IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

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INTRODUCTION
My point of departure is that nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that word’s multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. To understand them properly we need to consider carefully how they have come into historical being, in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy. I will be trying to argue that the creation of these artefacts towards the end of the eighteenth century was the spontaneous distillation of a complex ‘crossing’ of discrete historical forces; but that, once created, they became ‘modular’, capable of being transplanted, with varying degrees of self-consciousness, to a great variety of social terrains, to merge and be merged with a correspondingly wide variety of political and ideological constellations. I will also attempt to show why these particular cultural artefacts have aroused such deep attachments.

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS
Before addressing the questions raised above, it seems advisable to consider briefly the concept of ‘nation’ and offer a workable definition. Theorists of nationalism have often been perplexed, not to say irritated, by these three paradoxes: (1) The objective modernity of nations to the historians’ eye vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists. (2) The formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept – in the modern world everyone can, should, will ‘have’ a nationality, as he or she ‘has’ a gender – vs. the irremediable particularity of its concrete manifestations, such that, by definition, ‘Greek’ nationality is sui generis. (3) The ‘political’ power of nationalisms vs. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence. In other words, unlike most other isms, nationalism has never produced its own grand thinkers: no Hobbeses, Tocquevilles, Marxes, or Webers. This ‘emptiness’ easily gives rise, among cosmopolitan and polylingual intellectuals, to a certain condescension. Like Gertrude Stein in the face of Oakland, one can rather quickly conclude that there is ‘no there there’. It is characteristic that even so sympathetic a student of nationalism as Tom Nairn can nonetheless write that: “‘Nationalism’ is the pathology of modern developmental history, as inescapable as ‘neurosis’ in the individual, with much the same essential ambiguity attaching to it, a similar built-in capacity for descent into dementia, rooted in the dilemmas of helplessness thrust upon most of the world (the equivalent of infantilism for societies) and largely incurable.”

Part of the difficulty is that one tends unconsciously to hypostasize the existence of Nationalism-with-a-big-N (rather as one might Age-with-a-capital-A) and then to classify ‘it’ as an ideology. (Note that if everyone has an age, Age is merely an analytical expression.) It would, I think, make things easier if one treated it as if it belonged with ‘kinship’ and ‘religion’, rather than with ‘liberalism’ or ‘fascism’.

In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.

It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. Renan referred to this imagining in his suavely back-handed way when he wrote that ‘Or l’essence d’une nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup de choses en commun, et aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses.’ With a certain ferocity Gellner makes a comparable point when he rules that ‘Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist.’ The drawback to this formulation, however, is that Gellner is so anxious to show that nationalism masquerades under false pretences that he assimilates ‘invention’ to ‘fabrication’ and ‘falsity’, rather than to ‘imagining’ and ‘creation’. In this way he implies that ‘true’ communities exist which can be advantageously juxtaposed to nations. In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined. Javanese villagers have always known that they are connected to people they have never seen, but these ties were once imagined particularistically – as indefinitely stretchable nets of kinship and clientship. Until quite recently, the Javanese language had no word meaning the abstraction ‘society’. We may...
today think of the French aristocracy of the ancien régime as a class; but surely it was imagined this way only very late. To the question ‘Who is the Comte de X?’ the normal answer would have been, not ‘a member of the aristocracy’, but ‘the lord of X’, ‘the uncle of the Baronne de Y’, or ‘a client of the Duc de Z’.

The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation in the way that it was possible, in certain epochs, for, say, Christians to dream of a wholly Christian planet. It is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. Coming to maturity at a stage of human history when even the most devout adherents of any universal religion were inescapably confronted with the living pluralism of such religions, and the allomorphism between each faith’s ontological claims and territorial stretch, nations dream of being free, and, if under God, directly so. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state.

Finally, it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.

These deaths bring us abruptly face to face with the central problem posed by nationalism: what makes the shrunken imaginings of recent history (scarcely more than two centuries) generate such colossal sacrifices? I believe that the beginnings of an answer lie in the cultural roots of nationalism.

