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The Unseen Presence: A Theory of The Nation-State and its Mystifications

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CONTENTS

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In memory of my uncle, Harold Benjamin (1908-1984), lawyer by profession but scholar by avocation, who was always urging me to write "something general"; and in memory of his son Richard (1956-1986) whose sadly unfinished historical research would have had much bearing on some of the issues discussed in this essay.

I. Introduction

> The [nation-]state is a political artefact. It is imitable and alterable. It is thought into existence and can be thought out of existence. So complex, however, is the task of establishing and maintaining order that in dealing with the problem, men are forced to provide a basis of myth and legend. (Klein 1974:1.)

> The relation of the state to the sociologist is that of a drunk to a lamp-post, it wants support, not light. (S. Ossowski, cited in Daniels and Houghton 1972:71-2.)

Sociologists and anthropologists have customarily taken the nation-state too much for granted. Working almost entirely ***within*** nation-states, they have often failed nevertheless to see that the nation-state ***as such*** is the major factor generating the forms of sociality under study. Political scientists, it is true, have frequently focused their attention directly on the nation-state, but as a rule they have treated it as a normal or desirable condition of human existence, the maintenance of which poses merely organisational problems. In general, it is only the historians (and then only a section of them) who have considered the nation-state as problematical.

But the nation-state ***is*** problematical. Viewed as part of the grand sweep of human history, it is a late starter in the race between competing ways of trading off individual and local autonomy against higher-level organisational integration. The nation-state is not the

only such form of higher-level integration, of course, for there have existed in the past ten thousand years not only a plethora of pre-modern states and empires but also an extensive range of ranked and stratified *non*-centralised polities too. Nor can it be said that the nation-state is the last in the line, for while nation-states are still being created in some parts of the world they are currently being dissolved away in others, and we cannot hope to predict the nature of the sociocultural forms that will emerge in future.

We need, therefore, to ask some fundamental questions about the nation-state; we need especially to understand why so much political effort has been expended in the last few decades to ensure that all of the world's inhabited territories should become organised as nation-states. This is not simply a matter of coming to grips with nationalism (to which much excellent historical and political scholarship has already been devoted) nor of acknowledging the nation-state's pervasive role in daily life (as some sociologists have done), nor even of turning to the study of urbanism and modernisation (as many anthropologists now do). The problem goes deeper than that, and the widespread scholarly blindness to the nation-state is not just a sin of omission, for the scholarly community has been largely responsible for the active ***maintenance*** of the nation-state's invisibility.[1]

In this essay I propose a theory of the modern nation-state as an artefactual, imitable and ideological institution, set up within the framework of the industry-based world system of international relations, and maintained through processes of ideological mystification in which conventional scholarship has played almost as large a role as overt politics. I also examine the profound effects that modern nation-states -- or, more precisely, their rulers' actions -- have on the life-circumstances of their populations. In the following pages I attempt to explain the nation-state as an institution and to interpret its status as the ghostly image underlying certain widely diffused varieties of social, cultural and linguistic theory.

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[1] These words were first sketched out some years ago, when sociological literature on the nation-state was indeed notable for its absence. In the intervening years, however, there has been a welcome surge of interest, and several monographs and collections have appeared on the topic. An excellent anthology is provided by Held *et al.* (1983), and the views of some other recent writers are referred to below. A brief look at this literature encourages me to believe nevertheless that there is still just enough original material in the present essay to warrant its publication, for Anthony Giddens (1987) seems to have been one of the few writers coming to the specific kinds of conclusion I have drawn here. Moreover, my own earlier research experience has encouraged me to look at the modern nation-state partly through the eyes of those who, being "tribal" (in the sense discussed below), found it incomprehensible, and therefore ripe for study. I hope that this "Third-" and "Fourth-World" starting-point will be found helpful in discussing a problem that is usually debated from a "First-World" viewpoint.

Pre-Modern States and Modern Nation-States

A nation-state is qualitatively quite distinct from anything that went before: it is not the same thing as a "traditional state" modernised. Premodern, "traditional" states were defined not by boundaries enclosing homogeneous territories, but in relation to hierarchies of localised foci. They showed little concern with the essentially modern idea of sovereign independence, finding no difficulty in maintaining overtly ranked relations between themselves and the rulers of other states. They were usually more interested in control over people than over land, and they were expressly thought of more as the entailments of mystical or charismatic principles centred on kingship and dynasticism than as legal entities (cf. Richard Benjamin 1986:21). In premodern Europe, for example, "rule was still personal, deriving from the fief of land and oath of homage. Not citizen to state but vassal to lord was the bond that underlay political structure. The state was still struggling to be born" (Tuchman 1979:56). The political units "were less states than landed estates" (Roberts 1980:572).

With very few exceptions, modern nation-states have come into being quite literally overnight. In the newer states, the colonial power's flag is ceremonially hauled down at midnight and replaced by a newly designed one. As soon as possible thereafter the newborn nation-state takes its seat in the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization. A similar process was involved in establishing the great majority of those older nation-states that did not experience a recent history of decolonisation (as for example in the various dissolutions-and-reconstitutings of the several French "republics" that have existed since the 1789 revolution). These various state-creations represent historical and social ***discontinuity***, not continuity, and this is true even of those states that had a very long history of pre-"national" political centralisation. The establishment of the Chinese Republic in 1912, for example, was intended as a ***break*** with the past, not just a reshaping of it.

This discontinuity between nation-statehood and whatever preceded it is usually referred to as the achieving of "independence". Yet, in reality, and despite the rhetoric, a new nation-state's "independence" has more to do with an increasing separation from its own past than with an increased autonomy from the rest of the contemporary world. More than anything else, nation-statehood means entry into the modern world-system of nations. From the moment of independence, a country is tied into such a complex international network of legal, economic, political and cultural arrangements that its social circumstances are influenced at least as much by external factors as by internal ones. This paradox -- "independence" in dependence -- involves considerably more than the now familiar arguments about "neocolonialism" in the so-called Third World, for the issues are not exclusive to postcolonial societies or to the twentieth

century, nor do they necessarily entail external exploitation. Moreover, these remarks do not apply solely to capitalist states, for "socialist" states too are first and foremost *nation*-states.

"Primary" and "Secondary" Nation-States

It may be helpful at this point if I draw a heuristic distinction between primary nation-states and secondary ones. *Primary* nation-states are those that happened into being as a consequence of the essentially accidental processes to be discussed shortly. *Secondary* nation-states are those that were brought into being by the deliberate reshaping of social relations to accord with the model presented by the primary nation-states. In very general terms, the primary nation-states are those that emerged in parts of Europe between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries, while the secondary nation-states are those that were brought into being from around 1800 in the remaining parts of Europe and in the rest of the world.[2]

We should not make too much of this characterisation, however, for it is unlikely that any *purely* primary nation-state has ever existed. But it helps sharpen the argument if we think of some nation-states (such as Great Britain and Spain) as *more* "primary" than others (such as Malaysia, Liberia, or even Japan). This explicitly "ideal-type" procedure should direct our attention more closely to the ways in which the real-world circumstances deviate from the ideal, and why.

In the primary nation-states that came into being before the creation of the United States of America in 1776, the establishment of the organisational features characteristic of the modern nation-state took place at a much slower rate than in the more secondary nation-states that have achieved independence since. I refer here to such features as:

> (1) *citizenship*, defined by territorial boundaries, and carrying with it a uniform set of rights (such as politics) and duties (such as payment of tax);
>
> (2) a single *standardised national language* for use in public contexts;
>
> (3) access to a state-provided uniform *educational system*;
>
> (4) a uniform, single-level, *money-based economic system* embedded in the industrial mode of production.

The more "primary" a nation-state, the more likely is it that its component institutions were set in place gradually enough for the people to have assimilated them relatively easily into their daily cultural

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[2] The same distinction has been recognised by many other writers (e.g., Seton-Watson 1977, Breuilly 1982); only the terminology is new.

expectations. Even in those European territories that were shaped into nation-statehood quite late (such as Germany and Italy), the people's attitudes still did not need to change much for them to assimilate the idea of the nation-state into their personal view of the world: the changes wrought by state-consolidation were regarded as aspects of the here-and-now rather than of some future and as-yet meaningless condition towards which they were being urged.

The more "secondary" a nation-state, however, the more likely is it that a political and cultural lag will exist between the rest of the population and the politicians who declared the state into being. The politicians, regarding themselves as the sole repositories of enlightenment, will feel obliged to herd their people in a direction that they alone can descry. Secondary nation-states tend consequently to be future-orientated and permanently "transitional" in the mode of societal consciousness they exhibit.[3]

II. Why Nation-States?

It is often assumed that nation-states arise simply as the organised expression of some pre-existing "nation", needing only a degree of political action for it to become a practical reality. Despite its naivety, this is precisely the view that was put about by the instigators of the classical European nationalisms, and it has served as a major political tool in the shaping of modern European history. Closer examination shows, however, that such "nations" are not so much the antecedents as the *consequences* of struggles to bring nation-states into being.[4] It is also commonly asserted that nation-states exist because they are the primary guarantors of political and economic stability. But even if one were to accept the functionalist circularity of this approach, it would not change the fact that virtually *all* "societies" known to history and ethnography, whether centralised or segmentary, have been concerned with political and economic organisation. As I shall argue, the *raisons d'être* of the modern nation-state lie elsewhere, in quite novel economic and political imperatives peculiar to the modern world-system.

With these caveats in mind, let me propose a simple (though not, I hope, simple-minded) approach to understanding why and how nation-states came into being in the first place, and what it is about the still-active process of secondary nation-state formation that makes it possible to talk of *the* nation-state as a societal type.

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[3] For an enlightening discussion of the tendency for new nation-states to become permanently "transitional", see Walter 1976. This positively "transitional" character is one of the key features that distinguish "developing" from "developed" societies.

[4] On this theme, see especially the recent studies by Gellner (1983) and Anderson (1983).

Industry and the nation-state

In the views of Ernest Gellner (1974, 1983) and Ronald Dore,[5] the nation-state is at base a consequence of the industrial revolution: it arose out of the need to organise the sort of educational system ("exosocialisation" in Gellner's terminology) necessary to produce a labour force suitably educated for industrial work. Two things are essential, they claim, if workers are to be made sufficiently flexible to be slotted into whatever jobs have to be done: (1) a basic but standardised literacy for following instructions, and (2) an elementary knowledge of science and technology so as to understand what they are doing. The provision of such a standardised science-based education on a mass scale is, however, beyond the means of any autonomous local institution. Only a central authority operating for the country as a whole has the means to concentrate both the economic resources and the expertise necessary to such a task: hence the nation-state.

This theory, which is more subtle and hard-won than my bare summary suggests, has the virtue of posing truly sociological questions, and in that respect it marks a significant advance. But it leaves several other important questions unraised. Even if one accepts (as I do) Gellner's and Dore's recognition of industrialism as the significant framework of the modern nation-state, their emphasis on education seems too single-minded. The provision of housing, health and hygiene, and the establishment of a homogeneous monetary system were surely at least as important as education in the early installation of industrialism. These too require the capabilities of a centralised modern nation-state, because of the need for a healthy work force and a more-or-less predictable economic regime if industry is to thrive.[6] And, as several authors have noted, the waging of war in the modern way has become a primary factor in the shaping of nation-states.

A less trivial lacuna in the Gellner/Dore theory is its relative non-attention to the processes by which the modern nation-state first emerged as an imitable institution. This is no mere antiquarian

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[5] I first came across these scholars' views on the state when they presented seminars (independently and on different occasions) at the Department of Sociology, University of Singapore, in the 1970s. The present essay is, in large part, a delayed response to the ideas they proposed at that time. (I have not yet succeeded in tracing the published version of Dore's paper.)

[6] It could perhaps be argued that standardised education is a necessary precondition for these other features, as it certainly is in secondary, "developing" nation-states at the present time. But I doubt that the same argument should be applied to, say, early industrialising Britain or the other "primary" nation-states, where the development of a standardised system of public education seems to have post-dated the initial development of industrial production.

quibble: an understanding of the historical how's of that process is a prerequisite for grasping the sociological why's of today's nation-states. It is especially important to incorporate international relations into any theory of the nation-state for, as I shall argue, nation-states exist just as much in relation to other nation-states as to their own citizenries -- and often, indeed, more so.

Lastly, Gellner (in particular) seems somewhat ambivalent as to the part played by conscious planning or self-interest in the creation of nation-states. In some parts of his text (1983) he explicitly denies any role to these factors, but elsewhere he writes as if acknowledging their presence. It seems, however, that this apparent inconsistency results not from any sociological fuzziness, but simply from a disinclination in this instance to discuss the historical dimension. Gellner's own typology of nationalisms certainly does, as he says, "correspond to realistic historic situations" (1983:90), and it does generate novel sociological insights; but its essentially synchronic appraisal leaves unconsidered certain consequences of the *process* of nation-state formation.

