Nationalism

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Nationalism is an ideology that stresses allegiance to one's nation as a major political virtue and national preservation and self-determination as prime political imperatives. In its varied forms, nationalism has proved an immensely powerful force for popular mobilization over two centuries in almost every part of the world.

Yet as a political-theoretical concept it remains deeply problematical. Who, after all, are the great nationalist theorists of today? Many people theorize *about* nationalism but few are nationalist theorists in the manner of liberal, Marxist, conservative or feminist theorists. Even recent defenses of liberal or civic nationalism have been by liberals or social democrats trying to come to terms with the nationalist phenomenon. "Multicultural" theorists also afford some theoretical recognition to nationalist sentiment, but these too are liberals seeking to extend the principle of tolerance to "sub-nationalities" within state borders. Indeed all varieties of theorist – Marxists, democrats, conservatives, feminists – have had to confront the nationalist phenomenon in their own way, but full-throated defenders of normative nationalism are very rare.

It was always thus according to the author of a famous contemporary work on nationalism. Benedict Anderson, contrasting nationalism's political power with its "philosophical poverty," noted that, "unlike most other isms, nationalism has never produced its own grand thinkers: no Hobbeses, Tocquevilles, Marxes, or Webers" (Anderson 1983: 5). Most of the vast modern literature on nationalism is produced not by theorists but by historians, sociologists, social psychologists or anthropologists more likely to denounce nationalism than to defend it. Even Tom Nairn, who treats nationalist movements sympathetically, describes nationalism's "Janus" nature as "both healthy and morbid" in its equal display of progressive and regressive tendencies (Nairn 1981: 347-8). The main aim has been, not to defend nationalism,

but to *explain* it, and often − after the manner of Marx's explanation of religion − to *explain it away* as a potentially destructive secular illusion.

Yet the illusion is not dispelled. The continuing power of the nationalist impulse is an embarrassment for political theorists because it seems dependent on irrational, or non-rational, passions rather than on respectable (that is, rational) political theory. It is embarrassing because rational theories seem themselves critically dependent on a prior national principle. The free institutions of a liberal government, John Stuart Mill said, were almost impossible in a state containing mixed nationalities that precluded "fellow-feeling" and sense of common identity (Mill 1972: 392). John Rawls accepted Mill's contention that "common sympathies" must exist to create a 'people,' then theorized how a liberal state could extend rights of toleration beyond individuals to 'decent' peoples (in non-liberal states) to form a system of peaceful international relations (Rawls 1993). Will Kymlicka tried to reconcile principles of individual right with the existence of sub-national peoples *within* states by admitting a form of group right attaching to such peoples in a 'multi-cultural', yet nevertheless liberal, society (Kymlicka 1995a, 1995b).

Pierre Manent, focusing on democracy rather than liberalism, argued that the democratic principle cannot itself define the space in which it is to operate and must rely on other ideas, including that of the cohesive nation, to define it first; democrats may regard "the nation" as a "contingent and arbitrary legacy of the predemocratic age," but they cannot deny its practical necessity (Manent 1997: 96-99). Jürgen Habermas accepted this contingent connection, arguing that nationalism had formed an historical precondition for the democratization of state power: "A democratic basis for the legitimation of domination would not have developed without national self-awareness, because it was the nation that first created solidarity between persons who until then had been strangers to each other" (Habermas 1997, 171). Nevertheless, Habermas believed the grotesque history of the twentieth century had revealed the urgent necessity for democratic states to shed their dependency on a people's nation (*Volksnation)* and move toward supranational, cosmopolitan forms of integration (Habermas 1998).

The theoretical inconvenience of nationalism also confronted Marxism-Leninism after the dream of world revolution became the doctrine of "socialism in one country," leading eventually to socialist countries split along national lines. Both Marx and Lenin took an instrumental view and advised tactical alliance with some nationalist groups in the struggle for

socialism, but it was a moot question which allegiance would emerge victorious. Stalin was forced to appeal to Russian nationalism to inspire the common soldiers defending the Soviet Union during World War II: "We are under no illusion that they are fighting for us [the communists]," he said. "They are fighting for Mother Russia" (cited Miner 2003: 67).

