The Roots of Nationalism

Introduction[1]

Lotte Jensen

> We may often remark a wonderful mixture of manners and characters in the same nation, speaking the same language, and subject to the same government ... Where the government of a nation is altogether republican, it is apt to beget a peculiar set of manners. Where it is altogether monarchical it is more apt to have the same effect; the imitation of superiors spreading the national manners faster among the people. If the governing part of state consist altogether of merchants, as in Holland, their uniform way of life will fix their character. If it consists chiefly of nobles and landed gentry, like Germany, France, and Spain, the same effect follows. The genius of a particular sect or religion is also apt to mould the manner of a people.[2]

In 1748, the Scottish philosopher David Hume made a clear statement about the origins of national character in his collection of moral and political essays. He argued that the character of a nation depended solely upon socio-political and moral factors. His essay 'Of National Characters' was a fierce attack on the widely held climate theory that attributed the differences between peoples to the influence of the climatological circumstances in which they lived.[3] According to this theory, southern peoples like the Spanish and the Italians were wittier and more inclined to warfare than northern peoples whose mental state was determined by greater humidity. Hume objected to this theory by giving nine examples where it failed. One of his decisive arguments was that even though Spanish, English, French and Dutch people travelled across the entire globe, they were still distinguishable. Instead, Hume foregrounded other elements which defined national character, such as cultural habits, a shared language, a common religion and being subject to the same government.

Hume's essay is part of a long tradition of texts about national stereotypes and character that can be traced back to the Middle Ages.[4] The way he reflects upon 'nation' and 'national character' reveals that these terms had become ingrained in common speech, but were historically charged and contested. Hume refuted the idea that differences in the manners and customs of people could be related to climatological factors and promoted

the idea of differences in 'national cultures', in other words: the idea that national identity was primarily defined along cultural lines.[5] According to Hume, national identities were mutable and the result of the interaction of various factors. The more language, nation and state coincided, the more coherence there was to be found in terms of cultural manners and habits amongst the people. National identity was a matter of imitating each other's behaviour rather than of climatological influences. Geographical settings mattered only as far as political boundaries were concerned: 'The same national character commonly follows the authority of government to a precise boundary'.[6]

In *The Roots of Nationalism*, we focus on the shaping of such 'national cultures' in Europe between 1600 and 1815. This historiographical demarcation is to be taken in a broad sense: while this volume focuses mainly on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the specific periods that were most significant for creating a sense of nationhood may vary from nation to nation. Some of the contributions mention relevant developments in the late medieval period, while others follow certain developments into the nineteenth century. The aim of this book is twofold: firstly, to explore how different aspects of national identity were articulated in cultural, literary and historiographical source traditions in the premodern era from various European perspectives. Secondly, to contribute to current debates on the historical foundations of nationalism by calling into question the dichotomy that has arisen between 'modernists', who regard the nation as a quintessentially modern political phenomenon, and 'traditionalists', who believe that nations began to take shape long before the advent of modernity. While the modernist paradigm has been dominant, it has been challenged in recent years by a growing number of studies that situate the origins of nationalism and nationhood in earlier times. This book takes issue with the modernist paradigm by stressing the *cultural* continuities between premodern and modern nations. Even if one asserts – as some of the authors in this volume do – that nationalism as a political ideology can be traced back only to the revolutionary movements of the late eighteenth century, then the cultural expressions of these movements still have their origins in premodern source traditions that were reinvented, revitalised and adapted in the context of the nineteenth-century nationalist movements.

By offering a wide range of contributions, which cover different aspects of early modern national identity formation, such as language, cartography, historiography and literature, this volume seeks to readdress the modernist paradigm. It will do so by discussing premodern national thought from five different perspectives: (I) methodological and theoretical issues, (II) the

genealogy of national identity, (III) negative mirror imaging, (IV) maps, canonisation and language, and (V) nation in the age of revolution. This introduction will follow this structure by first commenting on current scholarly views on the formation of national identities and then confronting these views with the historical source-based research, as it is presented in this book.

The Modernist Paradigm Contested

The gap between the modernists and traditionalists has its origin in two apparently simple questions: what is a nation? And do nations have navels?[7] Since the 1980s these questions have produced a constant stream of articles and books, and this stream is in no way about to dry up. On the contrary, over the last few years the issues of nationhood, national identity and nationalism have aroused new interest among scholars, not in the least because of the fierce controversies between those who contend that the nation is intrinsically linked with modernity and those who wish to include the premodern era in the field of nationalism studies.