Bringing history back in

The distinction I proposed earlier between "primary" and "secondary" nation-state formation is intended to cope with precisely this issue. Primary nation-states are those that grew, Topsy-like, before their creators could form a clear picture of what they had wrought. Secondary nation-states, on the other hand, were (and are still) brought into being by the actions of individuals who had a very clear idea what they were doing -- even if, in the nature of things, what actually emerged could never be quite what they wished for. The "primary"/"secondary" distinction should not be thought of as a dichotomy, however, for even a brief study of the history of primary nation-state formation shows that the component elements did not emerge, fully formed, as a single complex of institutions. On the contrary, the earliest nation-states emerged out of a bundle of semi-autonomous relational patterns that came gradually and cumulatively to reinforce each other, until eventually it became obvious to the people involved that a new kind of societal framework had enveloped them. From that time on, the nation-state had become an ***imitable*** institution, which would thereafter be the focus of conscious planning and never again be independently invented. Self-interest, too, now had something more tangible to work with, and the question "***whose*** nation-state?" became an appropriate one to ask -- whether asked of historical data or of our own contemporary circumstances.

This, in brief, is what I understand by "primary" and "secondary" nation-statehood and the historical passage between them. But typologies are successful only to the extent that they dissolve away when

confronted with the complex real-world issues that they have first served to bring into sharper focus. Let us turn, then, to the history of primary nation-state formation in Europe (which, for reasons not discussed here, is where it happened to take place), and to the sociology of recent secondary nation-state formation in the rest of the world (other parts of Europe not excluded). The aim is to deconstruct the modern state into its component elements by paying special attention to their relative temporal layering, so as to discover which of them are the more weighty, sociologically speaking.

III. Primary Nation-State Formation

The history of Western Europe can be read as a series of stages, each of which witnessed the establishment of one or more of the various organisational features that have since fused together as the modern nation-state. For clarity, I shall list these features as if they constituted a simple temporal succession, although the relations between them were in reality much more complicated than that: such a cavalier, non-historian's approach should help in distinguishing the main lines of the story. What follows is offered as a ***minimal*** listing, no more, of the changes that must be taken into consideration in explaining the rise of the modern state; much has been omitted. I seek to show that primary nation-state formation -- in contrast to the secondary process to be discussed shortly -- was cumulative, gradual, complicated, and mostly unforeseen, and that many features usually thought of as adventitious were, on the contrary, built into the very processes that brought the nation-state into being in the first place.

■ The nation-state principle did not emerge from nothing. For example, the boundaries still recognised today between England, France and Spain are those that were agreed to after a series of battles between 1212 and 1214 (Wallerstein 1974:32). From the thirteenth century on, these three countries increasingly became bounded territorial realms, each headed by a prince or king closely aided by an emerging bureaucracy. Some of the organisational primordia of the modern nation-state were therefore already in place at a time when most of Western Europe was still under the sway of a relatively uniform Christian civilisation, embedded in the feudal mode of linkage between people and rulers.

In late Medieval times European states enjoyed an ideological, economic and political setting quite different from that of their modern descendants. The Medieval worldview had yet to undergo the great changes that were eventually to produce the mind-set characteristic of the modern world. Historians specialising in that period must approach it in much the same way as anthropologists confront "other" cultures. But at least three elements were present in those thirteenth-century states that were to remain as formative components of the modern state, even if the structural alignments that gave them meaning were different from those that do so today. These were:

centralisation, which, by definition, is common to all states; ***bureaucracy***, which is widespread but not universal, and at that time not yet characterised by Weber's "rational" mode of organisation; and a concern for ***territorial boundaries***, which is not at all common comparatively speaking, but is important as the primordium of the "state-as-map" idea discussed later.

■ The overseas exploration, trade, naval militarism and (eventually) colonial conquest begun by the Portuguese in the early fifteenth century marked the commencement of Western Europe's expansion into the wider world (Africa, Asia, the Americas) by the Atlantic route. The earlier push through the Mediterranean had been rebuffed: as Roberts puts it (1980:507), "Jerusalem ceased to be the centre of the world." Portuguese exploration was carried on, moreover, as a ***state*** enterprise, in which the King and his close relatives had a controlling role. Wherever possible, as in Asia, Portugal's contacts were managed on a state-to-state basis.

■ Despite the mostly inchoate nature of primary nation-state formation, some normative ***concept*** of the "state" had entered political discourse several centuries before the modern international system took shape. In early sixteenth-century Italy, for example, where city-states and republics had existed alongside a variety of kingdoms of various sorts, Machiavelli and others were floating their revolutionary idea of the state as something to be worked for -- as the proper goal of politics (cf. Watkins 1968:151). Temporally, therefore, statist political ideology came early, though it is uncertain to what extent it was involved in the organisational changes that followed. There is evidence to suggest, however, that this ideology facilitated the more general acceptance of formal interstate ***diplomacy***, which has become a major feature of the modern system of states.

In the event, a rather different ideological stance was to have much more profound consequences for the later evolution of the nation-state. This was ***individualism***, which was to become such a central feature of post-Reformation Western European culture, and eventually of the modern worldview generally. Although individualism is now so thoroughly embedded in modern life-styles and science that a special effort of mind is required to "see" it at all, it probably began its present-day diffusion in the individualistic challenge to authority made possible in the mid-sixteenth century by such proto-moderns as Erasmus, Luther and Calvin.[7]

■ The secession of the English church from Rome under Henry VIII in 1534 led to the emergence of what was effectively, as regards its internal politico-economic organisation, the world's first modern nation-state. Important structural changes took place in England and Wales

[7] In addition to the large and still expanding body of literature generated by Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic* essay, the works of the contemporary anthropologist Louis Dumont are a major source of interpretative ideas on the nature of individualism in, and as, modernity; see especially Dumont 1965, 1971 and 1983 for statements on the relationship between individualism and the state.

as the monasteries were destroyed, the market system centralised, the character of hierarchical social relations altered, and Parliament given a more central role.[8]

■ In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the Protestant ethic in its several varieties came to be connected with nation-state formation, not only through its influence in propagating an individualistic stance but also for more concretely political reasons. Soon after it first emerged, Protestantism came to play an important role in the secession of various German-speaking princedoms from the Church-based empire which had hitherto incorporated them. This set the pattern for Protestantism to become a (not *the*) basis of state-formation and, more importantly, for mercantilism (the precursor of capitalism) to be reinforced as an element in the emerging pattern of nation-states -- a process that had commenced earlier in Catholic southern Europe.[9]

■ Anglo-Spanish rivalry, up to and after the defeat of the Armada in 1588, was at its most intense just as the rulers of both countries were greatly exercised about their *sovereignty*. This helped set the pattern in which international relations, both friendly and unfriendly, became a major criterion of nation-statehood. Although some authors (such as Klein 1974) have regarded the now universal concern over sovereignty as an essentially twentieth-century development, it first emerged as a geographically restricted, if still powerful, issue much earlier. By the mid-1500s Spain and England had become the most centralised states in Europe -- England through the king's use of Parliamentary legislation, and Spain through the king's use of an autonomous Inquisition beyond Rome's control.

From the first, Anglo-Spanish rivalry was bound up with the foreign colonial adventure in which both states were engaged. This facilitated the later coexistence of colonialism with the nation-state, when other Western European powers followed suit. Although European colonialism is often seen as an unfortunate but contingent side activity, it was in reality an integral part of the modern nation-state almost from the start. In any case, colonialism was to be the fundamental modality through which the nation-state became, in the twentieth century, the basic unit of the emergent world-system of social and economic relations.[10]

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[8] Some scholars, e.g. MacFarlane 1978, would see this as having been facilitated by England's peculiarly non-feudal history, in which there had in effect been no peasantry.

[9] I am not claiming that there ever was or is any necessary "causal" relationship between Protestantism and Capitalism, but only that *in this instance* the two were linked by historical processes that brought them together in a meaningful constellation. Despite widespread and continued misunderstanding of the issue among historians and (especially) sociologists, this, I believe, is what Weber was arguing (cf. Poggi 1983).

[10] There is a very large literature on this topic; the volumes by Braudel (1981), Wallerstein (1974, 1980), and Wolf (1982) deserve special mention.

■ Selfconscious modern nation-statehood probably began with Holland, which brought itself into existence (as the "United Provinces") by throwing off Spanish colonial rule in 1576. This means that the first deliberately legislated nation-state was as much "secondary" as "primary" in character. In 1598 the United Provinces put the seal on its newfound nation-statehood by entering, as an equal, into a treaty with France and England, thus starting the modern practice of authenticating a country's statehood by persuading other countries to treat with it diplomatically on equal terms.

Holland was characterised from the start by the plurality of religion and personal conscience that it has retained to the present day.[11] Since cultural homogeneity is still all too frequently proclaimed to be the modern nation-state's proper condition of existence, it is worth reiterating that (as with Holland then and now) the overwhelming majority of nation-states have been demographically (i.e. linguistically, religiously and ethnically) heterogeneous.[12]

■ The emergence of the United States of America in 1776 was little more than an accident of its anticolonial revolt against the British parliament; many of its institutions were therefore patterned on British models. But by the time the Constitution had been drawn up in 1788 and the first President appointed a year later, it was obvious that something quite new had come into being. First was the idea that a nation-state could be instituted *de novo*, by an act of suppletion rather than through evolutionary change.[13] Second was a radical break with the ancient idea of the state as the institutionalisation of the principle of hereditary monarchy. The Americans replaced this with the view that, on the contrary, it was the *people's* mandate that gave legitimacy to the state. This idea was fundamental to the various revolutionary stirrings that have swept Europe and the rest of the world since. Third was the U.S.A.'s overt and constitution-based republicanism, which demonstrated to waverers elsewhere that such a system could, after all, be a viable alternative to more traditional ways of organising a state.

The religious element in this deserves special attention. The founders of the U.S.A. were mostly descendents of people who had migrated to escape religious persecution in Europe, and there is indeed something religious about the way in which Americans have continued to see their nation-state as a fresh start, setting them free from history. The proselytic zeal for freedom-in-statehood and the suppression of already-present indigenous populations that have marked much of U.S. history bear witness to this religious character.

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[11] Post-Reformation France and England were also so characterised, in their very different ways and rather less consistently.

[12] The only exceptions I can think of as I write are Iceland and Nauru, whose special geographical circumstances must be accounted responsible!

[13] The prior presence of an indigenous population was regarded as of little import, even though some colonisers had earlier thought of the "Indians" as people one should make treaties with; cf. McLeod 1928:152-171.

The scrupulous separation of church(es) and state in the U.S.A. has had the effect not of removing religious ideals from public life, but of focusing those ideals onto the individual citizen. This has led to the habit of thinking of the state itself as an individual person (as indeed, under the law, it is). The political consequences of this have been immense: since the nineteenth century, international relations have been conducted as if they were inter-***personal*** relations, to the extent that as much attention must now be paid to a country's supposed honour and shame as to its economic or political condition!

■ The French revolution of 1789 was in part a response to the American democratic model, but it added a few elements of its own to the emerging nation-state ideal. In the early nineteenth-century France carried the legislated character of the state into such new domains as the standardisation of language and education, the centralisation of economic planning, and even (for a while) the attempted establishment of a secular state-focused religion. A major consequence of this was that France, through Napoleon's interference in other parts of Europe, eventually became the unintending model for the spread of nationalistic, state-forming ideas elsewhere in the world.

■ A convenient point at which to close this "primary" part of the story -- already rather "secondary" in character -- is with the mid- and late-nineteenth-century struggles of such countries as Liberia, Mexico, Japan and Thailand to constitute (or reconstitute) themselves as modern nation-states. These transformations marked the diffusion of the nation-state model beyond the pale of the Western European tradition within which it evolved. The modern nation-state was by now fully transformed into the basic unit of a truly world system of international relations.

Nationalism and capitalism in primary nation-state formation

If the historical outline just presented is found acceptable, the modern nation-state is a consequence of the evolution of a system of ***inter***-state relations, increasingly more complex and extensive: internal processes were less important than most theories would lead us to believe. As a social form, the modern state is so obviously the consequence of processes of convergence that there can be little doubt of the explanatory priority of external relations. The reasons for this assertion will become clearer as we pursue the analysis of "secondary" nation-state formation.[14]

[14] These remarks are not intended as support for any general application of convergence theory to comparative social investigation. A state's responses to external influences are not simply-determined by its place within the world-system, but arise dialectically and non-determinedly out of the interaction between its international relations and its own internal relations. A knowledge of both is necessary to any explanation (which must be "after-the-event", not predictive) of a country's internal affairs.

