INTRODUCTION

AN APOLOGY for the nation? It is necessary and overdue. The nation has been maligned today, charged with xenophobia, fascism, and genocide. Journalists and academics, conservatives and liberals, Marxist and cultural studies critics seem to hold the nation responsible for the most odious crimes. Although they differ in their political and epistemological orientations, these writers launch their attacks on the nation from primarily two camps, cosmopolitanism and particularism—paradoxically the two forces that have led to the rise of the nation in the first place. On the one side are those who reject the nation as a betrayal of universal, rational reason. Looking at the ethnic cleansing, the bloodletting, and general interethnic strife around the globe, these commentators are horrified by nationalism's destabilizing potential, its chthonic, backward-looking energy. For them, nationalism abroad and at home is a historical cul-de-sac, an error, or a plague. On the opposite front are those who denounce the nation for oppressing the tribes within its borders, who regard national culture as a weight imposed on minority groups, crushing them with the stamp of the dominant ethnicity. They long instead for a utopian world of scattered diasporas, open borders, and hybrid identities.

In a sense, the case against nationalism had been argued forcefully more than a century ago by Lord Acton, the British historian and Liberal member of Parliament, who lamented the potential this doctrine had to wreak violence in the world. For this very reason the social theorist Elie Kedourie in an influential work dismissed postcolonial nationalism as the "opium of the masses," an irrational ideology built on "resentment and impatience, the depravity of the rich and the virtue of the poor, the guilt of Europe and the innocence of Asia and Africa" (1970: 146–47). Looking at the ethnic conflicts around the world in the 1980s and 1990s, the journalist Michael Ignatieff recoiled with understandable horror. People fooled themselves, he averred, into believing that humanity had moved beyond tribalism. "The repressed has returned, and its name is nationalism" (1993: 5). But this "repressed" is for Eric Hobsbawm at variance with history. Thus he characterizes Quebecois nationalism, for example, as a "headlong retreat from historical forces which threaten to overwhelm it" (1990: 164). Many commentators in the United States, such as Arthur Schlesinger, E. D. Hirsch, and Sheldon Hackney (the chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities in Bill Clinton's first term) have pointed to the politics of "blood and belonging" in places like Bosnia-

Herzegovina, Azerbaijan, Ireland, and Quebec, in order to awaken Americans to the dangers of "the politics of difference" at home.

The most caustic vitriol against nationalism, however, has been poured by poststructuralist critics who see this discourse as the ultimate attempt to impose upon a heterogeneous people an essentialist identity. Thus, even though from a different perspective, the critic Neil Larsen comes to a conclusion similar to Ignatieff's: "Postnational" consciousness has not really banished nationalist thinking. "Nationalism, in fact, *unless confronted and repudiated in all its ideological ramifications*, can find any number of ways to reassert itself within the thinking that claims to have abjured it" (1995: 142). Poststructuralists renounce nationalism because they find in its core the search for origins, mimetic representation, the narratives of myth, and the logic of identity. Because they associate nationalism with a Western, imperialist, logocentric reason, they promote what David Lloyd in his own rejection of nationalism has characterized as "anti-identitarian thinking" (1993: 55). Indeed, one of the most visible academic movements of the past twenty years has been an attempt to investigate the "writing of the nation" in order ultimately to "unwrite" it. What has gained favor is a critique of the nation, a hermeneutic of negativity, or, in the words of Lauren Berlant, a "counter–National Symbolic" (1991: 34). Because poststructuralist criticism wishes to free humanity from the constraints of the nation, it places great emphasis, as the work of Paul Gilroy, Homi Bhabha, and Arjun Appadurai has shown, on border writing, transcultural formations, and syncretic forms. Only rarely does one encounter any opposition to this stance in the way, for instance, Timothy Brennan ends his study of cosmopolitanism with the pronouncement: "Nationalism is not dead. And it is good that it is not" (1997: 317).

