

Definitions

Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.

Nationalism as a sentiment, or as a movement, can best be defined in terms of this principle. Nationalist *sentiment* is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfilment. A nationalist *movement* is one actuated by a sentiment of this kind.

There is a variety of ways in which the nationalist principle can be violated. The political boundary of a given state can fail to include all the members of the appropriate nation; or it can include them all but also include some foreigners; or it can fail in both these ways at once, not incorporating all the nationals and yet also including some non-nationals. Or again, a nation may live, unmixed with foreigners, in a multiplicity of states, so that no single state can claim to be *the* national one.

But there is one particular form of the violation of the nationalist principle to which nationalist sentiment is quite particularly sensitive: if the rulers of the political unit belong to a nation other than that of the majority of the ruled, this, for nationalists, constitutes a quite outstandingly intolerable breach of political propriety. This can occur either through the incorporation of the national territory in a larger empire, or by the local domination of an alien group.

In brief, nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and, in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state – a contingency already formally excluded by the principle in its general formulation – should not separate the power-holders from the rest.

The nationalist principle can be asserted in an ethical, 'universalistic' spirit. There could be, and on occasion there have been, nationalists-in-the-abstract, unbiassed in favour of any special nationality of their own, and generously preaching the doctrine for all nations alike: let all nations have their own political roofs, and let all

of them also refrain from including non-nationals under it. There is no formal contradiction in asserting such non-egoistic nationalism. As a doctrine it can be supported by some good arguments, such as the desirability of preserving cultural diversity, of a pluralistic international political system, and of the diminution of internal strains within states.

In fact, however, nationalism has often not been so sweetly reasonable, nor so rationally symmetrical. It may be that, as Immanuel Kant believed, partiality, the tendency to make exceptions on one's own behalf or one's own case, is *the* central human weakness from which all others flow; and that it infects national sentiment as it does all else, engendering what the Italians under Mussolini called the *sacro egoismo* of nationalism. It may also be that the political effectiveness of national sentiment would be much impaired if nationalists had as fine a sensibility to the wrongs committed by their nation as they have to those committed against it.

But over and above these considerations there are others, tied to the specific nature of the world we happen to live in, which militate against any impartial, general, sweetly reasonable nationalism. To put it in the simplest possible terms: there is a very large number of potential nations on earth. Our planet also contains room for a certain number of independent or autonomous political units. On any reasonable calculation, the former number (of potential nations) is probably much, *much* larger than that of possible viable states. If this argument or calculation is correct, not all nationalisms can be satisfied, at any rate at the same time. The satisfaction of some spells the frustration of others. This argument is further and immeasurably strengthened by the fact that very many of the potential nations of this world live, or until recently have lived, not in compact territorial units but intermixed with each other in complex patterns. It follows that a territorial political unit can only become ethnically homogeneous, in such cases, if it either kills, or expels, or assimilates all non-nationals. Their unwillingness to suffer such fates may make the peaceful implementation of the nationalist principle difficult.

These definitions must, of course, like most definitions, be applied with common sense. The nationalist principle, as defined, is not violated by the presence of *small* numbers of resident foreigners, or even by the presence of the occasional foreigner in, say, a national ruling family. Just how many resident foreigners or foreign members of the ruling class there must be before the principle is effectively

violated cannot be stated with precision. There is no sacred percentage figure, below which the foreigner can be benignly tolerated, and above which he becomes offensive and his safety and life are at peril. No doubt the figure will vary with circumstances. The impossibility of providing a generally applicable and precise figure, however, does not undermine the usefulness of the definition.

State and nation

Our definition of nationalism was parasitic on two as yet undefined terms: state and nation.

Discussion of the state may begin with Max Weber's celebrated definition of it, as that agency within society which possesses the monopoly of legitimate violence. The idea behind this is simple and seductive: in well-ordered societies, such as most of us live in or aspire to live in, private or sectional violence is illegitimate. Conflict as such is not illegitimate, but it cannot rightfully be resolved by private or sectional violence. Violence may be applied only by the central political authority, and those to whom it delegates this right. Among the various sanctions of the maintenance of order, the ultimate one – force – may be applied only by one special, clearly identified, and well centralized, disciplined agency within society. That agency or group of agencies *is* the state.

The idea enshrined in this definition corresponds fairly well with the moral intuitions of many, probably most, members of modern societies. Nevertheless, it is not entirely satisfactory. There are 'states' – or, at any rate, institutions which we would normally be inclined to call by that name – which do not monopolize legitimate violence within the territory which they more or less effectively control. A feudal state does not necessarily object to private wars between its fief-holders, provided they also fulfil their obligations to their overlord; or again, a state counting tribal populations among its subjects does not necessarily object to the institution of the feud, as long as those who indulge in it refrain from endangering neutrals on the public highway or in the market. The Iraqi state, under British tutelage after the First World War, tolerated tribal raids, provided the raiders dutifully reported at the nearest police station before and after the expedition, leaving an orderly bureaucratic record of slain and booty. In brief, there are states which lack either the will or the

means to enforce their monopoly of legitimate violence, and which nonetheless remain, in many respects, recognizable 'states'.

Weber's underlying principle does, however, seem valid *now*, however strangely ethnocentric it may be as a general definition, with its tacit assumption of the well-centralized Western state. The state constitutes one highly distinctive and important elaboration of the social division of labour. Where there is no division of labour, one cannot even begin to speak of the state. But not any or every specialism makes a state: the state is the specialization and concentration of order maintenance. The 'state' is that institution or set of institutions specifically concerned with the enforcement of order (whatever else they may also be concerned with). The state exists where specialized order-enforcing agencies, such as police forces and courts, have separated out from the rest of social life. They *are* the state.

Not all societies are state-endowed. It immediately follows that the problem of nationalism does not arise for stateless societies. If there is no state, one obviously cannot ask whether or not its boundaries are congruent with the limits of nations. If there are no rulers, there being no state, one cannot ask whether they are of the same nation as the ruled. When neither state nor rulers exist, one cannot resent their failure to conform to the requirements of the principle of nationalism. One may perhaps deplore statelessness, but that is another matter. Nationalists have generally fulminated against the distribution of political power and the nature of political boundaries, but they have seldom if ever had occasion to deplore the absence of power and of boundaries altogether. The circumstances in which nationalism has generally arisen have not normally been those in which the state itself, as such, was lacking, or when its reality was in any serious doubt. The state was only too conspicuously present. It was its boundaries and/or the distribution of power, and possibly of other advantages, within it which were resented.

This in itself is highly significant. Not only is our definition of nationalism parasitic on a prior and assumed definition of the state: it also seems to be the case that nationalism emerges only in milieux in which the existence of the state is already very much taken for granted. The existence of politically centralized units, and of a moral-political climate in which such centralized units are taken for granted and are treated as normative, is a necessary though by no means a sufficient condition of nationalism.

By way of anticipation, some general historical observations should be made about the state. Mankind has passed through three fundamental stages in its history: the pre-agrarian, the agrarian, and the industrial. Hunting and gathering bands were and are too small to allow the kind of political division of labour which constitutes the state; and so, for them, the question of the state, of a stable specialized order-enforcing institution, does not really arise. By contrast, most, but by no means all, agrarian societies have been state-endowed. Some of these states have been strong and some weak, some have been despotic and others law-abiding. They differ a very great deal in their form. The agrarian phase of human history is the period during which, so to speak, the very existence of the state is an option. Moreover, the form of the state is highly variable. During the hunting-gathering stage, the option was not available.

By contrast, in the post-agrarian, industrial age there is, once again, no option; but now the *presence*, not the absence of the state is inescapable. Paraphrasing Hegel, once none had the state, then some had it, and finally all have it. The form it takes, of course, still remains variable. There are some traditions of social thought – anarchism, Marxism – which hold that even, or especially, in an industrial order the state is dispensable, at least under favourable conditions or under conditions due to be realized in the fullness of time. There are obvious and powerful reasons for doubting this: industrial societies are enormously large, and depend for the standard of living to which they have become accustomed (or to which they ardently wish to become accustomed) on an unbelievably intricate general division of labour and co-operation. Some of this co-operation might under favourable conditions be spontaneous and need no central sanctions. The idea that all of it could perpetually work in this way, that it could exist without any enforcement and control, puts an intolerable strain on one's credulity.

So the problem of nationalism does not arise when there is no state. It does not follow that the problem of nationalism arises for each and every state. On the contrary, it arises only for *some* states. It remains to be seen which ones do face this problem.

The nation

The definition of the nation presents difficulties graver than those attendant on the definition of the state. Although modern man tends

to take the centralized state (and, more specifically, the centralized national state) for granted, nevertheless he is capable, with relatively little effort, of seeing its contingency, and of imagining a social situation in which the state is absent. He is quite adept at visualizing the 'state of nature'. An anthropologist can explain to him that the tribe is not necessarily a state writ small, and that forms of tribal organization exist which can be described as stateless. By contrast, the idea of a man without a nation seems to impose a far greater strain on the modern imagination. Chamisso, an *émigré* Frenchman in Germany during the Napoleonic period, wrote a powerful proto-Kafkaesque novel about a man who lost his shadow: though no doubt part of the effectiveness of this novel hinges on the intended ambiguity of the parable, it is difficult not to suspect that, for the author, the Man without a Shadow was the Man without a Nation. When his followers and acquaintances detect his aberrant shadowlessness they shun the otherwise well-endowed Peter Schlemihl. A man without a nation defies the recognized categories and provokes revulsion.

Chamisso's perception – if indeed this is what he intended to convey – was valid enough, but valid only for one kind of human condition, and not for the human condition as such anywhere at any time. A man must have a nationality as he must have a nose and two ears; a deficiency in any of these particulars is not inconceivable and does from time to time occur, but only as a result of some disaster, and it is itself a disaster of a kind. All this seems obvious, though, alas, it is not true. But that it should have come to *seem* so very obviously true is indeed an aspect, or perhaps the very core, of the problem of nationalism. Having a nation is not an inherent attribute of humanity, but it has now come to appear as such.

In fact, nations, like states, are a contingency, and not a universal necessity. Neither nations nor states exist at all times and in all circumstances. Moreover, nations and states are not the *same* contingency. Nationalism holds that they were destined for each other; that either without the other is incomplete, and constitutes a tragedy. But before they could become intended for each other, each of them had to emerge, and their emergence was independent and contingent. The state has certainly emerged without the help of the nation. Some nations have certainly emerged without the blessings of their own state. It is more debatable whether the normative idea of the nation, in its modern sense, did not presuppose the prior existence of the state.

What then is this contingent, but in our age seemingly universal and normative, idea of the nation? Discussion of two very makeshift, temporary definitions will help to pinpoint this elusive concept.

1 Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating.

2 Two men are of the same nation if and only if they *recognize* each other as belonging to the same nation. In other words, *nations maketh man*; nations are the artefacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities. A mere category of persons (say, occupants of a given territory, or speakers of a given language, for example) becomes a nation if and when the members of the category firmly recognize certain mutual rights and duties to each other in virtue of their shared membership of it. It is their recognition of each other as fellows of this kind which turns them into a nation, and not the other shared attributes, whatever they might be, which separate that category from non-members.

Each of these provisional definitions, the cultural and the voluntaristic, has some merit. Each of them singles out an element which is of real importance in the understanding of nationalism. But neither is adequate. Definitions of culture, presupposed by the first definition, in the anthropological rather than the normative sense, are notoriously difficult and unsatisfactory. It is probably best to approach this problem by using this term without attempting too much in the way of formal definition, and looking at what culture *does*.

Culture in Agrarian Society

One development which takes place during the agrarian epoch of human history is comparable in importance with the emergence of the state itself: the emergence of literacy and of a specialized clerical class or estate, a clerisy. Not all agrarian societies attain literacy: paraphrasing Hegel once again, we may say that at first none could read; then some could read; and eventually all can read. That, at any rate, seems to be the way in which literacy fits in with the three great ages of man. In the middle or agrarian age literacy appertains to some only. Some societies have it; and within the societies that do have it, it is always some, and never all, who can actually read.

The written word seems to enter history with the accountant and the tax collector: the earliest uses of the written sign seem often to be occasioned by the keeping of records. Once developed, however, the written word acquires other uses, legal, contractual, administrative. God himself eventually puts his covenant with humanity and his rules for the comportment of his creation in writing. Theology, legislation, litigation, administration, therapy: all engender a class of literate specialists, in alliance or more often in competition with freelance illiterate thaumaturges. In agrarian societies literacy brings forth a major chasm between the great and the little traditions (or cults). The doctrines and forms of organization of the clerisy of the great and literate cultures are highly variable, and the depth of the chasm between the great and little traditions may vary a great deal. So does the relationship of the clerisy to the state, and its own internal organization: it may be centralized or it may be loose, it may be hereditary or on the contrary constitute an open guild, and so forth.

Literacy, the establishment of a reasonably permanent and standardized script, means in effect the possibility of cultural and cognitive storage and centralization. The cognitive centralization and codification effected by a clerisy, and the political centralization which is the state, need not go hand in hand. Often they are rivals; sometimes one may capture the other; but more often, the Red and

the Black, the specialists of violence and of faith, are indeed independently operating rivals, and their territories are often not co-extensive.

Power and culture in the agro-literate polity

These two crucial and idiosyncratic forms of the division of labour – the centralizations of power and of culture/cognition – have profound and special implications for the typical social structure of the agro-literate polity. Their implications are best considered jointly, and they can be schematized as shown in figure 1.

