Empires and Nations: Convergence or Divergence?

Krishan Kumar (University of Virginia)

"*Imperialism is becoming everyday … more and more the faith of a nation*"

Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, 1898 (in Mehta 1999: 5)

"*Our Empire is not an Empire at all in the ordinary sense of the word. It does not consist of a congeries of nations held together by force, but in the main of one nation, as much as if it were no Empire but an ordinary state*"

J. R. Seeley ([1883] 1971: 44)

"*The making of empire and the construction of nationality are … closely related themes*"

A. G. Hopkins (2002: 25)

"*The nationalist idea has a peculiar appeal because of the way in which it asks people to celebrate* themselves *rather than anything beyond them*"

John Breuilly (2000: 217)

Nation versus Empire

It has long been the conventional wisdom that nations and empires are rivals, sworn enemies. The principle of nationalism is homogeneity, often seen in ethnic terms. Nations strive to embody, or to produce, a common culture. They express a radical egalitarianism: all members of the nation are in principle equal, all partake of the common national "soul". Nations moreover are intensely particularistic. While they do not deny the existence of other nations, and of their right to cultivate their ways, they are generally concerned only with their own way, convinced that it is superior to the ways of all other nations. Nationalists, as John Breuilly suggests above, are highly inward-looking. They tend to celebrate themselves – "we English", "we Germans", "we French" – simply for their good fortune in being who they are, rather than for any cause or purpose in the world which might justify their existence.

Empires by contrast appear to exhibit principles antithetical to those of nations. They are multi-ethnic or multi-national. Far from having or seeking a common culture, they stress the heterogeneity of cultures, especially that between the elite and the local cultures. Empires are hierarchical, opposed in principle to egalitarianism. The lines of solidarity are vertical, between subject and ruler, not, as in nations, horizontal, between equal citizens or fellow

members of the same ethnic group. Empires finally aspire to universalism, not particularism. As with China or Rome, they see themselves as being at the centre of the known world, the source of civilization itself and the carrier of the civilizing process to all the corners of the globe. Far from celebrating merely themselves, they tend to see themselves as the instruments of larger purposes in the world, generally of a moral or religious character. Towards nationalism they are contemptuous, as something petty and self-centred. "I am not nacional [*sic*]; that is something for children", declared the Count-Duke Olivares of imperial Spain, in an expression typical of the imperial mentality (in Elliott 1984: 74)[1].

A powerful statement of what Benedict Anderson in his *Imagined Communities* calls "the inner incompatibility of empire and nation" (Anderson 2006: 93) is to be found in an equally famous study of nationalism, Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism*. For Gellner empires – seen as essentially pre-modern in type – belong to what he calls "agro-literate" society, the central fact of which is that "everything in it militates against the definition of political units in terms of cultural boundaries" (Gellner 1983: 11; see also Gellner 1998: 14–24; Breuilly 2000: 198–99). Power and culture belong to different realms. Crucially, the culture of the elites – often cosmopolitan or international in character – is sharply differentiated from the myriad local cultures of the subordinate strata in the empire. Modern empires, such as the Soviet empire, perpetuate this division, which is why for Gellner they are inherently unstable in a world in which nationalism is the dominant principle.

For nationalism, argues Gellner, closes what in modernity becomes an increasingly intolerable gap between power and culture, state and nation. It insists that only political units in which rulers and ruled share the same culture are legitimate. Its ideal is one state, one culture – which is to say, its ideal is the "nation-state", since it conceives of the nation essentially in terms of a shared culture. In the eyes of nationalists, for rulers of a political unit to belong to a nation other than that of the majority of the ruled "constitutes a quite outstandingly intolerable breach of political propriety" (Gellner 1983: 1). What, to nationalists, could possibly justify the existence of an entity such as the British empire, in which a handful of British ruled over millions of Indians, Africans, and others, all of whom contained within themselves the seeds of potential nationhood?

In pitting nation against empire, Anderson and Gellner work within a tradition that stretches back to the eighteenth-century European Enlightenment. Anthony Pagden has drawn attention to the thought in particular of Johann Gottfried Herder, one of the fathers of European nationalism, in "setting up the unalterable opposition of nations and empires". "For Herder, the concept of a people, a *Volk*, and the concept of empire, were simply incompatible. Sooner or later all the world's empires were destined to collapse back into their constituent parts", seen as peoples or nations (Pagden 2003: 131–2; see also Pagden 1994: 172–88; Muthu 2003: 210–58). "Nothing", declared Herder, "appears so directly opposite to the end of government as the unnatural enlargement of states, the wild mixture of various kinds of humans and nations under one sceptre" (in Muthu 2003: 248). This view became a commonplace of nineteenth-century liberal thought as it increasingly allied itself with the national principle. Even those liberals, such as Lord Macaulay and John Stuart Mill, who defended empire accepted that nationality was the "natural" principle, and that empires could be justified only in so far as they were leading "backward" peoples towards independent nationhood (Mehta 1999: 77–114; Pitts 2005: 123–62).

The history of the relations between nations and empires in the past two centuries would seem to bear out the truth of this view of difference and divergence. For what has that history been but one of a revolt against empire in the name of nationality? In the wake of the First World War, the great continental land empires, commonly denounced as the "prison-houses of nations" – the Russian, the German, the Austro-Hungarian, and the Ottoman empires – all came crashing down, to be replaced by independent nation-states that were widely regarded as their legitimate heirs. The victorious allies' charter of 1918, President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, loudly proclaimed the triumph of the principle of nationality over that of dynastic empire (Seton-Watson 1964: 19-23; Hobsbawm 1994: 31; Kappeler 2001: 213; Ferguson 2005: 172-3).

Later came the turn of the oceanic or overseas empires of the French, the Dutch and the British. In a spectacular series of "wars of national liberation" their colonies claimed and enforced their independence on the basis of the nationalist doctrine that had become the norm of the international system. It became common to speak of the movement "from empire to nation" (e.g. Emerson 1960) to sum up this post-war experience. Moreover, the break-up of these empires too had partly been the result of a cataclysmic war, the Second World War, and, as with the previous war, there was again official endorsement of the nationality principle in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 ("everyone has the right to a nationality"). Later still, in 1989, the "informal colonies" of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe declared their independence, followed swiftly thereafter by similar actions among the various national republics or "internal colonies" of the Soviet Union itself (though, as Gellner rightly noted [1998: 57], it was not nationalism itself that brought down the Soviet Union).

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 seemed to set the seal on the long-drawn-out encounter between nation and empire. Despite much talk about the new "American empire", it was clear that formal empire in the classic sense had for the time being at least reached a certain historic terminus (the announcement of the "end of history", and similar claims that liberal democracy had triumphed in the world, were some kind of recognition of this). The opprobrium that had, with increasing force since the Second World War, gathered around the terms "empire" and "imperialism", seemed now to hold sway everywhere. No state called itself an empire any more; only its enemies did so. If indeed there was or is an American Empire, as Niall Ferguson argued, it was "an empire in denial", an empire that practiced "the imperialism of anti-imperialism", an empire that "dare not speak its name" (Ferguson 2005: xxii, 6, 61-104; cf. Teschke 2006: 137)[2].

