Henry's action. It is common in historical accounts to contrast dynastic with nationalist motivations for actions. Henry's break with the Papacy falls into the first of these alternatives, but succeeded in part because it was compatible also with the second.

The breach with the Papacy was not over doctrinal matters. It was not, or did not begin as, a *protestant* reformation. Its origins lay in the need for a legitimate heir, a need which united the whole 'political nation', for in the absence of such, a return to the instability of the Wars of the Roses in the previous generation was likely when Henry died. By the late 1520s the need for a (male) heir required that Henry remarry, and thus that he first divorce Catharine of Aragon. The subordination of the Papacy to the Emperor Charles V, Catherine's nephew, meant that the Pope did not accept the (weak) legal case Henry did present for the annulment of his marriage.

Even in this context the breach with the Papacy, and the turn to a purely national church as legitimator for the divorce was taken through a series of tentative steps. Although the first Reformation Parliament met in 1529 and began the process of raising Henry to the head of the English Church in theory in addition to his (and his predecessors') already substantial influence in fact,

this process was not carried to its logical conclusion for several years. Full subjugation of the English Church was achieved by legislation passed of 1530 and 1532, which was passed through Parliament by drawing on anti-clerical and protestant feelings. But until the Act in Restraint of Appeals to Rome of 1533, appeals beyond the king to the Pope (who thus remained, in some sense more restricted than before, the ultimate head of the church of England, particularly in matters of heresy) were still allowed.

In the early 1530s Henry's agents continued a propaganda campaign in continental Europe, aimed in particular at the universities, trying to persuade the Pope to decide in his favour. It was only when it became clear that this was unlikely, and Anne Bolyn's pregnancy made urgent need for someone to authoritatively legitimise the divorce, that the final and irrevocable breach was made. It has been argued, and I find this plausible, that Henry's initial motive in making moves against the Papacy was to pressure them, and that only when this ploy failed was the more radical step taken.

The relation of this reformation to protestantism was also complex. The initial breach with Rome was actually accompanied by a wave of persecution of heretics, i.e. protestants. But as we have already seen Henry was also willing to make use

of the anti-clerical sentiments which were the precursor of protestantism if not its full expression, when this pointed to ends (the imposition of his full authority on the church) which he shared.

The elaboration of this programme through successive parliamentary Statutes, and the acceptance of Parliament as the fount of legitimacy in place of the Papacy which this implied, is a sign that the Reformation entailed the elaboration of a new social compact, a hegemonic compromise between the classes (the king himself and the increasingly bourgeoisified gentry who formed the 'political nation' whose representatives made up the membership of parliament) though still excluding the masses. The doctrinal components of this compromise were not securely laid during the rest of Henry's reign (indeed, were in some ways contested until the more lasting compromise signified by 'the Glorious Revolution').

Henry was thus not a *protestant* reformer. But given his necessary breach with Rome for reasons which did not, at best, coincide with those which led protestants to reject the Papacy, and given the extent of the spread of protestantism, in particular among the very 'political nation' whose support was vital for the regime, some kind of alliance with the protestants was always likely. Once this had been achieved it could then be used by the protestants, in directing the newly-enlarged power of state over

church to impose their conceptions of practice and doctrine onto the church, and thus to broaden the base of protestantism.

A parallel argument can be constructed about the nationalism of the reformation. Henry did not begin by having some simple national independence declared. The hesitant steps between 1529 and 1533 still left some limited and much reduced, but not thereby absolutely nonexistent, sovereignty with the Pope. That even such steps were contemplated is a sign that the political nation was willing to have the concentration of overwhelming power within the national boundaries both *de facto* and *de jure* (it is the latter which is the true novelty) to an extent which would have been inconceivable a few generations earlier. The failure of this last-ditch attempt as a blackmail ploy led to the taking of the final step, the assertion of total *de jure* independence. If one moment is wanted when England formally becomes a separate national state, this fits better than any other.

But the ease with which each step leading up to this was taken suggests another model. For in taking even the first step Parliament had accepted that the monarch's proposals, conditional only on their consent, was what counted, and not the countervailing will of the Papacy. The first limited breach already implied that ultimate, if not perhaps

sole, sovereignty lay with the nation and not the international order spanning Christianity. Not with the nation in its modern sense, but with a minority who formed the political nation: the king himself and the gentry and nobility (who included of course the lords spiritual, most of whom went along with these moves).

Once again, this was not merely a case in which the success of the Henrician reformation required as a presupposition that there was already a substantial body of nationalist sentiment waiting to be tapped to gain allies, but also that the implications of the breach with Rome were such as to promote both the clarification and the wider diffusion of such sentiment. This process involved both changes which promoted the homogeneity of the realm of the English monarchs, and elaborations of an ideology of the unity and uniqueness of the English.

The extent to which the reorganisation of the structures of Tudor administration was a necessary consequence of the reformation is debatable. The architect of these reforms, Thomas Cromwell, was the leading member of the radical protestant faction of the political nation, and rose to the high offices he held, which gave him the power to push through the reforms, because of the steadfastness of his support for the breach with Rome. Nevertheless many of the reforms differed in their radicalism rather than in

their basic assumptions from similar attempts which went back at least to the Yorkists.

The aim of the Cromwellian reforms was to create a unitary realm, to impose a common administrative and legal structure over the whole of the territory claimed by the English king (i.e. including Wales, Ireland, and the last continental foothold of Calais). This succeeded in simplifying and making more obvious the common rule focused in the person of the monarch, and it is in this sense that what Hill says can be accepted when he says:

A natural concomitant of the suppression of local liberties is an ideology of nationalism. (1967, p 22)

This 'natural' concomitant was not achieved spontaneously and inevitably, as the reign of Mary shows.

The significance of Mary's reign is that it shows that an alternative to the combination of reformation and national independence may have been viable, but that by this stage reformation and national independence had to stand or fall together. Mary's determination to end the schism and restore the partial sovereignty of the Pope was now fully contested by a significant section of the political nation from protestant principle, and her policy of alliance with Catholic Spain (and marriage to Phillip) was partly a prudent means of covering any weakness this might entail.

Nevertheless, the majority of the political class did go along with most of her anti-protestant and anti-nationalist programme (though the marriage treaty to Phillip stipulated that no foreigners should be appointed to English offices, and the persecution of heretics from 1555 was only accepted after the dissolution of the monasteries had been ratified). It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that the failure of this programme was due to the lack of a further Catholic heir, and Mary's own early death. If both of these actual eventualities had been reversed, the question of whether there was the possibility of a successful counter-Reformation in England becomes an open one, and even the outcome of the state achieving a stable full sovereignty would at least have been delayed. It is difficult to speculate, but there seems to be some possibility that there could have been stability with the option of neither protestantism nor full nationalism.

What is easier to establish is the impact of Mary's programme on the fraction of the political nation who were irreconcilable protestants. If there is a single decisive step in the elaboration of an English nationalist ideology, this step was the one taken among the few hundred Marian exiles, who survived the reign in a safer atmosphere abroad:

To one of these exile groups belonged the credit for originating the ideology of England as the Elect Nation, which was to play a

fundamental part in the development of the English polity during the next half century. Brooding upon the mysterious ways of the Lord, they came to the conclusion that the Marian persecution was a fiery purgation designed to test the vocation of England to a special place in the divine order. Starting from this assumption, and mixing in a little secular nationalism with their eschatology, they were able to prove to their own satisfaction that this was part of an historical evolution beginning with the first establishment of Christianity in Britain, King John's quarrel with the Papacy, the Statutes of Praemunire, the condemnation of Wycliffe, and Henry VIII's establishment of royal supremacy, could all be seen as leading up to this supreme test. (Loades, 1974, p 247)

In the full elaboration of this ideology the term Elect Nation did not denote merely spiritual succession to the Jews, the biblical chosen people, but involved an assertion of the direct physical descent of the English from the ten lost tribes. (24)

Following the succession of Elizabeth this myth became a central theme which was elaborated on, most notably, in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Tentative and implicit in the first edition of 1563, it was made explicit in the second of 1570. Shortly afterwards that the Council ordered the *Book of Martyrs* to be set up in every church and public place, making it one of the two English books (with the bible) mandatory for every parish: "so that it became almost a second pillar of the faith." (Loades, 1974, p 288)

Hobbes and Locke

This section will argue that themes central to the modern nationalist doctrine were implicit in the political theory of Hobbes and Locke. They have not been chosen as the nearest seventeenth century precursors to such modern ideas. Among the radicals who achieved publication in the 1640s and 1650s were some, most notably Gerrard Winstanley (1973), who used religious imagery to articulate a messianic English nationalism with a democratic component. This combination was then to remain dormant until its wider articulation in the course of the French Revolution, since when it has become central to modern nationalism.

Such writing presents presumptive evidence that nationalist sentiments in seventeenth century England had resonance considerably wider than among the 'political nation' (a possibility which will be discussed further in Appendix One). No detailed analysis has been made of the nationalist assumptions and imagery of such writings because of the marginal political effectiveness they have had, both in their own time and subsequently.

Chapter Two argued that the underpinning of Hobbes' political theory rests on an assumption that there are two stable forms of human society, the State of Nature or war, in which the only peace

groups are small family ones constantly engaging others in warfare, and the other the Commonwealth in which the peace group is considerably larger. Although the first form of society is approximated by some of the "savage people in many places of America" (Hobbes, 1968, p 187) it is more readily understood through a process of rational reconstruction which begins from introspection to understand the passions which would cause men within commonwealths to fall back into such a state if their passions are not restrained by a sovereign power (Macpherson, 1962, pp 19 - 29) (25) Commonwealths were represented, imperfectly by contemporary states. The purpose of his theory is to make a radical diagnosis of the imperfections of present civil societies, and thus to ensure that such problems could be avoided in the future.

A commonwealth unites far more men than the family unit of the state of nature. But it is an unquestioned assumption in Hobbes that there will be many commonwealths, and indeed that the relation between these will be a perpetual matter of war or preparation for war, but that this form of warfare is not incommodious like the *bellum omnes contra omnes*. Thus in the chapter which deduces the state of war from the natural equality and unbounded desires of men he concedes that this state has never been global: "I believe it was never generally so, over

all the world" (1968, p 187), then immediately goes on to assert that one of the approximations to it is in international relations:

... yet at all times, Kings, and Persons of Sovereigne authority, because of their Independency, are in continuall jealousies, and in the state and posture of Gladiators; having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another; that is, their Forts, Garrisons, and Guns upon the Frontiers of their Kingdomes; and continuall Spyes upon their neighbours; which is a posture of War. *But because they uphold thereby, the Industry of their Subjects; there does not follow from it, that misery, which accompanies the Liberty of particular men.* (Hobbes, 1968, pp 187 - 188, my emphasis)

In fact Hobbes uses war in three different senses. As the State of War it is a condition where each man is potentially fighting every other. Within a civil society of commonwealths two forms of war are possible, civil war between factions within the commonwealth (in which as we shall see some factions are likely to receive aid and ideological inspiration from foreign commonwealths) and foreign wars. Although defeat in the latter can lead to dissolution of the power of the sovereign, and hence to the State of War, Hobbes has little to say about the regulation of this form of war. His central concern is with civil war (i.e. with what was called the Aristotelian problem of order in Chapter Two) which leads more directly to the State of War.

How and why are commonwealths differentiated

within this schema? This matter is not discussed explicitly by Hobbes, but the reading which makes best sense of his work is one which starts from an assumption that commonwealths are nations. While there is no explicit development of this assumption in *Leviathan*, the arguments rest on postulates which are mentioned more or less in passing, and which add up to something which differs from modern nationalist doctrines as defined by Smith only in that the sole source of sovereignty is located in the individual sovereign not the people as a whole.

There is only one indication that Hobbes implied that the division of mankind was natural in the sense that it was present in the state of nature, and this is at best ambiguous. He asserts that the three main causes of conflicts between men are competition, diffidence, and glory, and exemplifies the use of violence under the third head as follows:

... the third, for trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of undervalue, either direct in their Persons, or by reflexion in their Kindred, their Friends, their Nation, their Profession, or their Name. (Hobbes, 1968, p 185)

This is probably too ambiguous to impute to Hobbes the view that the state of nature was one in which there was division into nations. Similarly, there is a brief reference to the tower of Babel episode as the origin of the "diversity of Tongues", whose speakers were forced to "disperse themselves into

severall parts of the world" (1968, p 101), but no links are made here with the division into a plurality of commonwealths. It is when his descriptions are based on contemporary commonwealths that the equation of these with nations becomes clear.

The most basic form that this takes is that 'nation' is used as a simple synonym for 'commonwealth' throughout. Thus a random example using country also in the same sense:

For Gold and Silver, being (as it happens) almost in all Countries of the world highly valued, is a commodious measure of the value of all things between Nations; and Mony (of what matter soever coyned by the Sovraign of a Common-wealth,) is a sufficient measure of the value of all things else, between the Subjects of that Common-wealth. (Hobbes, 1968, p 300)

But this does not get us very far still in establishing that mankind is naturally divided into nations. Perhaps it would be better to switch to another of the components of nationalist doctrine. The chapter of *Leviathan* which deals with the causes of the imperfections of contemporary commonwealths includes the section headed by the marginal note *Imitation of Neighbour Nations*:

As a false doctrine, so also often-times the Example of different Government in a neighbouring Nation, disposeth men to alteration of the forme already settled. [Examples from biblical Jewish and classical Greek history discussed] And I doubt not, but many men have been contented to

see the late troubles in *England*, out of an imitation of the Low Countries; supposing there needed no more to grow rich, than to change, as they had done, the forme of their Government. (Hobbes, 1968, p 368)

There are still ambiguities even here, for immediately after the passage quoted Hobbes says this desire to imitate other nations is rooted in men's psychology, in their desire for change. In the next section, which discusses imitation specifically of classical civilizations, he further develops the idea that this imitation comes when men see the relative advantages of other political forms without considering their corresponding defects:

... receiving a strong, and delightfull impression, of the great exploits of warre, atchieved by the Conductors of their Armies, receive withall a pleasing Idea, of all they have done besides; and imagine their great Prosperity, not to have proceeded from the aemulation of particular men, but from the vertue of their popular forme of government; Not considering the frequent Seditions, and Civill warres, produced by the imperfection of their policy. (Hobbes, 1968, p 369)

Despite this qualification, the only way to make sense of the Dutch/English example which is his sole contemporary one for this process is that changes which were beneficial in the Low Countries were not in England. Although he is elucidating universal principles applicable in any commonwealth the implication is that beyond these there are more specific principles which will vary between

commonwealths.

Next, it is clear that the sort of size criterion outlined in Chapter One is necessary for a commonwealth:

Nor is it the joyning together of a small number of men, that gives them this security; because in small numbers, small additions on the one side or the other, make advantage of strength so great, as is sufficient to carry the Victory; and therefore gives encouragement to an Invasion. The Multitude sufficient to confide in for our Security, is not determined by any certain number, but by comparison with the Enemy we feare; and that is then sufficient, when the odds of the Enemy is not of so visible and conspicuous movement, to determine the event of warre, as to move him to attempt. (Hobbes, 1968, p 224)

This is enlarged on in the enumeration of the causes which tend to the stability of a commonwealth:

And therefore no great Popular Common-wealth was ever kept up; but by the forraign Enemy that united them; or by the reputation of some one eminent Man amongst them; or by the secret Counsell of a few; or by the mutuall feare of equall factions; and not by the open Consultations of the Assembly. And as for very little Common-wealths, be they Popular, or Monarchicall, there is no humane wisdom can uphold them, longer then the Jealousy lasteth of their potent Neighbours. (Hobbes, 1968, p 311)

Finally, Hobbes argues that sovereigns by conquest have the same rights to be obeyed as those decided by compact. In particular, when one commonwealth succeeds in conquering another the victor can incorporate the vanquished. But for this to succeed the the victors must denizenise some or all of the

vanquished:

But if it be lawfull for a Monarch to dispose of the Succession by words of Contract, or Testament, men may perhaps object a great inconvenience: for he may sell, or give his Right of governing to a stranger; which, because strangers (*that is, men not used to live under the same government, nor speaking the same language*) do commonly undervalue one another, may turn to the oppression of his Subjects; which is a great inconvenience: but it proceedeth not necessarily from the subjection to a strangers government, but from the unskilfulness of the Governours, ignorant of the true rules of Politiques. And therefore the Romans when they had subdued many Nations, to make their Government digestible, were wont to take away that grievance, as much as they thought necessary, by giving sometimes to whole Nations, and sometimes to Principall men of every Nation they conquered, not onely the Privileges, but also the Name of Romans; and took many of them into the Senate, and Offices of charge, even in the Roman city. (Hobbes, 1968, pp 250 - 251, my emphasis)

In Locke's *Two Treatises* the natural division of humanity is, as in his polemical target, Filmer, a result of the tower of Babel episode:

The Scripture says not a word of their Rulers or Forms of Government, but only gives an account, how Mankind came to be divided into distinct Languages and Nations ... (Locke, 1960, p 286) (26)

It would seem that after this event even those who continue to live in the state of nature are divided into nations - such at least is the characterisation of the native Americans, as "the several nations of the *Americans*" (Locke, 1960, p 338). That nations

also differ in their 'temper's' is indicated by the opening salvo of the introduction:

Slavery is so vile and miserable an Estate of Man, (27) and so directly opposed to the generous Temper and Courage of our Nation; that 'tis hardly to be conceived, that an *Englishman*, much less a *Gentleman*, should plead for't. (Locke, 1960, p 175; italics original emphasis, underlining my emphasis)

In Locke the sovereignty of the nation resides not in the monarch as in Hobbes, but in the people (this is of course the crux of Hobbes' rejection, and Locke's enthusiasm, for the 'crown in parliament' as the ideal sovereign body). Despite its closer apparent resemblance to modern nationalisms, this people is still not the whole population (Macpherson, 1962, Part V, Section 3).

The final point I will note in Locke is his discussion of denizenation, which comes in the section where he is asserting that all individuals enter into the commonwealth only through their own (tacit) consent. This discussion begins in the course of the argument that sons are not bound, once they come of the age of reason, by compacts entered into by their fathers, through an example which is an anomaly for partisans of the assumption that nationality is natural - a child born to expatriates:

If a Subject of *England* have a Child by an *English* Woman in *France*, whose Subject is he? Not the King of *England's*; for he must have leave to be admitted to the Priviledges of it. Nor the King of *France's*; For how then

has his father a liberty to bring him away ... He is under his Fathers Tuition and Direction, till he come to Age of Discretion; and he is a Free-man; at liberty what Government he will put himself under; and what Body Politick he will unite himself to. (Locke, 1960, pp 391 - 392)

This in turn leads on to a consideration of the situation of adult foreigners living as expatriates. Their enjoyment of the protections brought by the government they are living under means they, like the other nationals they live among, are bound to submit to the government, but in their case - unlike that of the nationals - this submission does not amount to tacit consent:

And thus we see, that *Foreigners*, by living all their lives under another Government, and enjoying the Privileges and Protection of it, though they are bound, even in Conscience, to submit to its Administration, as far forth as any Denisons; yet do not thereby come to be *Subjects* or *Members* of that *Commonwealth*. Nothing can make any man so, but his actually entering into it by positive Engagement, and express Promise and Compact. (Locke, 1960, p 394)

It is not clear whether this is to be read as saying that such an 'express Promise and Compact' is open to individual foreigners, or, as a mechanical application of nationalist doctrine would seem to entail (but not the actual practices of even modern nation states, with their laws allowing 'naturalisation'), that even this option is closed.

