

# Soil, blood and identity

27/18

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## Abstract

Modern nations are products of nationalism, and can be defined only as such, rather than by their own distinctive traits – which anyway vary over an extremely wide range. Nationalism was, sociologically, an attempt made by the modern elites to recapture the allegiance (in the form of cultural hegemony) of the 'masses' produced by the early modern transformations and particularly by the cultural rupture between the elites and the rest of the population by the 'civilizing process', whose substance was the self-constitution and the self-separation of new elites legitimizing their status by reference to superior culture and knowledge. In the same way in which the modern state needed nationalism for the 'primitive accumulation' of authority, nationalism needed coercive powers of the state to promote the postulated dissolution of communal identities in the uniform identity of the nation. In the practice of both, there was an unallayed tension between the 'inclusivist' and 'exclusivist' prongs of the nation-state project; hence the never fully effaced link between nationalism and racism, nationalism being the racism of the intellectuals, and racism – the nationalism of the masses. Currently our part of the world undergoes the process of the separation between state and nation, effected by lesser reliance of state power on culturalist legitimation and a degree of de-territorialization of communal affiliations, which fills the efforts of nation-building, invention of heritage, tribal integration etc. with a new urgency and may lead to the sharpening of either of the two prongs of the nationalist project.

Un nationaliste, c'est un Français qui a pris conscience de sa formation. Nationalisme est acceptation d'un déterminisme.

Maurice Barrés

L'Autre, n'est-il pas, pour longtemps, la partie de soi-même que l'on refuse désormais de reconnaître comme telle?

Robert Muchembled

From amidst the gathering storm of nationalism, reaching to the most remote corners of Europe, sounded, as usual the sober and always sobering, voice of Nietzsche: 'That which is at present called a "nation" in Europe' – he wrote in *Beyond Good and Evil* – 'is rather a *res facta* than *nata* (indeed, sometimes confusingly similar to a *res ficta et picta*), is in every case something evolving, young, easily displaced, and not yet a race' – such 'nations', he warned, 'should most carefully avoid all hotheaded rivalry and hostility!'.<sup>1</sup> As always, Nietzsche's words proved all the more ineffective for the potentially sobering message they carried. And it could hardly be otherwise. Precisely because 'that which was called a nation' was so unstable and 'easily displaced' – any effort to make it stable and non-displaceable had no choice but to fortify itself with suspicion, hostility, and a lot of hot-headedness. Were they to last and – against all odds – gather in force, sobriety would be the last thing such efforts could afford. No one perhaps explained better why this had to be the case than Ernest Gellner:

Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as an inherent though long-delayed political destiny, are a 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.<sup>2</sup>

Nationalism is the *true reality* – but it can remain reality (that is, 'create the facts' supplying the evidence or reality it allegedly reflects; more precisely still, *mould* reality so that it begins to resemble its own form) only in as far as it plays down its own reality and extols instead an imagined one – that of the nation as '*res facta*' *because* '*nata*'. It must pretend to be secondary, 'merely reflective', in order to secure its priority, its capacity of reality-making. It has to reverse in imagination the order of causality which structures its practice.

What follows, is that to explain the phenomenon of the *nations* one needs to explain the phenomenon of *nationalism*. Which is exactly the opposite of what most studies bent on unpacking the



mystery of nationality normally do. Two widespread practices in particular must be first to go:

1. The effort to arrive at an 'objective definition' of the nation or at an inventory of traits which a group must possess 'to be a nation'. Such an effort stems from a common enough error of mistaking what ought to be the topic of explanation for the explanatory resource: it takes off from the acceptance of the 'objective reality' of the nation, de-problematizing thereby the very elusiveness and contingency of the nation's precarious existence which nationalisms try hard to conceal. No wonder that more often than not the intended list of 'necessary attributes' ends up as a roster of exceptions (nations without common territory, or common language, or common political history etc.). The search for an 'objective definition' obliquely legitimizes the nationalistic claims that it is the sharing of certain attributes that 'makes a nation', that integrates a certain number of people into a spatial and temporal unity, rather than exposing the fact that the 'commonality' itself (of land, of language, of tradition) is always an artefact of boundary-drawing activity: always contentious and contested, glossing over some (potentially disruptive) differentiations and representing some other (objectively minor) differences as powerful and decisive separating factors. Paul Ricoeur distinguished two different, though all-too-often confused, aspects of *identity*: 'la mêmète' (identity with itself over time), and 'l'ipseité' (setting oneself apart from 'the other'). We may say that in the relationship between nationalism and nation 'l'ipseité' *precedes* and *conditions* 'la mêmète'.

2. The habit to conceive of nationalist movements as 'representations' of the already formed unities and common group interests; as a sign (or vehicle) of the passage from 'nation *an sich*' into 'nation *für sich*'. By that rendering, the role of the national movements as agents of change boils down to the revelation of realities 'which were already there', yet remained invisible because of lagging consciousness or deliberate suppression. An almost universal corollary of such a view is the tendency to take at face value (as descriptions of reality), the rhetoric figures serving the discourse of domination: such as, for instance, that the nationalist practices and accompanying ideologies can and should be split into 'liberating' and 'oppressive'. The interpretive habit in question conceals the genuine – and reverse – sequence of the causal chain: common-interest groups, integrating myths of shared traditions and common destinies – all those notorious paraphernalia of the

'reality of the nation' – arrive *in the wake* of a nationalist movement and supply evidence of its successful bid for the right to historicity for itself and for the denial of such right to the competitor(s). The concealment of the true sequence is an indispensable condition of that success.

Once we agree to put the two confusing practices of theorizing out of the way, once we abandon the vain, time-wasting search for the attributes of 'nations as such' – we will accept, after Fredrik Barth, that 'ethnic categories provide an organizational vessel that may be given varying contents and forms in different socio-cultural systems. They may be of great relevance to behaviour, but they need not be; they may pervade all social life, or they may be relevant only in limited sectors of activity'; that the continuous existence of an 'ethnic category' depends solely on the *maintenance of a boundary*, whatever are the changing cultural factors selected as the border posts; that it is in the end 'the ethnic *boundary* that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses',<sup>3</sup> that all having been said and done, the very identity of that cultural stuff (its 'unity', 'totality') is an artefact of firmly drawn and well guarded boundary, though the designers and guardians of borders would as a rule insist on the opposite order of causality. And then we shall face the phenomenon of nationalism as social movement, not of the nation as 'social given', as the major challenge to understanding and explanation.