As these changes came about, the system of international relations was moving from a mercantile basis to an increasingly capitalist and industrialist one. This process was in turn closely bound up with colonial empire building. Of the six countries most involved in the earlier phases of the primary evolution of the modern state, four -- Portugal, England, Spain, Holland -- became the major colonisers of the non-European parts of the world, thereby insinuating their administrative styles into the practices of people living far away from the nuclear area. Later, as if following the same book of rules, several other new nation-states set about colonising the remaining parts of the non-European world. In this way, the U.S.A., France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Russia, and even Denmark, came at various times and with various degrees of permanency to occupy foreign territory.

There was a relationship of mutual reinforcement between the mercantilism that characterised much of the classical European empire-building and the rise of industrialism in the metropolitan countries. The colonies were made to serve both as the reservoirs of raw materials and as the captive markets for the finished industrial manufactures. It is this last factor that gave a capitalist coloration to the postcolonial world-system within which secondary nation-state formation has since been taking place. As Wallerstein has remarked (1979:68-69, 73-74), there is no formal necessity for the modern world-system to be capitalist in character; that it has nevertheless become so is a consequence of the particular historical processes that brought it into being. Even those "socialist" countries that have eschewed the capitalist road at home now find themselves having to deal with the rest of the world on capitalist terms. It is no surprise to discover, therefore, that *as* nation-states, the socialist countries exhibit much the same social and cultural characteristics as the non-socialist countries of the world.[15]

Whether this means that capitalism is to be seen as an intrinsic element of the modern system of nation-states or as a merely adventitious one, is an issue I shall leave undiscussed; others better qualified have already discussed it at length. In any case, the main trend of my argument does not depend on a consideration of capitalism as such (except to remark that one of capitalism's major effects has been to make *greed* a respectable principle of modern state-management). Likewise, I do not regard the question of nationalism as fundamental, even though I have adopted the possibly misleading, but well-established, term "nation-state" as the label for my object of study. Nationalism in Gellner's sense of the term (1983:95) -- "entry to, participation in, identification with, a literate high culture which

[15] Attempts by statesmen to hold their countries aloof from the world-system -- Albania, Burma, China and Cambodia are recent examples -- have met with only temporary success, if success is the right word.

is coextensive with an entire political unit and its total population" -- had relatively little to do with the early stages of modern nation-state formation. It was not until later that nationalism became important, when it served as a rhetorical device for political mobilisation within the state as industrialisation spread, and as a somewhat mystical justification for the concomitant spread of colonisation overseas.

Subsequently, nationalism was taken up by those in the colonised territories who wished to bring themselves and their fellows to independent nation-statehood. Thus, although the place of capitalism remains a matter for debate, it seems reasonable to conclude that nationalism has played a relatively insignificant part in the development and maintenance of the modern system of nation-states. We shall get nowhere in attempting to explain nationalism without first understanding the modern state. The explanation of capitalism, on the other hand, can make at least some initial headway without involving itself in a study of the state.

IV. Secondary Nation-State Formation

Primary nation-state formation has long since ceased, but the secondary process continues today. It is therefore still open to contemporary investigation by researchers who are, so to speak, in a position to know what they are looking for -- something that was denied to most of those who, two or more centuries ago, would otherwise have been in a position to observe primary nation-state formation as it occurred. By definition, any secondary nation-state that comes into being today does so as the consequence of conscious, goal-orientated, *planning*. Indeed, the planning mentality -- which surely goes back to the history-rejecting future-orientation that characterised the founding of the U.S.A. -- is so much a part of modern nation-statehood that in the majority of countries (the "primary" states not excluded) it has become the preferred way of talking explicitly about the state.

It is not at all obvious, however, why any individuals should bother to devote their lives to first proposing and then realising the extraordinary plan of bringing a nation-state into being. It must be emphasised that, whatever may have been the case with the emergence of the primary nation-states, we are not now dealing (if ever we really were) with simple, ineluctable socioeconomic process, but with the joint actions of individual human beings who have consciously chosen to take the nation-state path. Nor can we refer the process to some mythical collectivity or "people" whose nationalistic and anticolonial fervour has supposedly, through some kind of organismic mass action, directly brought them to nation-statehood.

In taking this stand, I do not wish to play down the brutal oppression that has accompanied much colonial experience: others

more properly qualified (such as Memmi 1965, Fanon 1968), have described it so tellingly that there is little point in adding anything here. My theme is not anticolonialism, but the modern nation-state. Anticolonial feeling can certainly lead to the overthrow of a hated colonial regime, and anticolonial uprisings there certainly have been (though they were perhaps fewer than is often thought). But anticolonial feeling alone cannot result in the formation of an independent nation-state, and colonial uprisings were never the direct, unmediated source of nation-statehood. That has always been the consequence of the actions of just a few (mostly self-appointed) individuals who took it upon themselves to carry the rest of the population with them into nation-statehood.

Colonial experience, however, always involved a profound reorganisation of the colonised community's way of life, generating new patterns of politico-economic relations on the ground and new representations of the ideal structure in people's minds. This has usually resulted in the imposition of a novel, but spuriously static, concept of "tradition", which served as a baseline for the exploitative administrative practices of the colonial officers themselves -- and also for the political discourse of the post-colonial leaders who took over from them. This complex dialectic of "tradition"-in-modernity was so thoroughgoing in its effects that it can be traced not only in the peasantries directly under colonial sway (see for example the essays in Asad 1973) but also in "tribal" settlements usually thought to be remote from such influences (cf. Benjamin 1968).[16] Such, then, is the nature of the secondary nation-state that from the sociological vantage point the fundamental questions are: ***Why*** *the nation-state?* and ***Whose*** *nation-state?* So salient is the role of particular individual leaders in the history of the newer states that these two questions must be tackled together, as aspects of the same investigation.[17]

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[16] The active invention of "tradition" was an important component of political activity in the metropolitan countries too during the period of the nineteenth-century nationalisms; see Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983.

[17] This is not to deny that non-personal "systemic" factors are involved too: I would not otherwise choose to talk of "the world-***system***". Much of the ensuing analysis is, in fact, systemic in approach (though I should make it clear that I regard the world-system as the ***only*** social system, properly so called, that exists). But even the most functionally "integrated" social "system" could operate only through the actions of choice-making and choice-taking individual human beings, which is one reason to mistrust the idea that social relations are constituted of functionally integrated "systems" (other than the human organisms involved, that is) in the first place (cf. Benjamin 1985:220-224). Later in this essay I attempt to locate such "system"-based ideas as falling within the ambit of nation-state-mystifying rhetoric rather than within the framework of social investigation proper.

The nation-state as a legal entity

In the last few decades a large number of mostly postcolonial territories have been declared nation-states. The current membership figure of the United Nations Organization -- some 159 -- provides a close measure of the scale of the phenomenon, for only a handful of states are not members of that body. So widespread is the nation-state idea, moreover, that all the inhabited portions of the earth's surface are now thought of as falling obligatorily under the legitimate rule of one or other nation-state.[18] At base, this is a ***legal*** issue, for what most clearly marks nation-statehood is not self-declaration, but the formal recognition by *other* nation-states of that status. Not only do the rulers of newborn states seek diplomatic recognition for themselves before turning their attention to other tasks, but they are also much more likely than those of the older nation-states to act uneasy at the possibility that some ***other*** territory, especially a neighbouring one, might find itself in a stateless limbo through the withdrawal of diplomatic recognition.[19] The shorter a country's history as a modern nation-state, the more committed it is to nation-statehood as such, for others as well as for themselves. Longer-established states (such as those that form the European Community) often appear to be more tolerant of a certain degree of effective loss of sovereignty. Why should it be that in the final decades of the twentieth century, when nationalism and sovereignty have become somewhat outmoded in the more "primary" regions, the newer "secondary" states continue to attach themselves so firmly to the nation-state ideal?[20]

Since it is individual politicians who bring nation-states into being, one answer to this question might be that these very individuals

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[18] The only exceptions, all little inhabited, are the Polar regions and a few remote small islands.

[19] A good example of this is the disquiet expressed by some national governments within the ASEAN grouping at the decision of the Australian and British governments to regard the territory of Cambodia as, in effect, temporarily having *no* nation-statehood. Unwilling to recognise the Vietnamese-backed Heng Samrin government because of its suspected foreignness and (in Australia at least) pressured to have no truck with the mass murderers of the former Pol Pot government, the governments of these older states have not found it too hard to allow for a political vacuum. But the much younger ASEAN states -- Singapore and Thailand especially -- have found it necessary to rally international support for the ousted Pol Pot-linked regime, however distatefully, because it is unthinkable to the leaders of those countries that nation-statehood should lapse.

[20] As Malaysia's then Foreign Minister put it in 1983: "Unless one has a colonialist or imperialist mentality one could never accept foreign domination of another country, ***whatever may be the pretext or excuse, not even to save the people of the country from their own evil government***" [emphasis added]. (*Straits Times,* Singapore, 1 April 1983.)

and their immediate successors have a stake in maintaining the system that has provided the setting for their own life's work. Just what would all the first-generation leaders and career diplomats *do* if the nation-state idea should lapse? They will have lost the skills and patience necessary to practising whatever profession they originally trained for (usually law, medicine or the military, but sometimes historical, social or scientific research). They might find lodging for their talents in some university, but the classroom audience cannot compensate for the loss of a national or international platform. The problem is more pressing in the newer nation-states than in the older ones because the state apparatus has usually been so well instituted in the latter that no one -- not even a De Gaulle, a Franco or a Churchill -- needs to devote his whole life to maintaining its establishment: there are plenty of others ready and able to carry on the task. Political leaders in the older nation-states are usually accustomed to a shorter political career and to the likelihood that their talents will find them a place again in business or academe after they leave office; they are not so threatened, therefore, by the temporary lapsing of nation-statehood in other parts of the world. Moreover, whereas the citizenries of the older states long ago accorded legitimacy to the idea of the nation-state, the citizenries of the newer states are still being sold that idea. Any act by the leaders (such as encountenancing the lapsing of nation-statehood in some neighbouring territory) which might suggest that they themselves are less than sincere in their support for the nation-state idea will impress more through its seeming cynicism than for any wisdom it might reveal.

If this were all, however, it would look as if nation-states were simply devices for satisfying the psychological needs of their leaders. But this would be preposterous; any such argument, however valid, could provide no more than a partial explanation. "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past" (Marx 1852/1984:168). What then are the salient features of the circumstances under which the recent nation-states have come into being?

The answer, as I have already suggested, lies in the essentially ***legal*** nature of the secondary nation-state. How, other than by reshaping their populations into some sort of corporate legal "person", could hitherto colonised peoples be defended against the economic depradations of the primary nation-states? Only through remaking themselves into the same kind of polity as the dominant nation-states already are could it be become possible to deal with those states, in principle at least, on terms of ordered legal equality. What drives the nationalist motor is the desire to gain recognition as a legal "person" within the sphere of international law and diplomatic usage: colonial

status cannot achieve this, but statehood can.[21] Consequently, most of the earth's surface is now divided up among some 175 nation-states, all in principle able to negotiate with each other on equal terms as if they were persons seated around a table. A minuscule Republic of Nauru can claim -- without necessarily receiving! -- the same legal rights as a giant United States of America. The principle underlying this circumstance has been called "sovereign equality among states", which Klein (1974) traces back to the Second Hague Peace Conference of 1907, where its original sphere of reference was the development of relations between the U.S.A. and the Latin American republics. However, this new idea of sovereign equality depended for its meaning on an earlier -- but originally just as local -- change in cultural evaluation, the "individualistic revolution" touched on earlier. Dumont (1971:32) characterises this as "a displacement of the main value stress from society as a whole (holism) to the human individual taken as an embodiment of humanity at large (individualism)." Only when society had come to be thinkable-of as an association or partnership between individuals, each thought of as "a substance existing by itself", could it become possible to think of states in turn as relating to each other as individuals. Although it derives from European experience, this individualism, as Dumont and many other scholars have argued, is now situated at the very core of the world-view we know as "modern", wherever it may be found. And, as many a field ethnographer has discovered, nation-states (as opposed to more archaic forms of centralised polity) do indeed hold meaning only for those individuals who have come to operate within a "modern", individualistic, framework of ideas. Consequently, an as-yet unmodernised population poses a considerable problem for those activists who wish to turn them into the citizenry of a nation-state.