This vilification of nationalism is shortsighted, to say the least. That most of the world's nationalist struggles resounded with the call for freedom from foreign rule rather than for freedom of speech, women's rights, or protection for minorities is no reason to denounce the whole enterprise. Was it not noble to end colonial domination, establish a republic, and set up a society of citizens? Those critics who identify the nation with oppression forget that nationalism has inspired people over the past two centuries to fight collectively against the illegitimacy of foreign occupation.

In contrast to its dominant representations in currency today, I argue that the nation should be perceived as a positive institution in human society. More important, I wish to restore history to the study of nationalism, a dimension shockingly missing in poststructuralist approaches to the subject. The concentration on the present, both in terms of scholarship and current events, has led to the demonization of nationalism as a procrustean force restraining difference. This presentism is particularly evi-

dent in literary and cultural studies, manifesting itself in the way, for instance, that theorists depict the nation as an invention, a fantasy, or a narration. The defamation of the nation goes hand in hand with its portrayal as an ideological construct. Both processes occlude the long political developments leading to the emergence of the nation-state as a body of citizens, making it seem inevitable, a matter of writing. The emphasis on the present, however, has the effect of highlighting the role of literary and cultural critics as slayers of the malevolent nationalist dragon.

My aim is neither to celebrate the nation nor to gloss over its crimes, but rather to evaluate its contribution to historical developments over the past two centuries. Nationalism appeared in Europe at least as early as the destruction of the ancient regime and the industrialization of the economy; however, it cannot be reduced to these developments. The undertaking to build nations is an autonomous process that seeks to unify a particular people in a hostile world, to give them a realm of emotional attachments in the face of continuing change, and, above all, to propel them on a path of progress. Rather than sliding back into darkness, nationalism actually is an attempt to interpret and participate in modernity.

The inescapability of Western progress had made itself felt in the past two centuries to societies in central, eastern, and southern Europe as well as to its colonies overseas. The original nationalists in the latter part of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, fearing that their own societies had been left behind by early modernizers, placed enormous value on a self-enclosed national culture as a way of pushing their compatriots toward a more sanguine future. The great challenge to nationalists has always been to take part in modernization while at the same time preserving traditional identities. They have been able to persuade their populations to enter the modern age by promising them that what was dear to them would be safeguarded. While people stepped diffidently into a competitive, heartless world, nationalists assured them that the road ahead was paved with ancestral materials. From the beginning nationalism has incorporated the tensions between tradition and progress and between a full past and the sketchy future.

I argue that nationalism developed in the latter eighteenth century for two reasons. First, the far-reaching transformations accompanying modernity brought about a profound interaction among populations. Although cultural and economic exchanges had always been part of human history, in the modern age this intercourse began to threaten the ethnic identities of regional groups more than had been the case with the polyethnic empires of antiquity and the Middle Ages. Capitalism, colonialism, and new means of communication and transportation pulled distant places closer together and mixed their populations, endangering thereby their cultural existence. The intensity and scope of contact among the

world's peoples engendered a deep interest in the collective self and in the separation of this self from others. The more people confronted groups beyond their frontiers and borrowed from them, the more the differences between those inside and those outside were emphasized. Elites conceived ideologies, like nationalism, which promised to save autochthonous traditions threatened by a seemingly ceaseless penetration of foreign ideas, capital, goods, and people. To the forces in modernity pushing toward sameness and standardization, nationalism responded by defending difference.

The safeguarding of identities became a political objective in modernity because a centralized, omniscient, and omnipotent state could infiltrate and affect the minutiae of daily life in ways inconceivable in the past. Invading armies could bring about not only physical destruction and plunder but also the dissolution of traditional folkways, which had become increasingly meaningful for reasons already noted. The possibility of such a loss became real to Europeans, for instance, in the Napoleonic Wars. Confronted by an aggressive state bent upon imposing the universal values of the French Revolution upon the world, Germans and Scandinavians sought in culture a way of preserving their identities and of repelling their foes. This was true of Europe's colonies as well. Edward Said has shown that colonialism had a distinct cultural dimension, seeking to know the people of its territories, to transform their societies, and to use this knowledge in the aid of its administration.