Cultural roots

No more arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism exist than cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers. The public ceremonial reverence accorded these monuments precisely because they are either deliberately empty or no one knows who lies inside them, has no true precedents in earlier times. To feel the force of this modernity one has only to imagine the general reaction to the busy-body who ‘discovered’ the Unknown Soldier’s name or insisted on filling the cenotaph with some real bones. Sacrilege of a strange, contemporary kind! Yet void as these tombs are of identifiable mortal remains or immortal souls, they are nonetheless saturated with ghostly national imaginings. (This is why so many different nations have such tombs without feeling any need to specify the nationality of their absent occupants. What else could they be but Germans, Americans, Argentinians . . . ?)

The cultural significance of such monuments becomes even clearer if one tries to imagine, say, a Tomb of the Unknown Marxist or a cenotaph for fallen Liberals. Is a sense of absurdity avoidable? The reason is that neither Marxism nor Liberalism are much concerned with death and immortality. If the nationalist imagining is so concerned, this suggests a strong affinity with religious imaginings. As this affinity is by no means fortuitous, it may be useful to begin a consideration of the cultural roots of nationalism with death, as the last of a whole gamut of fatalities.

If the manner of a man’s dying usually seems arbitrary, his mortality is inescapable. Human lives are full of such combinations of necessity and chance. We are all aware of the contingency and ineluctability of our particular genetic heritage, our gender, our life-era, our physical capabilities, our mother-tongue, and so forth. The great merit of traditional religious world-views (which naturally must be distinguished from their role in the legitimation of specific systems of domination and exploitation) has been their concern with man-in-the-cosmos, man as species being, and the contingency of life. The extraordinary survival over thousands of years of Buddhism, Christianity or Islam in dozens of different social formations attests to their imaginative response to the overwhelming burden of human suffering – disease, mutilation, grief, age, and death. Why was I born blind? Why is my best friend paralysed? Why is my daughter retarded? The religions attempt to explain. The great weakness of all evolutionary/progressive styles of thought, not excluding Marxism, is that such questions are answered with impatient silence. At the same time, in different ways, religious thought also responds to obscure intimations of immortality, generally by transforming fatality into continuity (karma, original sin, etc.) In this way, it concerns itself with the links between the dead and the yet unborn, the mystery of re-generation. Who experiences their child’s conception and birth without dimly apprehending a combined connectedness, fortuity, and fatality in a language of ‘continuity’? (Again, the disadvantage of evolutionary/progressive thought is an almost Heraclean hostility to any idea of continuity.)

I bring up these perhaps simplenained observations primarily because in Western Europe the eighteenth century marks not only the dawn of the age of nationalism but the dusk of religious modes of thought. The century of the Enlightenment, of rationalist secularism, brought with it its own modern darkness. With the ebbing of religious belief, the suffering which belief in part composed did not disappear. Disintegration of paradise: nothing makes fatality more arbitrary. Absurdity of salvation: nothing makes another style of continuity more necessary. What then was required was a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning. As we shall see, few things were (are) better suited to this end than an idea of nation. If nation-states are widely conceded to be ‘new’ and ‘historical’, the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and, still more important, glide into a limitless future. It is the magic of nationalism to turn chance into destiny. With Debray we might say, ‘Yes, it is quite accidental that I am born French; but after all, France is eternal.’

Needless to say, I am not claiming that the appearance of nationalism towards the end of the eighteenth century was ‘produced’ by the erosion of
religious certainties, or that this erosion does not itself require a complex explanation. Nor am I suggesting that somehow nationalism historically 'supercedes' religion. What I am proposing is that nationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which – as well as against which – it came into being.

[...]