The disputes between the modernists and traditionalists have been extensively charted by the sociologist Anthony Smith, who since the 1990s has worked on defining and refining all possible positions within this debate.[8] While fully acknowledging the great value and comprehensiveness of his work, its success has a reverse side as well: no scholar in the field of nationalism studies can escape the obligation to situate himself within the proposed schemes, which are constructed around a series of oppositions: organic versus voluntarist nationalism, constructivism versus determinism, ethnic versus civic nations, political versus cultural national ties, primordialism versus perennialism, continuous versus recurrent perennialism, antiquity versus modernity, etc. What's more, it has become virtually impossible to write about the subject without reproducing the dichotomy between modernists and traditionalists, in spite of some fierce critical attacks against this, in some respects, false dichotomy.[9] For the sake of clarity, both positions will be reproduced here briefly, albeit with a certain reluctance: every reproduction seems only to affirm rather than question the gap between the two parties.[10] Nonetheless, repeating these views also enables us to offer an explanation for the persistence of the dichotomy and the predominance of the modernist account.

The foundations of the modernist paradigm were laid down by scholars such as Hans Kohn and Elie Kedourie, who defined nationalism as a political

ideology that emerged in the nineteenth century.[11] Their work was given impetus in the 1980s by Ernest Gellner, who, in the same vein, argued that nations, national identity and nationalism were the products of modernity and not the other way around.[12] The work of John Breuilly takes a slightly different angle by focusing on the state as the main driving force behind nationalism, but he is equally clear in stating that nationalism should be considered a purely political and modern phenomenon.[13] Of great influence were works by scholars like Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, whose approaches were more bottom-up than Gellner's, as they included the input of the people by stressing the role of the media and traditions for community-building in modern times. The terms they have coined, 'imagined community' and 'invention of tradition', have had a major impact on the scholarly field.[14]

A cultural perspective to the modernist view has been added by the literary scholar Joep Leerssen, who, inspired by the work of John Hutchinson, Miroslav Hroch and Anne-Marie Thiesse, has mapped out the many different manifestations of 'cultural nationalism' in the nineteenth century.[15] We also note the work of the historian Stefan Berger, who has focused on the nationalisation of history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[16] The approach of these scholars is directly opposed to that of Breuilly, who wishes to include only political phenomena in his account. However, the cultural approach fits in well with a modernist framework in general that supports the thesis of a watershed around 1800, marked by major changes in terms of industrialisation, the emergence of mass media, and capitalism.[17] Even though some modernists seek to include the wider, premodern source traditions in their accounts by introducing terms such as 'national thought' (Leerssen) and 'ethnie' and 'ethno-symbolism' (Smith), they hold on to a strict division between what happened before and after 1800.[18] Nonetheless, Smith's ethno-symbolist approach, in particular, does acknowledge the need to comprehend the rise of nations from a broader historical perspective, attaching much importance to common traditions, shared memories and popular symbols of 'ethnies'.[19]

One of the reasons that the modernist account has been so successful lies in the type of factors used to explain the rise of nationalism, such as industrialisation, the rise of mass media, and democratisation. They serve to explain broad processes on a macro level. Another reason is the interrelatedness of arguments: modernity is defined by a series of causes that are also presupposed for the rise of nationalism. Hence, the conclusion is drawn that nationalism should be considered as a product of modernity. The modernist way of reasoning has much in common with what has been

labelled in economics as a 'positive feedback loop system'.[20] Part of the output influences the input, while input and output run in the same direction. This means that the system is circular and self-reinforcing: presupposing the existence of one element automatically leads to the reinforcement of another, and so on. The higher the level of generality, the more likely it is that historical events are described in terms of deterministic processes and will entail these types of positive feedback loops.[21]

The main criticism offered by traditionalists or premodernists is that historical practices are much more obstinate, unpredictable and contingent than these grand schemes allow room for. Traditionalists maintain that nations are not products of modernity as nations and nationhood existed before modernity. There is a wide variety in approaches and geographical scope, and scholars differ widely in the starting dates of their alternative histories. Scholars of premodern national thought, however, share their unease with the current theoretical framework into which it is difficult, if not impossible, to fit their more source-based studies. Many of their studies focus on nations that took the form of a national cultural and political community from a very early stage, such as England, Sweden, France and the Dutch Republic.[22] Andrew Hastings, for instance, argues that England presents the 'prototype' of a nation and a nation-state and that a sense of national unity was already detectable there by the end of the tenth century.[23] Others locate the emergence of British national identity in the first decades of the sixteenth century or the Elizabethan era.[24] The Dutch Republic is also often used as a counter-example to modernist accounts: although each of the seven provinces was autonomous, centralist tendencies on the level of official state politics were abundantly present. Likewise, cultural symbols and narratives that contributed to a sense of a common national identity were plentiful in printed matter from the late sixteenth century onwards.[25]