In other words, social, economic, technological, and political developments in modernity directed attention to collective identities and endowed them with a materiality they had not had before. Starting at the close of the eighteenth century people began to believe that their ethnicity, once as transparent as the water they drank, was a vital possession that could be harmed by ruling groups, aggressive neighbors, or colonial masters. They began to associate consciously their sense of their own well-being with that of their national culture rather than, say, their religion or their king. In other words, they politicized their identity. National culture began to signify those practices and social relations which, expressing the difference of one nation from others, formed the foundation of the new states.

Culture became political when it became national–that is, when people began to justify political rule on the basis of ethnic unity. It acquired this political status, however, in the interaction of groups. National culture is a relational concept that has gained its significance in the struggles of groups and states for representation, land, and resources. Ethnicity was nationalized when people began to feel that they could best protect their identities in their own unitary state rather than in the province of other states or empires. The justification of the new states, as to both their gene-

sis and continuing life, was the preservation of a certain uniqueness. The experiences of the stateless Palestinians and Kurds show that the principle of cultural survival is as much alive at the end of the twentieth century as it had been for the Greeks at the beginning of the nineteenth. Nationalism has brought together two originally separate ideas: power resides with the people, and a people sufficiently different from others has a right to govern itself. In modernity an attack on the political liberty or the cultural integrity of a nation is tantamount to ethnocide.

That nationalists look to culture as a safe haven from foreign aggressors does not mean, as is often asserted, that nationalism promotes a purely defensive posture, one hostile to the outside world. Rather than advancing a narcissistic concern with the self, nationalism actually mediates in the interaction between the self and the other, between the individual and the universal, the old and the new. Nationalism fosters an interchange among groups by promoting self-confidence among them, by encouraging them to find strength in their own cultural resources, and ultimately to fight against oppression and for independence.

Nationalism has been an extraordinary force over the past two hundred years because it has permitted groups to maintain their differences while ensuring their survival in modernity, to seek justice and self-respect while becoming members of a transnational world of states, to form a polity on the basis of a (presumed) homogeneous identity. National culture itself serves as both the manifestation of uniqueness and its guardian, a process of creation and its end product, a result of and determinant of intergroup dialogue. In short, it provides an unfolding map for the nation's future as well as an archive of its history.

My second argument is that nationalism is born out of a theory of progress and that nationalists appropriate culture in their projects of modernization. I do not mean that human society has been moving resolutely toward an unlimited future but rather that a significant impulse for the emergence of nationalism has been the discovery by intellectual and political elites of the tardiness of their societies. Nationalism therefore is in part a response to a condition of belatedness. European modernization produced its first successes industrially in England and the Netherlands and politically in France. The advances made by these countries in modernizing themselves put all other societies, not least their neighbors, in a situation of "backwardness." This was so because the theory of progress, another specifically European value now universalized, accentuated forward movement and unlimited material improvement. It divided the world into pioneering and successful societies, on the one hand, and follower and failed communities, on the other. Those left behind had no choice but to catch up with the winners of the race. Ever since they were

co-opted or had inserted themselves into the narrative of Western progress, they have been striving to catch up.

In the colonial situation, Partha Chatterjee contends, nationalist thought "asserts that the superiority of the West lies in the materiality of its culture, exemplified by its science, technology and love of progress. But the East is superior in the spiritual aspect of culture" (1986: 51). In other words, nationalists of postcolonial societies recognize the inevitability of Western modernity, the inescapability of progress, and the necessity of copying its models. But the need to imitate Western skills has been accompanied by the greater urgency to preserve ethnic distinctiveness. Anticolonial nationalists divide the world of institutions and practices into two domains, the material and the spiritual. The first consists of the economy, statecraft, science, technology, "a domain where the West has proved its superiority and the East had succumbed." The spiritual sphere, containing the marks of cultural distinctiveness, is declared sovereign, beyond the control of the colonial power (Chatterjee 1993: 6).