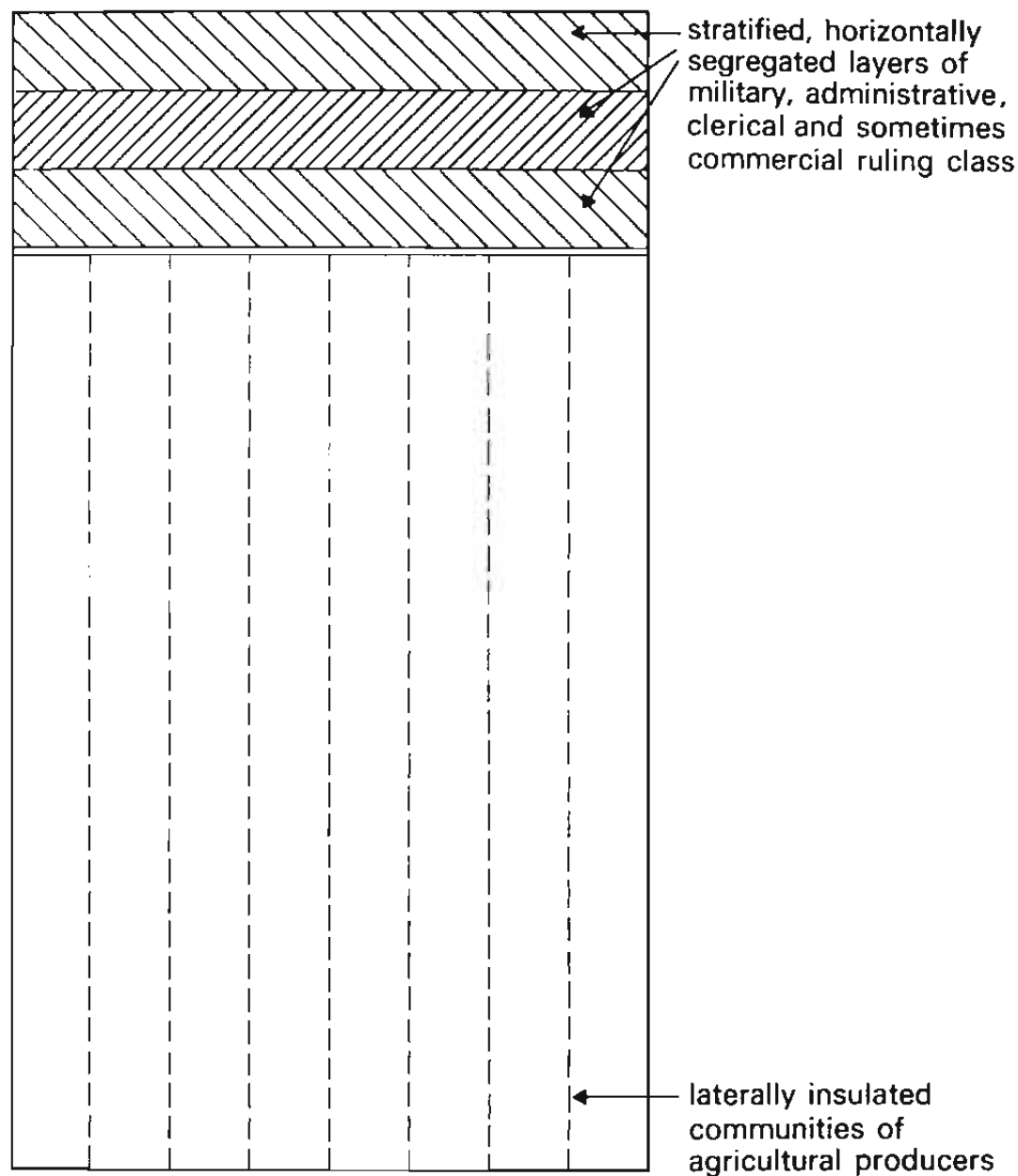


Figure 1 General form of the social structure of agrarian societies.

In the characteristic agro-literate polity, the ruling class forms a small minority of the population, rigidly separate from the great majority of direct agricultural producers, or peasants. Generally

speaking, its ideology exaggerates rather than underplays the inequality of classes and the degree of separation of the ruling stratum. This can in turn be sub-divided into a number of more specialized layers: warriors, priests, clerics, administrators, burghers. Some of these layers (for example, Christian clergy) may be non-hereditary and be re-selected in each generation, though recruitment may be closely predetermined by the other hereditary strata. The most important point, however, is this: both for the ruling stratum as a whole, and for the various sub-strata within it, there is great stress on cultural differentiation rather than on homogeneity. The more differentiated in style of all kinds the various strata are, the less friction and ambiguity there will be between them. The whole system favours horizontal lines of cultural cleavage, and it may invent and reinforce them when they are absent. Genetic and cultural differences are attributed to what were in fact merely strata differentiated by function, so as to fortify the differentiation, and endow it with authority and permanence. For instance, in early nineteenth-century Tunisia, the ruling stratum considered itself to be Turkish, though quite unable to speak that language, and in fact of very mixed ancestry and reinforced by recruits from below.

Below the horizontally stratified minority at the top, there is another world, that of the laterally separated petty communities of the lay members of the society. Here, once again, cultural differentiation is very marked, though the reasons are quite different. Small peasant communities generally live inward-turned lives, tied to the locality by economic need if not by political prescription. Even if the population of a given area starts from the same linguistic base-line – which very often is not the case – a kind of culture drift soon engenders dialectal and other differences. No-one, or almost no-one, has an interest in promoting cultural homogeneity at this social level. The state is interested in extracting taxes, maintaining the peace, and not much else, and has no interest in promoting lateral communication between its subject communities.

The clerisy may, it is true, have a measure of interest in imposing certain shared cultural norms. Some clerisies are contemptuous of and indifferent towards folk practices, while others, in the interest of monopolizing access to the sacred, to salvation, therapy and so forth, combat and actively denigrate folk culture and the freelance folk shamans who proliferate within it. But, within the general conditions prevailing in agro-literate polities, they can never really be

successful. Such societies simply do not possess the means for making literacy near-universal and incorporating the broad masses of the population in a high culture, thus implementing the ideals of the clerisy. The most the clerisy can achieve is to ensure that its ideal is internalized as a valid but impracticable norm, to be respected or even revered, perhaps even aspired to in periodic outbursts of enthusiasm, but to be honoured more in the breach than in the observance in normal times.

But perhaps the central, most important fact about agro-literate society is this: almost everything in it militates against the definition of political units in terms of cultural boundaries.

In other words, had nationalism been invented in such a period its prospects of general acceptance would have been slender indeed. One might put it this way: of the two potential partners, culture and power, destined for each other according to nationalist theory, *neither* has much inclination for the other in the conditions prevailing in the agrarian age. Let us take each of them in turn.

Culture

Among the higher strata of agro-literate society it is clearly advantageous to stress, sharpen and accentuate the diacritical, differential, and monopolizable traits of the privileged groups. The tendency of liturgical languages to become distinct from the vernacular is very strong: it is as if literacy alone did not create enough of a barrier between cleric and layman, as if the chasm between them had to be deepened, by making the language not merely recorded in an inaccessible script, but also incomprehensible when articulated.

The establishment of horizontal cultural cleavages is not only attractive, in that it furthers the interests of the privileged and the power-holders; it is also feasible, and indeed easy. Thanks to the relative stability of agro-literate societies, sharp separations of the population into estates or castes or millets can be established and maintained without creating intolerable frictions. On the contrary, by externalizing, making absolute and underwriting inequalities, it fortifies them and makes them palatable, by endowing them with the aura of inevitability, permanence and naturalness. That which is inscribed into the nature of things and is perennial, is consequently not personally, individually offensive, nor psychically intolerable.

By contrast, in an inherently mobile and unstable society the maintenance of these social dams, separating unequal levels, is intolerably difficult. The powerful currents of mobility are ever undermining them. Contrary to what Marxism has led people to expect, it is pre-industrial society which is addicted to horizontal differentiation within societies, whereas industrial society strengthens the boundaries between nations rather than those between classes.

The same tends to be true, in a different form, lower down on the social scale. Even there, preoccupation with horizontal, often subtle but locally important differentiations can be intense. But even if the local group is internally more or less homogeneous, it is most unlikely to link its own idiosyncratic culture to any kind of political principle, to think in terms of a political legitimacy defined in a way which refers to the local culture. For a variety of obvious reasons, such a style of thinking is, in these conditions, most unnatural, and would indeed seem absurd to those concerned, were it explained to them. Local culture is almost invisible. The self-enclosed community tends to communicate in terms whose meaning can only be identified *in context*, in contrast to the relatively context-free scholasticism of the scribes. But the village patois (or shorthand or 'restricted code') has no normative or political pretensions; quite the reverse. The most it can do is identify the village of origin or anyone who opens his mouth at the local market.

In brief, cultures proliferate in this world, but its conditions do not *generally* encourage what might be called cultural imperialisms, the efforts of one culture or another to dominate and expand to fill out a political unit. Culture tends to be branded either horizontally (by social caste), or vertically, to define very small local communities. The factors determining political boundaries are totally distinct from those determining cultural limits. Clerisies sometimes endeavour to extend the zone of a culture, or rather, of the faith they codified for it; and states sometimes indulge in crusades, faith-endorsed aggression. But these are not the normal, pervasive conditions of agrarian society.

It is important to add that cultures in such a world proliferate in a very complex way: in many cases, it is far from clear how a given individual is to be assigned to his 'cultural background'. A Himalayan peasant, for instance, may be involved with priests and monks and shamans of several religions in different contexts at different

times of the year; his caste, clan and language may link him to diverse units. The speakers of a given tribal language may, for instance, not be treated as members of it, if they happen to be of the wrong occupational caste. Life-style, occupation, language, ritual practice, may fail to be congruent. A family's economic and political survival may hinge, precisely, on the adroit manipulation and maintenance of these ambiguities, on keeping options and connections open. Its members may not have the slightest interest in, or taste for, an unambiguous, categorical self-characterization such as is nowadays associated with a putative nation, aspiring to internal homogeneity and external autonomy. In a traditional milieu an ideal of a single overriding and cultural identity makes little sense. Nepalese hill peasants often have links with a variety of religious rituals, and think in terms of caste, clan, or village (but not of nation) according to circumstance. It hardly matters whether homogeneity is preached or not. It can find little resonance.

The state in agrarian society

In these circumstances there is little incentive or opportunity for cultures to aspire to the kind of monochrome homogeneity and political pervasiveness and domination for which later, with the coming of the age of nationalism, they eventually strive. But how does the matter look from the viewpoint of the state, or, more generally, of the political unit?

Political units of the agrarian age vary enormously in size and kind. 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 the city states, tribal segments, peasant communes and so forth, running their own affairs, with a fairly high political participation ratio (to adapt 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.

The question which concerns us is whether, in our world, containing these types of unit, there are forces making for that fusion of culture and polity which is the essence of nationalism. The answer

must be No. The local communities depend for their functioning on a good measure of face-to-face contact, and they cannot expand in size radically without transforming themselves out of all recognition. Hence these participatory communities seldom exhaust the culture of which they are part; they may have their local accent and customs, but these tend to be but variants of a wider inter-communicating culture containing many other similar communities. City states, for instance, seldom have a language of their own. No doubt the ancient Greeks were reasonably typical in this respect. While they possessed a vigorous awareness of their own shared culture and the contrast between it and that of all barbarians (with, incidentally, a rather low degree of horizontal cultural differentiation between Hellenes), this sense of unity had little *political* expression, even in aspiration, let alone in achievement. But when a pan-Hellenic polity was established under Macedonian leadership, it very rapidly grew into an empire transcending by far the bounds of Hellenism. In ancient Greece, chauvinistic though the Greeks were in their own way, there appears to have been no slogan equivalent to *Ein Reich, Ein Volk, Ein Fuehrer*.

The varieties of agrarian rulers

The agro-literate polity is a kind of society which has been in existence some five millennia or so and which, despite the variety of its forms, shares certain basic features. The great majority of its citizens are agricultural producers, living in inward-turned communities, and they are dominated by a minority whose chief distinguishing attributes are the management of violence, the maintenance of order, and the control of the official wisdom of the society, which is eventually enshrined in script. This warrior-and-scribe ruling class can be fitted into a rough typology, in terms of the following set of oppositions:

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| 1 | Centralized | Uncentralized |
| 2 | Gelded | Stallions |
| 3 | Closed | Open |
| 4 | Fused | Specialized |

1 Both a clerisy and a military class can be either centralized or decentralized. The medieval Catholic Church is a splendid example of an effectively centralized clerisy which can dominate the moral

climate of a civilization. The *ulama* of Islam achieved as much, but with an almost total absence of any centralized organization or internal hierarchy, and they were theoretically an open class. The Brahmins were both a clerisy and a closed kin group; the Chinese bureaucracy doubled up as scribes and administrators.

2 From the viewpoint of the central state, the major danger, as Plato recognized so long ago, is the acquisition, or retention, by its military or clerical office-holders of links with particular kin groups, whose interests are then liable to sway the officers from the stern path of duty, and whose support is, at the same time, liable to endow them on occasion with too much power.

The strategies adopted for countering this pervasive danger vary in detail, but can be generically characterized as *gelding*. The idea is to break the kin link by depriving the budding warrior/bureaucrat/cleric either of ancestry, or of posterity, or of both. The techniques used included the use of eunuchs, physically incapable of possessing posterity; of priests whose privileged position was conditional on celibacy, thereby preventing them from avowing posterity; of foreigners, whose kin links could be assumed to be safely distant; or of members of otherwise disfranchised or excluded groups, who would be helpless if separated from the employing state. Another technique was the employment of 'slaves', men who, though in fact privileged and powerful, nevertheless, being 'owned' by the state, technically had no other legitimate links, and whose property and position could revert to the state at any time, without even the fiction of a right to due process, and thus without creating any rights on the parts of some local or kin group of the destituted official.

Literal eunuchs were frequently employed.¹ Celibate priests were, of course, prominent in Christendom. Slave military bureaucracies were conspicuous in Islamic polities after the decline of the Kaliphate. Foreigners were often prominent in palace elite guards and in the financial secretariats of the empires.

However, gelding was not universal. The Chinese bureaucracy was recruited from the 'gentry'; and the European feudal class rapidly succeeded in superimposing the principle of heredity on to that of the allocation of land for service. In contrast with gelding, elites whose members are formally allowed to reproduce themselves

¹Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, Cambridge, 1978, ch. 4.

socially, and retain their positions for their offspring, may be called *stallions*.

