

Romancing the Nation: The Reconciliation of the Individual and the Collective in Romantic
Nationalism

by

Elizabeth Della Zazzera
B.A. Honours, University of Ottawa, 2007

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of History

© Elizabeth Della Zazzera, 2009
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

Supervisory Committee

Romancing the Nation: The Reconciliation of the Individual and the Collective in Romantic
Nationalism

by

Elizabeth Della Zazzera
B.A. Honours, University of Ottawa, 2007

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Robert Alexander, (Department of History)
Supervisor

Dr. Gregory Blue, (Department of History)
Departmental Member

Dr. Perry Biddiscombe, (Department of History)
Departmental Member

Abstract

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Robert Alexander, (Department of History)

Supervisor

Dr. Gregory Blue, (Department of History)

Departmental Member

Dr. Perry Biddiscombe, (Department of History)

Departmental Member

The connection between Romanticism and nationalism, like most aspects of Romanticism, is complex and manifests in diverse ways. This project seeks to examine how Romanticism in Scotland, France and Germany could emphasize individualism and nationalism simultaneously, and seeks to elucidate the ways both these concepts were understood by Romantic scholars. It argues that although the connection between Romanticism and nationalism was not necessary, Romantic sensibilities were often compatible with nationalist theory. Romanticism can thus be said to have laid the theoretical groundwork for the possibility of nationalism, by emphasizing history, imagination and the importance of the collective. However, in all those things the Romantics also focused on the importance of individuals: lauding historical heroes, the imaginative genius of the scholar, and the fulfilment of the individual through belonging to a community. It further argues that the Romantics were influenced by the Enlightenment scholars' emphasis on the individual, but sought to move away from individualism as a universal principle toward an understanding of individualism that balanced uniqueness and belonging to a particular community. Moreover, it contends that Romantic nationalism can be distinguished from later nineteenth century integral nationalism, by its relative emphasis on the individual, diversity and cosmopolitanism, but that it contained within it elements of, and therefore perhaps the seeds for, more virulent nationalism.

Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
Acknowledgments.....	v
Dedication.....	vi
Chapter 1 – Introduction: The Historiography of Romantic Nationalism.....	1
Chapter 2 – The Past is This Self-Same Country: Romantic Concepts of the National, the Individual and the Historical.....	50
Chapter 3 – The Wholeness of the Individual and the Individuation of the Whole: The Idea of the Particular and the Relationship between the Whole and the Part in Romantic Thought.....	87
Chapter 4 – Nationalism in the Middle: The Nation as the Ideal Unifier of the Historical Particular and the Universal.....	129
Conclusion.....	168
Bibliography.....	174

Acknowledgments

I would like to offer my sincerest thanks to everyone who helped make completing this thesis possible. To my friends and family for their constant support and their willingness to act as sounding boards for my more confused ideas. To Heather Waterlander for cheerfully helping me to negotiate the necessary bureaucracy and paperwork. To Dr. Elizabeth Vibert for all of her guidance and support. To SSHRC and the University of Victoria for generously funding my Master's. To Dr. Perry Biddiscombe for helping me to better grasp the minutia of nationalism scholarship. To Dr. Gregory Blue for insisting that I question my assumptions and qualify my generalizations. His erudite criticism, always delivered with kindness and enthusiasm for the subject matter, saved this thesis from a number of more egregious errors. Finally, to Dr. Robert Alexander, whom I cannot thank enough for his constant support, extremely helpful advice and suggestions, painstaking editorial work, and willingness to put up with my more irritating tendencies toward the verbose and repetitive. Without him, this thesis would certainly have been a poorer piece of scholarship. While none of these can be blamed when my work errs or falls short, they certainly deserve credit wherever and whenever it succeeds. Thank you all so much. It has certainly been educational.

Dedication

For my family.

Chapter 1 – Introduction: The Historiography of Romantic Nationalism

Although the contemporary world is often considered to be post-nationalist or internationalist, we in fact inhabit a world wherein the concept of nation has very much become naturalized. Contemporary conception of the world is closely tied to the idea of the nation as the fundamental unit of organization and analysis. Defined in this limited way the contemporary world is rife with ‘nationalists’ – people, who, in essence, believe in the existence and functional necessity of nations and have never questioned whether there might be another way to organize the world. As Ernest Gellner notes, it is relatively easy to conceive of a time without states, or a person without a state, but very difficult to imagine a person without a nation. He argues that “having a nation is not an inherent attribute of humanity, but it has now come to appear as such.”¹ Nationalism is often taken as an emotive term, relating closely to patriotism and the desire to exalt one’s personal nation. While that is certainly its most common usage, at its very base nationalism as a political ideology is about belief in the existence and autonomy of nations. At the very least being a nationalist in the emotive sense requires that one uphold such an ideology.

In its earliest stages, nationalism is often linked with Romanticism, an artistic and political movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.² However, the connection between the two has not often been the topic of scholarly study, and it has been particularly infrequent in more recent scholarship. This is true both in works on nationalism and in ones on Romanticism. Nationalism scholarship is focused more on power dynamics than ideology and culture, and works on Romanticism are often concerned primarily with literature.

¹ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2nd Edition, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 6. [first edition 1983].

² There are exceptions to the perception of nations and nationalism as emerging in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. For example, Liah Greenfeld places the emergence of nationalism in sixteenth-century England. Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992), 6-7.

Literary scholars are in fact more commonly the authors of works on Romanticism than are historians. With respect to nationalism, much of the scholarship has a distinct political science perspective, which seeks to unveil the truth behind nationalism, rather than describe its development and particular manifestations. By examining scholarly work on both nationalism and on Romanticism, one can extrapolate the ways in which the two phenomena have been discussed congruently, and determine an approach for future study that makes use of the lessons learned from an examination of the scholarship. Such is the purpose of this introduction.

Nationalism

It turns first to the historiography of nationalism, with a particular emphasis on how and when studies of nationalism have been able to integrate discussions of the cultural aspects of nationalism, as opposed to accounts that focus on nationalism as being fundamentally and primarily political. Scholarly interest in nationalism emerged on the heels of nationalism's increasing importance in world politics. Thus, the study of the phenomenon developed in tandem with growing lay awareness of nations and nationalism in everyday life. Nationalism has played such an important role in modern history that Hans Kohn has taken to referring to the modern period as the 'Age of Nationalism.'³

The study of nationalism has certainly changed over time; the earliest accounts tend to be largely narrative descriptions of how nationalism as an ideology has developed over time, and more contemporary accounts tend to be more concerned with determining the 'reality behind the myth' of nationalism. As a consequence, more contemporary accounts eschew discussions of ideology or culture, arguing that nations are modern, contingent, and invented,

³ Hans Kohn, *The Age of Nationalism: The First Era of Global History* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962). Kohn is often considered the 'father' of the modern study of nationalism (although an argument could easily be made that Carlton J. Hayes was just as pioneering) and although he was by no means the first to study it, he remains quite influential. Andre Liebich, "Searching for the perfect nation: the itinerary of Hans Kohn (1891–1971)" *Nations and Nationalism* 12, no. 4 (October 2006) 579–596.

and not ancient and natural as nationalism claims. There are exceptions to this general trend, most notably a group of contemporary scholars (including Anthony Smith and John Armstrong) often referred to as the ‘new primordialists’ or, the term Smith prefers, ‘perennialists,’ who emphasize that nationalism had to draw on roots of existing culture, even if it was selective or inventive with respect to those cultural roots. This is not to say that older studies or ‘new primordialist’ accounts simply accept nationalist myths wholesale, or that the contemporary accounts have no appreciation for the role of culture in nationalism, but rather it is a question of emphasis.

In general, however, contemporary accounts seek to unmask what they perceive as nationalist myths in order to find ‘true nationalism’ – which they present as stripped of its purely cultural elements and imbued instead with a political activism that is more about power than sentiment. These scholars seek to understand nationalism from a vantage point outside of the nationalist world we inhabit, in order to develop an ‘objective’ non-nationalist theory of nations and nationalism.⁴ In doing so they often present nationalism as being none of the things that nationalism claims to be: ancient, natural, a movement of the people, and unique. They instead stress the novelty of nations and nationalism, their artifice, the elitism of its earliest movements, and the commonalities of nationalisms the world-over. In Ernest Gellner’s words, “nationalism is not what it seems, and above all it is not what it seems to itself.”⁵ The earliest studies of nationalism, along with the new primordialist accounts, tend

⁴ An ‘objective’ theory of nationalism need not mean a theory that only looks at external material factors (those outside the ‘subject’) as the source of nationalism, although there are certainly scholars who emphasize material non-idealist (and in that sense non-subjective) factors to the exclusion of all others: notably, Tom Nairn who argues that “the subjectivity of nationalism is an important objective fact about it; but it is a fact which, in itself, merely reposes the question of origins.” Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (London: NLB, 1977) 335. See also, Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983). Rather ‘objective’ is here simply used to mean ‘outside the ideology of nationalism,’ and some contemporary scholars seek to achieve this objective standpoint outside of nationalist rhetoric precisely by emphasizing the role of the subject and collective imagination (and are in that sense ‘subjective’). For example, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006).

⁵ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 56.

toward the opposite. They are more willing to take nationalism at face-value, and to incorporate into the study of nationalism those elements that popular nationalist discourse values. As a consequence they are more likely to accept those self-same characteristics that nationalism would appropriate for itself. This divergence also means that for the most part it is earlier works that tend to engage with nationalism's origins in Romanticism. This is because they are more willing to engage directly with nationalist rhetoric, such as notions of cultural revival and the rediscovery of folk literature, which are precisely those aspects of Romanticism most closely linked with nationalism.

Neither approach is without its problems. Newer works often run the risk of trivializing those genuinely cohesive aspects of nationalism (which are so often cultural), and reducing the phenomenon to one predicated on the reciprocal incidences of self-interest and coercion – whereby people buy into nationalism because it is in their best interest to do so, and encourage others to follow suit for the same reason. Contrarily, earlier studies have a tendency to overlook the more material and incidental factors involved in the construction of nationalities, instead focusing on those elements that are considered to be intrinsic to nationalism. These differences in approach tend to be tempered the more the author emphasizes the notion that nations and nationalism are founded on attitudes or ideas. Such an emphasis can make it possible to be critical of popular nationalist discourse while not discounting the importance of that discourse in the minds of individuals.

The conception of nations as existing in the minds of nationalists is an important trend that exists throughout nationalism scholarship. While it was Benedict Anderson who most famously argued this in his 1983 *Imagined Communities*, there are hints of it in earlier works. For example, Hans Kohn in 1944 wrote that “nationalism is first and foremost a state of mind, an act of consciousness,”⁶ but that this is not enough to define a nation, because it does not

⁶ Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background* (New York: MacMillan

distinguish it from other groups. Where Kohn's insistence on nationalism as a "state of mind"⁷ differs most sharply from that of Anderson or subsequent scholars is in how he then applies this understanding to his study of nationalism. Rather than looking for those elements that would encourage the masses of people to adopt the notion that they belong to a nation that should form a political unit, he outlines the ideological development of such a state of mind, providing essentially an intellectual history of nationalist theory. In contrast, Anderson's concern is with how the members of any given nation imagine themselves as part of a community, and his discussion therefore centers more on the role popular symbols (perhaps most famously the tomb of the unknown soldier) and readily accessible print media play in the imagining of these communities.⁸

A more recent example of the importance placed on imagination is Anthony Smith's *National Identity*, wherein he notes that it does not matter particularly whether or not a nation actually has a common *ethnie* (ethno-cultural foundation), but rather that they believe that they do. In the same way, external signifiers of *ethnie* like language, skin, hair or eye colour, and bone structure are not so important in themselves, as for the significance attributed to them. While Smith recognizes that *ethnie* is not the primordial phenomena nationalist mythology claims, he also insists that the mutability of ethnic boundaries can be overstated, because they do persist over time and despite boundary changes.⁹ This is a clear example of how an emphasis on the role of identity and imagination can strike a balance between skeptical and gullible understandings of nationalism.

Despite any common appreciation for the role of imagination in nationalism, earlier and more recent studies of nationalism have some striking differences. Some aspects of

Company, 1961), 10. [first edition 1944].

⁷ Kohn, *Idea of Nationalism*, 18.

⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 9, 36-37.

⁹ Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1991), 22-24.

nationalism that these scholars tend to disagree on are: whether nations are natural or fabricated, whether they are entirely modern or have roots in their histories, and whether it is more fruitful to study them as mass or intellectual movements.

Nations: Artificial or Natural?

While there are virtually no scholars who claim that nations are completely ‘natural,’ there are degrees by which they emphasize the socially constructed nature of nations. Carlton Hayes, for example, writing in 1926, gives the impression that it is more or less natural for humans to adopt group identities, and to feel affinity for the place they were born, or the place or group they feel they belong to. He contends that “it has been a mark of nurture, if not of nature, for human beings since the dawn of history to possess some consciousness of nationality, some feelings that make its members akin among themselves and alien from all other groups,” but adds that only in modern times has this become true modern nationalism, wherein people are taught to believe that their first and last loyalty is to the nation, and that nations should form the basis for autonomous political and cultural communities.¹⁰ Thus Hayes maintains that although humans are social animals who tend to live in groups, those groups need not be nations, and in that sense nationalism is not ‘natural,’ even though the inclination toward group living, and the recognition of the legitimacy of other groups, seems to be a natural inclination of humans.¹¹

Similarly, Hans Kohn argues that “there is a natural tendency in man – and by ‘natural tendency’ we mean a tendency which, having been produced by social circumstances from time practically immemorial, appear to us as natural – to love his birthplace or the place of his childhood.”¹² He argues that people prefer the familiar, and as a consequence are easily proud of their heritage, even believing in its superiority over all others. These natural feelings, he

¹⁰ Carlton J.H. Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), 26. [first edition 1926].

¹¹ Hayes, *Historical Evolution*, 292, 2.

¹² Kohn, *Idea of Nationalism*, 4.

contends, are not nationalism: they are the feelings out of which nationalism is formed, but nationalism itself is qualitatively different from these other kinds of loyalties and affinities.¹³ Thus, while neither Kohn nor Hayes claims that nations themselves are natural or have always existed, they present the impetus toward them as fundamentally human.

Comparably, the ‘new primordialist’ John Armstrong, while recognizing the novelty of political nationalism, insists on seeing nationalism as part of the trend of ethnic identification that takes place over various time periods, arguing that a *longue durée* perspective makes it clear that nationalism is part “of a cycle of ethnic consciousness.”¹⁴ Armstrong emphasizes that identity creation is a natural human endeavour, and he sees the creation of nations as an extension of that. He clearly demonstrates his emphasis on cultural factors in identity creation when he writes that “it is the symbolic rather than the material aspects of common fate that are decisive for identity. Moreover, symbols need not directly reflect the ‘objectively’ most important elements of the material way of life even when it does constitute a sharply differentiating underlying factor.”¹⁵

Anthony Smith presents a similar view, arguing that the myth that the nation is eternal or ancient is at the center of nationalism. However, he argues that it is precisely the centrality of this myth that means the ethnic origins of nations should be studied, because it is from pre-modern ethnic identities that modern nationalism draws its myths (scholars like Gellner, on the other hand, would contend that the fact that it is a myth renders it irrelevant.) Smith seeks a definition of ethnicity that lies between the extremes of natural biological fact and mutable social construct, contending that “an ethnic group is a type of cultural collectivity, one that emphasizes the role of myths of descent and historical memories, and that is recognized by one

¹³ Kohn, *Idea of Nationalism*, 6, 8-9.

¹⁴ John A. Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 4.

¹⁵ Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism*, 9. Also implicit in this statement is the idea of nations as a logical consequence of the identity groupings that came before them, as opposed to marking a decisive shift and a wholly new form of organization. The idea that nations are constructed is very closely tied to the idea that nations are aspects of modernity.

or more cultural differences like religion, customs, language or institutions.”¹⁶ Smith contends that while it is certainly true that nations and nationalism are modern, they “are no more ‘invented’ than other kinds of culture, social organization or ideology. If nationalism is part of the ‘spirit of the age’ it is equally dependent upon earlier motifs, visions and ideals.”¹⁷ Thus, this ‘perennialist’ position strikes a balance between an entirely naturalist and an entirely constructivist view of the nation. However, these scholars do seem to emphasize the ways in which nations are natural, in protest against positions that, in their opinion, overemphasize the created nature of nations.

In contrast, John Breuilly argues that those qualities that nationalists choose as the ‘natural’ characteristics of the nation are often arbitrary and self-serving. He contends that while nationalists claim to be promoting the ‘true spirit’ of the nation, even the choice of which units will and will not be nations is arbitrary, because “groups and languages can be categorized in many other ways.”¹⁸ It is the nationalists who claim the national groups are natural, with the intimation that that which is unnatural is somehow ‘bad.’ However, Breuilly is also unwilling to go so far as to say that the particulars of nationalism are entirely arbitrary (unlike Gellner, discussed below), instead arguing that “nationalist ideology is neither an expression of national identity (at least there is no rational way of showing that to be the case) nor the arbitrary invention of nationalists for political purposes. It arises out of the need to make sense of complex social and political arrangements. But that need is itself shaped both by intellectual traditions and the sorts of responses which any intellectual scheme evokes when it is activated in some way or another.”¹⁹ Thus nationalist rhetoric has some connection with reality, but it transforms that reality into something new for its purposes. He argues that

¹⁶ Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1991), 20.

¹⁷ Smith, *National Identity*, 71.

¹⁸ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 341.

¹⁹ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 343.

nationalists collapse the divide between politics and culture, and in doing so legitimize the politicization of a number of ideas and practices that would never heretofore have been politicized. These ideas and practices then are presented as political values. However, he maintains that one should not then believe the nationalist rhetoric that nationalism is the “expression of these values in political form,” because nationalism in fact transforms them and selects them particularly.²⁰ This is a clear example of how later scholars have emphasized the disconnect between the reality of nationalism and the claims nationalism makes about itself.

This notion is heightened in Gellner’s presentation of the development of nationalism, where his emphasis on socio-political over mythical or identity factors encourages a conception of nations as human inventions. He stresses the divergence between what nationalism purports to be and what it is in practice, maintaining that “the self-image of nationalism involves the stress of folk, folk-lore, popular culture, etc. In fact, nationalism becomes important precisely when these things become artificial.”²¹ He specifically challenges the idea that nations are natural, arguing that they are constructs created to deal with the artificiality of industrial society, noting that nations were not needed in the ‘natural’ pre-industrial agricultural world.²² He also avers that for most of human history ‘nations’ (which he defines as essentially linguistic-cultural groups) have not been political units.²³ He argues that the lack of congruence between political and cultural units was not an issue for people, because in large part the linguistic and cultural dimensions were relatively unimportant. It was only when language became more important that nationalism could emerge.²⁴

Gellner’s consideration of the artificiality of nations thus centres around a discussion of how language became privileged within societies. He argues that as universal literacy became

²⁰ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 349.

²¹ Gellner, *Thought and Change*, 162.

²² Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), 51.

²³ Gellner, *Thought and Change*, 152.

²⁴ Gellner, *Thought and Change*, 152.

recognized as a good, it was nation-state-wide education systems that had to realize that good.²⁵ He notes that in European societies nationalist languages could themselves be fabricated (chosen from amongst dialects, for example) and then propagated through the education system, eventually overturning local languages used in the home as people gained a vested interest in knowing the official language.²⁶ As it became politically necessary to be educated, Gellner contends, people became nationalists – because the education system had to be in a language, and languages are necessarily national. He writes “men do not in general become nationalists from sentiment or sentimentality, atavistic or not, well-based or myth-founded: they become nationalists through genuine, objective, practical necessity, however obscurely recognized.”²⁷ This is particularly important because in his emphasis on the artificiality of nations, Gellner takes what is generally considered a cultural factor in nationalism (language) and discusses it in political terms. Language, for Gellner, is important because in modern times education in the national language becomes necessary for full citizenship, and people become willing to adopt this language and discard the local idiosyncrasies of their dialect not out of a sense of cohesion, but for political expediency: in order to secure their positions within political society.

Hobsbawm’s approach to language is similar, and also betrays an understanding of nations as human constructs rather than natural or organic units. Hobsbawm specifically says that he agrees with Gellner’s argument for the artificiality of nationalism.²⁸ In particular, he notes that national languages are nearly always constructed, and as such are somewhat

²⁵ Gellner, *Thought and Change*, 159-160. “Time was, when the minimal political unit was determined by the preconditions of defense or economy: it is now determined by the preconditions of education.” (159)

²⁶ Gellner, *Thought and Change*, 162.

²⁷ Gellner, *Thought and Change*, 160.