Two recent, more theoretically based, attacks on the modernist paradigm stand out: *The Origins of Nationalism. An Alternative History from Ancient Rome to Early Modern Germany* (2012) by Caspar Hirschi, and *Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism* (2013) by Azar Gat.[26] Hirschi offers a 'counter-theory' to modernist paradigms by understanding nationalism as a linguistic phenomenon that constructed and represented historical realities. Taking 'national honour' and 'national freedom' as key concepts, his reconstruction of the history of nationalism consists of three phases: he argues that nationalism has its origins in Catholic Europe in the fourteenth century, that forms of nationalism abounded in the Renaissance, and that 'modern nationalism could only become such a mobilising force because of its presence in politics, scholarship and

art of long ago'.[27] Gat broadens the temporal and geographic scope even further by discussing kin-culture communities and the evolution of these communities into tribes and then states in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. This evolution took place much earlier than usually is assumed: 'Nations and national states can be found whereever states emerged since the beginning of history'.[28] Central in his argument are the concepts of 'ethnie' and 'political ethnicity'. His use of 'ethnie' bears much resemblance to Smith's, but is less restricted in terms of time and space: it's not only the basis of historical states, but also of new immigrant states. 'Political ethnicity' expresses the idea that ethnicity has been political and politicised throughout the ages. Gat considers national states as particular forms or templates of political ethnicity, in which 'a rough congruence exists between a single, dominant people, and a state'.[29] Part of Gat's argumentation is directed against overestimating literacy, as illiterate societies had their own 'potent means of wide-scale cultural transmission'.[30]

This volume does not offer a fully developed, coherent counter-theory nor do all authors share the same views with regard to the above-mentioned theoretical debates. The positions range from rejecting the dichotomy between modernists and traditionalists altogether, to relativising the differences. Azar Gat and Andrew Hadfield (Chapters 1 and 2), for instance, see no reason to hold on to these schemes, while David Bell (Chapter 3) and László Marácz (Chapter 13) prefer a to maintain a distinction between premodern and modern forms of nationhood. What connects all contributions, however, is their critical attitude towards an exclusively modernist approach that precludes the admission of earlier phases of history into accounts of nationhood and national identity formation. The aim of this book is to show that premodern developments are not just introductory to the 'real thing' that occurred in the nineteenth century, but integral, vital parts of a larger picture.

As such, this volume challenges the idea of a watershed between premodern and modern forms of nation-building from four basic assumptions. Firstly, source-based research should always be at the heart of studies in ethnicity, nation and nationalism. It is no use denying the existence of nations and national identities (or 'national character' to use Hume's phrase) in the early modern period when these concepts are so abundantly present in the printed material of this era. Secondly, a contextualising and historicising approach is called for, when trying to assess the contemporary meaning of these concepts: how were they used, in what political and social contexts and what changes did they undergo over the course of time? Thirdly, cultural continuities with regard to memory cultures and (invented) traditions

deserve more attention than they have received to date. In general, there seems to be little exchange between modernists and premodernists, although there is much to gain by exchanging research results.[31] Finally, culture and politics are hardly ever entirely separate spheres, certainly not in the period under review here. Cultural expressions, such as pamphlets, historiographies, poems and songs, were used to mobilise public opinion and gain support for political causes, including the defence of what was considered to be the common 'patria'.[32]

The Roots of Nationalism, however, does not attempt to give a comprehensive overview of the entire European continent. England, France, Spain and the Netherlands, for instance, are included, while Italy and Germany are notably absent. From the perspective of nationalism studies the last two nations have already received much attention, in particular because they became politically unified at a rather late date: in 1870 and 1871, respectively. This circumstance has only widened the gap between those scholars who wish to speak of a national Italian or German identity only after this unification and those who stress the necessity of a long-term view.[33] Nevertheless, this volume does include several nations that have been studied less from the perspective of national identity formation and that challenge the idea of clear boundaries between premodern and modern manifestations of national thought, such as Wales, Iceland, Hungary and Russia. In the chapters devoted to these nations, the authors explicitly seek to connect early modern cultural expressions of a 'national' identity with later, nineteenth-century developments.

The first part of this book, *The Modernist Paradigm Contested*, offers three different views on modernist accounts of nationalism. Although the authors of this section take different positions regarding how far one can stretch the use of concepts such as the 'nation' and 'nationalism', they have in common that they plead for a more source-based praxis and flexible attitude towards issues of continuity and discontinuity. In the opening chapter, Azar Gat defends the traditionalist position, but criticises the use of subdivisions such as 'primordial' and 'perennial', which mainly serve rhetorical modernist purposes. Instead, he introduces 'political ethnicity' as a category, which emphasises the strong potency of ethno-national ties and their lasting impact on human history. According to Gat, modernists have failed to recognise that ethnic ties have always been political and politicised, and that there was a clear congruence between culture, ethnicity and state before the advent of modernity. Gat points to the rise of national states in medieval Europe, such as England, Denmark, Norway and Poland, and the (often political) use of the word 'natio' in medieval documents to

reinforce his claim that ethnic and national affinities have deep roots and are amongst the most powerful forces in human history. In his view, the main difference between premodern and modern nationhood lies in the fact that premodern national identity remained secondary to the dynastic principle in earlier times, while it became the primary formal, legal and ideological principle during modern times.