Chatterjee rightly argues that the aim of this nationalism is to create a new, modern, national culture, but one not Western. He is mistaken, however, to see this as a feature of only "anti-colonial nationalisms in Asia and Africa" (1993: 6). Nationalist thought has always given priority to cultural survival and the pursuit of progress at the same time, as the cases of Germany and Greece indicate. Germany, where the theory of cultural nationalism first appeared and received its most comprehensive treatment, presents an interesting example because it is now regarded as a Western country. Yet German poets, artists, and scholars developed an imagined nation in response first to French cultural hegemony and then to Napoleon's invasions of their territories in the name of Enlightenment universality. Greece offers a fascinating twist to the postcolonial situation. Although viewed today as a European nation, it was ruled until 1821 by the Ottoman Empire, an Oriental society. Greek elites, residing in European cities, launched a project of modernization once they discovered the progress of Europe. Persuaded that their nation had fallen into "backwardness" in the hands of the Ottomans, they saw in culture a way of making their society modern. This pattern can be seen in Egypt, which had been an Ottoman province but was invaded by Napoleon in 1798, occupied by Britain, and ruled as a protectorate from 1882 until 1922. In response to these invasions Egyptian nationalist intellectuals began to see the national state as a way of acquiring the benefits of modernity in order to strengthen Egypt. They assumed a direct "correlation between the realization of Egyptian authenticity and the attainment of modernity" (Gershoni and Jankowski 1986: 130). All three cases, German, Greek, and Egyptian, show that, contrary to the claims of postcolonial theory, nationalism has resisted political and cultural universal systems from the

beginning and has sought in national culture the resources for modernization. The nation-state itself has always been seen both in Europe and in its colonies as a vehicle to modernity.

Thus, R. Radhakrishnan mistakenly claims that the nationalist project is complicit with the European Enlightenment. It is complicit only if we understand by this that it reacted against the Enlightenment. The earliest European nationalisms, for instance, fought against the attempt of the French to create a new world order, to extend the principles of the French Revolution across the rest of Europe. Ironically, when Radhakrishnan criticizes nationalism for continuing the "baleful legacies of Eurocentrism," he calls, in fact, for more nationalism. Echoing Chatterjee, he enjoins postcolonial subjects to produce "a genuine subaltern history about themselves and not merely replicate . . . the liberal-elitist narrative of the West" (1992: 86).[1] In so doing, of course, he is promoting a Herderian and ultimately nationalist proposition, as German thinkers had done in the latter eighteenth century. For it was Herder who first insisted that nations should desist from copying others, look for strength in themselves, and value their own unique qualities. Each historical period, he wrote, "has in itself the center of its own happiness" (1992: 45).[2]

The prominent position given culture and progress in nationalist thought accentuates the roles of elites in modernization, making this project, in the words of Chatterjee, "an elitist program" (1986: 51). Traditionally those promoting modernization have been intellectuals who usually have come into contact with modernity before the general population and who, as a class, have had much to gain from this program. As a result of the devastating comparisons they made between their own society and western Europe, out of which their own society emerged as inferior and backward, they undertook a project of social reconstruction. Their project was and is to a great extent cultural, as it places emphasis on identity, language, antiquity, and the nation. The "passionate search for a national culture" by intellectuals in colonial societies, Frantz Fanon wrote, has to do with the "anxiety" of being "swamped" in Western culture, and of

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[1] Basil Davidson makes the same argument. While he understands the need of African nations to modernize, he asks: "But why then adopt models from those very countries or systems that have oppressed and despised you? Why not modernize from the models of your own history or invent new models?" (1992: 18). Although postcolonial nations adopt these models of modernization, they also attempt to defend the integrity of their cultures.

[2] Like Herodotus, Herder believed in a dogged particularism. He attacked the evils of ethnocentrism: "People who are ignorant of history and know only their own age believe that the present taste is the only one, and so necessary that nothing else besides it is thinkable; they believe that everything they find is indispensable for all ages. . . . Commonly, this ignorance is also joined by pride . . . that their age is the best of ages, because they dwell within it and other epochs did not have the honor of their acquaintance" (1992: 66).