²⁸ E.J. Hobsbawm. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 9. He quotes Gellner, “Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as an inherent . . . political destiny, are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures; *that* is a reality.”

artificial, or in some cases wholly invented. Generally, this involved choosing one regional idiom over all others, which are then downgraded to dialects.²⁹ Hobsbawm emphasizes the practicalities of nation-creation, contending that it was important for political elites to promote national sentiment when increased democratization and the development of a military that required mass participation meant that more common people became involved politically. The more political people became, the less they accepted wholesale the rule of their ‘social betters’ and as a consequence parties had to vie for their support, and did so by appealing to their cohesion as a people.³⁰ Thus, for Hobsbawm promoting nationalism was not about an organic attachment to an ethnic identity, but was rather a way to ensure stability in the uncertain times following the French Revolution, as well as a way to justify large administrations that would protect and promote capitalist economics.³¹ He does recognize that states had to build on some pre-existing cohesive sentiment, but contends that although that sentiment was based on ideology, the state’s notion of loyalty was based on politics and citizenship, and involved privileging one group over all others, and claiming it represented the ‘nation.’³² Hobsbawm in fact denies the existence of truly popular ‘proto-nationalism’ (which is a sentiment he contends was limited to elites) and emphasizes the discrepancy between the reality and the mythology of nationalism, arguing that “as always, the content of nineteenth-century national propaganda is an unreliable guide to what the rank and file of the common people actually thought before they began to adhere to the national cause.”³³

Because of his focus on identity Anderson challenges this emphasis on the ‘falsity’ of nations and nationalism. He contends that Gellner has taken emphasis on the novelty and contingency of nations too far, saying that “Gellner is so anxious to show that nationalism

²⁹ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 54.

³⁰ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 82-84.

³¹ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 85.

³² Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 94.

³³ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 76.

masquerades under false pretences that he assimilates ‘invention’ to ‘fabrication’ and ‘falsity,’ rather than to ‘imagining’ and ‘creation.’”³⁴ Thus, according to Anderson, Gellner’s shortsightedness is in seeing duplicity where there is collective imagining. This does not mean that Anderson argues that nations are natural, which is made very clear in his discussion of their modernity, but rather he takes very seriously the fact that nations are perceived as natural, because in large part, he contends, it is their perceived organicity that gives nationalism so much power. Because the cultural ties uniting a nation are perceived as unchosen, and therefore natural, they are also seen as disinterested.³⁵ Anderson argues that it is precisely because the nation is without interest that it can demand sacrifice. He notes, “dying for one’s country, which usually one does not choose, assumes a moral grandeur which dying for the Labour Party, the American Medical Association, or perhaps even Amnesty International can not rival, for these are all bodies one can join or leave at easy will.”³⁶ He argues that language holds important sway in European national identities precisely because language always feels natural and primordial, and creates a sense of ‘unisonance’ – that all are united in language.³⁷ The irony is of course that a nation conceived in language, rather than blood, can always be joined through a process of naturalization, because in principle “anyone can learn any language.”³⁸ This is an excellent example of Anderson’s appreciation that both the ‘realities’ and the ‘mythologies’ of nationalism are important to understanding the phenomenon.

Nations: The Modernity Debate

Related quite closely to the debate over whether nations are natural or fabricated, is the debate over what role history and the past have on the foundation of nations and nationalism.

Nationalism is almost universally conceived as having emerged in the modern period – the late

³⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

³⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 143.

³⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 144.

³⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 145.

³⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 134.

eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Modern nationalism is nearly always distinguished from earlier identities and forms of attachment by its express interest in the political. Modern nationalism seeks to unite the nation with the political unit. Where the accounts differ is in how much they argue these modern nations owe to their pre-national pasts, and how much they are about the invention of something new. Scholars have often been struck by the dual nature of nations and nationalism – as both regressive and progressive, backward looking and forward looking. One of the earliest and most oft-quoted works on nationalism is Ernest Renan’s 1882 address at the Sorbonne “Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?”³⁹ Although most famous for having said that the nation is “une plébiscite de tous les jours” Renan does not in fact claim that the nation is formed solely on the will of the people, but that it also requires a history, a shared heritage.⁴⁰ This idea of nations as both backward and forward looking is a strong theme throughout much of the literature on nationalism.

With respect to the foundation of nations, earlier studies are more willing to see nations and nationalism as partly founded on ‘pre-nationalist’ conditions and sentiments, rather than rejecting these sentiments as falsehoods created by nationalist mythology. Thus Hans Kohn contends that “nationalities are created out of ethnographic and political elements when nationalism breathes life into the form built by preceding centuries.”⁴¹ The ‘new-primordialist’ school is based precisely on the idea that nations, although modern, have roots in the past. As the title of his book, *Nations Before Nationalism*, implies, Armstrong defines nationalism as a political phenomenon, but he emphasizes the fact that political nationalism of modern times was made possible because it emerged out of a tradition that privileged the creation of group identities and the fragmentation of society into separate polities.⁴² Thus he does not tie his

³⁹ Ernest Renan, *Qu’est-ce qu’une nation? Et autres essais politiques*, ed. Joël Roman (London: Presses Pocket, 1997).

⁴⁰ Renan, *Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?*, 55, 54.

⁴¹ Kohn, *Idea of Nationalism*, 16.

⁴² Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism*, 298-299.

discussion of the origins of nations to an examination of the emergence of modernity, but rather he focuses on the roots of what he terms ‘ethnic identity’ and *mythomoteur* – which he defines as that which “sustains a polity and enables it to create an identity beyond that which can be imposed by force or purchased by peace and prosperity.”⁴³ This is distinct from Hobsbawm’s discussion of proto-nationalism precisely because it emphasizes continuity between the past and the present. Moreover, even when he discusses the proto-national, Hobsbawm emphasizes the political aspects, contending that the “most decisive criterion of proto-nationalism, [was] the consciousness of belonging or having belonged to a lasting political entity,”⁴⁴ while Armstrong emphasizes that the consciousness of ethnic identity is more than mere politics. He avers that “myth, symbol, communication and a cluster of associate attitudinal factors are usually more persistent than purely material concerns,” and contends that even concrete factors like geographical boundaries are often more important as symbols than as physical constraints.⁴⁵

Anthony Smith, in *The Ethnic Origin of Nations* (1986), presents a similar understanding of the modernity debate (his work is highly influenced by Armstrong’s.)⁴⁶ He argues that one cannot understand modern political nationalism without looking at the roots of national identity, contending that one cannot ignore “the ubiquitous yearnings of nations in search of roots in an ethnic past,” and that studies of modern nations and nationalism must take history seriously.⁴⁷ On the other hand he also indicates that modern nations are clearly different from earlier forms of collective identity.⁴⁸ Thus he argues that the modernist position must be tempered by examining the roots of nations in earlier forms of identity, which he defines in

⁴³ Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism*, 293.

⁴⁴ A consciousness he argues was limited to the political elites. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 73.

⁴⁵ Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism*, 9.

⁴⁶ Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origin of Nations* (New York: Blackwell, 1986), 2.

⁴⁷ Smith, *Ethnic Origin*, 5.

⁴⁸ Smith, *Ethnic Origin*, 11.

terms of cultural symbols and histories.⁴⁹ He contends that the durability of such identities and their transformation into modern nationalisms is not a result of their political, economic or geographic arrangement, but rather of their ‘myth-symbol’ complexes, which he maintains embody “the corpus of beliefs and sentiments which the guardians of ethnicity preserve, diffuse and transmit to future generations.”⁵⁰ Moreover, Smith disagrees with Gellner’s contention that the modern nation’s attachments to its *narodnik* elements are spurious, arguing that modern nations have a dual orientation in that they are developing toward a political and economic future, while looking back to a cultural past.⁵¹ As with Armstrong, Smith’s appreciation of the role of culture in identity creation allows for an understanding of modern nationalism as not radically divorced from the past with which nationalists claim continuity.

He puts this very clearly in his later work *National Identity* (1991):

If the nation seems in many ways modern, it is also deep-rooted. The nationalists were guilty of telescoping history, but they were not altogether mistaken. They grasped that if a nation, however modern, is to survive in this modern world it must do so on two levels: the socio-political and the cultural-psychological. What after all is the *raison d’être* of any *nation* (as opposed to state), if it is not also the cultivation of its unique (or allegedly unique) culture values.⁵²

Anthony Smith notes that if modernist scholars are correct that nations and nationalism are both entirely modern constructs, then the conditions that brought about nations and nationalism cannot have existed in any pre-modern period. However, he insists that this position assumes that the ‘nation’ requires the mobilization of the mass of the population, which Smith contends is a problematic and western-centric position, yet one that is not entirely avoidable.⁵³

In contrast, Hobsbawm’s emphasis is on nations as novel, and he insists on the inherent differences between modern national sentiment and earlier group identities. He says that while modern political nationalism was able to draw upon pre-existing collective sentiments, those

⁴⁹ Smith, *Ethnic Origin*, 14-15.

⁵⁰ Smith, *Ethnic Origin*, 15.

⁵¹ Smith, *Ethnic Origin*, 152.

⁵² Smith, *National Identity*, 69-70.

⁵³ Smith, *National Identity*, 44.

sentiments were merely ‘proto-nationalist,’ and cannot be seen as equivalent to modern nationalism precisely because they have no necessary relation to a politico-territorial unit, which Hobsbawm maintains is the foundation of the modern nation (which is necessarily political).⁵⁴ He notes, for example, that although Jewish people, who certainly conceived themselves as a group, had lived scattered and under foreign rule since the Babylonian exile, this did not translate into desire for a national state until nationalism was invented in the nineteenth-century.⁵⁵

Gellner’s discussion of nationalist movements in *Thought and Change* provides the most striking example of the tendency of contemporary scholars to downplay ‘pre-nationalist’ identities and groupings. Gellner notes that in nationalist movements there is always a debate between supporting modernization (which is generally westernization)⁵⁶ or a *narodnik* return to tradition and ‘the people’ movement.⁵⁷ However, Gellner rejects this debate, saying that all nationalist movements are in fact modernizing, and simply use the trapping of traditional culture in order to support their new political unit.⁵⁸ Thus for Gellner this emphasis on modernization leads to a de-emphasis on the particularities of culture, in favour of an emphasis on its functionality. Gellner argues that the specific cultural trappings are a “more or less spurious” aspect of nationalism,⁵⁹ in direct contrast with popular nationalist discourse, which tends to emphasize the *narodnik* elements. Interestingly, Gellner notes that his debate between modernization or *narodnik* is essentially the debate between rationalists of the Enlightenment and Romantics, and he completely rejects the position of the Romantics as false and contingent.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 46.

⁵⁵ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 47.

⁵⁶ Gellner interestingly talks of the Enlightenment scholars as the first ‘westernizers,’ in the sense that they created the west that would then be copied in attempts to westernize. Gellner, *Thought and Change*, 170.

⁵⁷ Gellner, *Thought and Change*, 171.

⁵⁸ Gellner, *Thought and Change*, 171.

⁵⁹ Gellner, *Thought and Change*, 171.

⁶⁰ Gellner, *Thought and Change*, 171.

However, what Gellner rejects as arbitrary and contingent are the particular manifestations of nationalism, rather than the ideology of nationalism itself. He argues that it is not true that nationalism would not have been invented “if only those damned busy-body interfering Europeans thinkers, not content to leave well alone, had not concocted it and fatefully injected it into the bloodstream of otherwise viable political communities.”⁶¹ He insists that while nationalism is not what it claims to be, and the cultures it revives are arbitrarily selected or entirely invented, it, as an ideology distinct from its particular manifestations, “has very very deep roots in our shared current condition, is not at all contingent, and will not easily be denied.”⁶² This emphasis on the arbitrary nature of the particulars of nationalism ensures Gellner’s disinterest in discussing the minutia of Romantic (or any other manifestation of) nationalism. Certainly this is understandable given that his focus is on understanding the phenomenon of nationalism as a whole; however one can also question whether such an approach is the best way to gain a complete understanding of nationalism.

This is not to say that none of the scholars emphasizing the novelty of nations do not also see how it is rooted in the past, simply that this is not their emphasis. For example, in *Imagined Communities*, Anderson points to the contrast between the historians’ objective view of nations as modern, and the nationalists’ subjective view of them as ancient, as one of the great paradoxes of nationalism.⁶³ In many ways Anderson’s discussion of the modernity of nations (which he firmly upholds) is an attempt to moderate this paradox. While his viewpoint in many ways fits quite closely with those of Gellner and Hobsbawm, because he too sees

⁶¹ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 55.

⁶² Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 55. Gellner sees nationalism as tied up with education. He argues that because the industrial world requires a consistent culture and language to allow for rapid and easy communication, the government had to set up a monopoly on education; such that industrial society is formulated entirely around a system of education, and by controlling education the state controls culture and thus shapes the nation.

⁶³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 5.

nations as modern constructs that emerged as a response to the political and economic context of modernity, it also differs considerably in some respects. For example, he is able to take seriously both those ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ causes of nationalism. He emphasizes both the breakdown of earlier forms of identity as well as the introduction of ‘print-capitalism’ (which allowed for the creation of new identities as it united large numbers of people) as creating the conditions necessary for the emergence of nationalism.⁶⁴ Anderson argues that the combination of print culture and capitalist economics created the incentives for a wide diffusion of printed material in the national language, but that this cannot fully explain the emergence of nations, as nations are not simply linguistic groups (seeing as not all nations are unilingual and as some languages are not unique to a single nation.)⁶⁵ This is a clear example of how Anderson’s focus on identity allows him to unite cultural and political factors, and to be both critical and cognizant of the importance of nationalist ‘myths.’

John Breuilly also presents a somewhat nuanced position on the question of the modernity of nations. He admits that “nationalism clearly builds upon some sense of a cultural identity, even if it is the major creator of that sense.”⁶⁶ He recognizes that nationalism is related to the emergence of modern communications and politics as well as a world economy, but emphasizes that nationalism cannot be specifically linked to a particular culture or economy or class, because nationalism is first and foremost a form of politics.⁶⁷

Studying Nationalism as Politics or Ideology

It is certainly a tendency of the more recent scholars to treat nationalism as a generic movement wherein its specifics are more or less arbitrary and therefore unnecessary to study. Benedict Anderson contends that once modern nations were created they became ‘modular’

⁶⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 36.

⁶⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 46.

⁶⁶ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 35-36.

⁶⁷ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 35-36.

and were as such transplanted to a variety of cultures and political climates, in a process he calls ‘piracy.’⁶⁸ Anne-Marie Thiesse similarly notes that the result of the collective fabrication involved in the creation of national identities is not a unique mold for each nation, but rather a sort of ‘do-it-yourself’ kit of those things necessary for a group to be a nation.⁶⁹ In *Nations and Nationalism*, Gellner outlines the development of nationalism in the fictional society of Ruritania, saying that it is a “characteristic scenario of the evolution of nationalism,”⁷⁰ demonstrating his contention that the construction of nationalism is very similar wherever it takes place – because the substance of the culture being ‘revived’ in response to the upheavals of industrial society is irrelevant. What matters is that it occurred.⁷¹ This in part explains their tendency not to discuss particular manifestations of nationalism, and particularly not Romanticism, as it was certainly a movement that emphasized particularity, and embraced a nationalism often more cultural than political.

In contrast, Anthony Smith argues that nationalism is chameleonic, always taking its “colour from its context,” and that “nationalism-in-general is merely a lazy historian’s escape from the arduous task of explaining the influence of this or that particular nationalist idea, argument or sentiment in its highly specific context.”⁷² Certainly nationalist ideologues throughout history did not believe that the cultures they revived or called up to support their belief in the nation were arbitrary or invented. Consequently, understanding the beliefs and motivations of these individuals seems key to understanding the forms that nationalism has

⁶⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 4. Although, he also emphasizes how nationalism changed as it moved from culture to culture – noting, for example, that while the creation of linguistic homogeneity was key for nineteenth-century European nationalism, that was not the case elsewhere. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 71.

⁶⁹ Anne-Marie Thiesse, *La Création des Identités Nationales: Europe XVIII^e-XX^e siècle* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1999), 13-14.

⁷⁰ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 58.

⁷¹ In contrast with John Armstrong who provides caveats for all of his typologies, insisting they only apply to the specific examples he discusses. Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism*, 296-297, for example.

⁷² Smith, *National Identity*, 79. Although, this does not mean that Smith sees no meaning to ‘nationalism’ as a general term – simply that it is one in which there is much diversity.

taken – in this particular instance, Romantic nationalism.

In general, earlier scholars of nationalism engage more directly with Romantic thinkers than do more contemporary writers, in part because the former's emphasis is on the development of nationalism as a political theory rather than a popular ethos. Carlton J.H. Hayes, in his 1931 *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism*, expressly states that while it would be legitimate to study nationalism as a social process or a popular movement, he seeks to examine it as a political ideology, and as a consequence his work will focus on the thinkers rather than the followers.⁷³ It would be overly simplistic to absolutize such a divide – earlier scholars certainly discuss nationalism with respect to the masses, and later scholars are by no means ignorant of the theoretical side to the development of nationalism – but it does speak to a general trend with respect to scholarly emphasis. It is, in any case, logical that the earliest works on nationalism would be somewhat narrative. It was necessary for scholars to ascertain the progression of theories and events before those theories and events could be more intently analyzed.

There are, of course, limitations involved in studying only the intellectual theories behind nationalism. The ideas themselves tell us nothing of their reception. Hayes argues that no one thinker, or small group of thinkers, can possibly be attributed with the popularization of nationalism, contending that “the importance of these nationalist theorizers, like that of any philosopher, resides in the fact that, having been themselves the result of the phenomenon they discuss rather than its cause, they have formulated and clearly expressed what has been vaguely in the minds of many men.”⁷⁴ He contends that it was neither the philosopher nor the masses who invented nationalism, but rather the middle-class intelligentsia who then inspired both the

⁷³ Carlton J.H. Hayes, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1931), vi.

⁷⁴ Hayes, *Historical Evolution*, 209.

philosopher and the masses.⁷⁵

Hans Kohn is similarly concerned with the development of nationalist ideology. He notes that although the myths nationalism puts forward about itself are untrue, and do not truly tell us why nationalism developed, “they must be taken as characteristic elements of thought in the age of nationalism, and are subject themselves to analysis by the historian of nationalism.”⁷⁶ Thus for Kohn it is important to know that nationalists believed that nations were based on race and supported by the *Volksgeist*, even if these things are merely “mythical pre-historical pseudo-realities.”⁷⁷ Their importance lies not in whether or not they are true, but that they were believed. As a consequence Kohn spends much of his book discussing the development of the ‘idea of nationalism’ in the minds of its philosophers and ideologues. Such an approach to nationalism’s myths contrasts sharply with the approach of later scholars, with the exception of the new-primordialists.

Anthony Smith also argues for the importance of examining ideology in the study of nationalism, but he also goes somewhat further in that he discusses the importance of studying art and culture as well. He notes that if nationalists are intent on celebrating the nation, then there is a clear relationship between art and nationalism. He writes: “Who, more than poets, musicians, painters and sculptors, could bring the national ideal to life and disseminate it among the people?”⁷⁸ Thus, he sees intellectuals and artists as very important in the early stages of nationalism (of which Romanticism is clearly a part), but less important later. This is because it is the intellectuals “who have proposed and elaborated the concepts and language of the nation and nationalism and have through their musings and research, given voice to wider aspirations that they have conveyed in appropriate images, myths, and symbols.”⁷⁹ If

⁷⁵ Hayes, *Historical Evolution*, 293.

⁷⁶ Kohn, *Idea of Nationalism*, 13.

⁷⁷ Kohn, *Idea of Nationalism*, 13.

⁷⁸ Smith, *National Identity*, 92.

⁷⁹ Smith, *National Identity*, 93.

intellectuals are the purveyors of the earliest stages of nationalism then it certainly seems pertinent to understand their individual approaches.

On the other side of the debate, John Breuilly challenges the efficacy of understanding nationalism from the perspective of ideology (firmly arguing that it should be seen as a type of politics). He contends that studying a phenomenon like nationalism as an ideology runs into the problem that ideologies need not be logical, that it is common for an individual to hold contradictory opinions. Thus he maintains that it may be helpful to clarify the ideas involved, but that “a clarity which ends up abolishing historical reality on the grounds of logical untidiness is not worth having.”⁸⁰ This is certainly a perspective that must be kept in mind when undertaking any exercise in intellectual history, and particularly with respect to Romanticism, which is a movement almost more known for its variety and inconsistency than for anything it concretely argues.

More than this, however, Breuilly maintains that ideology only has a political impact when it is simplified and presented through symbols or ceremonies, thus questioning what studying ideology can in fact tell us about mass nationalism.⁸¹ He argues that the historicist arguments of scholars like Herder and Fichte can be manipulated to nationalist aims, but are not necessarily linked to nationalism. He contends, for example, that Herder’s conception that language is natural and unique to each culture, and that cultures should seek to preserve their unity and purity, could be used to support nationalism, but does not do so unavoidably.⁸² Herder himself was by no means a staunch nationalist. This certainly points to some of the limitations involved in studying nationalism from the perspective of ideology.

Tom Nairn, in his *Break-Up of Britain*, provides a very staunch argument against an ‘idealist’ understanding of nationalism, and in favour of a materialist explanation. He argues

⁸⁰ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 17.

⁸¹ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 334-335.