At the more general level, nationalism can be thought of as a specimen of the big family of *we-talks*; that is, of discourses in which identities and counter-identities are conceived and through which they are sustained. From other discourses purporting to report experience or unpack its meaning the *we-talks* are set apart by their *exclusivity*: they tend to promote ego-centred binary divisions, divide the world into *friends* and *enemies* – sharply separated from each other by mutually exclusive sets of assigned rights and duties, moral significance and behavioural principles. Identity offered by the postulated membership of the inner circle of friends is circumscribed – made tangibly real – by the non-identity relationship to the outer circle of enemies. The 'we-ness' of friends owes its materiality to the 'they-ness' of the enemies. Identity is permanently under conditions of a besieged fortress: since its inception, it is to be forever threatened by trespassing of enemies, dilution, slackening of vigilance. Always made-up, almost always contested, it tends to be fragile and unsure of itself; this is why the *we-talk* can seldom stop. Identity stands and falls by



the security of its borders, and the borders are ineffective unless guarded.

'Identity' seems to be one of the most universal human needs. We all seem to share in the pursuit of what Michel Morineau aptly dubbed *la douceur d'être inclu*:

D'elle même, d'une certaine manière, l'expression dit tout; elle correspond au désir premier, celui d'appartenir, d'appartenir à une groupe, d'être reçu par un autre, par des autres, d'être accueilli, d'être retenu, d'être sûr d'avoir des soutiens, des alliés . . . Et plus que ce détail de gratifications distillées une à une, les subsumant, les assumant, le sentiment, par dessus celui d'avoir son identité personnelle avalisée, certifiée, acceptée par un nombre, le sentiment d'être revêtu d'une seconde identité, une identité sociale cette fois . . . <sup>4</sup>

The 'we' made of inclusion, acceptance and confirmation is the realm of gratifying safety cut out (though never securely enough) from the frightening wilderness of the *outside* populated by 'them'. The safety would not be felt unless the 'we' were trusted to possess the binding power of acceptance and the strength to protect those already accepted. Identity is experienced as secure if the powers that have certified it seem to prevail over the enemies construed in the process of their self-assertion. 'We' must be powerful, or it won't be gratifying. There is little pleasure in being included if – as Heine once remarked on one of the less effective protective walls, those of an ethnic ghetto – 'cowardice guards the gates from inside, and stupidity from outside'.

If the need of identity is universal in the human species burdened with its drive to sociability, its awariness, consciousness of its *experience* – as a need, as an end to be pursued, task to be fulfilled – is far from universal. That experience intensifies with the ferocity of contest (or, which amounts to the same, with the decrease in certainty). Competitive challenge makes any identity seem precarious; and the one comfort identity is expected to offer is self-confidence, certainty, 'knowing where one stands'. One would expect, therefore, the *search* for identity to be at its most intense when identity is not to be taken placidly, as a gift of blood and soil; when it appears instead fluid, pliable, located in the not-yet-accomplished future instead of in the already-too-late-to-be-tinkered-with past. By and large, this is what happens at a time of rapid change – when new forms of life emerge too fast to be

absorbed and domesticated by the old mechanisms of control and ancient mental frames. Whenever more than at the era of modernity, which – in the memorable words of Marx – announced its arrival by melting all solids and profaning everything that used to be sacred. Modernity makes all being *contingent*, and thus a ‘problem’, a ‘project’, a ‘task’. Lifting identity to the level of awareness, making it into a task – an objective of self-reflexive activity, an object of, simultaneously, individual concern and specialized institutional service – is one of the most prominent characteristics of modern times.

It is against this background that the phenomenon of nationalism can be best understood.

### Reconquering the estranged

Reflecting on the intellectual and moral reform France needed, Ernest Renan bewailed the state of the ‘masses’, but most of all the incapacity of the masses to extricate themselves from that state by their own will and force: ‘the masses are onerous, crude, dominated by a most superficial view of their interest’. ‘Imbeciles or ignorants may well unite, but nothing good would follow from their union’ – Renan wrote elsewhere, as if in conclusion. ‘The spectacle of the physical suffering of the poor is no doubt lamentable. I admit, however, that it causes me infinitely less pain than the sight of the great majority doomed to intellectual parochialism’<sup>5</sup> – was the moral and practical lesson: ‘the masses’ are to become, and for a foreseeable future to remain, an *object* of tender care aimed at their spiritual elevation: not the *subject* of action, not the makers of choices one would be ready to accept. It is the presence of the masses that founds the necessity of spiritual leadership, and thus offers the domination by the elite its *raison d’être*. At the time Renan wrote these words, this was the generally accepted opinion, shortly to be still further elaborated by LeBon, Tarde or Sorel among many others. That opinion summed up a century or more of estrangement and re-conquest.

‘The masses’ belong to the populous family of categories born together with modernity. Shuffling together of the multiple regional, legal and occupational identities of *le petit peuple* into an indiscriminate mass or a *mobile vulgus* did not start in earnest but in 17th century, and has reached its conceptual maturity only in the thought of Enlightenment. According to Robert Muchembled,



All social groups of the 15th and 16th centuries moved at the same level in that universe, enormously distant from ours. Real cleavages caused by birth or wealth did not result in profound differences in sensibility and common conduct between the dominant and the dominated . . .

Beginning with the 18th century, the break between two separate mental planets intensifies. The civilized people cannot any more feel the people, in the proper sense of the word. They reject everything which appears to them savage, dirty, lecherous – in order to better conquer similar temptations in themselves . . . Odour became a criterion of social distinction

There were many divisions and sub-divisions, broad or minute, in that *divine chain of being* that the pre-modern mind of Christian Europe forged to piece together its life-world; too many, in fact, for one, all-embracing, all-defining 'division of divisions', like that *modern* division between the 'civilized' and the 'vulgar', to emerge. In a truly revolutionary way, the 'civilizing process' that took off in the 17th century was first and foremost a drive to the self-separation of the elites from 'the rest' – now forcefully blended, despite all its internal variety, into homogenic masses; a process of a sharp *cultural de-synchronization*. On one, active end (that of the elites) it produced growing preoccupation with the task of self-formation, self-drill and self-improvement. On the other, receiving end, it sedimented a tendency to biologize, medicalize, criminalize and increasingly police 'the masses' – 'judged brutal, filthy and totally incapable of constraining their passions in order to accommodate in the civilized mould'.<sup>6</sup>

The overall product of the process was a sharply dichotomized society (at least – and that counted most – such was its vision from the top). Children of light versus children of darkness, reason at war with superstition, civilizing effort facing sinister passions, law and order keeping violent instincts at bay, humanizing self-culture of the educated set against the raw animality of the lesser mortals; all oppositions being, in the end, but perspectival dimensions of the greatest and most seminal of separations: that between elite and the masses.

At the threshold of modernity one finds the process of the *self*-formation of the elite (now set apart by its 'civilized' mode, with its two faces of spiritual refinement and bodily drill) which at the same time is a process of formation of the *masses* as the potential field of elite's supervising function, action and responsibility.