"becoming lost to their people" (1963: 209). The fear of cultural loss has motivated intellectuals to preserve their ethnic heritage ever since national culture in the eighteenth century began to take shape as an object of political concern.

Culture has figured prominently in plans for modernization because it allows elites in postcolonial and belated societies to understand their "backwardness" as well as to try to overcome it. Insofar as modernization entails a process of catching up, it requires recourse to models, copying, imagining, representation, interpretation—the very devices of culture. Modernization in these societies necessitates the work of intellectuals to imagine, fabricate, and self-consciously formulate what is considered lacking. Intellectuals thus serve not as movers of heaven and earth but as revolutionaries, poets, interpreters, and teachers. Although they do not create the conditions for their actions, they play an extraordinary role in imagining the possibility of a unified nation, often decades before its realization.

Rather than constituting a compensatory prize of victimized people in search of absent ideals, nationalism acts as a dynamic power, pushing societies into a modern, global world. It is a revolutionary, progressive, and utopian doctrine, seeking the transformation of the inherited, and quite often, unjust and oppressive order. Nationalism promotes modernization by reassuring the *Volk* that its way of life will survive because it, rather than the monarchy, the church, or the colonial ruler, now forms the life and structure of the state. The nation is modern insofar as culture legitimates political sovereignty.

I propose, in short, that nationalism is ultimately a cultural phenomenon. In contrast to a dominant trend in political theory, and one ignored by cultural studies, I put into question the possibility of a purely civic (noncultural) conception of nationalism—that a nation-state can be based on an idea, that it can flourish in a purely political sense, that it is held together by its constitutional documents and democratic institutions. Through a discussion of specific states I show that cultural and political nationalisms are intertwined and that the distinction between ethnic and civic nations, itself carrying a long tradition, is false and ultimately Eurocentric. For it reduces the history of the past two centuries into a morality tale, a struggle between "good" nationalisms (those of the United States, France, and England) and "bad" nationalisms (those of eastern Europe and of Asia and Africa). Differences in nationalisms exist. Some may be open and accommodating to foreigners and minorities, whereas others can be hostile, repressive, and downright murderous. Others still may attempt to suppress emergent nationalist movements at home or in colonies. But these differences cannot be expressed solely in terms of ideology. Each nationalist movement must be seen as a product of historical condi-

tions of the nation, class relations, and the concurrent development of constitutional forms of government and of civil society that can check the excesses of the state.

Culture has been implicated in the development of even the most political of nations, the United States—which has been portrayed traditionally as a country built on political ideals rather than on common blood ties, on enlightenment ideas rather than notions of uniqueness, on republican principles rather than cultural values. Culture, I argue, has in varying degrees been involved in all projects of nationalism, and even in those most actively denying it. This does not mean that culture works like a magician, conjuring nations out of thin air, nor that nationalism alone is responsible for the emergence of nation-states. I claim, rather, that nationalists exploit the resources of culture (interpretation, rhetoric, symbols, myths), its institutions (art, literature, the academy), and its ideology (the fantasy of a homogeneous identity) in order to promote the creation and maintenance of a nation.

The workings of nationalism provide proof of the impact that culture and, by extension, intellectuals can have in daily life when conditions are right. Nationalism highlights the capacity of culture to serve as a means for political action and, ultimately, social change. Cultural nationalism enables a people to see itself as separate from others, to pursue a political program of justice and autonomy, and to promote a program of modernization. In this sense nationalism is a creative force, allowing social movements to imagine themselves achieving greatness, pursuing self-government, and building a society of citizens.