In this essay I will approach nationalism by first examining the contributions of those early modern thinkers who foreshadowed what we now call a nationalist outlook. I will then look briefly at the historical trajectory of what proved to be a resilient and protean concept capable of multifarious transformations in different political contexts. Finally, I will outline the central puzzles and debates that this often troubling history has provoked among commentators, concluding with some remarks on what the nationalist phenomenon indicates about modern political theory.

Philosophical nationalism

The theoretical seeds of modern nationalism were planted in 1748 by Montesquieu in his book *The Spirit of the Laws.* Montesquieu resisted the pervasive Cartesian rationalism of his time with its deductive reasoning from first principles (e.g. Hobbes, Spinoza) and undertook to survey humanity in all its manifest variety. He also rejected the legal-rationalism of seventeenth-century social contract theorists like Grotius, Hobbes and Locke who had assumed, he said, what they set out to prove, namely types of relations in a pre-social state of nature that could exist only *within* society. Montesquieu's story of humanity's emergence from nature was not juridical but quasi-anthropological, and led to no particular normative account of political society. Observing the many differences among social orders, Montesquieu sought to explain them scientifically by the variable effects of climate − although he also allowed that people were more complexly influenced by "religion, the laws, the maxims of government, by the precedents, morals and customs, from which is formed a general spirit that takes its rise from these." Accepting the resultant variety, Montesquieu thought it wisest to declare "that the government most in conformity with nature is the one whose particular arrangement best relates to the disposition of the people for whom it is established" (Montesquieu 1914, XIX, 4; I, 3).

He did, nevertheless, draw this normative conclusion: since people must live in *some* society, the preservation of society must count as a principle of justice, implying preservation of

the government on which a society depended, whether republican or monarchical. Here Montesquieu introduced an element omitted by rationalism but central to future nationalism: love. "Now, a government is like everything else," he wrote, "to preserve it we must love it" (Montesquieu 1914, IV, 5). Inspiring civic love must be the chief business both of education and parental example (except in a despotic government, which could not be loved because it was destructive of all socialized personality).

Powerful parochial attachments were thus advocated and justified. Yet Montesquieu also embraced Enlightenment cosmopolitanism founded on universal principles of justice and equality. "If I knew of something that was useful to my nation which would be ruinous to another," he wrote, "I would not propose it to my prince, because I am a man before being French, or rather, because I am necessarily a man, and I am French only by chance" (Montesquieu 1949, 980). But how could patriotic love of one's country be squared with a cosmopolitan ideal demanding that one treat all one's fellow humans with equal justice? Montesquieu advised moderation between extremes. A sound policy must acknowledge both the need for patriotism and the broader obligations of nations to deal fairly with one another. Montesquieu thus enunciated and attempted to address the conundrum of particularism versus universalism that would beset nationalist thought.

The French Revolution is usually taken as inaugurating the nationalist era, and the philosopher most commonly associated with it is Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The "illustrious Montesquieu," according to Rousseau (1957, 578), had established a true science of the *positive* rights of established governments, everywhere different, but had not attempted to discern universal principles of political right. At issue here, said Rousseau, was how to reconcile humanity's natural freedom with the subjection imposed by a social order. His solution was the dual concept of a citizen-subject: free citizens were members of the sovereign people whose legislative will (expressing what Rousseau called a correct "general will" aimed at the common good) generated laws to which all were equally subject.