Nations as Empires

But there is another way of telling the story of the relation between nation and empire. In this account, nation and empire are not so much opposed as acknowledged to be alternative or complementary expressions of the same phenomenon of power. Empires can be nations writ large; nations empires under another name.

The great historian Sir Lewis Namier once said that "religion is a sixteenth-century word for nationalism" (quoted MacLachlan 1996: 15). This seems to be a typical case of a secular thinker's refusing to accept the sincerity or authenticity of the participants' own protestations. The sixteenth-century conflicts that tore apart most European

societies *were* indeed "wars of religion", and any attempt to convert or reduce them to nationalist (or even "protonationalist") conflicts seems, *pace* Anthony Marx (2003), highly anachronistic[3]. But what is insightful in Namier's comment is the recognition that nationalism can take a variety of forms and expressions, and that "imperial nationalism" therefore may not be as contradictory as it first sounds.

In the first place it is important to note that many early-modern states – those which later evolved into nation-states – saw themselves as *empires*. David Armitage (2000: 29-32), among others, has stressed that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries especially the term empire was often used in its original (Roman) sense of *sovereignty* or *supreme authority*, rather than in its later – and more common modern – meaning of rule over a multiplicity of lands and peoples[4]. This allowed many absolutist monarchies, such as the French, and even small city-states such as Milan under the Visconti Dukes, to declare themselves empires. For English speakers, the best-known example of this is the famous pronouncement in Henry VIII"s Act in Restraint of Appeals of 1533, that "this realm of England is an empire, entire of itself ". By this was meant that the king of England acknowledged no superiors in his realm, that his rule was sovereign or absolute, and that there could be no appeal to a higher power, such as the Pope or the Holy Roman Emperor (Ullmann 1979)[5]. Here then was an assertion of empire as sovereignty or self- sufficient authority very similar to one of the central claims of the nation-state.

There was a further way in which empire and (nation-) state might overlap. Many of the early-modern states were what have been called "composite monarchies" or "multiple kingdoms" – states, that is, such as Spain or Britain, where one monarch might rule over several territories[6]. Thus Spain – leaving aside what we might think of as its more classically imperial possessions in the New World and elsewhere – contained Castilians, Catalans. Basques and others, in their several territories; Britain, with the accession of James I in 1603, and more firmly with the Act of Union of 1707, was a composite state made up of English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish subjects of the monarch (Koenigsbeger 1987; Eliott 1992; Russell 1995; Armitage 2000: 22-3). Such states, in other words, contained that variety and plurality of peoples and lands that empire connoted, both classically and in modern times. Whether therefore the stress was on sovereignty or multiple rule, state and empire were conjoint terms for much of the early-modern period – as found in the writings of Bodin, Hobbes, Grotius and Spinoza (Koebner 1961: 52; Armitage 2000: 14-23; Pagden 1995: 13-14).

But there is an even more compelling consideration that might lead us to see convergence rather than divergence between (nation-) states and empires. Most nation-states, or what became nation-states, are, like most empires, the result of conquest and colonization. The later ideology of nationalism of course disguises this unpalatable fact, as it exhibits amnesia about many other aspects of the violent origins of nations (Marx 2003: 29-32). The rise of nationalist historiography in the nineteenth century drove a wedge between "domestic" and "extra-territorial" history, between the nation-state and empire – both the territorial empires that had preceded it and the extra-European empires that were constructed across the globe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Nevertheless, as David Armitage says, "the nation-state as it had been precipitated out of a system of aggressively competing nations […] functioned as 'the empire *manqué*'" – within Europe itself as much as beyond it (Armitage 2000: 14).

Robert Bartlett (1994) has given the classic account of how European states were formed by a process of "conquest, colonization and cultural change", in the High Middle Ages, between 950-1350. From their heartlands in the old

Carolingian lands – modern France and western Germany – Frankish and Norman knights swept westwards, eastwards, and southwards. Normans conquered England, and went on to take Wales and Ireland. They put enormous pressure on the Scots, forcing them, on pain of survival, to adapt to Anglo-Norman culture and institutions. In the East, Germans cleared the forests, established new towns and settled in old ones – such as Prague – in large numbers, opening the way to the eventual incorporation of these lands in Prussia and other German states. Burgundian familes established their rule in Portugal and León-Castile and spearheaded the Christian Reconquest of Andalucia from the Moors[7].

The Normans conquered Sicily and from this base spread the ways and institutions of Latin Christianity throughout the southern Mediterranean and many parts of the Levant (aided by the Crusading movement that established the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem). In this massive centrifugal movement, a uniform system of town charters, commercial law, coinage, language (Latin), educational and ecclesiastical institutions came into being in a huge swathe stretching from the Baltic to the eastern Mediterranean. "Europe, the initiator of one of the world's major processes of conquest, colonization and cultural transformation, was also the product of one" (Bartlett 1994: 314).

This dynamic process of conquest and colonization meant that the states and kingdoms that were established in medieval and early modern Europe nearly all had the appearance of empires. England, for instance, once united by the Norman Conquest of 1066, went on in its turn – largely at first under Norman auspices – to "unite" (*sc.* conquer) the peoples of Wales, Ireland and, eventually, Scotland, into another state, the United Kingdom, and another nation, the British[8]. Observing that "many of the most successful nation states of the present started life as empires", Niall Ferguson asks, "what is the modern United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland if not the legatee of an earlier English imperialism" (Ferguson 2005: xii)? Just as Europe itself, so too England began its great colonizing venture in the world with an initial act of "internal colonization", the construction of an "inner empire" of Great Britain that became the launching pad for the creation of an "outer empire" of "Greater Britain" overseas (Kumar 2003: 60–88; cf. Cooper 2005: 172).

France achieved nationhood by a process of conquest launched by the Capetian kings from their base in the Île-de-France, and leading eventually to the forcible incorporation of Brittany, Burgundy, Languedoc, Normandy, Gascony, Aquitaine, Provence and several other once proud and independent principalities of the Carolingian successor kingdoms of West Francia, East Francia and Lotharingia. At the point at which, in 987, Hugh Capet became king of West Francia, the kingdom, says Colin Jones, "looked more like a collection of potential future states than a single, unitary one" (1999: 75). It took several hundred years, and the suppression of many internal rebellions, for the French kings to weld together the disparate territories of their "inner empire" (Collins 1995). Even the great centralizing influence of the French Revolution still left much to be done, at least in the countryside where the majority of the people lived. According to Eugen Weber (1976), it was only in the late nineteenth century that the process seriously began of turning peasants of many tongues and disparate traditions into Frenchmen and Frenchwomen. Rogers Brubaker points out that the idea of *la mission civilisatrice*, usually applied to justify France's overseas empire, initially had reference to the civilizing mission of the French state in relation to its own domestic inhabitants. This "internal *mission civilisatrice*" was to be carried out by the *instituteurs*, the school teachers, "whose mission was to *institute* the nation" (Brubaker 1992: 11). As Eugen Weber says, "the famous hexagon [i.e. France in its current form] can itself be seen as a colonial empire shaped over the centuries: a complex of territories

conquered, annexed, and integrated in a political and administrative whole, many of them with strongly developed national or regional personalities, some of them with traditions that were specifically un- or anti-French" (Weber 1976: 485; see also Kuzio 2002: 32)[9].