Footnotes to Chapter Four

1) This is not to deny the importance of the creation of a common trans-European Christian identity, partly constructed by contrast with the Islamic 'other' (Armstrong, 1982; Metzlitzki, 1977; Said, 1978). On the contrary a fuller exploration of the imagery developed with regard to this European Christian identity is important both for understanding the evolution of modern nationalism, and also the evolution of modern racism.

The equation of whiteness and purity with Christianity, and of blackness with evil and paganism was clearly elaborated by the time of the late Roman Empire. However, in this period the "blackness" which was the sign of the devil was not identified with the "blackness" of the comparatively darker-skinned peoples of Africa (Snowden, 1983). At some stage in the following centuries (the Reconquest of Spain? the Crusades? - all that can be said for certain, for the moment, is that this change anticipated the voyages of discovery of the fifteenth century by centuries) such an identification, black equals evil equals 'moors', became common (Jordan, 1974; Walvin, 1973).

This is a topic which requires a far more extended treatment than can be given here, but a noteworthy example comes in a motif which recurs in medieval European poetry, of marriage between a

Christian princess and a Muslim king. In a Middle English version, *The King of Tars* [Tarsus] the princess eventually converts her husband to the true faith, whereupon, as proof of the sincerity of the conversion, he turns white overnight. (Mehl, 1968, pp 122 - 123; Metlitzki, 1977, pp 137 - 138)

2) Even this case is less than clear cut. Louis' success came because there was no clear successor to John, so many of the barons accepted Louis as a candidate for the throne. This support disappeared when John died in 1217, to be succeeded by the minor Henry III.

3) The kind of sustained insubordination which was manifested when the feudal dependents of the Kings of France as the Dukes of Burgundy (or even the Kings of England in their capacities as Dukes of Normandy and other 'French' territories) allied themselves for generations at a time with their notional superior's enemies never occurred in post-Conquest England. Such rebellions as did occur involved more limited insubordination.

4) There were other temporary expansions of English controlled territory in France, mainly around Gascony or in the regions nearest the channel, in the aggressive phases of the Hundred Years War, mostly

regained by the French within the space of a generation. After 1453 only Calais was left of the continental territories, again dependent because of the economic links of the wool trade.

5) This finally came with the Acts of Union of 1536 and 1543.

6) Wales and Welsh are derived from Germanic words meaning foreign/stranger/barbarian - the same root-word gives the origin of the names other peoples speaking non-Germanic languages near the linguistic frontier: Walloons, Wallachians. Foliakov says the original root-word comes from the name of one tribe just across the linguistic frontier in the area which is now modern Belgium. If this is so it brings this somewhat closer to other similar terms: Sassanach and its Welsh equivalent from Saxon, or in a wide swathe of languages from Arabic to Chinese where the word for European is derived from Frank.

7) One of these, Northumbrian, was at that time the vernacular both in what is now north-east England and south-east Scotland, and formed the main basis for the distinctive form of English spoken and used as a literary medium in lowlands Scotland.

8) There are apparently also claims that English was

at some time also displaced as a significant vernacular: in view of its later comeback this is highly implausible.

9) In the one part of the Norman fief not lost by John in 1204, the Channel Islands - les Iles Anglo-Normandes - the French language which is still one of the two languages of the area derives from Norman-French.

10) This is a religious history of the world written in the Northumberland dialect about 1300 A.D., and includes, half way down the lines quoted, the first surviving use of the word 'nation' in English. Other examples justifying the choice of the English language are included in Appendix Three.

11) And casting doubts on earlier arguments that a socially aspiring middle class or bourgeoisie formed a significant market (summarised in more depth in Coss, 1984, pp 37 - 54).

12) Common descent for modern nationalists is a lot more difficult to prove with the historical evidence of great migratory movements, and the formation of the common descent becomes a much more mystical process, whether the mystique is of race, soil, or institutions (it has of course been the latter which

has been favoured now among recent English nationalists, with an unbroken 'Parliamentary' tradition as the favoured institution traced back at least to the French lord Simon de Montfort - see Churchill (1956) or Powell and Maude (1970)).

- 13) It was not till the twelfth century, however, which saw a remarkable flowering of the beginnings of true national consciousness in a whole series of European countries, that this view became influential. In France, the Capetian kings were suddenly hailed in a novel way as national heroes fighting the English and German invaders; the French victory at Bouvines in 1214 let loose a flood of national exultation which would have been unthinkable only 150 years earlier. In Italy and Sicily national feeling arose, again in the twelfth century, as a reaction to German aggression. The *Chanson de Roland* and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*, the most influential 'nationalist historiography of the Middle Ages', fixed in writing the burgeoning of national consciousness. (Kamenka, 1973b, pp 6 - 7)

There is a comprehensive survey of European myths of national origin in this period in Poliakov (1974).

- 14) This book, produced 'in association with Debrett's Peerage', claims to have finally identified Arthur with someone known from documentary records; to wit, a British tribal king last seen leading his war band towards Avalon in France, and concludes with an appendix (pp 195 - 199) which shows the current royal family are direct descendents of this

particular war-lord.

15) "The English ruling class had long traced its real ancestry to the classical world, and especially Rome, as distinct from its actual physical ancestors." (Williams, undated, p 181) The mythical world of an Arthurian Romano-British twilight is a ready-made bridge to this idealised ancestry.

16) All of these contrasts apply to English texts before Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* of the fifteenth century. As the first version to be printed (heavily edited by Caxton) this came to be the one formative for modern ones, but Malory relied more heavily on previous French than English sources.

The names of members of Arthur's retinue are given in their modern English forms.

17) ... when did those inhabitants of the island of Britain who were neither Celtic-speaking nor subjects of the northern line of kings develop a common awareness of "England" as an identity including them all and of a national epos which was part of its definition? I have a fairly strong sense that I do not know, and that those who ought to know and perhaps do are medievalists. (Pocock, 1975, p 99)

At least since the Norman invasion, if not earlier, myths were circulated and symbols promulgated by chroniclers and clergy which echoed and explained an emergent Anglo-Norman or English identity, in contradistinction to Welsh, Scottish, and, later, Irish

identities. Geoffrey of Monmouth, in particular, put forward an influential mythology about Brutus and his sons landing in Albion which became a potent framework for political claims by the English monarchy ... (Smith, 1986b, p 205)

The following section is in effect an elaboration of the compressed comments of Smith, but was originally developed independently.

The discussion of the "Matter of Britain" will begin with Geoffrey of Monmouth. The speculation about Geoffrey's sources, with tantalising hints of Arthurian motifs in Welsh, Breton or English ethnic mythology in a significantly earlier period must be laid aside for lack of solid evidence.

18) Which received its literary elaboration in the *Franciade* of Pierre de Ronsard (1572), although it was known much earlier. Compare also Virgil, whose *Aeneid* constitutes a second ancestral foundation myth for Rome, additional to the legends of Romulus and Remus. The main Spanish myth of national origin also traced the descent to Trojan refugees.

Troy formed a dominant subject in the third of the medieval Matters, of Antiquity. It retained this popularity, so that one of the most common forms of early printed works was the 'Troy book'. (Fevbre and Martin, 1976, pp 284 - 285)

19) Some English Arthurian texts as examples:

Layamon's *Brut* extant in 2 manuscripts (Lewis, 1966, p 182), the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* - one of Malory's few English language sources - one manuscript (Finlayson, 1967, p 30), the *Auntys of Arthure* four (Hanna, 1974, p 52), and the most highly acclaimed of the Middle English texts, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, again one (Tolkien, 1967, p xi)). The *Chanson de Roland*, probably the nearest equivalent of a French 'patriotic' text of similar period, survives in seven manuscripts dating between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. (Fox, 1974, pp 60 - 61)

20) Where, perhaps not surprisingly, there was an anti-English thrust to the whole story. G.Williams (1985) argues that that the Welsh *Brut* formed the ideological matrix for the first authentically nationalist Welsh revolt against English incursions, the rebellion led by Glyn Dwr at the beginning of the fifteenth century: "[Glyn Dwr] was a man who wrote Merlin's prophecies into his diplomatic correspondence and his peace treaties. But the ancient British-Welsh tradition - *brut* as the Welsh called it - was to provide a recognizable identity to something novel; the Welsh were to become one of the *nationes*." (p 88)

21) Milton's earliest plan for an epic was a

national one centered on the figure of Arthur - these plans were shelved in favour of *Paradise Lost* because of his disillusion first with the monarchy, then with the English nation (Hill, 1977)

22) Even within modern Europe there is a contrast between the names of those countries which combine ethnicity and territory (Deutschland, England, Scotland, Ireland, Yugoslavia) with much of the rest of Europe where the name is solely ethnic (France, Italia, Espagna, Eire). This contrast correlates only imperfectly with that of the different types of imagery in nationalist mythology of Smith's territorial and ethnic nations (1986b, pp 134 - 138).

This lack of precise fit is due to difficulties in classifying what is merely the dominant theme of complex mythologies. Territorial nations can take this form because the ethnic unity of their core populations can be taken for granted. Ethnic nations develop a symbolism of their natural territory as a subsidiary theme of their myths.

The contrast between "ethnic nations" and "political nations" (Krejci and Velimsky, 1981) also covers similar ground.

23) Geoffrey's account of Arthur's conquest of Albany was the basis for Edward I's claim, accepted by the Pope in 1301, of suzerainty over Scotland.

24) "The belief in the carnal descent from the Jews was sufficiently rooted in Great Britain for an enlightened writer such as the deist, John Tolland, to use it as a prime argument in his *Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews in Great Britain and Northern Ireland* (1714)." (Poliakov, 1974, pp 44 - 45)

25) In correctly stressing that the state of nature is a logical construct abstracting from certain features of men in seventeenth century 'possessive individualist' society, and thus historically conditioned, MacPherson underplays the fact that for Hobbes both the state of nature and civilization are possible because of the natural (biologically determined along lines permitted by his mechanistic philosophy) constitution of men.

26) The King James translation speaks only of the division of languages, and by implication of peoples.

27) Locke invested heavily in the slave trade.

Chapter Five

Conclusions

The three central chapters have considered the two main types of theories which are commonly used as explanations of the nationalist phenomenon. Chapter Two looked at sociobiology, as the most recent and most plausible theory claiming that nationalism (and racism) derived from the biological constitution of humankind. It follows from this that nationalism is an inevitable feature of all human societies.

Chapter Three then considered the alternative position developed by theorists who claim that nationalism is a feature only of a small sub-set of known societies, specifically those which have achieved or are undergoing the transition of modernisation and industrialisation. This in its turn implies that nationalism cannot be explained by any universal biological inheritance, but through factors specific to the social structure, culture, or other features restricted to the historically limited range of societies where it occurs.

The third chapter raised certain methodological problems with the modernist theories of nationalism. This was followed in Chapter Four by a case study of the development of a nationalist ideology in England, in which it was argued that the initial formulation of such nationalist doctrines and myths began in an earlier epoch than is compatible

with the assumptions of the modernist theory.

The thrust of the three chapters has thus been a critique of these two major current theories of the roots of nationalism. In order to draw out the more positive claims which have been made in the course of the analysis I begin by recapitulating the major conclusions of these critiques.

Sociobiology

The sociobiological claim to have explained nationalism rests on the assertion that it is a modified form of an innate tendency to favour close blood relations. It was argued in Chapter Two that the plausibility of this thesis rests on a systematic ambiguity as to whether the kinship which is asserted to unite the large anonymous group is real or fictitious. Van den Berghe, who was taken as the most sociologically sophisticated representative of this group writing about nationalism and racism, frequently states that the large groups who form nations or races can be considered kin only in a Pickwickian sense. Nevertheless the argument from biological roots derives its power from an implication that there is some real sense in which all the members of an ethnic group are more closely interrelated with each other than with outsiders.

Chapter Two claimed that this implication is false. Outside of close kin the chances that an

individual has a closer biological relationship to someone in their own ethnic group than to someone in another such group are negligible. Ethnic solidarity is not nepotism, and it is not necessarily optimal in a Darwinian sense either.

The focus of the critique of sociobiology was not on the assertions of the universality of the ethnic phenomenon, but on the explanations of the causes thereof. The ubiquity of ethnicity is further discussed in Appendix One, which follows Smith (1986b) in an assertion that ethnic group formation has been a constant but not universal feature of human societies across at least the time-span of recorded history.

This implies that ethnicity is neither inevitable, nor a product of our biological constitutions. The rhetoric of kinship frequently elaborated in ethnic mythology must therefore be directly addressed.

When van den Berghe discusses the relationship of ethnic groups to the processes of social class formation, he seems to assume that the latter are not problematic in the way that the processes of formation of ethnic in-groups are. More specifically he claims that the intensity of class conflict and the degree of continuity of classes as corporate groups will be greater to the extent that class boundaries are also ethnic boundaries. With this

qualification there is the implication that the rationality of the constitution of classes as in-groups is more transparent, and does not need to be dissected in the same manner as his investigation of the rationality of the formation of ethnic groups.

Classes can be explained sociologically, but ethnic groups, he argues, whether they take a national or a racial form, must be explained biologically. Ethnicity is therefore a deeper form of collectivity, both in requiring scientific explanations diverging more from common sense, and in that it is normally more stable and enduring.

Van den Berghe's nepotistic theory, that ethnic groups share larger interrelationships internally than externally, draws its plausibility partly from older and now discredited anthropological and biological theories, and partly from the rhetoric of ethnic solidarity. Within this rhetoric images of close kinship are certainly frequent. (1) But this type of rhetoric is by no means specific to ethnic groups. On the contrary this rhetoric of kinship is employed within many in-groups. Trades unionists are brothers, feminists are sisters, mafiosi a family. Indeed in some in-groups there are implications that the forms of kinship they offer are superior to those of mere blood relationship:

There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said

unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! (Mark 3, 31 - 34)

The rhetoric of kinship is therefore invoked by many, though not all, large scale in-groups. Conceivably it could be argued that this is so because all human relationships other than the most immediately instrumental are possible only through a redirection of instinctive affections for close kin. In the absence of any evidence for such instincts, and in view of the frequency with which interrelations between close kin are anything but affectionate, such suggestions are implausible.

In almost all societies the initial processes of child rearing, that is of the forming of a biologically human being into a socialised human individual, takes place within some family form which is normally centred on a core of closely related kin. Within such family units the relationships are anything but purely instrumental. On the contrary, the bonds a child forms have a multi-layered emotional significance (though to repeat, the emotions can be hostile as well as friendly). (2)

In-groups which use this rhetoric of kinship are acting so as to mobilise the affective as well as instrumental depths of such relationships. In so far as they are able to do this effectively they can

create bonds between their members which extend beyond the merely instrumental satisfactions they can help achieve, and therefore tend to promote a more stable and enduring collectivity. (3)

The other indication that the rhetoric of kinship is socially constructed and operative at the level of meaning is in the enormous variation in the size and scope of the in-groups constituted through such language. Such groups can vary between a few hundreds and many millions. The initial premiss of sociobiology is that ethnic solidarity derives from a redirection of the instinctive solidarity with the primeval horde. Even if this premiss were to be accepted it would not take us very far.

The most which can be deduced from such an assumption is that interethnic conflict may be a ubiquitous feature of human social life. Even if this conclusion is in its turn accepted it is so vague and generalised as to be misleading. Conflicting ethnic groups can vary in size from groups with a few hundred adults to those with many millions. The intensity of ethnic conflicts can vary from pacific economic competition, through various forms of exploitation, up to full scale wars of extermination. Lines of ethnic cleavage can run either parallel or orthogonal to other lines of intergroup cleavage and conflict. Some ethnic groups have maintained a continuous (but changing) identity

for millenia, other ethnic boundaries have been fragmented or redrawn in the space of a generation.

The claim of sociobiologists to have discovered the basis for the ubiquity of the ethnic phenomenon directs attention away from these systematic variations in its actual manifestations. It also, I have suggested, tends to legitimate ethnic conflict: ethnic conflict may be unfortunate, but it is inevitable.

I am not convinced that the anthropological record and the historical record show that ethnic conflict is inevitable. What they do show is that the extent of such conflict is greatly variable in both scope and intensity - and that there are complex relations between interethnic and intraethnic conflicts, with no necessity that the former are the more important.

The variations in the ethnic phenomenon are at least as important as its asserted ubiquity. I will therefore now turn to one of the major attempts to deal with such variations, in the various theories which claim that nationalism is both radically distinct from the ethnic phenomenon *per se* and of historically recent origin.

Modernists

Chapter Three argued that assertions that the nationalist phenomenon is still historically something of a novelty rest on definitions which equate the nation with the whole adult population. Given that nationalism is also excluded, by definition, from application to anything but large-scale state societies and that in such societies until very recently the exclusion of the vast majority of adults from full citizenship has been the norm, this equation effortlessly produces the conclusion that nations and nationalism are specifically modern.

It would be possible to argue that there is an intimate connection between nationalism and this restitution of some citizenship rights to the masses of adults. Given the still major cleavages in wealth and power within all societies which claim to be democracies, a necessary but not sufficient precondition for even the formal political egalitarianism, in western or soviet forms, would include, at the minimum, that very few people suffered absolute deprivation and that, within a given polity, sufficient forms of communal unification of anonymous communities kept the class struggles, arising from such disparities of condition as continue to exist, within tolerable bounds. In this sense there are undoubtedly features which are

important and new in modern nationalism. Given the substantive importance of these changes it is clearly relevant to develop a specific conception which can articulate them.

The modernists do this by confining the concepts of nation and nationalism to these circumstances. The formula they claim to be using to do this is one in which a nation comes to exist when an ethnic group is equivalent to the population of a state. Yet the actual definitions employed have a covert third component, that there is formal equality between the members of the ethnic group, as citizens.

Implicit in Chapters Three and Four has been the assumption that this third component is not a defining feature of nations and nationalism as such, but only of a particular type of nation and of nationalism. There may have been a correlation between separate ethnic groups and separate polities for small-scale stateless societies. It is an ideal, from which all actual examples deviate to a greater or lesser extent, for large industrialised societies. Such correlations were the exception, rather than being entirely absent, from what Gellner terms agrarian societies.