Rousseau's idea of popular sovereignty gave a democratic twist to developing nationalism: the sovereign people formed the body of citizens constituting the nation. Thus the Third Article of the French National Assembly's Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in 1789 states: "The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation." An

essential virtue for such a popular nation was love of fatherland, but this presented a problem as Rousseau pondered how to establish nations in Corsica and Poland. These could not be founded on pre-political cultural identities − which, he argued, had been largely erased by the homogenizing force of commerce − but must be *politically* created. What would bind human beings to a new nation? In *Considerations on the Government of Poland* Rousseau argued, against Hobbes, that it could not be rational self-interest, because private good and the common good "are mutually exclusive in the natural order of things." To Rousseau, who made "sentiment" the wellspring of human life, it was clear that no constitution would be any good that did not reach the citizens' hearts: "But how can men's hearts be reached?" His answer: "Dare I say it? With children's games; with institutions which appear trivial in the eyes of superficial men, but which form cherished habits and invincible attachments" (Rousseau 1997, 79, 179). National ceremonies and public spectacles must arouse popular fervor for, and devotion to, the nation formed of the people themselves.

Rousseau was a sincere patriot of his native Geneva, but also a cosmopolitan whose patriotism followed his enthusiasms. In his *Confessions* he relates that during the war of the Polish succession he became "an ardent Frenchman" governed by "a blind passion, which nothing could overcome" (Rousseau 2006, Ch 5). It is likely, indeed, that Rousseau's main influence on nationalism is to be found in passionate sentiment rather than his philosophy of political right and popular sovereignty. The democratic element would prove historically detachable from nationalism, the passionate element never.

The eighteenth-century figure most closely tied to nationalist theory is Johann Gottfried Herder, who was deeply influenced by, but highly critical of, both Montesquieu and Rousseau. Like them he rejected the "facile rationalism" that encouraged *a priori* reasoning, abstraction and system-building. Like Montesquieu, he was fascinated by the variety of humanity but believed it could be more adequately explained through sociological and historical inquiry. Herder dismissed the social contract theorists' account of a pre-social state of nature on the grounds that the being of humanity is essentially linguistic, and language already presumes society. Language was an interactive social phenomenon that gave humans creative freedom, mobilizing their capacity for reason and invention and constituting the core of what Herder called "culture." Culture, he said, is natural to human beings, shaping the person even as the person sustains the

culture. No culture ever came into being as a result of a "contract." Since language can arise and be transmitted only if a community inherits and preserves it, the existence of a multiplicity of languages attested to a multiplicity of distinct socio-cultural entities in the world each forming what Herder termed a *Volk* or nation (used interchangeably).

Herder explicitly denied that any nation may claim superiority over another, and thought discrimination on racial grounds utterly misconceived. Mankind was one species existing in plural cultures each with its own distinctive *Volksgeist* (national spirit), and this diversity was good. Plural cultures implied plural values, and Herder believed each *Volk* has its own admirable virtues and unfortunate corruptions. His relativism was tempered by a regulative ideal – *Humanität* or human essence – that embodied "the noble constitution of man for reason and freedom, finer senses and impulses" (Herder 1969, 267), but this essence was always a potential to be realized, never one finally attained. There was progress in history but it was seldom unilinear or irreversible and no particular nation could be regarded as "chosen." Unlike other animals, humans were incomplete beings who had to seek self-realization through their own efforts in their own particular cultures.

Herder distinguished social culture from political culture, and insisted there was no single right principle of government applicable to all cultures, times and places. Nevertheless he was strongly critical of the sovereign, centralizing tendencies of the European principalities and empires of his day which imposed a political culture quite incongruent with, and destructive of, the social cultures below. Sovereign power was coercive and hierarchical, external to and mechanically impressed on society. Even Rousseau, despite his concern for freedom, succeeded only in replacing state sovereignty with popular sovereignty which, expressed through a somewhat metaphysical general will, was equally coercive. A truly collective political identity could grow only, organically as it were, within a common culture. Herder's political thought was anarchistic, emphasizing horizontal rather than vertical integration, and an idea of government diffused throughout society by a free people ordering their lives and laws as best suited them. Herder's idea of a *Volk*-state was of a territory in which a nation was politically self-determining in the most direct and participative manner. In *Ideas for a Philosophy of History,* he admonished his former teacher, Kant:

> The maxim, that 'man is an animal that needs a lord when he lives with others of his species, so that he may attain happiness and fulfil his destiny on earth', is both facile and noxious as a fundamental principle of a philosophy of history. The proposition, I feel, ought to be reversed. Man is an animal as long as he needs a master to lord over him; as soon as he attains the status of a human being he no longer needs a master in any real sense (Herder 1969, 323).