*Responsibility* is for leading the masses into humanity; the *action* may take form of persuasion or enforcement. It was that responsibility and the associated propulsion to act that defined 'the masses' in their two permanently coexisting and mutually complementary, even if ostensibly sharply diverse, incarnations: of 'the mob' (coming to the fore whenever force was the order of the day), and 'the people' (invoked when education was hoped to make enforcement redundant).

What applied to the grand separation, applied as well to the grand re-assembly which was bound to follow. The re-integration of divided society was to be led by the new civilized elite of the educated, now firmly in the saddle. To quote Gellner again, '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'.<sup>7</sup> The processes of integration and re-production of society could be no more left to spontaneous, unreflexively operating forces of sociability set in motion by the multitude of compact, localized mini-centres (or – more correctly – modern elites have consciously and resolutely broken with what they now viewed, in retrospect and with horror, as such a de-centred, diffuse, chaotic and thus dangerous and always pregnant with catastrophe, *irrational* state of affairs). Processes of integration and reproduction of social order have now become the domain of specialization, expertise – and of a legally defined authority. As the processes of separation which preceded them, they simultaneously constitute the elite as the group at the helm and the rest of society as a natural object of elite's action; in other words, they reproduce the structure of domination in its new, much extended form – stretching far beyond the past re-distribution of the surplus product, shaping the spirits and the bodies of the subjects and penetrating deeply their daily conduct and the construction of their life-worlds. The call for the education of the masses is simultaneously a declaration of the masses' own social incompetence and a bid for the dictatorship of the *professoriat* (or, to use the educated elite's own vocabulary, for the 'enlightened despotism' of the guardians of reason and good taste).

Nationalism was, essentially, such a bid. It was, therefore, as modern as the structure of domination around which and through which the new integration of society is perpetrated; and as the



social forces elevated to the managerial positions in the process. In the course of modern history, nationalism played the role of the hinge fastening together state and society (represented as, identified with, the nation). State and nation emerged as natural allies at the horizon of the nationalist vision (at the finishing line of the re-integrating race). The state supplied the resources of nation building, while the postulated unity of the nation and shared national destiny offered legitimacy to the ambition of the state authority to command obedience. One may say that, consciously or instinctively, the rising state sought legitimizing support through siding with the already existing, or fomenting a new nationalism; while nationalist projects sought the instruments and assurances of their effectivity in the powers of the extant or still-to-be-built states. Indeed, the elite-promoted alliance had become so close that by the end of the nineteenth century Maurice Barrès could look back on the link between the state and the nation as on a result of an utterly natural and un-prompted process, a product of the law of nature of sorts: 'Peoples emancipated from historical constraints by natural rights, by the Revolution, organized themselves into nationalities . . . They decided spontaneously to form groups resting on shared legends and on life in togetherness'.<sup>8</sup>

Nationalism was, first and foremost, a conjunction of the spiritual elite's bid for political leadership and the political rulers' bid for spiritual hegemony. It was aimed at recapturing the bodies and minds of the previously distanced and estranged 'masses', that end-product of decomposition and pulverization of ancient (local and self-administered) structures of incorporation. It aimed at the substitution of one 'centre', overlooking and supervizing the whole of 'periphery', for the patchwork of multi-focal sociabilities.

In this sense, nationalism was a programme of unification and a postulate of homogeneity. But nationalism was also invariably a bid for exclusive rights to a territory, a population, a populated territory; much as it was a struggle of the elite to tame and subjugate obstreperous or indifferent masses, it was also a struggle between extant and prospective, established and up-and-coming elites for the right to administer the taming effort, to set its rhetoric and to benefit from its eventual success. It is for this reason that there was always an ambiguity, and interplay of inclusive and exclusive tendencies in every nationalism – and in each nationalist crusade or proselytizing campaign. Promotion of homogeneity had to be complemented by the effort to brand, segregate and evict the 'aliens' – already a prey of another national

elite, converts of another nationalism, and altogether poor prospects for assimilation into the fought-for uniformity. Drawing the boundary between the *natives* and the *aliens*, between prospective nation and its enemies, was an inseparable part of the self-assertion of the national elite.

## Blood and choice

What is *la patrie*? – asked Maurice Barrès, and answered: '*La Terre et les Morts*'. The two constituents of *la Patrie* have one thing in common: they are not a matter of choice. They cannot be *chosen freely*. Before any choice can be as much as contemplated, one has been already born onto this soil here and now and into this succession of ancestors and their posterity. One can move places, but one cannot take one's soil with one, and one cannot make another soil one's own. One may change company, but not one's dead, the dead ancestors who are his and not of the others; nor may one transform other people's dead into one's own ancestors. Commenting on the conflict between Creon and Antigone, Barrès made it clear just what the limits of the choice are:

Creon is a master who arrived from abroad. He said: 'I know the laws of the country and I'll apply them'. This was the judgment of his intelligence. Intelligence – what a trifle thing at the very surface of our selves! Antigone, on the contrary, . . . engages her profound heredity, she is inspired by those subconscious parts where respect, love, fear no more differentiated from the magnificent might of the veneration'.

Antigone has what Creon, armed solely with his wit and acquired – learned – knowledge, will never possess: *l'épine dorsale*, the backbone on which and around which everything else in human creature rests and is shapen (the backbone, Barrès insists, is not a metaphor, 'but a most powerful analogy'). By comparison with the solidity of the backbone, intelligence is no more than 'a trifle thing on the surface'. The backbone is a fixed point from which everything else must depart – and it must have been already in place, otherwise no move would have been feasible. And it determines what moves are feasible and which are not (that is, threaten to break the backbone). Truth is also a fixed point, like the backbone: not a point of arrival (not the *end point*



of the knowledge process), but the *starting* point of all knowledge, point that cannot be created but only found, recovered if missed or lost; 'a unique point, this one here, none other, the point from which everything appears to us in its right proportions'.