The nation-state and modern consciousness

The problem is twofold, and not a little tricky: (1) How to generate a modernist individualism at all -- for how else could the people first understand and then fulfill their responsibility as citizens? (2) How then to constrain this individualism once it has taken root, so that the politically desired order of relations between leaders and citizens can be maintained? As I hope to show, the responses to these problems in the more recently formed nation-states have tended to come up against a fundamental paradox. Although the very existence of the

[21] Wallerstein, more ironically, puts it thus (1979:105): "In general, both groups -- the indigenous bourgeoisie and the professional strata -- look upon the state as their negotiating instrument with the rest of the capitalist world-economy. In that narrow sense, they are 'nationalist'; that is, they will always be ready to brandish the flag if they believe it has a blackmail effect, and to put the flag in cold storage for a price."

nation-state presupposes an ideology of individualism (especially where the citizen's ***duties*** are concerned), the more the state itself succeeds in becoming a corporate individual among other such individuals, the more it swallows up the individuality of the very people who constitute its citizenry.[22] But before we consider the means by which the leaders engineer these consciousness shifts we need first to ask just ***who***, sociologically speaking, these leaders are.

The secondary nation-states have all been created through the activities of modern-educated members of the elite who feel much more at home, whatever their "tradition"-based rhetoric might suggest to the contrary, in the metropolitan or "international" culture in which they were trained than in the domestic culture they now have to operate in.[23] Now, the population at large in nation-states that have been brought into existence overnight are unlikely to share the same expectations as their usually self-appointed leaders, whose initial sphere of operation is the external world-system of nations. For the leaders themselves, this is likely to prove threatening: if they are to give economic substance to their country's jural independence, they must act quickly to so change the people's cultural consciousness that they will form themselves into a flexible, modern-minded, individually responsible work-force. In order to communicate effectively with the rest of the population, the leaders must therefore generate a common cultural mode (which need not be ***called*** a "culture") to serve the needs of all. To do this, they will either hijack an already present "high" culture and divert it to their own purposes or, if no such ostensibly homogeneous culture is available,

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[22] One sign of this -- and I present it as an observation, not a judgment -- is the almost complete failure of liberal democracy, for want of a better term, to establish itself firmly in the secondary nation-states.

[23] This is not to say that they would feel ***completely*** at home in the metropolitan culture. For various reasons, such as the shock of racism or the unfamiliar food, they may often have experienced cultural alienation at both "ends" of their lives -- at least until they had succeeded in so transforming their own country that it came to suit their personal style. Even more important, the first-generation post-colonial leaders have virtually all been "intellectuals" who found their well thought-out ideas patronised or rejected simply because they were colonials. This must have been all the harder to take when it was obvious to them that they could have run the administration much more efficiently than their often incompetent colonial masters. One of the paradoxes of colonialism is that education was used to emphasise the sorts of subjects (language, geography, mathematics) that would qualify the students to work as pen-pushers in the lower and middle ranks of the colonial administration, rather than those subjects (the natural sciences and technology) that would supposedly have enabled the population to run its own affairs. In the longer run, of course, this helped to produce a group of people qualified to enter the "liberal" professions, and eventually to take over the reins of government from the colonial power.

they will patch one together out of whatever *is* available and parade it as the fountainhead of the "traditions" that supposedly made the citizenry into the people they are. (Gellner's views on nationalism fit here.) Before this can happen, however, the people must be made to turn their attention outwards -- or is it upwards? -- from their private and purely local concerns, so that they will have ears for what the leaders wish to tell them. Reciprocally, those leaders will experience a considerable need for the people to serve as their audience -- for few politicians can bear to perform to an empty theatre.

The legitimating of interference

As modern-minded people, we take it for granted that others have the right to interfere in our lives to some extent, and that we in turn have the right to interfere in theirs. But we often fail to recognise that this interfering or intrusive attitude is embedded in specific culturally-propagated modes of consciousness, and that it has a history (cf. De Mause 1976). There are many ethnographically reported communities where such interpersonal interference would be regarded as not merely annoying, but ***meaningless***. A modern nation-state, however, can only attain full political penetration when the enveloping cultural framework has been so reshaped as to accord legitimacy to the interfering mode of interaction, for only then will the population be sufficiently dependent in their attitudes to buckle down to the job of "nation-building". This is not the place to discuss the historical and sociological reasons for the differential distributions of the interfering and non-interfering modes of consociation: suffice it to say that the question is bound up with the way in which individuals have been made to sense their own personal ***identity.***

In those cultural regimes (let us call them "egocentric") where one's self-identity is grounded in one's own actions, and where one does not look constantly to others as the mirroring source(s) of self-identification, then one assumes in return that the same will be true of those others -- that they will not be constantly monitoring *our* behaviour in order to generate their own self-identity.[24] If, on the other hand (as in the various "sociocentric" or other-orientated cultural regimes), people are made to feel a lack of self-identity, and that they should therefore look to others as the source of that identity, then they will assume that those others in turn will be constantly monitoring yet other people's responses to their behaviour, as a means of creating *their* own self-identity. There is a political dimension here: in an egocentric cultural regime there will be little sense in trying to persuade other people to believe in your

[24] I refer here not to any overt, talkable-about, concept of "self-identity", but to the tacit notional sense of one's empirical, organismic self-integrity.

assertions, for they will regard only their own direct experience as the authentic basis for knowledge. In a sociocentric cultural regime, however, people are more likely to feel that others will believe their assertions, for they will themselves already be eager to hear what others have to say. Put differently, only where people have been made to feel that they lack a solid self-identity can it be taken for granted that they will put any faith in assertions for which they have no directly experienced evidence. If they *do* possess a solidly felt self-identity, on the other hand, it will be a far harder job to persuade them of anything outside their own direct experience.[25]

The government of a would-be nation-state must therefore require of its citizens the credulity of an other-orientated, sociocentric, "self"-lacking population who are nevertheless happy to talk individualistically about what they like to think of as their "real self". The last thing such a government wants is the scepticism of an ***authentically*** self-orientated, egocentric population. The leaders of a new nation-state must therefore work to transcendentalise -- to turn outwards -- the mode of consciousness of its citizenry. This it does by first deliberately instilling in them a feeling of self-lack and unworthiness, and then charging in with interference. In recent times, this has typically been achieved through the mass indoctrination of the population with the idea that they must, as individuals, have an "identity" of one sort or another -- the different "sorts" of identity being defined, of course, by the particular governmental agency charged with carrying out this task. Out of this "identity" (which may be national, sexual, religious, ethnic, racial, class-based, or linguistic -- or various fusions of these) each individual will construct, possibly for the first time, an explicitly talkable-of concept of his or her "real self" -- the characteristics of which will nevertheless have been supplied by others.

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[25] Note that "solidly felt" does not mean "easily conceptualised" or "easy to talk about": quite the reverse, in fact. Authentic feelings of identity will necessarily be held in the mind as symbolically condensed, somewhat mystified notions, not as articulated concepts. Modern, politically maintained ideas of "identity" are, on the other hand, all too easily and explicitly talkable-of.

A more explicit version of the theory underlying this argument can be found in Benjamin 1987, where what I have here labelled "sociocentric" is referred to the "Transcendental" mode of orientation, and what I here call "egocentric" is more finely differentiated into the "Immanent", "Dialectical" and "Zen" modes of orientation. That more detailed analysis is not strictly relevant to the present argument, however, and I mention it here only to avoid confusing those have read my other work, where the four-way distinction looms larger.

V. How the Nation-State?

The primary means of producing this transformation consists of the appropriately named "mass media", understood here as including not just journalism and broadcasting, but the educational system and such hierarchical organisations as the army, civil service, industry and (increasingly) religion. The task of these media is in effect to instill personal identity crises in the citizenry at large, so that the leaders can then step in with the claim that only they have what it takes -- a ready-made "identity" -- to solve people's crises. By that stage, people will be quite predisposed, perhaps even against their better wishes, to listen to (though not necessarily to accept) whatever they are told. The leaders of newer nation-states accordingly tend to be authoritarian or even totalitarian in governmental style -- parents, more than delegates -- if only to ensure that there be but one transcendental social truth, and to control the means of instilling that (often counter-experiential) truth from the outside.

Overt concern with an explicit personal "identity" is thus frequently the creature, and almost always the concomitant, of the nation-state or of those nationalist movements that have nation-statehood as their goal.[26] "Identity" in this sense is a device for transcendentalising people's consciousness by deliberate cultural engineering -- a subversion from the top down. One sign of this is that "identity" is not, as the word might at first suggest, the discovery of something already inside one's personality (itself a highly mystical concept!). It is, rather, something yet to be discovered as a result of mapping oneself onto some normative and external societal role, selected from the closed list of "identities" offered by the powers that be. Such "identities" are the antithesis of the personal identity -- the "real me" -- that the writers of self-help manuals urge us to uncover. Where the pop psychologists invite us to be, say, "creative", "extravert" or "nurturing", the political leader urges us to live up to our ethnic, class, age, occupational, gender, religious, or simply national, "identity". The pop psychologist and the statist are, in fact, making appeal to equally stereotypical notions. Indeed, the "me-generation" pop psychologists (along with many social scientists) have unwittingly joined the band of those who help mystify the nation-state by insinuating it into people's commonsense, taken-for-granted view of the world. But the nationalist politician's special use of "identity" is a ploy, to help direct the citizenry into the roles that

[26] I am not claiming that the nation-state is the only context in which conscious concern over personal "identity" arises; monotheism provides one other such context. The nation-state does seem, however, to be the institution that leads to "identity" being chosen as a normal mode of organising political and economic societal consciousness, or to being an object of personal psychological concern.

have to be filled if the never-ending task of "nation-building" is to continue.[27] The convergence between the politicians' hortatory use of "role" (as in "*women's...*" or "*writers' role in society*") and the way in which many functionalist sociologists use the word is less apparent than real.

Phenomenally and ontogenetically, categories such as "nation", "class", "ethnic group", "religion", "gender" and "race" are, properly speaking, external to the individual's own authentic sense of being-in-the-world. A Durkheimian would place them unequivocally among the collective, not the individual, representations. That such externalities should be offered as the foundations of "self-identity" is therefore somewhat of an impertinence, for identity properly speaking is the relation that holds between something and itself! In other words, if the individual citizen's selfhood is to be represented as somehow partaking of such external societal categories, then, by the same token, those societal categories must somehow be understood as partaking of the individual's selfhood. The unspoken, implied meaning that lies behind this dialectic is at base a thoroughly *religious* one: that the nation-state is to be understood and internalised by its citizens as their collective Overself. Thus mystified, the nation-state becomes so much more potent a force for the subversion from-the-top-down of the individual citizen's consciousness -- for *mystification* (the symbolic condensing of an idea so that it becomes a diffuse notion rather than a thinkable or talkable-about, focused-upon concept) is the prerequisite for turning an erstwhile overt ideology into covert common sense.[28]

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[27] It is often claimed, contrary to the view just proposed, that a "national identity" is something that arises spontaneously, as in Fiji or Malaysia (to give examples that have been cited to me), or through revolution as (it is claimed) in Indonesia or Vietnam. On closer examination, however, such cases show (1) that the "spontaneity" has in fact been stirred up by an activist cadre group charged with the job of consciousness-raising, and (2) that the "nation" to which the supposedly spontaneous identity appears is not coterminous with the organised nation-state that finally emerges. Fiji's population is largely Indian, Malaysia's largely Chinese (with other non-Malay populations, indigenous and non-indigenous). In Indonesia, the declaration of Malay as the future national Indonesian language was made by a group of mostly non-Malays who made their declaration not in Malay or Javanese, but in Dutch. Now, sixty years later, when Bahasa Indonesia is truly accepted throughout most of the country as a valuable possession, it is hard to believe that its modern political status was so overtly imposed.

[28] If it seems that I have just reinvented Durkheim's theory of religion, beware: Durkheim's claims about societal overselves as the object of religious worship were argued with reference to what he thought of as the *least* state-like of all societies (the central Australian Aborigines) and to supposedly *unconscious* collective process. My claims are the reverse -- that we are dealing with a religious phenomenon that reaches it most typical manifestation in the modern nation-state, and which emerges as a result of the

The cultural and social engineering of a nation-state into being (talked of so often as if it were a merely technical task of economic, educational and demographic planning) therefore requires the leaders to become in effect the priests, prophets and preachers of an unnamed civic religion (cf. Apter 1963). From the sociologist's or historian's viewpoint, the most significant components of active "nation-building" are often those of the leaders' actions that lacked any obvious political or economic rationale when they were first proposed. But if the leaders' pronouncements are thought of as belonging to a civic ***religion*** the problem eases somewhat, for their actions can then be seen as part of the process of inducting the citizens into their new "identities". Citizens will, after all, be least powerful to alter, and hence most likely to accept without apparent demur, those ideas that have been transmitted through a symbolically condensed, religious means of communication, for they then cannot talk about those ideas to others without first having to struggle with the imposed conventions of the very language they speak.[29]

If we look at just ***which*** human characteristics are reconstructed into politically imposed personal "identities", we find that they have usually been chosen for their potentially two-faced character. Gender, ethnicity, language, religious allegiance, occupation, class, and so on, are categories that touch simultaneously on the social person's role-allocation and on the individual human being's psychic integrity. One's own sexuality, sense of provenance, mode of expression, state of grace, life-trajectory and hierarchical placement are matters of the profoundest concern. To suggest that someone's situation in any of these respects is clouded by uncertainty or unworthiness is to strike at the core of his or her self-esteem. The very act of urging people to consider their situation with regard to these once private and inchoate concerns is to pressure them into overtly articulating what they would surely prefer to keep tacit and out of focal awareness. Once articulated, however, it is very hard for people to re-privatise their concerns: they rapidly discover that others too are in the same boat, and that the sharing of psychic burdens becomes a means of easing the threatened loss of esteem. But the more they engage in open sharing of their concerns the harder it becomes for them ever

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quite conscious (though not necessarily overtly conceptualised) machinations of historically identifiable actors. That Durkheim's real concern was almost certainly with the problems of morality in Republican France is an issue I return to later.