⁸² Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 336-339.

that while an idealist explanation is always tempting, it would be too accepting of nationalism's rhetoric, which is steeped in idealism – imagining an ideal 'people' – and that whereas idealist explanations cannot explain its material elements, material explanations encompass the ideal as well.⁸³ Nairn contends that the true origins of nationalism are not in a person's desire for fulfillment in the whole or in folk culture, but rather in the machinations of global political economy, and specifically in the unevenness of its development.⁸⁴ He maintains that less developed nations were faced with a dilemma – either be unduly influenced by industrial centers, or move toward greater industrialization themselves. But industrialization could not really circumvent that unwanted influence, as it would mean following the example of the already-industrialized. Nationalism, he argues, was the natural result of this dilemma, wherein the middle classes turned to their cultures to make up for their lack of industrialization.⁸⁵ They, as less industrialized nations, had to mobilize something to protect themselves, and what they had was the masses. According to Nairn, "mobilization had to be in terms of what was there; and the whole point of the dilemma was that there was nothing there – none of the economic and political institutions of modernity now so needed. All that there *was* was the people and peculiarities of the region: its inherited *ethnos*, speech, folklore, skin-colour."⁸⁶ This ensured that all nationalism was populist, because even though its message was first spread by middle-class intellectuals, the masses were the audience of that message and also the power behind it, insofar as the people were being mobilized to make up for a lack of industrial might.⁸⁷

However, scholars like Breuilly and Nairn do not focus on ideological nationalism because of the very definition of nationalism they employ. Because the body of more recent academic work emphasizes the apparent falsehood in nationalism, a discussion of the rhetoric

⁸³ Nairn, *Break-Up of Britain*, 102-104. He argues that although Marxism is materialist it is rooted in idealism, which is why Marxist explanations for nationalism have failed. (302-303).

⁸⁴ Nairn, *Break-Up of Britain*, 335.

⁸⁵ Nairn, *Break-Up of Britain*, 99-100.

⁸⁶ Nairn, *Break-Up of Britain*, 340.

⁸⁷ Nairn, *Break-Up of Britain*, 100.

of nationalism is perceived as saying nothing real about the phenomenon itself, which is fundamentally about the material reality of the masses. As Hobsbawm argues, nationalist propaganda tells us little about what the common person actually felt and believed.⁸⁸ Certainly, if one's goal is to examine nationalism from the perspective of the masses, an examination of ideology is not the best solution. As Linda Colley notes in the introduction to *Britons*, her book contains no examination of high culture – no discourse on political theory or fine art – precisely because her emphasis is on bringing out “the myriad voices of those who have often and wrongly been deemed too conventional to be listened to.”⁸⁹ However, she does call for future scholars to take up an examination of high culture and its relationship to Britishness. A discussion of nationalism not focused on the masses would certainly have to engage with nationalist ideology.

Thus any given study of nationalism is necessarily limited by its scope and focus. Nationalism is not either an elite or a mass movement, or either a cultural or political one. Rather, it is all these things simultaneously. The diversity inherent in the study of nationalism points quite firmly to the complexity of the phenomenon itself. Therefore, scholarship on nationalism tends only to present an aspect of it, dependent upon that scholar's particular focus. For example, Colley's focus may be mass culture, but she recognizes that a study of high culture would elucidate an alternate view of Britishness, and perhaps of identity itself. Thus, one's conception of the nature of nationalism is at least in part dependent upon one's focus – on which aspect of nationalism one hopes to elucidate.

Studying Nationalism Through Identity and Imagination

Despite this, scholarship on nationalism is at its best when it can encapsulate the diversity inherent in it, and demonstrate an appreciation for both its cultural and political

⁸⁸ E.J. Hobsbawm. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 76. [emphasis original]

⁸⁹ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 7-8.

aspects, for the ways in which it is both natural and artificial, both particular and general, both novel and ancient. This is most often accomplished by emphasizing the role of identity in the creation of nations. A person's identity involves a complex interrelation of ideas and experiences. Accordingly, the study of identity allows an historian to examine both mental and social aspects of human life. Identity thus functions as a gateway into the varied complexities of historical experience. Moreover, as Colley writes in *Britons*, "identities are not like hats. Human beings can and do put on several at a time."⁹⁰ The complexity inherent in the concept of identity is therefore multiplied by any given individual's ability to possess several. An emphasis on identity allows fluidity in one's understanding and allows explanations of nationalism to more readily integrate the cultural and political, even when they seem to mutually exclude one another.

Similarly, as noted in above sections on Anderson, emphasizing the imagined nature of nations facilitates the concurrent study of both the cultural and political aspects of nationalism. Moreover this focus on imagination helps one to recognize that ideas of nationalism can be diverse and contested. The relationship between imagination and identity is a close one; one could even argue that all identities are imagined, and belonging to a particular nation is simply one identity an individual can imagine for him or herself. Thus, a nation is imagined into being by the individuals who comprise it, and each (depending on the identity he or she wishes to ascribe to him or herself) can imagine the nation somewhat differently. As Catherine Hall notes in her *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867*, a debate that took place in Britain over the actions of the Governor of Jamaica, Edward John Eyre,⁹¹ demonstrates that there were at least two different conceptions of

⁹⁰ Colley, *Britons*, 6.

⁹¹ Eyre became Governor of Jamaica in 1864. His brutally violent suppression of a rebellion in Jamaica in 1865 and his subsequent imposition of martial law and hanging of member of Jamaican parliament George William Gordon became an issue of debate in Westminster. John Stuart Mill led those who called for Eyre's criminal prosecution, and Thomas Carlyle led those who supported Eyre's actions and decisions. Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton:

‘Englishness’ defined against two different conceptions of ‘the other’ (in this case, the colonized Jamaicans). She argues that some Britons, like John Stuart Mill, imagined their community “of potential equality, in which ‘us,’ white Anglo-Saxon men and women, believed in the potential of black Jamaican men and women to become like ‘us’ through a process of civilisation.”⁹² However, simultaneously, there were Britons, such as Thomas Carlyle, whose “imagined community was a hierarchically ordered one in which ‘we’ must always master ‘them.’”⁹³ In another example suggesting the diversity inherent in imagined nations, Hall, Jane Lewis, Keith McClelland and Jane Rendall critique Benedict Anderson for not considering the gendered dimension of nationalism: that men and women might imagine their nations, and therefore participate in their nations, very differently.⁹⁴ By focusing on the individually imagined nature of nations Hall demonstrates that nations are contested ideas, suggesting (in opposition to scholars like Gellner) that it is important to study their specifics, because they differ not only from nation to nation, but also within nations.

Hall’s work also suggests that a given way of imagining the nation may become dominant, potentially excluding those who wish to imagine the nation differently from positions of power within the nation. For example, although she points out differences between Mill and Carlyle’s conceptions of their nation, both clearly imagined England as imperial and as white. Their notions of ‘us’ and ‘them’ were quite similar, mostly differing in what they imagined to be the relationship between ‘us’ and ‘them,’ and neither was willing to include ‘them’ (black and mixed-raced colonised) in ‘us’ (white colonisers). By imagining England as white, they excluded those who were not. Similarly, if the nation is dominantly imagined as masculine, this might limit women’s participation in it.⁹⁵

Princeton University Press, 2005), 150-155.

⁹² Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 25.

⁹³ Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, 25.

⁹⁴ Catherine Hall et al., “Introduction,” *Gender and History* 5, no. 2 (Summer, 1993), 159.

⁹⁵ “The gendered concerns that marked out new nations might be irrelevant to women’s interests, might even

George Mosse's work on sexuality and nationalism in the twentieth century also explores the way nationalism can reinforce established power structures and hegemonic discourse. In *Nationalism and Sexuality*, which focuses mostly on the origins of fascism in Germany, he argues that those who held power in the nation, the middle class, defined sexual mores in a way that alienated those who were sexually 'other,' claiming this was necessary for the protection of the nation.⁹⁶ Essentially, the nation was imagined as masculine and 'respectable,' and anything believed to be outside of that image was considered 'perverted' and a threat.⁹⁷ Mosse emphasizes that "reality tends to be shaped by the perceptions men and women have of it, by the myths and symbols through which they grasp the existing world," indicating that by seeing the nation as protecting society from behaviour they believed deviated from the norm, these men and women helped to create both those norms and the nation that sought to preserve them.⁹⁸ Therefore, by taking seriously the role that individuals' perceptions have on the nation, Mosse is able to root his discussions of the discourse and ideas surrounding the nation in the political reality of that nation.

* * * * *

Romantic Nationalism

An overview of scholarship thus provides insights into which methods and approaches are most effective, given one's particular focus. As this paper is focused on Romantic Nationalism, and its development as an ideology and an identity, the older and 'new primordialist' or 'perennialist' approaches to nationalism provide the most obvious exemplars.

serve to marginalize them, to close of particular avenues. Women were more frequently the subjected territory across which the boundaries of nationhood were marked than active participants in the construction of nations." Hall et al., "Introduction," 162.

⁹⁶ George L Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle Class Morality and Sexual Norms in modern Europe* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

⁹⁷ George L Mosse, "Nationalism and Respectability: Normal and Abnormal Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Contemporary History* 17, no. 2 (April, 1982), 227.

⁹⁸ George L. Mosse, *Masses and Man: Nationalist and Fascist Perceptions of Reality* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1980), 15.

These scholars tend to focus on ideology and culture, and as such are more willing to investigate the characteristics nationalism would appropriate for itself. Moreover, those scholars most interested in ideology and the cultural content of nationalism are also more willing to view nationalism as related to ‘natural’ human processes, as tied directly to a past, and as diverse in its manifestations. However, as has been noted, the contemporary political approach to nationalism has provided an important corrective to the more naïve aspects of older scholarship, and as such must also be taken into account when formulating a methodology when understanding Romantic nationalism, even if this newer scholarship at times borders on being overly skeptical, and if its discussion of Romanticism is virtually non-existent.

On the whole, Romantic nationalism has been neglected by both nationalism scholars and Romanticism scholars, and when it is discussed it is often done in passing, rather than comprehensively. Nationalism scholars who discuss Romanticism in detail tend to approach the study of nationalism in a way that combines aspects of earlier and more contemporary scholarship. Romanticism scholarship is often focused on attempting to define Romanticism as a movement, despite its complexity and diversity, and as such can be highly fragmentary, particularly with respect to the study of nationalism.

Studies that do mention the connection between Romanticism and nationalism are not always cognizant enough of the variety and complexity inherent in both movements. At times they ignore the individualist bent in Romanticism, and thus present it as a movement that was wholly collectivist, and therefore naturally (or at least as a logical consequence) nationalist. As Carlton Hayes wrote, “Romanticism had a pronounced nationalist bent. Its interest in common men and common things stimulated the study and revival of folk-ways, folk-legends, and folk music. Its appeal to history meant an appeal to folk-history, to adorned tales of the ‘good old

days' of fanciful national independence and national integrity."⁹⁹ The reverse is also true: studies that do not address the nationalist aspect of Romanticism tend to focus on its individualism. For example, Anthony Thorlby, in a somewhat extreme assessment of Romantic individuality, contends that the instability in Romanticism was a result of its inward reliance on the subjective, and the fact that it sought self-realization in nature, rather than in society.¹⁰⁰ The key to understanding Romanticism and its relationship with nationalism is recognizing that Romanticism was both individualist and communitarian simultaneously. This is something that Hans Kohn understood, and that has been reiterated by a selection of Romanticism scholars.

In Kohn's words:

The romantic individual . . . regarded himself not as a representative of a universal order but as a unique being and demanded complete freedom in life and in work, for his creative genius. At the same time the romantics, for all their revolt against society, did not accept the titanic loneliness of the Storm and Stress. They longed for a community of like-minded individuals who would live a full life according to their innermost emotions and convictions. The complexity and anguish of their search for this community were heightened by their underlying subjectivism. The unique individual longed for full gratification of all his desires and yet felt the need for fulfillment in the miracle of a true harmonious union in which all the conflicting opposites of life would be reconciled.¹⁰¹

He contends that because they were looking for a miracle, the German Romantics would find no help in eighteenth-century nationalism. Although they embraced the state, Kohn maintains that, as artists, the German Romantics could not call for homogeneity. Instead citizens were intended to serve the state fully while remaining fully individual.¹⁰² He contends that the state, or national community, took on an increased importance in Romanticism as it became a dynamic entity that contributed to the political, ethical, and aesthetic development of individuals. Although this was initially an abstract conception of the state, Kohn notes that

⁹⁹ Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism*, 53.

¹⁰⁰ Anthony Thorlby, *The Romantic Movement* (London: Longmans, Green and Co Ltd., 1966), 9.

¹⁰¹ Hans Kohn, *The Mind of Germany: The Education of a Nation* (London: MacMillan, 1965), 50.

¹⁰² Kohn, *Mind of Germany*, 50.

Romantics later began to see their own specific states in this way.¹⁰³

More recent studies of nationalism have not focused on the role of Romanticism because they have dismissed its cultural rhetoric as so much ephemera, irrelevant to any attempt to understand the ‘actual’ nature of nationalism. What is necessary for the study of Romantic nationalism is to find a way to integrate insights put forward by more skeptical accounts of nationalism, while maintaining an appreciation for the rhetoric espoused by nationalism about itself. While it may be true that nationalists were wrong in their belief that the world is naturally ordered into nations, this point does not mean that understanding such a mythology is not key to understanding the ideology. All political ideologies have their mythologies; for example: popular sovereignty has the state of nature, and absolutism has divine right theory. One can by no means truly understand these ideologies without understanding the myths that justified them. Nationalism is no different.

In some ways the two approaches to nationalism discussed above are bridged by the work of Elie Kedourie. His 1960 work, *Nationalism*, very much emphasizes the contingent and ‘naturalized’ nature of nationalism, while still focusing on the development of nationalist ideology.¹⁰⁴ He argues that “there is no convincing reason why the fact that people speak the same language or belong to the same race should, by itself, entitle them to enjoy a government exclusively their own.”¹⁰⁵ It is Kedourie that John Breuilly has in mind when he notes in his introduction to Ernest Gellner’s *Nations and Nationalism*, that in the 1960s one approach to the study of nationalism saw it as a “modern, irrational doctrine which could acquire sufficient power so as actually to generate nationalist sentiments and even nation states.”¹⁰⁶ These scholars believed that the key to understanding nationalism began with examining “the ideas

¹⁰³ Hans Kohn, “Romanticism and the Rise of German Nationalism,” *The Review of Politics* 12, no. 4 (Oct, 1950), 446-450.

¹⁰⁴ Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1966), 9. [first edition 1960].

¹⁰⁵ Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 80.

¹⁰⁶ John Breuilly, “Introduction,” in Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2nd Edition, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), xx. [first edition 1983].

and the intellectuals who expressed those ideas and moved on to consider how they changed the world.”¹⁰⁷ Thus while Kedourie’s understanding of nationalism as an invented ideology was not so far away from that of contemporary scholars, his approach differed substantially. He sought to explain the philosophical origins of nationalism, and to examine why the thinkers who supported nationalism did so, both from an intellectual and a socio-political perspective. He was not attempting to explain why nationalism as a political force took hold of firstly Europe, and then the rest of the world.

Because of this emphasis Kedourie’s work provides interesting insight into Romantic nationalism, although this is by no means the focus of his work. He argues that in Germany the post-Kantians (that is Fichte, his students, and scholars like him) had an understanding of metaphysics that was consistent with nationalism, but that this alone does not explain their attraction to it. Rather, he contends that these scholars were trying to find a place for themselves within the power structure of the state. They were highly educated, but relatively poor, and the old state apparatus had no place for them in its hierarchy. Their education gave them potential in terms of a vision of culture and ideas about how the state could run, but no way of actualizing any of these things: so they called for a state that would foster the individual and recognize true talent and intelligence.¹⁰⁸ Kedourie maintains that this idea of individual fulfillment through the state, teamed with a philosophy of history that emphasized the existence of autonomous cultural units (nations), led these scholars to adopt a nationalist ideology.¹⁰⁹

Kedourie also argues that Romanticism and nationalism have similar sensibilities – they both blur the line between fiction and reality, they both demonstrate contempt for “things as they are,” and they (paradoxically) embrace both youth and death.¹¹⁰ While this final

¹⁰⁷ Breuille, “Introduction,” xx.

¹⁰⁸ Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 42-45.

¹⁰⁹ Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 53-54.

¹¹⁰ Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 85, 87, 88-89.

similarity is somewhat confusing (and perhaps somewhat confused), his general point is well taken: there are many similarities of sentiment and ideal linking the two movements. Tom Nairn makes a similar point, arguing that “the politico-cultural necessities of nationalism . . . entail an intimate link between nationalism politics and *Romanticism*.”¹¹¹ He continues by saying that Romanticism was the “cultural ‘language’ that alone made possible the formation of the new inter-class communities required by it. In that context, all Romanticism’s well-known features – the search for inwardness, the trust in feeling or instinct, the attitude to ‘nature,’ the cult of the particular and mistrust of the ‘abstract,’ etc. – make sense,” but adopting such language to examine nationalism would mean getting trapped in nationalist rhetoric, and losing sight of the material explanations for nationalism’s development.¹¹²

More recently, Liah Greenfeld in *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (1992) has put forward an argument very similar to Kedourie’s. She contends that the new non-noble intellectual elite that grew out of the eighteenth-century German education system (she calls them the *Bildungsbürgertum*) found there were no positions of power equal to their skill. Consequently, a great many found themselves unemployed, and doing freelance work, at a time when writing was not particularly lucrative in Germany.¹¹³ While the *Aufklärung* was primarily a cosmopolitan movement, the *Bildungsbürgertum* eventually turned toward national identity, because, Greenfeld contends, “it implied an unassailable dignity for and automatically elevated members of the national collectivity, however lowly, putting them on par with the most exalted nobility.”¹¹⁴ Like Kedourie, Greenfeld sees the scholars as attracted to nationalism for reasons of power, status, and personal gain. She expressly states that “*national identity is, fundamentally, a matter of dignity*. It gives people reasons to be proud.”¹¹⁵ Within a nation,

¹¹¹ Nairn, *Break-Up of Britain*, 104.

¹¹² Nairn, *Break-Up of Britain*, 104.

¹¹³ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 297-299.

¹¹⁴ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 314.

¹¹⁵ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 488. [emphasis original]

one will always have a measure of status, because at the very least one is a member of that nation.¹¹⁶

Greenfeld contends that while nationalism in general spread throughout Europe, particular national identities adapted themselves to the peculiarities of their respective cultures. With respect to German national consciousness, she sees Pietism and Romanticism as most influencing its particular shape and colour. Pietism, she notes, emphasized emotionalism rather than dogma, thus encouraging an individualized view of religion wherein having faith in Christ generally was more important than the content of one's beliefs. Pietism helped shape the framework in which nationalism would develop because its lack of formal doctrine encouraged group development of beliefs, and thus group consciousness.¹¹⁷ Greenfeld considers Romanticism to be a sort of secularized Pietism combined with a rejection of the rationalism of the *Aufklärung*.¹¹⁸ However, the rejection of Enlightenment thought was incomplete, she insists. While the Romantics resented the *Aufklärung* for failing to fulfill its promise, they "clung to the promise itself: by hook or by crook the world had to belong to those with superior mental powers. Their claim to status in society rested on their intellect, and they were not willing to give this claim up."¹¹⁹ She contends that the main tenet of Romanticism is the argument that reason is not the only virtue of humanity, and that Romantic emphasis on individualism, cultural relativism and totality were simply expressions of that central belief. She argues that by creating the first secular religion, Romanticism set the stage for other secular religions,¹²⁰ of which (presumably) nationalism is one.

While Greenfeld devotes a considerable number of pages to describing the nature of the Romantic movement in Germany, she spends very little time drawing express connections

¹¹⁶ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 489.

¹¹⁷ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 317-320.

¹¹⁸ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 327.

¹¹⁹ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 250.

¹²⁰ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 330.

between the ideology of the Romantics and the ideology of nationalism. She never explicitly draws the parallel between Romanticism and nationalism as two ‘secular religions,’ although she certainly seems to be hinting at it. She does explain the socio-economic attraction nationalism had for the Romantics, and she seems to see Romanticism as having an impact on the shape and nature of German nationalism, but draws no causal connection between the two.

Rather, for Greenfeld the two movements are co-constitutive. Nationalism is not presented as a facet of Romanticism (or vice-versa), but rather they are distinct movements, each having an impact on the other. She writes:

German nationalism brought together the Pieto-Romantic mentality, forged and hardened in the lasting predicament of successive generations of *Bildungsbürger*, which penetrated deeply into the souls of the Germans who could read, to become the way they thought and felt, and the idea of the nation, which, though long available, until then had no appeal in Germany. When this idea was finally appropriated it was inevitably interpreted in light of the Pieto-Romantic mentality and imbued with an entirely new meaning. At the same time, the Romantic ideals were ‘nationalized’ and represented as the reality peculiar to the German people, language and land. The German nation, which was now seen as the object of supreme loyalty, and which did not at the same time exist as a united polity (or economy), assumed the characteristics of the true Church and the Romantic ideal community.¹²¹

Thus while Greenfeld clearly sees the two movements as having an important impact on one another, her concern is not with expressly explaining how the two ideologies were able to work together. Like Kedourie, she sees the importance in understanding both the ideological and the material impacts on the development of nationalism, which is itself simultaneously principled and practical.¹²²

The work of Kedourie and Greenfeld provide the most detailed discussions of the relationship between Romanticism and nationalism within scholarship on nationalism. Their focus on Germany is telling, as Germany is considered to be the most striking example of

¹²¹ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 363.