I ought to situate myself exactly at the point which demand my eyes, such eyes as have been formed by centuries: the point from which all thing offer themselves in the measure of a Frenchman. The totality of right and true relations between given objects and the determined man, the Frenchman, this is the French truth and the French justice. Pure nationalism is nothing else than the knowledge that such a point exists, the search to find it, and – once it has been reached – cleaving to it in order to derive from it our arts, our politics, all our activities.<sup>9</sup>

Ambivalence again, and one that cannot be ever resolved conclusively: the point has been fixed before I've been born, I myself had been 'fixed' by it before I began to think of points or of anything else – yet finding this point is still my task, something I must do while exercising my reason. I must seek that point actively, and then choose what is not a matter of choice: to embrace *voluntarily* the *inevitable*, to submit in full consciousness to that which has been present all along in my subconscious. The outcome of free choice is given in advance: while exercising my will, I am not really free to will: there is only one thing that in my case may be willed effectively: to be determined by *la terre et les morts*, to revel in having stern and demanding masters – to say to oneself 'I wish to live with these masters, and – through making them the objects of my cult – to fully partake of their force'. But there are other things as well that I may happen to will, or think (mistakenly) that I am free to will them; for instance, disowning my own masters or appropriating masters that are not mine. In both cases I may really come to believe that I am free and that my reason-dictated choice, like the reason itself, knows no bounds. In both cases the result is the same: *déracinement*, rootlessness – body without a backbone, thought with no fixed point on which to stand.

What unites certain human creatures (and sets them apart from others) is not *solidarity* – something they can forge or disavow at will, but *affinity* – liens they have not chosen and are not at liberty to trade off. 'The fact of being of the same race, of the same family, forms a psychological determinism; it is in this sense that I

take the word affinity'. The status of affinity is precarious: strong enough to inspire faith in the final victory of the unity drive but not strong enough to breed complacency and legitimize quietism. True nationalism (certainly a nationalism Barrès' style) would shun the exceptionless, impersonal, overpowering determinism of *race*: 'it is incorrect to say that there is a French race in the exact meaning of the word. We are not a race, but a nation: a nation which goes on creating itself daily, and to avoid being diminished, annihilated, we – the individuals who make it – must protect it.'<sup>10</sup> If group membership depends on race, everything was said and done before anything has been thought or spoken; if, on the other hand, togetherness of the group hangs on the *willing* acceptance of fate (if the nation is Renan's 'daily plebiscite'), it also (and most importantly) hangs on what is being spoken and those who speak it. Unlike the race, nation is incomplete without its 'conscience arousing' spokesmen; unlike the race, nation includes consciousness among its defining attributes – it can be *für sich* but also 'merely', in an inferior fashion, *an sich*. Nationalism, one may say, is a racism of the intellectuals (and obversely, racism is the nationalism of the masses; the masses are, virtually by definition, objects of somebody else's choices, products rather than producers, whether the determining forces are genes or the legally fixed narrative of the powers that be. The 'belonging' appears to the masses, therefore, as something given and complete, matter-of-factly and non-negotiable; most certainly, as something that cannot be changed).

And so affinity, but not race. The need to forge a formula of integration that includes, as its irremovable factor, those who speak and write in the pivotal role of integrators supreme, embroils the nationalist intellectuals (very much like the intellectual preachers of class mission, for that matter) into an ambivalence without good solution. The truth they preach must rely on something stronger than mere power of argument; it must be guaranteed before the argument has started, and independently of the course the future argument may take – that is, by forces reason can only discover and acknowledge, not conjure up or modify. In relation to intelligence the truth of the nation must be transcendental and absolute. On the other hand, however, it must be a vulnerable truth, a truth which may come under attack and even be, at least temporarily, defeated – so that it will always need to be defended and thus need and respect and reward its defenders. *Une vérité française* must be *la vérité* for all Frenchmen; but it must not be



just any truth, but *la vérité française* – a made-to-measure truth, so to speak, a truth that appoints its addressees in advance and leaves choice to no one. Hence, the truth of the nation is simultaneously absolute *and* relative; an incongruence, if there ever was one. Nations of the nationalists are constantly at war – an unwinnable war – against their own inner ambivalence. Fighting, as always, its inner incongruity in a re-projected form of *The Other*, nations focus their self-defence on locating, segregating, disarming and banishing the *strangers* rather than *enemies*: those aliens in their midst who are the crystallizations of their zealously, but ineffectively, suppressed ambivalence. In the words of Reinhold Niebuhr, any ‘altruistic passion is sluiced into the reservoirs of nationalism’, so that ‘patriotism transmutes individual unselfishness into national egoism’; with that task accomplished (but never accomplished securely and once for all), nations bear ill criticism of their selfish parochialism; ‘nations crucify their moral rebels with their criminals upon the same golgotha’.<sup>11</sup> Nationalism, that quest for a uniform world without contingency, turns out ambivalence as its ‘productive waste’, and cannot but turn it out continuously and on a never diminishing scale. Lest they should suffocate under the growing heaps of ambivalence, nations are called to be vigilant against the strangers in their midst – the false pretenders who claim the soil and the blood that are not their own, outspoken detractors of the sanctity of national symbols or (worse still) deceitful flatterers drowning their alienness in the mendacity of praise.

Nations can never stay still; complacency and fading vigilance is their worst sin – a mortal (suicidal) sin, to be sure. The order that sustains them and which they sustain by their ‘daily plebiscite’ is after all artificial (even though ‘natural’ because of reflecting what the soil and blood dictate), and hence precarious from stem to stern. The paradox of the order (‘the ludicrous thing about order’, in Canetti’s expression) is that it wants to be so total and all-embracing while it ‘depends on so little. A hair, literally a hair, lying where it shouldn’t, can separate order from disorder. Everything that does not belong where it is, is hostile. Even the tiniest thing is disturbing: a man of total order would have to scour his realm with a microscope, and even then a remnant of potential nervousness will remain in him’.<sup>12</sup> Nationalism breeds such an endemic nervousness in nations it spawns. It trains the nations in the art of vigilance that means a lot of restlessness and promises no tranquillity; it makes the nationhood into a task always to be

struggled for and never to be fulfilled in the degree justifying the complacency that comes with victory. It prompts feverish defence of the soil and frantic blood-testing. It creates the state of permanent tension of which it presents itself as the solution; it thrives on that tension, it draws from it its life juices; it is, after all the selfsame tension which it sustains that makes it indispensable – indeed, welcome, sought after, and once found or offered, eagerly and gratefully embraced.

A quarter of a century ago Karl Deutsch spelled out the role played by the tension born of anxiety born of uncertain (withdrawn, questioned, under-determined) identity, in riveting together the 'push' and 'pull' factors in nationalism. Nation-state, he wrote,

offers most of its members a stronger sense of security, belonging or affiliation, and even personal identity, than does any alternative large group . . .