3 There are advantages in clerisies, bureaucracies and military classes being *open*, and in their being *closed*. European clergy and Chinese bureaucrats were technically open (as were Muslim *ulama*), though they were recruited predominantly from a restricted stratum. In Hinduism, priests and warrior-rulers are both closed and distinct, and their mutual (theoretical) impenetrability may be essential to the working of the system. They are both closed and non-fused, distinct. In Islam (excluding Mamluk and Janissary periods) neither clerisy nor the military are gelded.

4 Finally, the ruling class may either *fuse* the military and clerical (and possibly other) functions, or carefully segregate them into *specialized* groups. Hinduism formally separated them. European feudalism fused them on occasion, in the military orders.

It would be intriguing to follow in concrete historical detail the various possible combinations resulting from choosing from among these alternatives. For our present purpose, however, what matters is something that all the variants tend to have in common. The power-holders are caught in a kind of field of tension between local communities which are sub-national in scale, and a horizontal estate or caste which is more than national. They are loyal to a stratum which is much more interested in differentiating itself from those below than in diffusing its own culture to them, and which quite often extends its own limits beyond the bounds of the local polity, and is trans-political and in competition with the state. Only seldom (as in the case of the Chinese bureaucracy) is it co-extensive with a state (and in that case, it did display a certain kind of nationalism).

The only stratum which can in any sense be said to have a cultural policy is the clerisy. Sometimes, as in the case of the Brahmins, its policy is in effect to create a complementarity and mutual interdependence between itself and the other orders. It seeks to strengthen its own position by making itself indispensable, and the complementary roles it ascribes to itself and to the laity, far from requiring its own universalization, formally preclude it. Notwithstanding the fact that it claims monopolistic authority over ritual propriety, it does not wish to see itself emulated. It has little wish for the sincerest form of flattery, imitation, though it does provoke it.

Elsewhere, as in Islam, the clerisy from time to time takes its own missionary duties, to be practised among the habitually relapsing

weaker brethren within the faith, with becoming seriousness. There is here no rule enjoining that some must pray, some fight, and some work, and that these estates should not presume to meddle with each other's realm. As far as the actual prescriptions of the faith go, everyone is allowed to do all three of these things, if his aptitudes and energy allow. (This latent egalitarianism is very important for the successful adaptation of Islam to the modern world.) Thus there is no formal or theological obstacle to a clerical missionary cultural policy *à outrance*. In practice there is still a problem: if everyone really systematically indulged in legal-theological studies, who would look after the sheep, goats and camels? In certain parts of the Sahara there are entire tribes designated, by inter-tribal compact, as People of the Book. In practice, however, this only means that religious personnel are habitually drawn from among their number. It does not mean that all of them actually become religious specialists. Most of them continue to work and fight. The only communities in which a really very significant proportion of adult males indulged in the study of the Law were some Jewish ones in Eastern Europe. But that was a special and extreme case, and in any case these communities were themselves sub-communities in a wider and more complex society.

So for very deep, powerful and insuperable reasons, clerisies in agro-literate societies cannot properly dominate and absorb the entire society. Sometimes their own rules prohibit it, and sometimes external obstacles make it impossible; but the latter would in any case constitute a sufficient and effective impediment, even if the rules were always favourable to this aspiration.

In the agrarian order, to try to impose on all levels of society a universalized clerisy and a homogenized culture with centrally imposed norms, fortified by writing, would be an idle dream. Even if such a programme is contained in some theological doctrines, it cannot be, and is not, implemented. It simply cannot be done. The resources are lacking.

But what happens if the clerisy one day *is* universalized, becomes co-extensive with the entire society, not by its own efforts, not by some heroic or miraculous internal *Jihad*, but by a much more effective, deeply-rooted social force, by a total transformation of the whole nature of the division of labour and of productive and cognitive processes? The answer to this question, and the specification of the nature of that transformation, will turn out to be crucial for the understanding of nationalism.

Note also that in the agrarian order only some elite strata in some societies were systematically gelded, by one or another of the specific techniques described above. Even when it is done, it is difficult, as Plato foresaw, to enforce the gelding indefinitely. The guardians, be they Mamluks or Janissaries, bureaucrats or prebend-holders, become corrupted, acquire interests and links and continuity, or are seduced by the pursuit of honour and wealth and the lure of self-perpetuation. Agrarian man seems to be made of a corruptible metal.

His successor, industrial man, seems to be made of purer, though not totally pure, metal. What happens when a social order is accidentally brought about in which the clerisy does become, at long last, universal, when literacy is not a specialism but a pre-condition of all other specialisms, and when virtually all occupations cease to be hereditary? What happens when gelding at the same time also becomes near-universal and very effective, when every man Jack amongst us is a Mamluk *de Robe*, putting the obligations to his calling above the claims of kinship? In an age of universalized clerisy and Mamluk-dom, the relationship of culture and polity changes radically. A high culture pervades the whole of society, defines it, and needs to be sustained by the polity. *That* is the secret of nationalism.

Industrial Society

The origins of industrial society continue to be an object of scholarly dispute. It seems to me very probable that this will continue to be so for ever. An enormously complex transformation occurred in a very large, diversified and intricate society, and the event was *unique*: no imitative industrialization can be treated as an event *of the same kind* as the original industrialization, simply in virtue of the fact that all the others were indeed imitative, were performed in the light of the now established knowledge that the thing could be done, and had certain blatant and conspicuous advantages (though the emulated ideal was, of course, interpreted in all kinds of quite diverse ways). So we can never repeat the original event, which was perpetrated by men who knew not what they did, an unawareness which was of the very essence of the event. We cannot do it, for quite a number of cogent reasons: the sheer fact of repetition makes it different from the original occasion; we cannot in any case reproduce all the circumstances of early modern Western Europe; and experiments on such a scale, for the sake of establishing a theoretical point, are morally hardly conceivable. In any case, to sort out the causal threads of so complex a process, we should need not one, but very many re-runs, and these will never be available to us.

But while we cannot really establish the aetiology of industrialism, we can hope to make some progress in putting forward models of the generic working of industrial society. In fact, the real merit and importance of Max Weber's celebrated essay (*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*) seems to me to lie far less in his fascinating but speculative and inconclusive hypothesis about the genesis of the capitalist spirit, than in his reflections about what constitute the general distinguishing features of the new social order. In fact, although the (entirely salutary) shift of concern from the origins of capitalism to that of the origins of industrialism only occurred after Weber, and as a consequence of the emergence of non-capitalist industrial societies, nevertheless this reformulation of the crucial

question is already implicit in Weber's preoccupation with bureaucracy, alongside his concern with the entrepreneurial spirit. If a centralized bureaucracy exemplifies the new *Geist* just as much as does the rational businessman, then clearly we are concerned with industrialism, rather than with capitalism as such.

In the Weberian, and I think in any plausible account of the new spirit, the notion of *rationality* must be central and important. Weber himself was not particularly deft in giving coherent and adequate definitions, particularly so in this case, though it is perfectly possible to distil from the contexts of his use of this notion of rationality what he meant by it, and that this underlying notion is indeed crucial for this topic. As it happens, this notion is explored, with unparalleled philosophic depth, by the two greatest philosophers of the eighteenth century, David Hume and Immanuel Kant, both of whom, under the fond delusion that they were analysing the human mind as such, *an sich*, anywhere, any time, were in fact giving very profound accounts of the general logic of the new spirit whose emergence characterized their age. What these two thinkers shared was at least as important as what separated them.

Two elements are conspicuously present in Weber's notion of rationality. One is coherence or consistency, the like treatment of like cases, regularity, what might be called the very soul or honour of a good bureaucrat. The other is efficiency, the cool rational selection of the best available means to given, clearly formulated and isolated ends; in other words, the spirit of the ideal entrepreneur. Orderliness and efficiency may indeed be seen as the bureaucratic and the entrepreneurial elements in an overall spirit of rationality.

I do not myself believe that these two elements are really independent of each other. The notion of means-ends efficiency implies that the agent will always choose the self-same solution to a given problem, irrespective of 'irrelevant' considerations; and consequently it carries the bureaucratic requirement of symmetry of treatment as an immediate corollary. The imperative of symmetry does not quite so immediately imply the corollary of efficiency (and indeed, as an empirical fact, bureaucrats, even or especially perfectly honest and conscientious ones, are not always particularly efficient, as Weber himself noted); nevertheless, any sustained and non-superficial implementation of the requirement of orderliness will imply the use of a general and neutral idiom for the specification both of ends and of fact, of the environment in which the ends are to be pursued.

Such a language, by its clear specification of ends and means, will in the end only permit the characterization of actions in a way which ensures that clearly identified ends are attained by means selected for their optimal effectiveness, and for nothing else.

What underlies the two elements of the rational spirit of which Weber was clearly aware (orderliness and efficiency) is something deeper, well explored by Hume and Kant under the blithe impression that they were investigating the human mind in general: namely, a common measure of fact, a universal conceptual currency, so to speak, for the general characterization of things; and the *esprit d'analyse*, forcefully preached and characterized already by Descartes. Each of these elements is presupposed by rationality, in the sense in which it concerns us, as the secret of the modern spirit. By the common or single conceptual currency I mean that all facts are located within a single continuous logical space, that statements reporting them can be conjoined and generally related to each other, and so that in principle one single language describes the world and is internally unitary; or on the negative side, that there are no special, privileged, insulated facts or realms, protected from contamination or contradiction by others, and living in insulated independent logical spaces of their own. Just this was, of course, the most striking trait of pre-modern, pre-rational visions: the co-existence within them of multiple, not properly united, but hierarchically related sub-worlds, and the existence of special privileged facts, sacralized and exempt from ordinary treatment.

In a traditional social order, the languages of the hunt, of harvesting, of various rituals, of the council room, of the kitchen or harem, all form autonomous systems: to conjoin statements drawn from these various disparate fields, to probe for inconsistencies between them, to try to unify them all, this would be a social solecism or worse, probably blasphemy or impiety, and the very endeavour would be unintelligible. By contrast, in our society it is assumed that all referential uses of language ultimately refer to one coherent world, and can be reduced to a unitary idiom; and that it is legitimate to relate them to each other. 'Only connect' is an intelligible and acceptable ideal. Modern philosophies of knowledge are frequently our expression and codification of this idea and aspiration, which in turn is not a philosophical whim, but has profound social roots.

Equalization and homogenization of facts is incomplete unless accompanied by what may be called the separation of all separables, the *esprit d'analyse*, the breaking up of all complexes into their constituent parts (even if it can only be done in thought), and the refusal to countenance conceptual package deals. It is precisely by binding things together that traditional visions perpetuate themselves and the prejudgements contained within them; and it is by insisting on prising things apart that we have liberated ourselves from them. These package-deals, and the discontinuous conceptual spaces, are the equivalents, in the sphere of ideas, of the stable social groupings and structures at the level of men. Likewise, the unified and standardized, as it were metric world of facts, as conceived in the philosophies of Hume or Kant, is the analogue of the anonymous and equal collectivities of men in a mass society. In the present argument, we are concerned with men and their groupings, rather than with ideas; but the unification of their ideas in continuous and unitary systems is connected with their re-grouping in internally fluid, culturally continuous communities.

Industrial society is the only society ever to live by and rely on sustained and perpetual growth, on an expected and continuous improvement. Not surprisingly, it was the first society to invent the concept and ideal of progress, of continuous improvement. Its favoured mode of social control is universal Danegeld, buying off social aggression with material enhancement; its greatest weakness is its inability to survive any temporary reduction of the social bribery fund, and to weather the loss of legitimacy which befalls it if the cornucopia becomes temporarily jammed and the flow falters. Many societies in the past have on occasion discovered innovations and improved their lot, and sometimes it may even have been true that improvements came not as single spies but in battalions. But the improvement was never perpetual, nor expected to be so. Something special must have happened to have engendered so unusual and remarkable an expectation.

And indeed, something unusual, something unique, had happened. The conception of the world as homogeneous, subject to systematic, indiscriminate laws, and as open to interminable exploration, offered endless possibilities of new combinations of means with no firm prior expectations and limits: no possibilities would be barred, and in the end nothing but evidence would decide how things were, and how they could be combined to secure desired

effects. This was a totally new vision. The old worlds were, on the one hand, each of them, a cosmos: purposive, hierarchial, 'meaningful'; and on the other hand, not quite unified, consisting of sub-worlds each with its own idiom and logic, not subsumable under a single overall orderliness. The new world was on the one hand morally inert, and on the other, unitary.

Hume's philosophy is one of the most important codifications of this vision. Its best-known part is his treatment of causation, which indeed follows from the overall vision and its central insights. What it amounts to in the end is this: in the very nature of things, nothing is inherently connected with anything else. The actual connections of this world can only be established by first separating in thought everything that can be thought separately – so that we can isolate the pure elements, so to speak – and then seeing what, as a matter of experience, happens to be actually conjoined to what.

Is the world like that? *Ours* is. This is the pre-condition, the price of a world of endless discovery. Inquiry must not be bound by the natural affinities and liaisons of things, built into this or that vision and style of life. And, of course, Hume's account of causation is not merely an admirable summary of the background picture facing the untrammelled, eternal inquirer; it is also an account of the comportment of his economic counterpart, the modern entrepreneur. Not for the merchant or manufacturer of the age of reason the fusion of labour, technique, material and mould, prescribed by custom, tied to a social order and rhythm; his progress and the advancement of the economy of which he is a part hinges, once again, on his untrammelled selection of whatever means, in the light of the evidence and of nothing else, serves some clear aim such as the maximization of profit. (His predecessor or indeed his surviving feudal contemporary would have been hard put to it to single out a solitary, isolable criterion of success. Profit for them would have been merged in a number of inseparable other considerations, such as the maintenance of their positions in the community. Adam Smith saw only too clearly the difference between a Glasgow burgher and, say, Cameron of Lochiel. Hume's theory of causation ratifies the perceptions of the former.)

This vision of a society which has become dependent on both cognitive and economic growth (the two being, of course, linked to each other) concerns us here, because we are primarily interested in the consequences of an ever-growing, ever-progressing society. But

the consequences of such perpetual growth have striking parallels with the vision which was its condition.