Spain shows even more clearly the pattern of unification through conquest – the more so as it remains in several respects still incomplete, with a persistent Basque separatist movement and intermittent calls for independence emanating from Catalonia. From the time of the union of the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile in 1469, Spanish monarchs engaged in a strenuous and only partly successful effort to bring adjacent territories into a single state and to form a Spanish nation[10]. That the process was tortuous, marked by frequent rebellions and civil wars, is made clear in the comment of an eighteenth-century Spanish civil servant, Olavide, that Spain was "a body composed of other smaller bodies separated, and in opposition to one another, which oppress and despise each other and are in a continuous state of civil war […] Modern Spain can be considered as a body without energy […] a monstrous Republic formed of little republics which confront each other" (in Carr 2000: 6).

Spain, France, and England/Britain are the countries most regularly invoked in the literature on nationalism as early, well-formed, nation-states (see, e.g. Smith 1991: 55). It is salutary to remember then how much of conquest and colonization there was in the formation of these nation-states, and how imperfectly the word "nation", with its suggestion of consensus, community and homogeneity, sums up the resulting product. "Spain", "France", "Britain", and their respective nations, were the result of the more or less forcible integration of neighbouring lands and peoples by dominant groups whose institutions and culture often differed considerably from those of the conquered peoples. This pattern has often been noted for later examples of nation-building. For example, it was common to say, in the nineteenth century and later, that "Germany" was made by Prussian conquest of the other German states; less commonly, but perhaps equally accurately, it might be said that "Italy" was made by the Piemontese conquest of the other Italian states (which explains the famous remark of Massimo d'Azeglio in 1868, that "we have made Italy, now we must make Italians"). And it has frequently been pointed out that many of the "new nations" of Africa and Asia are so only in name, that they are artificial creations, the result largely of the wars and political manoeuvrings of the former imperial powers. What we need to stress is that this pattern is not simply typical of latecomers to nation-building but has been the norm since the very earliest examples. Many "nation-states", to put it another way, are empires in miniature; they have been formed as empires have usually been formed. There is in that sense an inescapably imperial dimension to the nation-state[11].

Empires as Nations: "Imperial Nationalism"

If nations have often been conceived and constructed as empires, might the reverse also be true? If nations can be seen as mini-empires, can empires be seen as large nations? Does imperialism converge with nationalism? What are the degrees – and limits – of this convergence?

Anthony Smith has in several places (e.g 1986, 2004) argued that all nations are constituted by "core" *ethnies*, around which may cohere other ethnic groups in subordinate roles. In the English case, for instance, it is impossible

to ignore the contribution over the centuries of Norwegians, Normans, Huguenots, Scots, Welsh, Irish, Jews, Indians, Afro-Caribbeans and other ethnicities to that mix we call "Englishness". But it is equally clear that, by about the sixteenth at the latest, there had emerged something like an English nation (which is – *pace* Greenfeld (1992) – quite a different matter from saying that we can find English *nationalism* in this period). The English language, for one thing, had by then come into its own, supremely with the works of Shakespeare, Marlowe, Spenser and others. Protestantism was beginning to do its work, especially in its non-conformist forms. Parliament and the Common Law were already beginning to be acknowledged as emblems of the national culture. This was the beginning of something like "racial Anglo-Saxonism", to use Reginald Horsman's (1981) term, though it had little of the biological character ascribed to it in its nineteenth-century guise. It does though mean that by this time a distinctive and dominant *ethnie* had emerged in England, setting the terms and conditions within which later groups were invited to find, or to force, a place (for other examples, see Kaufmann 2004). It is this core *ethnie* that lends its peculiar qualities to the nation; it is this group that defines the "national character", difficult as it always is to enumerate its attributes precisely.

Can we not say something similar about empires? Most empires are constructed by a particular people – the Romans, the Spanish, the English/British, the French, the Russians, the Turks, etc. It is they who name it and oversee its development. Whatever their numbers, it is they who tend to define its character. They are, we may say, the "state-bearing" peoples of the empire. And, just as a particular ethnic group might come to identify itself with the nation it creates, so a particular people or nation might come to identify itself with the empire it founds. Nations and empires, we have said, tend to think of their purpose or destiny in the world in different terms, the one more inner, the other more outward looking. But it seems fair to say that in both cases we can discern a group or groups that identify with their creation and derive their sense of their collective identity from it.

I have elsewhere (Kumar 2000, 2003: 30-5) argued that we can call the sense of identity of imperial peoples a kind of "imperial" or "missionary nationalism". There is, I agree, a double danger in so doing. In the first place, the ideology of nationalism does not emerge until the late eighteenth century, and it is therefore anachronistic and misleading to speak of nationalism in any form before that time. Since empires for the most part clearly pre-date the age of nationalism – even if they persist well into it – we obviously need to specify clearly what we might mean by "imperial nationalism". In the second place, for all the suggestive parallels, empires are not nations (and nations are not empires), as we shall see. Hence to speak of imperial nationalism runs the risk of confusing two entities – nations and empires – that for most purposes need to be kept separate.

The reason for nevertheless thinking that "imperial nationalism" might be a useful concept is the gain that comes from seeing two disparate phenomena from a common vantage point. Like nationalists in relation to their nation, imperialists feel that there is something special or unique about their empire. It has a mission or purpose in the world. This may, again as with nationalists, endow imperial peoples with a sense of their own superiority, a feeling of inherent goodness as of a people specially chosen to carry out a task (cf. Smith 2003)[12]. Imperialists, like nationalists, are true-believers.

What are the causes or missions which have given imperial peoples a sense of their collective identity? For most Europeans, the pattern was set by the Romans with their belief that they were giving nothing less than civilization –

Roman laws, Roman institutions, Roman culture – to the world. Hence it was possible for the Romans to identify their empire with the whole known world, the *orbis terrarum*. Later European empires, from the Holy Roman Empire onwards, repeated the claim, to an almost wearying degree, though the content might vary depending on the particular place or time. Thus although the Spaniards like most imperialists saw themselves in the image of Rome, it was as a Catholic power that they saw their mission, in Europe and in the New World (a role intensified with the Protestant Reformation). The Austrian Habsburgs took up the torch from their Spanish cousins, putting themselves not just at the head of the Counter-Reformation but also – as the *Östmark* or *Österreich* – seeing themselves as the defenders of European civilization on its eastern flank, against the threat of the infidel Turks. The Russians, proclaiming Moscow the "Third Rome" and themselves the legatees of the doomed Byzantines, aspired to continue the struggle for Orthodoxy in the world. A similar resolve, but for a contrary cause, animated the English when as "the Protestant nation" they attempted to lead the Protestant crusade in Europe and the New World, especially against the machinations of the Catholic powers of Spain and France. The French, for their own part, having first hitched their empire to the Catholic cause, after their Great Revolution of 1789 and the turn towards republicanism, increasingly came to identify French imperialism with *la mission civilisatrice* (as, in the later phases of the British Empire, did the British). This too, in its own terms, was the mission of the Russians in their second or Soviet empire, the spreading of reason and science to the benighted in the form of communism. In this renewed emphasis, begun with the Romans, on the mission to civilize and enlighten, the wheel had come full circle[13].