The strength of modernist theories derives from their appreciation of this contrast between agrarian and industrialised societies. That most agrarian societies were not national states, and may

have had far less inter-ethnic conflict than there is in the modern, nationalised world, is a sufficient demonstration that ethnicity is not a universally necessary basis for the organisation of political societies. While national agrarian societies are indeed rare, a small number of cases can be found where states appear to fit this model.

Such exceptions create significant anomalies for modernist theories of nationalism - anomalies which are signalled by major disagreements among modernists as to whether such instances are genuine examples of nationalism at all. These divergences are commonly explained as rooted in problems of definition and taxonomy. At one level this is of course true, but apart from these conceptual problems the existence of these exceptions poses substantive issues, for they include precisely those states which formed the initial exemplars in the process of the global diffusion of nationalism.

Most modernists have stressed the factors which differentiate these apparent precursors from modern nationalism. The most common means for doing this has been building in some democratic component as a necessary feature of nationalism. I am not convinced that this step is justified.

This is not to deny that the democratic element which the modernists also include as a definitional element is important in the rhetoric if

not always the reality of modern nationalism. On the contrary its very importance demands that it should be made explicit. What I am further suggesting is that there is a certain separability between these two elements, that it is both logically and empirically possible to have situations where state and ethnic boundaries coincide, but with a political nation which is a tiny fraction of the ethnic group.

To some extent this may be simply a matter of semantics. Some modernists acknowledge that in the Middle Ages there were what they term 'nationalist sentiments', here designated nationalism. The present argument also accepts modernist diagnoses of the specificity of the post-medieval phenomenon, with its democratic/ populist dimension and global extension, while preferring some more specific term such as modern nationalism or populist nationalism. In so far as this is so, the matter can be resolved in a Humpty Dumpty manner. Each of us is using words to mean what we want them to mean - there is even the added bonus of the possibility of a simple and direct translation between the terminologies.

However, even where the matter is initially a semantic one, there is a tendency for this to affect more substantive matters. I have shown that many of the theorists who start by talking about the nationalist sentiment of the middle ages continue by minimising the extent of such sentiments in ways

which cannot be justified by the historical evidence. More substantively significant is the relationship between premodern and modern forms of nationalism. The previous chapter argued that, both in intellectual assumptions and in mythology, the modern form draws on and modifies rather than radically breaks from the medieval form of nationalism.

There is a model of the relationship between liberalism and nationalism which is sometimes presented by the modernists, which runs something as follows. First nationalism is deduced (fallaciously according to Kedourie) from the liberal assumption that everyone has rights (Kedourie (1966), where the liberalism is of J.S.Mill and Woodrow Wilson, and A.D.Smith (1984) where the liberalism is Lockean). Subsequently the effect of nationalist movements is to increase interethnic tensions, so the state gets more repressive to dampen these, resulting in a diminution of individual liberties.

The concluding section of the previous chapter argued that the founders of liberal theory were also nationalists, while presenting an argument that their adoption of this position arose from reasons other than their (valid or invalid) deductions from their individualist assumptions. But this modernist model of the relationships between democracy, liberalism and nationalism must be questioned more fundamentally than any doubts about a (pseudo-) deductive relation

between them. First the simple equation between liberalism and democracy must be challenged.

Classical liberalism was not about the rights of the individual, but about the rights of the minority of individuals who happened to be property owners (and who were also male heads of families). Granting full rights to the irrational mob (irrational in their envy for the goods monopolised by the propertied) was held to be incompatible with the continuing existence of the individual rights of the propertied.

From the initial elaborations of liberalism in the seventeenth century until at least the middle of the nineteenth, liberals argued (almost certainly correctly given the absolute disparities of wealth then) that democracy would make impossible the liberties they espoused (MacPherson, 1962). (4) The only practical question was whether the alternative to the unacceptable demos should be oligarchy (as in Locke) or autocracy (Hobbes).

Indeed, given that the dominant trend of liberal democratic theory since the nineteenth century has been about the need to achieve a balance between the need to permit some form of participation from the masses, and the need to protect the political system from the excesses resulting from the ignorance and proneness to greed of these selfsame masses, it seems reasonable to doubt that this easy

equation of liberalism and the rights of all has ever been applicable in the simplistic way suggested in the modernist model.

The English state established after the 1688 settlement was a tolerable approximation to the liberal model (for the propertied). The ideology of the rule of law around which it was partly articulated extended some limited individual rights to those excluded from the settlement. (5)

The claim of the lower orders for admission into formal citizenship was based centrally on a nationalist dimension. The acceptability of this admission to the elites, was also dependent on nationalism. Indeed, the social compact which made this entry viable to the elite was one in which the nation itself was redefined so as to encompass more than the minority political nation, while the self-acceptance of membership of the nation by the lower orders served to render certain forms of internal political conflict illegitimate.

The models presented by Gellner, Kedourie and Smith are ones in which moves to liberalism/democracy in a context of ethnic differentiation fuel ethnic conflict, which in turn threatens to undermine liberty. It would not be difficult to document situations where such processes have occurred. But the over-quick identification of liberalism with democracy, like the building-in of democracy or

populism as a definitional component for the recognition of nationalism, obscures the full complexity and ambiguity of the relations between these ideologies and their social effects.

The methodological critique of the marxist and Gellnerite versions of the modernity thesis, suggested that there was a deep ambiguity as to whether these theories were proposing functionalist or intentionalist explanations of the nationalist phenomenon. In both the root explanation is that nations are the necessary forms of political organisation of industrialised (or capitalistically industrialised) societies. But for both - there is also a clearly identifiable group - in the one case the bourgeoisie, for the other the intellectuals - who are the conscious vectors of the nationalist syndrome.

There is then the further difference that while the marxists tend to assume, on the basis of theory rather than evidence, that the motivation of these vectors derives from their perceptions of the benefits which will accrue to them, Gellner, after a more detailed exposition of how it is that the early benefits of establishing a new nation state represent gains only for the intellectuals, then goes on to deny explicitly that their motivation had been awareness of these benefits.

Chapter Three claimed that this denial left

Gellner without any explanation why a whole layer of intellectuals should, within a short span of time, suddenly take an overriding interest in gathering their national folklore and folksongs, describing the philology of their national tongue, or forming more directly political movements for national independence. It suggested that an examination of the statements of many modern nationalist ideologies would show that they were aware of, and partly motivated by, these material advantages of independence.

Aside from the many problems this still leaves of the relationship between the instrumental and other motivations of the carriers of nationalism, this also poses yet another problem, which Chapter Three termed a problem of infinite regress. This problem will now be approached from the other side, as the limiting case for modernist theories. If the awareness of the advantages of nationalism is accepted as even a partial component in the explanation of why people should favour such an option, there is then a need to explain where they got such an awareness from. For nationalist movements after the dual revolution the source of such knowledge is readily found. The model they could draw on was that of the national states where the breakthrough into modernity had already happened: initially the twin arenas of the dual revolution,

England and France, and then other countries which had emulated them.

This simple borrowing breaks down, however, in the locus of the initial breakthrough, where no prior and existing model can be drawn upon. (6)

Modern computing textbooks devote a great deal of emphasis to the testing of programs, and within this on several strategies, one of which is empirical testing with extreme data. In this method, a program to be tested is run, first with the highest data inputs it has been designed to deal with, and then with data increased so as to be the lowest it is not designed to deal with. A success in the first case and failure of some kind in the second is held to increase confidence in the correctness of the program. This philosophy, it seems to me, also provides one useful way for testing theories.

In the context of the theories of nationalism, the relevant extreme cases are the countries which became the first exemplars of nations. Regarding these there is confusion among modernists as to whether they represent genuine cases of nationalism or something which was only apparently similar. For those historians who are more concerned to assert that nationalism is a modern phenomenon than to develop elaborate explanations why this has been so, these confusions are mainly a matter of the precise definitions of the nature of nationalism.

The opposite pole to this is represented by Gellner and Nairn, who manage to make both of these contradictory assertions within the same text. The theory of nationalism as the response of the latecomers to the modernisation or industrialisation process is unable to come to terms with the firstcomers, and seems to become schizophrenic when faced with them.

I have proposed that this dilemma should be resolved by recognising that nationalism does have older roots than the dual revolution; that in England (and by implication that some or all of the handful of other states whose current national form goes back before the turn of the nineteenth century: most of the rest of the Atlantic seaboard states in Europe, China, Japan ...) nationalism evolved earlier and in response to other imperatives. The bulk of the previous chapter was devoted to trying to demonstrate that even in medieval England ideologies similar to modern nationalism, but minus any pretensions of a democratic component, were present and politically significant.

That chapter tried to draw out some of the differences as well as the similarities between medieval and modern nationalism. Given the dominance of the modernist thesis among those historians and sociologists who have concerned themselves with the origins of the nationalist phenomenon, my stress has

been on the similarities to, and modern nationalism's dependence on, ideas which were formulated in a much earlier period.

Unlike later nationalists, the radicals of mid-seventeenth century England, or of late eighteenth century France, did not need to worry about 'rekindling' the fires of national sentiment, nor about guaranteeing the integrity of the core territory of the national state. The novel programmes they evolved for the renewal of national glory could take these starting points for granted. The contemporary ubiquity of nationalism is due to the coincidence that the territorial locations of the dual revolution were in long-established ethnic territorial states.

To what extent was this a coincidence? This question can only be answered speculatively, and must first be broken down into two parts: why was there such a consistent evolution towards a national form in the English and French states through the later middle ages and 'early modern' period?; and what contribution, if any, did the national form of these states make to the fact that it was there that the dual revolution first happened?

Chapter Four and Appendix One allude to some of the factors which seem to have been most significant in promoting long-term consciousness of ethnic ties in general, and stable polities

identified with specific ethnic groups in particular. Such factors include the existence of a 'natural territory' (defined not simply by topography, but by topography in conjunction with the social organisation and technology of warfare: in the age of the ballistic missile there are no natural frontiers). Thus the divide between the mainly lowland plain of 'England' and the hillier zones of 'Scotland' and 'Wales' formed the approximate frontiers of political rule, and frequently also of ethnic groups, for much of the prolonged period between the Claudian invasion of England and the Henrician administrative incorporation of Wales.

The second factor has been the existence of major linguistic fractures, with neighbouring peoples speaking dialects deriving from different language families (Celtic Breton and Romance French, itself abutting to Germanic tongues to the north; the non-Indo-European Euskari surrounded by Romance languages; or Celtic Welsh and the Germanic - with subsequent substantial Romance influence - English). In the areas which were to become the modern France and Britain such linguistic gulfs frequently corresponded to divides of religious belief and practice, which tended to further reinforce awareness of ethnic distinctiveness.

The final factor mentioned was the repetition, across the course of several generations, of warfare

between neighbouring states (Smith, 1986b, pp 73 - 76). In the course of such conflicts elaborate mythologies about the characteristics of the 'natural enemy' tend to form. (7) These also have the effect of defining, by contrast, the shape of 'our' glorious national character. It thus seems plausible to suggest that the military ethos of western European feudalism may have helped to promote, at least in those states within its orbit strong enough to resist conquest and dismemberment, enduring forms of ethnic awareness.

Certainly the entire period covered in Chapter Four and beyond was punctuated by intermittent Anglo-French wars, as well as campaigns by both states against other neighbouring territories. It was often during the course of such wars that nationalist sentiments were most loudly articulated.

No attempt has been made to develop an analysis of the relative importance of these various factors conducive to the formation and reproduction of ethnic consciousness. It seems likely that their relative importance is not fixed, but dependent on specific historical contexts. In the Anglo-French cases what is significant is that for long periods throughout the middle ages and up to the beginning of the nineteenth century several or all of the four factors were acting in the same direction: to produce trends towards a heightening of the

consciousness of ethnicity.

No claim is made that the formation of the French or English national states was inevitable. A single decisive military defeat of either core state (say of the English by a Spanish Armada with more conducive weather conditions) might have produced political, and thus quite possibly ethnic, fragmentation. Given that both states did manage to avoid such decisive defeats, all the conditions were present to promote the prolonged process of identification between these states and an ethnically distinctive, and increasingly, but always imperfectly, ethnically unified population.

The contribution made by the national character of the English or French states to the initial 'transition to modernity' is still more difficult to assess. Many of the functional benefits of nationalism identified by modernists are not relevant, being introduced into England or France only during the course of the 'dual revolution' (Gellner's universal education system, or more exactly universal elementary education, came to England and France only in the second half of the nineteenth century, well after many neighbouring countries, including Scotland).

The infrastructural conditions identified by many marxists, and indeed other economists, as the preconditions for the viability of an internal market

were asserted previously to have no necessary connections to nations as such. In both France and England many of the reforms needed to ensure these infrastructural supports for the internal market were again undertaken during the course of the dual revolution. Such initiatives required the support, and often the direct intervention, of a strong and stable state. (8)

There seems to have been no requirement arising from economic needs, narrowly considered, that the states which accomplished such tasks should have a national form. The long-established links between ethnicity and the state gave the states (though not always the regimes as shown by the experience of Revolutionary France) a heightened legitimacy which may have contributed to the ease with which such changes could be imposed.

1) For example in the nation as mystical parent - mother or fatherland.

2) It may be that the possibility of such bonds which go beyond the bounds of instrumentality at the level of the individual derive ultimately from some mechanism of genetic determinism. At this level the verdict on some sociobiological claims has to be "not proven". Even this needs to be further qualified by asserting that there is nothing in the neuronal pathways or whatever it is the genes control which determines that it should be genetic kin who are the initial recipients of this emotional charge.

The mapping of social to biological kinship in different societies varies enormously, and emotional ties to kin are to those socially defined as such, not to those whose coefficient of relationship in biological terms is greater than some particular fraction.

3) Indeed, only if purely self-centered instrumentalism is overcome can the free rider and prisoners dilemma problems be avoided. At this point game theorists tend to start talking of the individuals going beyond the individually rational solution to the game because of distortions due to

culture.

An alternative approach would be that the game theorists were talking about the wrong game, in that the instrumental pay-offs they have diagnosed are not the real pay-offs of the actual players, which can only be assessed in terms of players' valuations.

The process of infusing relationships with emotional depth is one which creates pay-offs beyond the immediate and instrumental, and can thus alter the global structure of the game. This process is not always conscious, though it can be.

Only groups which create multi-layered emotional attachments in addition to instrumental ones achieve long-term stability. While the rhetoric of kinship is the most commonly adopted, and perhaps the most successful, means to this end, it is not the only viable one.

4) Similarly in the twentieth century Schumpeterian liberalism with its justifications of an apathetic democracy, not to mention recent theorisations of the acceptability of authoritarianism, in contrast to the unacceptability of totalitarianism.

5) Thompson characterises the situation thus. The common Englishman "with few affirmative rights, but protected by the law against the intrusion of arbitrary power." (1968, p 87). The other major

component of the ideology around which this state was articulated, i.e. precisely nationalism, gave an opening for demands from those below for them also to be recognised by an extension of the settlement - the Liberty Tree was raised for the rights of the Freeborn Englishman (note the continuing gendering), radical democracy thus encapsulating in its watchword a simultaneous extension both of liberalism and nationalism. (Thompson, 1968, ch 4)

6) Although this breakthrough in the narrow sense of the capitalised Industrial Revolution happened in Britain, or politically in the Revolution in France, it required both the economic exploitation, through the developing colonial empires, of much of the rest of the world, and also the synthesis of intellectual developments having their origins much farther afield, and by no means confined only to elsewhere in Europe.

7) Wars frequently generate patriotic enthusiasm, but also war-weariness, which may give rise to questioning of the regime as to its justifications for the conflict.

It should never be assumed that either sentiments of patriotism or war-weariness are diffused to a similar extent among all strata in the population.

8) For the elaboration of state power in western Europe in the period of the dual revolution see most of the essays collected in Tilly, 1975a; an earlier stage of European state-formation is discussed by Strayer, 1963; 1970.

Appendix One

On Primordialism and Perennialism

The definition of primordialism developed in Chapter One does not include all contemporary sociologists commonly so designated. Primordialism is frequently used in the the sociology of nationalism to denote the work of Edward Shils and Clifford Geertz. They assert that ties and loyalties of ethnicity are, like other forms of fundamental social relationship such as those of kinship and common religion, primordial, in the sense that they are characteristic of all known, and, at least by implication, all possible forms of human society.

Unlike the sociobiologists, Shils and Geertz do not rest their argument about the primordial nature of ethnic bonds on explicit theorisations of biological constraints on the human condition. It seems likely that, if the bonds of kinship and ethnicity are as inescapable as Geertz and Shils assert, the sociobiologists are right as to the most plausible source of an explanation for this situation, if not for the specific form of biological reductionism they offer.

This variety of 'primordialism' makes a clear conceptual distinction between nationalism and ethnic bonding in general, which is not drawn by the sociobiologists. For Shils and Geertz, like the authors discussed in Chapter Three, what is

distinctive about nationalism is its historical location in the modern era, where it serves as an ideology of legitimation for sovereign national states:

The tendency towards the adoption of ideological traditions which is aroused by intensified conflict [in modern societies] is hostile towards substantive traditions, centered as they are around familial and religious authority and attachment to locality and other primordial things. When nationality becomes their object, it is an ideological nationalism which is no less sympathetic to substantive traditions which include nationality [i.e. ethnicity - D.A.] among their objects. (Shils, 1981, p 321)

Shils' language of modern "ideological" nationalism versus primordial nationality is almost identical to that used by the modernist Carlton Hayes who is discussed in Chapter Three. Like Hayes, Shils uses the term nationality where most contemporary sociologists would use "ethnicity". While the existence of this contrast is clear in Shils' discussion of nationalism, its precise significance is more cloudy. This is a point which Geertz expands in a discussion of nationalist movements outside of Europe, formed in reaction to the European colonisation of Asia and Africa:

The first, formative stage of nationalism consisted essentially of confronting the dense assemblage of cultural, racial, local, and linguistic categories of self-identification and social loyalty that centuries of uninstructed history had produced with a simple, abstract, deliberately constructed, and almost

painfully self-conscious concept of political ethnicity - a proper "nationality" in the modern manner. The granular images into which individuals' views of who they are and who they aren't are so intensely bound in traditional society, were challenged by the more general, vaguer, but no less charged conceptions of collective identity, based on a diffuse sense of common destiny, that tend to characterise industrialized states. (Geertz, 1973, p 239)

The 'primordialism' of Shils and Geertz can therefore be summarised as follows.

Bonds of kinship, locality and ethnicity (and possibly of common religion and race) are primordial: universally found in human societies, and perhaps deriving in some unspecified way from the nature of human nature. Modern, large-scale, sovereign, industrialised societies (or aspirant candidates for this status) are highly specific and historically novel social forms, emerging in western Europe in the nineteenth, and in Asia and Africa in the twentieth, century.