The society of perpetual growth

If cognitive growth presupposes that no element is indissolubly linked *a priori* to any other, and that everything is open to re-thinking, then economic and productive growth requires exactly the same of human activities and hence of human roles. Roles become optional and instrumental. The old stability of the social role structure is simply incompatible with growth and innovation. Innovation means doing new things, the boundaries of which cannot be the same as those of the activities they replace. No doubt most societies can cope with an occasional re-drawing of job-specifications and guild boundaries, just as a football team can experimentally switch from one formation to another, and yet maintain continuity. One change does not make progress. But what happens when such changes themselves are constant and continuous, when the persistence of occupational change itself becomes the one permanent feature of a social order?

When this question is answered, the main part of the problem of nationalism is thereby solved. Nationalism is rooted in a *certain kind* of division of labour, one which is complex and persistently, cumulatively changing.

High productivity, as Adam Smith insisted so much, requires a complex and refined division of labour. Perpetually growing productivity requires that this division be not merely complex, but also perpetually, and often rapidly, changing. This rapid and continuous change both of the economic role system itself and of the occupancy of places within it, has certain immediate and profoundly important consequences. Men located within it cannot generally rest in the same niches all their lives; and they can only seldom rest in them, so to speak, over generations. Positions are seldom (for this and other reasons) transmitted from father to son. Adam Smith noted the precariousness of bourgeois fortunes, though he erroneously attributed stability of social station to pastoralists, mistaking their genealogical myths for reality.

The immediate consequence of this new kind of mobility is a certain kind of egalitarianism. Modern society is not mobile because

it is egalitarian; it is egalitarian because it is mobile. Moreover, it has to be mobile whether it wishes to be so or not, because this is required by the satisfaction of its terrible and overwhelming thirst for economic growth.

A society which is destined to a permanent game of musical chairs cannot erect deep barriers of rank, of caste or estate, between the various sets of chairs which it possesses. That would hamper the mobility, and, given the mobility, would indeed lead to intolerable tensions. Men can tolerate terrible inequalities, if they are stable and hallowed by custom. But in a hectically mobile society, custom has no time to hallow anything. A rolling stone gathers no aura, and a mobile population does not allow any aura to attach to its stratification. Stratification and inequality do exist, and sometimes in extreme form; nevertheless they have a muted and discreet quality, attenuated by a kind of gradualness of the distinctions of wealth and standing, a lack of social distance and a convergence of life-styles, a kind of statistical or probabilistic quality of the differences (as opposed to the rigid, absolutized, chasm-like differences typical of agrarian society), and by the illusion or reality of social mobility.

That illusion is essential, and it cannot persist without at least a measure of reality. Just how much reality there is in this appearance of upward and downward mobility varies and is subject to learned dispute, but there can be no reasonable doubt that it does have a good deal of reality: when the system of roles itself is changing so much, the occupants of positions within it cannot be, as some left-wing sociologists claim, tied to a rigid stratificational system. Compared with agrarian society, this society is mobile and egalitarian.

But there is more than all this to the egalitarianism and mobility engendered by the distinctively industrial, growth-oriented economy. There are some additional subtler traits of the new division of labour, which can perhaps best be approached by considering the difference between the division of labour in an industrial society and that of a particularly complex, well-developed agrarian one. The *obvious* difference between the two is that one is more stable and the other is more mobile. In fact, one of them generally wills itself to be stable, and the other wills itself to be mobile; and one of them pretends to be more stable than social reality permits, while the other often claims more mobility, in the interest of pretending to satisfy its egalitarian ideal, than its real constraints actually permit. Nevertheless, though both systems tend to exaggerate their own central

features, they do indeed markedly possess the trait they claim as their own when contrasted with each other: one is rigid, the other mobile. But if that is the obvious contrast, what are the subtler features which accompany it?

Compare in detail the division of labour in a highly advanced agrarian society with that of an average industrial one. Every kind of function, for instance now has at least one kind of specialist associated with it. Car mechanics are becoming specialized in terms of the make of car they service. The industrial society will have a larger population, and probably, by most natural ways of counting, a larger number of different jobs. In *that* sense, the division of labour has been pushed much further within it.

But by some criteria, it may well be that a fully developed agrarian society actually has the more complex division of labour. The specialisms within it are more distant from each other than are the possibly more numerous specialisms of an industrial society, which tend to have what can only be described as a mutual affinity of style. Some of the specialisms of a mature agrarian society will be extreme: they will be the fruits of lifelong, very prolonged and totally dedicated training, which may have commenced in early youth and required an almost complete renunciation of other concerns. The achievements of craft and art production in these societies are extremely labour- and skill-intensive, and often reach levels of intricacy and perfection never remotely equalled by anything later attained by industrial societies, whose domestic arts and decorations, gastronomy, tools and adornments are notoriously shoddy.

Notwithstanding their aridity and sterility, the scholastic and ritual complexity mastered by the schoolmen of a developed agrarian society is often such as to strain the very limits of the human mind. In brief, although the peasants, who form the great majority of an agrarian society, are more or less mutually interchangeable when it comes to the performance of the social tasks which are normally assigned to them, the important minority of specialists within such societies are outstandingly complementary to each other; each one of them, or each group of them, is dependent on the others and, when sticking to its last, its specialism, quite incapable of self-sufficiency.

It is curious that, by contrast, in industrial society, notwithstanding its larger number of specialisms, the distance between specialists is far less great. Their mysteries are far closer to mutual intelligibility, their manuals have idioms which overlap to a much

greater extent, and re-training, though sometimes difficult, is not generally an awesome task.

So quite apart from the presence of mobility in the one case and stability in the other, there is a subtle but profound and important qualitative difference in the division of labour itself. Durkheim was in error when he in effect classed advanced pre-industrial civilizations and industrial society together under the single heading of 'organic solidarity', and when he failed to introduce properly this further distinction within the wider category of organic solidarity or of complementary division of labour. The difference is this: the major part of training in industrial society is *generic* training, not specifically connected with the highly specialized professional activity of the person in question, and *preceding* it. Industrial society may by most criteria be the most highly specialized society ever; but its educational system is unquestionably the *least* specialized, the most universally standardized, that has ever existed. The same kind of training or education is given to all or most children and adolescents up to an astonishingly late age. Specialized schools have prestige only at the end of the educational process, if they constitute a kind of completion of a prolonged previous unspecialized education; specialized schools intended for a younger, earlier intake have negative prestige.

Is this a paradox, or perhaps one of those illogical survivals from an earlier age? Those who notice the 'gentlemanly' or leisure-class elements in higher education have sometimes supposed so. But, although some of the frills and affectations attached to higher education may indeed be irrelevancies and survivals, the central fact – the pervasiveness and importance of generic, unspecialized training – is conjoined to highly specialized industrial society not as a paradox, but as something altogether fitting and necessary. The kind of specialization found in industrial society rests precisely on a common foundation of unspecialized and standardized training.

A modern army subjects its recruits first to a shared generic training, in the course of which they are meant to acquire and internalize the basic idiom, ritual and skills common to the army as a whole; and only subsequently are the recruits given more specialized training. It is assumed or hoped that every properly trained recruit can be re-trained from one specialism to another without too much loss of time, with the exception of a relatively small number of very highly trained specialists. A modern society is, in this respect, like a

modern army, only more so. It provides a very prolonged and fairly thorough training for all its recruits, insisting on certain shared qualifications: literacy, numeracy, basic work habits and social skills, familiarity with basic technical and social skills. For the large majority of the population the distinctive skills involved in working life are superimposed on the basic training, either on the job or as part of a much less prolonged 'supplementary training; and the assumption is that anyone who has completed the generic training common to the entire population can be re-trained for most other jobs without too much difficulty. Generally speaking, the additional skills required consist of a few techniques that can be learned fairly quickly, plus 'experience', a kind of familiarity with a milieu, its personnel and its manner of operation. This may take a little time to acquire, and it is sometimes reinforced by a little protective mystique, but seldom really amounts to very much. There is also a minority of genuine specialists, people whose effective occupancy of their posts really depends on very prolonged additional training, and who are not easily or at all replaceable by anyone not sharing their own particular educational background and talent.

The ideal of universal literacy and the right to education is a well-known part of the pantheon of modern values. It is spoken of with respect by statesmen and politicians, and enshrined in declarations of rights, constitutions, party programmes and so forth. So far, nothing unusual. The same is true of representative and accountable government, free elections, an independent judiciary, freedom of speech and assembly, and so on. Many or most of these admirable values are often and systematically ignored in many parts of the world, without anyone batting an eyelid. Very often, it is safe to consider these phrases as simple verbiage. Most constitutions guaranteeing free speech and elections are as informative about the societies they allegedly define as a man saying 'Good morning' is about the weather. All this is well known. What is so very curious, and highly significant, about the principle of universal and centrally guaranteed education, is that it is an ideal more honoured in the observance than in the breach. In this it is virtually unique among modern ideals; and this calls for an explanation. Professor Ronald Dore has powerfully criticized this tendency,¹ particularly among developing societies, of

¹Ronald Dore, *The Diploma Disease*, London, 1976. For an approach to the social implications of literacy at an earlier stage, see Jack Goody (ed.), *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, Cambridge, 1968.

overrating formal 'paper' qualifications, and no doubt it has harmful side effects. But I wonder whether he fully appreciates the deep roots of what he castigates as the Diploma Disease. We live in a world in which we can no longer respect the informal, intimate transmission of skills, for the social structures within which such transmission could occur are dissolving. Hence the only kind of knowledge we can respect is that authenticated by reasonably impartial centres of learning, which issue certificates on the basis of honest, impartially administered examinations. Hence we are doomed to suffer the Diploma Disease.

All this suggests that the kind of education described – universal, standardized, and generic – *really* plays some essential part in the effective working of a modern society, and is not merely part of its verbiage or self-advertisement. This is in fact so. To understand what that role is, we must, to borrow a phrase from Marx (though not perhaps in the sense in which he used it), consider not merely the mode of production of modern society, but above all its mode of *reproduction*.

Social genetics

The reproduction of social individuals and groups can be carried out either on the one-to-one or on-the-job principle, or by what may be called the centralized method. There are, of course, many mixed and intermediate ways of doing this job, but their consideration can best be postponed until after the discussion of these two extreme, as it were polar, possibilities.

The one-to-one, on-the-job method is practised when a family, kin unit, village, tribal segment or similar fairly small unit takes the individual infants born into it, and by allowing and obliging them to share in the communal life, plus a few more specific methods such as training, exercises, precepts, *rites de passage* and so forth, eventually turns these infants into adults reasonably similar to those of the preceding generation; and in this manner the society and its culture perpetuate themselves.

The centralized method of reproduction is one in which the local method is significantly complemented (or in extreme cases, wholly replaced) by an educational or training agency which is distinct from

the local community, and which takes over the preparation of the young human beings in question, and eventually hands them back to the wider society to fulfil their roles in it, when the process of training is completed. An extreme version of this system developed a high degree of perfection and effectiveness in the Ottoman empire, when under the *devshirme* and janissary systems, young boys, either secured as a tax obligation from conquered populations, or purchased as slaves, were systematically trained for war and administration and, ideally, wholly weaned and separated from their families and communities of origin. A less total version of this system was and in part still is practised by the British upper class, with its reliance on boarding schools from an early age. Variants of this system can on occasion be found even in relatively simple, pre-literate agrarian societies.

Societies consisting of sub-communities can be divided into those in which the sub-communities can, if necessary, reproduce themselves without help from the rest of society, and those in which mutual complementarity and interdependence are such that they cannot do this. Generally speaking, the segments and rural communities of agrarian society *can* reproduce themselves independently. The anthropological concept of a segmentary society contains precisely this idea: the 'segment' is simply a smaller variant of the larger society of which it is a part, and can do on a smaller scale everything done by the larger unit.

Furthermore, one must distinguish between economic and educational self-sufficiency, in the sense of capacity for self-reproduction. The ruling strata of an agrarian society are, of course, dependent on a surplus drawn from the rest of society, but they may nevertheless be educationally quite self-sufficient. Various other kinds of non-self-sufficiency can also be engendered by social rules, such as those which make communities dependent on external ritual specialists, or on the supply of brides from outside. Here we are concerned with educational, not economic capacity for group self-reproduction. There are numerous complex, mixed and intermediate forms of group reproduction. When feudal lords send their sons as half-trainees, half-hostages to the local court, when masters accept apprentices who are not their sons, and so forth, we are obviously in the presence of such mixed systems.

Generally speaking, the situation in agrarian society seems to be this: the great majority of the population belongs to self-reproducing

units, such as in effect educate their young on the job, in their stride, as part and parcel of the general business of living, without relying much or at all on any kind of educational specialist. A minority of the population receives specialized training. The society will contain one or more strata of full-time educators, who both reproduce themselves by taking on apprentices, and perform part-time services for the rest of the community: ritual, therapeutic, admonitory, secretarial, and so on. It may be useful to distinguish between one-to-one, intra-community training, and call it acculturation, and specialized *exo-training* (on the analogy of exogamy), which calls for skills outside the community, and call that education proper.

A very important stratum in literate agrarian society are the clerks, those who can read and transmit literacy, and who thus form one of the classes of specialists in that society. They may or may not form a guild or be incorporated in an organization. As, generally speaking, writing soon transcends its purely technical use in record-keeping, and acquires moral and theological significance, the clerks or clerics are almost invariably far more than mere grapho-technicians. It is not just writing, but what is written that counts, and, in agrarian society, the ratio of the sacred to the profane, within the realm of the written, tends to be heavily weighted in favour of the first. So the writers and readers are specialists and yet more than specialists; they are both part of a society, and claim to be the voice of the whole of it. Their specialism *says* something, something special, more so perhaps than that of the woodcarvers and other designers, and much more than that of the tinkers.