¹²² Identity in general, one could argue, is simultaneously principled and practical. A person’s identity is formulated by a complex interrelationship of their ideas and experiences. As a consequence, the study of identity allows a historian simultaneously to examine both mental and social facets of human life.

Romantic nationalism, and as such is often put forward as exemplary of the phenomenon generally. If much of the literature on nationalism overlooks the role of Romanticism even in German nationalism, there is certainly a dearth of comprehensive discussion of the role of Romanticism in the nationalism of nations besides Germany.

As with nationalism scholarship, the study of Romanticism seldom focuses specifically on the connection between nationalism and Romanticism, despite the existence of ‘Romantic nationalism’ as an assumed cliché. Certainly Romanticism scholars have put forward arguments to explain the connection. For example, Maurice Cranston argues that Romanticism made nationalism possible because it redefined the nation as a social and cultural entity, whereas Enlightenment thinkers conceived of the nation as a more purely political unit.¹²³ This development, Cranston contends, is what allows modern nationalism to be exclusionary – it defines a social reality to which some belong, and others do not. Contrarily, he maintains, the political nation (or kingdom) of the Enlightenment could be inclusive or diverse because unity came from allegiance to a single ruler, rather than from a common culture, or religion.¹²⁴ Whereas Cranston ties the relationship with nationalism to the Romantic emphasis on culture, Roland Stromberg argues that nationalism was not necessary to Romanticism, but rather Romanticism became tied up with nationalism as it became tied up with other political movements at the time.¹²⁵

Warren Breckman provides what is perhaps the best explanation for the connection between Romanticism and nationalism in the compelling introduction to his brief *European Romanticism*, a collection of documents. He argues that Romanticism provided historical and philosophical arguments that could be used to support nationalism, and “created images that

¹²³ Maurice Cranston, “Romanticism and Revolution,” *History of European Ideas* 17, no 1 (1993), 27.

¹²⁴ Cranston, “Revolution,” 27-28.

¹²⁵ Roland N. Stromberg. *European Intellectual History Since 1789* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 44.

galvanized national sentiment.”¹²⁶ He emphasizes that Romantic nationalism was somewhat utopian and valued the harmonious diversity of nations, even believing that nations were the “best vehicle for the achievement of true human universality.”¹²⁷ This seeming paradox, he contends, is a reflection of Romantic understandings of universality and individuality generally – that true individuality is the gateway to the universal, and true universality is made up of variegated individualities.¹²⁸ His argument seems to imply an understanding of Romanticism and nationalism as compatible, but not necessarily connected, ideologies or worldviews, along with an understanding that Romantic nationalism differed from later forms of nationalism.

Defining Romanticism

This inability to pin-down the precise nature of Romantic nationalism is a characteristic of Romanticism scholarship generally. Romanticism is a notoriously diverse movement, changing over time, place, and individual Romanticist. In the words of Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich, “there is something intrinsically and astonishingly complex about Romanticism.”¹²⁹ This complexity, they insist, exists because the Romantics, in rejecting the coherent system of the Enlightenment due to the excesses of the French Revolution, lost the “easy targets and ready solutions which had united the philosophes,” and instead they launched a movement that operated “from within diverse national, social, and cultural climates.”¹³⁰

In fact, the indefinable and ephemeral nature of Romanticism has become something of a cliché of the historiography. Perhaps most famously, Arthur O. Lovejoy, commonly held to be the founder of the history of ideas, opined that the fundamental characteristic of Romanticism was in fact its diversity,¹³¹ even going so far as to say that it would be incorrect to

¹²⁶ Warren Breckman, *European Romanticism: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 31.

¹²⁷ Breckman, *European Romanticism*, 31.

¹²⁸ Breckman, *European Romanticism*, 31-32.

¹²⁹ Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich, *Romanticism in National Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 4.

¹³⁰ Porter and Teich, *Romanticism*, 5.

¹³¹ Roland N. Stromberg. *European Intellectual History Since 1789* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-

talk of Romanticism as a coherent movement, and that rather one must refer to ‘Romanticisms.’¹³² Whether or not scholars have accepted Lovejoy’s addition of the allomorph, his point has certainly been well taken: Romanticism was not a cohesive, unified movement, but rather one that varied across time and space. Stromberg argues that the diversity, or even incoherence, so characteristic of Romanticism is an example of its success as an intellectual movement. He writes:

The mood of an age may be nonetheless real for being illogical . . . Historical phenomena take on many accretions as they pass through society; they become involved with other phenomena and eventually lose themselves in the common stream. Any major movement of the mind inevitably accumulates a crowd of different associations and meanings as it spreads. But we do not for this reason infer its nonexistence or meaninglessness. It is, in fact, possible to argue the reverse: that whenever we find doctrine that everyone knows about but no one can quite define we are in the presence of a major intellectual movement.¹³³

One could even argue that confusion being a mark of success is particularly true of Romanticism, given that, despite its diversity, it everywhere emphasized chaos and the non-existence of universal principles.

Many scholars have emphasized one expression of that chaos: Romanticism’s tendency toward unifying opposites. Michael Löwy and Robert Sayre note that it is a movement “simultaneously (or alternately) revolutionary and counterrevolutionary, individualistic and communitarian, cosmopolitan and nationalistic, realist and fantastic, retrograde and utopian, rebellious and melancholic, democratic and aristocratic, activist and contemplative, republican and monarchist, red and white, mystical and sensual.”¹³⁴ While Löwy and Sayre reject the notion that contradiction and confusion is what unifies Romanticism, it is a characteristic that is very often emphasized in scholarship. Hobsbawm, for example, notes that while there is no political consensus amongst Romantics, they are always opposed to the middle, and thus

Hall, 1986), 45.

¹³² Porter and Teich, *Romanticism*, 2.

¹³³ Stromberg, *Intellectual History*, 36.

¹³⁴ Michael Löwy and Robert Sayre, *Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity*, Catherine Porter, trans. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 2.

occupy the political extremes.¹³⁵ Mary Anne Perkins and Martin Leibscher's *Nationalism Versus Cosmopolitanism in German Thought and Culture, 1789-1914* presents German Romanticism as simultaneously embracing cosmopolitanism and nationalism, through the idea that the progress of Europe would be undertaken on the German model.¹³⁶ D. G. Charlton argues that the French Romantics sought a "union of new with old, of reform with stability."¹³⁷ In the most striking example, Roger Cardinal has in fact argued that it is the unification of opposites that is at the heart of Romanticism.¹³⁸

The confusion with respect to pinpointing a specific definition of Romanticism is clearly a result of its diversity and complexity, and thus approaches to Romanticism are almost as varied as the movement itself. Consequently the study of Romanticism, not unlike the study of nationalism, is characterized by a distinct lack of consensus, particularly in its attempts to define the nature and parameters of the movement itself. Some scholars define Romanticism as essentially a literary movement, while others emphasize that it had political and philosophical sides as well. Furthermore, there is debate with respect to the nature of Romantic individualism, and its relationship with collectivism.

Within Romanticism scholarship there are contrary tendencies: one that seeks to define Romanticism based on its characteristics, and another that seeks to define it historically or temporally. In essence, the former develops an analytical category of 'Romanticism' and then looks for empirical data that fits the mold developed, while the latter chooses a time or place and seeks to understand it prior to developing a definition for the phenomenon in question.

Literary scholars are most likely to adopt the former method. For example, Löwy and Sayre

¹³⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789-1848* (London: Weiderfeld and Nicolson, 1962), 259.

¹³⁶ Mary Anne Perkins, "Introduction," in Mary Anne Perkins and Martin Liebscher, eds. *Nationalism Versus Cosmopolitanism in German Thought and Culture, 1789-1919: Essays on the Emergence of Europe* (Queenston, Ontario: Edwin Meller Press, 2006), 10-11.

¹³⁷ D.G. Charlton, "Religious and Political Thought," in D.G. Charlton, ed, *The French Romantics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 58.

¹³⁸ Roger Cardinal, *German Romantics in Context* (London: Studio Vista, 1975), 27.

present Romanticism as fundamentally a critique against modernity that developed as a result of the emergence of capitalism. But it is a critique very much from within the modern framework – Romanticism is a modern movement. Thus, Romanticism is modernity’s critique of itself.¹³⁹ By defining it thus, Löwy and Sayre see Romanticism as a set of ideals and characteristics, rather than a temporally contained historical movement.

Contrarily, the latter method was embraced by Lilian Furst. She has noted that “to try to seize Romanticism in its entirety in a neat catch-phrase is an endeavour as doomed to failure as it is futile. We must in this instance reverse the usual order by seeking to understand Romanticism as a phenomenon before attempting to define it.”¹⁴⁰ More recently, Frederick Beiser has also come down on the side of the historical method, arguing against those scholars who would see Romanticism as an anticipation of post-modernism, rather than as an historical movement that is temporally contained.¹⁴¹

Murray Pittock in his examination of Irish and Scottish Romanticism presents a position that is somewhere between an analytic and historicist position. He argues against a study of Romanticism that functions on only aesthetic parameters, and then finds examples of those aesthetic qualities in an ever expanding time period – but also insists that an historical account must integrate “the subjective and aesthetic dimensions of ‘Romanticism’ held so dear by a previous critical paradigm.”¹⁴²

Much of the scholarship on Scottish Romanticism is written from a literary perspective. While this is also the case for Romanticism generally, the emphasis is more striking in the literature on Scotland. This is in part related to the fact that Scotland has long been considered to have not truly experienced a Romantic movement, and certainly experienced nothing like the

¹³⁹ Löwy and Sayre, *Romanticism Against the Tide*, 15-17, 21.

¹⁴⁰ Lilian R. Furst, *Romanticism* (London: Methoun & Co Ltd, 1969), 6.

¹⁴¹ Frederick C. Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003), ix-x.

¹⁴² Murray Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 2-3.

Romantic nationalism of the continent. As Pittock notes, Scotland did not have examples of Romantic historiography (which he presents as necessary for Romantic nationalism), as its historical practices were very much tied up with the Enlightenment tendency to ignore Scotland's 'dark and fabulous' beginnings, and to dismiss its folk mythology as embarrassing nonsense. It was only in literature, Pittock contends, that the 'taxonomy of glory,' the link to antiquity, was able to persist.¹⁴³

Despite the fact that much of the scholarship on Romanticism has been written from a literary perspective, there is also a strong branch in the literature calling for a recognition of the diversity in form that Romanticism took. For example, Greenfeld argues against seeing Romanticism as a primarily literary movement, saying that it was "a movement of thought, a 'mode of thinking' which found expression in almost every sphere of the social, political, economic and cultural existence of the land of its birth and deeply affected its future development."¹⁴⁴ While Greenfeld is referring only to Germany, and sees the relegation of Romanticism to mere literature in other countries as more accurate, it could be argued that her position should be expanded to Romanticism more broadly, and other scholars have done so. Frank Paul Bowman makes this argument with respect to France, saying that to understand French Romanticism one must examine not only literature, but also political texts, theological treatises, historical works and even scientific writing, because there was strong interplay between these genres within Romantic scholarship.¹⁴⁵ Discussing Romanticism more broadly, Löwy and Sayre note that where literary scholars have a tendency to overlook the non-literary aspects of Romanticism, "following the rigorous logic of academic disciplines – political scientists often have a regrettable tendency to neglect the properly literary aspects of

¹⁴³ Pittock, *Scottish Romanticism*, 58, 27

¹⁴⁴ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 322.

¹⁴⁵ Frank Paul Bowman, *French Romanticism: Intertextual and Interdisciplinary Readings* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 201.

Romanticism.”¹⁴⁶ They argue that Romanticism should be studied not as a literary or a political movement alone, but as a worldview.¹⁴⁷

Moreover, there are a number of substantial works on Romanticism that provide detailed intellectual histories of the various Romantic thinkers, and do so by no means simply from a literary perspective. Maurice Cranston’s *The Romantic Movement* is an excellent example of one such work.¹⁴⁸ Such an intellectual overview is particularly justified in the case of Romanticism, because of the sheer diversity of its thinkers. Moreover, Romanticism emphasized the role of the creative genius, and the importance of the individual; therefore studying these thinkers as individuals seems fitting to the movement. That being said, it is also important to draw parallels and larger conclusions to bridge together the individual case studies.

Romanticism as Individualist and Nationalist

Individualism has long been recognized as central to Romanticism. Lilian R. Furst’s *Romanticism in Perspective* contains an entire section devoted to the Romantic notion of individualism, and considers individualism as one of the key characteristics distinguishing Romanticism from the Enlightenment, along with imagination and emotion.¹⁴⁹ However, older works may not account for the unique nature of Romantic individualism, or the fact that collectivism was also a key Romantic sensibility. More recently, Löwy and Sayre emphasize this duality, contending that the Romantics simultaneously embraced the individual and the idea of unity, and that “the demand for community is just as essential to the definition of the Romantic vision as its subjective and individualistic aspect.”¹⁵⁰ Romanticism is able to be both

¹⁴⁶ Löwy and Sayre, *Romanticism Against the Tide*, 5.

¹⁴⁷ Löwy and Sayre, *Romanticism Against the Tide*, 15-17.

¹⁴⁸ Maurice Cranston, *The Romantic Movement* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1994). Also, H.G. Schenk, *The Mind of the European Romantics: An Essay in Cultural History* (London: Constable, 1966).

¹⁴⁹ Lilian R. Furst, *Romanticism in Perspective: A comparative study of the Romantic movements in England, France and Germany* (London: Macmillan, 1979), 55.

¹⁵⁰ Löwy and Sayre, *Romanticism Against the Tide*, 26.

individualist and communitarian because of the nature of Romantic individualism, which is, Löwy and Sayre note, not like modern liberalism, in that the individualism of each peculiar personality is thought to contribute to an organic whole.¹⁵¹ Greenfeld also recognized the distinctive nature of Romantic individuality, noting that the Romantics defined individuality in two somewhat contradictory ways: firstly as peculiarity, and secondly as *human* nature – that which one shares with all of humanity and thus renders humanity a community.¹⁵²

Alan Menhennet, in his text on the Romantic Movement in Germany, also briefly discusses the individual-collective paradox inherent in Romanticism. He notes that the Romantics' emphasis on the self as independent did not mean that they advocated that the self not engage with reality. The Romantics in fact perceived isolation as leading to the destruction of the self, although they did have a place for solitude.¹⁵³ He argues that the Romantics were seeking a kind of brotherhood, and that this communitarian sentiment was reflected in their attitude to the state. He contends that Romantic understanding of the state marks an attempt to “achieve a relationship between the individual and general in which the former is not lost in the latter, but found again at a higher level.”¹⁵⁴ Beiser's understanding is similar. He contends that politics was central to Romantic thought and stemmed from their notion “that the individual is a social being who can realize himself only within the state. If self-realization is the highest good, and if self-realization is achieved only within the state, then politics, the doctrine of the state, becomes crucial.”¹⁵⁵ It becomes the means through which we learn how to achieve this highest good.

Thus, just as the Romantic notion of individuality is unlike that of modern liberalism, so too is Romantic nationalism unlike modern nationalism. As Roger Cardinal argues, the

¹⁵¹ Löwy and Sayre, *Romanticism Against the Tide*, 25.

¹⁵² Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 249-250.

¹⁵³ Alan Menhennet, *Romantic Movement* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), 33-34.

¹⁵⁴ Menhennet, *Romantic Movement*, 35.

¹⁵⁵ Beiser, *Romantic Imperative*, 36.

exclusionary calls for political autonomy that characterized late nineteenth-century nationalism can be seen as “something of a perversion of Romanticism’s original demand for the self-affirmation of the individual, echoing French revolutionary principles. Since the true logic of Romanticism lies in the reconciliation of polarities, the authentic aim of Romantic politics should be to preserve individual freedom while pursuing collective aims.”¹⁵⁶ Cardinal recognizes, however, that Romantic desire for community is manifest not only in nationalism, but in collectivism more generally, which can be seen in the existence of Brotherhoods, literary groups, intellectual friendships, group publications and journals. He notes that “even where broader political views diverge, Romantics are agreed on the basic principle that some means of healing the rift between men must be sought.”¹⁵⁷

It is precisely this relationship between individuality and collectivity in Romanticism that requires more comprehensive study. Understanding the interplay of these two concepts seems to be at the crux of understanding Romantic Nationalism more broadly. An examination of the writings of a small number of Romantic scholars from a variety of countries should allow this question to be examined in sufficient depth and breadth. The diversity of Romanticism is such that one should focus on the details so as not to gloss over the differences between scholars, while simultaneously ensuring that a variety of scholars from different times and places are considered, so that the selection can have some semblance of being representative of the movement as a whole.

Furthermore, it should be recognized that in discussing the nationalism and identities of individual Romantic scholars, conclusions should not then be drawn regarding other parts of the nation. While it is true that in some ways nationalism is always a mass movement, in the sense that it speaks for the masses, it should be noted that the masses are sometimes unaware

¹⁵⁶ Roger Cardinal, *German Romantics in Context* (London: Studio Vista, 1975), 27.

¹⁵⁷ Cardinal, *German Romantics*, 28.

they are being spoken for. Moreover, while historians tend to characterize an entire era on the basis of a single political or artistic movement, that tendency does not mean that other types of art or ideology were impossible, or even that the ‘characteristic’ movement was necessarily numerically dominant. Eric Hobsbawm made this precise point with respect to Romanticism, saying that “Romanticism is the fashion in art as in life most characteristic of the period of dual revolution [that is the French and Industrial Revolutions], but by no means the only one. Indeed, since it dominated neither the cultures of the aristocracy, nor those of the middle classes and even less of the labouring poor, its actual quantitative importance at the time was small.”¹⁵⁸ Thus in discussing Romantic nationalism, one is only examining a minute portion of the population of each nation, but a portion that was highly visible and influential in subsequent time periods.

Rather than attempting to explain the motivations of the Romantics by focusing solely on their interests in society, and the incentives provided by it, it seems particularly fruitful to consider how Romantic thought itself encouraged the sentiments it did – what parameters of beliefs did the Romantics themselves set up that allowed them to be simultaneously individualist and nationalist? For example, the Romantics placed unprecedented importance on imagination, which allowed them to embrace the individual as the creative genius, but also made it possible for them to accept that truth could be found in legends and myths. They could imagine their communities because imagination was not perceived as another word for falsehood, but rather was considered a legitimate path toward greater knowledge. The Romantics believed that “the mind creates truth rather than simply reflecting it.”¹⁵⁹ This is not to say that the Romantics were the first to find truths in mythology and imagination, but rather that they were the first to do so after the existence of those truths had been so fundamentally

¹⁵⁸ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolutions, 1789-1848* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962), 270.

¹⁵⁹ Stromberg, *European Intellectual*, 44.

challenged by the Enlightenment. This is why Romanticism should not be considered a reversion to pre-Enlightenment times (although many of its adherents lauded the medieval period), because it had to revive the truth to be found in mythology and fiction, while still recognizing the divide between myth and other kinds of knowledge. It was necessary to rehabilitate myths and legends only because they had been discredited. In that sense, the Romantics were not irrational; they did not reject reason, they simply also embraced imagination. In fact, Furst contends that its emphasis on imagination is what truly distinguishes Romanticism from previous movements. She remarks that earlier movements may have lauded primitiveness, naturalness or spontaneity, but none embraced imagination with the fervour or centrality of the Romantics.¹⁶⁰

Menhennet links the Romantic emphasis on imagination with the move toward nationalism. He argues that it is difficult enough for unified nations to feel a sense of nationalism at any given time, and that although there was a sort of latent national consciousness in the German states in the early nineteenth century, “it needed the imaginative and emotional power of the romantic mentality to turn it into a political force.”¹⁶¹ Thus by studying language, mythology and the medieval period, Romantic scholars could help to reformulate a sense of the German nation. Their ability to promote actual change was somewhat limited, however, because “Germany could not be re-created on paper or on stage, and practical life showed up the dangerous weakness of the idealistic romantic position. The purity and poetry of a vision are all too easily lost in the attempt to translate it into reality. The practical tends to be unpoetic and the poetic impracticable.”¹⁶² Certainly, when discussing Romantic nationalism from the perspective of ideology, it is important to keep in mind that the practicalities of nationalism may be far removed from its poetries.

¹⁶⁰ Furst, *Romanticism*, 40.

¹⁶¹ Menhennet, *Romantic Movement*, 35.

¹⁶² Menhennet, *Romantic Movement*, 36.