Merely to list these causes or missions is to cast doubt on the analogy between nationalism and imperialism. Nationalist causes are not typically like these. For some time in the early nineteenth century, when a form of liberal nationalism flourished under the banner of Giuseppe Mazzini and his followers, nationalism did indeed ally itself with the noble causes of spreading freedom and enlightenment in the world (Alter 1994: 19–23, 39–65). But the period that followed, the period of "organic nationalism", showed another face of nationalism: one that was vindictive and intolerant towards rivals, one that trumpeted the power and glory of particular nations, one that asked its citizens to die for the nation whatever the cause it chose to embrace. The Nazis' celebration of the Teutonic or Aryan peoples, in and for themselves, indicated the logical end-point of this type of nationalism (Alter 1994: 26–38; Hobsbawm 1992: 101–30).

Imperialist ideologies are universalistic, not particularistic. That difference has to be borne in mind. Imperial peoples do not, unlike nationalists, celebrate themselves; they celebrate the causes of which they are the agents or carriers. It is from this that they derive their sense of themselves and their place in the world. But the parallel with nationalism is still instructive. In both cases we see the attempt to effect a fusion, a symbiosis almost, between a people and a political entity. Imperial nationalism plays down membership of a "mere nation", with its tendency towards self-congratulation and self-importance; but it does so in order to insist on a higher form of nationalism, one that justifies the nation in terms of its commitment to a cause that goes beyond the nation.

It is somewhat ironic, in view of this, that the greatest apparent convergence between imperialism and nationalism is to be found in the very period – from the 1870s to the First World War – in which nationalism threw off its liberal mantle and presented itself in the guise of naked power-seeking. The historian Wolfgang Mommsen speaks of "the deformation of national politics" in this period:

"The idea of the nation state progressively lost those elements which in the first half of the nineteenth century had made it an emancipatory ideology, directed against the arbitrary rule of princes and small aristocratic elites, and an intellectual weapon in the campaign for constitutional government. Instead it came to be associated with the power-status of the established national culture, and the imposition of its values on ethnic or cultural minorities both within and beyond the body politic was now considered essential" (Mommsen 1990: 215; see also Mommsen 1978).

Mommsen sees this deformation as directly connected to the "high imperialism" of the times, when the great powers – in particular Britain, France, Germany – competed for dominance on the world stage through the acquisition of larger and larger territorial empires (Mommsen 1990: 212). This was the view too of another liberal thinker, J. A. Hobson, the great critic of imperialism, who saw imperialism as "a debasement of […] genuine nationalism, by attempts to overflow its natural banks and absorb the near or distant territory of reluctant and unassimilable peoples" (Hobson [1902] 1988: 6). For Hobson as for other liberal thinkers, nationality still appeared the natural and desirable principle – a "plain highway to internationalism" – with imperialism a "perversion of its nature and purpose" (Hobson [1902] 1988: 11).

Such a position has seemed too kind to nationalism, in the view of other thinkers. For them nationalism is inherently imperialistic, just as it was inevitable at this time that imperialism would take the form of nationalist rivalries. Imperialism is then seen not so much as a perversion as a more or less natural extension of a power-seeking nationalism; in its turn, the nation comes to conceive of itself in the image of empire, the traditional emblem of grandeur and the supreme expression of great-power status. "Imperialism and nationalism", says Christopher Bayly, "were part of the same phenomenon […] The rise of exclusive nationalisms, grasping and using the powers of the new and more interventionist state, was the critical force propelling both the new imperialism and the hardening of the boundaries between majority and assumed 'ethnic' populations across the world […] Imperialism and nationalism reacted on each other to redivide the world and its people" (Bayly 2004: 230, 242–3)[14].

Once again, therefore, the ground between empire and nation, imperialism and nationalism, seems to crumble and disappear. If nations can be seen as empires, empires, especially modern empires, can seem no more than nations writ large. The British Empire, or "Greater Britain" as some termed it, is in this view no more than the expression of British nationalism, the desire to expand the British presence and power in the world (see, e.g Seeley [1883] 1971); the French Empire, partly in rivalry with Britain, the expression of a wounded French nationalism in the wake of the crushing defeat at the hands of Prussia in 1871 (see Schivelbusch 2004: 103–87). Imperialism appears as hypertrophied nationalism, perhaps; but nationalism nonetheless, expressing its ultimate logic and tendency.

Empire and Nation: Continuing Antagonisms and Tensions

Is this then the conclusion? Are Gellner, Anderson and so many others wrong in drawing such a sharp distinction between the principle of empire and that of the nation? Is imperialism simply nationalism under another name?

It would surely be premature, not to say facile, so to conclude. Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, reacting against the centrality accorded to the nation-state in conceptions of European history since the eighteenth century, rightly warn that "it is not clear that simply considering empire as an extension of nation will get to the root of the problem" (Stoler and Cooper 1997: 22). No more, perhaps, than reversing this procedure and seeing nations as extensions of empires, or as empires in miniature. We have to respect nations and empires for their differences as well as their admitted similarities. Nations are not empires and empires are not nations, whatever the gains in looking for parallels and commonalities.

Max Weber once observed that while all "Great Powers" tend, for reasons of prestige, to be imperialist and "expansive", this was not the case with all nations, some of which sought their principles and sense of national pride from within themselves. "Not all political structures are equally 'expansive'. They do not all strive for an outward expansion of their power, or keep their force in readiness for acquiring political power over other territories and communities by incorporating them or making them dependent. Hence, as structures of power, political organizations vary in the extent to which they are turned outward" (Weber 1978: 910). Britain, France and Germany might feel the need for empire, but not so Switzerland or Norway.

This perception might be one way of considering the fact that empire and nation can, at different times, alternate in the striving of states. In the early modern period, the examples of the Spanish and Portuguese empires made it seem that empire was the only way of establishing one's presence in the world. The British, Dutch and French hurried to imitate the imperial style of those countries, with a considerable measure of success. Later, in the nineteenth century, as the national principle gained in strength, nation-state formation seemed to offer a more fulfilling, as well as for many a more practicable, option. This was especially so in the case of smaller or weaker countries, such as Italy, Poland, Ireland, Norway, and the Slav peoples of the Habsburg empire. Here empire was the enemy, not the goal.

But nationalism, rather than imperialism, was not just for small or weak countries. The tension between nation and empire could often be seen within the same country, including some of the most powerful, at the same time. Britain in the nineteenth century had its "Little Englanders" who, especially after the loss of the North American colonies, felt that empire was ruinous to British commerce and corrupting in its moral and political effects at home. The way forward was for Britain to renounce imperial entanglements and to exert its influence by the example of its peaceful and prosperous existence as one nation among others (see, e.g. Thornton 1968: 1–56; Gott 1989)[15]. In France, after the loss of Alsace-Lorraine following the Franco-Prussian war of 1871, there was a bitter struggle between the imperialists, keen on matching Britain's imperial power, and the nationalists who felt that it was essential to France's national honour to recover the lost provinces, and for whom empire was a crippling distraction (Baumgart 1982: 55–68; Schivelbusch 2004: 176–87).