Before proceeding to a discussion of the specific origins of nationalism, it may be useful to recapitulate the main propositions put forward thus far. Essentially, I have been arguing that the very possibility of imagining the nation only arose historically when, and where, three fundamental cultural conceptions, all of great antiquity, lost their axiomatic grip on men's minds. The first of these was the idea that a particular script-language offered privileged access to ontological truth, precisely because it was an inseparable part of that truth. It was this idea that called into being the great transcontinental sodalities of Christendom, the Islamic Ummah, and the rest. Second was the belief that society was naturally organized around and under high centres – monarchs who were persons apart from other human beings and who ruled by some form of cosmological (divine) dispensation. Human loyalties were necessarily hierarchical and centripetal because the ruler, like the sacred script, was a node of access to being and inherent in it. Third was a conception of temporality in which cosmology and history were indistinguishable, the origins of the world and of men essentially identical. Combined, these ideas rooted human lives firmly in the very nature of things, giving certain meaning to the everyday fatalities of existence (above all death, loss, and servitude) and offering, in various ways, redemption from them.

The slow, uneven decline of these interlinked certainties, first in Western Europe, later elsewhere, under the impact of economic change, 'discoveries' (social and scientific), and the development of increasingly rapid communications, drove a harsh wedge between cosmology and history. No surprise then that the search was on, so to speak, for a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together. Nothing perhaps more precipitated this search, nor made it more fruitful, than print-capitalism, which made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways.

**The Origins of National Consciousness**

If the development of print-as-commodity is the key to the generation of wholly new ideas of simultaneity, still, we are simply at the point where communities of the type 'horizontal-secular, transverse-time' become possible. Why, within that type, did the nation become so popular? The factors involved are obviously complex and various. But a strong case can be made for the primacy of capitalism.

As already noted, at least 20,000,000 books had already been printed by 1500, signalling the onset of Benjamin's 'age of mechanical reproduction'. If manuscript knowledge was scarce and arcane, print knowledge lived by reproducibility and dissemination. If, as Fevre and Martin believe, possibly as many as 200,000,000 volumes had been manufactured by 1600, it is no wonder that Francis Bacon believed that print had changed 'the appearance and state of the world'.

One of the earlier forms of capitalist enterprise, book-publishing felt all of capitalism's restless search for markets. The early printers established branches all over Europe: 'in this way a veritable "international" of publishing houses, which ignored national [sic] frontiers, was created.' And since the years 1500–1550 were a period of exceptional European prosperity, publishing shared in the general boom. 'More than at any other time it was a great industry under the control of wealthy capitalists.' Naturally, 'book-sellers were primarily concerned to make a profit and to sell their products, and consequently they sought out first and foremost those works which were of interest to the largest possible number of their contemporaries.'

The initial market was literate Europe, a wide but thin stratum of Latin-readers. Saturation of this market took about a hundred and fifty years. The determinative fact about Latin – aside from its sacrality – was that it was a language of bilinguals. Relatively few were born to speak it and even fewer, one imagines, dreamed in it. In the sixteenth century the proportion of bilinguals within the total population of Europe was quite small; very likely no larger than the proportion in the world's population today, and – proletarian internationalism notwithstanding – in the centuries to come. Then and now the bulk of mankind is monoglot. The logic of capitalism thus meant that once the elite Latin market was saturated, the potentially huge markets represented by the monoglot masses would beckon. To be sure, the Counter-Reformation encouraged a temporary resurgence of Latin-publishing, but by the mid-seventeenth century the movement was in decay, and fervently Catholic libraries replete. Meantime, a Europe-wide shortage of money made printers think more and more of peddling cheap editions in the vernaculars.

The revolutionary vernacularizing thrust of capitalism was given further impetus by three extraneous factors, two of which contributed directly to the rise of national consciousness. The first, and ultimately the least important, was a change in the character of Latin itself. Thanks to the labours of the Humanists in reviving the broad literature of pre-Christian antiquity and spreading it through the print-market, a new appreciation of the sophisticated stylistic achievements of the ancients was apparent among the trans-European intelligentsia. The Latin they now aspired to write became more and more Ciceronian, and, by the same token, increasingly removed from ecclesiastical and everyday life. In this way it acquired an esoteric quality quite different from that of Church Latin in medievai times. For the older Latin was not arcane because of its subject matter or style, but simply because it was written at all, i.e. because of
its status as text. Now it became arcane because of what was written, because of
the language-in-itself.