Herder's ideal of nationality obviously does not resemble the world of nation-states that came after him. His work was nevertheless hugely influential on succeeding generations, particularly that of the European revolutionaries of 1848. What it mainly transmitted to nationalist thought was the centrality of "culture" and the idea that "natural" cultural nations should be politically independent and self-determining.

German idealist philosopher, Johann Gottfried Fichte, was influenced by Herder's nationalist thought but eventually took it in a direction Herder would hardly have welcomed. Fichte's early political writings, developed from his own peculiar philosophical perspective, represented an unusual mix of liberalism and communitarianism (Fichte 2000). Fichte viewed the governmental state as a contrivance imposed on society, but having an instrumental role in bringing the world-as-it-should-be into being, the ultimate purpose of government being to make government superfluous (eventually, not soon). In Fichte's grand cosmopolitan vision, true science (*Wissenschaft*) directed the way to the ideal future of all humanity, a future in which the ego was universally transcended and fulfilled in an eternal and "Infinite Will." The essence of true patriotism lay in each cultural nation upholding the torch of enlightenment according to its individual capacity and passing it on when they had exceeded their capacity (Fichte 2009). Fichte thus reconciled patriotism with cosmopolitanism by making particular national cultures the serial means toward a universal goal, such cultures being defined, like Herder's, by language. But later Fichte, under pressure of historical circumstances, introduced a hierarchical element absent from Herder.

The overrunning of the German principalities by Napoleon's armies caused Fichte to raise the flag of a defiant German nationalism. In his *Patriotic Dialogues* of 1806 and his *Addresses to the German Nation* in 1808, he argued that the German patriot naturally wished that mankind's universal purpose be attained first among Germans. Fortunately, the Germans were a uniquely "original" people existing in continuity since pre-Roman times, their "natural" state

defined not by artificial lines on a map but by "internal" boundaries marked out by a common language and a common way of thinking. The German language was, moreover, superior to other European languages in its ancientness and purity, being relatively uncontaminated by foreign tongues and thus uniquely suited to the philosophy that led upward to the universal ideal. The Germans alone possessed a true *Volksgeist,* whereas people who were infected by a foreign spirit "do not believe at all in something original nor in its continuous development … [they] are in the higher sense not a people at all. As they in fact, properly speaking, do not exist, they are just as little capable of having a national character" (Fichte 1922, 135). The German national spirit took on alarming dimensions in some passages:

> What spirit has an undisputed right to summon and to order everyone concerned, whether he himself be willing or not, and to compel anyone who resists, to risk everything including his life? Not the spirit of the peaceful citizen's love for the constitution and the laws, but the devouring flame of higher patriotism, which embraces the nation as the vesture of the eternal, for which the noble-minded man joyfully sacrifices himself, and the ignoble man, who only exists for the sake of the other, must likewise sacrifice himself. … The promise of a life here on earth extending beyond the period of life here on earth – that alone it is which can inspire men even unto death for the fatherland (ibid. 140-1).

The liberalism of Fichte's earlier thought seemed all but consumed by his pro-German, anti-French passions. Like Herder, however, he had no theoretical space for racialism. His undoubted distrust of Judaism as a faith (a foreign influence allegedly inimical to the German spirit) seemed not to encompass animus toward actual Jews. His most notorious statement − "I see no way to give the Jews civil rights except to cut off all their heads in one night, and to set new ones on their shoulders, which should contain not a single Jewish idea" – was an overstated way of declaring Jews could not be trusted with civil rights because they constituted a State within a State, but he insisted that their human rights be defended and in fact himself defended them at personal cost to himself (Sweet 1993). Fichte could hardly have foreseen the rabid nationalism that would one day possess Germany, yet by introducing the element of hierarchical ordering among cultural nations, by emphasizing German purity, and by elevating German-ness to a philosophic category of chosen-ness, he had provided material that could ultimately be bent to evil ends.