This particular study will focus on Romantic scholars in Germany, France and Scotland, and examine the works of Johann Gottfried Herder, J.G. Fichte, Friedrich Schlegel, Victor Hugo, François-Rene de Chateaubriand, Augustin Thierry, Jules Michelet, Walter Scott, and Thomas Carlyle. These particular countries were chosen because of their variety of experience with respect to Romantic nationalism; Germany experienced the movement quite strongly, France to a lesser degree, and Scotland even less. Perhaps as a consequence, Scotland and France have been relatively overlooked with respect to questions of national identity and individualism in the Romantic period. On the other hand, because Germany provides the most striking example of Romantic nationalism, it has been the most studied, and the scholarly work on it is a useful tool when attempting to study Romantic nationalism elsewhere. However, to a certain extent its study has also precluded the study of romantic nationalism elsewhere by virtue of having set up a standard for what constitutes ‘nationalism’ or even ‘Romanticism’ that the experiences of other nations cannot match. It seems imprudent to define nationalism or Romanticism based on its most extreme case and then claim that it does not exist elsewhere. This situation calls for a reexamination of the peculiar nature of Romantic nationalism and a redefinition based on its more moderate examples. France provides an interesting example because while scholars have long considered the French Romantic movement to be quite vibrant, there is very little attention paid to its nationalism. Scottish Romanticism, on the other hand, has long been considered to be a false or even ersatz example of Romanticism in historical and literary scholarship, and is only very recently being studied again. Nineteenth-century Scottish nationalism is held in similar regard. Julian D’Arcy notes:

Nationalism is, in fact, something of an elusive concept in Scottish history. Indeed, as many historians have noted, within the terms of traditional nationalism, nineteenth-century Scotland would seem to be unique in its apparent lack of any clearly defined nationalist impulse. Despite fulfilling many of the theoretical prerequisites for nationalism (progressive industrialization, a thriving middle-class, and what could be regarded as an imperial oppressor, England), Scotland resolutely failed to produce an

effective or even recognizable nationalist movement.¹⁶³

However, the writings of Scottish ‘Romantics’ like Walter Scott were highly influential in France, and tended to be seen as highly Romantic and nationalist by contemporaries.¹⁶⁴ In fact, there was much international influence and interplay among the scholars being studied – notably, Scott was an important influence on Chateaubriand and Thierry, as was Fichte on Carlyle.

These particular thinkers were chosen also to get a cross section of Romantic genres – history, literature, philosophy, and politics – so that some of Romanticism’s variety might be represented. Moreover, nationalist sentiment and identity find important expressions and stimulus from all these genres. Scholarship on nationalism has certainly demonstrated how ideas about the past, the nature of myth and fiction, and the development of political ideologies are all influenced by and influence the development and expression of nationalism and national identity. The same could certainly be said for the individual or subjective identity – like national identity, it is argued over and forged on the pages of Romantic scholarship. The interplay between the individual and the nationalist or collective can thus best be observed where they are being simultaneously created and enacted: in the minds and works of the Romantics.

While Herder wrote somewhat before the other thinkers being examined (his major work the *Outline of the Philosophy of History of Mankind* was originally published between 1784 and 1791), and as a consequence is as often discussed in the context of the Enlightenment as he is in that of the Romantic period, it is perhaps most accurate to view him as a bridge

¹⁶³ Julian Meldon D’Arcy, *Subversive Scott: The Waverley Novels and Scottish Nationalism* (Reykjavik: University of Iceland Press, 2005), 19. Tom Nairn provides an interesting explanation for the lack of nationalism in Scotland. He argues that nationalism emerged as a result of the uneven development of modernity and industrialization, wherein middle-classes in unindustrialized centres turned to their culture to make up for their lack of industrialization. Scotland, he contends, while it was behind in the eighteenth-century went through such an intense modernization process that it left no place for nationalism in the nineteenth. Nairn, *Break-Up of Britain*, 99-100, 116.

¹⁶⁴ Pittock, *Scottish Romanticism*, 204-210.

between the two movements. His work was influenced by German Enlightenment thinkers like Kant, but his work is also perceived as highly influential for the Romantics, both in Germany and in Europe as a whole, and in particular with respect to theories of nationalism. The emergence of German political nationalism is often seen as emerging in response to the 1806 Napoleonic invasion of the German states.¹⁶⁵ Yet the political nationalism that emerged in this context was building on the roots of cultural nationalist consciousness that had existed since at least the time of Herder. In the late eighteenth century “Johann Gottfried Herder’s concept of the *Volk*, of a people united by language, custom and history, had gained wide currency at least in intellectual circles.”¹⁶⁶

Examining Herder’s writings provides important insight into the relationship between Romanticism and the Enlightenment because of his position between the two movements, both conceptually and temporally. His work functions as a reminder that although the Romantics were reacting against what they perceived as the extreme rationalism of the Enlightenment, they were also beholden to it for many of their ideas, and should not be seen as rejecting all of its lessons or messages. Thus, although the Romantics defined individualism in a way that differed substantially from the Enlightenment scholars’ definition, both groups saw the promotion of the individual as an ideal to be pursued. However their opinions differed as how that ideal could best be met.

To understand how the Romantics managed to balance the idea of the individual and the nation this work will first examine Romantic conceptions of history, in chapter two. The historical provides interesting insight into both Romanticism and nationalism because it was considered to be integral by proponents of both, and therefore provides a framework through which to view the similarities or parallels in the two movement’s ideologies and sensibilities.

¹⁶⁵ Brendan Simms. *The Struggle for Mastery in Germany, 1779-1850* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 91.

¹⁶⁶ Simms, *Struggle for Mastery*, 91.

The Romantic conception of history provides insight into Romantic thought more generally, and points to a number of ways in which Romantic sensibilities and perspectives on reality opened the way for the possibility of nationalism, but still maintained an emphasis on individualism. This is also true of the Romantic understanding of particularity, examined in the third chapter. Romantics conceived of both individuals and nations as examples of particularity. Moreover, the Romantic understanding of particularity could not be divorced from notions of totality, as the two were essentially seen as necessary halves of a whole. In consequence, Romantic particularity should be seen as the fundamental concept at the basis of Romantic nationalism, which therefore negotiated between individuals and universals. The Romantic understanding of the nation itself is the topic of the fourth chapter. The latter examines the ways the Romantics defined nations, why they at times believed they were the ideal unit for the organization of society, and how they conceived of the nation as encouraging diversity, both by bringing diverse elements and individuals into its fold, and by acting as a unique individual on the world scale, contributing to cosmopolitanism.

Chapter 2 – The Past is This Self-Same Country: Romantic Concepts of the National, the Individual and the Historical

French Romantic historian Jules Michelet (1798-1874) began his introduction to *Jeanne D'Arc* by telling the story of going to visit a man whom he described as having much lived and much suffered. This man had just finished reading a book; his eyes were filled with tears and he appeared as if lost in a dream. When he came to himself, he exclaimed, “Elle est donc morte!” “Qui?” Michelet asked. “La pauvre Jeanne d’Arc,” the man replied.¹ “Telle est la force de cette histoire,” Michelet concluded from this experience, “telle sa tyrannie sur le coeur, sa puissance pour arracher les larmes!”² This brief anecdote offers a snapshot of the Romantic view of the relationship between the individual, the national, and history. By reading the story of Joan of Arc, the man felt connected to her, and to the nation she helped to forge. Although Joan had died centuries earlier, this man’s reading of her story brought her to life in the present – speaking both to her power as a heroic figure and to the power of written history. The Romantics embraced history as a powerful force that they took very seriously. It revived the past, brought promise for the future, and in doing so connected all time. The Romantics approached history in manifold ways, and as a result they engaged in scholarly historical writing, created historical societies charged with collecting documents (notably the Bannatyne Club in Scotland, and the Société d’Histoire de France),³ theorized about the philosophy of history, and wrote historical novels.

This historical emphasis provides an obvious point of contact between Romanticism

¹ Jules Michelet, *Jeanne D’arc* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1888), xxiii.

² Michelet, *Jeanne D’Arc*, xxiii

³ Walter Scott was one of the founders of the Bannatyne Club, which in 1823 “Resolved that a Work, to be entitled The Bannatyne Miscellany, containing a Collection of Tracts and original Papers, relative to the History, Literature, and Antiquities of Scotland, be printed.” W. Scott, D. Laing and T. Thomason, eds, *The Bannatyne Miscellany; containing original papers and tracts, chiefly relating to the history and literature of Scotland* vol III (New York: AMS Press, 1973), frontispiece. The Société d’Histoire de France published 65 volumes of historical documents within six years. Jacques Barzun, *Romanticism and the Modern Ego* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1944), 113.

and nationalism, as the relationship between history and nationalism is in many ways intuitive: nations very often define themselves based on a believed common history. Thus one can argue that by emphasizing the historical, Romanticism provided a theoretical foundation that could be used by nationalists, and thus helped create the conditions for the emergence of nationalism. While it is certainly clear that Romanticism and nationalism do not necessarily entail one another (as not all Romantics are nationalists, and not all nationalists Romantics), they share commonalities, and an examination of the Romantic conceptions of the historical brings to light a number of these points.

However, the interconnections between history, Romanticism and nationalism are by no means simple. While the Romantic emphasis on history at times connects it with nationalism, Romantic histories also exhibit Romanticism's attachment to individualism. History need not be nationalist, and can often emphasize the individual figure, rather than the nation. Romantic historiography also tended to be very personal. Romantic scholars emphasized life histories and imbued their narratives strongly with their own voices. Interestingly, this personalized historical style draws a strong connection between nationalism and individualism. Just as people can feel strong personal attachments to their individual histories, they can also feel strong attachments to their national histories – the two are personally affective in similar ways.

Because Romantics tended to view time as organically connected, and thus did not radically separate the past and future, but saw both as necessary parts of a whole, one cannot understand Romantic history without looking at their notions of both the past and future. Moreover, nationalism, while it certainly relies on history and the past for its justification, is fundamentally a modernizing movement.⁴ Thus this study of Romantic conceptions of history

⁴ See Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 171. Anne-Marie Thiesse argues that although intuitively the nation seems anti-modern because of its emphasis on heritage, it in fact allows for social and economic change precisely because it insists that the nation itself does not

must first look at how nationalism and Romantic history both exist liminally, ensconced at the threshold of the present, perpetually negotiating between past and future, and subsequently look in more detail at how the Romantics constructed the past, and how they strove for future development.

* * * *

Janus-Faced Movements

In many ways the Romantics were anti-presentist; seeking to eliminate the ills of contemporary bourgeois society, they hoped to “create a new world on the ruin of the old.”⁵ Löwy and Sayre argue that Romanticism was fundamentally a critique of modernity, but because Romanticism was so tied up with modernity, it should be considered modernity’s self-criticism. This criticism, they contend, was tied closely with an experience of loss: the idea that modernity had lost something that was fundamental to both the individual and humanity as a whole, that “certain essential human values have been alienated.”⁶ Löwy and Sayre suggest that this encouraged the Romantics to look nostalgically to the non-alienated past to “rediscover paradise in our present reality.”⁷ However, because they were modernists and not just reactionaries, the Romantics looked not only to the past, but also to the future to remedy the shortcomings of their pestiferous surroundings. This ‘double-vision’ distinguished the Romantics from earlier movements. August Wilhelm Schlegel wrote that where “the poetry of the ancients was that of possession, ours is that of yearning; the former stands firmly rooted in the present, the latter hovers between recollection of the past and presentiment of the future.”⁸

change. It creates a point of stability around which other things can change and develop. Anne-Marie Thiesse, *La Création des identités nationales: Europe XVIII^e-XX^e siècles* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1999), 16.

⁵ Barzun, *Romanticism and the Modern Ego*, 22.

⁶ Michael Löwy and Robert Sayre, *Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity*, trans. Catherine Porter (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 21.

⁷ Löwy and Sayre, *Romanticism Against the Tide*, 23. Eric Hobsbawm makes a similar argument, saying that the Romantics criticized bourgeois society, and thus yearned for the medieval period because it was non-bourgeois. Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789-1848* (London: Weiderfeld and Nicolson, 1962), 262-264.

⁸ Quoted in Hans Eichner, ed, *‘Romantic’ and Its Cognates: The European History of a Word* (Toronto:

By refusing to be tied to the isolated and circumscribed present the Romantics could in essence belong to all time, to an ‘eternal present,’ seeing time in its continuity rather as divided into discrete units. For Thomas Carlyle history was “the half-magical science of celebrating this ‘wondrous . . . contiguity and perpetual closeness [of] the Past and Distant with the Present in time and place; all times and all places with this our actual Here and Now.’”⁹

The Romantics did not separate past and future, but rather saw them as parts of an organic whole; understanding both was necessary for the elucidation of historical truth. The past was perceived as simultaneously ‘other’ and present. Although many Romantics revered a past era (often the medieval period or antiquity), they objected to neo-classicism’s attempt simply to recreate classical art forms in the present, instead seeking to create living art that was both connected to the past and striving toward the future. As noted previously, they were not all reactionary, or not always, but rather desired the creation and maintenance of a fluidity between past and future. Victor Hugo warned that “the counterfeits of the past take assumed names, and are fond of calling themselves the future.”¹⁰ Somewhat ironically, however, the maintenance of this fluidity required a recognition of the distinctness of the past, and of its ‘pastness.’ The past was both gone and fundamentally different from the present it helped to create.

As historians, the Romantics insisted that no two eras were identical and that it was the role of the historian to ‘revive’ these past eras in the present, so that their distinction from the present could be clearly elucidated (although this was recognized as not always being easy.) Thomas Carlyle in his 1830 essay ‘On History’ averred that insofar as people were more than mere biology, the aim of humanity, whether conscious or not, differed from age to age, but that despite this, “neither are the more important outward variations easy to fix on, or always well

University of Toronto Press, 1972), 138.

⁹ John D. Rosenberg, *Carlyle and the Burden of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 19-20.

¹⁰ Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables* vol. 1 (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1994) 343.

capable of representation.”¹¹ The goal of history, to bring to light these differences of age, and to accurately represent times past in their difference, was therefore a difficult one. Jules Michelet too saw the importance of capturing these historical differences and representing them. He saw the purpose of history as “*résurrection*”¹² - saying that the goal of history was “non plus de raconter seulement ou juger, mais *d’évoquer, refaire, ressusciter* les ages. Avoir assez de flame pour réchauffer des cendres refroidie si longtemps.”¹³

Michelet’s penchant for resurrecting the past seems to have followed in the tradition of Herder. Herder had already believed that “we tread on the ashes of our forefathers, and stalk over the entombed ruins of human institutions and kingdoms. Egypt, Persia, Greece, Rome, flit before us like shadows: like ghosts they rise from their graves, and appear to us in the field of history.”¹⁴ Therefore, the past was gone forever, but through history one could hear echoes of this time from which one was divorced, yet, which one was perhaps to rekindle and recapture. It was this dual emphasis on the otherness and connectedness of the past, on its ability to be both lost and extant, that allowed Herder to lament that “everything in history is transient: the inscription on her temple is, evanescence and decay,” on one page, and on the very next declare that “a slender thread connects the human race, which is every moment breaking, to be tied anew . . . thus generations and empires are linked together. The sun sets, that night may succeed, and mankind rejoice at the beams of a new morn.”¹⁵ Herder insisted that although any ‘return to the past’ was a fiction, because time only flows in one direction, the present was made up of all that had come before it, “in the vast snowball rolled up by Time.”¹⁶

This was certainly picked up by the Romantics, for whom writing good history

¹¹ Thomas Carlyle, “On History,” in *Selections from Carlyle*, Henry W. Boynton, ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1896), 69.

¹² Jules Michelet, *Le Peuple* (Paris: Comptoir dest Imprimers-Unis, 1846), xxxvi.

¹³ Jules Michelet, *Histoire de France* (Paris: Robert Leffort & Le Club Français du Livre, 1971), 8.

¹⁴ J.G. Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, trans. T. Churchill, vol II (London: J. Johnson, 1803), 265.

¹⁵ Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy*, 265, 266.

¹⁶ Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy*, 305-306.

required an appreciation of this ‘otherness’ of the past. Augustin Thierry, for example, was concerned with the historicity of language. He argued that while contemporary language could easily capture the history of today, to intelligently convey the history of times past one had to know the different version of French spoken in that time.¹⁷ In practice, in his history of the Norman conquest of England he retained the original spelling of names.¹⁸ Thierry was very concerned that writers not present diverse historical eras as having been uniform.¹⁹ Similarly, Walter Scott emphasized the ‘otherness’ of Scotland’s Highland past. In his novel *Waverley* the title character is awed by the existence of violent raids in Highland Scotland, something he had never experienced in England. He is surprised such diversity exists within the confines of Great Britain.²⁰ Where Scott said that in his own time the differences between Scotland and England were negligible, he wished to preserve in collective memory this ‘other’ Scotland of the past.²¹ John Glendening argues that in doing so Scott emphasized both the ‘pastness’ of the past (subtling his novel ‘*Tis Sixty Years Since*) and how the development of history ensured that the past “continually creates the present.”²²

By emphasizing that the more ‘romantic’ elements of Britain’s past occurred in the Highlands, Scott creates a hermetic seal out of the ‘Highland line’, dividing the present where romance exists in novels, from the past where romance and reality were conflated.²³ In doing so “Scott created a new Scotland by relegating to the romantic past its difference, its dangerous independence and volatility, while retaining an emblematic Scotland consisting of the romantic

¹⁷ Augustin Thierry, *Lettres sur l’histoire de France, pour servir d’introduction a l’étude de cette histoire* (Paris: Just Tessier Libraire, 1836), 49.

¹⁸ Stephen Bann, “Romanticism in France,” in *Romanticism in National Context*, eds. Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 256-257.

¹⁹ Augustin Thierry, *Récits des Temps Mérovingiens* (Paris: Librairie A. Hatier), 8.

²⁰ Walter Scott, *Waverley or ‘Tis Sixty Years Since* (New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell & Co, 1907), 108.

²¹ Scott, *Waverley*, 422.

²² John Glendening, *The High Road: Romantic Tourism, Scotland, and Literature, 1720-1820* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 174.

²³ Glendening, *High Road*, 199.

nuances and gestures most readily consumed by nationalists and tourists.”²⁴ Glendening goes as far as to say that it is because Scott insisted that the past was dead, that it could be revived in the present. Emphasizing the ways it was so different sparks the imagination, and declaring it to be irretrievable encourages nostalgia.²⁵ Thus in their manner of recognizing the otherness of the past, the Romantics also saw its connection to the present and future. As Stephen Bann notes, “the past had to be perceived in its otherness before it could be recreated by their eager contemporaries.”²⁶

This perception of history as both other and connected, and the related emphasis on the unity of time, encouraged the Romantics to perceive history as both backward- and forward-looking. Thomas Carlyle, in ‘On History,’ wrote that History “is a looking both before and after; as, indeed, the coming Time already waits, unseen, yet definitely shaped, predetermined and inevitable, in the Time come; and only by the combination of both is the meaning of either complete.”²⁷ Carlyle’s emphasis on the need to combine ‘coming time’ with ‘time come’ in order to uncover the meaning of either indicates that his was not a linear understanding of history wherein the past simply entailed the future. Rather he presented a perspective in which understanding the future was required to understand the past. For the Romantics, “history is not simply a progression into the future, it restores the origin to its higher position; it actualizes potentiality; it is progressive regression or regressive progress,” and true progress could not be achieved without both elements.²⁸ It was this sentiment that led J.G. Fichte to argue that “the

²⁴ Glendening, *High Road*, 185-186, 175.

²⁵ Glendening, *High Road*, 191-192. Murray Pittock makes a very similar argument, contending that Scott’s literature was concerned with uniting history and romance. Pittock maintains that Scott wished to pay homage to Scotland’s past, “yet in the act of relegating old romance to the past, Scott was creating it in the present. The essence of his creative ends were at odds with the teleology of his creating means. The act of internment is an act of rehabilitation: Scott indeed thrust his buried men back in the human mind again.” Murray Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 189.

²⁶ Bann, “Romanticism in France,” 256.

²⁷ Thomas Carlyle, “On History,” in *Selections from Carlyle*, ed. Henry W. Boynton (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1896), 66.

²⁸ Dietrich von Engelhardt, “Romanticism in Germany,” in Porter and Teich, *Romanticism*, 117.

real destiny of the human race on earth . . . is to make itself what it really is originally,”²⁹ and allowed his student Friedrich Schlegel to call a historian “a prophet facing backward.”³⁰

The importance of history as a means of actualizing potentiality had strong nationalist undertones for some Romantic scholars. When Fichte spoke of the human race re-appropriating its originality, he was in fact talking about the German people, whom he professed are the true ‘original’ people, and thus can be called simply ‘the people.’³¹ He believed the Germans had been divorced from their own past, and that to reclaim their historical path required not a return to old, but the creation of a new society born from a new system of education. Nevertheless, Fichte maintained that this new society would not break radically with the past, but would instead be “the true natural continuation and consequence of the past.”³² He even went so far as to say that those who “do not believe at all in something original nor its continuous development, but only in the eternal recurrence of apparent life . . . are in the higher sense not a people at all. As they in fact, properly speaking do not exist, they are just as little capable of having a national character.”³³ Thus, for Fichte the very possibility of the national and thus of nationalism required this idea of history as involving continuity with the past and development into the future.