[29] The reshaping of language, through standardisation and the invention of a peculiarly local political rhetoric, is one of the most common methods employed in the statist subversion of individual consciousness. I discuss this in a later section. (See also Benjamin 1988.) The same argument probably applies also to the state's propensity for reshaping the framework of ***family*** interactional styles as an agency of consciousness-moulding; I shall not discuss this further here (but cf. Reiss 1981).

again to fall back into the happier condition of naive unselfconsciousness. On the contrary, selfconsciousness is exactly the psychic state that it best suits the political leaders for the citizenry to find themselves in, for this is the sign that the citizens have developed the psychological valency to accept whatever new "identity" is offered by the state's cultural-development agencies. It is for this reason, I believe, that overt concern over people's ethnic, religious, language, gender, occupational or class group-membership is such a ubiquitous phenomenon in the sociocultural make-up of the newer nation-states.[30]

The literature of political science, history, anthropology and sociology reveals many examples of this kind of thing. Too often, though, authors have taken the political rhetoric at face value and assumed that the various identity-giving categories it made reference to were no more than "primordial sentiments" (in Geertz's phrase, 1963:109) which the state's agencies had to grapple with as best they could. To go along with that view, however, is to impose the sociological bracketing (*épochè*) too early: indeed, to go along with it at all is to preclude the possibility of real sociological analysis. In modern nation-states, identity-giving categories of the sort just mentioned are always *constructed*, never "natural" or primordial.[31] One should be especially on one's guard when a policy is justified publicly on the grounds that it is "only natural" or "plain commonsense". Feminist sociology, in particular, has taught us to keep a weather-eye open for this kind of special pleading when it is used to justify the extraction of the unpaid and unrecognised labour (in both senses of the word) on which complex society, including the modern nation-state, depends. But the same applies, in principle, to the other identity-conferring category distinctions, all of which are frequently asserted to have "natural" antecedents and consequences to which the nation-state stands merely as the containing vessel (rather than as the shaping potter it really is).

Citizenship of a nation-state is, then, a form of dependency in which one's individuality is somehow made to merge with a societal Overself that is merely hinted at, through a set of politically constructed surrogate social "identities". To the extent that this circumstance has been successfully implanted, the population will have been socially "gelded" (as Gellner puts it, 1983:15) where once they were

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[30] As examples of the kind of thing I am referring to, let me mention the political use of: ethnic identity in Malaysia (Nagata 1974) and Singapore (Benjamin 1976); religious (Theravada Buddhist) identity in Burma, Laos or Thailand (Smith 1978); gender in Iran; and of class -- the "Bourgeois" and the "Proletariat" -- in Mao's China.

[31] This probably holds for all social formations, not just nation-states; but the aims and consequences of such declarations have often been quite different in the other forms of society.

"stallions". In place of the more direct, here-and-now, *gemeinschaftlich* ties that most sociologists like to believe characterised premodern social relations, people's sociality will have been redirected outwards so that they feel themselves more responsive to abstract, there-and-then, *gesellschaftlich* "relationships", mediated unavoidably by state-linked institutions. Such, at least, is what "modernising" and "state-building" politicians have had as their aim -- whether they have openly stated as much or (on the contrary and more usually) they have sought to mystify their goals by enveloping them in an aura of "tradition".[32]

VI. The Nation-State in Long-Term Perspective

What I have been treating as the deliberate instilling of personal identity crises, and what Gellner would characterise as the turning of stallions into geldings, is but one facies of what many scholars would regard as the central problem of history and sociology -- the great transformation of the world's *anciens régimes* into modern society. If we look upon that great transformation as a macrocosmic reflection of the temporally and geographically more restricted processes discussed in this essay, we should get a clearer understanding of what is involved in the making of nation-states.

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[32] An example of the latter approach is provided by the Republic of Singapore, which is currently (1983-88) witnessing a long-term campaign to persuade the "Chinese" portion (*ca.* 75%) of the population into giving up their attachment to the so-called "dialects" (one of which, Hokkien, is actually Singapore's most widely spoken language) in favour of Mandarin. (This name is used in Singapore, as elsewhere in the English-speaking world, for the spoken language, *pǔ tōng huà*, as standardised for use in the People's Republic of China.) The publicly stated aim of this move is to "unify" the Singapore Chinese and "reunite" them with their "cultural roots". Given (1) that government, education and public life in Singapore are carried on mostly in English, (2) that "traditional" Chinese culture in Singapore, including its highly impressive commercial component, is embedded linguistically in such "dialects" as Hokkien, Cantonese or Hakka, (3) that "Mandarin" in this sense of the term is a twentieth-century invention (Chao 1976) aimed expressly at helping China westernise itself, and (4) that Singapore's indigenous language is Malay -- given all this, the overtly stated reasons for Singapore's "Speak less Dialect" [*sic*] campaign provide an incomplete guide to its real aims. The goal, surely, is to geld the stallion of family-, locality- and personal-skill-based Chinese "tradition" -- the very epitome of the non-interfering outlook on life, and the reason for the indifference of ordinary Chinese elsewhere to matters of state.

Gesellschaft and the statist suppression of *Gemeinschaft*

Most scholars see what they suppose to be the progression from archaic, localised *Gemeinschaften* to modern, world-system *Gesellschaft* as an essentially unilinear one; but the story is more complicated than that. Discussion is usually founded on the notion that there has been only one break between a "then" and a "now", which most commentators would place in the fifteenth-century rise of capitalism (though some would place it much earlier, in the West Asian post-Neolithic). This has led to the habit of treating the *Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft* distinction in fundamentally dichotomous terms, so that the problem of the "great transformation" has been equated with that of explaining the supposedly ***direct*** conversion of *Gemeinschaft* into *Gesellschaft*. In my view, this very way of framing the scholarly research programme is in itself a piece of statist myth-making, and it is unlikely that pure *Gemeinschaft* has ever been (or *could* ever be) the object of historical, sociological or even ethnological study.[33] By the very fact of having come under study and entering into communication with the visiting reporter, a community will have been inducted into something other than purely *gemeinschaftlich* social relations. More importantly, those premodern communities that were to become today's nation-states were constituted, not of a unitarily *gemeinschaftlich* mode of consciousness, but of a complicated apposition of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. The sociologists' and anthropologists' "traditional societies" -- the "tribal" communities just as much as the peasantries -- were those in which *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* were *both* present, not just the one or the other alone.

It is more useful, I suggest, to think of the contrasting modes of social consciousness in a rather different way. Despite their obvious archetypal differences, there is one important feature that pure *Gemeinschaft* and pure *Gesellschaft*, if they existed, would share: they would both be associated with essentially ***unitary*** ways of experiencing one's social universe. In pure *Gemeinschaft*, all social relations would be thought of as inhering in the face-to-face interactions of the individuals concerned (pure "network" let us call it). In pure *Gesellschaft*, all social relations (even those within the family) would be thought of as being between "persons" whose relative positions are allocated by some external authority lying beyond the range of face-to-face relations.[34] Differences of this kind are not arbitrarily

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[33] This is not to deny that some ethnographical field studies have provided materials that enable us to guess what pure *Gemeinschaft* would be like: see, for example, Bellah's re-characterisation (1969:269-272) of W.E.H. Stanner's accounts of Australian Aboriginal religion.

[34] This contrast applies also to the ***setting*** in which social life takes place. In the unitary mode, if it were available for examina-

distributed: they have a sociology as well as a history, even if disciplinary sociology has treated them under a variety of rubrics. One, which owes something to both Marx and Weber, is the study of cultural differentiation in the context of increasing social complexity, and this is the particular macrosociological tradition to which the following remarks form a kind of counterpoint.

So far as the evidence of archaeology, ethology, genetics and demography allows us to reconstruct, the earliest (i.e. Lower and Middle Palaeolithic) human societies would have operated within the unitary, "network" mode. Their nomadic foraging bands, each too small to be viable as a self-reproducing population, must have belonged to a wider network of relations in order to breed and survive. Moreover, given that we have remained a single species since the evolution of the genus *Homo*, that network must have been sufficiently open from the beginning to have embraced the totality of the world's population. Talk of a Palaeolithic "world-system" (cf. McKinley, *in preparation*) may shock through its unfamiliarity; but it is a proper corrective to the widespread view that earlier human society was divided into tightly bound "tribes" or "societies" and that later world history has consisted in the progressive dissolving away of those boundaries.

Problems over the disposal of property or territory are unlikely to have arisen in Palaeolithic times, for early humans were too nomadic to amass the former and too thinly distributed to worry about the latter. Institutionally bounded social groups are therefore unlikely to have been a feature of early human society, and we may assume that until, say, the Mesolithic (and its equivalents outside Europe) human sociality pertained fundamentally to a single, unbounded (though not undifferentiated) network of relations. (Admittedly, these relations would have been very much more sparse and occasional than what we are used to thinking of as social relations.) While the people probably distinguished various degrees of "we"-ness and "they"-ness within that network, according to the variable degree of familiarity that each individual would have had with what lay beyond the social horizon, it is hardly conceivable that they could have organised their

tion, relations between people and their "environment" (and between the different things within that environment) would probably be thought of as belonging within the very same relational network that links people to each other. In other words, there would be *no* "setting", for the same dialectic of Subject and Object would infuse all things in the world -- its human inhabitants just as much as its non-human ones. (See Munn 1973 for a well analysed example of an Australian Aboriginal situation that approximates very closely to this unitary ideal.) On the other hand, in the non-unitary modes of consciousness actually known to history and ethnography, social relations do take place against a setting -- the "environment" or "country" (of which word, more later) -- which is thought of as a separate and peripheral domain, constituting in most versions (modernism especially) the ***object*** of people's subjectivity.

social life other than through a unitary mode of consciousness. (Indeed, they could hardly have found it meaningful in the first place even to maintain in their minds such non-unitary concepts as "social relations" or "individual", distinguishable from the rest of existence.)

What was it, then, that eventually led to the emergence of non-unitary modes of consciousness as normal components of the way in which people experience their world? The primary factor must have been the emergence of relations of interpersonal *interference*, coming not from some familiar, well-"understood" source (such as one's father), but from some socially remote, and therefore rather mysterious, source (such as a king, acting through his tax-collectors and priests). I am referring, of course, to "civil society" or "civilisation" in the sociological sense of the term (cf. Elias 1939/1982), a condition of life characterised by the coexistence of two experientially distinct domains of sociality, one relating to the here-and-now of local face-to-face relations and the other to the imposed values of an external administrative structure. Just how the earliest civilisations arose is still debated by prehistorians (see Fagan 1983 and Wenke 1984 for straightforward and up-to-date accounts), but the consequences were sociologically similar (though not identical) in all cases.