Andrew Hadfield is equally critical of modernist accounts and raises the question whether it is possible to imagine a time in which nations did not exist (Chapter 2). He argues that it would be much more fruitful if historians would acknowledge that human beings have always had a sense of national identity. Such a position would relieve them from having to choose between two evils: the idea that historians should be able to either pinpoint the exact moment of a nation's birth or adhere to the idea that nations are modern inventions. He points to the role of the public sphere, which, in his view, by no means was an eighteenth-century invention, and the role of literature in spreading images of national identity. The emergence of the printing press, its variety and potential significance, are therefore crucial for our understanding of the development of nations. He illustrates that point by discussing the work of two early-seventeenth-century English poets who tried to articulate an understanding of the nation that might even be called 'nationalistic', at least if one acknowledges their role in a national tradition that did not emerge out of nothing in the nineteenth century.

David Bell reflects on issues of continuity and discontinuity with regard to the rise of nationalism in revolutionary France, and the supposed intrinsic relationship between nationalism and modernity (Chapter 3). He agrees that a clear distinction between national sentiments and the rise of the political ideology nationalism during the French Revolution should be maintained, but that this rise can be properly understood only by including earlier stages of French history. He distinguishes three phases: firstly, the decades around 1700, during which the concepts of 'nation' and 'patrie' acquired new political significance; secondly, the turbulent years of the French Revolution, when the principal goal of the revolutionaries became to transform the peoples of France into one single nation united by common values, common practices and a common language (this marked the birth of nationalism in France); and thirdly, the radical phase of the French Revolution, in 1793-94, when a truly nationalist programme took shape.

However, Bell warns against an overly teleological and universalist approach, in which the French Revolution becomes the all-encompassing model of later republican regimes and nationalist movements. For instance, historians should avoid drawing a straight line from the radical

revolutionaries of the 1790s to the Third Republic. On the contrary, during the Napoleonic regime an entirely different strategy was followed, as Napoleon propagated European integration and the transformation of the peoples of Europe into one single people. Bell also relativises the tendency to take the nation-state as the sole point of reference in historical surveys of the nineteenth century, as global empires played an equally important role. In other words, stating that nationalism is a modern, conscious political programme does not imply that nationalism was or is essential to modernity: modernity does not automatically favour this way of organising and mobilising populations and territories.

Cultural Roots of Nationalism

The next parts (II-V) are devoted to a series of case studies from various European perspectives. In these essays, the contributors search for traces of national identity formation in early modern sources and for the ways identities developed over time. Cultural continuity is the key word here: the basic idea is that the shaping of national identities was firmly rooted in premodern source traditions, and that they were just as much constructed, invented and imagined as in modern times. Revisiting concepts such as 'invention of tradition' and 'imagined community' that are usually applied to the modern era can demonstrate the nature of the proposed continuities.

It is generally acknowledged that the shaping of collective memory cultures was vital for spreading nationalist sentiments in the nineteenth century: national unity was shaped by inventing traditions, such as symbols, rituals, heroic stories and founding myths. They provided the nation with 'authentic' traditions and roots that characterised its unique history and character. The nation's 'identity checklist', as Anne-Marie Thiesse aptly calls it, included founding fathers, national heroes, traditional costumes, a language, an emblematic animal, and a history establishing its strength and resilience throughout the ages.[34] Many of these elements, however, went back to earlier stages of history: the Dutch lion, the Gallic rooster, and the German eagle, for instance, were not inventions of the nineteenth century, but had already served a long time as emblematic animals, especially in times of war. They were reused in a new historical context, without losing the older values attached to these symbols. They contributed to feelings of national unity, power and resilience precisely because of their rootedness in a long and meaningful history. Smith and Gat have both pointed out the misleading connotations of 'invention of tradition'; it conceals that many

symbols and rituals were only partly new inventions, and were rooted in a longer, cultural history.[35] As Gat puts it, 'the inherently fanciful processing and reprocessing of tradition did not mean fabrication *ex nihilo*. Rather, it primarily involved selective reworking of existing historical materials and folk memories which often had at least some basis in reality'.[36]

Something similar can be said of the 'imagined community'. Anderson has famously argued that modern nations function as imagined communities: although members do not know most of their fellow members, they all have an image of their (national) community in their minds. These images are spread mainly through mass media and other institutions, such as newspapers and books.[37] A parallel can be drawn with early modern times, when printed material was also used to unite people for common causes in early modern Europe (a point that is also brought up by Andrew Hadfield in Chapter 2). As Peter Burke has suggested, Bibles in the vernacular, printed catechisms and other religious writings stimulated the formation of imagined communities based on a common language.[38] In times of war or political crisis, feelings of patriotism and unity were aroused and propagated by pamphlets, periodicals, newspapers, poems and theatre plays.[39] One should, however, keep in mind that these imagined communities differed from those of the nineteenth century. The circulation of printed material was much lower, and one should be cautious not to overstate the impact of (partly literary) discourses.[40] Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the mental landscape of authors and readers was shaped through concepts such as 'the fatherland' and 'the nation'. Not all inhabitants may have identified with these 'imagined' communities, but they *did* exist, at least in the minds of intellectuals and poets, who created different kinds of unifying images, using metaphors and topical images that surpassed civic and regional borders.[41]