Nationalism and imperialism could therefore, despite their similarities, point in very different directions. A world of nations, accepting the particularities of different peoples, and promoting the cultivation of unique national cultures, was quite different from a world of competing empires, each intent on reforming the world in its own image. J. A. Hobson, the best-known writer on modern imperialism, and one who was fully alive to the connections between nationalism and imperialism, nevertheless felt the need to make it plain at the very outset of his study that the kind of imperialism that was collusive with nationalism was of a very novel and highly untypical kind. It was novel and untypical because it took the form of competing nations, each striving to magnify their empires; whereas the true principle of empire was unitary and universal.

"The notion of a number of competing empires is essentially modern. The root idea of empire in the ancient and the medieval world was that of a federation of States, under a hegemony, covering in general terms the entire known recognized world, such as was held by Rome under the so-called *pax Romana*. When Roman citizens, with full civic rights, were found all over the explored world, in Africa and Asia, as well as in Gaul and Britain, Imperialism contained a genuine element of internationalism. With the fall of Rome this conception of a single empire wielding political authority over the civilized world did not disappear. On the contrary, it survived all the fluctuations of the Holy Roman Empire. Even after the definite split between the Eastern and Western sections had taken place at the close of the fourth century, the theory of a single state, divided for administrative purposes, survived. Beneath every cleavage or antagonism, and notwithstanding the severance of many independent kingdoms and provinces, this ideal unity of the empire lived. It formed the conscious avowed ideal of Charlemagne … Rudolf of Habsburg not merely revived the idea, but laboured to realize it through Central Europe, while his descendant Charles V gave a very real meaning to the term by gathering under the unity of his imperial rule the territories of Austria, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Sicily and Naples. In later ages this dream of a European Empire animated the policy of Peter the Great, Catherine, and Napoleon" (Hobson [1902] 1988: 8-9).

There is not much to add to this masterly sketch, merely to say that its accuracy has been confirmed by most later studies of the imperial idea (see, e.g Folz 1969; Muldoon 1999; Münkler 2005). Hobson goes on to say that the "internationalism of empire" was continued, with diminishing force, in the "humane cosmopolitanism" of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, only to "wither before the powerful revival of nationalism" in the nineteenth century. Nationalism properly understood and practised, he continued to believe, was not in necessary contradiction with internationalism. But linked to an aggressive and competitive imperialism, which transforms "the wholesome stimulative rivalry of varied national types into the cut-throat struggle of competing empires", it threatened "the peace and progress of mankind" (Hobson [1902] 1988: 10-12)[16]. Hobson saw no hope, or even necessity, of reviving the universal empire. He was no liberal imperialist. But he was clear what had been the consequence of the degeneration of both the national and the imperial ideal. They came to feed off each other, turning their backs on the promise of their respective principles.

The recent revival of interest in empire has, no doubt, many sources. But one surely has to do with concerns over the recent excesses of nationalism, in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, as well as in many areas of the

Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Already in the mid-nineteenth century, when nationalism was only just getting into its stride, Lord Acton warned against the oppressive and exclusive principle of nationality which, "by making the State and nation commensurate with each other in theory [...] reduces practically to a subject condition all other nationalities that may be within the boundary" (Acton [1862] 1996: 36)[17]. Against this he defended both the British and the Austrian empires as bastions of liberty. Something similar has recently said by a historian of the Russian empire, Andreas Kappeler. "Studying the history of multi-ethnic empires", he says, "can serve to remind us that there are alternative principles with regard to the structure of states and societies", and can "also clarify the problematical nature of the (ethnically restricted) nation state". Kappeler thinks that "as in the successor states of the Habsburg Empire there may even come a time when people will idealize and look back nostalgically at the Russian multi-ethnic empire whose geographical borders and intellectual horizons far exceeded those of the ethnic nation states" (Kappeler 2001: 3, 392)[18].

There is a certain amount of nostalgia around, no doubt, as when certain enthusiasts for the European Union talk about a "revived Habsburg Empire", or when people look back admiringly to the *millet* system of the Ottoman empire, as some kind of model for our "multicultural" societies. There are even those who see in the earlier empires some presage of present-day globalization, and praise, for instance, the *pax Britannica* of the British empire as an exemplar of a possible world order (see, e.g Ferguson 2004). One can dispute all of these, if one chooses to. But there can surely be no doubt that empires have much to teach us about many of the problems that preoccupy us today: multiculturalism, transnationalism, diasporas, the nation state in an era of globalization, multinational corporations, and the possibilities of supranational organization. Empires are, almost by definition, multicultural, multiethnic and even multinational. They have been created by and in turn the cause of vast migrations of people across the globe. They preceded the nation-state and they, or something like them, may well succeed it. None of these features, it need hardly be said, apply to nations; empires and nations, for all the interesting ways in which they overlap, do in the end belong to different worlds.

Not only that, but it can be argued that these worlds have interacted with each other for much longer than we are inclined to think. The nineteenth-century is often labeled the "era of nationalism", but we need to remember that empire persisted until well into the twentieth century, and that it is only with the end of the great overseas European empires in the 1950s and 1960s that the nation-state really came into its own. The nineteenth century, as several thinkers have stressed, was a world of empires as much as, perhaps more than, it was of the new nation-state (Ferguson 2005: xi-xiii; Cooper 2005: 171). What were the dominant actors on the world stage – Britain, France, Russia, the Ottomans, Austria-Hungary, Germany, China, Japan, perhaps also America – but empires?[19].

Non until after the Second World War was the hold of empire on the world loosened, and even then it was given a significant renewal with the expansion of the Soviet Union's "informal" empire in Eastern Europe. "In the 1960s", says Frederick Cooper, "a world of nation-states finally came into being, over three centuries after the peace of Westphalia, 180 years after the French and American revolutions, and 40 years after the Wilsonian assertions of national self-determination" (Cooper 2005: 190).

It might also be worth observing that this "world of nation-states" was closely supervised by two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, both of whom while denying the fact acted very much like the empires of old.

Even the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 still left one "lonely superpower" (Huntington 1999) to carry on the imperial task of policing the world. The future of this venture remains highly uncertain; but even if it does not succeed, it is highly unlikely that an anarchical world of nation-states will be the outcome. The world is too tightly intermeshed for the major nations to accept such an arrangement. Nationalism, said Ernest Renan over a century ago, is "the law of the age in which we live". But, he predicted, "nations are not something eternal. They have had their beginnings, they shall have their end" (Renan [1882] 2001: 175). What is even more remarkable to contemplate is not just the end of nations, but the possibility that nations, or at least nation-states, never really had the world to themselves, even for a relatively short period. They have always lived in the shadow of empire.