This ethnocentric Fichtean view was later opposed by the French philosopher, Joseph Renan, whose ideas would influence the views of Benedict Anderson. Renan characterized

nationalism, in somewhat Rousseauean terms, as the self-conscious desire of people united by historical circumstances to do great things together, as they had done in the past. A democratic element was introduced in the claim that the existence of a nation was based on a "daily referendum" (Renan 1882).

Political nationalism

No singular, coherent political theory emerged from these writers. The socio-political significance of nations as prime sites of identity and allegiance had been affirmed, with a tendency to assume the need for national independence and self-determination, but what, after all, was a nation? The cultural-developmental views of Herder and Fichte were opposed by views like those of Rousseau and Renan of a nation as an ongoing, conscious political project, and when that project was based on universal values of equality and liberty the tendency was to undermine traditions rather than to affirm them. Issues of relativism, particularism and universalism swirled around the subject without firm resolution.

Most problematic was the issue of nationalism's relation to the modern state. The theorists were ambivalent at best on the centralizing sovereign state and, in Herder's case, quite opposed. Yet as the territorially-defined administrative state became the dominant form of modern political organization, there was an obvious, pressing incentive for peoples to reconstruct themselves politically on state lines. Certain theorists, especially G.W.F. Hegel, took a more positive view of the "rational" administrative state, even to the point of glorification, yet retained the national principle. States enfolded nations and thus became "nation-states." In these circumstances any set of people considering itself a nation seemed to require its own political state for its perfection or protection. As Mill put it: "Where the sentiment of nationality exists in any force [and however it might have arisen], there is a *prima facie* case for uniting all members of the nationality under the same government, and a government to themselves apart" (Mill 1972, 392). This became the very definition of nationalism: "Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent" (Gellner 1983, 1). The kinds of nationalism it might cover, however, proved historically diverse, and included conservative, liberal, fascist and anti-colonial forms.

In Britain, the blood-letting of the French Terror provoked a spirit of *conservative nationalism*, famously enunciated by Edmund Burke in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). Liberty, Burke said, could not be secured by the French champions of popular sovereignty for whom it meant riotous unrestraint; genuine political liberty depended on integral and complex connection to other values. Against French abstract universalistic rights, Burke pitted the concrete rights of Britons organically developed within venerable traditions embodying accumulated wisdom that transcended "rationality." Burke's organic metaphor resembled Herder's only up to a point. For Herder, cultural development was highly dynamic and never-ending: "change is a condition of everything on earth" (Herder 1969, 247). But Burke was concerned with conservation, not change. The mature evolved structure may not be perfect, and might benefit from the odd tinkering reform, but anything larger risked damage or destruction. This conservative line would be continued by figures like Coleridge, Disraeli and T.S. Eliot, and more recently by Michael Oakeshott, Russell Kirk and Roger Scruton.

The most triumphant form of political nationalism in the nineteenth century, however, was *liberal nationalism*. There was a latent tension between liberalism (whose moral individualism provoked suspicion of collectivism) and nationalism (in which the individual was subsumed within a larger entity). Liberal nationalists could overlook this so long as and it was presumed that national and individual liberties were of one species, and that nations fighting for independence were also fighting for liberal government. This generally *was* the presumption during the struggles of Serbs and Greeks against the Ottoman Empire and Poles against Czarist Russia, and during the revolutionary wave that swept over Europe in 1848 (known as the "Spring of Nations"). Love of nation did not exclude love of mankind, or so insisted the era's most prominent liberal nationalist, Guiseppe Mazzini, who spent his life struggling for the unification and liberation of Italy. Mazzini preached that a person's first duty was to Humanity, but only by striving in association with one's fellow nationals *on the right principle* would one find strength to fulfill such duty. The "right principle" was a country defined by individual liberty and equality of rights. Mazzini predicted: "The countries of the peoples, defined by the vote of free men, will arise upon the ruins of the countries of kings and privileged castes, and between these countries harmony and fraternity will exist" (Mazzini 1898, 59). Liberal nationalism seemed automatically to imply liberal internationalism and thus the cause of peace and progress.