Parts two and four of this volume (*The Genealogy of National Identity* and *Maps, Language and Canonisation*) are centred around the invention of national myths in the premodern era, while parts three and five (*Negative Mirror Imaging* and *Nation in the Age of Revolution*) concentrate on the shaping of (national) imagined communities in reaction to foreign threats and warfare. The contributors of the second section, *The Genealogy of National Identity*, make clear that national traditions played a key role in early modern historiographical writings, which often served as tools for political propaganda. That this process of nationalisation took place not only at a textual level, but also at that of the agents, is shown by Cesc Esteve (Chapter 4). The rise of official state historiography in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe gave rise to an intellectual debate on the

preferred profile of the state historian. On the one hand, it was considered prerequisite that the official chronicler of the Spanish Catholic monarchs be native born because his knowledge of and affinities with the object of his study would be an advantage. On the other hand, it was also argued that too much affinity could affect the historian's neutrality and credibility. These offsetting arguments led some historians to operate cautiously with regard to this issue, for if one thing was very clear, it was that official historiography primarily served to strengthen the power of the Spanish monarchy.

The other contributions in this section examine the way national identity was shaped in early modern Icelandic, Dutch, Russian and Welsh historiographical texts. Kim Middel discusses the work of the Icelandic historiographer Arngrímur Jónsson (1568-1648), who carefully balanced foregrounding Icelandic self-awareness with staying within the realm of the Danish king, while Jan Waszink concentrates on early-seventeenth-century perceptions of 'Dutch' and Low Countries' nationhood in two works of the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius (Chapters 5 and 6). Waszink shows that the view of a native-born historian differed much from that of the foreigner. While Grotius tended to take the provincial level as the locus of the primary cultural and political unity of a people, the Scotsman John Barclay did not take the provincial level into consideration at all, but treated the people of the Low Countries as a cultural unity with shared manners and characteristics. Gregory Carleton focuses on an account of the so-called Times of Troubles (1598-1613) in Russia, by the church official Avraam Palitsyn (Chapter 7). Carleton demonstrates that land, faith and the Russian people merged into an organic whole, aligned along an intersecting spiritual-terrestrial axis that was identified as 'Great Russia'. A Welsh perspective is chosen by Adam Coward, who describes the national myths that circulated in the long eighteenth century in Wales and served to underline the nation's unique character (Chapter 8).

What these papers have in common is an effort to connect the seventeenth-century national self-images and traditions with later uses in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, Middel shows how Arngrímur laid the foundation for the development of Icelandic linguistic identity in later times. His work was reused by a nineteenth-century Danish philologist for his research on the origins of the Icelandic language and thus served in the reinvention of the roots of the Icelandic nation. Carleton demonstrates that in Palitsyn's work one can already observe the archetypes that would define the collective imagination of nineteenth-century Russian nationalism, as found in Tolstoy's narrative of the 1812 campaign in *War and Peace*. In the same vein, Coward argues

that traditional myths were kept alive throughout the ages: while earlier myths about Welsh origins were reimagined in the eighteenth century, the tales of this period influenced Welsh identity in modern representations of the Welsh nation.

Middel and Coward both point to the importance of language as a marker of national identity. The role of language is also examined in the fourth part of this book, *Maps, Canonisation and Language*. Lászlo Marácz demonstrates that language was one of the core features of early modern Hungarian nationhood and argues that there exists long-term continuity between the Hungarian sixteenth-century ethno-linguistic identity and modern Hungarian linguistic nationalism (Chapter 12). His historical overview is based upon canonical Hungarian works that are more or less related in a 'vertical web' in time, as they contain many references and cross-references. This source tradition does not suggest a sudden and absolute rupture between premodern and modern expressions of an ethnic-linguistic Hungarian identity, but a development in which continuity prevailed.

Two other types of continuity that span the premodern and modern eras are literary canons and maps. Lieke van Deinsen discusses an early-eighteenth-century Dutch initiative to construct a national canon of literature: the *Panpoëticon Batavûm* (Chapter 13). This wooden cabinet contained a collection of portraits of Dutch poets and learned men from the past and present. This collection inspired many poets and attracted numerous visitors; it therefore gave rise to vivid discussions, reflections and debates on the vernacular literary tradition well before the development of an official literary canon in the nineteenth century. Another way of drawing borders between different nations was cartography. Michael Wintle discusses how maps of Europe and of individual nations added to nation-building during the Enlightenment (Chapter 14). He argues that visual territorialisation could inspire and spread national feelings of loyalty and that maps were used to seek the support of the people of the nation, rather than simply the endorsement of the monarch. In other words, nation, territory, and landscape, rather than the monarch and the territory, were linked in the cartographical representations.