Similarly, Jules Michelet attached the idea of actualizing the past into the future to French nationalist sentiment. In his *Introduction à l'histoire universelle*, he wrote that those who wished to know the destiny of the world must look at the history of Italy and of France, because Rome had once been the centre of civilization and France was to lead the world in future events. He wrote, “c’est en nous plaçant au sommet du capitole, que nous embrasserons du double regard de Janus, et le monde ancien qui s’y termine, et le monde moderne, que notre

²⁹ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, George A. Kelly, ed., (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968), 40.

³⁰ Engelhardt, “Romanticism in Germany,” 117

³¹ Fichte, *Addresses*, 92.

³² Fichte, *Addresses*, 40.

³³ Fichte, *Addresses*, 115-116.

patrie conduit désormais dans la route mystérieuse de l'avenir."³⁴ In other words, Michelet contended that the French, because they were heirs of the legacy of ancient Rome, were positioned to lead the world into the future.

The Romantics did not believe that history was about the past and the future as discrete dimensions, but rather they saw a natural tendency in humanity to be torn between development and regression. Thomas Carlyle contended that in our world, which hoped in the future while persevering in expressing the past, "innovation and conservation wage their perpetual conflict."³⁵ Chateaubriand perceived himself as existing at the confluence of two eras, negotiating between the two. In the preface to his *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe* he wrote, "je me suis rencontré entre les deux siècles comme au confluent de deux fleuves; j'ai plongé dans leurs eaux troublées, m'éloignant à regret du vieux rivage où j'étais né, et nageant avec espérance vers la rive inconnue où vont aborder les générations nouvelles."³⁶ The disorientation associated with such a liminal existence on the threshold of a new era informed much of Chateaubriand's thought, and led him to lambaste the "nightmare of an eternal present, a place that is undisturbed by the difference of the past because it cannot fashion the narratives to assimilate the signs of yesterday's lives."³⁷

In France, as elsewhere, this emphasis on the past came out clearly in the Romantics' calls for the preservation of old buildings and monuments. Chateaubriand saw the French Revolution as horrific not only because it exiled people like himself from France but also because it had destroyed monuments of the past, including ruins. In his writing, "again and again, he took his readers to the abbey of Saint-Denis, outside Paris, where in August 1793 revolutionaries had plundered the royal tombs and smashed the bones of France's kings. To

³⁴ Jules Michelet, *Introduction à l'histoire universelle* (Paris: Librairie Classique de L'Hachette, 1831), 74-75.

³⁵ Thomas Carlyle, *History of the French Revolution* (Toronto: Ward Lock & Co Limited, 1911), 34.

³⁶ François-René de Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, ed. by Ed Biré (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1904), xlviii

³⁷ Peter Fritzsche, "Specters of History: On Nostalgia, Exile, and Modernity" *American Historical Review* 106, no. 5 (December 2001) 1618

take away ‘the bones of their fathers,’ he wrote in another context, ‘you take away their history,’ robbing people of ‘the proofs of their existence and of their annihilation.’”³⁸ It was important for Chateaubriand that people know how the future was distinct from the past, and how the relics of the past had been destroyed. In fact, in his *Génie du Christianisme*, he argued that everyone is secretly attracted to ruins, precisely because they console us in our mortality, for they stand as physical pillars proving that great and famous figures have gone before us.³⁹ Thus, in showing us the remnants of the past, ruins both indicate how we are similar to, yet always removed from, that past. Victor Hugo presented a similar sentiment in “On the Destruction of Monuments in France,” (1825) when he wrote that “it is necessary for a universal cry to summon the new France finally to help of the old.”⁴⁰ The Romantics recognized that the past was distinct from the present, and they sought to remedy the diremption of that past with the present. Thus Hugo called for present day France to “save the past,” so that it could continue on into the future.

This ‘Janus’-like tendency in Romanticism reminds us of the simultaneous historicist and modernist tendencies that Anthony Smith recognizes in nationalism. Smith contends that nations function as both forward and backward looking not only in spirit, but also in structure, and that if they were not there would be no nationalism, only statism. While he recognizes that the state played an important role in promoting common culture and homogenizing society, he maintains that “it could never have produced the results it did without ethnic cores and ethnic models for mobilizing grass-roots aspirations and solidarities.”⁴¹ Smith sees modern nations as invariably developing toward a political and economic future, while looking back to a cultural past.⁴² Ernest Renan too says that the nation is created by both a shared heritage or memory and

³⁸ Fritzsche, “Specters of History,” 1613

³⁹ François René de Chateaubriand, *Génie du Christianisme* Tome II (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1843), 136.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Bann, “Romanticism in France,” 257.

⁴¹ Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origin of Nations* (New York: Blackwell, 1986), 214.

⁴² Smith, *Ethnic Origin*, 152.

by a will to be a group and continue into the future; so that any nation must share a past and desire a future.⁴³ Murray Pittock, drawing a more direct connection between Romantic literature and the creation of a national public sphere, argues that the creation of both Scottish and Irish national literatures required what he calls “the taxonomy of glory: the adoption of the national past.”⁴⁴ This literature, he contends, found its status in the present through an appeal to antiquity, and was specifically about resisting English dominance over Irish and Scottish culture, to ensure the maintenance of each in the future.⁴⁵ Thus both Romanticism and nationalism demonstrate this tendency toward negotiating between the past and the future.

However, the Janus-faced nature of Romanticism was not echoed only in collective features of nationalism, but also found individual expression. When Fichte wrote of Germany returning to what he considered to be its true historical path, as found in the ‘youthful dream’ of the Middle Ages, he called for an individual to “bring back this nation from its false path, and in the mirror of its youthful dreams show it its true disposition and its true vocation!”⁴⁶ By looking to the past, this individual could therefore bring his or her nation into its rightful future. Such sentiments reveal that the Romantics’ dual emphasis on past and future applies not only to the nation as a whole, but to the individual as well.

Interestingly, Löwy and Sayre have argued that insofar as Romanticism was future-oriented it was about the individual, and insofar as it looked to the past, it emphasized unity.⁴⁷ While this may be true in particular examples, the relationship between these concepts is by no means that straightforward. It is certainly the case that the Romantics looked to the past for examples of unity, and saw individuals as important actors for development in the future.

However, the Romantics saw the past as filled with examples of exceptional individuals, and

⁴³ Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation? Et autres essais politiques* ed. Joël Roman (London: Presses Pocket, 1992), 54.

⁴⁴ Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism*, 27.

⁴⁵ Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism*, 26-27.

⁴⁶ Fichte, *Addresses*, 91.

⁴⁷ Löwy and Sayre, *Romanticism Against the Tide*, 25.

the future they strove for had unity as its ideal. A more detailed look at how the Romantics constructed the past is necessary to illuminate how Romanticism laid theoretical groundwork for both nationalism and individualism, and to explain how it was able to integrate these two disparate ideas into its conceptual framework.

Constructing the Past: The More Reality Thesis

Romanticism was very focused on the past and on history. The Romantics dedicated themselves to the practice of history most sedulously, seeking to reform its pursuit with very specific ideas about how the writing of history should be undertaken. Moreover they sought to imbue all genres of human expression with the historical. Stephen Bann notes the Romantics not only added historical elements to established media, but also developed new ways of publicly displaying the historical – in dioramas and museums. He sees the Romantic period as embracing not only ‘more history’ quantitatively, whereby the ‘amount’ of historical knowledge and the number of people interested in it increased, but also embracing a new conception of the historical, whereby history went “from being a localized and specific practice within the cultural topology – became a flood that overrode all disciplinary barriers, and, finally, when the barriers were no longer easy to perceive, became a substratum to almost every type of cultural activity.”⁴⁸ He argues that, “history in the strict sense – that is, history researched and written by an increasingly self-conscious cast of professional historians – was not divorced from this pluralizing and popularizing tendency. It tried, often successfully, to maintain its scientific distance. But this did not stop it being validated, in social and cultural terms, by the very proliferation of historical awareness that was fostered by the new, transgressive genres.”⁴⁹

Thus Romantic history, even in its typical scholarly manifestation, took on a variety of

⁴⁸ Stephen Bann, *Romanticism and the Rise of History* (Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan Canada, 1995), 6-7.

⁴⁹ Bann, *Romanticism and the Rise of History*, 4.

characteristics not present in eighteenth-century historical writing. The ways in which the Romantics reformed the practice of historical writing, and reconceptualized the idea of the historical, provide another point of contact between Romantic history and nationalism. Just as both Romanticism and nationalism negotiate between past and future, both negotiate between truth and fiction, imagination and reality. In Marc Redfield's words, "the roots of the association between these two romantic inventions – imagination and nationalism – run very deep indeed."⁵⁰

Nations, as Benedict Anderson has so convincingly argued, are 'imagined communities,' but they are imagined with a foundation in reality, and very often a foundation in history.⁵¹ While history may not be the only factor involved in the conceptualization of nations, it is undoubtedly a vital one. The Romantics certainly conceived of nations historically. Michelet argued specifically that France became a nation because of the particularities of its history, saying that "si la liberté des villes eût prévalu, si les communes eussent subsisté, la France couverte de républiques ne fut jamais devenue une nation," but would have become a collection of city-states, like Italy.⁵² Because the nature of the French nation was defined by its history, he believed that he could know the personality of France by knowing its history.⁵³ In this he followed, or perhaps responded to, Herder who famously saw the development of nations as a direct result of the natural human desire to develop humanity, such that nations were literally the product of historical development.⁵⁴ Fichte, who saw the

⁵⁰ Marc Redfield, *The Politics of Aesthetics: Nationalism, Gender, Romanticism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 47. Redfield seems to be using a definition of 'Romanticism' as a set of characteristics rather than an historical phenomenon, which perhaps explains his willingness to say that imagination was 'invented' by romanticism. Even if it is an overstatement to say that the Romantics *invented* nationalism wholesale (and it is certainly an overstatement to say they invented imagination), the fact that the two concepts are connected, both to each other and to Romanticism, is clear.

⁵¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006), 145.

⁵² Michelet, *Histoire Universelle*, 58.

⁵³ Michelet, *Peuple*, xvii-xviii.

⁵⁴ Herder, *Outlines*, 272.

nation as fundamentally about language, stressed that a language changed over time, such that the history of the nation coincided with the history of that language.⁵⁵ Michelet similarly remarked that the history of France began with the history of the French language.⁵⁶ The Romantics could even see in the histories of their nations reasons for nationalist pride. Walter Scott, for example, argued that the history of Scotland was disproportionately popular, compared to the size and power of the nation, as a direct result of the valour and strength with which its ancient inhabitants protected their independence, as well as Scotland's historical connection to England.⁵⁷ And Michelet remarked that "L'histoire est la véritable base de ce [that is, French] patriotisme."⁵⁸

However, in some ways the practice of history as a discipline and the imaginative process involved in conceiving a nation are at odds with one another.⁵⁹ Imagining nations tends to be steeped in mythology and traditions, while history as a 'scientific' discipline is concerned in principle with challenging tradition and myth in favour of fact and source-based narrative. As Ernest Renan noted, nations are based as much on forgetting as they are on remembering.⁶⁰ Thierry recognized this problem, noting that the history of France did not truly become the history of France until the eighteenth century, and to deny that would be to deny the truth of French ancestry. He argued that even though French history had come to a point

⁵⁵ Fichte, *Addresses*, 47-50.

⁵⁶ Michelet, *Histoire de France*, 31.

⁵⁷ Walter Scott, *The History of Scotland*, vol I of *The Cabinet History of England, Scotland and Ireland* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1845), 1.

⁵⁸ Quoted in François Blücher, "Introduction," in Jules Michelet, *Histoire de France*, xxxi.

⁵⁹ For a discussion of the process by which History became a discipline, as well as a critique of 'disciplined' history see Hayden White, "The Politics of Historical Interpretation: Discipline and Desublimation," in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987). As history became 'disciplined,' White contends, it was particularly important that 'imagination' be contained, because history is intended to be concerned with 'facts' rather than 'fiction.' Of course, all historical writing includes a certain measure of imagination. Modern understandings of history present the historian as empathizing with historical subjects, as imagining what life would be like given a set of historical circumstances. However, White notes that "the imagination is disciplined by its subordination to the rules of evidence which require that whatever is imagined be consistent with what the evidence permits one to assert as a 'matter of fact'" (67).

⁶⁰ Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*, 41.

where the nation was strong and unified, it certainly did not begin that way.⁶¹ But, for Thierry this did not undermine the possibility of patriotism – rather he maintained that it was in recognizing the diversity of history, that true national history could be told, and true patriotism encouraged.⁶²

The Romantics sought in many ways to overcome the perceived disparity between nationalist tradition and history. Thus they conceived of reality as encompassing both fact and fiction, which encouraged and integrated imaginative processes (like those involved in the conception of nations), and they conceived of both history and the nation as personally affective and fulfilling. In the latter case, the potential disparities between history and nationalism were addressed in the individual who looked back to a national past to which he or she felt particularly attached, and embraced a willingness to imagine that nation into the future.

In Stephen Bann's words, "'tradition' is, at least in the context of the early nineteenth century, the creation of a phony past . . . 'History,' by contrast, is precisely the discipline that serves to unmask such fabrications."⁶³ He goes on, however, contending that "what this approach fails to encounter, as it celebrates the perspicuity of the ironic modern historian, is the sheer excess and extravagance of the Romantic investment in the past. This, too, is a historical phenomenon, and we cannot simply brush it aside as eighteenth-century rationalists used to dismiss as superstitious the medieval 'Age of Faith.'"⁶⁴ Hayden White too criticizes 'disciplined' History for dismissing Romantic historiography as imaginative literary nonsense, arguing that disciplining history removes its effective power.⁶⁵ He contends that removing the

⁶¹ Thierry, *Lettres*, 31-33.

⁶² Thierry, *Lettres*, 14-17, 33.

⁶³ Bann, *Rise of History*, 8-9.

⁶⁴ Bann, *Rise of History*, 9.

⁶⁵ Hayden White, "Politics of Historical Interpretation," 74. He writes, "The extent to which historical studies were disciplinized can be measured by the extent to which professional practitioners on both sides of the political barricades succeeded in identifying as errors the attitudes with which the Romantics approached history. The domestication of historical thinking required that Romanticism be consigned to the category of well-meaning but ultimately irresponsible cultural movements which used history for only literary or poetic purposes. Michelet and Carlyle looked to history for neither understanding nor

sublime from history, insisting that history be devoid of politics (that is, ‘disciplining’ it), effectively neuters historical discourse, which then becomes incapable of promoting a new vision for politics and of effecting change in the world.⁶⁶ The Romantics, as both Bann and White note, called for history to do more, for historians to, in Carlyle’s words “look with reverence into the dark untenanted places of the Past, where, in formless oblivion, our chief benefactors, with all their sedulous endeavors, but not with the fruit of these, live entombed.”⁶⁷ While Carlyle was here discussing specifically studying the lives of average people, rather than simply politics and constitutions, his statement speaks to a larger trend within Romanticism of defining history broadly, of a willingness to see more than strict historical scholarship as history. As Gerald Izenberg argues, “the Romantics never suppressed ‘history’ from their work. They were not only highly aware of themselves and their literary and philosophical innovations as the products of the historical process, but always saw themselves as the bearers of a historical mission.”⁶⁸ The Romantics sought to reform the way people saw the past, in order to better move forward into the future. They saw their understanding of history as central to moving beyond the present of which they were so critical. And it is by reconceptualizing the nature of history, by embracing the syzygy of the factual-historical and the imaginative-historical that the Romantics were able to reappropriate the traditions that would provide so much fodder for nationalist rhetoric. And nationalism is fundamentally about developing into the future.

Where many Enlightenment scholars sought to strip history of its mythical and

explanation but rather for inspiration – the kind of inspiration, moreover, that an older aesthetics called sublime. Their demotion by professional historians to the status of thinkers who should be read for their literary style rather than for any insight that they might have had into history and its processes is the measure of the price paid in utopian aspiration for the transformation of history into a discipline.”

⁶⁶ White, “Politics of Historical Interpretation,” 73.

⁶⁷ Carlyle, “On History,” 70.

⁶⁸ Gerald N. Izenberg, *Impossible Individuality: Romanticism, Revolution and the Origins of Modern Selfhood, 1787-1802* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 14.

fabulous elements,⁶⁹ the Romantics were more likely to integrate ‘non-scientific’ elements and imagination with their conceptions of history – which meant both that their histories contained imaginative elements, and that their fiction contained factual historical elements. Lilian Furst argues that their emphasis on imagination is what distinguishes Romantics from earlier thinkers,⁷⁰ and their redefinition of the historical certainly allowed the Romantics to distinguish themselves from the Enlightenment scholars whom they could portray as ‘non-historical’ simply because they approached history differently. This is not to say that the Romantics were unscholarly, for they were very much heirs of the Enlightenment tradition of rigorous scholarship; they simply embraced imagination as well. Furst concedes that there was a sort of nascent understanding of the importance of imagination in the Enlightenment, but contends that imagination only became of central importance under the Romantics.⁷¹

This double-emphasis on both scholarship and imagination is reflected in the Romantics’ historical writings. Hugh Trevor-Roper argues, for example, that Walter Scott had “two souls.” He was at one time “the well-balanced, scholarly heir of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment who edited Dryden, saw through Ossian and brought gas to Abbotsford; at another he would be the romantic Jacobite, the poet who would allow himself to be carried away by his own too sympathetic vision of an archaic Highland past.”⁷² But rather than seeing Scott’s scholarship and Romanticism as necessarily separate, it would perhaps be more accurate to say that he sought to imbue the Romantic with the authority only available from fact-based scholarship. For example, in the preface to his novel *Waverley*, Scott wrote that many of the stories he put in his novel had been told to him by Highlanders in his youth, and

⁶⁹ William Ferguson, *The Identity of the Scottish Nation: An Historic Quest* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 145-146.

⁷⁰ Lilian R. Furst. *Romanticism* (London: Methoun & Co Ltd, 1969), 40.

⁷¹ Furst, *Romanticism*, 40.

⁷² Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Invention of Scotland: Myth and History* (New Have: Yale University Press, 2008), 210-211.

noted that, surprisingly, the more ‘romantic’ stories were in fact those based in fact.⁷³ Thus, while Scott wanted to emphasize the romance of Scotland’s highland past (which had been rejected by eighteenth-century Scottish historians like William Robertson), he was careful to underscore the factuality of the ‘romantic’ elements he integrated.⁷⁴ In a perhaps more straightforward example, in the introduction to his collection of traditional Scottish ballads, *Minstrelsy on the Scottish Border*, Scott noted that studying the early poetry of any nation should be of interest to historians, who should not “disdain to gather from the tradition conveyed in ancient ditties and ballads, the information necessary to confirm or correct intelligence collected from more certain sources.” He added that while poets have always tended toward exaggeration and so require corroboration in other sources, “instances frequently occur where the statements of poetical tradition are unexpectedly confirmed.”⁷⁵ Thus, Scott deemed it possible to use scholarship to find truth in traditional poems and ballads.

In a somewhat similar attempt to bring together the seemingly disparate worlds of scholarship and myths, J.G. Herder had envisioned a scholarly approach to the study of mythology. In his discussion of Welsh Arthurian legends he wrote that it would be futile to try to determine when Arthur lived, but that “to trace the foundations, the history, and the effects of these tales and fictions, through all the nations and ages in which they flourished, and place them in their proper light as historical phenomena, would be no small fame, equally pleasing and instructive.”⁷⁶ Moreover, Herder saw myths as important sources for truth. He went as far as to say that “Ossian and his contemporaries convey to us more information respecting the interior state of the ancient gael, than a historian could give, and are at the same time affecting

⁷³ Scott, *Waverley*, 422.

⁷⁴ Scott was also willing to retain belief in various ‘non factual’ things – such as legends about monsters in lochs, the ‘evil’ character of Richard III; he believed the dwarfs in Scandinavian mythology were aboriginal Finns. James Anderson, *Sir Walter Scott and History and other papers* (Edinburgh: The Edina Press, 1981), 8.

⁷⁵ Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy on the Scottish Border* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1932), 7.

⁷⁶ Herder, *Outlines*, 335.

preachers of humanity, as it exists even in the most simple forms of society.”⁷⁷

The Romantics’ willingness to embrace myth is closely related to their willingness to see truth in fiction. They, following Herder’s example, did not see truth and imagination as mutually exclusive. Augustin Thierry praised Walter Scott’s novels for encouraging an interest in history,⁷⁸ and “said there was more true history in Scott’s *Ivanhoe* than in the work of most historians.”⁷⁹ In the same spirit, Hugo wrote that Scott, more than any other Romantic, had hidden truth in his fiction, hidden pedagogy in diversion,⁸⁰ saying that few historians were as faithful to the truth as “ce romancier.”⁸¹ The acceptance of historical fiction was of particular importance in Scotland,⁸² whose histories and mythologies had been so fundamentally dismantled by Scottish Enlightenment scholars seeking to prove their rationality that their “taxonomy of glory” could survive only in the “depoliticized space of artistic sentiment.”⁸³ In this spirit Thomas Macaulay declared that Walter Scott “had used those fragments of truth which historians have scornfully thrown behind them in a manner which may well excite their envy. He has constructed out of their gleanings works which, even considered as histories, are scarcely less valuable than theirs.”⁸⁴ Macaulay argued that “a truly great historian would reclaim those materials which the novelist has appropriated.”⁸⁵ Because of their inclination to re-appropriate the truths expressed in fiction and mythology, the Romantics were well-placed to create the link between present traditions and a living past that Smith contends was so

⁷⁷ Herder, *Outlines*, 331.