Second was the impact of the Reformation, which, at the same time, owed
much of its success to print-capitalism. Before the age of print, Rome easily won
every war against heresy in Western Europe because it always had better
internal lines of communication than its challengers. But when in 1517 Martin
Luther nailed his theses to the chapel-door in Wittenberg, they were printed up
in German translation, and ‘within 15 days [had been] seen in every part of the
country.’43 In the two decades 1520-1540 three times as many books were
published in German as in the period 1500-1520, an astonishing transforma-
tion to which Luther was absolutely central. His works represented no less than
one third of all German-language books sold between 1518 and 1525. Between
1522 and 1546, a total of 430 editions (whole or partial) of his Biblical
translations appeared. ‘We have here for the first time a truly mass readership
and a popular literature within everybody’s reach.’44 In effect, Luther became
the first best-selling author so known. Or, to put it another way, the first writer
who could ‘sell’ his new books on the basis of his name.17

Where Luther led, others quickly followed, opening the colossal religious
propaganda war that raged across Europe for the next century. In this titanic
‘battle for men’s minds’, Protestantism was always fundamentally on the
offensive, precisely because it knew how to make use of the expanding
vernacular print-market being created by capitalism, while the Counter-Re-
formation defended the citadel of Latin. The emblem for this is the Vatican’s
Index Librorum Prohibitorum – to which there was no Protestant counterpart—
a novel catalogue made necessary by the sheer volume of printed subversion.
Nothing gives a better sense of this siege mentality than François I’s panicked
1535 ban on the printing of any books in his realm – on pain of death by
hanging! The reason for both the ban and its unenforceability was that by then
his realm’s eastern borders were ringed with Protestant states and cities
producing a massive stream of smugglable print. To take Calvin’s Geneva
alone: between 1533 and 1540 only 42 editions were published there, but the
numbers swelled to 527 between 1550 and 1564, by which latter date no less
than 40 separate printing-presses were working overtime.18

The coalition between Protestantism and print-capitalism, exploiting cheap
popular editions, quickly created large new reading publics – not least among
merchants and women, who typically knew little or no Latin – and simulta-
neously mobilized them for politico-religious purposes. Inevitably, it was not
merely the Church that was shaken to its core. The same earthquake produced
Europe’s first important non-dynastic, non-city states in the Dutch Republic and
the Commonwealth of the Puritans. (François I’s panic was as much political as
religious.)

Third was the slow, geographically uneven, spread of particular vernaculars
as instruments of administrative centralization by certain well-positioned
would-be absolutist monarchs. Here it is useful to remember that the univers-
ality of Latin in mediaeval Western Europe never corresponded to a universal
political system. The contrast with Imperial China, where the reach of the
mandarinal bureaucracy and of painted characters largely coincided, is instruc-
tive. In effect, the political fragmentation of Western Europe after the collapse
of the Western Empire meant that no sovereign could monopolize Latin and make
it his-and-only-his language-of-state, and thus Latin’s religious authority never
had a true political analogue.

The birth of administrative vernaculars predated both print and the religious
upheaval of the sixteenth century, and must therefore be regarded (at least
initially) as an independent factor in the erosion of the sacred imagined
community. At the same time, nothing suggests that any deep-seated ideolo-
getic, let alone proto-national, impulses underlay this vernacularization where it
occurred. The case of ‘England’ – on the northwestern periphery of Latin
Europe – is here especially enlightening. Prior to the Norman Conquest, the
language of the court, literary and administrative, was Anglo-Saxon. For the
next century and a half virtually all royal documents were composed in Latin.
Between about 1200 and 1350 this state-Latin was superseded by Norman
French. In the meantime, a slow fusion between this language of a foreign ruling
class and the Anglo-Saxon of the subject population produced Early English.
The fusion made it possible for the new language to take its turn, after 1362, as
the language of the courts – and for the opening of Parliament. Wycliffe’s vernacular
manuscript Bible followed in 1382.19 It is essential to bear in mind
that this sequence was a series of ‘state’, not ‘national’, languages; and that the
state concerned covered at various times not only today’s England and Wales,
but also portions of Ireland, Scotland and France. Obviously, huge elements of
the subject populations knew little or nothing of Latin, Norman French, or
Early English.20 Not till almost a century after. Early English’s political
enriment was London’s power swept out of ‘France’.