(The) greater the need of the people for such affiliation and identity under the strains and shocks of social mobilization and alienation from earlier familiar environments, the greater becomes the potential power of the nation-state to channel both their longings and resentments and to direct their love and hate.<sup>13</sup>

It was the disintegration of 'earlier familiar environments' at the threshold of the modern era that gave the initial push to the ready-made, state-authorized identities. Only in small part the early modern state was responding to an already existing, much less a well articulated, need; more likely, the decisive factor was the state's own groping for an effective – and in the past untried because unnecessary – means to squeeze the volumes of social compliance and discipline which the pre-modern state, with its limited ambitions, never required. There is a recent restatement by Anthony H. Birch of the by now commonly agreed view of the historians,

until the last two centuries in Europe and North America, and until very recently in most other parts of the world, the demands made by the state or empire on its citizens were so small that no active sense of loyalty was required for the governmental system to operate. Taxes were minimal; government services were minimal; laws and regulations left people without interference in their normal lives; and wars were fought by volunteers and



mercenaries . . . In recent generations, the development of the positive state has transformed the situation.<sup>14</sup>

It may be that nationalism was a more productive factory of the needed popular submission than any other conceivable legitimation – particularly when leaning on the new legislative monopoly supported by awesome coercive powers of the state. This probability found recurrent confirmation in the collapse or near collapse of liberal-rationalistic formula of legitimation Weber's style in every period of crisis leading to a change in the rules of the game, or in the framework in which the needed form of allegiance is moulded. In such periods in the past the 'legal-rational' formula supporting liberal-democratic style of governmental activity used to come under severe strain; most importantly, it came under attack by left or right critiques, as a rule heavily tainted with nationalistic sentiments and appealing to national selfishness while taking a pugnacious stance towards the 'aliens' outside and inside national boundaries.<sup>15</sup> The attack was given strength by the 'push' and 'pull' factors alike: nationalist re-assertion was a favourite self-promotion weapon of the counter-elites that found the existing elite-circulation mechanism not capacious enough; and re-shuffle of social hierarchies (most importantly, the sapping or withdrawal of status that accompanied it), lent vigour to the feverish search for explanation and remedy among the victims – the de-stabilized, and hence threatened strata.

### **Identity in the era of the wane of the national state**

Some observers, most notably Eric Hobsbawm, consider the astonishing proliferation of 'nation-states' in the most recent period of world history as a sign not so much of the ultimate triumph of the 'national principle', but – on the contrary – of the progressive collapse of the nation-state as the principal carrier of collective sovereign identities. Throughout the 'classical modern' era, up to the cataclysm brought about by the World War One, the multi-dimensional sovereignty (embracing first and foremost the grand triad of the military, economic and cultural autonomy and self-management) was inextricably woven into the nationalist idea; one may guess that it was this link that made the institution of nation state so tempting and so effective as the target and the reference point of collective identities. 'Viability' was seen then

the indispensable attribute of nation-state – and hence a territory too small or too weak to cater for itself was not truly in the race; only medium and medium-to large entities could ponder themselves, and were pondered by others, as ‘deserving’ the nation-state status. Today, that criterion seems to have been removed and we witness seemingly endless ‘fissiparousness of nationalisms’, with ever new regional, linguistic, denominational etc. differences being picked up by ever new prospective elites as distinctive identities powerful enough to justify a separate state formation.

Any speck in the Pacific can look forward to independence and a good time for its president, if it happens to possess a location for a naval base for which more solvent states will compete, a lucky gift of nature such as manganese, or merely enough beaches and pretty girls to become a tourist paradise . . .

The majority of the members of the UN is soon likely to consist of the late twentieth century (republican) equivalents to Saxe-Coburg-Gotha and Schwarzburg-Sonderhausen . . .

If the Seychelles can have a vote in the UN as good as Japan’s . . . then surely only the sky is the limit for the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands.<sup>16</sup>

The proliferation of units claiming the status won historically by modern nation-states does not testify to the fact that smaller and weaker entities than before can reasonably claim or strive for viability; it only testifies to the fact that viability has ceased to be a condition of nation-state formation. Most significantly, it suggests – paradoxically – the *loss* of ‘viability’ in the old sense by such medium and medium-to-large state organisms as could claim to enjoy the classical triad of sovereignty in the ‘high modernity’ era. The overcrowded UN building does not augur the ultimate triumph of the nationalist principle – but the coming end of the age of society identified with the nation-state (though not necessarily of the age of nationalism). The way in which the world economy operates today (and there is today a genuine world economy) favours state organisms that cannot effectively impose conditions under which economy is run; economy is effectively transnational – and in relation to virtually any state, big or small, most of economic assets crucial for the daily life of its population are ‘foreign’. The divorce between political autarchy (real or imaginary) and economic autarky seems to be irrevocable.

Paul Valéry wrote not that long ago that ‘les races et les nations



ne se sont abordées que par des soldats, des apôtres et des marchands'. Today the soldiers' marches have been to a decisive extent made irrelevant by the carefully planned trajectories of long-range missiles. Missionaries by and large lost their causes, and the few who did not can attend to their apostolic vocation from home, as electronics devoured and pulverised the traditional space, measured in miles instead of megabytes. The traders, on the other hand, are active as never before. Collectively, they have broken all previous records of boundary crossing. One may go as far as to say that the traders (more conspicuously still, their merchandise) travel across the *political* boundaries too massively for those borders to retain any of their past *economic* sense. Economically, statehood makes ever less sense: this is precisely why the tiniest of populations may be gazed at hopefully by aspiring nation-builders as potential suppliers of the usual quota of ministries and embassies. In the process of uncoupling of the state from the function of economic management, the size-and-viability limits to nationalist ambitions have been effectively removed.

Alongside the globalization of economy (during the 1980s alone, the volume of 'international' trade rose by 50 per cent, its monetary value by 75 per cent; the very label of 'inter-nationality' in circulation of commodities, a tribute to historical memory, becomes increasingly a book-keeping fiction), another 'globalizing' process is taking place, with seemingly opposite impact on the future of nationalism: the emerging exterritoriality of information, the global flow of communication that ignores all borders and cannot be arrested by any border guards, however zealous and heavily armed. In recent years, almost every single foreboding of the 'mass culture' debate of the 1950s has been dusted off, though this time the homogenization of *national* cultures, not *class* cultures (obliteration of national, not class identities) is being divined. The almost universal accessibility of cultural contents cut off from any localized abode and tradition is once again seen as tantamount to cultural uniformity, this time on the world-wide scale. Once more, the presence of the message on the one hand, and the practiced style of thought and action on the other, are short-circuited, with the second anticipated to follow the first automatically. We hear now of the end of history or of the advent of the 'cosmopolitic era'.<sup>17</sup>

I propose that the divinations of global culture are as unlikely to materialize as were half a century ago the other auguries of a

homogenized mass culture. Significant cultural differences are at all times neither 'objectively given' nor can they be 'objectively obliterated' or levelled-off. Cultural contents make a totality only in the form of a pool of tokens from which a volume of selections and combinations (in principle infinite) can, and is, made. Most importantly, they serve as a raw material from which DIY identities are assembled; the truly significant cultural differences (those made visible, noticed, serving as orientation points or labels for group integration, and defended) are *products* of such identity-assembling processes. It is the presence or absence of such processes, and their relative strength, which (always contentiously) elevates some dialects to the level of languages and reduces some languages to the level of dialects; which organizes the remembered or invented past in separate or shared traditions; which, in general, prompts imitative urges vis-à-vis some cultural tokens and imposes a ban on embracing of others.