Civilisation's malcontents: peasants, tribespeople and rulers

The essence of civilisation lies in the attempt to impose and maintain a centralised state organisation and a homogeneous cultural regime throughout a region which had previously harboured autonomous local communities. The classical civilising process engenders *three* basic types of sociocultural situation, where previously there had been just one. Those who place themselves in command belong to the *ruler* category (which I shall use as a shorthand term for priests, tax-collectors, soldiers and so on, as well as kings). Those who reject the state and its rulers, holding themselves aloof in a "sub-nuclear" fashion (cf. Lehman 1963:225), are in the *tribal* category (the characteristics of which are shaped nevertheless by the proximity of civilisation). Those who allow their lives to be controlled by agencies of

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[35] I am discounting here any temporary switch that individuals may privately have made into other modes. This proviso is of fundamental importance, for I do not wish to imply that individual consciousness is simply a function of social consciousness -- a proposition that I do not accept, despite its wide currency in the social sciences.

the state, which they provision, in exchange for a little reflected glory but no counter-control, are ***peasants***.[36]

Two things must be emphasised about this tribespeople-peasants-rulers categorisation. First, it is not an evolutionary series. It is, rather, a *single* complex, formed of alternative, mutually dissimilatory responses to the same sociopolitical circumstance -- the imposition of a hierarchically organised, supralocal, state apparatus. On this view, all historically and ethnographically reported "tribal societies" are *secondary* formations, characterised by the positive steps they have taken to hold themselves apart from incorporation into the state apparatus (or its more remote tentacles), while attempting to suppress the knowledge that their way of life has nevertheless been profoundly shaped by the presence of the state (or whatever locally represents its complexifying effects).[37] Second, and as a consequence of this linkage with the state, all three situations are characterised by an inherent *duality* of social experience -- although only the peasants are likely to acknowledge this overtly. Those who wish to remain rulers must engage in a constant struggle to suppress any open expression of "folksy" (*gemeinschaftlich*) ways, through the heightened cultivation of courtly civilisation. But those who wish to retain their tribal autonomy must do the opposite, and suppress any positive movement towards the splendours of civilisation, however much they may marvel at them from afar.

The complicated distinctions characteristic of the premodern world -- which are still in the process of giving way to the relatively greater organisational uniformity of the modern world system -- nevertheless owed their very condition of existence to the network of social, economic and political relations that linked them together. This, in essentials, is the "traditional" society into which the modern world-system is still infiltrating itself: not a series of *Gemeinschaften* pure and simple, but a series of ***social spaces*** (to use Condominas's apt term, 1980) in which *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* form the oil and water of a none too uniform emulsion. The forging of nation-states out of such heterogeneous social spaces has therefore required, not the conversion of *Gemeinschaft* into *Gesellschaft*, but the simple ***suppression of Gemeinschaft***, in the tendentious attempt to re-establish a unitary mode of consciousness. But this unitary consciousness is now shaped according to the ideal of pure *Gesellschaft*, rather than to the pure *Gemeinschaft* of sociological myth.

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[36] Cf. Charles Hockett (1973:553): "We know what a city is: an aggregate of the dwelling places of people who raise little or none of the food they eat".

[37] There are reasons for thinking that even such apparent exceptions as "traditional" New Guinea or Aboriginal Australia are precisely that -- apparent (cf. Urry 1979, White 1971, Eliade 1973). On the wider issue of "tribal" societies as consequences, not antecedents, of the state see Service 1975, Fried 1975.

What relevance does the duality-of-experience just ascribed to premodern societies hold for the rest of my argument? What difference does it make whether the modern nation-state is imposed on a unitarily *gemeinschaftlich* situation or on a non-unitary, mixed-consciousness, *Gemeinschaft*-plus-*Gesellschaft* one? The answer, it seems to me, is that if pure *Gemeinschaft* had indeed been the matrix, then the political task of nation-state implantation would have been much easier to bring off than it has in fact been. With pure *Gem[illegible]* as the starting point the transformation would have been complete: once the rupture with the past had been made it would have involved little more than a replacement by *Gesellschaft*. There would have been virtually no chance, in such a societal flip/flop between one unitary mode and another, for any intermediate situation to become institutionalised. But where the modern nation-state is carved out of a nonunitary situation, as has always actually been the case, the possibility of reversal is inherent in the very duality of the "traditional" mix of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. This duality is especially hard for a complex modern state to break down, for it already contains within it the social basis for resistance to further statist incorporation. Besides, human beings appear to prefer the warmth, richness, and possibility of personal escape offered by "traditional" duality-of-experience to what they see as the cold starkness of the unitary mode -- which is what some sociologists refer to as "alienation".

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the leaders of modern secondary nation-states have in general proved so draconian in the methods they use to suppress the *gemeinschaftlich* component of the "traditionalist" mix, in favour of the thoroughly uniformitarian *gesellschaftlich* "homelessness" (Berger *et al.* 1974) required, as they see it, of a modern citizenry. The task requires a massive expenditure of political energy, if feelings of legitimacy are to be implanted into the citizenry with regard to the very idea of the nation-state and to the particular leadership that is struggling to institutionalise it.

VII. Mythologising the Nation-State

> Why, is not this a lamentable thing, grandsire, that we should be thus afflicted with these strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these pardon me's, who stand so much on the new form that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench? O, their bones, their bones! (William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, Scene 4.)

If Shakespeare had known the modern nation-state, he might well have said something similar about its leaders' unwillingness to let things be. Interference is the very essence of modern techniques of

state-management: to leave the citizenry to their own devices would be to defeat the purpose of the exercise.[38] The propagation of profound concern for personal identity as a means for suppressing the *gemeinschaftlich* elements of the citizenry's consciousness is just one of an armoury of techniques employed in the modern state to coerce people's consciousness away from self-sufficiency to other-directed dependency, so as to let the *gesellschaftlich* reign supreme.

Marx's analysis of the equivalent situation in early European capitalism laid great emphasis on the state as an apparatus of violence: the dispossessed poor were coerced to become manufacturing workers for the benefit of those who had the finance and tools but no labour supply. The collapse of feudalism had ensured people's dispossession; the violence was necessary to turn them away from such "useless" but still autonomous activities as begging, vagabondage or even tilling their own gardens, in favour of productive manufacturing labour. Marx's discussion of the historical evidence makes it clear that his use of the word "violence" was no mere metaphor; and labour-related state violence is still with us today as industrialisation proceeds. Yet, overt violence is hardly an efficient way of easing a population into industrial wage-labour: it requires constant vigilance and produces a work-force fit only for the most elementary kind of productive activity. The task is far better done by altering people's self-image from within -- by instituting a self-regenerating, implied, psychic "violence" in place of constantly re-exerted overt, physical violence. The near-monopoly over education, housing, taxation and welfare services held by many modern nation-states makes this less difficult than it would otherwise be. But the most efficient way of instilling a desired mode of consciousness is, as suggested earlier, to employ what are in effect religious techniques: once mystified, overt concepts become taken-for-granted *notions*, and correspondingly less likely to be the object of communicable dissent.

All social formations with any degree of persistence must secure the continued reproduction of at least two fundamental sets of relations -- those that hold between people, and those that link people with the terrain they inhabit. By the same token, these are the relations that must be *altered* if the social formation as a whole is to be permanently changed. However, it is unlikely that shifts in the pattern of interpersonal relations such as those discussed earlier could ever be brought about unless there has first been a sufficient change in the people-to-terrain relation to generate a feeling of virtual "dispossession", analogous to what occurred in the immediate post-Feudal period in Europe. In most recent states this has been

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[38] The example of premodern China, where the aim of the state authorities was usually to leave the people as far as possible concerned only with local affairs, should suffice to show that interference is not a feature of centralised states as such.

done by rupturing the ideational and interactional bonds that formerly tied people to land. Ways of talking and behaving have been reshaped so that the felt primacy of *places* in people's consciousness is replaced by an abstractly conceptualised and much less immediate linkage with a generalised *area*.

Nation-state as "country"

The ordinary English word for what journalists and social scientists call a "nation-state" is a "country"; but this usage is not as straightforward as it might at first seem. Etymologically, the word "country" derives (via the older French term *contrée*) from the Italian (or Latin) [*terra*] *contrata* "facing, opposite [land]", which referred originally to the landscape that confronted anyone who looked out from a villa or palazzo. *Contrata* and its borrowed forms in other languages later became generalised to refer to the territory that lay beyond the built-up conurbations -- the countryside. Both meanings contain within them a set of implied contrasts: viewpoint and view, constructed edifice and setting, subject and object (but not, I think, culture and nature). In ordinary English usage, "the country" consists of those parts of the terrain that lie outside the cities and large towns. But the "country" is no wilderness, since it is expected to be inhabited by people living in "villages" (and even "country towns"), or covered by tidily worked fields. The unspoken but widely understood implication is that sophisticated, knowing subjectivity belongs properly to the city, not to the countryside. Historically, and in the popular imagination, cities are populated by people who have dispossessed themselves of any linkage to specific places by the simple act of migrating away from the "country". Yet, these same city-dwellers or their descendents have not ceased to recognise that "the country" means home and subjectivity for others -- it is simply that those others do not really count for anything in the city's scheme of things, because they have failed to gain the sort of wisdom that comes from breaking one's linkages to concrete places. From the leaders' point of view, it is *city* life that epitomises the pattern of consociation best suited to citizens of a modern nation-state.[39] The relationship of "city" to "country" is that of an *apartness*, bridged nevertheless by persisting social relations displaying a gradation of sophistication.[40]

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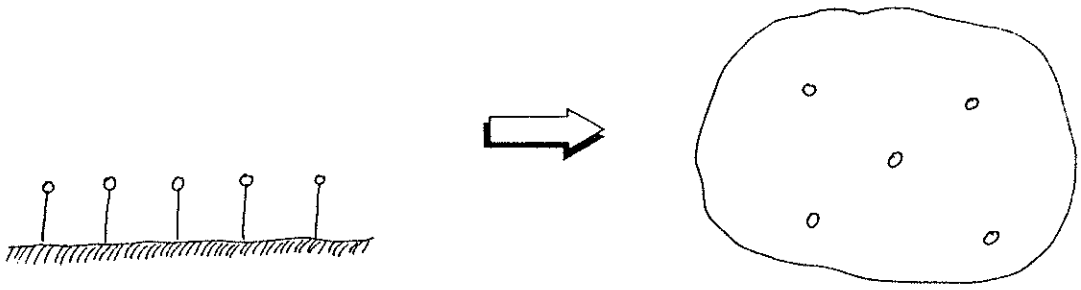
[39] In many languages the word for "state" is basically the word for "city" or "capital". Note also the connection between "city" and "citizen", and between the Ancient Greek *polis* "city" and its derivative forms "polity" and "politics".

[40] This is the imagery contained in the phrase "going to the country", employed in Britain when a government seeks continued legitimation of its rule through declaring a general election.

The effective meaning of the word "country" when used as the colloquial term for "nation-state" should now be clearer. Unlike a "place", a "country" is marked by objectivity: it is something we stand back from and look at as a relatively undifferentiated whole. To be made to see ourselves as living in a particular "country" rather than in a particular place directs our attention away from such *gemeinschaftlich* things as kinship or sodality towards the more abstract *gesellschaftlich* idea of a state's *territory*, thought of simultaneously as population and map. In this way the place-based, landscape-founded linkages that sustained individuals and social groupings in most premodern social formations are ruptured. People must look instead to the principle of citizenship, whereby everyone "in" the state is equally linked (as a generalised "person") to the wider territory, now thought of as an undifferentiated whole.

The ancient Roman principle *civis romanus sum* ("I am a Roman citizen") may represent the first example of this way of thinking. But later history has ensured that the citizens of today's nation-states are linked to an "overself" that is neither *felt* interactionally as a concrete social group nor *represented* cognitively in concrete symbols.[41] Instead, people's "selves" are now be conceptualised and defined for them in the image of a *map* -- a differentially coloured area in the atlas.

This change from place to territory (and map) contains within it several different aspects that have a close bearing on the ways in which nation-state-consciousness is generated and maintained. First, the change represents a move from attachment *to* something to containment ***within*** something:



Containment is, of course, the job of boundaries: the ritualistic policing of international borders by customs and immigration officers, which infuses ingress and egress with highly charged statist meaning, is a major task in virtually all modern countries. This is so

[41] Examples of such concrete symbols include the fruit-tree groves that represent cognatic descent groups in many indigenous Southeast Asian communities, the bone that represents lineage in West Africa, or the skin and hair that represented the filiative and descent components of the self in premodern China.

similar to the manner in which ethnicity is organised that the parallel between nationality and ethnicity can be no accident. In popular (and much sociological) thought they are both portrayed as the expression of some distinctive *content*; yet this is an illusion, for the distinctiveness is created and kept going almost solely by careful attention to boundary-maintenance. Far from being the direct expression of cultural imperatives, ethnicity and nationality turn out on closer examination to be little more than empty vessels crafted out of statist expediency.[42]

Since it requires the replacement of concretely experienced linkages by abstractly posited ones, the shift from place to territory is likely to make sense only to a population that is at least minimally *literate*. Indeed, given that the rulers of nation-states so often seek to control what their citizens may read, a major reason for implanting universal literacy must be that it predisposes those citizens to make certain kinds of leap-of-faith -- such as the leap involved in seeing one's "self" as deriving from containment in a map-cum-overself.[43] (The Chinese used to have an expression translatable as "book idiot", *shū dāi zǔ* in modern Mandarin, with which to label those so naive as actually to believe anything printed or written; this reveals an attitude quite the reverse of our modern faith that a proposition's truth is proved by the fact that it can be read in black and white.)