Specialists are often feared and despised in this kind of society. The clerics may be viewed ambivalently, but in the main their standing is rather high. They are both specialists and a part of society among others, and yet also, as stated, claim to be the voice of the totality. They are in an inherently paradoxical situation. Logicians possess, in their armoury of allegedly deep and significant puzzles, the Problem of the Barber: in a village, all men can be divided into those who shave themselves, and those who are shaved by the barber. But what of the barber himself? Is he a self-shaver, or one of the barber-shaved? In this form, let us leave it to the logicians. But the clerics are somewhat in the barber's situation. They reproduce their own guild by training entrants, but they also give a bit of training or provide services for the rest of society. Do they or do they not shave themselves? The tension and its problems

(and they are not just logical) are with them, and they are not easily resolved.

In the end, modern society resolves this conundrum by turning *everyone* into a cleric, by turning this potentially universal class into an effectively universal one, by ensuring that everyone without exception is taught by it, that exo-education becomes the universal norm, and that no-one culturally speaking, shaves himself. Modern society is one in which no sub-community, below the size of one capable of sustaining an independent educational system, can any longer reproduce itself. The reproduction of fully socialized individuals itself becomes part of the division of labour, and is no longer performed by sub-communities for themselves.

That is what developed modern societies are like. But why *must* this be so? What fate impels them in this direction? Why, to repeat the earlier question, is this one ideal, that of universal literacy and education, taken with this most unusual, untypical seriousness?

Part of the answer has already been given, in connection with the stress on occupational mobility, on an unstable, rapidly changing division of labour. A society whose entire political system, and indeed whose cosmology and moral order, is based in the last analysis on economic growth, on the universal incremental Danegeld and the hope of a perpetual augmentation of satisfactions, whose legitimacy hinges on its capacity to sustain and satisfy this expectation, is thereby committed to the need for innovation and hence to a changing occupational structure. From this it follows that certainly between generations, and very often within single life-spans, men must be ready for reallocation to new tasks. Hence, in part, the importance of the generic training, and the fact that the little bit extra of training, such as is attached to most jobs, doesn't amount to too much, and is moreover contained in manuals intelligible to all possessors of the society's generic training. (While the little bit extra seldom amounts to much, the shared and truly essential generic core is supplied at a rather high level, not perhaps when compared with the intellectual *peaks* of agrarian society, but certainly when placed alongside its erstwhile customary average.)

But it is not only mobility and re-training which engender this imperative. It is also the *content* of most professional activities. Work, in industrial society, does not mean moving matter. The paradigm of work is no longer ploughing, reaping, thrashing. Work, in the main, is no longer the manipulation of things, but of

meanings. It generally involves exchanging communications with other people, or manipulating the controls of a machine. The proportion of people at the coal face of nature, directly applying human physical force to natural objects, is constantly diminishing. Most jobs, if not actually involving work 'with people', involve the control of buttons or switches or leavers which need to be *understood*, and are explicable, once again, in some standard idiom intelligible to all comers.

For the first time in human history, explicit and reasonably precise communication becomes generally, pervasively used and important. In the closed local communities of the agrarian or tribal worlds, when it came to communication, context, tone, gesture, personality and situation were everything. Communication, such as it was, took place without the benefit of precise formulation, for which the locals had neither taste nor aptitude. Explicitness and the niceties of precise, rule-bound formulation were left to lawyers, theologians or ritual specialists, and were parts of their mysteries. Among intimates of a close community, explicitness would have been pedantic and offensive, and is scarcely imaginable or intelligible.

Human language must have been used for countless generations in such intimate, closed, context-bound communities, whereas it has only been used by schoolmen and jurists, and all kinds of context-evading conceptual puritans, for a very small number of generations. It is a very puzzling fact that an institution, namely human language, should have this potential for being used as an 'elaborate code', in Basil Bernstein's phrase, as a formal and fairly context-free instrument, given that it had evolved in a milieu which in no way called for this development, and did not selectively favour it if it manifested itself. This puzzle is on a par with problems such as that posed by the existence of skills (for example, mathematical ability) which throughout most of the period of the existence of humanity had no survival value, and thus could not have been in any direct way produced by natural selection. The existence of language suitable for such formal, context-liberated use is such a puzzle; but it is also, clearly, a fact. This potentiality, whatever its origin and explanation, happened to be there. Eventually a kind of society emerged – and it is now becoming global – in which this potentiality really comes into its own, and within which it becomes indispensable and dominant.

To sum up this argument: a society has emerged based on a high-powered technology and the expectancy of sustained growth, which

requires both a mobile division of labour, and sustained, frequent and precise communication between strangers involving a sharing of explicit meaning, transmitted in a standard idiom and in writing when required. For a number of converging reasons, this society must be thoroughly exo-educational: each individual is trained by specialists, not just by his own local group, if indeed he has one. Its segments and units – and this society is in any case large, fluid, and in comparison with traditional, agrarian societies very short of internal structures – simply do not possess the capacity or the resources to reproduce their own personnel. The level of literacy and technical competence, in a standardized medium, a common conceptual currency, which is required of members of this society if they are to be properly employable and enjoy full and effective moral citizenship, is so high that it simply *cannot* be provided by the kin or local units, such as they are. It can only be provided by something resembling a modern ‘national’ educational system, a pyramid at whose base there are primary schools, staffed by teachers trained at secondary schools, staffed by university-trained teachers, led by the products of advanced graduate schools. Such a pyramid provides the criterion for the minimum size for a viable political unit. No unit too small to accommodate the pyramid can function properly. Units cannot be *smaller* than this. Constraints also operate which prevent them being too large, in various circumstances; but that is another issue.

The fact that sub-units of society are no longer capable of self-reproduction, that centralized exo-education is the obligatory norm, that such education complements (though it does not wholly replace) localized acculturation, is of the very first importance for the political sociology of the modern world; and its implications have, strangely enough, been seldom understood or appreciated or even examined. At the base of the modern social order stands not the executioner but the professor. Not the guillotine, but the (aptly named) *doctorat d'état* is the main tool and symbol of state power. The monopoly of legitimate education is now more important, more central than is the monopoly of legitimate violence. When this is understood, then the imperative of nationalism, its roots, not in human nature as such, but in a certain kind of now pervasive social order, can also be understood.

Contrary to popular and even scholarly belief, nationalism does not have any very deep roots in the human psyche. The human

psyche can be assumed to have persisted unchanged through the many many millennia of the existence of the human race, and not to have become either better or worse during the relatively brief and very recent age of nationalism. One may not invoke a *general* substrate to explain a *specific* phenomenon. The substrate generates many surface possibilities. Nationalism, the organization of human groups into large, centrally educated, culturally homogeneous units, is but one of these, and a very rare one at that. What is crucial for its genuine explanation is to identify its specific roots. It is these specific roots which alone can properly explain it. In this way, specific factors are superimposed on to a shared universal human substrate.

The roots of nationalism in the distinctive structural requirements of industrial society are very deep indeed. This movement is the fruit neither of ideological aberration, nor of emotional excess. Although those who participate in it generally, indeed almost without exception, fail to understand what it is that they do, the movement is nonetheless the external manifestation of a deep adjustment in the relationship between polity and culture which is quite unavoidable.

The age of universal high culture

Let us recapitulate the general and central features of industrial society. Universal literacy and a high level of numerical, technical and general sophistication are among its functional prerequisites. Its members are and must be mobile, and ready to shift from one activity to another, and must possess that generic training which enables them to follow the manuals and instructions of a new activity or occupation. In the course of their work they must constantly communicate with a large number of other men, with whom they frequently have no previous association, and with whom communication must consequently be explicit, rather than relying on context. They must also be able to communicate by means of written, impersonal, context-free, to-whom-it-may-concern type messages. Hence these communications must be in the same shared and standardized linguistic medium and script. The educational system which guarantees this social achievement becomes large and is indispensable, but at the same time it no longer possesses monopoly of access to the written word: its clientele is co-extensive with the society at large, and the replaceability of individuals within the system by others

applies to the educational machine at least as much as to any other segment of society, and perhaps more so. Some very great teachers and researchers may perhaps be unique and irreplaceable, but the average professor and schoolmaster can be replaced from outside the teaching profession with the greatest of ease and often with little, if any, loss.

What are the implications of all this for the society and for its members? The employability, dignity, security and self-respect of individuals, typically, and for the majority of men now hinges on their *education*; and the limits of the culture within which they were educated are also the limits of the world within which they can, morally and professionally, breathe. A man's education is by far his most precious investment, and in effect confers his identity on him. Modern man is not loyal to a monarch or a land or a faith, whatever he may say, but to a culture. And he is, generally speaking, gelded. The Mamluk condition has become universal. No important links bind him to a kin group; nor do they stand between him and a wide, anonymous community of culture.

The obverse of the fact that a school-transmitted culture, not a folk-transmitted one, alone confers his usability and dignity and self-respect on industrial man, is the fact that nothing else can do it for him to any comparable extent. It would be idle to pretend that ancestry, wealth or connections are unimportant in modern society, and that they are not on occasion even sources of pride to their beneficiaries; all the same, advantages secured in these ways are often explained away and are viewed at best ambivalently. It is interesting to ask whether the pervasive work ethic has helped to produce this state of affairs, or whether, on the contrary, it is a reflection of it. Drones and rentiers persist, of course, but they are not very conspicuous, and this in itself is highly significant. It is an important fact that such privilege and idleness as survive are now discreet, tending to prefer obscurity to display, and needing to be uncovered by eager researchers bent on unmasking the inequality which lurks underneath the surface.

It was not so in the past, when idle privilege was proud and brazen, as it persists in being in some surviving agrarian societies, or in societies which continue to uphold the ethos of pre-industrial life. Curiously enough, the notion of conspicuous waste was coined by a work-oriented member of a work-addicted society, Thorsten Veblen, scandalized by what he saw as the survivors' from a

pre-industrial, predatory age. The egalitarian, work- and career-oriented surface of industrial society is as significant as its inegalitarian hidden depths. Life, after all, is lived largely on the surface, even if important decisions are on occasion made deep down.

The teacher class is now in a sense more important – it is indispensable – and in another sense much less so, having lost its monopoly of access to the cultural wisdom enshrined in scripture. In a society in which everyone is gelded by identification with his professional post and his training, and hardly anyone derives much or any security and support from whatever kin links he may have, the teaching clerics no longer possess any privileged access to administrative posts. When everyone has become a Mamluk, no special mamluk class predominates in the bureaucracy. At long last the bureaucracy can recruit from the population at large, without needing to fear the arrival of dozens of cousins as unwanted attachments of each single new entrant.

Exo-socialization, education proper, is now the virtually universal norm. Men acquire the skills and sensibilities which make them acceptable to their fellows, which fit them to assume places in society, and which make them 'what they are', by being handed over by their kin groups (normally nowadays, of course, their nuclear family) to an educational machine which alone is capable of providing the wide range of training required for the generic cultural base. This educational infrastructure is large, indispensable and expensive. Its maintenance seems to be quite beyond the financial powers of even the biggest and richest organizations within society, such as the big industrial corporations. These often provide their personnel with housing, sports and leisure clubs, and so forth; they do not, except marginally and in special circumstances, provide schooling. (They may subsidize school bills, but that is another matter.) The organization man works and plays with his organization, but his children still go to state or independent schools.

So, on the one hand, this educational infrastructure is too large and costly for any organization other than the biggest one of all, the state. But at the same time, though only the state can sustain so large a burden, only the state is also strong enough to control so important and crucial a function. Culture is no longer merely the adornment, confirmation and legitimation of a social order which was also sustained by harsher and coercive constraints; culture is now the necessary shared medium, the life-blood or perhaps rather the

minimal shared atmosphere, within which alone the members of the society can breathe and survive and produce. For a given society, it must be one in which they can *all* breathe and speak and produce; so it must be the *same* culture. Moreover, it must now be a great or high (literate, training-sustained) culture, and it can no longer be a diversified, locality-tied, illiterate little culture or tradition.

But some organism must ensure that this literate and unified culture is indeed being effectively produced, that the educational product is not shoddy and sub-standard. Only the state can do this, and, even in countries in which important parts of the educational machine are in private hands or those of religious organizations, the state does take over quality control in this most important of industries, the manufacture of viable and usable human beings. That shadow-state dating back to the time when European states were not merely fragmented but socially weak – the centralized Church – did put up a fight for the control of education, but it was in the end ineffectual, unless the Church fought on behalf of an inclusive high culture and thereby indirectly on behalf of a new nationalist state.

Time was when education was a cottage industry, when men could be made by a village or clan. That time has now gone, and gone forever. (In education, small can now be beautiful only if it is covertly parasitic on the big.) Exo-socialization, the production and reproduction of men outside the local intimate unit, is now the norm, and must be so. The imperative of exo-socialization is the main clue to why state and culture *must* now be linked, whereas in the past their connection was thin, fortuitous, varied, loose, and often minimal. Now it is unavoidable. That is what nationalism is about, and why we live in an age of nationalism.

The Transition to an Age of Nationalism

The most important steps in the argument have now been made. Mankind is irreversibly committed to industrial society, and therefore to a society whose productive system is based on cumulative science and technology. This alone can sustain anything like the present and anticipated number of inhabitants of the planet, and give them a prospect of the kind of standard of living which man now takes for granted, or aspires to take for granted. Agrarian society is no longer an option, for its restoration would simply condemn the great majority of mankind to death by starvation, not to mention dire and unacceptable poverty for the minority of survivors. Hence there is no point in discussing, for any practical purpose, the charms and the horrors of the cultural and political accompaniments of the agrarian age: they are simply not available. We do not properly understand the range of options available to industrial society, and perhaps we never shall; but we understand some of its essential concomitants. The kind of cultural homogeneity demanded by nationalism is one of them, and we had better make our peace with it. It is not the case, as Elie Kedourie claims,¹ that nationalism imposes homogeneity; it is rather that a homogeneity imposed by objective, inescapable imperative eventually appears on the surface in the form of nationalism.

Most of mankind enters the industrial age from the agrarian stage. (The tiny minority which enters it directly from the pre-agrarian condition does not affect the argument, and the same points apply to it.) The social organization of agrarian society, however, is not at all favourable to the nationalist principle, to the convergence of political and cultural units, and to the homogeneity and school-transmitted nature of culture within each political unit. On the contrary, as in medieval Europe, it generates political units which are either smaller or much larger than cultural boundaries would indicate; only very

¹Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, London, 1960.

occasionally, by accident, it produced a dynastic state which corresponded, more or less, with a language and a culture, as eventually happened on Europe's Atlantic seaboard. (The fit was never very close. Culture in agrarian society is much more pluralistic than its empires, and generally much broader than its small participatory social units.)