Such inflated hopes were punctured by the rise of unified "nation states," like Germany after 1871, that were less than fully liberal and eventually aggressively anti-liberal. The nationalism of even liberal states like Britain and France was sullied by association with the "scramble for empire," especially as jingoistic nationalism took up the hierarchical tenets of Social Darwinism and the "scientific" racialism of Count de Gobineau. Finally, the Great War of 1914-18 revealed the fearful heights to which nationalist passion could be stirred, provoking hysterical demonization of the enemy. The Versailles peace process, nevertheless, produced an apotheosis of pacific liberal nationalism as President Woodrow Wilson, in his Fourteen Points, upheld the principle of national self-determination for countries emerging from the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian Empire − on the condition that each nation form a state guaranteeing democratic government and individual rights. The problem, as Wilson found, was how to determine which of the many groups calling themselves nations should be so regarded, with the further problem that any particular distribution of statehood would likely encourage either secessionism within states or the expulsion of non-nationals *by* states − as indeed occurred.

The aftermath of traumatic war also saw the inauguration of *fascist nationalism,* the mirror image of liberal nationalism. Fascism rejected equality, law and reason in favor of superiority, force and will, replacing the idea of progress with that of perpetual struggle. Individuals were bound to the national state and to the authoritative will of a strong leader by ties of absolute duty and obedience. Fascism sought to shock incompletely modernized states − Italy under Benito Mussolini, then Spain, Portugal, Greece, Romania, eventually Japan – into more rapid development. It took hold in industrialized Germany because of Germans' deep sense of humiliation and betrayal over the outcomes of the war, exacerbated by the miseries of hyper-inflation and economic depression. To Mussolini's authoritarian ultra-nationalism Hitler's national-socialism added the fanatical anti-Semitism of de Gobineau's follower Houston Stewart Chamberlain, with consequences that revealed how very dark the dark side of nationalism could be.

Theoretical advocates of nationalism became scarce after this period. Indeed nationalism was vehemently opposed by liberals like Friedrich Hayek and Karl Popper who had fled Nazism in the 1930s. Hans Kohn was unusual in advocating a "forward looking," Mazzini-style liberal nationalism that might extend the sphere of democracy, equality, dignity and happiness to all

humanity. To make his argument, Kohn distinguished between the "good" nationalisms of France, England and America, born "in a wave of generous enthusiasm for mankind," and the "bad" nationalisms of Eastern Europe that were "self-centered and antagonistic" (Kohn 1944, 572-73).

Practical nationalism received a boost, meanwhile, from colonies demanding independence from European masters. The content of *anti-colonial nationalism* varied. Vietnam combined nationalism with communism during its long wars of independence. Other nationalisms, like pan-Africanism and pan-Arabism, attempted to transcend state boundaries through grand political unions of populations linked by "negritude" or Arab cultural identity, or by communitarian traditions and a common history of colonial oppression. Such movements, however, fell victim to the tyranny of territorial boundaries inherited from colonial powers, which divided peoples into discrete but arbitrarily-defined "sovereign" states. The result was a "growing gap between state as incumbent regime, and 'nation' as collectivity" (Young 2001, 169). Boundaries generally enclosed many cultural groups, and competition for state power often destructively politicized ethnic difference. The anti-colonial principle of self-determination was never extended to separatist groups within state boundaries, leading sometimes, as in Nigeria and Sudan, to brutal civil war. The imperative need to "build" a nation that transcended particular ethno-cultural traditions and embraced all was rarely fulfilled, and ethnic distinctions remained stubbornly salient.