A third, overtly political, issue is that the map-as-overself idea lends plausibility to those who wish to maintain an essentially *geo-political* view of world affairs -- and, by extension, of local affairs too. This leads people to accept quite readily the doubtful but

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[42] A detailed study of the history of passports and visas, which came to prominence only after the 1914-18 War, would surely throw much light on the processes by which the modern system of boundary-conscious nation-states consolidated itself. The classic anthropological statements on state boundaries and ethnicity are the essays of Leach (1960) and Barth (1969) respectively.

[43] There is a well-established body of literature on the two themes just discussed, looked at from various different viewpoints. The classic source is probably Maine's discussion (1907:172-174) of what he treated as the shift "from status to contract" in connection with changing conceptions of territory. In this same tradition, and building likewise on his experience of India, Dumont (1965) has written of the shift from "lineage" to "territory" as a criterial characteristic of social modernisation. The ideological and conceptual changes have been discussed by, among others, Gellner (1974) and Berger (1974), both working in a broadly Weberian framework. Gellner discusses the supposed gulf separating primitive "enchantment" and modern "disenchantment" as the basis for the emergence of "science". Berger emphasises the breaking down of conceptual wholeness in face of the "componentiality" (of which more later) that pervades the mind made "homeless" by modernity. These authors' characterisations of the issues are so carefully thought out that it seems churlish to suggest that they might have paid more attention to the state-based *political* imperatives that created the modern mode of consciousness.

politically self-serving claim that it is countries rather than individual human beings that interact with each other in the sphere of international relations. Claiming *force majeure* as the reasons for their actions, and stretching morality to the breaking point, national leaders can thereby absolve themselves of the charge of acting on the basis of their own individual whims and fancies. In this way, they allow themselves to portray their own policies as "realistic" and to downgrade as "unrealistic" the policies of those who would put people before state. This generates an all-too-familiar Doublespeak: "realistic, hard-headed action" now refers to arrangements made ostensibly between abstract overselves (i.e. the nation-states of the world) which cannot, by their very nature, ever be true agents. But any attempt to relate political arrangements to the concrete realities of individual human beings' lives, by ensuring that the real agents -- the politicians themselves -- act morally, is labelled "idealistic, soft-headed" (and often "Western liberal" to boot). It is only because of the essentially *religious* underpinnings of nation-statehood that our consciousness could ever be so transcendentalised as to accord any meaning at all to such Doublespeak. I refer of course to the carefully orchestrated confidence-trick whereby our "selves" have come to be defined for us through identification with something as abstract as a *map*.

However, such consciousness-altering techniques can do little to bring about state-mindedness of this kind unless steps are also taken to ensure a directly experienced loss of individuals' concrete linkages to places. This is most efficiently achieved by ensuring that people have no significant peer-group- or sodality-based relations to turn to except those that derive their meaning from the nation-state framework -- hence the almost universal application of population resettlement policies by nation-states (whether in seventeenth-century England or late twentieth-century Southeast Asia). Once resettled, an individual's linkages with locality are mediated henceforth through agencies of the state, among which must be counted the widespread setting up of "peer-group" organisations alternative to those based on kinship or locality. Uniformed groups, schools, mass consumerism, pop culture, all have the effect of legitimating, in the minds of the young especially, the necessity for a transcendental turning outwards as the precondition of developing a meaningful sense of self-identity.

On ritualised national occasions, such as Independence Day parades, the units that march before the public are hardly ever individuals, but organised *groups* owing their identity to the state's administrative and political structure. Sailors, nurses, firemen, primary-school children, trades unionists, and party-political cadres follow each other in a dramatic demonstration of the state's power to bring otherwise unrelated individuals together in synthetic sodalities and peer groups that owe their meaning and existence to the state alone. Sports events take this even further: the premier sporting occasions

are those in which national competitors and teams compete in an "international" context. There is nothing "natural" or spontaneous about this, for very tight political controls are exerted by international sports federations to ensure that each "nation" may mount only one team in each sport; and each constituent national committee is usually closely linked to the country's government. (Why else should so many countries have a Ministry of Sport?) Those who regard bans and boycotts against engaging in contests with teams from, say, South Africa, Israel or the Soviet Union as "bringing politics into sport" and therefore to be suppressed, have so completely internalised the nation-state ideal that they can no longer see that inter-*national* sport is political in its very essence. (The mythologising starts early, of course, first with school and college teams, and then with city or county teams -- all faithfully representing a hierarchical administrative structure imposed *by* the state and *for* the state, and having no *intrinsic* relation to sport whatsoever.)

VIII. Language, Scholarship, and the Nation-State

If the ordinary English word for "nation-state" is "country", the word "state" in this sense is rarely used outside of scholarly and legalistic contexts. In spoken English, "state" is a common enough word with other meanings, but these meanings seem at first to have no obvious relation to what is implied in the phrase "nation-state". Closer examination shows, however, that there is indeed a relation between the two sets of meanings. In ordinary usage the word "state" refers to a set of circumstances or a condition of existence thought of as unchanging. Etymologically, "state" is connected with "stasis", the scholarly term for "no-change"; but why should such a term be used for an institution that is clearly *not* static? Throughout this essay I have been emphasising the historical and processual aspects of the nation-state and its capacity for bringing about massive sociocultural change. Thus, to the extent that "state" relates to "stasis", the reference must be to something other than its concrete, on-the-ground, political properties.

I suggest that it is the legal and ideological aspects of the nation-state that underlie this usage. Laws and governmental policies (including the bringing into being of the state in the first place) are always "laid down" as if unchanging -- until, of course, they *are* changed, whereupon a new "*state*-of-affairs" comes into being. In other words, the nation-state is presented to its citizenry as if it were a timeless, autonomously functioning system. The ramifications of this particular piece of statist mythologising range far and wide. The synchronic illusion that it feeds on is a major component of much modern scholarship, in the social "sciences" especially (cf. Phillips 1976); but it is also a *myth*, created by processes that remain open to

historical analysis. This will become clearer if we return to the "primary" part of the story and examine some of the cultural changes that were brought about in Renaissance Europe as part of nation-state consolidation, for the effects are with us still.

The "classical fallacy" as politics

One of the stereotypical characteristics of the modern nation-state is that it is expected to have its own "national" language. (Some states may have more than one national language and others may share their national language with one or more other states, but this does not significantly affect the argument.) At first glance, nothing could seem more "natural" than that the French should speak French, the British English, the Bangladeshis Bengali, the Malaysians Malay, and so forth. But historical studies show that (as with the "national" sports teams discussed earlier) there is nothing natural about this. The establishment of a particular variety of each of these languages as the standard variety, and the linking of that standard with a particular "nation", had very little to do with linguistics or ethnology. These were, and are, preeminently *political* acts, first set into motion, it seems, by one Elio Antonio de Nebrija, who published a grammar of newly standardised (Castilian) Spanish at Salamanca on 18 August 1492. A year later Nebrija published a companion dictionary, the first monolingual dictionary of any non-extinct European language (Illich 1981:34).

By modern standards, these seem rather unremarkable events, but Nebrija's work was revolutionary both in intent and in its consequences. As Illich notes (1981:35), Nebrija's *Gramática Castellana* was written "as a tool for conquest abroad and a weapon to suppress untutored speech at home".[44] He worked hard to persuade Queen Isabela (whose aim was to make Spain into a powerful, highly centralised, sovereign state) that the spoken vernacular of the time was *la lengua suelta y fuera de regla* "language beyond bounds and rules", and thus a challenge to the Crown. At first this argument astonished the Queen (as well it might!), but eventually Nebrija seems to have won his point. The problem as he saw it was that the people were reading all manner of literature published in their own local vernacular -- this was just decades after the first appearance of printing -- thereby wasting their time and filling their minds with fancies. Standardisation of the language would allow the state to bring publishing under centralised bureaucratic control, and enable the suppression of "wild, unkempt vernacular reading" -- a habit all the more reprehensible because reading in those days was usually

[44] The consequent sociolinguistic situation "abroad" -- in Peru -- has been examined in detail by Mannheim (1984).

done out loud, so that it was almost inevitably a social activity (Illich 1981:40-42).

Nebrija set about his task by synthesising what he judged to be the best elements of the vernacular speech-varieties into a national language. His expressed aim was to replace those vernaculars with a purified and regularised language that would become the people's mother tongue -- expressly in the image of "Mother Church"! -- which they would nevertheless need to be formally taught by state-appointed preceptors if they were ever to speak it. (The propensity for appropriating live vernacular culture in order only to hand it back later, exanimate but with a seal of official approval, is well established in the modern world.)

As Roy Harris has argued (1980:130), the production of monolingual dictionaries was to become a normal feature of the heightened political centralisation that accompanied the emergence of nation-states in Renaissance Europe. This has had profound effects not only on the languages themselves, but also on the way in which people (scholars especially) have come to conceptualise and talk about the phenomenon of language in general and the idea of "*a* language" in particular.[45] Underlying this approach to language is an attitude of mind that Harris has identified as the "classical fallacy", recognisable nowadays in almost any field of cultural endeavour in which the state has had a hand. This is the idea that every language, literature, music, religion or nation has (or once had) a perfect, wholly "correct" form, of which all actually occurring instances are but "incorrect" corruptions. People persuaded of this view are, of course, all the more predisposed to see themselves as "identified" with some pure form outside of themselves ("nation", "ethnic group", "religion", etc) that is actually the creation of others over whom they have no effective control.

In practice, this classical fallacy is put about by the schoolmasterly insistence that there *is* "correct" language, "good" music, "fine" literature -- thereby injecting moral insinuations into what would otherwise be just a matter of description. The "invention of tradition" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) that has become such a characteristic feature of modern nationalism, with its use of "golden age" ideas as the means of justifying present policies, is a reflex of this same classical fallacy (see Benjamin 1976 for a contemporary example). Present-day scholarship too is perfused by these ideas: examples from my own fields of interest include the frequent insistence of sociologists on treating as "deviance" anything that differs from the supposed societal "norm", and (as Harris has persuasively argued)

[45] Twentieth-century linguistics of the structuralist and transformationalist varieties are archetypal examples of the consequences of the standardising approach, and are in reality far less revolutionary than their proponents have usually claimed; see Harris 1980.

the linguists' inconscient attachment to a deep-seated prescriptivism while proclaiming themselves to be thorough descriptivists. Modern education in general, both elementary and advanced, is profoundly caught up in the classical fallacy through its attachment to the institution of the *syllabus* -- understood by teachers and students alike as *that beyond which nothing is worth knowing*. In turn, this view presupposes that there are distinct, perfectly formed, pre-existing "subjects" out there in the world, the primary function of which is to enable the state's personnel-sorting agencies to grade the students' levels of educational attainment.

This vulgar, syllabus-based, classical fallacy has considerably wider sociopolitical implications, however, for life in a modern nation-state entails seeing the various components of society as autonomous domains -- "the economy", "religion", "politics", "the arts", etc. -- that is, as overtly institutionalised and functionally differentiated entities.[46] Political action (for example), as any field-working anthropologist knows, is in reality diffused throughout all social behaviour, though it *can* be institutionalised in the form of overt "government". Language, by any honest measure, is of course thoroughly grammatical in all its varieties, though it *can* be institutionalised in the "correct" grammatical forms of a standardised variety. The same is true of religion, which most anthropologists would see as a component of *all* social life, but which most people would nowadays see as being focused on such formal institutions as churches, temples or mosques. The statist institutionalisation of power, language or religion therefore does not consist in removing these domains of life from the "diffuse" sphere they have always occupied so much as in *appropriating the names* by which they are known. As examples, let me cite:

> (1) the labelling of non-written or non-standardised languages as "dialects", supposedly lacking grammar, in order to restrict the word "language" to the standardised "national" variety;
>
> (2) the assertion that tribespeople (or such non-tribals as those Chinese who follow neither Buddhism nor Christianity) possess only "beliefs", "superstitions" or "rituals", but not "religion", thereby freeing the latter term for monopolistic use by the state's authorities to label just those activities that they find acceptable or desirable;
>
> (3) the claim that non-centralised or nomadic peoples live in rule-less "anarchy", and must therefore be made to settle down and be ruled, so that no one should be seen to escape the state's arrogation of "politics" to itself.

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[46] This analysis of modernism has been developed by Dumont (1971) among others; Berger (1974) has discussed the effects of this on the structure of individual mentalities, under the label of "componentiality".

Along with its near-monopoly over the definition of identity (discussed earlier), these are all examples of the modern state's propensity for appropriating to itself a wide range of cultural symbols that originally made appeal to quite different contexts. The meanings of those symbols are, of course, changed irrevocably in the process.