The genuine chances of a 'global culture' depends not so much on the cultural offer (drastically extended by the rapidly advancing informatic technology), but by the unchanged needs of identity-building. These needs, if anything, tend to be more acute still (and more than in the past disjunctive) in the wake of the ever more evident bankruptcy of the nation-states in their past role of producers and suppliers of ultimate identity. The conviction gains in credibility that the stable future of the world organized as a collection of nation-states and supra-national alliances entered by the states always tending to 'full sovereignty' as their ideal target – a future assumed as the yardstick by which progress was measured and changes of status quo evaluated – is not to be. Which does not mean that the identity-constructing function in which the nation-states used to specialize, is likely to fade off together with its carriers. This only means that the function will probably seek another carrier, and will seek it all the more ardently for the 'softness' – elusiveness and contingency – of all available alternatives.

Most alternatives available share one feature: they are, by and large, *non-territorial*. Less and less the states preside over cultural crusades aimed at the totality of population subjected to its legislative rule. One may say that the identity-building has been 'de-territorialized', prised off (at least in principle) from the activity of space-management and drawing boundaries in their primary, spaces-separating sense. More than ever before identity-building has assumed a symbolic character, and expresses itself in the choice or rejection of cultural tokens together with their



carriers. The tendency to inner cultural homogeneity and outer cultural separatedness remains the property of groups – but not of the territorial administrative units.

We live today in a nomadic world, in the *universe of migration* – of commodities and, increasingly, of people. Variegated provenance of inanimate constituents of life-worlds, as well as of a growing fraction of newcomers (of varying degree of strangeness) among the human ones, brings into relief the nomadic character of life itself; its territorial uprootedness and weakened dependence on hereditary determinants. Temporality and friability of marriage-sustained family bonds, plus the fast increasing manipulability of human genes through various forms of medical intervention, add to the perception of nomadism and of a made-up, contrived character of any, irreparably contingent, identity; one may guess that domestication of genetic-engineering practices in the life-world will sooner rather than later shift all matters biological from the realm of 'nature' (that is, a realm perceived as exempt from human manipulation) to that of 'culture' (that is, one admittedly artificial, made and monitored by the humans).

### **Desperately seeking identity**

Postmodern nomads, unlike prototypically modern, protestant 'pilgrims through life', wander between *unconnected* places. It is on this point that they differ – not in the concern with *establishing* and *preserving* their identities, a concern which they share with their pilgrim ancestors. Most attributes of modern conception of identity, listed persuasively by Anthony Giddens,<sup>18</sup> apply to the nomads as much as they did to the pilgrims. For both, identity is a task, and a task which has to be reflexively monitored, and a task the monitoring of which is their own and constant responsibility; for both, the construction and maintenance of identity are tasks that can never be abandoned, an effort that cannot be relaxed. Where the nomads and the pilgrims differ, and differ rather sharply, is the *disconnexity* of the time/space in which the identity of the nomads is plotted, as against *connexity* of the time/space canvas on which the pilgrims' identities are woven.

Pilgrims, like nomads, must *select* their life-destination; but they select their destination early and plan their life-itinerary accordingly. We may say that they are guided throughout by a 'life-project', by an overall 'life-plan'. Nomads, on the other hand, hardly ever

reach in their imagination beyond the next caravan-site. If pressed to make sense of their itinerary, they would rather look back, than forward, tracing (with the 'wisdom of the hindsight') the connections between stations which they failed to note at the time. Only in retrospect, if at all, the series of contingencies appears to them as a stochastically determined chain. Only in this ex-post-facto sense they would speak of their lives as of implementation of a life-project. If there was a life-project, it was not a part of the nomads' own psychological reality. The nomads, like the pilgrims, were all along busy constructing their identities; but theirs were 'momentary' identities, identities 'for today', until-further-notice identities. Nomads do not bind time/space, they move through it; and so they move *through* identities.

Modernity has had its way, and the past does not bind the present any more. As the war waged by modern spirit and modern practice was coming to its victorious end, Claude Lévi-Strauss could in clear conscience declare history to be our own variant of tribal myth, and the synchronic network of relations (and not the diachronic sequence favoured by historically-minded etymologists), a network fully enclosed in the present and disdainful to the past, to be the only setting in which meaning of anything could be explored and found. *Simultaneity* replaced history as the location of meaning. What counts – what has the power to define and shape – is what is around here and now. 'Older' and 'younger' objects are all on the same plane, that of the present. The present is a large pool of such objects, which differ in many aspects – the aspect of 'origin' or 'history' not being, however, one of them.

In the postmodern world whose philosophy Levi-Strauss' precept anticipated, the present does not bind its future more than it itself is bound by its past: what the future will be, if not another 'present state' unbound by *our* present that will have turned out to be *its* past? Life is a succession of self-cancelling determinations. Since our present, that *past of our future*, will be sooner or later declared null and void and its hold on the way things are (if there ever was one) will be broken, consideration of the distant, not-immediately-experienced consequences of our present actions is waste of time. Whatever the present may offer, it offers now – 'while stocks lasts'. The offer will be rescinded (or won't it rather be forgotten?) when the present present is replaced (pushed aside, elbowed out, made obsolete, cast into oblivion) by some other, tomorrow's present.



And so nothing needs to be done forever. Nothing *can* be done forever. Knowledge I studiously master today will turn thoroughly inadequate, if not a downright ignorance, tomorrow. The skills I learn today in the sweat of my brow will not carry me far in the brave new world of tomorrow's technology and know-how. The job I've proudly won yesterday in fierce competition will disappear tomorrow. The career whose steps I'm negotiating will vanish – the stairs, the staircase, the building and all. My prize possessions, my today's pride, will tomorrow become yesterday taste and my embarrassment. The union which I've sworn to cherish and preserve, will fall apart and be dissolved tomorrow at the first sign of my partner's or my own disaffection. Perhaps there will be a string of 'life-long partners'. None is, none will be my partner 'till death us do part'; or at least nothing I do may assure me that s/he will.