Corresponding in some way to the novelty of the social form, these modern societies entail the development of novel forms of social bonding. This frequently if not invariably involves a mobilisation of the loyalties previously focussed on primordial bonds, and thus a rhetoric of upholding the old traditions. But the sheer necessary scale of modern societies, and the heightened conflict within them, means this rhetoric must be a cover for a substantive

assault on, and major modifications of, the old traditions.

Despite a significantly different emphasis this argument is close to the mainstream of the modernist tradition. For Hayes as for Shils ethnicity (both use nationality) is primordial; for Kohn and Gellner as well as Geertz localism is primordial. True, there is no implication in Hayes, Kohn or Gellner of biological explanations of the primordality of ethnicity or localism. Perhaps more significant is the differential focus on the two halves of the equation: for Hayes, Kohn and Gellner the stress is on the distinctiveness of modern nationalism, and an attempt to elucidate the precise form it takes; for Geertz and Shils the focus of attention is on the ties which predate modern nationalism.

This difference of emphasis, then, is one which serves to mark the tradition represented by Shils and Geertz as a distinctive school within the modernist interpretation of nationalism. Their stress on the primordality of kinship and the rest points to a distinct problematic, the relationship of these primordial bonds to modern nationalism, which is decidedly minimised in the writings of what could be called the mainstream modernists. Nonetheless, some of these mainstream modernists do acknowledge the primordality of some of the types of bonding

which are the interest of Shils and Geertz; who themselves do distinguish the distinctiveness of modern nationalism.

In terms then of the contrast between primordialists and modernists as defined in Chapter One, Shils and Geertz are modernists. The stress by Geertz and Shils on attempts by nationalists to mobilise loyalties based on more enduring ethnic ties has some apparent parallels with the arguments developed in later chapters here. Before an attempt is made to assess the validity of their claims about the primordiality of ethnicity it is necessary to consider briefly yet another recent, or recently identified, school of analysis, the perennialists (A.D.Smith, 1984; 1986b).

Like Geertz and Shils, the perennialists pay attention to the manifestations of ethnic or national sentiment. The first of the perennialists who will be discussed here is John Armstrong, who claims that 'national' sentiment (Armstrong does not draw a clear distinction between nations and ethnic groups) has been present in a significant proportion of societies, although not all societies, since the beginning of recorded history.

Apart from Armstrong, the other person whose work will be discussed is Anthony Smith, who places himself in an intermediate position between the perennialists and the modernists. Unlike Armstrong,

Smith makes a clear conceptual distinction between ethnicity and modern nationalism, arguing it has been the former which has formed a persistent feature of known human societies, in an approach which is very similar to the present critique of modernist theories.

Armstrong draws on the work of Fredrik Barth (1969) to argue that the formation of ethnic or national groups occurs when such groups develop systematic contacts with other groups having a different way of life. The contrast with the way of life of the 'stranger' helps to define the central features which constitute *our* way of life, which must be defended by 'border guards' - symbolic limits on the possibility of action.

Once the presence of other forms of ways of life brings awareness of the distinctiveness of the practices of the proto-ethnic group, this leads not merely to conscious efforts to maintain the old way of life against the threat which is posed to it by the practical demonstration of alternative possibilities, but to the elaboration of justifications why this way of life is necessary and indeed superior to any alternative.

Such justifications take the form of a complex series of myths and symbols which explain how and why the group has come to have its distinctive form and way of life. These myths and symbols cohere to form

a *mythomoteur*, an emotionally satisfying ideology which defines the limits of membership of the ethnic group and the appropriate forms of behaviour for them.

One characteristic form of *mythomoteur* is typical of agrarian societies populated by settled pastoralists, particularly if their territory borders that of others who continue to practice a pastoral economy. Here the characteristic form of definition of the boundaries of the group uses the 'genealogical principle': the members of the group are the descendants of a single founder (compare Chapter Four, footnote 12). A central theme of the myths of the ethnic group is of nostalgia for the lost 'golden age' when the group maintained its pastoral way of life. Armstrong argues that myths of this form were important in constituting the ethnic identities of the civilizations of the ancient Middle East and of medieval Islam.

Thus the first form of contrast in ways of life which Armstrong discusses is that between pastoralists and settled agrarian societies. The second contrast is between medieval Islam and Christendom. A whole series of factors, from the continuing social presence of pastoralist desert Arabs for urban Moslems, and the absence of equivalent groups for urban Christians, to differences in the mythologies of the two religions, and differences in the forms of legal codes, tended

to underpin a continuing 'genealogical principle' foundation for Islamic ethnic myths, while on the contrary facilitating the elaboration of myths on an alternative 'territorial principle' in Christian Europe.

One of the most fascinating factors discussed by Armstrong relates to different methods of "town planning" adopted in Islamic and Christian cities. The Islamic city was in effect a congeries of separate settlements, divided into a series of segments by internal walls. Each of these segments formed the residential zone for a different kinship group. European cities had little or no segmentation of this form, and hence a physically far wider public sphere where any citizen had a right to be present.

The effect of the form of Islamic cities was to reinforce consciousness of the distinctiveness of kinship groups, while that of European cities to promote a much greater awareness of the commonality of all the residents of the city. European "town planning" therefore promoted a sense of common identity related not to bonds of kinship, but to ties of place: the 'territorial principle'.

Anthony Smith's most recent book (1986b) develops Armstrong's analysis, but uses a more elaborate conceptualisation. In parallel with the modernists he talks of nations and nationalism as emerging in western Europe at about the beginning of

the nineteenth century. Before this time his subject is ethnic groups (Smith uses the French term *ethnie*). A further distinction is drawn to identify ethnic groups which, before the emergence of the modern national phenomenon, were closely identified with a particular state. Ethnicity in general is portrayed as being as old as recorded history. While it is distinguished from the specific form of ethnicity constituted by modern nationalism, one of the main themes is the influence older forms of ethnic sentiment and ethnic solidarity have exercised on the development of the specifically modern form.

Ethnic groups share loyalties which derive from:

... the meanings shared by a number of men and women over some generations on certain cultural, spatial and temporal properties of their interaction and shared experiences. (Smith, 1986b, p 22)

Ethnic groups have six identifying marks: a common name; a common myth of descent; shared history; a distinctive shared culture; links with a specific territory; and, deriving from all of these, a sense of solidarity. The presence of a name used as a self-designation indicates that the ethnic group is regarded as distinctive not merely by others, but by its own members. (Smith, 1986b, pp 22 - 23) The common myth of descent is "[I]n many ways the *sine qua non* of ethnicity (see also Chapter Four). The, generally spurious, claims of common descent embodied

in these myths unite cognitive and affective images of the nature of the ethnic community. Indeed, these myths are central to the symbolic image of the ethnic group, "an overall framework of meaning for the ethnic community, a *mythomoteur* which 'makes sense' of its experiences and defines its 'essence'." (Smith, 1986b, p 24)

The common understandings of a shared history are in a sense the continuation of the myths of shared origin and descent. They too have no necessary similarity to the history which is the product of disinterested scholarship. Again it is the "poetic, didactic and integrative purposes" (p 25), the imagery created rather than the accuracy, which is the significant feature of the shared history. The element of shared culture has the effect of giving the members of the ethnic group continuous reminders of the features they share with their fellows, which serve to mark them off from outsiders. While language has been one significant marker of cultural distinctiveness, most scholars have made the mistake of considering this the sole criterion.

The territory may, but need not, be the one in which the ethnic group is resident. As with the history, what is significant about the ethnic territory is less its actual climate, topography or whatever, than the potent poetic and symbolic use

which is made of these features. Finally, all five points so far mentioned serve only to differentiate potential ethnic groups. Until there is a sense of common loyalty animating at least the educated upper class of the ethnic group, the depth of which may vary with time, and which may coexist with other forms of loyalty based on class, region, religion or dynasticism, there is not a fully-formed ethnic group.

Smith then goes on to distinguish between ethnic groups in general and more specific varieties: ethnic groups which had their own state prior to the rise of modern nationalism, and modern nations. These more specific forms of ethnic group will be discussed below, after a brief examination of further evidence to support Smith's claim of the antiquity of the generalised form of ethnicity.

Ethnic differentiation is one of the central themes of the *Histories* of Herodotus (written in the second half of the fifth century B.C.). Indeed, Herodotus's portrayal of the rigidity of ethnic conditioning would seem to align him with the more extreme of modern nationalists:

For if anyone, no matter who, were given the opportunity of choosing from among all the nations in the world the set of beliefs which he thought best, he would inevitably, after careful consideration of their relative merits, choose that of his own country. Everyone without exception believes his own native customs, and the religion he was brought up in, to

be the best; and that being so, it is unlikely that anyone but a madman would mock at such things. There is abundant evidence that this is the universal feeling about the ancient customs of one's country. (Herodotus, 1972, p 219)

While such statements are themselves powerful evidence for the ancient existence of an ethnic consciousness, they do tend to suggest that Herodotus was something less than a disinterested witness. His own presumptions about the ubiquity of feeling for the ancient customs and religion of one's own country may have led him to identify some of the peoples he discusses as ethnic groups ("nations" in the translation cited) when they were, at most, potential ethnic groups in Smith's terms.

While it is thus necessary to be aware of the need not to take Herodotus' evidence at face value, the depth and plausibility of some of his descriptions of other peoples is such as to suggest that they meet all of Smith's six markers for the existence of an ethnic group. One such people are the Scythians described in Book Four of the *Histories*.

The Scythians were a pastoralist people, who used wagons for their homes, and who had an economy based on cattle and horses. Together with confederate tribes sharing some but not all aspects of their culture, who lived on the fringes of their territory, they lived on the great plains of eastern

Europe and Asia Minor, between the Danube and the Sea of Azov.

The confederate tribes are listed as the Tauri, Agathyrsi, Neuri, Androphagi, Melanchlaeni, Geloni, Budini, and Sauromatae. Most or all of these are given Greek-derived names which describe the features which differentiate them from the Scythians. Thus the Androphagi are the sole group of cannibals in the region, while the Melanchlaeni, more prosaically, all wear black cloaks.

Some are distinguished from the Scythians by language. The Geloni, who are the only group in the region with an agrarian economy (other Greeks are criticised for confusing the Geloni with the Budini who inhabit the same region, and calling both by the same name, despite the fact that the latter are pastoralists with a taste for lice) are the descendants of Greek settlers, with a language half Greek and half Scythian.

Religion is also a distinguishing feature. Neurians practice magic, and are rumoured by Scythians and Greeks resident in Scythian territory to change into wolves for a few days each year. The semi-hellenic Geloni worship Dionysus, while Scylas, a hellenised Scythian who was initiated into the Dionysian rite, so offended Scythian "national" sensibility that he was beheaded for his apostasy.

It is unclear then whether the confederate

tribes are fully-formed ethnic groups or proto-*ethnie*. While "Scythian" is itself a Greek designation, and the people thus designated are further divided into a series of tribes for whom Herodotus again gives Greek names, the people as a whole have a collective self-designation:

They are known indiscriminately under the general name of Scoloti, after one of their kings, and the Greeks call them Scythians. (Herodotus, 1972, p 273)

They have a myth of common descent which portrays their founders as the three sons of the union of Targitaus (himself the son of Papaeus, whom Herodotus equates with Zeus) and a daughter of the river Borysthenes (Dnieper). There is even an alternative version of their foundation myth, told by their neighbours the Greeks of Pontus, which traces them back to the three sons of a union between Hercules and a creature who was half woman and half viper.

No further details are given of the historical myths of the Scythians, beyond mention of their claim to be "the youngest of all nations". (Herodotus, 1972, p 272) Some allusion has already been made to their territorialisation and their distinctive forms of worship (as well as the listing of their preferred gods, Herodotus also gives detailed descriptions of their funerary practices, which are consistent with the findings of modern archaeology).

All the indications are that the Scythians of

the fifth century B.C. formed a distinctive and self-aware ethnic group - and more speculatively that their inclusive ethnic identity as Scoloti might have incorporated a series of more restricted ethnic identities of the component tribes. Although one of the tribes, the putative descendants of the youngest of the three founder-brothers, is identified as the Royal Tribe, the precise nature of the political arrangements among the Scythians is not clear from the text of the *Histories*.

What does seem likely from the evidence provided by Herodotus, and is a probability strengthened by analogy with modern ethnographic studies of pastoralist peoples (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, 1940; Mair, 1970), is that while they may in some sense have had a territorial polity, it was one which cannot be described as a fully-fledged state. (1)

The evidence of the *Histories* indicates, therefore, contrary to Armstrong's initial location of the ethnic phenomenon (if this indeed is what his designation of "nations before nationalism" is intended to describe), that ethnicity is also possible among pastoralists. However, the Scythians lived in close proximity to settled agrarian societies with developed states, and it is possible that concepts of ethnic distinctiveness passed to the Scythians by a process of cultural diffusion from

such settled and agrarian neighbours as the Greeks.

Before we finally leave the Scythians one final point should be noted. It seems likely that among humanity's current teeming millions there are some who have some of Herodotus' Scythians among their ancestors. Yet the Scythians have totally disappeared as a distinctive ethnic group. Even during the height of the age of nationalism in Europe, when the writings of classical historians were combed for possible mythical founders of erstwhile nations, no-one to my knowledge laid claim to the Scythians. (2)

That ethnic groups have been in existence for at least as long as the historical record extends does not imply the indefinite duration of existence of specific ethnic groups. The Scythians of the time of the *Histories* pointed to their relatively recent emergence as an ethnic group; they later ceased to be distinguished as such.

Both the formation and dissolution of specific ethnic groups are probably compatible not only with perennialism, but also with the Shils/Geertz and van den Berghe versions of primordialism. This discussion of the Scythians has also argued, following Smith, that there is not, and cannot be, evidence of the ubiquity of ethnic groups; that the nature of the historical evidence is inevitably contaminated by its source as a product of settled

societies (where claims as to the frequency of some form of ethnic consciousness among the literate are more likely), but the most plausible interpretation of this ambiguous evidence is that fully-formed ethnic groups are not a universal characteristic of human society.

For agrarian, and thus class-divided, societies Smith (1986b, pp 76 - 89) distinguishes two basic forms of ethnic groups. One form is lateral-aristocratic, in which the awareness of a shared ethnicity is mainly confined to dominant classes, nobles and clerics. The durability of this form of ethnicity derives from the concord between ethnic identity and status situation, but the stratum basis for this form of ethnic identity often means its territorial limits are ill-defined, increasing the chance of ethnic dissolution. The other type is the vertical-demotic ethnic group, not confined to the aristocracy. This type forms and persists by a stress on the common bonds uniting the groups against enemy strangers, and survives through a sharp emphasis on boundary markers: through a rigorous rejection of "religious syncretism, on cultural assimilation and even on inter-marriage." (Smith, 1986b, p 83)

Even in agrarian societies neither of these types of ethnic group has any necessary association with a particular state, most of whose inhabitants

are drawn from the ethnic group, and which is identified with that *ethnie*. Ethnic minorities are ethnic groups not associated with such a state.

States associated with a core ethnic community are termed ethnic states. Such states have existed for millenia. Among the examples cited by Smith are the Near Eastern states of the Elamites, Amorites, Kushites, Canaanites, Egyptians and Sumerians, all of the period 2300 - 1700 B.C., and in Europe, despite significant deviations from total ethnic homogeneity in all cases, medieval France, and England, Sweden, Russia and Spain in the late middle ages or early modern period.

Once such ethnic states come into existence they constitute a powerful form of reinforcement of awareness of a separate ethnic identity. Among the reminders of ethnicity are the myths of dynastic legitimacy (frequently linked with conceptions of a 'sacred territory'); a distinctive state religion where this is different from that of neighbouring peoples and states; a distinctive legal system (though this will not normally treat all members of the ethnic group as formally equal citizens before the epoch of modern nationalism, and may thus tend towards an ethnicity of the lateral-aristocratic type); and perhaps most significant of all, a continuing experience of wars with neighbouring peoples and states.

These factors only act to reinforce ethnicity so long as the ethnic state itself continues to exist. Should it cease to do so it is quite possible, particularly if the ethnicity was of the lateral-aristocratic type, that the destruction of the ethnic state will lead to the dissolution of the corresponding ethnic identity.

That the link between political power and ethnicity does have the significance attributed to it by Smith can be seen by looking at the ethnic mosaic in Gaul in the period after the collapse of the western Roman Empire (the following discussion draws heavily on Jones, 1982, chap 1). Caesar's army conquered a Gaul divided into four parts by significant differences of language, custom and law. Most of the inhabitants spoke Celtic dialects, though it is possible that in the south-west the language was the one from which modern Basque (Euskara) derives.

By the fourth century A.D. there was extensive Latinization of the Gaulish ruling class, all of whom were Roman citizens. The dialects of Latin in Gaul already showed signs of what was later to become the divide into the *langue d'oïl* (French) and the *langue d'oc* (Occitan), with the frontier between these dialects following roughly the lines of a Roman administrative boundary.

The ethnic and proto-ethnic mosaic of

post-Roman Gaul was further complicated by the incursions of Germanic (Suevi and Alamanni) and Asiatic (Sarmatain and Taijal) nomads from the third century onwards. Unlike the more substantial *Volkerwanderung* of the fifth century, these incursions were successfully contained by the Imperial armies, and subsequently it would appear that the Roman administration adopted a policy of encouraging the settlement of the invaders to form a barrier zone against repetition of similar events. There is archaeological evidence of Frisian settlement in late-Roman Britain (Alcock, 1972) which may have a similar explanation. The third-century Taijal settlement retained an ethnic distinctiveness until at least the sixth century. (James, 1982, p. 14)

The 'great invasion', and the collapse of the western Empire, came in the fifth century. By the end of that century Gaul was divided into three major kingdoms identified with different Germanic ethnic groups: the Visigoths in the south-west; the Burgundians in the south-east; and the Franks in the north. In the following centuries the Franks were to extend their sphere of influence, to varying extents of incorporation of the kingdoms of the Visigoths and Burgundians, and thus begin the long process which has given their name to modern France.

The 'kingdom' which the Franks began to extend

throughout much of the territory of modern France and well beyond from the sixth century was not on the later medieval model of a single king at least notionally superordinate to an aristocracy who were rather more recalcitrant in reality. Like the later and less stable system which developed in pre-Conquest England, it was rather a matter where the apex of the ruling-class pyramid was a single 'high king', with the next tier of the pyramid consisting of a series of sub-kings. The sub-kingdoms were frequently incorporated provinces which had formerly been separate kingdoms identified with specific ethnic groups, and retained considerable, but varying, levels of 'regional autonomy'.