On the Seine, a similar movement took place, if at a slower pace. As Bloch
wryly puts it, ‘French, that is to say a language which, since it was regarded as
merely a corrupt form of Latin, took several centuries to raise itself to literary
dignity’,21 only became the official language of the courts of justice in 1539,
when François I issued the Edict of Villers-Cotterêts.22 In other dynastic realms
Latin survived much longer – under the Habsburgs well into the nineteenth
century. In still others, ‘foreign’ vernaculars took over: in the eighteenth century
the languages of the Romanov court were French and German.23

In every instance, the ‘choice’ of language appears as a gradual, unselfcon-
scious, pragmatic, not to say haphazard development. As such, it was utterly
different form the selfconscious language policies pursued by nineteenth-cen-
tury dynasts confronted with the rise of hostile popular linguistic-nationalisms.
One clear sign of the difference is that the old administrative languages were just
that; languages used by and for officials for their own inner convenience.
There was no idea of systematically imposing the language on the dynasts’
various subject populations.24 Nonetheless, the elevation of these vernaculars to
the status of languages-of-power, where, in one sense, they were competitors with Latin (French in Paris, Early English in London), making its own contribution to the decline of the imagined community of Christendom.

At bottom, it is likely that the esoterization of Latin, the Reformation, and the haphazard development of administrative vernaculars are significant, in the present context, primarily in a negative sense — in their contributions to the dethronement of Latin. It is quite possible to conceive of the emergence of the new imagined national communities without any one, perhaps all, of them being present. What, in a positive sense, made the new communities imaginable was a half-fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communications (print), and the fatality of human linguistic diversity.25

The element of fatality is essential. For whatever superhuman feats capitalism was capable of, it found in death and languages two tenacious adversaries.26 Particular languages can die or be wiped out, but there was and is no possibility of humankind’s general linguistic unification. Yet this mutual incomprehensibility was historically of only slight importance until capitalism and print created monoglot mass reading publics.

While it is essential to keep in mind an idea of fatality, in the sense of a general condition of irremediable linguistic diversity, it would be a mistake to equate this fatality with that common element in nationalist ideologies which stresses the primordial fatality of particular languages and their association with particular territorial units. The essential thing is the interplay between fatality, technology, and capitalism. In pre-print Europe, and, of course, elsewhere in the world, the diversity of spoken languages, those languages that for their speakers were (and are) the warp and woof of their lives, was immense; so immense, indeed, that had print-capitalism sought to exploit each potential oral vernacular market, it would have remained a capitalism of petty proportions. But these varied idioms were capable of being assembled, within definite limits, into print-languages far fewer in number. The very arbitrariness of any system of signs for sounds facilitated the assembling process.27 (At the same time, the more ideographic the signs, the vaster the potential assembling zone. One can detect a sort of descending hierarchy here from algebra through Chinese and English, to the regular syllabaries of French and Indonesian.) Nothing served to ‘assemble’ related vernaculars more than capitalism, which, within the limits imposed by grammars and syntaxes, created mechanically reproduced print-languages capable of dissemination through the market.28

These print-languages laid the bases for national consciousnesses in three distinct ways. First and foremost, they created unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars. Speakers of the huge variety of Frenches, Engishes, or Spanishes, who might find it difficult or even impossible to understand one another in conversation, became capable of comprehending one another via print and paper. In the process, they gradually became aware of the hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people in their particular language-field, and at the same time that only those hundreds of thousands, or millions, so belonged. These fellow-readers, to whom they were connected through print, formed, in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community.