Dramas we watch do not outlive the pressing of TV button; books we buy and read last from one railway stop to another. The news' main function is to chase yesterday news off, to force them out from attention and memory – and to agree in advance to be driven away in a similar way by tomorrow news. The centre of public vision is permanently overcrowded, and the 'news' must fight, tooth and nail of their promoters, for a share of public attention. Those selected 'public events' and celebrities who make it to the centre seem to appear from nowhere; soon they will return to whence they came – they will fade into non-existence. As long as they manage to stay on the stage, however – their short-lived, but intense public cult, enhanced and magnified by being echoed in millions of synchronized and similarly patterned reactions, celebrates the birth *ab nihilo*, the painlessness of disappearance, the wonder of evanescence, beauty of the fleeting moment, the glory of transience. Obliquely yet significantly, the cults proclaim durability to be boredom, and age to be obsolescence. They turn permanence into a word of ridicule. The cults self-annihilate as they self-reproduce: today cults whet the appetite for tomorrow cults and make them necessary.

The urge of mobility, built into the structure of contemporary life, prevents the arousal of strong affections for any of the places; places we occupy are no more than temporary stations. The progress in life is measured and marked by moving homes and offices. Addresses do not retain their prestige capacity for long; they move up and down the scale of respectability, attractiveness and pulling power. Nothing seems to be 'for life', and none of the

things in life are approached and embraced and cherished as if they were. Skills, jobs, occupations, residences, marriage partners – they all come and go, and tend to annoy or bore or embarrass when they stay too long. Nothing is truly irreplaceable, and thus the tragedy is neither unbearable nor too shattering when things or partners disappear from view. Again, all-too-often disappearance of things and persons alike comes before their 'natural death'. All this has not done away with the need of self-definition and identity. It only made the job of constructing them that much more harrowing, unnerving, passion-ridden.

Moreover, the paradox of man-made collective identities which may hold fast only when perceived as beyond human power has not gone away either; if anything, it has become sharper than at any previous stage of the modern era. Its solution, on the other hand, has turned more difficult than ever. Since it had become a conscious activity, identity-building always contained a mix of 'restorative' and 'productive' objectives (the first category expressed in the invocation of soil and blood, *la terre et les morts*, the second in the requisite of patriotism, denunciation of lukewarmness as treachery, and demand of vigilance against the turncoats). Today, however, productive aspects come clearly to the fore – as the ostensibly firmest foundations of identity (such as territory or racial stock) have been exposed by current practice (at least in the part of the world already under postmodern condition) as irreparably fluid, ambivalent and otherwise unreliable. There is, therefore, a sort of 'social demand' for such 'objective' foundations of collective identities which openly admit of their historicity and man-made origins, yet nevertheless may be ascribed a supra-individual authority and a value which the carriers of identity can disregard only at their peril. Concerns with identity, complete with the xenophobia they gestate in volumes inversely proportional to self-confidence, will in all probability seek anchor in the territory classified as *culture*. The phenomenon described by Simmel as 'tragedy of culture' (the contradiction between the modality of culture as the product of human spirit, and the awesome, massive 'objectivity' of created culture as experienced by the individual no more able to assimilate it) has become a hundred years later the last straw of hope for the seekers of solid identities in the postmodern world of contingency and nomadism.

The focus of identity-building is now the contrived, made-up community masquerading as a Tönnies-style inherited *Gemeinschaft*. Community that comes into being and continues to exist, however



ephemerically, through the combined force of individual choices. Community that has no other ground but the individual decisions to identify with it, yet one that needs to impress itself upon the minds of decision-makers as *preceding* any decision, so that decision in its favour should be taken in quantities sufficient to create such grounds. Community, therefore, which is bound to remain endemically precarious and hence bellicose and intolerant, neurotic about matters of security and paranoid about hostility and ill intentions of environment. Maffesoli's *neo-tribe*,<sup>19</sup> all the more hypochondriac and quarrelsome for being deprived of what the old-style tribes derived their security from: effective powers to 'objectify' its ascendancy and monopolistic claim to obedience.

Neo-tribes, akin to Kantian aesthetic communities rather than to Tönnies' solidly pre-conscious *Gemeinschaften*, lead but brittle life; by past standards, they come into being instantaneously – but then face daily the danger of evaporating without trace together with that energy of self-identification which lent them the appearance of solidity. However brief their ascendancy, it won't be possible with the brevity acknowledged and conceded in advance. Production must be conceived of as restoration or restitution, building new ground must be thought of as mapping-up of extant continents. Counterfactuality of self-image is the prime condition of success, even such fragile and elusive success as there is. Hence the concepts drawn from cultural discourse come handy: concepts like forms of life, tradition, community. Rejection of strangers may shy away from expressing itself in racial terms, but it cannot afford admitting its arbitrariness lest it should abandon all hope of success; it verbalizes itself therefore in terms of incompatibility or unmixability of cultures, or of self-defence of the traditionally shaped form of life. Horror of ambivalence sediments in consciousness as the value of communal cohesion and consensus that only shared understanding can bring. Arguments that wish it to be as firm and solid as those once anchored in the images of soil and blood now have to dress themselves in the rhetoric of culture and its values.

As always in the past, sociology has been quick to offer a commentary on the changing public concerns; as always, it seeks to represent such commentary as a new and improved description of social reality; as always, it authenticates its description by casting it in an updated conceptual frame with all the qualities of self-confirming truth. Thus the category of 'society' makes rapid exit from sociological discourse closely following the weakening of

powers once lodged with the nation-state. The category of community, once conceptualized away as a doomed relic of pre-modern past, makes a triumphant come-back, this time as the principal frame of reference for social analysis. Sociality with its endemic fluidity and indefiniteness elbows out structure with its implied fixity and determining power. Process takes the place once occupied by systems. Endless communication flow and never conclusive search for consensus take precedence over objective description, while hermeneutics – always conscious of its location in time and space – challenges the ideal of logical-experimental strategy of extemporal and exterritorial science. The orthodox consensus of sociology has been found guilty of aiding and abetting (often unwholesome) practices of the nation-state. Some time will pass yet before the new sociology, now relishing its honeymoon period and blithely self-congratulating, stands charged of complicity in the present fashions in identity-building. This, presumably, will not happen (not by common agreement at any rate) before those fashions are re-defined, as usual in retrospect, as wrong choices and lost chances.

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Received 3 September 1991

Accepted 1 October 1991

## Notes

- 1 Translated by Helen Zimmern. Quoted after: *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*, edited by Geoffrey Clive, New York, Mentor Books 1965, p.211.
- 2 Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, Blackwell 1983, pp. 48–9.
- 3 *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, edited by Fredrik Barth, Bergen, Universitets Forlaget 1969, pp.14–15.

Here is what Elias Canetti had to say on the role, the folly, and the costs of borders: 'The heroes who died for them, and their posterity, who pull the borders away from under the graves. Walls in wrong places, and where they actually ought to be put up if they didn't have to stand in other places long since. The uniforms of dead border officials, and the mischief in difficult passes, eternal transgressions, dislocations, and unreliable detritus. The arrogant ocean; uncontrollable worms; birds from country to country, a proposal for exterminating them' (*The Human Province*, translated by Joachim Neugroschel, London, Deutsch 1985, p.20).