Furthermore, the limits of the Frankish kingdom were by no means fixed. In the early middle ages the Frankish practice at the time of succession was to divide the kingdom between the sons of the late king. The lines of divide in such operations sometimes followed existing ethnic boundaries (thus tending to reinforce them) and sometimes ignored them completely (sometimes tending, if this new division remained stable, to re-draw the map of ethnic allegiance). The tendency to fragmentation implicit in this practice of division of the kingdom was periodically reversed by the successful expansions under dynamic kings. Again, the limits of such

expansions have less to do with ethnic boundaries than with the fortunes of war, and in so far as the new frontiers prove stable there is again the possibility they will tend to redraw the map of ethnic identification.

Most of Visigothic Gaul came into the Frankish sphere of influence in the early sixth century. Many of the Visigothic ruling class then took refuge in the Visigothic kingdom of the Iberian peninsula, though the coastal strip between the Rhone and the Pyrenees (Septimania) continued under Visigoth rule for another two centuries or more.

The Visigoth kingdom had covered the most intensively Romanised area of Gaul. Following the destruction of the Gothic kingdom of Toulouse in 507 there was little Frankish settlement south of the Loire, the Franks apparently being content to "exploit Aquitaine from a distance." (James, 1982, p 19) leaving the still heavily Romanised local ruling class considerable local autonomy.

The upshot of this significant degree of regional independence seems to have been, at least to judge by later Frankish designations of the inhabitants of the region, to allow for the formation and maintenance of separate ethnic identities. At the time of the Islamic invasion of Spain there was a reverse flight of Gothic refugees northwards across the Pyrenees, doubtless including the descendants of

the intermarriages of Visigoths and Gallo-Romans from the period of the former's kingdom. Yet these putative descendants of the Gallic Goths were distinguished, as the Goti, from the Iberian Hispani by the Franks.

Meanwhile, within the south-western portion of the Frankish realm a new ethnic identity, which drew on myths of descent from the pre-Roman population of the area as well as from the most clearly Romanised legal system in Gaul, seems to have been developing. By the early eighth century the Franks designated the people of this region as the 'Romani'. By the end of that century, following the confirmation by Pippin I in 768 of the Breviary of Alaric, a code of Roman law compiled in the reign of the last Gothic king, more systematic relations between the Franks and the Imperial City itself had developed. The name for the south-western Gauls then underwent a shift to 'Aquitani'.

From the late seventh century there are indications of a desire among the Aquitaine ruling class for complete independence, and that this desire was only headed off by the Carolingians through both concessions of substantial political autonomy and symbolic concessions to ethnic sensibilities. In the period of fragmentation of the Frankish polity in the tenth and eleventh centuries Aquitaine was one of the first regions to establish a *de facto* independent

dukedom. This then had a rarely interrupted existence until the period when it was used as the springboard for the achievement of the English crown, and expansion through much of modern France, by the Angevins in the thirteenth century.

Thus the autonomy of Aquitaine, while falling short of being a fully independent ethnic state, was still sufficient for the fostering of ethnic distinctiveness. The closer integration of the ex-Burgundian south-east into the Frankish kingdom, on the contrary, gave conditions less conducive to such developments.

Like the Visigoths the Burgundians were Germanic invaders who had been settled in Gaul prior to the collapse of Imperial power. Their distinctive law code, the *Lex Gundobandia*, was recorded early in the sixth century, and was again heavily influenced by Roman principle. The name Burgundia for their area of settlement was first used in the same period. However, even in the second half of the sixth century ethnic divisions in this area are indicated by the distinctions being drawn between Burgundians and Gallo-Romans. It was not until the eighth century that clear evidence survives of all the inhabitants of the region being called Burgundians.

Once Burgundy was brought into the Frankish sphere of influence it had considerably less autonomy than Aquitaine. Along with Neustria and Austrasia it

formed one of the *tria regna*, the three core kingdoms, of the Frankish body politic. Furthermore, and once again in contrast to Aquitaine, it was frequently partitioned when the realm was divided between brothers on their succession, and there are few indications of attempts to mobilise Burgundian ethnic sentiment in support of the legitimacy of the kings of these fragments of the original kingdom.

By the tenth century such Burgundian ethnic sentiments as survived seem to have been concentrated in what had by then become the Dukedom of Burgundy - an area which had formed the extreme north-western limit of the original Burgundian kingdom, which had had insignificant settlement from the original ethnic Burgundians.

Finally in looking at early medieval Gaul a brief discussion of two groups who have maintained their ethnic distinctiveness over a millenium and more, to form the basis for nationalist movements in post-war Europe (Brass, 1985; Tiryakian and Rogowski, 1985): the Basques and the Bretons.

That Euskari is a non-Indo-European language is one indication of the success of the Basques in resisting Romanisation despite nominal incorporation into the Empire. The difficulties of subjecting a recalcitrant people whose homeland was in the wilderness of the Pyrenees must have been a basic factor in this outcome (the only other region of the

western Empire in which heavily Latinised versions of the pre-conquest vernacular survived was Britain - did the hilly wilds of modern Scotland and Wales, which for many centuries also marked the basic limits of English influence, help the survival of Brythonic?).

By the sixth century the polities both north and south of the Pyrenees were subject to serious raiding from Vasconia. Such was the success of the raiders that by the seventh century this name was also used of the territory between the Garonne and the Pyrenees (the later Gascony). It was the Vasconians, and not the Saracens blamed in the *chanson de geste* (Sayers, 1957) who were responsible for the defeat of Charlemagne's rearguard, led by Roland, at the battle of Roncevalles in 778.

Finally, Basque distinctiveness was reinforced not only by the possession of an inhospitable homeland and a language unlike any of their neighbours, but also by a religious divide. Despite earlier missionary activity, their notional incorporation into Christendom did not come until at least the tenth century.

Although Celtic dialects may have survived in Amorica during the period of Roman rule, the key factor in the origins of the Breton language was the migration from south-west Britain in the period just before and after the withdrawal of the Romans -

Breton and Cornish were to remain mutually intelligible for many centuries. It seems likely the migrants were fleeing the disturbances caused by Germanic and Irish (i.e. Scotti) raiders. More speculatively, they may have been invited to Amorica by the local ruling class to help quell the revolts which were the product of the social crisis which marked the breakdown of Roman rule. There is no firm evidence of the scale of the British migration.

This British migration not only brought or reinforced the presence of a Celtic language, but also the distinctive form of British Christianity. Although Brittany was notionally within the province of the bishops of Tours, Breton bishops rarely acknowledged their authority.

From the sixth to the ninth centuries the Frankish kings seem to have made numerous attempts to incorporate Brittany into their realm, but little is known of the success or otherwise of these ventures. The Frankish need to persist in this course for such an extended period would seem to indicate a substantial level of political independence was enjoyed by the Breton ruling class.

With the fragmentation of Frankish power from the later ninth century Brittany became the base of an effectively independent polity, which at its apogee extended southwards to the Loire and eastwards to Nantes, although the brevity of Breton rule over

the eastern part of this territory makes it seem unlikely that any conception of Breton ethnicity was ever significant there.

Brittany continued to be a semi-autonomous dukedom, of potentially strategic significance, into the early centuries of the second millenium. In this period there are indications that the Brutus/Arthur stories which formed the origin myth of those Britons who had remained in Britain, and were now becoming the Welsh (G.Williams, 1985), and which were to serve a similar purpose for the English (Chapter Four), were also widely diffused in Brittany.

Like the case of the Scythians, these examples of ethnic processes in early medieval Gaul reinforce the conclusion that ethnicity may be perennial, but it is also fluid. Ethnic groups form. They merge together, with the merged group frequently taking the name of one of its previous components, but developing a common culture and a set of legitimating myths which are an inextricable mixture of elements drawn from multiple sources. Ethnic groups disappear, though only rarely through the biological extinction (or extermination) of their members. More frequently they fragment into sub-ethnic local particularisms, or become incorporated into some alternative ethnic group.

Later ethnic groups form in the same, or just a vaguely similar, territory. Although any

connections of descent are coincidental and approximate, and a shared common history can be only mythical, the old group is appropriated as the founders of the new. This process of resuscitation of long-disappeared ethnic groups is possible whenever there is literacy and the keeping of records (medieval Aquitaine as an ethnic territory reviving the name of the early-Roman province). Secularised history since the renaissance, and more systematically from the nineteenth century, has facilitated this search for 'roots'.

Even where the same ethnic group has had continuous existence for prolonged periods, this apparent stability has again been a mask for a deeper fluidity. Ethnic groups of long duration, like the Basques and Bretons discussed above, the Welsh who have occupied a parallel position in Britain, or the Jewish diaspora, have maintained their separate identity despite demographic discontinuities. Members have been lost through conquest or conversion outward; new recruits have been gained through the same processes. The collective identity of the group may be maintained by myths of descent from common ancestors. For groups of such long duration these must indeed be mythical even where the roots are traced back merely to the genuinely historical origin of the ethnic group concerned.

Athough the existence of a collective identity

may be continuous, the myths through which this common identity is constituted and expressed are not. As the internal social structure and external constraints on the group change, common identity could only be maintained if the myths through which it is expressed develop to fit these changing conditions.

This fluidity in both the demographic and mythic bases of long-lived ethnic groups applies not only to those which for long periods have survived without the umbrella of an autonomous polity. The territories, populations, and 'national characters' associated with long-established ethnic core states have varied, if such comparisons are meaningful, yet more than those of the ethnic groups without continuous states. (3)

Changes in constitutive ethnic myths do not happen spontaneously. The existence of a consciousness of common identity does not abolish internal social differentiation or internal social conflict. Often, though not always explicitly, this conflict is articulated through alternative conceptions of the nature of the ethnic identity, alternative definitions of the 'national interest'.

At times of crisis caused by changing social conditions these struggles may carry new classes and their novel rewriting of ethnic *mythomoteurs*, into a position of dominance. Existing dominant classes

maintain their position not only through making such a combination of repression and material concessions to the subaltern classes as are necessary to head off successful rebellion, but also through the elaboration of ideologies which can convince a sufficient proportion of the subaltern classes that their 'natural leaders' are the best representatives of their interest. Myths of ethnic solidarity have proved to be one of the most potent forms of such ideology.

In Chapter Four this process of "invention of tradition" (4) is traced through various periods of English history from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. This process is thus central to ethnic continuity even before the age of nationalism. But in the modern epoch the invention of traditions becomes more systematic, both in support of the rule of the existing dominant groups, and of subaltern class, regional, or other forms of challenge to this rule (CCCS, 1982b, Part Three; Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983; Wright, 1985).

The present arguments are closely parallel to those developed by Anthony Smith in his most recent book (1986b). There are, however, some significant differences of emphasis (not to mention a far more restricted historical and geographical focus in the present work). Some of those differences seem to be purely verbal. To describe the general form of

collectivity formed on the basis of ethnicity Smith uses the French word *ethnie* (van den Berghe and others take this from the Greek, giving the alternative spelling *ethny*). Here the term used is ethnic group.

All these terms are used to designate the same phenomenon: all collectivities where the primary basis for group formation is the sharing of a common culture. All three differ from the use of 'ethnic' as a noun, which in sociology can be traced back at least as far as Lloyd Warner's Yankee City studies, in what Michael Banton (1983) calls the "minus one" conception of ethnicity.

This minus one conception of ethnicity reflects nationalist assumptions, in that "ethnic" is used to designate ethnic minorities, but not the ethnic majority, in modern nation states. In contemporary Britain there is an increasing use of ethnic in this manner as the latest euphemism, or form of sanitary coding, to refer to minorities actually distinguished by 'race'.

Perhaps more significant is the terminology used to describe states prior to the dual revolution which were closely identified with a specific ethnic group. Smith terms most such states ethnic states. He draws on a far wider range of evidence than is discussed in the present work to detail a convincing case that some states have taken this form throughout

recorded history. The term ethnic state is coined so as to emphasise the contrasts with the nations which have existed since the dual revolution.

In *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* there is no concise definition of the distinguishing features of nations. Like his earlier (1971) definition of nationalist doctrine (cited in Chapter One) this definition seems to rest on features present initially in western societies since the dual revolution:

It would indeed not exaggerate the matter to say that what distinguished nations from *ethnie* are, in some sense, 'Western' features and qualities. Territoriality, citizenship rights, legal codes and even political culture, are features of society that the West has made its own. So is the realization of social mobility in a unified division of labour. (Smith, 1986b, p 144)

Thus the term ethnic state is chosen to avoid the nationalist proclivity to anachronistically project back features which are specific to modern nationalism to an earlier age. This is indeed a significant problem, and in so far as careful choice of terminology can help overcome it the coinage of 'ethnic state' is indeed helpful.

The thrust both of the present work and of Smith's book is to argue that the forms in which modern nationalism emerged were decisively influenced by older forms of ethnicity in general, and ethnic polities in particular. Smith locates the transition

from *ethnie* to nation somewhere within nineteenth century Europe, with the fusion of his lateral-aristocratic and vertical-demotic types of ethnicity marked by the extension of citizenship rights to the whole adult population. This process of transition from *ethnie* to nation was prolonged and complex. Smith signals this process by terming the Atlantic seaboard states established before the dual revolution national (but not nation) states. The present text has used "national state" and "nation state" interchangeably to denote these polities.

The case for this usage could be argued through a consideration of the history of such terminology, parallel to the arguments criticised in Chapters Three and Four. From at least the sixteenth century it was a commonplace to describe the English and French; but also the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas, as nations. Instead it will be argued that there was a valid kernel in the nineteenth century conception of 'historic nations'.

These historic nations were of three types. One, Poland, had been a sovereign state until it had suffered partition within living memory. In Germany and Italy there was a high culture which was more or less the common property of at least the literate. Here the territory defined by the common culture had long been fragmented into a multitude of small statelets and provinces of multi-ethnic empires.

Examples of the type which is of interest here were already, and continued, with temporary interruptions in most cases due to conquest, to be sovereign states identified with a core ethnic group. These were France, England, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands and Sweden. (5)

The political form of all these states in the period prior to the dual revolution was lateral-aristocratic. Where representative institutions (Estates, Parliament) existed at all, the franchise was restricted to a minority of adult males, who formed the 'political nation'. Indeed in all these states the downward extension of the franchise and other citizenship rights has been a prolonged process which has extended well into the present century.

That the form of ethnic sentiment present in all these states was also just a lateral-aristocratic type is more difficult to sustain. Smith's original distinction between lateral-aristocratic and vertical-demotic ethnic sentiments makes two separate, if related, points. The first is simply to delimit the social strata within which a consciousness of shared ethnicity exists; while the second is an elaboration of different forms of myths which articulate this shared identity, depending on whether the consciousness is restricted to an elite, or whether it is generalised. (Smith, 1986b, pp 57 -

The discussion of forms of myth is illuminating, and establishes a strong *prima facie* case that in some groups, especially in what Chapter One termed communal polities, consciousness of common ethnicity extended well below the ruling elites before the age of nationalism. Yet there are problems in trying to deduce the social penetration of ethnic consciousness in this direct way from different forms of mythology. That is, the presence of "communal-political" and "communal-religious" sentiments can indeed be taken as an indication of diffusion extending well beyond ruling elites (though still not necessarily to the entire population). That the main evidence left by the historical record of a particular state in some specific period is of the presence of myths of a "dynastic" type is a less secure ground for the assumption of the absence of ethnic sentiments among the majority.

Chapters Three and Four discuss the difficulties of moving from the evidence left by the historical record to a description of the sentiments even of the literate minority, and the virtual impossibility of establishing a firm description of the sentiments of the majority of the illiterate prior to the transition to universal literacy. It was then argued that it is in general plausible, again more on *prima facie* grounds than from any

direct evidence, that the vast majority of members of dominated classes in agrarian societies, and in particular the rural producers, live their entire lives in such a restricted social and geographical sphere that their sentiments of solidarity are likely to be confined to a local, regional, and in general sub-ethnic, orbit.

The recent and influential book by Eugene Weber (1979) argues that this situation of rural isolation remained the condition of the majority of the population of the archetypal French nation until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The wealth of examples he cites is sufficient to demonstrate that the change did come in this period for large numbers of French peasants. But Weber and others who have used his arguments sometimes generalise from this evidence to imply that consciousness of belonging to a state-wide national entity was not diffused to any members of subordinate social classes before this late period.

A more careful consideration is needed. Although Weber's wealth of evidence is new, assertions that the specific social conditions of the French peasantry were anything but conducive to the formation of national consciousness can be found in earlier observers. Thus the much-quoted passage in the *Eighteenth Brumaire* which asserts that the French peasantry form a class in itself but not a class for

itself relates this deficiency to the absence of a national awareness:

The small peasant proprietors form an immense mass, the members of which live in the same situation but do not enter into manifold relationships with each other. Their mode of operation isolates them instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. ... The smallholding, the peasant, and the family; next door another smallholding, another peasant, another family. A bunch of these makes up a village, and a bunch of villages makes up a department. Thus the great bulk of the French nation is formed by the simple addition of isomorphous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes. ... In so far as these small peasant proprietors are merely connected on a local basis, and the identity of their interests fails to produce a feeling of community, national links, or a political organization, they do not form a class. (Marx, 1973b, p 239)

Even before the qualitative leap in the levels of geographical mobility and in ease of communication of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by no means all members of all subaltern classes lived their lives circumscribed in quite such a narrow sphere as this.

The argument of Macfarlane (1978) is in a sense the opposite of Weber's. Macfarlane claims that at least from the later middle ages, and probably earlier, the English rural population did not correspond to the classic conception of a socially isolated, localised peasantry - a conception shared by Macaulay, Marx, and Max Weber (as well as

Eugene Weber). This assertion is supported by saying that many left their village of birth when setting up their own household, but nothing is said of the scope of this relocation. Movements merely from one village to a neighbouring one are likely to do little to create sentiments of loyalty to some entity beyond the purely local.

The typical career patterns of different social classes at different times entail various patterns of geographical mobility, of 'pilgrimages' (6), which in their turn are conducive to the development of different types of territorial sentiments (ethnic, religious, class). The model of a socially-isolated peasantry, living out the whole of their life-spans within a few hours walking distance of their place of birth unless they are unlucky enough to be conscripted to form the foot soldiers of someone's army, is merely one polar possibility within this spectrum.

Within any state society there are of necessity "manifold relationships" within the ruling classes on an inter-local scale. The form of such relationships varies greatly both at different times, and for different strata within the ruling class in the same period. That royal families could choose their marriage partners from similar families across much of Europe became established practice by the later middle ages. The lowest ranks of the ruling

class rarely married outside their native region (e.g. English counties) until about the time of the dual revolution. (Stone and Stone, 1984)

The specific patterns of geographical mobility of different strata of different ruling classes also varied. But in general membership of the 'aristocracy' of a state society has entailed some form of geographical mobility beyond the regional. It is these pilgrimages, beyond the mere awareness of common status, which are conducive to the formation of lateral-aristocratic ethnic sentiments.