However much the perpetrators of these interventions may claim that their actions are founded in morality or good taste,[47] their motivations are fundamentally political. Conventional education, for example, could not proceed unless teachers were able to restrict to themselves the right to pronounce on grammaticality and other species of "correctness". Nor would religions have much power to guide people unless priests and preachers had a "true religion" in the name of which to act. But statesmen, above all, have a clear stake in closely defining the domain of politics as being for them alone, not for the people at large. Put simply, the "classical fallacy" in its many manifestations is a mythical charter for interference in the lives of others -- for treating ordinary citizens as the moral and jural equivalents of life-long children. To link statist political policies with language, religion, or ethnicity is thus an efficient way of what Berger and Luckmann (1967) call "hiding the socially constructed nature of the institutional order".

The state and social science

It needs only the acquiescence of social "scientists" in this particular version of the classical fallacy for the trick to be complete. Those best placed to view the issues critically will then have disempowered themselves intellectually and politically through accepting a fundamentally statist notion of society as their taken-for-granted, unresearched and non-problematic "reality". This happens more frequently than is generally realised. Generations of sociology and anthropology students, for example, have been taught to take "societies", rather than social relations, as their objects of study, and to regard the maintenance of "order" and "social solidarity" as the fundamental problems of an academic discipline that they are encouraged to think of as a natural science, much like physics or chemistry.[48] The

[47] The idea of "good taste" was first put about, it seems, by Nebrija's Queen Isabela (Illich 1981).

[48] This approach is sometimes justified by its proponents on the grounds that beginning students need to be given a simple view if they are to progress in their studies -- as if it were possible to develop a more critical approach through the mere refining of fundamentally misconceived notions! As it is, many social-science students end their studies with less understanding of society than they brought with them on entering university. That it *is* nevertheless possible to write an introductory textbook without invoking "societies", or even "groups", as the fundamental social phe-

following extract from the written exercise of a first-year student of sociology and anthropology (Singapore, 1983) provides a carefully worked example of what I am referring to.

> A society is defined as a group of people living together. This group of people share the same beliefs, customs and religions. Societies are of two types -- the primitive society and the modern society. All societies have a system of laws and rules which the people must follow. Those who violate such regulations are said to be deviants. Social control is essential in every society. "Social control" is defined by Hoebel and Frost as a means of getting people to conform to certain behavioural standards. Social control is essential because the smooth functioning of society can only be said to take place when people do not violate rules and behavioural standards set for them by society.

Many teachers of sociology would find little to fault in this student's exposition; some might even consider it worthy of a high grade. A more careful appraisal, however, will show that it is not "societies" that these words would best apply to, but *polities* -- and most especially to efficiently policed modern nation-states. Moreover, the references to "deviants" and to the sameness of "beliefs, customs and religions" betoken yet another example of the classical fallacy, just as a hopelessly misplaced naturalism is conjured up by the talk of "smooth functioning", "primitive societies" and the setting of standards "by society". In this student's tale -- as in the tales of many professional "social scientists" -- the apparatus of state power and the entrenched domination by some people of others are first mystified by calling them something ("society") other than what they are (politics), and then made harmless by reduction to the status of self-regulating natural phenomena ("systems"). This is mythic language rather than the language of scholarly analysis.

But we should not be too surprised. As Durkheim and others have warned, it is barely possible for us to talk about our own social experience other than in moral or religious terms. This is especially so when that experience involves group life (as it does preeminently in the modern nation-state), for the individual is then placed in the position of having to identify with some kind of overself. In modern society, therefore, the "systems"-based human sciences *are* "religious" -- especially when focused on social, cultural or linguistic issues -- insofar as they are institutions through which the overselfness of the nation-state is mystified and made to merge with the taken-for-granted, commonsense "reality". Indeed, the image of the nation-state is probably immanent in the frequently employed concept of supra-

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nomenon is demonstrated by such diverse works as Hirst and Woolley (1982), Giddens (1982), or Max Weber's excellent but little-used short textbook (1962).

or extra-individual "system" ***whenever*** it is applied to human affairs: the list includes such scholarly enterprises as structuralism, functionalism, structural-functionalism, the use of statistics to represent a "whole", and organicism. The very phrase "social ***science***" is itself part of the myth-making, given the almost magical role that the idea of "science" ("systems"-science especially) has attained among the general public in the present century as the source of certainty; professional scientists, on the other hand, are more likely to regard science as dealing in organised ***doubt***.[49]

A homely example, in semi-popular form, of such scientising mystification is provided by this report in the *Sunday Times* newspaper of Singapore (13 February 1983) on a survey of "values" that it had commissioned.

> The Times survey, completed last year, was conducted among 890 Singapore citizens over 15 years old, randomly selected in the scientific sense of "random." Because the survey sample profile closely parallels that of the nation, the findings of the survey are ***valid for the whole nation*** [emphasis added].

As with the examination answer given earlier, the form of words used here would appear quite unexceptionable to many sociologists. Yet, closer inspection shows that the ideas of "valid" and "the whole nation" are mystifications, comprehensible only to those who have made the Overself notion part of their taken-for-granted view of the world. Such "findings" are "valid" only to the extent that ***identity*** has come to be seen as the mode of nexus between individual and society -- and that, as already argued, can be brought about only through a subversion-from-the-top-down, achieved in a manner not wholly different from that of religious conversion.[50] The "religious" character of much social-science teaching has been recognised for what it is by those whose chief concern is to leave some other, more conventional, religion unassailed. Orthodox Muslims and fervent Christians, for example, sometimes protest that the study of social and linguistic "science" are threats to the student's religious faith. It might be useful, therefore, to look briefly at the ways in which different religious traditions have pictured social life.

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[49] That the phrase "civic religion" is more than a figure of speech is demonstrated by the fact that it too, like "real" religions, engages in the communication with non-empirical beings that several scholars see as the criterial feature of religion: examples are saluting the flag, dying for one's country, or holding the little red (or green) book in one's hands before undertaking a risky enterprise.

[50] What else are we to make of the claim that the "whole nation" is characterised by a particular range of values when the values are distributed non-uniformly among the individuals surveyed?

The Temiars (a once-"tribal" hill-population of Peninsular Malaysia) understand their world, including their social relations, *psychocentrically,*[51] on the basis of their own experience of their individual *self-consciousness.* The Chinese preference is (or used to be) to understand their own private and social experiences *logocentrically,* as rectifications of the *names* used in talking about them. Now, if these are both fundamentally religious modes of understanding, then it is equally religious to understand one's experience of one's own consciousness *reocentrically,* on the basis of the *things* that supposedly constitute the world, especially when society-as-overself is taken as the most salient thing. This is exactly the mode of understanding proposed by the Marxian, Durkheimian and Saussurean traditions of scholarly analysis, and it is typified too in our more general habit of blaming private ills on "society". These various ways of mystifying the Self-Society relation are forms of surrogation, for nothing is ever talkable of or otherwise expressible *in its own terms;* we always talk of or act towards ourselves, others and social groups (including the nation-state) in terms that are actually surrogates for the "things-in-themself" that we are ostensibly referring to. The world's historically transmitted cultural regimes have tended to choose different foci, however, as the surrogates around which the ways of talking are framed.

The Durkheimian claim that it is "society" which is being symbolised in the world's various religions is not infrequently supported by the evidence. But structuralists and functionalists of the Durkheimian persuasion, in holding that they have thereby discovered religion's underlying reality, have misled themselves, for what they have discovered is merely that in some religions "society" is serving as the reocentric surrogate in terms of which the people are being urged to understand the only authentic subjective reality -- their own individual self-consciousness. To claim that "society" is the basis of other, often very differently shaped, religions is a projection of the nation-state image onto supposedly more "natural" societies; this too is a somewhat religious exercise in itself. Was Durkheim (1912) really addressing himself to the problems of the central Australian Aborigines, whom he never visited and on whom he possessed only the most meagre ethnographic sources, or was he concerned with the problem of providing the newly secularised French Republic with a civic morality -- a task he had been entrusted with by the state? (Auguste

[51] The terms used here are taken from Roy Harris's discussion (1980) of the surrogations employed in various cultural traditions for dealing with the question of "language": *psychocentric* (first, the thought or notion), *reocentric* (first, the thing or the world), and *logocentric* (first, the word or name). The reference to the Temiars is based on my own fieldwork among them in the 1960s and 1970s; I have yet to publish an account of their culture set within the particular framework just proposed.

Comte, Durkheim's predecessor as the standard-bearer of Sociology in France, had indeed attempted to set up an atheistic state religion centred on the public ceremonial worship of *La France*.)

Such reifications of Society are at one with the common sociological trick of seeing "society" as the *cause* of individuals' "behaviour", rather than as the outcome and framework of individuals' *actions*. Nor are anthropologists immune to such ways of thought: those who read the ethnological literature in hope of seeing "tribes" as the purest example of "societies" are following the same course. Too often, they take the nation-state as the implicit but unexamined "us" against which they generate the "other cultures" that form their preferred focus of attention. The social sciences broadly have tended to take the nation-state, in its boundedness, relative homogeneity, and individualistic character, as the model for *all* societies and for Society in general. They have made "natural" what is in fact constructed, and they have misrepresented the character of all other social forms -- most notably of the very "tribal" societies that are taken as the natural paragon of all these virtues.

It is hard to say whether the organic analogy that often accompanies this approach is the source or the *consequence* of taking the nation-state as the unspoken norm or model for "Society". I would argue, however, that the resultant functionalist theories of society are addressed at base to the political task of maintaining the conceptualisation of the nation-state as bounded and homogeneous, through the pretence that *all* societies, and indeed Society in general, are so constituted. There is a task here for the historian of ideas: did functionalism and the organic analogy have their source in nineteenth-century biology or in eighteenth-century European nationalism? I would incline to the latter view, if only because of recent scholarly demonstrations that evolutionary and functionalist ideas were present in sociology and linguistics at least half a century before they were taken seriously by the biologists. Darwin *followed* Spencer and William Jones, just as the organic view of "nations" emerged as a consequent of the Renaissance penchant for classicism and dictionary-making.

Let me end with an example taken from an unlikely source of confusion -- the work of a group of critical, reforming sociologists well aware of the issues I have raised here.

> While in our view most of the sociological and anthropological analyses of common values, shared symbolic universes and public systems of ritual practice *properly apply to the understanding of pre-industrial society* [note the singular collective noun!], Parsonian sociology requires that these perspectives also apply without major modification to advanced industrial society [emphasis added]. (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner 1980:51-52.)

This statement is embedded in a book devoted to showing that the (Parsonian) attribution of common values to any functioning social order is an unwarranted restriction on what Marx, Durkheim and Weber were saying. But, so far as we can tell, pre-industrial non-nation-state societies are relatively *less* pressured to demonstrate common values, as much recent ethnographic work has demonstrated: it is the *nation-states* of the world that pressure their citizens into a "common-values" mode, if usually in a covert manner.

We do not have to go to "tribal" social formations to find examples of non-nation-state societies, however, for this very perspective provides an extra reason (and basis) for looking more closely at the various communalist and utopian movements that have arisen within the nation-state framework. Such Anabaptist movements as the modern Hutterites and Mennonites are of great interest because they descend from people who saw all of the processes discussed in this essay as threatening even *before* the modern nation-state had become the norm in Europe. To this day, the Mennonites insist firmly on not allowing outside state agencies to have any part in socialising their children. The wider world, for its part, can tolerate such groups not only because they are civilly well-behaved but because they can be seen as quaint throwbacks, never incorporated into the world at large; they can be thought of as people who simply don't "know any better".[52] The surviving Anabaptist movements are *historically* important because of their genesis out of the original Protestant/Catholic rift (in which, be it noted, the two mainstream groups both went in the nation-state direction). But *sociologically*, other groups too may repay study in this light: the Hasidim, for example, or even such self-consciously "tribal" groups as the Semang, leading their lives in the face of modern Malaysia.

It is groups consisting of individuals brought up as "citizens" but who later reject the State that call a special degree of political obloquy onto themselves, whether they are "Hippies", new religious sects, or just eco-"freaks". They *are* usually seen as a threat by the state-minded, and only the most mature of governments will let them have their way.[53] The most prominent of all such labelling devices is the use of the epithet "primitive" (as in the student's statement reported earlier) to characterise any people who so dare to reject centralisation or modernism that they remain tribal by choice. By calling them "primitive", of course, we deny that they are capable of choice, being either so ignorant or evolutionarily pristine as to be quite incapable

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[52] Modern Mennonites, of course, know perfectly well where they fit in the world-scheme, and they know exactly what it is they are rejecting! (Cf. Urry 1983.)

[53] An excellent example of this is the history of Australian federal governments' changing responses to the persistence of some Aboriginal groups in living deliberately beyond the purview of the state.

of performing the ultimate critique of modernism and the nation-state -- by turning their backs on it.

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