Second, print-capitalism gave a new fixity to language, which in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation. As Febvre and Martin remind us, the printed book kept a permanent form, capable of virtually infinite reproduction, temporally and spatially. It was no longer subject to the individualizing and ‘unconsciously modernizing’ habits of monastic scribes. Thus, while twelfth-century French differed markedly from that written by Villon in the fifteenth, the rate of change slowed decisively in the sixteenth. ‘By the 17th century languages in Europe had generally assumed their modern forms.’29 To put it another way, for three centuries now these stabilized print-languages have been gathering a darkening varnish; the words of our seventeenth-century forebears are accessible to us in a way that to Villon his twelfth-century ancestors were not.

Third, print-capitalism created languages-of-power of a kind different from the older administrative vernaculars. Certain dialects inevitably were ‘closer’ to each print-language and dominated their final forms. Their disadvantaged cousins, still assimilable to the emerging print-language, lost caste, above all because they were unsuccessful (or only relatively successful) in insisting on their own print-form. ‘Northwestern German’ became Platt Deutsch, a largely spoken, thus sub-standard, German, because it was assimilable to print-German in a way that Bohemian spoken-Czech was not. High German, the King’s English, and, later, Central Thai, were correspondingly elevated to a new politico-cultural eminence. (Hence the struggles in late-twentieth-century Europe by certain ‘sub’-nationalities to change their subordinate status by breaking firmly into print — and radio.)

It remains only to emphasize that in their origins, the fixing of print-languages and the differentiation of status between them were largely unconscious processes resulting from the explosive interaction between capitalism, technology and human linguistic diversity. But as with so much else in the history of nationalism, once ‘there’, they could become formal models to be imitated and, where expedient, consciously exploited in a Machiavellian spirit. Today, the Thai government actively discourages attempts by foreign missionaries to provide its hill-tribe minorities with their own transcription-systems and to develop publications in their own languages: the same government is largely indifferent to what these minorities speak. The fate of the Turkic-speaking peoples in the zones incorporated into today’s Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and the USSR is especially exemplary. A family of spoken languages, once everywhere assemblable, thus comprehensible, within an Arabic orthography, has lost that unity as a result of conscious manipulations. To heighten Turkish-Turkey’s national consciousness at the expense of any wider Islamic identification, Atatürk imposed compulsory romanization.30 The Soviet authorities followed
suit, first with an anti-Islamic, anti-Persian compulsory romanization, then, in Stalin's 1930s, with a Russifying compulsory Cyrillicization.\footnote{Seton-Watson, Nations and States, I, p. 98.} We can summarize the conclusions to be drawn from the argument thus far by saying that the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation. The potential stretch of these communities was inherently limited, and, at the same time, bore none but the most fortuitous relationship to existing political boundaries (which were, on the whole, the highwater marks of dynastic expansions).

Yet it is obvious that while today almost all modern self-conceived nations—and also nation-states—have 'national print-languages', many of them have these languages in common, and in others only a tiny fraction of the population 'uses' the national language in conversation or on paper. The nation-states of Spanish America or those of the 'Anglo-Saxon family' are conspicuous examples of the first outcome; many ex-colonial states, particularly in Africa, of the second. In other words, the concrete formation of contemporary nation-states is by no means isomorphic with the determinate reach of particular print-languages. To account for the discontinuity-in-connectedness between print-languages, national consciousness, and nation-states, it is necessary to turn to the nations, and, with the interesting exception of Brazil, as (national) republics. For not only were they historically the first such states to emerge on the world stage, and therefore inevitably provided the first real models of what such states should 'look like', but their numbers and contemporary births offer fruitful ground for comparative enquiry.