All this should make us re-think our common notions of the presumed sequence "from empire to nation", or of an "age of nations" succeeding an "age of empire". Nations and empires, as Frederick Cooper (2005) stresses, have been variable forms of the political imagination throughout the recent period – at least since 1800, to go back no further. They have co-existed with and mutually influenced each other, even to the point where the same state might act or appear at one time as an empire, at another as a nation-state. China and the United States – both ambiguous cases of empire in the literature – are two obvious examples of this (see, e.g. Osterhammel 1986), but one could say the same thing about Britain or France. Nations and empires are different ways of conceiving the world as well as the collective self, but that has not prevented each of them from being regarded at various times as alternative possibilities, depending on their perceived fitness for the occasion.

As ideological formations, nations and nationalism may well have occupied centre-stage in the modern world order, at least in the last two centuries. But empires have also been part of that order. Their disappearance has been relatively recent, and the signs of their existence are still all around us, not least in the large populations from the former empires which are now part of the life of most major Western cities. If empires belong to history, it is to that aspect of history that has an inescapable after-life. "The empires of our time were short-lived, but they have altered the world for ever", says a character in V. S. Naipaul's novel *The Mimic Men* ([1967] 1985: 32); "their passing away is their least significant feature"[20].

References

Acton, John Emerich Edward Dalberg, First Baron [1862] 1996. "Nationality". Pp.141-70 in *Essays on Freedom and Power*, selected and edited by Gertrude Himmelfarb. London: Thames and Hudson.

Alter, Peter 1994. *Nationalism*, second edition. London: Edward Arnold.

Anderson, Benedict 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition. London and New York: Verso.

Arendt, Hannah 1958. *The Origins of Modern Totalitarianism*, 2nd edition. New York: Meridian Books.

Armitage, David 2000. *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bartlett, Robert 1994. *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950–1350*. London: Penguin Books.

Baumgart, Winfried 1982. *Imperialism: The Idea and Reality of British and French Colonial Expansion, 1880–1914*, translated by Ben V. Mast. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bayly , C. A. 2004. *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Breuilly, John 2000. "Nationalism and the History of Ideas". *Proceedings of the BritishAcademy*, 105: 187–223.

Brubaker, Rogers 1992. *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Calhoun, Craig, Frederick Cooper, and Kevin W. Moore (eds.) 2006a. *Lessons of Empire: Imperial Histories and American Power*. New York: The New Press.

Calhoun, Craig, Frederick Cooper, and Kevin W. Moore (eds.) 2006b. "Introduction", in Calhoun et al 2006a: 1–15.

Carr, Raymond 2000. "Introduction". Pp.1–9. in. *Spain : A History*,edited by Raymond Carr. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Clark, Christopher 2006. *IronKingdom: The Rise and downfall of Prussia, 1600–1947*. London: Allen Lane.

Cohn, Bernard S. and Nicholas B Dirks 1988. "Beyond the Fringe: The Nation State, Colonialism, and the Technologies of Power". *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1 (2): 224–9.

Collins, James B. 1995. *The State in Early Modern France*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cooper, Frederick 2005. "States, Empires, and Political Imagination". Pp.153–203 in *Colonialism in Question*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Eliott, J. H. 1984. *Richelieu and Olivares*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eliott, J. H. 1992. "A Europe of Composite Monarchies". *Past and Present* 137: 48–71.

Elliott, J. H. 2006. *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in the Americas, 1492–1830*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Emerson, Rupert 1962. *From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Ferguson, Niall 2004. *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*. London: Penguin Books.

Ferguson, Niall 2005. *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*. New York: Penguin Books.

Fieldhouse, D. K. 1961. "Imperialism: A Historiographical Revision". *The Economic History Review* 14 (2): 187–209.

Folz, Robert 1969. *The Concept of Empire in Western Europe, from the Fifth to the Fourteenth Century*, translated by Sheila Ann Ogilvie. London: Edward Arnold.

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

Gellner, Ernest 1998. *Nationalism*. London: Phoenix.

Gorski, Philip. S. 2000. "The Mosaic Moment: An Early Modernist Critique of Modernist Theories of Nationalism". *American Journal of Sociology* 105 (5): 1428–68.

Gott, Richard 1989. "Little Englanders." Pp.90–102, Vol. 1, in *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, 3 volumes, edited by Raphael Samuel. London and New York: Routledge.

Greenfeld, Liah 1992. *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Hobsbawm, E. J. 1987. *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Hobsbawm, E. J. 1992. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, second edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hobsbawm, Eric 1994. *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914–1991*. London: Abacus.

Hobson, J. A. [1902] 1988. *Imperialism: A Study*, 3rd edition. London: Unwin Hyman.

Hopkins, A. G. 2002. "The History of Globalization– and the Globalization of History?". Pp.11–46 in *Globalization in History*, edited by A. G. Hopkins. London: Pimlico.

Jones, Colin 1999. *The Cambridge Illustrated History of France*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Horsman, Reginald 1981. *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1999. "The Lonely Superpower". *Foreign Affairs*, March–April: 35–49.

Kappeler, Andreas 2001. *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History*, translated by Alfred Clayton. Harlow, Essex: Longman.

Kaufmann, Eric P. (ed.) 2004. *Rethinking Ethnicity: Majority Groups and Dominant Minorities*. London and New York: Routledge.

Kedourie, Elie 1961. *Nationalism*. London: Hutchinson.

Kedourie, Elie 1971. "Introduction". Pp. 1–160 in *Nationalism in Asia and Africa*, edited by Elie Kedourie. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson

Koebner, Richard 1961. *Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Koenigsberger, Helmut 1987. "*Dominium Regale* or *Dominium Politicum et Regale*: Monarchies and Parliaments in Early Modern History". Pp. 1–25 in *Politicians and Virtuosi: Essays in Early Modern History*. London and Ronceverte: The Hambledon Press.

Kohn, Hans 1932. *Nationalism and Imperialism in the Hither East*. London: George Routledge and Sons.

Kumar, Krishan 2000. "Nation and Empire: English and British National Identity in Comparative Perspective". *Theory and Society* 29 (5): 578–608.

Kumar, Krishan 2003. *The Making of English National Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kumar, Krishan 2005. "When was the English Nation?". Pp. 137–56 in *When is the Nation: Towards an Understanding of Theories of Nationalism,* edited by Atsuko Ichijo and Gordana Uzelac. London and New York: Routledge.

Kuzio, Taras 2002. "The Myth of the Civic State". *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25 (1): 20–39.

Lal, Deepak 2004. *In Praise of Empires: Globalization and Order*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lichtheim, George 1974. *Imperialism*. Harmondswoth: Penguin Books.

Mack Smith, Denis 1954. *Cavour and Garibaldi: A Study in Political Conflict*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mack Smith, Denis 1960. "Italy", in J. P. T. Bury (ed.), *The New Cambridge Modern History, Volume X: The Zenith of European Power 1830–1870*, pp. 552–76. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

MacLachlan, A. 1996. " 'A Patriotic Scripture': The Making and Unmaking of English National Identity". *Parergon* 14 (1): 1–30.

Mann, Michael 2003. *Incoherent Empire*. London: Verso

Mann, Michael 2005. *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Marx, Anthony 2003. *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mehta, Uday Singh 1999.*Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Mommsen, Wolfgang J. 1978. "Power Politics, Imperialism and National Emancipation". Pp.121–40 in *Nationality and the Pursuit of National Independence*, edited by T. W. Moody. Belfast: The Appletree Press.