As such the precise patterns of mobility are important. High-flying members of the medieval European clerisy, whose careers might involve rising through a Church bureaucracy which entailed moves across polities and major linguistic gulfs, or those with sufficient economic security to be able to contemplate pilgrimages, in the literal sense, on a similar scale (to Jerusalem rather than Canterbury), can be expected to have more rooted sentiments of the unity of Christendom than others whose mobility traces paths only within the confines of a single polity.

Such movements are likely to be conducive to identifications with imagined communities wider in territorial scope than the merely local or regional (though probably confined to class or religious segments of the total population of this broader

area). The territorial scope of communal identification may not, however, be identical to the precise range of the itineraries of travel. This will depend on the reasons for journeys, and the meaningful interpretation of such reasons by the pilgrims themselves.

'International' travel may promote cosmopolitanism, whether in the high functionaries of medieval Christendom, or among the modern international academic conference circuit satirised in David Lodge's *Small World*. (7) It may have the contrary effect of reinforcing awareness of ethnic distinctiveness, on the principle enunciated by Kipling in *The English Flag*, "And what should they know of England who only England know?"

A wide-ranging geographical mobility in particular, and a dispersed social network more generally, were more clearly characteristic of ruling elites than of dominated classes in agrarian state societies. But not all members of subaltern groups were restricted to virtual immobility. The *levee en masse* became economically viable only at the time of the dual revolution. But armies have always needed foot soldiers.

The ways of life associated with some types of toil entailed inter-regional mobility well before the modern period, and created the conditions for the growth of trans-regional (not invariably ethnic)

forms of imagined community. Fourteenth century Pyrenean transhumance facilitated the spread of Catharism (Ladurie, 1978). The movements of artisans in particular trades in continental western Europe across state boundaries in search of work, well established by the eighteenth century, played a significant part in the creation of sentiments of international working class solidarity by the nineteenth (Breuilly, 1985).

Different strata of the dominated classes will have been exposed to external influence both from their own movements and from other sources to greatly varying extents. The growth of capital cities in the later medieval period, and the contemporary burgeoning of ports as the termini of long-distance trade creates the possibility that even the static plebian residents of such areas will be aware of the existence of wider vistas, and that such awareness might promote the growth of broader ethnic identifications than in their more locally circumscribed peers.

It is possible that the lower levels of a clerical hierarchy could act as a channel for carrying the awareness of broader ethnic ties, generated in the itineraries of the aristocracy, to sections of subaltern classes:

Because of their organisation and position in most *ethnies*, priests, scribes, bards and other spiritual figures, were able to disseminate

their religious culture beyond the Court and the bureaucracy. Not only were the merchants and artisans in the capital and main cities within reach of the temple and church organization, the frequent presence of lower clergy in the small towns and villages enabled them to act as a conduit to and from the peasantry, and to influence peasant culture and customs through the religious ritual and conceptions of the Great Tradition which they represented. (Smith, 1986b, p 158)

Chapter Four makes the tentative suggestion that the *Brut* of Layamon, a Midlands parish priest, may indicate that myths of English ethnicity linked to the glory of the (then Angevin-ruled) English state, were diffused to levels well below an aristocracy.

Gerrard Winstanley, mentioned but not fully discussed in Chapter Four, developed a political programme which at various times include a democratic suffrage (with the franchise restricted to males over the age of forty and annual elections) and the communal cultivation of waste land. This programme was justified through a messianic and radical English nationalism (elaborated throughout via a religious imagery (8)) which asserted the membership of the "Poor Oppressed People of England" (from a pamphlet title, Winstanley, 1973, p 97) in the nation:

... that the CAUSE of those They call DIGGERS Is the life and marrow of that Cause the Parliament hath Declared for, and the Army Fought for; The perfecting of which Work, will prove England to be the first of Nations, or the tenth part of the city Babylon, that falls off from the Beast first, and that sets the Crown upon Christ's

head, to govern the World in Righteousness. (From the subtitle to the pamphlet *A New-Year's Gift for the Parliament and Army*, 1650; Winstanley, 1973, p 159)

Winstanley the Digger has been identified with a Gerrard Winstanley baptised in Wigan in 1609. If this identification is correct he came from a family which had an extended social network, including many Puritan connections. The family was a substantial one: the father was a mercer and became a burgess of Wigan, and young Gerrard was sent to London as a clothing apprentice.

Even if the identification is wrong the pamphleteer did come from Lancashire, and had by the early 1640s failed in his attempt to set himself up as a cloth merchant in the south of England. By the 1640s he was living in the vicinity of Cobham, Surrey, and making a living by herding cows, "apparently as a hired labourer." (Hill, 1973, pp 11 - 12)

Direct action by Diggers to initiate communal cultivation of commons and wastes occurred in many southern and midland counties of England in 1649. The degree of co-ordination, and of common ideas, uniting these initiatives is a matter more of speculation than of firm evidence. Winstanley was merely the best-known, and perhaps the most sophisticated, of the Digger ideologues. The revised definition of the nation proposed in his pamphlets

may owe something to his presumed downward social mobility as well as to his geographical movements. It may also owe something to the aim of the pamphlets not only to rouse support among the dispossessed, the potential recruits for the Diggers, but also to legitimate their actions to the key political actors of the Commonwealth; Army, Parliament and the City of London:

Sirs, you know that the land of England is the land of our nativity, both yours and ours, and all of us by the righteous law of our creation ought to have food and raiment freely by our righteous labouring of the earth, without working for hire or paying rent to another. (*An Appeal To The House of Commons*, 1649, Winstanley, 1973, p 113)

The proto-communism which shaped the collective cultivation of the lands the Diggers worked extended to the declared authorship of many of the pamphlets. The rich experiences of the previous life of Winstanley may have contributed to the strongly-stressed combination of nationalism and internationalism, a clear anticipation of the sentiments of the nascent labour movements of the nineteenth century.

But it seems implausible that such sentiments were an eccentricity of Winstanley alone. The Diggers' other main spokesman, William Everard, called himself a prophet "of the race of the Jews" (Hill, 1975, p 285) drawing on a strand of the mythology of the Elect Nation not mentioned by

Winstanley. It seems more likely that it was those activist sections of the 'dispossessed' as a whole who were using the absence of censorship to articulate their demands for admission into full membership of the nation.

Before the nineteenth century it was only in such troubled times that there was more than the briefest articulation of sentiments from groups outside the established 'political nation'. It is therefore difficult to decide whether the plebian nationalism which the Digger pamphlets reveal was a public expression of sentiments which were present in an underground form in an earlier period, or whether these ideas had developed in the course of the previous decade of political conflict.

Both the present text and Smith argue that ethnic groups are imagined communities which have formed many, though not all, known human societies, and that the basis for the imagining are sentiments formed from sub-political mythologies: of common descent, subsequent common history, of common territory, and of collective solidarity, symbolised by a common name (this list is given in systematic form in Smith, 1986b, pp 22 - 31; all these components are present in the current Chapter Four).

Next both claim that there are examples long back into the historical record of ethnic groups associated with their 'own' polity. The form of

ethnic sentiment normally associated with such states, before the time of the dual revolution, was normally of the lateral- aristocratic type. Such states also differed from modern nation states in other significant ways, to be discussed shortly.

A previous section of this appendix has presented examples, other than those used by Smith, to support the argument both that ethnic states predate by many centuries the transition to 'modernity', and also to support the general argument that such states cannot be equated with modern national ones. Unlike Smith's previous book (1971: see discussion in Chapter One) his more recent argument does not locate the main contrast between *ethnies* in general and nations in the specific form of nationalist doctrine, but in structural features of the societies which can be termed nations:

... the unification of the economy, territorial centralization, the provision of equal legal rights for more and more strata, and the growth of public, mass education systems. (Smith, 1986b, p 138)

These features share with the earlier definition the fact that they are restricted only to nineteenth and twentieth century states. Once again the national phenomenon is defined as modern through reference to features which are not specifically national.

Like Smith the present text argues for a form of modified modernism, which accepts the main thrust of such recent modernist theories as those developed

by Gellner, Nairn and Anderson, that there are particular structural conditions of modern societies particularly conducive to the outward (global diffusion) and downward (democratic or populist rhetoric) extension of identifications between ethnic core groups and 'their' states, while differing from such modernists in denying that modern nationalism forms a total rupture with all previous state forms and ideologies. The nationalisms of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are new, but they derive their effectiveness from continuities, or borrowings, from longer established forms of ethnicity.

Again like Smith, the argument here has considered nationalism not merely as rational doctrine, whether in the generalised "right of nations to self-determination" or the specific forms. National (and ethnic) sentiment can only be understood by paying attention to its particular content, and especially to the affective dimension of the poetic, mythic constitution of ethnic and national imagined communities. Such myths are the basis of potentially powerful sub-political ideologies:

Romance, mystery, drama - this is the stuff of any nationalist salvation-drama. It is important, because it helps to teach us 'who we are', to impart a sense of being a link in a chain which stretches back over the generations to bind us to our ancestors and our descendants. It is also important, because it teaches us 'where we are' and 'who we should be',

if we are to 'recover ourselves'. By conveying the atmosphere and drama of past epochs in the life of the community, we 're-live' the lives and times of our forbears and make ourselves a part of a 'community of fate'. (Smith, 1986b, p 180)

This political efficacy (Breuilly, 1982 (9)) of nationalisms in the modern age derives not just from conducive structural conditions, but also from the new combination of ideas and sentiments which such nationalisms represent. This has involved the fusion of the non-rational mythologies typical of older forms of ethnicity with the rational ideas of the nationalist doctrine. Such a Janus-headed combination allows the ideologues of modern nationalism to adopt rationalistic norms where these are appropriate for public political discourse (in particular when appealing for support from forces outside their own nation), while maintaining the resource of the affectively resonant sub-political mythology, a much more effective instrument for mass agitation within the confines of the particular nation itself.

1) This distinction between states and polities assumes states are marked by a formalisation of politics and administration. In states designated individuals carry out the offices of "decision makers" not merely in response to specific crises, but routinely.

2) This is almost certainly a sign of the limitation of my reading, rather than the limitations of the inventiveness of nineteenth century nationalists.

3) This portrayal of the fluidity of ethnicity is closer to the Heraclitan pole identified by Smith (1986b, pp 210 - 212) than he is. (Heraclitans perceive nothing but constant change, Parmenideans an unchanging ethnic map.) Contrast for example:

So long as a community can reproduce its members sufficiently from generation to generation, demographic continuity will ensure ethnic survival with only minor alterations of cultural contents over time. (Smith, 1986b, p 96)

with the assertion above that the demographic continuity of any ethnic group of long duration must be taken with a pinch of salt, necessarily involving both losses and gains of group members in relation to neighbouring groups, and non-minor alterations of

the cultural definitions of group membership.

This difference is a matter of different stresses. Both the present argument and Smith's are at intermediate points well removed from the polar Heraclitan and Parmenidean positions.

4) The term "invention of tradition" is taken from Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), where its context is limited to nineteenth century Britain.

5) All of these states apart from Portugal (culturally undifferentiated from the Galicians under Spanish rule) contained significant ethnic minorities which have never been fully incorporated or assimilated to the core nationalism.

6) This conception of 'pilgrimages' is taken from Anderson (1981, pp. 56 - 57), who argues that the characteristic patterns of geographical mobility associated with the educational and occupational careers of intellectuals in modern societies are decisive in setting the scope of the imagined communities of nations.

Anderson's arguments are persuasive for the modern period, but the following section extends his method in two ways. Firstly it is argued that the patterns of movement of different sections of the ruling classes of the middle ages were more varied

than Anderson himself asserts: with some being of a scope conducive to ethnic or proto-national sentiment. Secondly it seeks to extend the argument through a discussion of the significance of the movements of some groups within the subordinate classes.

7) This novel also uses a modernisation of Arthurian motifs as a central plot device.

8) This use of religious imagery to present a messianic nationalism extended far beyond Winstanley under the Commonwealth. Breuilly (1982, p 56) counterposes religion, as the main form through which opposition to the Stuart state was articulated, to nationalism. For many Commonwealth supporters, religion and nationalism appear to have been inextricably mixed, and mutually reinforcing.

9) Breuilly restricts his interest in politically effective nationalism to movements which challenge established regimes. (1982, p 9) Nationalist rhetoric to justify the legitimacy of regimes, or of their specific policies, is pervasive in the modern world (building, as argued in Chapter Four, on long-established traditions).

It may be easier to show the contribution of nationalism to the event of a challenge to a regime

than to the non-event of a lack of challenge. Sociologists and political scientists too frequently follow Weber in equating legitimacy with the absence of overt opposition. But even when apathy or realistic assessments of the means of coercion have been taken into account as alternative factors conducive to political quiescence, in the modern period many regimes, for much of the time, have rested on more than such grudging acceptance from their subjects, and assertions of the 'national interest' have been one of the major ways of achieving and maintaining such legitimacy.

Appendix Two

Nationalism and Nation in Marx and Engels

It has been common recently to suggest that the political theory in the writing of Marx and Engels is unsystematic and fragmentary, being mainly represented in what are little more than throw away lines in polemical or journalistic texts produced in specific circumstances with immediate political ends in view (e.g. Jessop, 1982, p 1; Miliband, 1977, p 1). This is certainly true of their writings on nationalism and the nation state.

In modern marxist analyses of nationalism and the nation state there has been much discussion about whether or not Marx and Engels had a coherent approach to these matters. Those who have argued that they had (e.g. Davies, 1967; Nimni, 1985a, 1985b; see also Connor, 1984 who argues both for the presence of the capitalism/nationalism thesis and incoherence(1)) claim that this coherence rests on a version of the capitalism/nationalism thesis which was a component of the orthodox marxism of the Second and Third Internationals, and which is discussed more fully in Chapter Three. Those who claim they did not have a coherent approach to nationalism (e.g. Jenkins and Minnerup, 1984; Lowy, 1977) frequently assert this is because this capitalism/nationalism thesis is contaminated by combination with the unacceptable 'Hegelian' distinction between 'historical' and

'non-historical' nations (this critique of Marx and Engels derives from Rosdolsky (1964) and will be discussed below).

It will be argued that those who assert that the views of Marx and Engels on nationalism are less than coherent have a point, while those who assert the consistent presence of the capitalism/nationalism thesis in Marx and Engels are straining the evidence of the texts; indeed, that in so far as any underlying coherence can be detected in Marx and Engels' understanding of the nationalist phenomenon, it arises because they were in the mainstream of Victorian theorisation of nationalism, in which national communities were a 'natural' product of linguistic divisions, though the paucity of texts must make this a more tentative conclusion.

There are three main types of text in which Marx and Engels discuss nationalism and the nation state, all of which are marked in their different ways by the immediate political purposes for which they were produced. The first type is agitational - newspaper articles or speeches written up in newspapers, which were reactions to immediate political events. Of these articles which have relevance to the subject under discussion, the most common are in support of the nationalist movements in Poland and Ireland, but others which are relevant support the movements for German and Italian

unification and Magyar independence, support some rights of the established nation states of France and England (one 'right' supported in the latter case being that of conquest of 'barbarian nations' - India and China), reject the nationalist claims of the Slavs, Danes and others, and support the Unionists in the American Civil War.

The second type of texts is programmatic - the *Manifesto* of the Communist League and the *Rules* and major statements of the International Working Men's Association. References to nationalism and nation states in such programmatic statements tend to be brief, and in so far as such statements had to be acceptable to the diverse currents which made up the organisations which issued them, there may be some problems in deciding their relationship to the real views of Marx and Engels.

This problem is greater in interpreting the statements written for the more heterogenous International, where it is a matter of record that Marx wrote statements in such a way as to ensure their acceptability to political currents very far removed from his own assumptions. Thus his 'diplomatic' rewriting of the Rules of the International is discussed in a letter to Engels (of November 4th 1864) which concludes:

It was very difficult to frame the thing so that our view should appear in a form acceptable from the present standpoint of the workers'

movement. In a few weeks the same people will be holding meetings for the franchise with Bright and Cobden. It will take time before the reawakened movement allows the old boldness of speech. It will be necessary to be *fortiter in re, suaviter in modo*. (Marx and Engels, 1965, p 149)

Despite the difficulties in interpretation of these texts, they tend to be of a higher level of generality than those in support of particular nationalist movements. For this reason it tends to be such texts which take the main strain as evidence for claims that Marx and Engels began the elaboration of the capitalism/nationalism thesis. It will be argued below that of these texts do not support this claim.

The final set of texts is at a higher level of generality yet. These are passages in 'early' texts such as the *German Ideology*, and in various 'mature' writings of Engels which set out to defend the methods he and Marx had developed against critics within the socialist movement through the application of these methods in semi-popular accounts of broad sweeps of human history (i.e. the *Origin of the Family ...*, *Anti-Duhring*, and its condensed version, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*). (2)

These later Engels texts were all produced as a result of the intellectual division of labour the two friends established, and this source perhaps is the reason for such texts being ignored by recent

marxist theorists of nationalism - the argument, which goes back to the Lukacs of *History and Class Consciousness*, blames Engels as the poisoned well who, through his mechanical method, is the intellectual source of all the 'deviations' of marxist theory, has become far more influential in recent decades (Colletti, 1972; Draper, 1971).

These late texts of Engels develop a linguistic, and possibly racial, model of the formation of national communities, and include a fully explicit dating of the origin of the main nations of western Europe, not to the period of the birth of capitalism, but to the period of transition between classical civilisation and feudalism.

These texts show that Engels, and probably Marx, assumed that nations came into being well before the capitalist epoch. Although the only statements of Marx in a similar spirit date from before 1848 (see footnote 1), he was aware of many of the occasions in which Engels made such arguments. Given Marx's proclivity for spotting 'deviations' in his companions, it is likely that if he had believed nations originate only with capitalism this error of Engels would not have gone uncorrected.

The order in which these different types of text of Marx and Engels will be discussed is as follows. First to be considered will be those most frequently cited by those who claim Marx and Engels

were proponents of the capitalism/nationalism thesis. Here it will be argued that these texts do not provide a firm basis for this conclusion - despite the near-unanimity of later marxists of various types that this was so. Secondly the various writings in response to contemporary nationalist movements will attempt to elucidate the justifications of the "strategic" (Connor, 1984, chapter 1) strand of their attitude. Finally consideration will be given to the late texts of Engels.

The capitalism/nationalism thesis rests on three assumptions which entail the conclusion that nationalism and the nation state are phenomena exclusively limited to capitalist societies. The first assumption is that a national form of state was neither functionally necessary nor actually present in societies with pre-capitalist modes of production. The second is that nation states are a functional necessity for capitalist modes of production, and therefore during the period of nascent capitalism the bourgeoisie created nationalist movements to achieve this end. Finally the result of fully developed capitalism is to create a unified global economy, so that the period of transition from capitalism to socialism will also be one in which the, now economically irrational, form of the nation state will be transcended. There is no evidence for any of these three assumptions in the mature writings of

Marx or Engels.