\section*{Notes}

1. As Aina Kemiläinen notes, the twin 'founding fathers' of academic scholarship on nationalism, Hans Kohn and Carleton Hayes, argued persuasively for this dating. Their conclusions have, I think, not been seriously disputed except by national ideologues in particular countries. Kemiläinen also observes that the word 'nationalism' did not come into wide general use until the end of the nineteenth century. It did not occur, for example, in many standard nineteenth century lexicons. If Adam Smith conjured with the wealth of 'nations', he meant by the term no more than 'societies' or 'states'. Kemiläinen, Nationalism, pp. 10, 33, and 48-9.

2. Nairn, Break-up of Britain, p. 359.

3. Cf. Seton-Watson, Nations and States, p. 5: 'All that I can find to say is that a race exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they formed one.' We may translate 'consider themselves' as 'imagine themselves.'

4. Renan, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?', p. 892. He adds: 'Tout citoyen français doit avoir oublié la Saint-Barthélemy, les massacres du Midi au XIXe siècle. Il n'y a pas en France dix familles qui puissent fournir la preuve d'une origine franque ...


6. Hobbes, for example, 'fixes' it by saying that in 1789 it numbered about 400,000 in a population of 23,000,000. (See his The Age of Revolution, p. 78.) But would this statistical picture of the noblesse have been imaginable under the ancien régime?

7. The late President Sukarno always spoke with complete sincerity of the 350 years of colonization that his 'Indonesia' had endured, although the very concept 'Indonesia' is a twentieth-century invention, and most of today's Indonesia was only conquered by the Dutch between 1850 and 1910. Preoccupation among contemporary Indonesia's national heroes is the early nineteenth-century Javanese Prince Diponegoro, although the Prince's own memoirs show that he intended to 'conquer' ('not liberate!') Java, rather than expel 'the Dutch'. Indeed, he clearly had no concept of the 'Dutch' as a collectivity. See Benda and Larkin, World of Southeast Asia, p. 158; and Kumar, ‘Diponegoro (1778-1855)’, p. 103. Emphasis added. Similarly, Kemal Atatürk named one of his state banks the Eti Bank (Hittite Bank) and another the Sumerian Bank. (Seton - Watson, Nations and States, p. 259). These banks flourish today, and, seriously saw, and see, in the Hittites and Sumerians their Turkish forebears. Before the commercial success of Tolkien's mythographies.

8. The population of that Europe where print was then known was about 100,000,000. Febvre and Martin, The Coming of the Book, pp. 248-9.

9. Emblematic is Marco Polo's Travels, which remained largely unknown till its first printing in 1539. Polo, Travels, p. xiii.

10. Quoted in Eisenstein, 'Some Conjectures', p. 56.

11. Febvre and Martin, The Coming of the Book, p. 122. (The original title, however, speaks simply of 'les frontières, L'Apparition, p. 184.)


13. 'Hence the introduction of printing was in this respect a stage on the road to our present society of mass consumption and standardisation.' Ibid., pp. 259-60. (The original text has 'une civilisation de masse et de standardisation', which may be better rendered 'standardised, mass civilisation.' L'Apparition, p. 394).\footnote{Ibid., p. 195.}


15. Ibid., pp. 291-5.

16. From this point it was only a step to the situation in seventeenth-century France where Cornelle, Molière, and La Fontaine could sell their manuscript tragedies and comedies directly to publishers, who bought them as excellent investments in view of their authors' market reputations. Ibid., p. 161.

17. Benda and Larkin, World of Southeast Asia, pp. 28-9; Bloch, Feudal Society, I, p. 75.

18. We should not assume that administrative vernacular unification was immediately or fully achieved. It is unlikely that the Guyenne ruled from London was ever primarily administered in Early English.


21. Ibid., p. 83.

22. An agreeable confirmation of this point is provided by François I, who, as we have seen, banned all printing of books in 1535 and made French the language of his courts four years later.

23. It was not the first 'accident' of its kind. Febvre and Martin note that while a visible bourgeoisie already existed in Europe by the late thirteenth century, paper did not come into general use until the end of the fourteenth. Only paper's smooth plane surface made the mass reproduction of texts and pictures possible—and this did not occur for still another seventy-five years. But paper was not a European invention. It