A central strand running through these pages is an investigation of how people use culture to bring about social change. In contrast to social and political theory, which has portrayed nationalism as a secondary, derivative phenomenon, a response to social change or uneven development, I regard it as a force capable of shaping our world. That is, I see nationalism as part of the modernizing process, as neither subservient to the economy nor an extension of the state. In this, I follow the traditions of Weberian sociology and cultural studies that seek to show the impact ideas can have in society. At the very least I examine the connection between ideas and historical developments in the way Weber analyzed the link between the genesis of capitalism as an economic system and the birth of the Protestant ethic. I have in mind studies like Colin Campbell's *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (1987) and Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993). Whereas Campbell explores how beliefs can affect conduct, Gilroy looks at the "cultural force" of modernity, specifically the artistic expressions of slave society, and examines how these expressions serve as media for the self-fashioning of individuals and of collective liberation (Gilroy 1993: 40).

In a similar way I am interested in discussing the impact the practices and institutions of nationalism have had on people over the past two centuries. My study is based on the assumption that modernity constitutes the separation of society into a series of autonomous but interrelated spheres of thought and activity: religion, law, the economy, bureaucracy, and, of course, culture. This process is, as Emile Durkheim noted, part of the general division of labor as various social functions, "whether political, administrative, or judicial, are becoming more and more specialized" (1984: 2–3). As a functionally differentiated domain, national culture is a constitutive part of modernity rather than a reaction to it. In other words, it is not a case of what sociologists call dedifferentiation—an escape from modernity or a strategy to provide comfort in time of ceaseless change and social differentiation.[3]

To argue that culture has been functionally differentiated is obviously not the same as saying that it has been freed from social, political, and economic forces. Nor does it mean that national culture serves as the causal agent in the construction of nation-states. When I claim that national culture exists as an autonomous domain, I mean that ethnicity has been politicized and endowed with institutions and practices unique to itself. I conceive of it in the way writers like Howard S. Becker and Peter Bürger see art as an "art world" or institution respectively—a sphere with its own rules and regulations, discourses, symbolic forms, and social spaces. This institutionality portrays national culture as a real structure that people can see, hear, and feel, rather than as a relational construct, which has acquired its historical significance in the past two centuries.

The challenge in any study of national culture involves the examination of how this phenomenon came to be seen as a justification of political authority and how it gained an institutional framework in this process without reproducing the "myths" of culture spawned by nationalism. In this I am mindful of Peter Murphy's caution that it would be "a mistake to confuse a culture's significance with the ghoulish or romantic attention paid to it" (1997: 275). At the same time, it would be wrong to avoid a positive evaluation of culture for fear of essentializing or reifying it. The trap of essentialism can be dodged through historical analysis of specific

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[3] If differentiation refers to the creation of separate spheres of human activity, informed by their own logic, dedifferentiation alludes to the collapse of these autonomous spheres. In *The Division of Labor* Durkheim observed that the division of labor is brought about by pressure exerted upon social units, "which forces them to develop in more or less divergent manner. But at every moment this pressure is neutralized by a reverse pressure that the common consciousness exerts upon every individual consciousness" (1984: 226). Yet the division of labor "unites at the same time as it sets at odds; it causes the activities that it differentiates to converge; it brings closer those that it separates" (217). See Parsons 1975 and Alexander 1988.

nationalist projects. Such an analysis would show, as I attempt to do in chapter 5, that national culture cannot be understood in isolation from the development of the state. The aim of this historical approach is ultimately to demonstrate that national culture is both a manifestation of and participant in social change.

This diachronic approach differentiates my study from recent attempts in political theory to look at the nation as a beneficial institution. Thus unlike recent defenses of nationalism such as David Miller's *On Nationality* (1995), Yael Tamir's *Liberal Nationalism* (1993), and Will Kymlicka's *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (1995), which consider nations as ethical communities, seeing membership in them as morally and rationally sound, my approach to nationalism is historical rather than ethical. It seeks to explain, for instance, why culture has been regarded as a site for social strife during the past two centuries by examining the roots of the impulse to link ethnicity with political sovereignty, to imagine culture as a means of achieving progress, to regard cultural tradition as a refuge of values in a hostile world. Although my study deals with the past, its ultimate concern is with the present and with the question of how people can live in a peaceful world while maintaining their collective identities. It begins and ends with this question in mind.