All this being so, the age of transition to industrialism was bound, according to our model, also to be an age of nationalism, a period of turbulent readjustment, in which either political boundaries, or cultural ones, or both, were being modified, so as to satisfy the new nationalist imperative which now, for the first time, was making itself felt. Because rulers do not surrender territory gladly (and every change of a political boundary must make someone a loser), because changing one's culture is very frequently a most painful experience, and moreover, because there were rival cultures struggling to capture the souls of men, just as there were rival centres of political authority striving to suborn men and capture territory: given all this, it immediately follows from our model that this period of transition was bound to be violent and conflict-ridden. Actual historical facts fully confirm these expectations.

Nevertheless, it would not be correct to proceed by simply working out the implications of the implementation of the nationalist imperative for agrarian society. Industrial society did not arrive on the scene by divine fiat. It was itself the fruit of developments within one particular agrarian society, and these developments were not devoid of their own turbulence. When it then conquered the rest of the world, neither this global colonization, nor the abandonment of empire by those who had been carried forward on the wave of industrial supremacy but eventually lost their monopoly of it, were peaceful developments. All this means that in actual history the effects of nationalism tend to be conflated with the other consequences of industrialism. Though nationalism is indeed an effect of industrial social organization, it is not the *only* effect of the imposition of this new social form, and hence it is necessary to disentangle it from those other developments.

The problem is illustrated by the fascinating relationship between the Reformation and nationalism. The stress of the Reformation on literacy and scripturalism, its onslaught on a monopolistic priesthood (or, as Weber clearly saw, its universalization rather than abolition of priesthood), its individualism and links with mobile

urban populations, all make it a kind of harbinger of social features and attitudes which, according to our model, produce the nationalist age. The role of Protestantism in helping to bring about the industrial world is an enormous, complex and contentious topic; and there is not much point in doing more than cursorily alluding to it here. But in parts of the globe in which both industrialism and nationalism came later and under external impact, the full relationship of Protestant-type attitudes and nationalism is yet to be properly explored.

This relationship is perhaps the most conspicuous in Islam. The cultural history of the Arab world and of many other Muslim lands during the past hundred years is largely the story of the advance and victory of Reformism, a kind of Islamic Protestantism with a heavy stress on scripturalism and above all a sustained hostility to spiritual brokerage, to the local middlemen between man and God (and, in practice, between diverse groups of men), who had become so very prominent in pre-modern Islam. The history of this movement and that of modern Arab (and other) nationalisms can hardly be separated from each other. Islam always had an in-built proclivity or potential for this kind of 'reformed' version of the faith, and had been seduced away from it, presumably, by the social need of autonomous rural groups for the incarnated, personalized location of sanctity which is invaluable for local mediation purposes. Under modern conditions its capacity to be a more abstract faith, presiding over an anonymous community of equal believers, could reassert itself.

But even religions which might be thought to have had little inherent potential for such 'protestant' interpretation, could nonetheless be turned in that direction during the age when the drives to industrialism and to nationalism were making their impact. Formally speaking, one would not expect Shintoism to have any marked resemblance to, say, English nonconformity. Nevertheless, during the Japanese modernization drive, it was the sober, orderly, as it were Quaker elements in it (which evidently can be found or imposed anywhere if one tries hard enough) which were stressed to the detriment of any ecstatic elements and any undue private familiarity with the sacred.¹ Had ancient Greece survived into the modern age, Dionysiac cults might have assumed a more sober garb as Hellas lurched forward along the path of development.

¹Personal communication from Ronald Dore.

Apart from the links between the Protestant and nationalist ethos, there are the direct consequences of industrialization itself. The general and pervasive consequences of an established industrial order have already been discussed, in connection with our general model linking the industrial division of labour with the implementation of the nationalist principle. But certain specific consequences of early industrialization which do not generally persist later nevertheless have a significant role to play. Early industrialism means population explosion, rapid urbanization, labour migration, and also the economic and political penetration of previously more or less inward-turned communities, by a global economy and a centralizing polity. It means that the at least relatively stable and insulated Babel system of traditional agrarian communities, each inward-turned, kept separate by geography sideways, and by an enormous social distance upwards, is replaced by quite a new kind of Babel, with new cultural boundaries that are not stable but in constant and dramatic movement, and which are seldom hallowed by any kind of custom.

There is also a link between nationalism and the processes of colonialism, imperialism and de-colonization. The emergence of industrial society in Western Europe had as its consequence the virtual conquest of the entire world by European powers, and sometimes by European settler populations. In effect the whole of Africa, America, Oceania, and very large parts of Asia came under European domination; and the parts of Asia which escaped this fate were often under strong indirect influence. This global conquest was, as conquests go, rather unusual. Normally, political empire is the reward of a military orientation and dedication. It is perpetrated by societies strongly committed to warfare, either because, let us say, their tribal form of life includes an automatic military training, or because they possess a leading stratum committed to it, or for some such similar reason. Moreover, the activity of conquest is arduous and takes up a large part of the energy of the conquering group.

None of this was true of the European conquest of the world. It was eventually carried out and completed by nations increasingly oriented towards industry and trade, not by a militaristic machine, nor by a swarm of temporarily cohesive tribesmen. It was achieved without any total preoccupation with the process on the part of the conqueror nations. The point made about the English, that they acquired their Empire in a state of absence of mind, can to some extent be generalized. (The English also, most laudably, lost the

Empire with a similar lack of attention.) When Europe was conquering and dominating the world, it had, on the whole, other, more pressing and internal things to occupy its attention. It did not even pay the conquered nations the compliment of being specially interested in the conquest. A few untypical periods of self-conscious and vainglorious imperialism apart, and disregarding the early conquest of Latin America, which was inspired by good old-fashioned non-commercial rapacity, that was how it was. The conquest had not been planned, and was the fruit of economic and technological superiority, and not of a military orientation.

With the diffusion of this technological and economic might, the balance of power changed, and between about 1905 and 1960 the pluralistic European empire was lost or voluntarily abandoned. Once again, the specific circumstances of all this cannot be ignored; even if the core or essence of nationalism flows from the general, abstractly formulable premisses which were initially laid out, nevertheless the specific forms of nationalist phenomena are obviously affected by these circumstances.

A note on the weakness of nationalism

It is customary to comment on the strength of nationalism. This is an important mistake, though readily understandable since, whenever nationalism has taken root, it has tended to prevail with ease over other modern ideologies.

Nevertheless, the clue to the understanding of nationalism is its weakness at least as much as its strength. It was the dog who failed to bark who provided the vital clue for Sherlock Holmes. The numbers of potential nationalisms which failed to bark is far, far larger than those which did, though *they* have captured all our attention.

We have already insisted on the dormant nature of this allegedly powerful monster during the pre-industrial age. But even within the age of nationalism, there is a further important sense in which nationalism remains astonishingly feeble. Nationalism has been defined, in effect, as the striving to make culture and polity congruent, to endow a culture with its own political roof, and not more than one roof at that. Culture, an elusive concept, was deliberately left undefined. But an at least provisionally acceptable criterion of culture might be language, as at least a sufficient, if not a necessary

touchstone of it. Allow for a moment a difference of language to entail a difference of culture (though not necessarily the reverse).

If this is granted, at least temporarily, certain consequences follow. I have heard the number of languages on earth estimated at around 8000. The figure can no doubt be increased by counting dialects separately. If we allow the 'precedent' argument, this becomes legitimate: if a kind of differential which in some places defines a nationalism is allowed to engender a 'potential nationalism' wherever else a similar difference is found, then the number of potential nationalisms increases sharply. For instance, diverse Slavonic, Teutonic and Romance languages are in fact often no further apart than are the mere dialects within what are elsewhere conventionally seen as unitary languages. Slav languages, for instance, are probably closer to each other than are the various forms of colloquial Arabic, allegedly a single language.

The 'precedent' argument can also generate potential nationalisms by analogies invoking factors other than language. For instance, Scottish nationalism indisputably exists. (It may indeed be held to contradict my model.) It ignores language (which would condemn some Scots to Irish nationalism, and the rest to English nationalism), invoking instead a shared historical experience. Yet if such additional links be allowed to count (as long as they don't contradict the requirement of my model, that they can serve as a base for an *eventually* homogeneous, internally mobile culture/polity with one educational machine servicing that culture under the surveillance of that polity), then the number of potential nationalisms goes up even higher.

However, let us be content with the figure of 8000, once given to me by a linguist as a rough number of languages based on what was no doubt rather an arbitrary estimate of language alone. The number of states in the world at present is some figure of the order of 200. To this figure one may add all the irredentist nationalisms, which have not yet attained their state (and perhaps never will), but which are struggling in that direction and thus have a legitimate claim to be counted among actual, and not merely potential, nationalisms. On the other hand, one must also subtract all those states which have come into being without the benefit of the blessing of nationalist endorsement, and which do not satisfy the nationalist criteria of political legitimacy, and indeed defy them; for instance, all the diverse mini-states dotted about the globe as survivals of a pre-nationalist

age, and sometimes brought forth as concessions to geographical accident or political compromise. Once all these had been subtracted, the resulting figure would again, presumably, not be too far above 200. But let us, for the sake of charity, pretend that we have four times that number of reasonably effective nationalisms on earth, in other words, 800 of them. I believe this to be considerably larger than the facts would justify, but let it pass.

This rough calculation still gives us only *one* effective nationalism for *ten* potential ones! And this surprising ratio, depressing presumably for any enthusiastic pan-nationalist, if such a person exists, could be made much larger if the 'precedent' argument were applied to the full to determine the number of potential nationalisms, and if the criteria of entry into the class of effective nationalisms were made at all stringent.

What is one to conclude from this? That for every single nationalism which has so far raised its ugly head, nine others are still waiting in the wings? That all the bomb-throwing, martyrdoms, exchange of populations, and worse, which have so far beset humanity, are still to be repeated tenfold?

I think not. For every effective nationalism, there are *n* potential ones, groups defined either by shared culture inherited from the agrarian world or by some other link (on the 'precedent' principle) which *could* give hope of establishing a homogeneous industrial community, but which nevertheless do not bother to struggle, which fail to activate their potential nationalism, which do not even try.

So it seems that the urge to make mutual cultural substitutability the basis of the state is not so powerful after all. The members of *some* groups do indeed feel it, but members of most groups, with analogous claims, evidently do not.

To explain this, we must return to the accusation made against nationalism: that it insists on imposing homogeneity on the populations unfortunate enough to fall under the sway of authorities possessed by the nationalist ideology. The assumption underlying this accusation is that traditional, ideologically uninfected authorities, such as the Ottoman Turks, had kept the peace and extracted taxes, but otherwise tolerated, and been indeed profoundly indifferent to, the diversity of faiths and cultures which they governed. By contrast, their gunman successors seem incapable of resting in peace till they have imposed the nationalist principle of *cuius regio, eius lingua*. They do not want merely a fiscal surplus and obedience.

They thirst after the cultural and linguistic souls of their subjects.

This accusation must be stood on its head. It is not the case that nationalism imposes homogeneity out of a wilful cultural *Machtbedürfniss*; it is the objective need for homogeneity which is reflected in nationalism. If it is the case that a modern industrial state can only function with a mobile, literate, culturally standardized, interchangeable population, as we have argued, then the illiterate, half-starved populations sucked from their erstwhile rural cultural ghettos into the melting pots of shanty-towns yearn for incorporation into some one of those cultural pools which already has, or looks as if it might acquire, a state of its own, with the subsequent promise of full cultural citizenship, access to primary schools, employment, and all. Often, these alienated, uprooted, wandering populations may vacillate between diverse options, and they may often come to a provisional rest at one or another temporary and transitional cultural resting place.

But there are some options which they will refrain from trying to take up. They will hesitate about trying to enter cultural pools within which they know themselves to be spurned; or rather, within which they expect to *continue* to be spurned. Poor newcomers are, of course, almost always spurned. The question is whether they will continue to be slighted, and whether the same fate will await their children. This will depend on whether the newly arrived and hence least privileged stratum possesses traits which its members and their offspring cannot shed, and which will continue to identify them: genetically transmitted or deeply engrained religious-cultural habits are impossible or difficult to drop.

The alienated victims of early industrialism are unlikely to be tempted by cultural pools that are very small – a language spoken by a couple of villages offers few prospects – or very diffused or lacking in any literary traditions or personnel capable of carrying skills, and so on. They require cultural pools which are large, and/or have a good historic base, or intellectual personnel well equipped to propagate the culture in question. It is impossible to pick out any single qualification, or set of qualifications, which will either guarantee the success as a nationalist catalyst of the culture endowed with it (or them), or which on the contrary will ensure its failure. Size, historicity, reasonably compact territory, a capable and energetic intellectual class: all these will obviously help; but no single one is necessary,

and it is doubtful whether any firm predictive generalization can be established in these terms. That the principle of nationalism will be operative can be predicted; just which groupings will emerge as its carriers can be only loosely indicated, for it depends on too many historic contingencies.

Nationalism as such is fated to prevail, but not any one particular nationalism. We know that reasonably homogeneous cultures, each of them with its own political roof, its own political servicing, are becoming the norm, widely implemented but for few exceptions; but we cannot predict just which cultures, with which political roofs, will be blessed by success. On the contrary, the simple calculations made above, concerning the number of cultures or potential nationalisms and concerning the room available for proper national states, clearly shows that most potential nationalisms must either fail, or, more commonly, will refrain from even trying to find political expression.