Nationalist movements within the communist bloc were suppressed through ideological control, the Soviet policy of legitimizing Union Republics, and sometimes violence. But with the break-up of the Soviet Union after 1989, nationalism again revealed its dormant power as thirty-odd nations or would-be nations sought to establish their credentials as independent states. Some achieved independence relatively smoothly, while others split apart, or attempted to, along nationalistic lines. Peaceful separation was achieved by the Czech Republic and Slovakia, but bitter wars were fought over Chechnya and Nagorno-Karabakh, and nationalist conflict in the former Yugoslavia produced war and horrors of "ethnic cleansing" not witnessed in Europe since World War II.

Political nationalism has not waned even in an age of globalization and "Europeanization." Its power to unify and mobilize make it a perennial temptation for state

leaders, sometimes ominously. It is a temptation also at the grassroots level of European societies experiencing substantial "ethnic" immigration, provoking a disquieting resurgence of chauvinistic nationalism. Meanwhile "banal nationalism" – evident in national symbols scarcely noticed but ubiquitous in people's daily lives − continues to express the loyalties of currently "unmobilized" citizenries around the world (Billig 1995).

Nationalist thought today

This history bequeathed many problems to social scientists seeking to understand nationalism's force and persistence. The first problem was one of definition, endlessly contested by "primordialists" arguing the antiquity of nations, and "modernists" who claimed they were a recent phenomenon. But whether or not *nations* existed before the modern period (e.g. biblical Israel, fourth century Armenia, Tudor England), it was generally agreed that *nationalism* was distinctively modern. The definitional question was thus transposed into one of whether the nationalistic "nation" necessarily rested on ethno-cultural roots, or was a cultural artifact cobbled together from "invented" traditions, myths, symbols and rituals to serve modern political purposes. If the first, pre-existing nations created their own nationalisms; if the second, nationalism preceded and created fictive nations.

Underlying these descriptive issues was a normative anxiety about the darker manifestations of nationalism, which one philosopher called "the starkest political shame of the twentieth century" (Dunn 1979, 59). Relevant here was Kohn's distinction between good and bad nationalism, or alternately between Western "civic" nationalism and illiberal Eastern cultural nationalism. This distinction is problematic given that an ethno-cultural nation like Israel can maintain a liberal democratic constitution, while even classic civic nations like France and Britain clearly rest implicitly on ethno-cultural features like language and historical traditions. Nevertheless the idea founded the hope that nationalism could be tamed for peaceful purposes. It also resonated with political theorists who took seriously the "communitarian" critique of liberalism's atomistic, autonomous individual, which stressed our necessary sociality and interdependence and claimed that communities are "constitutive" of our very selves.

Yael Tamir, seeking to reconcile her own liberal and nationalist commitments, defended a "reflective" nationalism that was not holistic and ultimate but individualistic and

antiperfectionistic (Tamir 1993, 11). To moderate the determinative force of nationality, she argued that even elements constitutive of our identities – religious belief, political affiliations and so on – remain significantly matters of choice. Liberals, she said, should admit that nationalistic values − belonging, loyalty and solidarity – are genuine human values that can be reconciled with personal autonomy and choice. She admitted, however, that a complete synthesis was impossible, and urged liberals toward reasonable compromise between incommensurable and incompatible values.

Tamir's theory rested finally on cultural nationalism, as shown by her Herderian ambivalence toward territorial, centralized nation-states that often oppressed sub-nationalities. She wished the protection of cultural-nations to be taken from the state and handed over to regional and international organizations. David Miller, on the other hand, sought to make "the state and nation coincide more closely" (Miller 1998, 72) with a state-based civic nationalism that could mediate between different cultural groups. A democratic socialist, Miller looked to nationalist sentiment to create a solidaristic public culture of trust to support reciprocal moral duties between co-nationals, encouraging citizen sacrifice in support of redistributive policies. Miller's nationalism had to be capacious enough to enfold sub-nationalities yet powerful enough, and sufficiently grounded in historically continuous tradition, to form a particular culture of its own.