This study is also comparative and interdisciplinary. In order to consider the capacity of nationalism in generating social change over the past two centuries, it has to excavate resources from a number of mines. Thus, in addition to the disciplines of cultural and literary studies, I borrow insights from sociology, anthropology, political science, and history. Although sociology has provided adequate theories of social change, it has until recently neglected nationalism, especially research in this area conducted by cultural critics. Similarly, although much exciting work on culture has been conducted by cultural studies, this field has ignored questions of historical development and the relationship between national culture and the state. In bringing together research from the humanities and social sciences, my intent is to facilitate a dialogue between the historical analysis of the nation-state and the study of culture. This dialogue is most audible in chapter 5, which puts into question the possibility of both a purely civic nationalism and a political nation.

While I am interested in defending nationalism from those who associate it exclusively with xenophobia, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, I do not celebrate it, however. I am aware of nationalism's dualistic nature, its capacity to confer benefits to humanity as well as wreak havoc. It is both Pandora's box and Hephaestus's hammer, capable of unlatching evil and chaos while also creating novel forms of social life. Nationalism may inspire groups to seek dignity, justice, or political autonomy, but it can also incite them to murderous violence. This double heritage of nationalism

has constituted our social and political reality for some time. An assumption underlying my study is that ethnic identities, which over the past two hundred years have become nationalized, are not an ephemeral phenomenon. They have made and will continue to make their presence felt in human societies. Although no one can make predictions about the close of the twenty-first century, we can say with certainty that its dawn will find ethnic conflict throughout the globe.

This being the case, the challenge we all face is how to cope with two conflicting tendencies: on the one hand, the legitimate demands made by groups for cultural and political autonomy and, on the other, the need for peace and neighborly coexistence. Some writers like Liah Greenfeld and Michael Ignatieff, respond to this dilemma by extolling the virtues of civic nationalism, a nationalism cleansed of longing for blood and soil and inspired by constitutional documents and institutions. Distressed by the threat of social and political fragmentation, other commentators like E. D. Hirsch, Samuel P. Huntington, and Arthur Schlesinger point to America's model of cultural pluralism by which identities become privatized and thus devoid of political consequence. Such a model, they believe, has preserved peace in the United States and could be promoted as a solution abroad. They paint the United States as a utopia of ethnic calm in a century of bloodshed. On the other hand, cultural critics like Homi Bhabha, and Arjun Appadurai, and philosophers like Martha Nussbaum and Kwane Anthony Appiah fear not social heterogeneity but the assimilationist policies of states. They thus raise the banner of diversity for people to follow. Believing in the superior value of a polyethnic society, they advocate the philosophy of cosmopolitanism, diaspora consciousness, hybrid identities, or various forms of soft or radical multiculturalism as models for today and the future.

The culture wars of the 1990s have been fought to a certain extent by these two groups, the former predicting doom for the nation, the latter apotheosizing difference. Many political thinkers, however, such as Yael Tamir, Will Kymlicka, Michael Lind, and David Miller refuse to see work on identity and nationalism as an absolute choice between Hephaestus and Pandora. Believing that the uncompromising attack on nationalism is unjustified and ahistorical, they aspire to a liberal nationalism that reconciles support for cultural identity with respect for individual autonomy. In this way Maurizio Viroli speaks of a republican nationalism and Jürgen Habermas of a *Verfassungspatriotismus* (constitutional patriotism).