This is precisely what we do find. Most cultures or potential national groups enter the age of nationalism without even the feeblest effort to benefit from it themselves. The number of groups which in terms of the 'precedent' argument could try to become nations, which could define themselves by the kind of criterion which in some other place does in fact define some real and effective nation, is legion. Yet most of them go meekly to their doom, to see their culture (though not themselves as individuals) slowly disappear, dissolving into the wider culture of some new national state. Most cultures are led to the dustheap of history by industrial civilization without offering any resistance. The linguistic distinctiveness of the Scottish Highlands within Scotland is, of course, incomparably greater than the cultural distinctiveness of Scotland within the UK; but there is no Highland nationalism. Much the same is true of Moroccan Berbers. Dialectal and cultural differences within Germany or Italy are as great as those between recognized Teutonic or Romance languages. Southern Russians differ culturally from Northern Russians, but, unlike Ukrainians, do not translate this into a sense of nationhood.

Does this show that nationalism is, after all, unimportant? Or even that it is an ideological artefact, an invention of febrile thinkers which has mysteriously captured some mysteriously susceptible nations? Not at all. To reach such a conclusion would, ironically, come close to a tacit, oblique acceptance of the nationalist ideologue's

most misguided claim: namely, that the 'nations' are there, in the very nature of things, only waiting to be 'awakened' (a favourite nationalist expression and image) from their regrettable slumber, by the nationalist 'awakener'. One would be inferring from the failure of most potential nations ever to 'wake up', from the lack of deep stirrings waiting for reveille, that nationalism was not important after all. Such an inference concedes the social ontology of 'nations', only admitting, with some surprise perhaps, that some of them lack the vigour and vitality needed if they are to fulfil the destiny which history intended for them.

But nationalism is *not* the awakening of an old, latent, dormant force, though that is how it does indeed present itself. It is in reality the consequence of a new form of social organization, based on deeply internalized, education-dependent high cultures, each protected by its own state. It uses some of the pre-existent cultures, generally transforming them in the process, but it cannot possibly use them all. There are too many of them. A viable higher culture-sustaining modern state cannot fall below a certain minimal size (unless in effect parasitic on its neighbours); and there is only room for a limited number of such states on this earth.

The high ratio of determined slumberers, who will not rise and shine and who refuse to be woken, enables us to turn the tables on nationalism-as-seen-by-itself. Nationalism sees itself as a natural and universal ordering of the political life of mankind, only obscured by that long, persistent and mysterious somnolence. As Hegel expressed this vision: 'Nations may have had a long history before they finally reach their destination – that of forming themselves into states'³ Hegel immediately goes on to suggest that this pre-state period is really 'pre-historical' (*sic*): so it would seem that on this view the real history of a nation only begins when it acquires its own state. If we invoke the sleeping-beauty nations, neither possessing a state nor feeling the lack of it, against the nationalist doctrine, we tacitly accept its social metaphysic, which sees nations as the bricks of which mankind is made up. Critics of nationalism who denounce the political movement but tacitly accept the existence of nations, do not go far enough. Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as an inherent though long-delayed political destiny, are a

¹G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, tr. H.B. Nisbet, Cambridge, 1975, p. 134.

myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures: *that* is a reality, for better or worse, and in general an inescapable one. Those who are its historic agents know not what they do, but that is another matter.

But we must not accept the myth. Nations are not inscribed into the nature of things, they do not constitute a political version of the doctrine of natural kinds. Nor were national states the manifest ultimate destiny of ethnic or cultural groups. What do exist are cultures, often subtly grouped, shading into each other, overlapping, intertwined; and there exist, usually but not always, political units of all shapes and sizes. In the past the two did not generally converge. There were good reasons for their failing to do so in many cases. Their rulers established their identity by differentiating themselves downwards, and the ruled micro-communities differentiated themselves laterally from their neighbours grouped in similar units.

But nationalism is not the awakening and assertion of these mythical, supposedly natural and given units. It is, on the contrary, the crystallization of new units, suitable for the conditions now prevailing, though admittedly using as their raw material the cultural, historical and other inheritances from the pre-nationalist world. This force – the drive towards new units constructed on the principles corresponding to the new division of labour – is indeed very strong, though it is not the only force in the modern world, nor altogether irresistible. In most cases it prevails, and above all, it determines the *norm* for the legitimacy of political units in the modern world: most of them must satisfy the imperatives of nationalism, as described. It sets the accepted standard, even if it does not prevail totally and universally, and some deviant cases do succeed in defying the norm.

The ambiguity of the question – is nationalism strong or not? – arises from this: nationalism sees and presents itself as the affirmation of each and every ‘nationality’; and these alleged entities are supposed just to be there, like Mount Everest, since long ago, antedating the age of nationalism. So, ironically, in its own terms nationalism is astonishingly weak. Most of the potential nations, the latent differentiable communities which could claim to be nations by criteria analogous to those which somewhere else have succeeded, fail altogether even to raise their claim, let alone press it effectively and make it good. If, on the other hand, one interprets nationalism in the manner which I hold to be correct, and which indeed

contradicts and offends its own self-image, then the conclusion must be that it is a very strong force, though not perhaps a unique or irresistible one.

Wild and garden cultures

One way of approaching the central issue is this. Cultures, like plants, can be divided into savage and cultivated varieties. The savage kinds are produced and reproduce themselves spontaneously, as parts of the life of men. No community is without some shared system of communication and norms, and the wild systems of this kind (in other words, cultures) reproduce themselves from generation to generation without conscious design, supervision, surveillance or special nutrition.

Cultivated or garden cultures are different, though they have developed from the wild varieties. They possess a complexity and richness, most usually sustained by literacy and by specialized personnel, and would perish if deprived of their distinctive nourishment in the form of specialized institutions of learning with reasonably numerous, full-time and dedicated personnel. During the agrarian epoch of human history the high cultures or great traditions became prominent, important, and in one sense, but one sense only, dominant. Though they could not altogether impose themselves on the totality, or even the majority of the population, nevertheless they generally succeeded in imposing themselves on it as authoritative, even if (or because) they were inaccessible and mysterious. They sometimes strengthened, and sometimes competed with, the centralized state. They could also deputize for that state, when it weakened or disintegrated during times of troubles or a dark age. A church or a ritual system could stand in for the shadow of a past or ghost empire. But the high cultures did not generally define the limits of a political unit, and there are good reasons why, in the agrarian age, they should not have been able to do so.

In the industrial age all this changes. The high cultures come to dominate in quite a new sense. The old doctrines associated with them mostly lose their authority, but the literate idioms and styles of communication they carried become far more effectively authoritative and normative, and, above all, they come to be pervasive and universal in society. In other words, virtually everyone becomes

literate, and communicates in an elaborate code, in explicit, fairly 'grammatical' (regularized) sentences, not in context-bound grunts and nods.

But the high culture, newly universalized in the population, now badly needs political support and underpinning. In the agrarian age, it sometimes had this and benefited from it, but at other times it could dispense with political protection, and that was indeed one of its strengths. In a dark age when anarchy prevailed and the king's peace was no longer kept, Christian or Buddhist monasteries, dervish *zawiyas* and Brahmin communities could survive and in some measure keep alive the high culture without benefit of protection by the sword.

Now that the task of the high culture is so much greater and so much more onerous, it cannot dispense with a political infrastructure. As a character in *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* observed, every girl ought to have a husband, preferably her own; and every high culture now wants a state, and preferably its own. Not every wild culture can become a high culture, and those without serious prospects of becoming one tend to bow out without a struggle; they do not engender a nationalism. Those which think they do have a chance – or, if anthropomorphic talk about cultures is to be avoided, those whose human carriers credit them with good prospects – fight it out among themselves for available populations and for the available state-space. This is one kind of nationalist or ethnic conflict. Where existing political boundaries, and those of old or crystallizing high cultures with political aspirations, fail to be in harmony, another kind of conflict so highly characteristic of the age of nationalism breaks out.

Another analogy, in addition to the above botanical one, is available to describe the new situation. Agrarian man can be compared with a natural species which can survive in the natural environment. Industrial man can be compared with an artificially produced or bred species which can no longer breathe effectively in the nature-given atmosphere, but can only function effectively and survive in a new, specially blended and artificially sustained air or medium. Hence he lives in specially bounded and constructed units, a kind of giant aquarium or breathing chamber. But these chambers need to be erected and serviced. The maintenance of the life-giving and life-preserving air or liquid within each of these giant receptacles is not automatic. It requires a specialized plant. The name for this

plant is a national educational and communications system. Its only effective keeper and protector is the state.

It would not in principle be impossible to have a single such cultural/educational goldfish bowl for the entire globe, sustained by a single political authority and a single educational system. In the long run this may yet come to pass. But in the meantime, and for very good reasons yet to be discussed, the global norm is a set of discontinuous breathing chambers or aquaria, each with its own proprietary, not properly interchangeable, medium or atmosphere. They do share some general traits. The formula for the medium of the fully developed industrial goldfish bowls is fairly similar in type, though it is rich in relatively superficial, but deliberately stressed, brand-differentiating characteristics.

There are some good and obvious reasons for this new pluralism, which will be explored further. The industrial age inherited both the political units and the cultures, high and low, of the preceding age. There was no reason why they should all suddenly fuse into a single one, and there were good reasons why they should *not*: industrialism, in other words the type of production or of the division of labour which makes these homogeneous breathing tanks imperative, did not arrive simultaneously in all parts of the world, nor in the same manner. The differential timing of its arrival divided humanity into rival groups very effectively. These differences in arrival-time of industrialism in various communities became acute if they could utilize some cultural, genetic or similar differentiae, left behind by the agrarian world. The dating of 'development' constitutes a crucial political diacritical mark, if it can seize upon some cultural difference inherited from the agrarian age, and use it as its token.

The process of industrialization took place in successive phases and in different conditions, and engendered various new rivalries, with new gains and losses to be made and avoided. Internationalism was often predicted by the prophets and commentators of the industrial age, both on the left and on the right, but the very opposite came to pass: the age of nationalism.

What is a Nation?

We are now at last in a position to attempt some kind of plausible answer to this question. Initially there were two especially promising candidates for the construction of a theory of nationality: will and culture. Obviously, each of them is important and relevant; but, just as obviously, neither is remotely adequate. It is instructive to consider why this is so.

No doubt will or consent constitutes an important factor in the formation of most groups, large and small. Mankind has always been organized in groups, of all kinds of shapes and sizes, sometimes sharply defined and sometimes loose, sometimes neatly nested and sometimes overlapping or intertwined. The variety of these possibilities, and of the principles on which the groups were recruited and maintained, is endless. But two generic agents or catalysts of group formation and maintenance are obviously crucial: will, voluntary adherence and identification, loyalty, solidarity, on the one hand; and fear, coercion, compulsion, on the other. These two possibilities constitute extreme poles along a kind of spectrum. A few communities may be based exclusively or very predominantly on one or the other, but they must be rare. Most persisting groups are based on a mixture of loyalty and identification (on *willed* adherence), and of extraneous incentives, positive or negative, on hopes and fears.

If we define nations as groups which *will* themselves to persist as communities,¹ the definition-net that we have cast into the sea will bring forth far too rich a catch. The haul which we shall have trawled in will indeed include the communities we may easily recognize as effective and cohesive nations: these genuine nations do in effect will themselves to be such, and their life may indeed constitute a kind of continuous, informal, ever self-reaffirming plebiscite. But (unfortunately for this definition) the same also applies to many

¹Ernest Renan, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation', republished in *Ernest Renan et l'Allemagne*, Textes recueillis et commentés par Emile Bure, NY, 1945.

other clubs, conspiracies, gangs, teams, parties, not to mention the many numerous communities and associations of the pre-industrial age which were not recruited and defined according to the nationalist principle and which defy it. Will, consent, identification, were not ever absent from the human scene, even though they were (and continue to be) also accompanied by calculation, fear and interest. (It is an interesting and moot question whether sheer inertia, the persistence of aggregates and combinations, is to be counted as tacit consent or as something else.)

The tacit self-identification has operated on behalf of all kinds of groupings, larger or smaller than nations, or cutting across them, or defined horizontally or in other ways. In brief, even if will were the basis of a nation (to paraphrase an idealist definition of the state), it is also the basis of so much else, that we cannot possibly define the nation in this manner. It is only because, in the modern, nationalist age, national units are the *preferred*, favoured objects of identification and willed adherence, that the definition seems tempting, because those other kinds of group are now so easily forgotten. Those who take the tacit assumptions of nationalism for granted erroneously also credit them to humanity at large, in any age. But a definition tied to the assumptions and conditions of one age (and even then constituting an exaggeration), cannot usefully be used to help to explain the *emergence* of that age.

Any definition of nations in terms of shared culture is another net which brings in far too rich a catch. Human history is and continues to be well endowed with cultural differentiations. Cultural boundaries are sometimes sharp and sometimes fuzzy; the patterns are sometimes bold and simple and sometimes tortuous and complex. For all the reasons we have stressed so much, this richness of differentiation does not, and indeed cannot, normally or generally converge either with the boundaries of political units (the jurisdictions of effective authorities) or with the boundaries of units blessed by the democratic sacraments of consent and will. The agrarian world simply could not be so neat. The industrial world tends to become so, or at least to approximate to such simplicity; but that is another matter, and there are now special factors making it so.

The establishment of pervasive high cultures (standardized, literacy- and education-based systems of communication), a process rapidly gathering pace throughout the world, has made it seem, to anyone too deeply immersed in our contemporary assumptions, that

nationality may be definable in terms of shared culture. Nowadays people can live only in units defined by a shared culture, and internally mobile and fluid. Genuine cultural pluralism ceases to be viable under current conditions. But a little bit of historical awareness or sociological sophistication should dispel the illusion that this was always so. Culturally plural societies often worked well in the past: so well, in fact, that cultural plurality was sometimes invented where it was previously lacking.

If, for such cogent reasons, these two apparently promising paths towards the definition of nationality are barred, is there another way?

The great, but valid, paradox is this: nations can be defined only in terms of the age of nationalism, rather than, as you might expect, the other way round. It is not the case that the 'age of nationalism' is a mere summation of the awakening and political self-assertion of this, that, or the other nation. Rather, when general social conditions make for standardized, homogeneous, centrally sustained high cultures, pervading entire populations and not just elite minorities, a situation arises in which well-defined educationally sanctioned and unified cultures constitute very nearly the only kind of unit with which men willingly and often ardently identify. The cultures now seem to be the natural repositories of political legitimacy. Only *then* does it come to appear that any defiance of their boundaries by political units constitutes a scandal.