The alternate response to embracing nationalism was theoretical multiculturalism or multinationalism (sometimes distinguished, sometimes used interchangeably), which pushed the values of equality and toleration to their limits. Multiculturalists advocated group rights for sub-nationalities or ethno-cultural minorities for one or both of two purposes: to protect a culture, cultural practice or identity; or, to correct unjust discrimination and political exclusion. Some argued that liberal states should adopt a "non-national liberalism" that was neutral between cultures, or that celebrated difference in a policy of "affirmative multiculturalism" (Raz 1994). Michael Walzer wished to preserve differences in perpetuity by keeping the gates of immigration open in order to obliterate any singular, generic, assimilative American cultural identity he associated with abhorrent American nationalism. Each hyphenate group may celebrate its own national heritage, he argued, except "the American-Americans, whose community, if it existed, would deny the Americanism of all the others" (Walzer 1996, 74). The inherent contradictoriness

of affirming all nationalisms save one's own dramatized the difficulties theorists faced in trying to come to terms with nationalism while defending cherished values.

Feminists were also divided over whether to embrace or repudiate nationalism. Some rejected it as another boys' game that excluded women or within which they were subordinated, others claimed women's active if incomplete involvement in nationalist struggles made it possible to speak of "feminist nationalism." The predominant theme, however, was the highly gendered nature of nationalist discourse, whether academic or popular, with its emphasis on "manly" virtues of honor, patriotism, military valor and duty. "Patriotism is a siren call that few men can resist," wrote Joane Nagel (1998, 252). Women were usually cast as the bearers of tradition, reproducers of the nation, and transmitters of culture. Feminists tackled nationalism less to defend nationalist theory than because it existed, one more complex field in which profound gender stereotyping and subordination could be exposed and comprehended within the long struggle toward women's emancipation.

Conclusion

Certain general assumptions about human nature underlie nationalist theorizing, namely, that human beings are intrinsically social-cultural creatures, either born or accepted into particular cultural communities that both shape them and are sustained by them, in and through which they find much of their meaning and significance, and to which they inevitably owe certain duties and loyalties. These inform but do not define nationalism, for they may apply to any cultural group. When, how and why any set of people come to conceive of themselves as part of the "imagined community" called a nation (rather than a tribe, a people, or the subjects of a kingdom or empire) is one of the great questions posed by the nationalist phenomenon. What is certain is that nationalism, whatever appeal it makes to culture, is a *political* ideology and thus always assumes political objectives, most centrally that the self-conceived nation be politically established, consolidated, preserved and defended. The inherently political character of nationalism explains its apparent inseparability from the modern state, which (despite the hopes of fears of globalization theorists) remains the central arena of modern political action and intention.

Nationalist projects gain force by tapping the need for belonging and meaning, and the desire to love something greater than oneself. The early theorists specified such love as essential

to political life and order, a denial of Hobbes's contention that fear was a stronger passion than love for binding people in political community. Hobbes, indeed, wished to suppress passionate love as a cause of folly, dissension and civil conflict, and succeeded all too well. Certainly Locke, following him, found no place for love in his idea of government as a defense of private property, Kant found only the most minimal, and Marxists, with their "objective" forces of production and class formation, had no means for theorizing their own passionate commitment, or for justifying the sacrifice of their lives to the impersonal material forces of history. Feminism may have addressed the neglect except that love tended to symbolize female oppression, women having been cast as the repository of nurturing, domesticated, "privatized" love in masculinist discourse.

Nationalism filled the theoretical vacuum by default. Liberal nationalists try to reclaim some of the ground, but in their fear of patriotic excess usually soft-pedal love, making their attempted reclamation less than convincing. Political theory premised on voluntary "contractual" attachments motivated by self-interest renders the passionate attachments and involuntary obligations so central to much of life theoretically anomalous. It is this failure of theoretical comprehension, perhaps, that makes the enduring power of nationalism such a continuing puzzle for political thinkers.

SEE ALSO: Burke, Edmund; Communitarianism; Cosmopolitanism; Gellner, Ernst; Herder, Johann Gottfried; Liberalism; Fascism; Conservatism; Love; Loyalty; Montesquieu, Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron; Multiculturalism; Nation and Nation State; Nationality; Patriotism; Rousseau, Jean-Jacques.

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