⁷⁸ Thierry, *Lettres*, 85. Contemporary historian Hugh Honour has also argued that Scott and other historical novelists contributed to the popularization of history in the nineteenth century. Hugh Honour, *Romanticism* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), 193.

⁷⁹ Maurice Cranston, *The Romantic Movement* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994), 90.

⁸⁰ Victor Hugo, *Littérature et Philosophie mêlées* (Paris: Nelson, Éditeurs, 1834), 237.

⁸¹ Hugo, *Littérature*, 230.

⁸² Interestingly, Scott’s writings were more often considered nationalist on the continent than in Scotland itself. Scott was very famous in continental Europe during his lifetime and his writing was “emplaced in national discourse in a manner very different from that in which they were interpreted in Scotland. In particular France, which Scott visited in 1825, was developing a strong passion for his writing with a strong ideological underpinning.” Pittock, *Scottish and Irish*, 204.

⁸³ Pittock, *Scottish and Irish*, 58.

⁸⁴ Quoted in Bann, *Romanticism and the Rise*, 23.

⁸⁵ Quoted in Bann, *Romanticism and the Rise*, 23.

necessary for the creation of nationalism.⁸⁶

This emphasis on imagination and the value placed on truth derived from the non-factual seems very much tied up with the type of worldview necessary for the possibility of nationalism. Nationalism is in so many ways about finding truth outside of facts; it is about seeing the reality in imagination, and using that imagination to create a sense of community that has verisimilitude. Nationalism requires a way of thinking about truth that allows for a suspension of disbelief in the face of national myths and imaginations, and Romanticism embraced such an understanding of truth. Alan Menhennet makes precisely this argument with respect to Germany, saying that German national consciousness “needed the imaginative and emotional power of the romantic mentality to turn it into a political force.”⁸⁷

Romantic willingness to see truth in fiction and embrace the importance of myth can perhaps be explained by what could be called the ‘more reality’ thesis. Famed cultural historian Jacques Barzun argues against the commonly held convention that Romanticism was about flights of fancy and embracing irreality through an emphasis on myths and dreams. He instead contends that what the Romantics really sought was “not a dream world in which to escape, but a real world in which to live.”⁸⁸ By insisting on putting Romanticism in the concrete world, Barzun is able to see that by emphasizing those things normally ignored by scholars, like dreams and imagination and ‘lower’ forms of folk art, the Romantics were in fact *expanding* the scope of reality. Thus, by making the non-material and oneiric legitimate topics of study, they were more fully embracing reality, rather than escaping or rejecting it. In Barzun’s words, “materialism narrows down the universe to a fraction of itself. The romanticists were finer realists precisely because they admitted the widest possible range of experience as real.”⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Anthony Smith, *National Identity*. (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1991), 65-66.

⁸⁷ Alan Menhennet, *The Romantic Movement* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), 35.e

⁸⁸ Jacques Barzun, *Romanticism and the Modern Ego* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1944), 81-82.

⁸⁹ Barzun, *Romanticism and Modern Ego*, 92.

Contemporary scholars also saw Romanticism in a similar light. In 1805, Garlieb Merkel wrote that “the romantic is reality elevated so as to have a poetic effect – and this elevation need not be brought about by the admixture of the marvelous, an object becomes romantic if it gains the semblance of the marvelous without losing its truth.”⁹⁰

Therefore, just as the Romantics emphasized the totality of time, wherein past and future could not be radically separated, they emphasized the totality of reality, wherein fact, fiction, imagination and scholarship all formed an integral whole. When Carlyle chastised the eighteenth century for its skepticism, and subsequent inability to accept heroes, he insisted that this skepticism meant that people were not only wrong about the transcendent, but that they were wrong about all aspects of the world.⁹¹

Emphasis on the unity of reality contributed to the Romantic sense of the nation – precisely because imagining nations requires an admixture of the factual and the ideated or constructed. Michelet argued that one needed to have faith in the *patrie*, and that this would be difficult if it were true that faith and reason were mutually exclusive. He argued that they were not: that to have faith was to believe in that which proves reason. The object of faith, he contended, was not the marvelous, but “le miracle permanent de la nature et de l’histoire.”⁹² He argued that to have faith in France, to hope for its future, one must look into its past, to find its natural genius, and its mission for the future.⁹³

In attempting to encompass and examine more of reality, the Romantics also argued for the elucidation of more aspects of history. They were not content with histories that told a single dimension of the story, and were willing to find historical truths in non-conventional sources, like fiction, as discussed above. Michelet argued that politics and the military alone

⁹⁰ Quoted in Hans Eichner, ed, ‘Romantic’ and Its Cognates: *The European History of a Word* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 124.

⁹¹ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes and Hero Worship* (Philadelphia: Henry Altems, 1899), 228, 231.

⁹² Michelet, *Peuple*, 298.

⁹³ Michelet, *Peuple*, 298.

did not make history, but rather that it ought to include “ce qui accompagne, explique, fonde en partie cette histoire politique, les circonstances sociales, économiques, industrielles, celles de la littérature et de l’idée.”⁹⁴ Thomas Carlyle too called for history to examine more than simply politics. He believed that by examining manifold types of experience, by allowing history to go in a variety of directions, historians as a whole could come close to an image of the whole of history.⁹⁵ He argued that historians needed an idea of the whole, which would inform their study of a single part, in fact contending that this recognition of history in its totality distinguished true historians who were artists, from those who were merely ‘artisans.’⁹⁶ Similarly, in his introduction to his *History of Scotland* Scott expressed a hope that his work would form “a chapter in the general history of man” rather than simply put forward truths about a single nation.⁹⁷ And Hugo argued that writing the history of a nation was incomplete work, and was therefore lacking and deformed. Local histories, he maintained, had to be part of a larger more general history.⁹⁸ Thus the Romantics saw history, much as they viewed reality more generally, as something one had to attempt to understand in its completeness, as each historical tract or story added to the whole.

This attempt to elucidate history in its totality was an ideal, however, and one the Romantics realized could not necessarily be fulfilled. Narration has its limits, where reality has none. In Carlyle’s words “Narrative is *linear*, Action is *solid*.”⁹⁹ As such, he contended there was always a discrepancy between an event, its observation, and the recording of that

⁹⁴ Michelet, *Histoire de France*, 18.

⁹⁵ Carlyle, “On History,” 79.

⁹⁶ Ann Rigney, “The Untenanted Places of the Past: Thomas Carlyle and the Varieties of Historical Ignorance,” *History and Theory* 35, no 3 (October 1996), 344.

⁹⁷ Scott, *History of Scotland*, v.

⁹⁸ Hugo, *Littérature et Philosophie mêlées*, 56. Of course, the Romantics were by no means the first to call for histories that were simultaneously global and local. Their desire for these totalizing histories is of particular relevance for them only insofar as it is reflective of their tendency to try to embrace what they perceived as the ‘completeness’ of reality, and thus an example in support of the ‘more reality’ thesis. Moreover, as Donald Kelley notes “history has been informed by the rhetoric of novelty,” and he gives the example of Thierry’s ‘new history’ of France, discussed below. Donald R. Kelley, *Faces of History: From Herodotus to Herder* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 271.

⁹⁹ Carlyle, “On History,” 72.

observation.¹⁰⁰ Yet they sought to expound as much of history as possible.

Romantic desire for ‘more history,’ while not necessarily connected with nationalism, often made such a connection possible. Examining the phenomenon draws broad parallels between Romantic and nationalist ideology, particularly insofar as this call for ‘more history’ led the Romantics to examine histories of those they believed had been left out of history, especially the masses. However, the Romantic emphasis on elucidating ‘more history’ just as easily connects Romanticism with individualism as with nationalism, and at times points to a simultaneous dual-emphasis.

Personalized History

The Romantics at times displayed an almost ‘populist’ approach to history, whereby they emphasized the importance of telling the histories of ‘all people’ and opposed simply chronicling political events or the lives of rulers. An emphasis on telling the story of the average person is interestingly both individualist and nationalist. It is individualist insofar as it emphasizes the importance of understanding the life of a person regardless of political influence, and it is nationalist insofar as it emphasizes the importance of recognizing the masses because they are members of the nation. Augustin Thierry, in his *Lettres sur L’Histoire de France* (1820), argued that a true national history of France had never been written, because no history had told the story of its entire population, regardless of social standing or political power.¹⁰¹ Thierry connected this quite closely with nationalism when he said that knowledge of the true national history would encourage patriotism among the French.¹⁰² Thus this new history had national importance. However, he also emphasized its personal importance, contending that the old history, with its small elite cast of characters, told nothing that was of importance to ‘us.’ He wrote that “nos provinces, nos villes, tout ce que chacun de nous

¹⁰⁰ Carlyle, “On History,” 71.

¹⁰¹ Thierry, *Lettres*, 15.

¹⁰² Thierry, *Lettres*, 14.

comprend dans ses affections sous le nom de patrie devrait nous être représenté à chaque siècle de son existence,” whereas in the old history of France one instead found only the domestic annals of the ruling family.¹⁰³ He argued that this history of the countryside, of the province, of one’s place of birth “est la seule où notre âme s’attache par un intérêt patriotique: les autres peuvent nous sembler curieuses, instructives, dignes d’admiration; mais elles ne touchent point de cette manière.”¹⁰⁴ Thierry thus called for history that he believed belonged to the people of France, history they could relate to – that was about their ancestors and their localities. His argument implies that by making history more personal, one makes history more national – that patriotism emerges from a sense of personal attachment. He asked for history to examine that which he believed it had traditionally ignored, and, like Michelet, who said that his history had given voice to those who could not speak for themselves,¹⁰⁵ he set up the historian as someone who was, in Chateaubriand’s words, “charged with avenging the people.”¹⁰⁶

Where Thierry sought to encourage French patriotism through knowledge of, and therefore a personal connection with, French history, Walter Scott sought to encourage British unity through the elucidation of the history and customs of the Highland Scots,¹⁰⁷ of whom he claimed the English knew nothing until Culloden in 1745, and of whom even the lowland Scots knew very little.¹⁰⁸ Scott seemed to believe that were they more familiar with the history and practices of the Scots, the English might feel more affinity for them. In the preface to *Waverley*, which takes place primarily in Highland Scotland at the time of Culloden, he contended that he wrote the novel in order to “introduce [Scotland’s] natives to those of the

¹⁰³ Thierry, *Lettres*, 16.

¹⁰⁴ Thierry, *Lettres*, 33.

¹⁰⁵ Jules Michelet, *Histoire de la Révolution Française* vol. II (Angers: Éditeurs de l’Ouest, 1952), 996.

¹⁰⁶ “In the silence of abjection, when the only sounds to be heard are the chains of the slave and the voice of the informer; when everything trembles before the tyrant and it is as dangerous to incur his favor as to deserve his disfavor, this is when the historian appears, charged with avenging the people.” Quoted in Hayden White, “The Politics of Historical Interpretation,” 79.

¹⁰⁷ Which he did in his histories and his novels.

¹⁰⁸ Walter Scott, *Manners, Customs and History of the Highlanders of Scotland* (Glasgow: Thames D. Morison, 1893), 13-14.

sister kingdom in a more favourable light than they have been placed hitherto.”¹⁰⁹ In so doing, he was also attempting to elucidate an aspect of history that had before gone unknown, while promoting the understanding of the history of what he felt was the more ‘romantic’ part of the Scottish nation. Thus, Scott pictured himself as both fulfilling a need for the English to see Scotland as romantic, and for the Scottish to find value in their own nation,¹¹⁰ by making its history an acceptable subject of study and a point of personal interest even outside of Scotland.

Thus the Romantics perceived history as something that was fundamentally personal, and in doing so, emphasized both the person and the collectivity. Thomas Carlyle contended that all cultures have history, even cultures without other fundamentals, like mathematics, and that it is the natural inclination of humans to seek out the past with which they are united. All humans, he believed, are naturally historians and naturally narrators.¹¹¹ Thus, all people are naturally inclined to seek out their culture’s past and imbue it with their own voice; to connect viscerally with a history to which they are personally connected. This is a clear demonstration of how the Romantic individual, although important in his or her own peculiarity and possessing an individual voice, was conceived of as fundamentally connected to something larger – be that history or a nation (or the history of a nation). This notion of individuals as connected to the broader reality is reflected in Michelet’s contention that when historians wrote about the people, they wrote about themselves, saying “ce grand peuple souffrant et silencieux que nous verrons venir à nous depuis l’origine du monde, il n’est autre que nous-mêmes.”¹¹² Telling the story of the ‘people’ ensured that Romantics, who saw themselves as of the people, told their own story.

Romantic historians did not write only about the masses, but in practice had a tendency

¹⁰⁹ Walter Scott, *Waverley*, 13. Moreover, Scott was particularly concerned with preserving knowledge about ancient Highland customs, because they were disappearing (422)

¹¹⁰ Glendening, *High Road*, 192.

¹¹¹ Carlyle, “On History,” 66-67.

¹¹² Quoted In Douglas Johnson, “Historians,” in *The French Romantics*, vol II ed. D.G. Charlton (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 283.

to emphasize great figures or heroes. Perhaps the most intuitive way in which the simultaneous emphasis on the individual and the nation is reconciled in the writing of history is through the figure of national heroes: historical individuals who, by their very exceptionality and uniqueness, were considered to be representative of the whole nation. It was in this context of Romantic individualist-nationalism that Michelet argued that France, under the leadership of Joan of Arc, became conscious of itself as a nation through war with England.¹¹³ Not only was the emphasis on the personage of Joan of Arc reflective of Romantic individualism, but so was his contention that it was the people, not Kings, who had forged France.¹¹⁴ Thomas Carlyle clearly emphasized the role of the heroic in history in *On Heroes and Hero Worship*, contending that the history of the world was in fact the history of these heroes and that as leaders these heroes were “in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain,” because actions in the world were the result of their thoughts and ideas.

Somewhat ironically, it was often the case that the less average these heroes were, the more they were considered to be suitable embodiments of the nation. Many Romantic historians discussed heroes in their histories. Walter Scott, in his *History of Scotland*, noted that popular Scottish tradition delighted to emphasize “the beloved champion of the people,” William Wallace, whom they described as having unparalleled strength, and never having felt fear.¹¹⁵ Thus, it was in Wallace’s uniqueness that he could be a heroic representative of the nation. Fichte took the logic of this one step further. When he discussed the role of Luther in the reformation, which he proposed was only successful because of Luther’s genuine concern

¹¹³ Michelet, *Jeanne D’Arc*, xl. “Souvenons toujours, Français, que la patrie chez nous est née du coeur d’une femme, de sa tendresse et de ses larmes, du sang qu’elle a donné pour nous.”

¹¹⁴ Cranston, *Romantic Movement*, 92. Interestingly, Douglas Johnson has argued that Michelet had an ambivalent relationship with great figures in history, at first seeing the people as more fundamental, and great figures more a matter of myth than reality, but that he changed his mind upon discovering Joan of Arc, who was simultaneously myth and reality. Johnson, “Historians,” 292-293.

¹¹⁵ Walter Scott, *History of Scotland*, 71.

regarding the question of salvation, he said that in the example of Luther “we have proof of German earnestness of soul.”¹¹⁶ Thus, the actions of a single exceptional German were taken to demonstrate the existence of a characteristic in all Germans.

Emphasis on heroes is a clear ‘personalization’ of history – and not only in the sense that the hero functions as a spotlighted ‘personality’ in a historical narrative. Perhaps more fundamentally, we revere heroes as heroes because we feel personally connected to them. In *On Heroes and Hero Worship*, Carlyle everywhere emphasized that the hero *belongs* to the nation, even saying that England would more readily give up its empire than it would give up Shakespeare.¹¹⁷ While this may have been highly unlikely, it demonstrates an understanding of heroes as people with whom one has a personal and inextricably proprietary relationship. As Scott said, William Wallace was ‘beloved’ – a word which would certainly evoke a strong personal attachment, and in Fichte’s example, knowing something about Luther told the Germans about their own characteristics. In *Jeanne D’Arc*, Michelet often emphasized the love people felt for Joan, saying that just as she loved France, France loved her, and noting that the people in her village knew she was pious and goodly even from a very young age.¹¹⁸ Moreover, Michelet often presented people as feeling moved to follow Joan, as if compelled by her obvious piety and steadfastness.¹¹⁹ This is not to say that he downplayed opposition to her, noting in fact that her own family sought to deter her, but rather to demonstrate that Michelet clearly emphasized that the people felt a personal and emotional attachment to her, both while she lived, and in the present, when a man could still cry at her death upon reading her story.¹²⁰ Consequently, this emphasis on a personal connection contributed to the affective power of

¹¹⁶ Fichte, *Addresses*, 81.

¹¹⁷ Carlyle, *Heroes*, 152.

¹¹⁸ Michelet, *Jeanne D’Arc*, xxxix, 9-10.

¹¹⁹ For example Michelet, *Jeanne D’Arc*, 19. He describes two men as ‘touched’ by her, and therefore agreeing to help her get to the King.

¹²⁰ Michelet, *Jeanne D’Arc*, 16, xxiii.

history in the present.¹²¹

The process of writing history was something the Romantics saw as their personal vocation, and their voices are often very present in their writing. Scott considered himself particularly well placed to tell the history of Highland Scotland because he had traveled extensively in the Highlands (although being a Lowlander himself),¹²² and not only is the character of Edward Waverley often thought to be semi-autobiographical, but also the novel itself has a strong narrator, giving Scott effectively two voices in the novel.¹²³ Chateaubriand, calling back to the historical tradition that began with at least Thucydides,¹²⁴ too believed he was especially capable of writing history, because he had experienced so much of it in his life, saying, “I made history and thus I was able to write it.”¹²⁵ Perhaps because of this personalized view of history, Chateaubriand put much of his own voice into his historical writing. Friderich Engel-Janosi characterizes Chateaubriand’s historical style as “putting his soul into the different ages and personalities,” and argues that in doing so Chateaubriand limited the extent to which these past events and personalities were relived, but that he did manage to shed some new light on them.¹²⁶ Certainly, for the Romantics, it is the latter that should be emphasized. Given their conception of the nature of reality, putting their voices into their histories would not have been seen as making Romantic historiography a lesser reflection of reality, but a greater one, because it made clear the role of the historian as mediator between the past and the

¹²¹ This can in part be explained by Michelet’s emphasis on history as resurrection.

¹²² Scott, *Waverley*, 14.

¹²³ Glendening, *High Road*, 177-178, 182. Glendening emphasizes that Waverley represents the Romantic element within Scott, while the narrator is his scholarly skeptical side.

¹²⁴ From antiquity it was conventionally believed that a good historian needed first hand experience to write history. Donald Kelley argues that the Thucydidean tradition of history (in which he includes a variety of historians over time, including, for example, Machiavelli, 147) “preferred eyewitness testimony to secondhand information – and consequently accessible history to remote antiquity.” Kelley, *Faces of History*, 207.

¹²⁵ Quoted in Friedrich Engel-Janosi. *Four Studies in French Romantic Historical Writing* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), 32. “Je me suis mêlé de paix et de guerre; j’ai signé des traits et des protocoles; j’ai assisté a des sieges, des congrès et des conclaves; à la réédification et à la demolition des trônes; j’ai fait de l’histoire, et je la pouvais écrire.” François René de Chateaubriand, *Mémoires D’Outre Tombe*, vol II (Librairie Gallimard, 1951), 936.

¹²⁶ Engel-Janosi, *Four Studies*, 41.

future, as the unifier of time, rather than trying to hide the historian's existence. As Donald Kelley notes, this notion of the historian as a direct participant in historical inquiry had existed since history's beginnings,¹²⁷ and while it had been somewhat challenged by some Enlightenment historians,¹²⁸ the Romantics' return to this earlier model was in keeping with their emphasis on the past and with their critique of modernity. Moreover, having a strong narratorial voice simultaneously highlighted the pastness of the past by distinguishing it from the voice of the present as well as displaying the past's personal affective impact in the present by showing how the past lives in the present through this new voice. By encouraging a personalized approach to history, the Romantics emphasized both individualism and nationalism: the former through this emphasis on authorial voice, and the individual's connection to the past, and the latter through an emphasis on a personal connection to a national past. This personalized connection is very important for the possibility of nationalism, as the nation-state, in Hans Kohn's words, "is more deep-rooted in the emotions of the masses than any previous political organization."¹²⁹

In an interesting juxtaposition of the national and the individual, Chateaubriand believed it was a French trait to put one's voice and personal experience into history, going so far as to say that the French tended to write memoirs rather than histories. He argued that this was because the French were concerned with demonstrating their role in history. Michelet too saw memoirs as a French practice, arguing that the Italians were too attached to their city-states

¹²⁷ He writes, "In a time-honored conceit history is played out in a vast 'theatre of nature,' in which historians, like all human beings, are at once actors and spectators – and, moreover, critics and, betimes, judges. The insight of modern science which, rejecting fictions of objectivity, situates the observer in the process of scientific investigation was a premise of historical inquiry from the beginning." Kelley, *Faces of History*, 8.