Under these conditions, though under these conditions *only*, nations can indeed be defined in terms both of will and of culture, and indeed in terms of the convergence of them both with political units. In these conditions, men will to be politically united with all those, and only those, who share their culture. Politics then will to extend their boundaries to the limits of their cultures, and to protect and impose their culture within the boundaries of their power. The fusion of will, culture and polity becomes the norm, and one not easily or frequently defied. (Once, it had been almost universally defied, with impunity, and had indeed passed unnoticed and undiscussed.) These conditions do not define the human situation as such, but merely its industrial variant.

It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round. Admittedly, nationalism uses the pre-existing, historically inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth, though it uses them very selectively, and it most often transforms them radically.

Dead languages can be revived, traditions invented, quite fictitious pristine purities restored. But this culturally creative, fanciful, positively inventive aspect of nationalist ardour ought not to allow anyone to conclude, erroneously, that nationalism is a contingent, artificial, ideological invention, which might not have happened, if only those damned busy-body interfering European thinkers, not content to leave well alone, had not concocted it and fatefully injected it into the bloodstream of otherwise viable political communities. The cultural shreds and patches used by nationalism are often arbitrary historical inventions. Any old shred and patch would have served as well. But in no way does it follow that the principle of nationalism itself, as opposed to the avatars it happens to pick up for its incarnations, is itself in the least contingent and accidental.

Nothing could be further from the truth than such a supposition. Nationalism is not what it seems, and above all it is not what it seems to itself. The cultures it claims to defend and revive are often its own inventions, or are modified out of all recognition. Nonetheless the nationalist principle as such, as distinct from each of its specific forms, and from the individually distinctive nonsense which it may preach, has very very deep roots in our shared current condition, is not at all contingent, and will not easily be denied.

Durkheim taught that in religious worship society adores its own camouflaged image. In a nationalist age, societies worship themselves brazenly and openly, spurning the camouflage. At Nuremberg, Nazi Germany did not worship itself by pretending to worship God or even Wotan; it overtly worshipped itself. In milder but just as significant form, enlightened modernist theologians do not believe, or even take much interest in, the doctrines of their faith which had meant so much to their predecessors. They treat them with a kind of comic auto-functionalism, as valid simply and only as the conceptual and ritual tools by means of which a social tradition affirms its values, continuity and solidarity, and they systematically obscure and play down the difference between such a tacitly reductionist 'faith', and the real thing which had preceded it and had played such a crucial part in earlier European history, a part which could never have been played by the unrecognizably diluted, watered-down current versions.

But the fact that social self-worship, whether virulent and violent or gentle and evasive, is now an openly avowed collective self-worship, rather than a means of covertly revering society though the

image of God, as Durkheim insisted, does not mean that the current style is any more veridical than that of a Durkheimian age. The community may no longer be seen through the prism of the divine, but nationalism has its own amnesias and selections which, even when they may be severely secular, can be profoundly distorting and deceptive.

The basic deception and self-deception practised by nationalism is this: nationalism is, essentially, the general imposition of a high culture on society, where previously low cultures had taken up the lives of the majority, and in some cases of the totality, of the population. It means that generalized diffusion of a school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom, codified for the requirements of reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication. It is the establishment of an anonymous, impersonal society, with mutually substitutable atomized individuals, held together above all by a shared culture of this kind, in place of a previous complex structure of local groups, sustained by folk cultures reproduced locally and idiosyncratically by the micro-groups themselves. That is what *really* happens.

But this is the very opposite of what nationalism affirms and what nationalists fervently believe. Nationalism usually conquers in the name of a putative folk culture. Its symbolism is drawn from the healthy, pristine, vigorous life of the peasants, of the *Volk*, the *narod*. There is a certain element of truth in the nationalist self-presentation when the *narod* or *Volk* is ruled by officials of another, an alien high culture, whose oppression must be resisted first by a cultural revival and reaffirmation, and eventually by a war of national liberation. If the nationalism prospers it eliminates the alien high culture, but it does not then replace it by the old local low culture; it revives, or invents, a local high (literate, specialist-transmitted) culture of its own, though admittedly one which will have some links with the earlier local folk styles and dialects. But it was the great ladies at the Budapest Opera who really went to town in peasant dresses, or dresses claimed to be such. At the present time in the Soviet Union the consumers of 'ethnic' gramophone records are not the remaining ethnic rural population, but the newly urbanized, apartment-dwelling, educated and multi-lingual population,¹ who

¹Yu. V. Bromley *et al.*, *Sovremennye Etnicheskie Protssesy v SSSR* (Contemporary Ethnic Processes in the USSR), Moscow, 1975.

like to express their real or imagined sentiments and roots, and who will no doubt indulge in as much nationalist behaviour as the political situation may allow.

So a sociological self-deception, a vision of reality through a prism of illusion, still persists, but it is not the same as that which was analysed by Durkheim. Society no longer worships itself through religious symbols; a modern, streamlined, on-wheels high culture celebrates itself in song and dance, which it borrows (stylizing it in the process) from a folk culture which it fondly believes itself to be perpetuating, defending, and reaffirming.

The course of true nationalism never did run smooth

A characteristic scenario of the evolution of a nationalism – and we shall have cause to return to this kind of scenario – ran something like this. The Ruritanians were a peasant population speaking a group of related and more or less mutually intelligible dialects, and inhabiting a series of discontinuous but not very much separated pockets within the lands of the Empire of Megalomania. The Ruritanian language, or rather the dialects which could be held to compose it, was not really spoken by anyone other than these peasants. The aristocracy and officialdom spoke the language of the Megalomanian court, which happened to belong to a language group different from the one of which the Ruritanian dialects were an offshoot.

Most, but not all, Ruritanian peasants belonged to a church whose liturgy was taken from another linguistic group again, and many of the priests, especially higher up in the hierarchy, spoke a language which was a modern vernacular version of the liturgical language of this creed, and which was also very far removed from Ruritanian. The petty traders of the small towns serving the Ruritanian countryside were drawn from a different ethnic group and religion still, and one heartily detested by the Ruritanian peasantry.

In the past the Ruritanian peasants had had many griefs, movingly and beautifully recorded in their lament-songs (painstakingly collected by village schoolmasters late in the nineteenth century, and made well known to the international musical public by the compositions of the great Ruritanian national composer L.). The pitiful oppression of the Ruritanian peasantry provoked, in the eighteenth century, the guerrilla resistance led by the famous Ruritanian social

bandit K., whose deeds are said still to persist in the local folk memory, not to mention several novels and two films, one of them produced by the national artist Z., under highest auspices, soon after the promulgation of the Popular Socialist Republic of Ruritania.

Honesty compels one to admit that the social bandit was captured by his own compatriots, and that the tribunal which condemned him to a painful death had as its president another compatriot. Furthermore, shortly after Ruritania first attained independence, a circular passed between its Ministries of the Interior, Justice and Education, considering whether it might not now be more politic to celebrate the village defence units which had opposed the social bandit and his gangs, rather than the said social bandit himself, in the interest of not encouraging opposition to the police.

A careful analysis of the folk songs so painstakingly collected in the nineteenth century, and now incorporated in the repertoire of the Ruritanian youth, camping and sports movement, does not disclose much evidence of any serious discontent on the part of the peasantry with their linguistic and cultural situation, however grieved they were by other, more earthy matters. On the contrary, such awareness as there is of linguistic pluralism within the lyrics of the songs is ironic, jocular and good-humoured, and consists in part of bilingual puns, sometimes in questionable taste. It must also be admitted that one of the most moving of these songs – I often sang it by the camp fire at the holiday camp to which I was sent during the summer vacations – celebrates the fate of a shepherd boy, grazing three bullocks on the seigneurial clover (*sic*) near the woods, who was surprised by a group of social bandits, requiring him to surrender his overcoat. Combining reckless folly with lack of political awareness, the shepherd boy refused and was killed. I do not know whether this song has been suitably re-written since Ruritania went socialist. Anyway, to return to my main theme: though the songs do often contain complaints about the condition of the peasantry, they do not raise the issue of cultural nationalism.

That was yet to come, and presumably post-dates the composition of the said songs. In the nineteenth century a population explosion occurred at the same time as certain other areas of the Empire of Megalomania – but not Ruritania – rapidly industrialized. The Ruritanian peasants were drawn to seek work in the industrially more developed areas, and some secured it, on the dreadful terms prevailing at the time. As backward rustics speaking an obscure and

seldom written or taught language, they had a particularly rough deal in the towns to whose slums they had moved. At the same time, some Ruritanian lads destined for the church, and educated in both the court and the liturgical languages, became influenced by the new liberal ideas in the course of their secondary schooling, and shifted to a secular training at the university, ending not as priests but as journalists, teachers and professors. They received encouragement from a few foreign, non-Ruritanian ethnographers, musicologists and historians who had come to explore Ruritania. The continuing labour migration, increasingly widespread elementary education and conscription provided these Ruritanian awakeners with a growing audience.

Of course, it was perfectly possible for the Ruritanians, if they wished to do so (and many did), to assimilate into the dominant language of Megalomania. No genetically transmitted trait, no deep religious custom, differentiated an educated Ruritanian from a similar Megalomanian. In fact, many did assimilate, often without bothering to change their names, and the telephone directory of the old capital of Megalomania (now the Federal Republic of Megalomania) is quite full of Ruritanian names, though often rather comically spelt in the Megalomanian manner, and adapted to Megalomanian phonetic expectations. The point is that after a rather harsh and painful start in the first generation, the life chances of the offspring of the Ruritanian labour migrant were not unduly bad, and probably at least as good (given his willingness to work hard) as those of his non-Ruritanian Megalomanian fellow-citizens. So these offspring shared in the eventually growing prosperity and general embourgeoisement of the region. Hence, as far as individual life chances went, there was perhaps no need for a virulent Ruritanian nationalism.

Nonetheless something of the kind did occur. It would, I think, be quite wrong to attribute conscious calculation to the participants in the movement. Subjectively, one must suppose that they had the motives and feelings which are so vigorously expressed in the literature of the national revival. They deplored the squalor and neglect of their home valleys, while yet also seeing the rustic virtues still to be found in them; they deplored the discrimination to which their conationals were subject, and the alienation from their native culture to which they were doomed in the proletarian suburbs of the industrial towns. They preached against these ills, and had the hearing of at

least many of their fellows. The manner in which, when the international political situation came to favour it, Ruritania eventually attained independence, is now part of the historical record and need not be repeated here.

There is, one must repeat, no need to assume any conscious long-term calculation of interest on anyone's part. The nationalist intellectuals were full of warm and generous ardour on behalf of the co-nationals. When they donned folk costume and trekked over the hills, composing poems in the forest clearings, they did not also dream of one day becoming powerful bureaucrats, ambassadors and ministers. Likewise, the peasants and workers whom they succeeded in reaching felt resentment at their condition, but had no reveries about plans of industrial development which one day would bring a steel mill (quite useless, as it then turned out) to the very heart of the Ruritanian valleys, thus totally ruining quite a sizeable area of surrounding arable land and pasture. It would be genuinely wrong to try to reduce these sentiments to calculations of material advantage or of social mobility. The present theory is sometimes travestied as a reduction of national sentiment to calculation of prospects of social promotion. But this is a misrepresentation. In the old days it made no sense to ask whether the peasants loved their own culture: they took it for granted, like the air they breathed, and were not conscious of either. But when labour migration and bureaucratic employment became prominent features within their social horizon, they soon learned the difference between dealing with a co-national, one understanding and sympathizing with their culture, and someone hostile to it. This very concrete experience taught them to be aware of their culture, and to love it (or, indeed, to wish to be rid of it) without any conscious calculation of advantages and prospects of social mobility. In stable self-contained communities culture is often quite invisible, but when mobility and context-free communication come to be of the essence of social life, the culture in which one has been *taught* to communicate becomes the core of one's identity.

So *had* there been such calculation (which there was not) it would, in quite a number of cases (though by no means in all), have been a very sound one. In fact, given the at least relative paucity of Ruritanian intellectuals, those Ruritanians who did have higher qualifications secured much better posts in independent Ruritania than most of them could even have hoped for in Greater Megalomania, where they had to compete with scholastically more developed

ethnic groups. As for the peasants and workers, they did not benefit immediately; but the drawing of a political boundary around the newly defined ethnic Ruritania did mean the eventual fostering and protection of industries in the area, and in the end drastically diminished the need for labour migration from it.

What all this amounts to is this: during the early period of industrialization, entrants into the new order who are drawn from cultural and linguistic groups that are distant from those of the more advanced centre, suffer considerable disadvantages which are even greater than those of other economically weak new proletarians who have the advantage of sharing the culture of the political and economic rulers. But the cultural/linguistic distance and capacity to differentiate themselves from others, which is such a handicap for individuals, can be and often is eventually a positive advantage for entire collectivities, or potential collectivities, of these victims of the newly emergent world. It enables them to conceive and express their resentments and discontents in intelligible terms. Ruritarians had previously thought and felt in terms of family unit and village, at most in terms of a valley, and perhaps on occasion in terms of religion. But now, swept into the melting pot of an early industrial development, they had no valley and no village: and sometimes no family. But there *were* other impoverished and exploited individuals, and a lot of them spoke dialects recognizably similar, while most of the better-off spoke something quite alien; and so the new concept of the Ruritanian nation was born of this contrast, with some encouragement from those journalists and teachers. And it was not an illusion: the attainment of some of the objects of the nascent Ruritanian national movement did indeed bring relief of the ills which had helped to engender it. The relief would perhaps have come anyway; but in this national form, it also brought forth a new high culture and its guardian state.

This is one of the two important principles of fission which determine the emergence of new units, when the industrial world with its insulated cultural breathing tanks comes into being. It could be called the principle of barriers to communication, barriers based on previous, pre-industrial cultures; and it operates with special force during the early period of industrialization. The other principle, just as important, could be called that of inhibitors of social entropy; and it deserves separate treatment.