While the above-mentioned essays focus on long-standing traditions, the sections on *Negative Mirror Imaging* and *Nation in the Age of Revolution* take contemporary political conflicts as the driving force behind the shaping of national identities. Several scholars have pointed out the importance of warfare for the development of distinctive regional and national identities: conflicts and hostility led to sharpened boundaries

between groups.[42] National self-images were usually constructed by opposing them to images of foreign and hostile nations. It is in the field of 'imagology', the study of literary representations of nationhood and national identities, that these images have been studied most profoundly.[43] The authors of this section open up new horizons by exploring new source material (political tracts, occasional writings and travel accounts) and by taking warfare as the starting point for the shaping of national self-images. They show that the incentives for forging national identities were often negative: negative images of foreign nations were used as input for a positive self-image.

Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez takes the contemporary use of words ('nuestra España' and 'nuestra nación') as the starting point for an analysis of Spanish apologetic discourse during the Twelve Years' Truce (1609-21) (Chapter 9). She demonstrates how a clear and well-defined Spanish national identity was articulated in reaction to the often very negative image of Spain that was propagated in the Netherlands and other European nations. The Black Legend was particularly used to strengthen a positive self-image, in which critical voices were taken up in a narrative framework that favoured typically Spanish virtues – hence, the negative image was used to Spain's advantage.

Hetero-image and *auto-image* played an equally important role during the three Anglo-Dutch Wars that were fought between 1650 and 1674, as Gijs Rommelse shows (Chapter 10). Implicitly he also tackles the persistent idea that the decentralised governmental and institutional structure of the Dutch Republic was no impediment to the construction of a Dutch national identity. Due to a flourishing media market that gave room for ample political debates, these self-images were spread on a supra-regional level. They were given a new impulse during the wars with England, when negative character traits of the English enemy were used to create positive images of the Dutch nation, thereby reaffirming their own national identity. Alan Moss focuses on the national traumas and victories as markers of national identity in early modern travel accounts (Chapter 11). Dutch travellers often compared foreign sites and events to their fatherland and its history, and used them to reflect on their own Dutch religious background and identity.

The last section, *Nation in the Age of Revolution*, deals with expressions of Belgian and Dutch nationhood as they were articulated in popular media, such as pamphlets and songs. Jane Judge scrutinises the articulation of a Belgian national identity during the early revolutionary years 1787-90 (Chapter 15). Belgium is a notoriously difficult case with regard to the

issue of national identity formation. Since the separation of the southern provinces from the northern provinces in 1579, each part had developed its own distinctive religious and political culture. The historian Jean Stengers speaks of 'la Scission du Nord et du Sud et de la naissance dans les Pays-Bas de deux sentiments nationaux distinct'.[44] For a long time, the southern provinces were governed by foreign rulers, first by the Spanish king, then by the Habsburg monarchy. In 1787, when Joseph II of Austria started to implement a series of political reforms that nullified the provincial Estates and Councils, revolt broke out.

In the final chapter, Bart Verheijen shows that popular songs were a means to keep the national spirit alive during the years of French occupation (Chapter 16). Authors not only protested against conscription, which took many young men away from their homes, but also expressed fears that their fatherland would cease to exist. This made them emphasise the particular qualities and strengths of the Dutch nation, and it prompted them to envision a future in which sovereignty was secured. Interestingly enough, their lamentations went hand in hand with a plea for the return of the Prince of Orange, who gradually came to symbolise the hidden strength of a nation that in its recent patriotic past had radically cut all ties with the house of Orange. From the beginning of 1813, as a reaction to the current political crisis, Orangism became a constitutive force in articulating Dutch national identity. Parts of this nationalist discourse went back to earlier writings, reusing and reinventing a wide range of national symbols and Orangist rhetorics – a clear signal that the pamphleteers looked for continuities with the past.

Of all the case studies presented in this volume, the idea of an imagined community is most appealing in the last two cases: the Belgian and Dutch nations did not exist formally, but were called into existence by means of political activism and writings. Pamphleteers claimed the ownership of the nation by rejecting French domination and legitimising their allegations through historical arguments and by reimagining their communal values and traditions. While the Belgian nation had never been a sovereign state before, the Dutch had a long-standing tradition to look back on. One might, with very good reason, argue that the Belgian case is the typical example of a modern nation being born in the wake of the Revolution. Hence, the modernists have a clear case to support their arguments. However, one can also contrast this case with the situation of other European nations, such as France, Spain, Iceland, England, Hungary, Russia and the Dutch Republic, where national identity was firmly rooted in cultural traditions that spanned the premodern and modern eras.