All Marx and Engels' writings on nationalism are Eurocentric. The context of this concentration of interest is their assumptions about the necessary conditions for successful socialist revolutions. The consistent assumption of both was that the transition to socialism was only viable, and would therefore only occur, in cooperative endeavour between several of the most "civilized and economically developed" countries, where capitalist industrialism was already fully established.

The countries which they always regarded as central in this respect were Germany, France, and most decisively of all, in Marx's lifetime at least, England - Engels was more enthusiastic about adding the United States to this minimum list than Marx. Engels' first draft of the *Communist Manifesto* asserts that the imminent socialist revolution will break out simultaneously in all these countries, the more usual presentation by both men is of a scarcely less optimistic 'domino theory' in which revolution breaks out first in one of these countries, then spreads rapidly to the others.

The socialist cooperation which is projected for the post-revolutionary period between several existing nations is ambiguous in its meaning. Does it imply that the national particularisms which have previously characterised them will now disappear as

economically irrational (the third assumption of the capitalism/nationalism thesis)? Or does it mean that, even with socialist productive relations, national loyalties will remain, shorn of the specific bourgeois form (whatever that is) which creates conflicts of interest between nations?

The former interpretation is crucial for arguments that Marx and Engels were precursors of the capitalism/nationalism thesis. The only statement of either Marx or Engels which is an unambiguous instance of this argument comes from Engels' early draft of the *Manifesto*:

The nationalities of the peoples associating themselves with the principle of community will be compelled to mingle with each other as a result of this association, and thereby dissolve themselves ... (Engels, 1977, p 27 - note 4)

It may appear that this argument is reproduced in the final version of the *Manifesto*, in the final stirring call "Working men of all countries, unite" and the blunt assertion that "The working men have no country", not to mention the confusing assertion that "Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle." At the very least, the anti-national assumptions are no longer explicitly articulated. But these sections of the *Manifesto* are also compatible with more confused and inconclusive assumptions.

The claim that working men have no country could refer to their deracination; but less dramatically it could be a rhetorical reference to the exclusion of the proletariat from the 'political nation'. The distinction between the 'national form' and 'non-national substance' of the struggle of the proletariat is little further elucidated in the following well-known passage:

Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself as the nation, it is, so far, national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word. (Marx, 1973a, p 84)

It is possible to interpret this sentence as asserting that the proletariat will abolish national differences, but that this process can only begin after they seize political power, and that this seizure itself must involve separate struggles within each existing national state. However, within this interpretation the significance of the proletariat 'constituting itself as the nation' is to say the least obscure. The assertion that the nationalism of the proletariat should not be interpreted in the bourgeois sense of the word is like the declaration that the struggle of the proletariat is national not in substance but only in form. Both are strong on rhetoric and weak on content.

The next clue comes in the assertions (perhaps plausible in the light of the experiences of their

contemporary history, but totally falsified since their deaths for socialist as well as capitalist societies) that the development of capitalism already minimises the antagonisms between different nationalities:

National differences and antagonisms between peoples, are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to uniformity in the mode of production, and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto.

The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster. United action, of the leading civilized countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat.

In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end. (Marx, 1973a, p 85)

This passage clearly asserts that national antagonisms will disappear (indeed already are disappearing). But it says nothing about the disappearance of national differences as such, and it seems to imply that nations will continue to exist indefinitely - though ceasing to exploit each other. (A less forced reading is that nations (to anticipate somewhat, nationalities or ethnic groups which are viable in providing the social foundations for further economic progress) will continue to exist, but that their interrelationships will tend to become

increasingly purely cooperative and non-antagonistic. The loyalty of workers to their own nation will be combined with fraternal solidarity with the workers of other countries. Such fraternity will not take the form of the mere well-intentioned humanitarianism which is the mark of bourgeois internationalism, but will be expressed in (largely unspecified) deeds.

A rational reconstruction along such lines can best explain the failure, apart from the solitary statement of Engels already cited, of either man to assert that nations would "wither away" under socialism. It also helps to explain the strength of their hostility to ideologues they characterised as 'bourgeois nationalists', where the vehemence of the criticisms are otherwise inexplicable in a context where the main practical differences separating them from such currents was in the form of rhetoric on which appeals against chauvinism were based, with Marx and Engels calling for the 'fraternity of working men' rather than 'the international brotherhood of man'.

If this reconstruction is correct - and in its very nature it rests mainly on an absence of evidence to the contrary rather than on anything more positive - their support for the third of the assumptions of the capitalism/nationalism thesis must be questioned. What evidence is there that Marx and Engels believed the other two assumptions of this thesis, that

nations and nationalism are the creations of the capitalist social order and the bourgeoisie?

The statement most frequently cited to support such claims (e.g. Connor, 1984, p 20, footnote 1; Nimni, 1985a, p 60) comes from the section of the *Communist Manifesto* which praises the progressive achievements of capitalism:

The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralized means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralization. Independent, or loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class interest, one frontier and one customs tariff. (Marx, 1973a, p 72)

This passage asserts both that there is an objective trend towards political centralisation with the development of capitalist productive relations, and that this trend is basically beneficent. Both of these propositions appear more questionable today than they did in the middle of the nineteenth century. This interpretation is built on Marx's appreciation of the achievements of the French Revolution (Nimni, 1985a, pp 60 - 61); on his involvement in the struggles for the unification of Germany, and perhaps also on his reading of English history. If this passage is read with the

assumptions of the capitalism/nationalism thesis it certainly appears to support these assumptions. But the full argument of this section of the *Manifesto* is less clear cut. Shortly before the passage cited above Marx also says:

In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. As in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures there arises a world literature.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian nations into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese Walls, with which it forces the barbarians' obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls [and what he has just called a couple of sentences ago - DA] civilization into their midst, i.e. to become bourgeois themselves. (Marx, 1973a, p 71, my emphasis)

This elaborates somewhat on the mechanisms which were supposedly eliminating national antagonisms. But if what it says can be interpreted literally, it does not say that capitalism has created nations for the first time, but that established capitalist nation states (of which the only examples in 1848 were

France and Britain) were created by the fusion of several smaller units, at least some of which were already national in form. The state was already national prior to the onset of the capitalist era, but the centralising tendencies created and required by the capitalist economy imposed powerful pressures to extend the boundaries of the national state, and to assimilate ethnic minorities and localised communities which previously managed to preserve their distinct identities.

The precapitalist societies designated by the Victorian epithet 'barbarian', which must adopt capitalism or perish, also include at least some societies which are already nations (although the opening of the possibilities that some may perish, despite its anticipation of social Darwinism, shows some distance from a frequent nationalist assumption that specific nations are both primordial and eternal). Capitalism has the effect of rearranging the specific division of the world into particular nations (with its centralising tendency reducing the total number of nations) but it does not create this division as such.

This argument of an economic need for centralization which will reduce the number of previously existing nations is the basis of such support as exists for Marx and Engels' distinction between historical and non-historical nations. This

'Hegelian' theory (an unnamed French historian is actually cited by Engels as the originator of the phrase) is used mainly to argue that Slav nationalist movements, whether these are particular or democratic pan-Slav in form, should be opposed by European working class movements.

In the course of such arguments much is made of the etymology of the word 'slave'. Indeed it must be said that even within Europe, Marx and Engels' attitudes to the national movements they opposed - particularly Slavs and Scandinavians - verged on racism, and that in this as in racism in a more strict sense Marx could be more crude than Engels.

(3)

Two main kinds of differences are asserted between the nationalist movements Marx and Engels did support (German, Italian, Polish, Irish, Hungarian, and American Unionist) and those they did not (primarily the Slavs, Scandinavians and Confederates). The first concerned the international political alignments they asserted such movements entailed, the second was concerned with assertions that only the movements they supported were capable of forming states which were capable of ensuring economic progress. There might be a presumption, given Marx and Engels' usual teleology, that they also assumed some systematic connection between these two sets of factors. They say very little which

would substantiate this.

The rationale for their varying support for nationalist movements comes out most clearly through contrasts between their justifications for support for the struggles of the Polish and Irish nationalist movements and the Unionists in America, and their opposition to Slav nationalisms. In the case of the movements they supported, their first argument is always that the main political movements of the European working class, and in particular those who apparently have most to lose, are already as a whole, or, in the worst case, in their most advanced representatives, supporting the nationalist movement in question.

That is, their claims for support for Polish nationalism say that the German workers already give this support. Support for the Union starts by asserting that this is already spreading through the English working class

It ought never to be forgotten in the United States that at least the *working classes* of England, from the commencement to the termination of the difficulty, have never forsaken them. (Marx and Engels, 1971a, p 327, original emphasis)

For Ireland the advanced representatives of the English workers become the trades union officials and positivists who were Marx's fellow members of the Committee of the International.

In an 1847 speech in support of the Polish

nationalist movements Engels goes so far as to claim that he is the representative of this advanced wing, albeit of the democratic rather than of the working class movement:

My friends, allow me today to appear for once in my capacity as a German It must be the concern of all us Germans, above all, us German democrats, to remove this stain [of Prussian participation in the Partition of Poland] from our nation. (Marx, 1973a, p 100)

This is a further assertion of their doctrine of the possible non-antagonism of different nationalisms, which is now extended to claims that German nationality can only be realised fully providing it recognises and supports the legitimate claims of another 'historic' nation - Poland. Similar connections are asserted about the relationships between the French and German nations, and the English and Irish nations. This attitude is in strong contrast to that displayed towards the political aspirations of Slav nationalists.

Marx and Engels' assertion here is that the only possible way in which a Slavic state or states could possibly achieve political independence would be through military dependence on 'the gendarme of Europe', Russia. This was linked with Marx's paranoic conspiratorial explanations of the political events of his times as controlled by the paid agents of the Czar and his evil twin, Louis Napoleon (as expounded in, literally, incredible detail in *The*

The second set of arguments rest on claims that the success of the nationalist movements they supported would be conducive to economic progress. At times they seem to suggest that the racial or cultural characteristics of some national groups is conducive to dynamic economic progress, while the equivalent characteristics of other national groups produce only stagnation (Connor, 1984, pp 15 - 17). But their most common justifications were more purely economic or political.

Apart from the application of this to the United States (with the obvious contrast between the laissez-faire capitalism of the north and the slave regime of the south) and to the unification of Germany and Italy (which like America fitted their assumptions that bigger and more centralised is better) the 'benefits' they actually mention are ones which are conducive to the progress (usually indirectly, through their presumed political results) of the oppressor nations, not to the ones struggling for independence.

The crux of this argument was summarised in the slogan used by Engels in the speech already cited, and often repeated by both men in subsequent writings on Poland and Ireland in particular with only marginal variations in the formula: "A nation

cannot be free and at the same time continue to oppress other nations." Although this formula stresses the political and social effects of oppressing other nations, part of the importance of this is that these effects serve to hinder economic progress as well (though this is mainly by deferring socialist revolutions, by encouraging chauvinist currents within the proletariat). This is expressed most clearly in relation to their attitude to Irish independence.

During the 1840s Marx and Engels asserted that the requirement of large centralised states for economic development meant that Irish independence was retrogressive. For economic progress Ireland needed to be an integral part of the British state. The current form of incorporation was oppressive, so what was needed was a move to a federation in which Ireland was incorporated without being dominated. In the 1860s, when the more aggressive Fenians came to the fore within Irish nationalism, this conclusion was reversed. (Marx and Engels, 1971b)

The switch to support for Irish nationalism was not based on any reassessment of the viability of economic progress in an independent Ireland. Rather it was based on claims of the effects that Irish independence would have on English economic, political and social life. Thus they claimed that the landlord class which dominated English politics

survived economically only because of their Irish holdings (a parallel and more credible argument could be developed about Prussian Junkers and Polish land, but such an argument was first articulated by Weber (Gerth and Mills, eds, 1948, chap XV)).

Marx and Engels then move on to assertions (which cast some doubt on their claims of English working class support for Irish independence) that the political domination of Ireland by England, and the mass migrations from Ireland to the working class districts of England which this entails, have the effect of creating deep divisions within the proletariat, in turn forming barriers to an effective struggle for socialism.

The explanations of the generation of such chauvinist divisions within the working class alternate between the structural and the, at least possibly, intentional, with a recognition that there are real differences of interest between English and Irish workers, and the conspiratorial, in which such divisions are the products of delusions which have been whipped up by bourgeois newspapers to con the English workers into an alignment with English capitalists.

The European nations which Marx and Engels thought could coexist harmoniously were in conflict during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. In their proposals for the reconciliation of these

antagonisms Marx and Engels, despite the fact that any theory of nationalism they held was based on notions of linguistic community, rejected irredentism, that is in expansionist claims for the redrawing of state boundaries to incorporate all territories where some of the population spoke the relevant national language. Thus in the speech already cited Engels states quite clearly that a viable independent Poland must include territory currently occupied by German speakers, and both in the public statements and private letters of Marx at the time of the Franco-Prussian war, the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine is dismissed on the ground that while some of their populations may speak German, they are and wish to continue to be French nationals.

Similarly, they normally had little truck with territorial expansions which are based on claims for a militarily adequate 'natural' frontier (see once again the opposition to the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, or Marx's contempt for the converse French case that they needed a frontier on the Rhine, in *Herr Vogt*). Their contempt for this type of justification for expansion was based on their assumption (probably the strongest argument with which they backed their slogan about nations which oppressed others necessarily being unfree) that the repression this would require, to ensure control of the unwilling subjects gained through such expansion,

would promote militarism in the nation carrying out such poaching. The logic of this argument would of course also apply to the repression of the Slavs who Marx and Engels proposed should be incorporated into the German, Polish, Hungarian, and Italian nations - a similar fantasy was also promoted by Mazzini. (Gellner, 1983, p 124, footnote)

Finally there are the statements in the later historical writings of Engels. The first of these is from *Anti-Duhring*:

[The Germanic invasions during the period of decline of the Roman Empire] drew Western and Central Europe into the course of historical development, created for the first time a compact cultural area, and within this also for the first time a system of predominantly national states exerting mutual influence on each other and mutually holding each other in check. Thereby it prepared the ground on which alone the question of equal status of men, the rights of man, could at a later stage be raised. (Engels, 1947, p 125)

The intellectual context within which Engels assertion was elaborated was one of a debate between the advocates of 'Germanism' and 'Romanism', in which different political strategies were pressed through appeals to alternative 'ancestral constitutions' (Finley, 1975, chap 2). The form such debates took in England, from at least the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, was one in which political radicals appealed to the precedent of claimed Anglo-Saxon liberties in rejection of the Norman Yoke

imposed illegitimately by conquest. (Hill, 1958, chap 3)

Similarly, political debates in eighteenth century France, between the advocates of the absolute rights of the monarch and those of the nobility, revolved around opposing claims that French institutions derived from those of the Roman Empire or the institutions of the Germanic tribes who had conquered the Empire (Aron, 1967, pp 58 - 59).

This intellectual tradition forms the background not only for Engels' ruminations on the formation of the major European nations in the dark ages, but also the near-contemporary writings of Gobineau and Chamberlain elaborating racial justifications for the rights of an 'aristocracy' of supposed Germanic descent which was now asserted against the challenges, not of some erstwhile absolute monarch, but the inferior plebian (and Celtic or Jewish) hordes who had supported the revolutions of 1848.

Engels' references to this theme are too few and brief to provide firm evidence of the presence of any racial component to his argument, which was that the creative potential of western European civilization derived from the fusion of qualities drawn from Roman and Germanic sources. What is explicitly mentioned by him, as we shall see in a moment, is the combination and juxtaposition of

institutional forms drawn from both sources, but this could still cover a racial theory of a type more characteristic of nineteenth century England than the continental mainland, in which the most dynamic of all human 'stocks' are formed not from pure races, but from the admixture of different 'progressive races'.

Whatever Engels' attitude towards such theories, his main argument is clear. Before the expansion of the Roman Empire western Europe (and north Africa) had been divided into nations which were abolished by the centripetal power of Rome. With the collapse of the Empire the potentiality for the reformation of new nations, divided along the lines of natural boundaries, and revealed by the increasing diversification of the vernacular dialects deriving from Latin, was revealed:

The levelling plane of Roman world power had been passing for centuries over all the Mediterranean countries. Where the Greek language offered no resistance all national languages gave way to a corrupt Latin. There were no longer any distinctions of nationality, no more Gauls, Iberians, Ligurians, Noricans; all had become Romans. Roman administration and Roman law had everywhere dissolved the old bodies of *consanguinei* and thus crushed the last remnants of local and national self-expression. The new-fangled Romanism could not compensate for this loss; it did not express any nationality, but only lack of nationality. The elements for the formation of new nations existed everywhere. The Latin dialects of the different provinces diverged more and more; the natural boundaries that had

once made Italy, Gaul, Spain, Africa independent territories still existed and still made themselves felt. (Marx and Engels, 1968, p 568)

However, the subject peoples of the Roman Empire, and the administrative and legal structures of that Empire, had no capacity to fulfil this dynamic historical role. Only an injection of dynamism from outside, from the Germans who still possessed the innovative capacity of peoples living in tribal societies, could carry western Europe across this threshold.

A racial grounding for this dynamism is explicitly repudiated - instead it is claimed to derive from their economic backwardness, and the more democratic political organisation (at least in comparison with the Empire) that this allowed.

Yet nowhere was there a force capable of combining these elements into new nations; nowhere was there the least trace of any capacity for development or any power of resistance, much less creative power. (Marx and Engels, 1968, p 568)

[The Germans'] personal efficiency and bravery, their love of liberty, and their democratic instinct, which regarded all public affairs as their own affairs, in short, all those qualities which the Romans had lost and which were alone capable of forming new states and raising new nationalities out of the muck of the Roman world - what were they but the characteristic features of barbarians in the upper stage, fruits of their gentile constitution? (Marx and Engels, 1968, p 575) (4)

As the tribes went beyond the immediate period of

military conquest to a more permanent settlement, this full gentile constitution proved an unsuitable instrument for institutionalising their rule. The leaders of the Germans, whose leading role had been purely military, had to transform themselves into the ruling classes of what were becoming territorial, and national, states. Many components of the Roman legal and administrative systems, and their corresponding class structure, formed the foundation for this consolidation. This process also involved the incorporation of educated Romanised Gauls, who could interpret the Roman constitution, who together with German military sub-commanders came to form the retinue at court, and thus the nucleus of the feudal nobility.

The most excessively oppressive features of the Roman class structure and the Roman constitution were now mitigated by survivals of the Germanic democracy of the Mark: "in at least three of the most important countries - Germany, Northern France and England" (Marx and Engels, 1968, p 575). Women were given a higher status than the ancient world had ever known, while the abolition of slavery, and its replacement by a serfdom coexisting with a free peasantry, meant that, instead of the purely individualistic road to emancipation through manumission, there was now the possibility for collective struggles of emancipation as a class.