Mommsen, Wolfgang J. 1982. *Theories of Imperialism*, translated by P. S. Falla. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mommsen, Wolfgang J. 1990. "The Varieties of the Nation State in Modern History: Liberal, Imperialist, Fascist and Contemporary Notions of Nation and Nationality". Pp. 210–26 in *The Rise and Decline of the Nation State*, edited by Michael Mann. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Muldoon, James 1999. *Empire and Order: The Concept of Empire, 800–1800*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Münkler, Herfried 2005. *Imperien: Die Logic der Weltherrschaft – vom Alten Rom bis zu den Vereinigten Staaten.* Berlin: Rowohlt.

Muthu, Sankar 2003. *Enlightenment Against Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Naipaul, V. S. [1967] 1985. *The Mimic Men*. New York: Vintage.

O'Leary, Brendan 2002. "In Praise of Empires Past: Myths and Method of Kedourie's *Nationalism*". *New Left Review* 18: 106–30.

Osterhammel, Jürgen 1986. "Semi-Colonialism and Informal Empire in Twentieth-Century China: Towards a Framework of Analysis". Pp. 290–314 in *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities*, edited by Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel. London: Allen and Unwin.

Pagden, Anthony 1994. *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Pagden, Anthony 1995. *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c. 1500–c.1800*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Pagden, Anthony 2003. *Peoples and Empires*. New York: The Modern Library.

.Richardson, J. S. 1991. "*Imperium Romanum*: Empire and the Language of Power". *Journal of Roman Studies* 81 (1): 1–9.

Pitts, Jennifer 2005. *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Pocock, John 2005. "Empire, state and confederation: the War of American Independence as a crisis in multiple monarchy". Pp. 134–63 in *The Discovery of Islands: Essays in British History.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Porter, Bernard 2004. *The Absent- Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Renan, Ernest [1882] 2001. "What is a Nation?". Pp. 162–76 in *Nations and Identities: Classic Readings*, edited by Vincent P. Pecora. Malden, MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.

Russell, Conrad 1995. "Composite Monarchies in Early Modern Europe: The British and Irish Example". Pp. 133–46 in *Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History*, edited by Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer. London and New York: Routledge.

Schivelbusch, Wolfgang 2004. *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery*, translated by Jefferson Chase. London: Granta Books.

Schumpeter, Joseph [1919] 1974. "The Sociology of Imperialisms". Pp. 3–98 in *Imperialism and Social Classes: Two Essays*, translated by Heinz Norden. New York: Meridian Books.

Seeley , J. R. [1883] 1971. *The Expansion of England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Seton-Watson, Hugh 1964. "Nationalism and Multi-National Empires". Pp. 3–35 in *Nationalism and Communism: Essays 1946-1963*. New York: Praeger.

Smith, Anthony D. 1986. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Smith, Anthony D. 1991. *National Identity*. London: Penguin Books.

Smith, Anthony D. 2003. *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Smith, Anthony D. 2004. "Ethnic Cores and Dominant Ethnies". Pp. 17–30 in *Rethinking Ethnicity: Majority Groups and Dominant Minorities*, edited by Eric

P. Kaufmann. London and New York: Routledge.

Steinmetz, George 2005. "Return to Empire: The New U.S. Imperialism in Comparative Historical Perspective". *Sociological Theory* 23 (4): 339–67.

Stoler, Ann Laura and Frederick Cooper, 1997. "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda". Pp. 1–56 in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, edited by Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Teschke, Benno 2006. "Imperial Doxa from the Berlin Republic". *New Left Review* 39 (May–June): 128–40.

Thornton, A. P. 1968. *The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies: A Study in British Power*. New York: Anchor Books.

Ullmann, Walter 1979. " 'This Realm of England is an Empire'". *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 30: 175–203.

Weber, Eugen 1976. *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Weber, Max 1978. *Economy and Society,* Two Volumes, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, Volume Two. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wimmer, Andreas 2002. *Nationalist Exclusion and Ethnic Conflict: Shadows of Modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wood, Ellen Meiksins 2005. *Empire of Capital*. London and New York: Verso.

Wood, Greg 2001. "Inventing Empire in Ancient Rome". Pp. 311–22 in *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History,* edited by Susan E. Alcock, Terence N. D'Altroy, Kathleen D. Morrison, and Carla M. Sinopoli. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zimmer, Oliver 2003. *Nationalism in Europe 1890–1940*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

[1] Max Weber made a similar point in his contrast between the "striving for prestige" characteristic of "great powers" and mere "national pride": "such pride can be highly developed, as is the case among the Swiss and the Norwegians, yet it may actually be strictly isolationist and free from pretensions to political prestige" (Weber 1978: 911).

[2] One of the best accounts of the "American empire" – which she calls the "empire of capital" (Wood 2005) – recognizes the difference between this form of empire and the historic instances of empire, though she finds the origins of this new kind of imperialism in aspects of earlier British rule, for instance over Ireland. See also on this Mann (2003) and Steinmetz (2005); and for an excellent collection of essays comparing America with other forms of empire, see Calhoun et al (2006).

[3] I have similar objections to the discussion, which closely parallels Marx's and on which Marx draws , in Gorski (2000). See Kumar (2005).

[4] See also Pagden (1995: 12–13). Koebner (1961: 18–64) emphasizes the importance of the Italian humanists in restoring the original meaning of "lawful authority" to the term empire, thus allowing those states outside the Holy Roman Empire – which had more or less monopolized the concept of *imperium* during the Middle ages – to declare themselves empires. It is worth emphasizing nevertheless that the more modern meaning of empire can also be found in the classical period. Both the sense of empire as sovereign rule and its application to rule over a variety of peoples can be found in Roman usage from a relatively early time (Koebner 1961: 4–6, 11–16; Lichteheim 1974: 24–6; Richardson 1991: 1; Woolf 2001: 313).

[5] The general form of the argument that, like the emperor in his empire, the king was emperor in his own kingdom (*rex in regno suo erat imperator*), had long been deployed by the canon layers, especially in France, against the universalist claims of the Holy Roman Empire. See Folz (1969: 156–7, 160); Muldoon (1999: 143, 146).

[6] Some scholars have wished to distinguish between "composite monarchies" and "multiple kingdoms". Thus seventeenth century England can be said to be a composite monarchy because, with particular laws for such counties as Kent and the County Palatine of Chester, it "did not have a single uniform system of law characteristic of

the single state"; whereas James VI and I, as king of England, Scotland, and Ireland, ruled over a multiple kingdom, the kingdom that he – but not the English or Scottish Parliaments – termed "Britain". Conrad Russell, who makes this distinction, argues that "all multiple kingdoms are composite monarchies, but not all composite monarchies are multiple kingdoms" (1995: 133; see also Armitage 2000: 22). While the distinction may be useful for certain purposes, it is not one that has found favour with most commentators, who tend to use composite monarchy and multiple kingdom more or less as synonyms. See, e.g Pocock (2005).

It should hardly need pointing out that medieval states, even more than early-modern ones, were composite monarchies, and to that extent approximated to empires. As Muldoon says, giving the example of the twelfth-century English Angevin monarchy with its extensive territories in England, Wales, Ireland, France and elsewhere: "All the major medieval kingdoms, consisting as they did of a conglomeration of dynastic lands, were empires whether or not anyone chose to employ the term" (1999: 142).