Notes

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      Willem Frijhoff and an anonymous referee for their comments.
2.   David Hume, 'Of National Characters', in David Hume, *Essays: Moral, Politi-
      cal, and Literary*. Edited and with a Foreword, Notes and Glossary by Eugene
      F. Miller ... Revised edition (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1985), 197-215, at
      207.
3.   On the spread of climate theory from antiquity until the eighteenth century,
      see: Waldemar Zacharsiewicz, *Die Klimatheorie in der Englischen Literatur
      und Literaturkritik von der Mitte des 16. Bis zum frühen 18. Jahrhundert* (Vi-
      enna/Stuttgart: Wilhelm Baumüller, 1977).
4.   On these source traditions, see, amongst others: Franz K. Stanzel, 'Das
      Nationalitätenschema in der Literatur und seine Entstehung zu Beginn der
      Neuzeit', in Günther Blaicher (ed.), *Erstarrtes Denken. Studien zu Klischee,
      Stereotyp und Vorurteil in englischsprachiger Literatur* (Tübingen: Narr,
      1987), 84-96; Franz K. Stanzl, Ingomar Wieler, Waldemar Zacharsiewicz
      (eds.), *Europäischer Völkerspiegel. Imagologisch-ethnographische Studien zu
      den Völkertafeln des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1999);
      Joep Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe. A Cultural History* (Amsterdam:
      Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 25-70. On medieval source traditions:
      Claire Weeda, *Images of Ethnicity in Later Medieval Europe* (University of
      Amsterdam, 2012, doctoral dissertation).
5.   I borrow the term 'national cultures' from Peter Burke, 'Nationalisms and
      Vernaculars, 1500-1800', in John Breuilly (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the
      History of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1-12, at 8. On
      the steep rise of literature on national character in the second half of the
      eighteenth century, including the seminal works by Montesquieu, Voltaire
      and Rousseau, see David A. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France. Inventing
      Nationalism, 1680-1800* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press),
      140-68.
6.   Hume, *Essays*, 204. On Hume's essay, see Franz K. Stanzel, 'Schemata und
      Klischees der Völkerbeschreibung in David Humes Essay "Of National
      Characters"', in Paul G. Buchloch, Inge Leimberg and Herbert Rauber (eds.),
      Studien zur englischen und amerikanischen Sprache und Literatur. Festschrift

für Hlemut Papjewski (Neumünster: Karl Wachholtz Verlag, 1974), 363-83, at 382-83.

7. The first question was central in one of the key texts in nationalism studies: Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* (Paris: Levy, 1882); the second was raised by Ernest Gellner in a debate at Warwick University in 1995. See Ernest Gellner, 'Do nations have navels?', *Nations and Nationalism* 2 (1996) 3, 366-70 and the response by Anthony Smith, 'Memory and modernity: reflections on Ernest Gellner's theory of nationalism', *Nations and Nationalism* 2 (1996) 3, 371-88.

8. For instance in: Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (New York: Routledge 1998); Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation in History. Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Hanover: University Press of England, 2000); Anthony D. Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004).

9. See, for instance, Slobodan Drakulic and Trevor W. Harrison, 'Introduction', in Trevor W. Harrison and Slobodan Drakulicz (eds.), *Against Orthodoxy. Studies in Nationalism* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 1-14; Azar Gat with Alexander Yakobson, *Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013).

10. Cf. Gat, *Nations*, 2: 'In this process the rift between the modernist and traditionalist schools is constantly reproduced'.

11. Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism. A Study in its Origins and Background* (New York: Macmillan, 1944); Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (New York: Praeger, 1960).

12. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).

13. John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* [1982] (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993, 2nd ed.); John Breuilly, 'Approaches to nationalism', in Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.), *Mapping the nation* (London/New York: Verso, 1996), 146-74.

14. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983).

15. Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe*, 13-22, with references to Miroslav Hroch, *Social Precondition of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985); John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987); Anne-Marie Thiesse, *La création des identites nationales: Europe XVIIIe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 1999). Also see: Joep Leerssen (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Romantic Nationalism in Europe*, to be published in 2016, and partly online available *at* www.spinnet.eu.

16. Stefan Berger, *The Search for Normality. National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Germany since 1800* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1997);

Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (eds.), *Nationalizing the Past. Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe* (Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

17.   Koselleck famously coined the term 'Sattelzeit', referring to this modernisation process that was accelerated by the French Revolution: Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (1964; Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp: 1979).

18.   Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe*, 14-5; Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (Reno/Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press), 19-42.

19.   Smith, *The Nation in History*, 65-72.

20.   Feedback is a key concept in economics and management, see Piotr Golec, 'Feedback', www.economicswebinstitute.org/glossary/feedback.htm (accessed 22 May 2015). Paul Schuurman has analysed Montesquieu's work from the perspective of feedback mechanisms: Paul Schuurman, 'Determinism and causal feedback loops in Montesquieu's explanations for the military rise and fall of Rome', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 21 (2013) 3, 507-28; the quotation above is taken from p. 509.

21.   Ibid., 509.

22.   To mention just a few examples: Orest Ranum (ed.), *National Consciousnesss, History, and Political Culture in Early-Modern Europe* (Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975); Otto Dann (ed.), *Nationalismus in vorindustrieller Zeit* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1986); Klaus Garber (ed.), *Nation und Literatur im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit.* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1989); Annete Helmchen, *Die Entstehung der Nationen im Europa der frühen Neuzeit Ein integraler Ansatz aus humanistischer Sicht* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005).

23.   Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood. Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 4-5; and chapter 1, 'England as a prototype', 35-65.

24.   Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1992), 42; Andrew Hadfield, *Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994).