Still, the main emphasis on the progressive achievement of the four centuries of the western European dark ages is in the creation of the 'modern nationalities', a whole historical epoch before the emergence of capitalist societies:

Nevertheless, progress was made during these four hundred years. Even if at the end we find almost the same classes as at the beginning, still, the people who constituted these classes had changed. The ancient slavery had disappeared, gone also were the beggared poor freemen, who had despised work as slavish. Between the Roman *colonus* and the new serf there had been the free Frankish peasant. The 'useless remeniscences and vain strife' of doomed Romanism were dead and buried. The social classes of the ninth century had taken shape not in the bog of a declining civilization, but in the travail of a new. The new race, masters as well as servants, was a race of men to be compared to its Roman predecessors. The relation of powerful landlords and serving peasants, which for the latter had been the hopeless form of the decline of the world of antiquity, was now for the former the starting-point of a new development. However, unproductive as these years appear to have been, they, nevertheless, left one great product behind them; the modern nationalities, the refashioning and regrouping of West-European humanity for impending history. (Marx and Engels, 1968, p 574)

Engels' view that the modern French, English and German nations originated from the fusion of Germanic and Roman populations in the Dark Ages has little more to recommend it than the 'classical marxist' view that these nations can be dated only from the rise to political dominance of the bourgeoisie. This

view does however demonstrate that the founders of marxism did not associate the political form of nationalism solely with one mode of production.

The place of the national phenomenon in Marx and Engels' theory of history is at best implicit and ambiguous. The programmatic statements of historical materialism refer to the role of class struggles and of the forces and relations of production in powering social evolution, without mentioning nations. But in the concrete historical writings of both men nations as well as classes are collective historical actors - and well before the age of capital.

Their attitude towards nationalism was complex, contradictory, confused and confusing. But it had little similarity to the capitalism/nationalism thesis. However, the confusions of their expression of their responses to nationalism were such that it became possible, first for those later marxists at the turn of the century who did develop a capitalism/nationalism thesis, and later other commentators, to project this approach back onto them.

1) Connor provides the most thorough discussion of the way in which subsequent states claiming allegiance to marxism have used the ambiguities in Marx and Engels' writings on the national question to justify the various twists and turns they have made in their policies towards national and ethnic minorities. The claim that Marx and Engels supported the capitalism/nationalism thesis (Connor, 1984, chapter 1) are less convincing.

Connor diagnoses three strands in Marx and Engels' attitude to nationalism: the "classic", which prioritises vertical divisions of class, regarding classes as the only true historical actors, and nations as superstructural epiphenomena confined to the capitalist era; the "strategic", in which tactical support for some nationalist movements may be necessary to hasten the communist revolutions; and the "national" (more prominent in Engels than Marx), in which nations become collective historical actors in their own right, with little or no reference to classes. The last two strands, Connor argues, became significant only after 1848, in response to the strong nationalist component to the revolutions of that year.

The strategic strand is discussed below. Connor's demonstration of the classical strand rests heavily on the statement from the *Communist*

Manifesto, again discussed in the main text, about the historic achievements of the bourgeoisie. References, in the *Manifesto* and elsewhere, to nations existing prior to capitalism are ignored, although Connors actually cites a statement from *The German Ideology* where Marx dates the emergence of nations much earlier (though he cites it only to prove Marx distinguishes nations from states):

The antagonism between town and country begins with the transition from barbarism to civilization, from tribe to State, from locality to nation ... (Marx and Engels, 1974, p 69; cited in Connor, 1984, p 20, footnote 7)

Marx, writing in 1845-6 thus locates the origins of nations in the period of the "urban revolution" (Childe, 1964; compare Armstrong, 1982 and Smith, 1986b), some two millenia or so before the rise to dominance of the bourgeoisie.

Many other scattered references to nations and nationalities going back to the dawn of recorded history can be found in the 'early' writings of Marx. The hegelian terminology of most of these discussions means they are even more confusing than the later texts. As it is the latter which are normally taken as the charters of marxism, they will form the centre of attention subsequently.

2) The bearing of these texts on Marx and Engels' theorisation of nationalism is rarely noted by modern

commentators. Indeed, one of the few references which notes them (Bloch, 1983, p 62) does so only to condemn the excessive influence of nineteenth century romantic historians on the thought of Engels. Such influences are undeniably present.

3) "It is now perfectly clear to me that, as testified also by his [Lassalle's] cranial formation and hair growth, he is descended from negroes who joined Moses's exodus from Egypt (unless his maternal mother [sic] or grandmother was crossed with a negro). Well, this combination of Jewish and Germanic stock with a negroid basic substance is bound to yield a strange product. The fellow's importunity is also nigger-like." (Letter of Marx to Engels, 30th July 1862, in Raddatz, trans and ed, 1980) Further examples of racist statements by Marx and Engels have been compiled by Nimni (1985a, pp 64 - 65).

4) At this point Engels is working himself up to a far-fetched analogy in which the proletariat are the barbarians within of the nineteenth century, whose historical mission is to emulate the Germanic tribes in achieving a new and more rational society.

Further Textual Excerpts, c 1200 - 1485

This appendix includes a series of excerpts from early English texts which are relevant to the arguments of Chapter Four. For the oldest passages, most removed from modern English, a complete translation follows each section. For later texts the translation consists solely of marginal notes of specific unfamiliar words.

1. Introduction to Layamon's Brut

Incipit hystoria brutoꝝ

An preost wes on leonden, Lazamon wes ihoten. He was
Leouennafes sone; liðe him beo Drihten. He wonede at
Ernlejem at æðelen are chirchen, Vppen
Seuarne-staþe, sel þar him uhte, On-fest Radestone,
þer he bock radde, Hit com him on modem and on his
moern þonke, þat he wolde of Engle þa æðelaen
tellen; Wat heo ihoten weoren and wonene heo comen,
þat Englene londe aerest ahten, AEfter þan flode þe
from Drihtene com, þe al her a-quelde quic þat he
funde, Buten Noe and Sem, Japhet and Cham, And heore
four wiues, þe mid heom weren on archen. Lazamon gon
liðen wide gond þas leode, And bi-won þa æðela boc,
þa he bisne nom. He nom þa Englisca boc, þa makede
seint Beda. An oþer he nom on Latin, þa makede seint

Albin, An þe feire Austin, þe fulluht broute hider
 in. Bok he nom þe ridde, leide þer amidden, þa
 makede a Frenchis clerik, Wace wes ihoten, þe wele
 couþe writen, And he hoe ȝef þare æðelen AElienorel
 þe wes Henries quene, þes he es kinges. Lazamon leide
 eos boc, and þa leaf wende; He heom leofliche
 bi-holden, liþe him beo Drihten. Feþeren he nom mid
 fingeren, and fiede on boc-felle, And þa soþere word
 sette to-gadere, And þa þre boc þrumde to are. Nu
 bidde Lazamon alcne æðele mon, For þene alminen
 Godd, þet þeos boc rede, and leornia þeos runan, þet
 he þeos so feste word segge to sumne, For his fader
 saule, þa hine forð brouhte, And for his moder saule,
 þa hine to monne iber, And for his awene saule, þat
 hire þe selre beo.

AMEN.

(Layamon's *Brut* (*Cotton Calugula A Text*) ll 1 - 35,
 from Dickens and Wilson, 1951, p 20: poem written at
 dates quoted as between 1190 and 1207: ms c 1225)

[There was a priest in the land ("among the people" -
 Jones), Layamon was his name. He was Leovenath's son
 - Lord be good to him. He lived at Arley, at a noble
 church on the Severn's bank, where he thought it
 pleasant. Near Redstone, there he read books (or his
 Mass or Bible). It came to his mind, a splendid
 thought, that he would tell of the splendid deeds of
 the English; what they were called, and when they

came, that first possessed the English land, [after the flood that came from the Lord, which killed all that were found alive there, but Noah and Shem, Japheth and Ham, and their four wives who were with them on the Ark.] Layamon travelled widely throughout this land (Jones translates this use of 'leonde' as 'nation'), and found those excellent books, that he took as examples. He got that English book, made by St Bede. Another he got in Latin, made by St Albin, and the fair Augustine, who brought baptism here. The third book he took, and lay amidst them, which a French cleric made, whose name was Wace, a skillful writer, who gave it to Eleanor who was queen to Henry, the high king. These books Layamon lay before him, and turned over the leaves; lovingly beheld them, the Lord be good to him, held pen with fingers, and wrote on vellum, set true words together, and the three books pruned to one. [Now Layamon bids every noble man, for the almighty God, who reads this book, and learns this advice, to tell some of this true word, for his father's soul, that it might go forth, for his mother's soul, that it might ?????, and for his own soul, that it might be better for it.] Translation based loosely on that included in Jones (1962, p ix), which does not include the sections in the second sets of square brackets, but sticking closer to the (modern) punctuation of the original for comparison, and with other changes, all

slight apart from the ones to which the curved brackets call attention.

2. Death of Arthur from Layamon's Brut

Arður wes for-wunded wunder ane swiðe, þer to him com
a cnaue þe wes of his cunne, He wes Cadores sune, þe
eorles of Cor[n]lwaile, Constantin hehte þe cnaue, he
wes þan kinge deore. Arður him lokede on, 'þer he lai
on folden', And as word seide 'mid sorhfulle
heorte': "Constaentin, þu art wilcume, þu weore
Cadores sone; Ich þe bitache here mine kinerliche,
And wite mine Bruttes a to þines lifes, 'And hald
heom alle þa lazen þa habbeoð istonden a mine dajen,
And alle þa lazen gode þa bi vðeres dajen stode'. And
ich wulle uaren to Aualun 'to uairest alre maidene',
To Argante þere quene, 'aluen swiðe sceone', And heo
scal mine wunden makien alle isunde, Al hal me makien
mid haleweige drenchen. And seoðe ich cumen wulle to
mine kineriche, 'And wunien mid Brutten midmuchelere
wunne'." Aefne þan worden, þer com of se wenden, þat
wes an sceort bat liðen sceouen mid vðen, And twa
wimmen þer-inne wunderliche idihte, And hoe nomen
Arður anan, and ane ouste hine uareden, And softe
hine adun leiden, and forð gunnen hine liðen. Þa wes
hit iwar den þat Merlin seide whilen, þat weore
unimete care of Arðures forðfare. (Layamon's Brut ll
25605 - 25620, from Dickens and Wilson, 1951, p 27

[Arthur was wounded wondrously much. There came to him a lad, who was one of his kindred; he was Cador's son, the Earl of Cornwall; Constantine the lad hight, he was dear to the king. Arthur looked on him, where he lay on the ground, and said these words, with sorrowful heart: "Constantine, thou art welcome; thou wert Cador's son. I give thee here my kingdom and defend thou my Britons ever in thy life, and maintain them all the laws that have stood in my days, and all the good laws that in Uther's day stood. And I will fare to Avalun, to the fairest of all maidens, to Argante the queen, an elf most fair, and she shall make my wounds all sound; make me all whole with healing draughts. And afterwards I will come again to my kingdom, and dwell with the Britons with mickle joy."

Even with the words there approached from the sea that was a short boat, floating with the waves; and two women therein, wondrously formed; and they took Arthur anon, and bare him quickly, and laid him softly down, and forth they gan depart.

Then it was accomplished that Merlin whilom said, that mickle care should be of Arthur's departure. (Mason's Translation of the above passage, in Wace and Layamon, 1912, p 264)]

3. In Frenssche bookys þis rym is wrouȝt,
 Lewede men ne knowe it nouȝt -
 Lewede men cune Ffrensch non,
 Among an hondryd vnnepis on -;
 Neuerþeles, wiþ glad chere,
 Ffele off hem þat wolde here
 Noble ienstes, j vnderstonde,
 Off dou t kny tes of Yngelonde.
 Þerfore now j wole ȝow rede
 Off a kyng, douȝty in dede:
 Kyng Rychard, þe merryour beste
 Þat men find in ony ieste.
 Now all þat here þis talkyng,
 God geue hem alle good endyng!
 (*Richard Coeur de Lion*, ll 21 - 34, quoted in Mehl,
 1968, pp 243 - 244)

4. Wycliffe's justification for an English translation of the Bible

Ant heere þe freris [friars] wit þer fatours
 [supporters] seyn þat it is heresye to write þus
 Goddis lawe in English, and make it knowun to lawid
 [lay, uneducated, ignorant] men. And forty signes
 þat þey bringen for to shewe an heretik ben not worpy
 to reherse, for nouȝt groundi hem but nygromansye
 [negromancy - perhaps loosely impious nonsense].

It semyþ first þat þe wit of Goddis lawe
 shulde be tauȝt in þat tunge þat is more knowun, for
 þis wit is Goddis word. Whanne Crist seip in þe
 Gospel þat boþe heuene and erþe shulden passe, but
 His wordis shulen not passe, He vronderstondith bi
 His wordis His wit. And þus Goddes wit is Hooly
 Writ, þat may on no maner be fals. Also þe Hooly
 Gost ȝaf to apostlis wit at Wit Sunday for to knowe
 al maner langagis, to teche þe puple Goddis lawe

þerby; and so God wolde þat þe puple were taught
Goddis lawe in dyuerse tungis. But what man, on
Goddis half, shulde reuerse Goddis ordenaunse and His
wille?

...

Also þe worþy reume [realm] of Fraunse,
notwistondinge alle lettingis, hap translatid þe
Bible and þe Gospels, wif oþere trewe sentensis of
doctours, out of Lateyn into Freynsch. Why shulden
not Englizschemen do so? As loris of Englonde han þe
Bible in Freynsch, so it were not a enus resoun þat
þey hadden þe same sentense in Englizsch; for þus
Goddis lawe wolde be betere knowun, and more trowid
[believed], for onhed of wit [unity of
understanding?], and more acord bitwixte reumes.
(John Wiclif, *De Officio Pastoralis*, chap xv, ll 1 -
15, 25 - 33, from Sisam, 1937, pp 117, 118 - text
written late C14; MS C15)

5. On the languages of Britain

As hyt ys yknowne houȝ meny maner people buþ
in þis ylond, þer buþ also of so meny people longages
and tonges. Noþeles Walschmen and Scottes, þat buþ
noȝt ymelled [mixed] wif oþer naciouns, holde wel nyȝ
here furste longage and speche, bote ȝef Scottes, þat
were som tyme confederat and wonede wif þe Pictes,
drawe somewhat after here speche. Bote þe Flemmynges
þat wone in þe west syde of Wales habbe yleft here

strange speche, and speke Saxonlych ynow. Also
 Englyschmen, þeyȝ hy hadde fram þe bygynnyng þre
 maner speche, Souþeron, Norþeron, and Myddel speche
 in þe myddel of þe lond, as hy come of þre maner
 people of Germania, noþeles by comyngstion and
 mellyng, furst wif Danes and afterward wif Normans,
 in menye þe contray longage ys aþeyred [impaired],
 and som vse strange wlaaffying [waffling??],
 chytteryng [chattering], harrayng [snarling], and
 garrayng grisbyttyng [grating gnashing of teeth]. Þis
 aþeyring of þe burþtonge ys bycause of twey þinges.
 On ys for chylðern in scole, aȝenes þe vsage of al
 oþer nacions, buþ compelled for to leue here oune
 longage, and for to construe here lessons and here
 þinges a Freynsch, and habbeþ supþe þe Normans come
 furst into Engeland Also gentil men children buþ
 ytaugt for to speke Freynsch fram tyme þat a buþ
 yrokked in here cradel, and conne speke and playewif
 a childe hys brouche [trinket]; and oplondysch men
 wol lynke hamsylf to gentil men, and fonde wif gret
 bysynes [endeavours with great industry] for to speke
 Freynsch, for to be more ytold of.

.... Hyt syme a gret wondur houȝ Englysch,
 þat ys þe burþ-tonge of Englyschmen, and here oune
 longage and tonge, ys so dyuerse of soon yn þis
 londe; and þe longage of Normandy ys comlyng
 [stranger, foreign] of anoþer londe, and haþ on maner
 soon among al men þat speke hyt aryȝt in Engeland.

(Noneless þer ys as meny dyuers Frensch yn þe rem
[realm] of Fraunce as ys dyuers manere Englysch in þe
rem of Engeland.)

Also of þe forseide Saxon tonge, þat ys deled
[divided] a þre, and ys abyde scarslych wip feaw
vplondysch men, and ys gret wondur, for men of þe est
wip men of þe west, as hyt were vnder þe same party
of heuene, acordeþ more in sounyng [sounding,
pronunciation] of speche þan men of þe norþ wip men
of þe souþ. Þerfore hyt ys þat Mercii [Mercians,
i.e. midlanders], þat buþ men of myddel Engeland, as
hyt were parteners of þe endes, vnderstondeþ betre þe
syde longages, Norþeron and Souþeron, þan Norþeron
and Souþeron vnderstondeþ eyþer oþer.

Al þe longage of þe Norþumbres, and
specialych at Ȝork, ys so scharp, slyttyng, and
frottyng [sharp, harsh, and grating], and vnshape, þat
we Souþeron men may þat longage vnderstonde. Y trowe
þat ys bycause þat a buþ nyȝ to strange men and
aliens, þat speke strangelych, and also bycause þat
þe kynges of Engeland woneþ alwey fer fram þat
contray; for a buþ more yturnd to þe souþ contray,
and Ȝef-a goþ [go] to þe norþ contray, a go wip gret
help and strengthe.

Þe cause why a buþ more in þe souþ contray þan
in þe norþ may be betre cornlond, more people, more
noble cytes, and more profytable hauenes [harbours].
(From John of Trevisa's translation of Higden's

Polychronicon, chap lix "The Languages of Britain",
11 1 - 25, 42 - 67, in Sisam, 1937, pp 148 - 149, 149
- 150: Translation completed 1387, MS c1400)

6. Caxton on the historicity of Arthur

After I had accomplished and finished divers histories as well of contemplation as of other historical and worldly acts of great conquerers and princes, and also certain books and examples of doctrine, many noble and divers gentlemen of this realm of England came and demanded me many and oftymes wherefore that I have not made and imprinted the noble history of the Sankgreall and of the most reknowned Christian king, first and chief of the three best Christian, and worthy, King Arthur, which ought most to be remembered among us Englishmen before all other Christian kings.

[Discusses and dismisses the claims that Arthur is mythical.]

Then, all these things considered, there can be no man reasonably gainsay that there was a King of this land named Arthur. For in all places, Christian and heathen, he is reputed and taken for one of the nine worthy, and the first of the three Christian men. Also he is more spoken of beyond the sea, more books made of his noble acts, than there are in England, as well in Dutch, Italian, Spanish and Greekish as in French. (From Caxton's Preface to

Malory, quoted in the edited version, Davies, 1967,
pp 27, 29)

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