- 4 'La douceur d'être inclu', in: *Sociabilité, Pouvoirs et Société, Actes du colloque de Rouen Novembre 1983*, Textes réunis par F. Thelamon, University of Rouen Press 1987, p.19. The alternative to the 'douceur d'être inclu' is 'la cruauté d'être exclu' (p.31). One may guess that it is precisely the fear of the cruelty of exclusion which makes the prospect of belonging so sweet; the experience of



exclusion (arising sometimes from eviction, some other time from the disappearance of wilting of frames that made belonging secure and thus unreflexive) precedes the conscious embracement of inclusion as an end and a task; it creates the thirst of identity and triggers off the active search of the sweet nectare of belonging: that is, of the authoritative confirmation of identity, stamping the identity with an entry visa.

- 5 Ernest Renan, from 'L'avenir de la science', in *Pages Choisis*, Paris, Calman Levy 1896, pp.27, 31.
- 6 Robert Muchembled, *L'invention de l'homme moderne: Sociabilité, moeurs et comportements collectives dans l'Ancien Régime*, Paris, Fayard 1988, pp.12, 13, 150.

The idea of the two-pronged, sharply differentiated effects of the 'civilizing process' (aimed polemically against the 'trickling down' model popularized by Norbert Elias) has been systematically pursued by Muchembled also in his other works (see particularly *La Violence en Village: Sociabilité et comportements en Artois du XV<sup>e</sup> au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, Bregnois 1989). According to Muchembled, the most profound mutations in sensibility and behavioural standards of quotidianity were limited to a narrow elite; they functioned simultaneously as a vehicle of self-distancing and as a vantage point for a new perspective from which the rest of the population was scanned as uniformly vulgar and, for the initial period at least, *uncivilizable*. Self-polishing as the strategy of the elite was juxtaposed to the confinement, policing and universal surveillance as the strategy to be deployed in dealing with 'the masses'. The civilizing process is best understood as the 'recomposition' of the new structure of control and domination once the pre-modern institutions of social integration have proven inadequate and were gradually decomposed (I have argued this point more fully in my *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Postmodernity and the Intellectuals*, Cambridge, Polity Press 1987).

- 7 *Nations and Nationalism*, p.34. Let us recall that Renan (though his views on the subject are remembered mostly for the constantly quoted description of the nation as 'un plébiscite de tous les jours') would never accept that *le peuple* (it was not for nothing that he saw them, and feared them, as 'la masse lourde et grossière' . . . ) can vote in that plebiscite as of right. He considered freedom of education an absurdity; what the objects of educational action needed was *authority*, not freedom of choice, which they would not know how to exercise anyway. Until the education achieves its purpose and the trainees are shaped and trimmed in the right way – 'prêcher la liberté sera prêcher la destruction; à peu près comme si, par respect pour le *droit* des ours et des lions, on allait ouvrir les barreaux d'une ménagerie' (Comp. *Pages choisies*, pp.28–34). Almost a century before Renan (in 1806) Fichte postulated that new education must consist in this 'that it completely destroys freedom of will in the soil which it undertake to cultivate, and produces, on the contrary, strict necessity in the decision of the will . . . If you want to influence him [the object of the educating effort] at all, you must do more than merely talk to him; you must fashion him, and fashion him, and fashion him in such a way that he simply cannot will otherwise than you wish him to will' (quoted after Elie Kedouri, *Nationalism*, London, Hutchinson 1960, p.83).

- 8 *Scènes et doctrines du Nationalisme*, Paris, Emile Paul 1902, p.443.

- 9 *Ibidem*, pp.8–13.

- 10 *Ibidem*, pp.16, 20.

- 11 *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics*, New York, Charles Scribner and Sons 1948, pp.91, 88. Niebuhr goes on to propose that nations are inherently immoral (or, rather, that they manipulate individual morality in such a way as to render it deployable for immoral purposes): 'the sentiment of patriotism achieves a potency in the modern soul, so unqualified, that the nation is given *carte blanche* to use the power, compounded of the devotion of individuals, for any purpose it desires . . . So the nation is at one and the same time a check upon, and a final vent for the expression of individual egoism' (pp.93, 95). One recalls Canetti's words: 'If you had to face one another naked, you would have a hard time slaughtering. The murderous uniforms'. (*The Human Province*, p.12).
- 12 *The Human Province*, p.160.
- 13 *Contemporary Political Science: Toward Empirical Theory*, New York 1967, p.217. See discussion in Peter Alter, *Nationalism*, translated by Stuart McKinnon-Evans, London, Edward Arnold 1989, p.123 ff.
- 14 *Nationalism and National Integration*, London, Unwin Hyman 1989, p.8.
- 15 For a highly persuasive illustration of this hypothesis, compare the massive and brilliant study of Zeev Sternhell, *Ni droite ni gauche: L'idéologie fasciste en France*, Paris, Seuil 1983.
- 16 'Some Reflections on "The Break-up of Britain"', in: *New Left Review*, 105 (1977).
- 17 See, for instance, Claude Imbert's 'L'ère cosmopolite', in *Le Point* of 31 December 1990.
- 18 And particularly the features captured in the following generalizations: 'The self is seen as a reflexive project, for which the individual is responsible'; 'The self forms a trajectory of development from the past to the anticipated future'; 'The reflexivity of the self is continuous, as well as all-pervasive' (Comp. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Cambridge, Polity Press 1991, pp.75 ff.).
- 19 Compare Michel Maffesoli's insightful *Le Temps des Tribus: Le déclin d'individualisme dans les sociétés de masse*, Paris, Klincksieck 1988. 'Regroupements constitués de la socialité', Maffesoli suggests, 'chacun à sa manière, compose son idéologie, sa petite histoire, à partir de ces éléments disparates que l'on retrouve aux quatre coins du globe' (p.90). 'À l'encontre de la stabilité induite par la tribalisme classique, le néo-tribalisme est caractérisé par la fluidité, les rassemblements ponctuels et l'éparpillement . . . Par sédimentations successives se constitue l'ambiance esthétique dont il a été question; et c'est au sein d'une telle ambiance que ponctuellement peuvent s'opérer ces "condensations instantanées" (Hocquenghem-Scherer), fragiles mais qui dans le moment même sont l'objet d'un fort investissement émotionnel' (p.98); for this reason, the neo-tribe may possess 'un objectif, une finalité, mais là n'est pas l'essentiel; ce qui est important c'est l'énergie qui est dispensée pour la constitution du groupe en tant que tel' (p.123).

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