25.   There are a vast number of case studies available on the rise of national thought in the Low Countries and the Dutch Republic. For a general introduction: Robert Stein, 'Introduction', in R. Stein and J. Pollmann (eds.), *Networks, Regions and Nations. Shaping Identities in the Low Countries, 1300-1650* (Leiden/Boston: Brill 2010), 1-18. On the sixteenth century: Simon Groenveld, 'Natie en patria bij zestiende-eeuwse Nederlanders', in N.C.F. van Sas (ed.), *Vaderland: een geschiedenis vanaf de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999), 55-81; Alistair Duke, 'In defence of the Common Fatherland. Patriotism and Liberty in the Low Countries, 1555-1576', in Stein and Pollmann (eds.), *Networks, Regions and Nations,* 217-39; the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: Marijke Meijer Drees,

'Patriottisme in de Nederlandse literatuur (ca. 1650-ca. 1750)', *De nieuwe taal-gids* 88 (1995), 247-60; Lotte Jensen, "'Toen 't volk als uit één' mond, lang leve Oranje! Riep". Orangisme in het vredesjaar 1748', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 128 (2015), 1-22; Pasi Ihalainen, *Protestant Nations Redefined. Changing Perceptions of National Identity in the Rhetoric of the English, Dutch and Swedish Public Churches, 1685-1772* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2005). Centralist trends in Dutch state politics before the nineteenth century are discussed in Simon Groenveld, Pieter Wagenaar and Frits van der Meer, 'Pre-Napoleonic centralization in a decentralised polity: the case of the Dutch Republic', *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 76 (2010), 47-64.

26.   Caspar Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism. An Alternative History from Ancient Rome to Early Modern German to Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012); Gat, *Nations.*

27.   Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism*, 9.

28.   Gat*, Nations*, 4.

29.   Ibid., 18-22.

30.   Ibid., 12.

31.   See, for instance, Rees Davies, 'Nations and National Identities in the Medial World: An Apologia', *Revue Belge d'histoire contemporaine* 34 (2004), 567-79. A longer time perspective has also been argued for within the field of memory studies, which is equally divided between modernists and pre-modernists. See Judith Pollmann and Erika Kuijpers, 'Introduction. On the early modern modernity of modern memory', in *Memory before Modernity. Practices of Memory in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), 1-22, at 22.

32.   Stein, 'Introduction', 17. For the interconnectedness of culture and politics, also see Tim Blanning, *The Power of Culture and the Culture of Power; Old Regime Europe, 1660-1789* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

33.   The historian Hans-Martin Blitz, for instance, points to a vast body of eighteenth-century works (epics, theatre plays, periodicals, letters, songs) that express a clear sense of a national identity long before the rise of the nation state. Hans-Martin Blitz, *Aus Liebe zum Vaterland. Die deutsche Nation im 18. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2000). See also Herfried Münkler, Hans Grünberger, Kathrin Mayer (eds.), *Nationenbildung: die Nationalisierung Europas im Diskurs humanistischer Intellektueller: Italien und Deutschland* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998); Ute Planert, 'Wann beginnt der "modern" deutsche Nationalismus? Plädoyer für eine nationale Sattelzeit', in Jörg Edernkamp and Sven Oliver Müller (ed.), *Die Politik der Nation. Deutscher Nationalismus im Krieg und Krisen 1760-1960* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2002), 25-59; Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism*. On the rise of Italian consciousness, see: Felix Gilbert, 'Italy', in Orest Ranum (ed.), *National Consciousness, History and Political Culture in Early-Modern Europe* (Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 21-42.

34.   Anne-Marie Thiesse, 'National identities: a transnational paradigm', in A. Dieckhoff and C. Jaffrelot (eds.), *Revisiting Nationalism. Theories and Processes* (London: Hurst & Co., 2005), 122-43, at 124.

35.   Anthony Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge/Malden: Polity Press, 2008), 86-90; Gat, *Nations*, 16-7.

36.   Ibid., 17.

37.   Anderson, *Imagined communities* (4th ed., 1987), 16, 38-9.

38.   Burke, 'Nationalisms and Vernaculars', 5.

39.   Stein, 'Introduction', 16-7.

40.   For a critical evaluation of the use of 'imagined community' as a concept, see Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 90-4.

41.   Cf. Blitz, *Aus Liebe zum Vaterland*, 15-6. For a case study on Dutch imagined communities in 1713: Lotte Jensen, 'Visions of Europe: Contrasts and Combinations of National and European Identities in Literary Representations of the Peace of Utrecht (1713)', in Renger de Bruin, Cornelis van der Haven, Lotte Jensen & David Onnekink (eds.), *Performances of Peace. Utrecht 1713* (Leiden/Boston: Brill 2015), 159-78

42.   Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 157-60.

43.   Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen (eds.), *Imagology. The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters. A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2007).

44.   Jean Stengers, *Les racines de la Belgique. Histoire du sentiment national en Belgique des origins à 1918.* Volume 1 (Bruxelles: Éditions Racine, 2000), 101.