I consider these positions in the last few chapters. But rather than closing with critique, the traditional strategy of cultural studies, I conclude with a discussion of federalism as a solution to the challenges posed by social diversity. Whereas my study begins with the investigation of national culture, it ends by restraining this culture in a web of constitutional

agreements. In contrast to many theorists of globalization who foresee the demise of the nation-state and a new era of open borders, I assume that states will coexist with other transnational structures. Moreover, I believe that globalization will promote unceasing ethnic differentiation and the maintenance of ethnic boundaries, as it has since the daybreak of modernity. Nationalism will continue to agitate the next century as a twin-headed force, releasing chaos into the world and leading to internecine strife but also allowing peoples to look for collective inner strength, to preserve their identities in the face of perennial change, and to strive for justice. In short, there is no proof to Bill Readings's contention that culture no longer "matters" with the decline of the nation-state (1996: 117). In fact, the explosive events around the world and within the United States show how much culture does matter for people.

Because groups will continue to identify their well-being with the condition of their culture and rationalize their sovereignty on the basis of their ethnic difference, culture will in the foreseeable future act as a fault line for conflict. Any solution that, in the name of cosmopolitanism, civic nationalism, or diaspora, does not recognize the need people feel for their identities and their connection to the native soil, will fail. This holds true for proposals for the creation of commonwealths of privatized identities. The history of the past two hundred years has shown that identities—ethnic, racial, national, religious—have an impact on governance and cannot be checked in the cloakroom. The key should be neither the suppression of identity nor its glorification. We need no longer be bound by the false dilemmas between a winsome hybridity or a dour national culture.

Our goal should be to reconsider the link established two hundred years ago by nationalism between culture and polity, ethnos and topos. We then have to devise political arrangements that can best mediate between the need for identity, nation, and locality with the necessity of universality, peace, and security. Federalism is a political system that can allow people to participate in their identities without regressing into internecine strife. It is thus best suited to reconcile the ongoing tug of war between universality and particularity, between the urgency for unity with the tonic of heterogeneity, between the necessity for amicable coexistence and the call for cultural rights.

In proposing federalism as a practical solution to the challenges confronting our postcolonial and multicultural world, I put myself at variance with the dominant tendency in humanistic study, which portrays intellectuals as commentators or censurers of political authority but never its practitioners. Literary and cultural critics, as Vassilis Lambropoulos contends, "have in general insisted on treating questions of power in a Manichean way that precludes any consideration of authority whatsoever." They continue to believe that "the hands of the intelligentsia will

never be dirtied by the concessions and compromises of government as they wield the holy sword of the pen and cut a swath through the corruption of the age" (Lambropoulos 1996b: 859). They rejoice in seeing themselves as members of an opposition, never having to contemplate the qualities of a government that would enable people to pursue the good life and to live with other groups within and outside their state. The critical reflection on governance is related to one of the oldest philosophical questions, namely, how we should run our society (Lambropoulos 1996a: 851). The history of nationalism shows that cultural and literary critics have in the past engaged with these issues. They can do so again.

If one of my aims in this study is to show how ideas are implicated in social change, it goes without saying that a corollary aim is to demonstrate that intellectuals themselves are involved in this process. One of the unfortunate by-products of contemporary theory on the left is the belief that intellectuals are outside of power and hence incapable of influencing events or debates beyond their specialties. This is a curious situation because, as Said notes, those who "view us with antipathy" actually believe in the power of the intellectual (1999: 4). More curious still is the diffidence among left intellectuals to deal with culture in a positive light. One can speak authoritatively of culture, it seems, only if one represents it as an instrument of oppression or imperialism. Or one does not consider it at all for fear of essentializing it. Thus intellectuals are put in the unenviable—and professionally untenable—situation of not being able to talk about the subject from which they derive their livelihood. They address all manner of interests except the matter of professional self-interest. It is not an accident that in a collection of essays concerned with the relevance of comparative literature "in the age of multiculturalism," most commentators do not consider the value of teaching literature itself (Bernheimer 1995). They leave unanswered the question of why anybody should study literature. Why should students register for classes on culture? Why should these classes be funded?

The examination of nationalism reveals, first, the interrelationship of culture and politics and, second, the impact intellectuals can have under proper conditions. If the practitioners of culture find themselves at an impasse today over their public relevance, the task before them should be neither to celebrate nor to denigrate culture but to reconsider its significance in society and history.