[7] "The Frankish warriors came to see themselves as men 'to whom God has given victory as a fief.' They anticipated an expansionary future and developed what can only be called an expansionary mentality". By the late Middle Ages they provided kings and queens for eighty per cent of European kingdoms. "The penetration of the British Isles by French knights, the participation of the Burgundian aristocracy in the wars of the Reconquest and the dominance of Franks in the crusading ventures of the eastern Mediterranean had resulted in the establishment of new Frankish dynasties from Scotland to Cyprus". (Bartlett 1994: 43, 90).

[8] The Scots, it is true, unlike the Welsh and Irish, were never formally conquered by the English; but there is no doubt that the Union with Scotland in 1707 had strong elements of a shot-gun marriage about it; everyone knew that England was prepared to invade if the Scottish parliament rejected the union (see Kumar 2003: 135–6, and references there).

[9] The idea that France is a nation formed by conquest was clear to Ernest Renan. He reminds us of that uncomfortable fact in the context of his famous observation that "forgetfulness, and I shall even say historical error, form an essential factor in the creation of a nation." The French, like all other nations, forget, and must forget, that "unity is ever achieved by brutality. The union of Northern and Southern France was the result of an extermination, and of a reign of terror that lasted for nearly a hundred years" (Renan [1882] 2001: 166).

[10] The imperial ambitions of Castille were clear even before the union with Aragon in the fifteenth century. "Iberian unity, which remained a central political objective of the Christian kings as they moved south from Leon, found expression in terms of the recovery of the ancient Roman province of Hispania. In 1077 Alfonso VI was already using the title 'imperator constitutus super omnes Ispaniae nationes', and in 1135 his successor Alfonso VII actually had himself crowned 'Hispaniae Imperator'" (Pagden 1995: 41).

[11] For some interesting reflections on the imperial dimension of the nation-state, with special reference to France, "the most talked-about model of the nation-state", see Stoler and Cooper (1997: 22-3).

[12] Cf. Max Weber, who links the "prestige interests" of the great powers – which generally takes the form of a drive towards imperial expansion – with "the legend of a providential 'mission'", which he sees as a manifestation of

"the idea of a nation". Just as with empire, then, "those to whom the representatives of the [national] idea zealously turned were expected to shoulder this mission" (Weber 1978: 925).

[13] For these examples, see Kumar (2000) and the references therein. For a good discussion of the Christianizing mission, differently conceived, of the Spanish and British in the Americas, see Elliott (2006: 57–87, 184–218).

[14] The view of an association between imperialism and nationalism is a long-standing one – almost, one might say, the traditional one, at least for this period. Joseph Schumpeter, in an early account, thought that imperialism "does not *coincide* with nationalism and militarism, though it *fuses* with them by supporting them as it is supported by them" (Schumpeter [1919] 1974: 97). With the rise of Italian, German and Japanese fascism in the 1920s and 1930s, generally seen as a form of extreme nationalism and expressing itself in distinctly imperialistic form, the affinity between imperialism and nationalism seemed to many only to obvious. See on this especially Kohn (1932: 49–76) and Arendt (1958: 123–302). Several more recent writers take a similar view: see Lichtheim (1974: 81); Hobsbawm (1987: 158–61); Armitage (2000: 14); Pagden (2003: 132–8); Zimmer (2003: 35–38). D. K. Fieldhouse remarks that "the rise of the imperialist ideology, this belief that colonies were an essential attribute of any great nation, is one of the most astonishing facts of the period [1870–1914]". It was also, he says, "an international creed, with beliefs that seemed to differ very little from one country to another." He cites the German nationalist, the historian Heinrich von Treitschke, in 1879: "Every virile people has established colonial power [...] All great nations in the fulness of their strength have desired to set their mark upon barbarian lands and those who fail to participate in this great rivalry will play a pitiable role in the future to come. The colonizing impulse has become a vital question for every great nation" (Fieldhouse 1961: 207). Bernard Porter quotes Finland's president Paasikivi in 1940, "Alle Grossmächte sind imperialistisch" in support of the view that "nations turn to empire-building when they are large and powerful" (Porter 2004: 310).

The Marxist view of imperialism, which sees it as the "highest stage" of capitalism, also tends to go along with this view, since Lenin and others regarded imperialism as the necessary expression of the rivalry of the leading nation-states of the period as they competed for markets. But in the long run Lenin thought that nationalism, especially in the colonial world, would turn against imperialism and become the agency of its destruction. See on this Mommsen (1982: 29–65).

[15] A characteristic expression of the Little Englanders was William Cobbett's: "It is my business, and the business of every Englishman, to take care of England, and England alone [...] It is not our business to run about the world to look after people to set free; it is our business to look after ourselves" (in Gott 1989: 94).

[16] "While co-existent nationalities", says Hobson, "are capable of mutual aid involving no direct antagonism of interest, co-existent empires following each its own imperial career of territorial aggrandisement are natural necessary enemies" (Hobson [1902] 1988: 12).

[17] A number of recent works have re-stated this point about the exclusionary, and potentially murderous, tendency of nationalism – e.g. Wimmer (2002), Marx (2003), and Mann (2005).

[18] It is worth remembering that one of the first and most influential works in the revival of nationalist theory, Elie Kedourie's *Nationalism* (1961), was a passionate protest against nationalism, and that a later work (Kedourie 1971)

by him explicitly compares nations and empires, to the decided detriment of the former. See for a discussion of Kedourie's views, O'Leary (2002). There are also decidedly positive readings of empire in several recent works, particularly those concerned with "the American empire" (e.g. Ferguson 2004, 2005: esp. 24–6).

[19] Eric Hobsabwm has remarked that "the era from 1875 to 1914 may be called the Age of Empire not only because it developed a new kind of imperialism, but also for a much more old-fashioned reason. It was probably the period of modern world history in which the number of rulers officially calling themselves, or regarded by western diplomats as deserving the title of, 'emperors' was at its maximum." As Hobsawm notes, the title was claimed not just by the rulers of Germany, Austria, Russia, Turkey and Britain, but also China, Japan, Persia, Ethiopia and Morocco (Hobsbawm 1987: 56–7).

[20] Cf. the remarks of Bernard Cohn and Nicholas Dirks in emphasizing the wide-ranging imperial legacies in the contemporary world: "Colonialism played an active role in the cultural project of legitimation and in the technological development of new forms of state power. Colonialism also left active legacies in the form of the modal Western states, in the constitution of postcolonial relations between the West and the third world, and in the new histories and states that have been constructed in the twentieth century. Colonialism is too important a subject to be relegated either to the history of nineteenth century Europe on the one hand or to the negative nationalisms of third world studies on the other". Just as the European nation-state "was predicated on its own colonial experience", so too third world nationalism was a "response to colonial experience [which] reproduced (though with crucial differences) the European experience" (Cohn and Dirks 1988: 229).

This article will be coming out in a volume, edited by George Steinmetz, called "Sociology and Empire" (with Duke University Press).