¹²⁸ David Hume, for example, famous for his skepticism, emphasized history as a source for empirical knowledge. He praised history "for a freedom from prejudice and passion that set it above everyday business and for a specificity that set it apart from the cold abstraction of philosophy. What history provided, he wrote, was 'materials, from which we may form our observations, and become acquainted with the regular springs of human action and behavior.'" Kelley, *Faces of History*, 235-236.

¹²⁹ Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1961), 23.

to write individual histories, the Germans too modest, and the English too arrogant to be self-reflexive.¹³⁰ And like Chateaubriand, Michelet saw histories as imbued with the voice of their author. However, where Chateaubriand meant this quite concretely, Jules Michelet saw the personal connection between himself and his work more fundamentally. He argued that his *History of France* was also his own life story, because he had put so much of himself into it, by working on it for so long. He contended that this was always the case, that “nul portrait si exact, si conforme au modèle, que l’artiste n’y mette un peu de lui.”¹³¹ Michelet believed the converse was also true, that he himself was made by his work. He said, “mon livre m’a créé. C’est moi qui fus son oeuvre.”¹³² So just as the present world was made up of its history, and looked back to remake it anew, Michelet saw himself as both formed and formed by his work.

The Romantics felt their personal connection to history so strongly that they desired to be a part of it, even if this only meant imbuing their histories with their own clear narrative voices. Fichte saw a similar impulse in humanity as a whole “to fling something new and unprecedented into time, so that it may remain there and become the inexhaustible source of new creations.” However, he contended that this was not so that the individual would be personally mentioned in history, and thus gain posthumous fame (the thirst for which he deemed a “contemptible vanity”), but rather so that each could leave behind evidence of having been on this earth, and know that he or she had contributed to the improvement of his or her people.¹³³ Thus, in this desire to be part of history, which was simultaneously about the self and the nation, the individual improved the future – demonstrating the interconnectedness of both past and future, and of the self and others.

Striving Toward the Future

¹³⁰ Michelet, *Histoire universelle*, 55.

¹³¹ Michelet, *Histoire de France*, 6.

¹³² Michelet, *Histoire de France*, 8.

¹³³ Fichte, *Addresses*, 113-114.

Because their conception of history was Janus-faced, one must look not only at how the Romantics constructed the past, but also the ways in which they strove for the future. For the Romantics history was fundamentally productive.¹³⁴ Carlyle even avoided using the past tense in his histories to emphasize the currency of past events, and the fact that they continued to have an impact.¹³⁵ Moreover, they believed the historian functioned as a necessary intermediary between the events of history and the future. Thus for Carlyle, “history is not a record of civilization; it is civilization itself, the past speaking to the present and to the future through the voice of the historian. Without that animating voice, we would have no history – only gibberish and unmarked graves.”¹³⁶ It was necessary for history to be more than gibberish, because the Romantics perceived it as serving a pedagogic function, believing that “history had to teach a lesson,”¹³⁷ often in conjunction with promoting nationalism. Michelet, for example, called for fathers to educate their sons to love *la patrie* by teaching them its history, from which they would gain both patriotism and understanding of France’s mission for the future.¹³⁸ Scott too saw his work as teaching the new generation about their pasts, about the “manners of their forefathers.”¹³⁹ And as discussed above, he also hoped to teach the English about Scotland, and thus encourage an affinity for it.

The Romantics also looked to the past to determine ‘national characteristics,’ which they believed then acted as indicators of the nation’s path in the future. Fichte contended that “the German nation is the only one among the neo-European nations that has shown in practice, by the example of its burgher class for centuries, that it is capable of enduring a

¹³⁴ In fact, the Romantics viewed art in general as productive. In Victor Hugo’s words “Je n’ai jamais dit: l’art pour l’art; j’ai toujours dit: l’art pour le progrès. Au fond, c’est la même chose . . . Le poète ne peut aller seul, il faut que l’homme aussi se déplace. Les pas de l’humanité sont donc les pas mêmes de l’art.” Quoted in Elwood Hartman. *French Romantics on Progress: Human and Aesthetic* (Potomac, Maryland: Studia Humanitas, 1983), 104.

¹³⁵ John D. Rosenberg, *Carlyle and the Burden of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 58.

¹³⁶ Rosenberg, *Carlyle and the Burden of History*, 15.

¹³⁷ Johnson, “Historians,” 280.

¹³⁸ Blûche, “Introduction,” xxxii.

¹³⁹ Scott, *Waverley*, 424

republican constitution,¹⁴⁰ and Thierry argued that looking into France's past would demonstrate that even in the worst times there were always those who stood up for liberty and justice, and that therefore the spirit of independence defined the French.¹⁴¹

Yet, for the Romantics the productive nature of historical truth was not necessarily pragmatic; it did not seek to establish concrete and programmatic political and social theories, but rather sought to provide an inspiring understanding of the totality of history (the unity of history was seen as fundamental to its truth) and the way it unfolded so that individuals might be able to situate themselves within its development.¹⁴² It was in this spirit that Herder had argued that "there is no nobler use of history than this: it unfolds to us as it were the counsels of Fate, and teaches us, insignificant as we are, to act according to God's eternal laws," that is, reason.¹⁴³ Yet this could never be entirely achieved, for Herder had also argued that it was a "beautiful dream of future life" that we could converse with the wise and noble in history so that we could improve humanity as a whole.¹⁴⁴ Carlyle echoed this notion that the insights of history were imperfect. Even though he maintained that it was only in understanding the past, "the true fountain of knowledge" that one could make sense of the present and the future, the complexities of history with its prophetic mysteries could "be fully interpreted by no man."¹⁴⁵ Both the complexities and 'pastness' of the past meant that it could neither be recreated in the present, nor used as a perfect template for things to come. One could not truly become a prophet by studying history, but gaining insight into life through understanding the past was an ideal to be striven for. This notion of striving for the ideal and the infinite is a strong theme in

¹⁴⁰ Fichte, *Addresses*, 90. Editor George A Kelly notes that "In Fichte's *Basis of Natural Right*, 'republican' means neither absolutist nor democratic in the direct sense." However, the definition is less crucial than the fact that Fichte believes that Germany's past experience should be taken as a demonstration of a national characteristic that will continue into the future.

¹⁴¹ Thierry, *Lettres*, 14.

¹⁴² Engelhardt, "Romanticism," 115.

¹⁴³ Herder, *Outlines*, 321.

¹⁴⁴ Herder, *Outlines*, 321.

¹⁴⁵ Carlyle, "On History," 73.

Romantic philosophy of history.

The Romantics embraced philosophies of history that perceived the world as in a state of perpetual development – moving toward a goal that could not be achieved, but ought to be striven for. Victor Hugo saw civilization as moving through various spheres, commencing in Asia, moving through Africa and Europe, and becoming centred in America in the future. He contended that when civilization moved to new land, it also moved onto new principles. He believed that the world was at that time moving away from religion toward emancipatory liberty, which he noted “semble devoir être désormais la loi de l’humanité.”¹⁴⁶ Herder had similarly argued that all of human history had been about the development of humanity, and that it was for this purpose that governments and laws were invented – so that people could improve.¹⁴⁷ He believed that “the human Race is destined to proceed through various Degrees of Civilization, in various Mutations; but the permanency of its Welfare is founded solely and essentially on Reason and Justice,”¹⁴⁸ and that this human progression was naturally tied to the progression of time.¹⁴⁹ For Herder this development of humanity was particularly tied to the development of nations. He had asserted that no European nation since Rome had been founded through conquest and war, in order to demonstrate that the nations of Europe were moving toward peaceful balance after generations of warring.¹⁵⁰ Herder contended that the relations that developed between nations, the codes of conduct and rules of war, were a step on the way to a time when nations would not be in conflict.¹⁵¹ Following this, Michelet too saw the development of nations as a step in a process of historical development, wherein people would overcome their local loyalties, and embrace larger and larger identities, until that of the nation, which would connect the individual to world events. The abstract idea of the nation,

¹⁴⁶ Victor Hugo, *Littérature et Philosophie Mêlées*, 277-278, 288-289.

¹⁴⁷ Herder, *Outlines*, 271-272.

¹⁴⁸ Herder, *Outlines*, 291.

¹⁴⁹ Herder, *Outlines*, 304.

¹⁵⁰ Herder, *Outlines*, 283.

¹⁵¹ Herder, *Outlines*, 271-272.

Michelet argued, would eventually bring people to the idea of the universal nation.¹⁵² But he insisted that this eventuality must be achieved by degrees, that “Il faut que l’humanité souffre et patiente qu’elle mérite d’arriver.”¹⁵³ Thus, for both Herder and Michelet the nation was a stage of history, one that would be overcome, but that was required for historical development. This suggests that for the Romantics the relationship between the nation and history was co-constitutive; the nation was a product of its history, and history continued on its path of perpetual development through the nation.

This philosophy of perpetual development is tied closely to the Romantic ideal of striving. Their goal was not to achieve something final and begin anew – but rather they saw the world as a living organism that grew and changed with time. Fichte argued against a philosophy of history that saw the world as developing, reaching culmination in a golden age, only for history to end and the process to begin anew, calling instead for a vision of history that emphasized the development of a living spirit through the work of sedulous individuals (and emphasizing that a person who thinks like a German would certainly have the latter vision).

He wrote:

Golden ages are to him [who thinks like a German] in every respect a limitation proceeding from a state of death. Gold may indeed be the most precious metal in the lap of dead earth, he thinks, but the stuff of the living spirit is beyond the sun and beyond all suns, and is their source. For him history, and with it the human race, does not unfold itself according to some mysterious hidden law, like a round dance; on the contrary, in his opinion a true and proper man himself makes history, not merely repeating what has existed already, but through all time creating what is entirely new.¹⁵⁴

This rejection of ‘golden age’ as the end of a cycle of history did not negate the possibility of looking back to a proverbial ‘golden age’ for inspiration for future development: Fichte himself emphasized the medieval period as the origin of Germany’s true path. For Fichte this vision of history as something that progressed perpetually was closely tied to his nationalism. He

¹⁵² Michelet, *Histoire de France*, 88.

¹⁵³ Michelet, *Histoire de France*, 88.

¹⁵⁴ Fichte, *Addresses*, 101.

believed that the German people, because they were an ‘original people’ who were connected to their own living language, having descended from the Teutonic peoples and not adopted a foreign tongue, necessarily believed in “something absolute primary and original in man himself, in freedom, in endless improvement, in the eternal progress of our race.”¹⁵⁵ More than this however, for Fichte the German nation itself was an ideal to be striven for; he argued that the German nation should make itself what it “ought to be,”¹⁵⁶ by returning to its original historical path (as discussed above). It was the role of individuals to bring the nation back to its original path – to ensure its historicity, its organic connection to its source, but it was this historical connection specifically that ensured the nation’s authenticity, and thus its ability to continue to develop into the future. Its living connection to its past meant it would not get stuck in the death of cyclical history.

This notion of striving, of perpetually moving toward that which is unattainable, provides a logical connection with nationalism, because the nation too is an ideal that is never absolutely achieved, but rather one that is perpetually approximated. As William H. McNeill notes in his study of the ideal of ethnically homogenous nation-states, nation-states have never been ethnically homogenous, but this remained their imagined ideal, regardless.¹⁵⁷ Many nationalism scholars have emphasized the fact that nationalism perpetuates myths about nations (be it ethnic homogeneity, a mythologized history, the notion of perpetual existence) and are quick to note that nations do not in reality conform to their own mythologies. However, for the Romantics this was not necessarily the issue that modern scholars perceive it to be, because of their willingness to accept ideals as unobtainable realities that should be striven for regardless.

¹⁵⁵ Fichte, *Addresses*, 107.

¹⁵⁶ Fichte, *Addresses*, 107.

¹⁵⁷ William H. McNeill, *Polyethnicity and National Unity in World History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 36. He argues that modern nationalism emerges in the way that it did because of the classical model of government of direct participation of citizens. Direct participation was an ideal, but an ideal that could no longer be obtained because states were not small enough. As such the notion became “all the more precious because it has irretrievably vanished from the face of the Earth.”

The Romantics were not necessarily thinking about nations when they embraced this idea of striving, although as noted above Fichte conceived of the nation as an ideal rather than a reality, but it certainly demonstrates an area of overlap between Romantic sensibilities and nationalist ideology.

* * * *

The Romantics had a particular conception of history, which allowed them to look simultaneously at past and future, truth and fiction. It encouraged them to tell the stories of those who had been forgotten, as well as those of influential figures. They personally influenced the way history was written – imbuing it with their own voices, but were in turn affected by it. Just as they harmonized these opposites in their historical endeavors, the Romantics also integrated the national and the individual into their histories. Their history, which encouraged an imaginative and personal connection with both the past and future, left open the possibility for either individualism or nationalism and encouraged both. As Smith contends, Romanticism can be seen as promoting “a yearning for an idealized golden age and a heroic past that can serve as exemplars for collective regeneration in the present.”¹⁵⁸ What is perhaps most interesting is that Romanticism provided this fertile soil in which nationalism could grow sometimes as a result of conscious effort on the part of Romantic scholars, but sometimes due to Romantic conceptions and dispositions not directly connected to, but still compatible with, nationalist sentiment. Joep Leerssen argues that Romantic historicism was a way to counter modern alienation by rooting oneself in the past, and that “on the surface, this historicist impulse is a manifestation of political Romanticism [his term for early nineteenth-century nationalism], and belongs to the general spectrum of resistance against a Napoleon-imposed loss of nationhood . . . at a more fundamental level, however, the historicist impulse

¹⁵⁸ Smith, *National Identity*, 91.

can celebrate any notion of authenticity and connectedness with the past.”¹⁵⁹ Thus, the reason the Romantics turned to the nation in particular remains to be discussed.

¹⁵⁹ Joep Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 121.

Chapter 3 – The Wholeness of the Individual and the Individuation of the Whole: The Idea of the Particular and the Relationship between the Whole and the Part in Romantic Thought

“What and wherever thou wast born, O man, there thou art, and there thou shouldst be: quit not the chain, set not thyself above it, but adhere to it firmly. Life and happiness exist for thee only in its integrity, in what thou receivest or impartest, in thy activity of each.”¹ With these words, Herder foreshadowed the side of Romantic individuality that emphasized the importance of connection – of the individual as an intersubjective being, one who both gave and received, and was thus engaged in communion with other individuals. But Romantic individuality was simultaneously about particularism as well as connection. It is because the Romantics conceived of each individual as unique that they also conceived of individuals as morally obligated to contribute to the whole, to be connected, because each brought something as a particular individual that another could not.

Perhaps the coexistence and compatibility of Romantic individualism and nationalism can best be explained by seeing both as forms of Romantic particularism, and consequently rejections of universalism. The Romantic individual was not the totalizing universal individual of the Enlightenment, which valued individuals because each had the capacity for reason. Rather Romantic individuality was about the peculiarity and uniqueness of each person. Individuality was therefore more a function of difference than of sameness. This is not to say that some measure of sameness was not also important, because although individuals were particular they were not isolated. Rather, their connection one to the other was a fundamental component of their individuality. This is the central paradox of Romantic individualism and collectivism. As Gerarld Izenberg has noted, “the question of the transition from singular

¹ J.G. Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, translated by T. Churchill (New York: Bergman Publishers, 1800), 229.

individuality to collective individuality is an abyss to be bridged rather than a bridge to be crossed.”² The Romantics emphasized individuality as uniqueness, the self determined in opposition to the not-self, and yet saw individual potential as fundamentally fulfilled through the integration of the self and the community.³

This conception of individuality was paralleled in Romantic nationalism. In the Romantic conception, nations functioned as individuals on the world stage, simultaneously unique and connected to a larger cosmopolitan whole. Anthony Smith contends that in the pre-modern period this “double drive to uniformity and uniqueness” present in the modern nation “was lacking.”⁴ It is precisely that double-drive, which distinguishes modern nationalism from previous types of collective identity, that Romantic authors used to distinguish themselves from other intellectual movements, notably the Enlightenment.

By simultaneously promoting individualism and identification with a community the Romantics facilitated the emergence of a nationalism that went beyond the rational pursuit of self-interest. In essence, they were promoting a nationalism that went further than Enlightenment scholars’ theory of a contractual state, but did not go so far beyond it as later nineteenth-century nationalism. This is not to say that Romanticism necessarily led to nationalism, as other forms of communitarianism could also accommodate their notion of particularity, but rather that the Romantic conception of the individual helped to create the possibility for their particular brand of nationalism, and laid the groundwork for later integral nationalism.

The Romantic understanding of particularity and individuality, and its compatibility with a sense of communitarianism, is reflected in a number of themes or concepts. Firstly,

² Gerald N. Izenberg, *Impossible Individuality: Romanticism, Revolution and the Origins of Modern Selfhood, 1787-1802* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 5.

³ Izenberg, *Impossible Individuality*, 5.

⁴ Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1991), 69.

Romantics like Friedrich Schlegel, J.G. Fichte, Walter Scott and Jules Michelet believed that individuality was only fulfilled through belonging to a larger whole, and in their understanding of belonging the part could function as a whole, and the whole could function as a particularity or individuality. Secondly, they, along with Thomas Carlyle, saw a special place in the larger whole for particular individuals, especially heroes and emphasized the importance of scholars or ‘geniuses’. Finally, these Romantics understood the nation itself as an individual, as a whole that could function as a particularity, which draws clear parallels between their understanding of the individual and the nation.

* * * *

Finding Individuality in the Whole

The Romantics’ understanding of individuality with respect to humans was very much informed by their understanding of particularity more generally. They envisioned a complex and co-constitutive relationship between the whole and its parts, whereby each part functioned as both an individual whole and an aspect of a larger whole, which in itself was an individual. Friedrich Schlegel, for example, made this argument for classical poetry, saying that as a conglomerate it functioned as an individual, and thus by analogy all things that can be categorized (in the way that one can categorize classical poetry) must be considered individuals:

If someone attempts a characterization of the ancients en masse, then no one considers that paradoxical; and yet so little do these people usually know their own minds that they would be surprised at the suggestion that classical poetry is an individual in the strictest and most literal sense of the word . . . Is it possible to characterize anything but individuals? Isn’t whatever can’t be multiplied after a certain given point just as much a historical entity as something that can no longer be divided? Aren’t all systems individuals just as all individuals are systems at least in embryo and tendency? Isn’t every real entity historical? Aren’t there individuals who contain within themselves whole systems of individuals?⁵

Schlegel’s understanding of this whole-part relationship is reflected in the very form in which

⁵ Friedrich Schlegel, “Athenaeum Fragments,” in *Lucinde and The Fragments*, trans by Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 196.

he organized his writing. Schlegel adopted the practice of writing in fragments, publishing collections of aphorisms on a number of somewhat interrelated topics. This created a system wherein each fragment was necessarily self-sustaining and self-contained, while remaining fundamentally part of a whole to which it contributed. It was both whole and part simultaneously, like Schlegel said that the poet must be.⁶

This idea is highly reflective of the Romantic notion of individuality, which emphasized individual fulfillment through participation in a larger whole, but also saw the individual as a whole in itself. In this the Romantics were following Herder, who had argued that if only a single individual populated the entire world, then “the object of human existence would have been accomplished in him; as we must consider it to be accomplished in so many individuals and nations, whom circumstances of time and place separated from the general chain of the species.”⁷ In general, the whole of humanity working in tandem, passing information through the chain of tradition, was intended to fulfill the goal of humanity; Herder had allowed, however, that where this was not possible a part could function as the whole. This is because he conceived of the whole itself as an individual, and the goal of any totality as the fulfillment of its innermost individuality: for example, for Herder, the purpose and mission of humanity was to be as human as possible. Therefore, he believed that “whatever its nature, the more fully it is acted out, the better is the culture. Wholesomeness becomes synonymous with moral soundness; oneness (and marginality), with unsoundness, corruption. The same principle applies to art, language, any part of culture, and – most important – to the individual himself. ‘Everyone’s actions should arise utterly from the self, according to its innermost character,’ Herder wrote to Caroline, his bride; ‘to be true to oneself: this is the

⁶ Schlegel was not the only Romantic scholar to write in fragments – and in fact the famous *Athenaeum Fragments* were also partly authored by his brother August Wilhelm Schlegel, Novalis, and Friedrich Schliermacher.

⁷ J.G. Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, trans. T. Churchill, vol II (London: J. Johnson, 1803), 316.

whole of morality.”⁸ This applied equally to people and to communities, each capable of functioning as totalities and individuals simultaneously.⁹

Yet, the Romantics fundamentally conceived of individuals as being truest to their individuality through communion with society.¹⁰ The emphasis on individuality as fulfilled in the whole derives, at least in part, from the Romantic understanding of humans as connected rather than isolated.¹¹ Fichte declared that the common belief that people were naturally selfish and had to be educated in order to be otherwise was “utterly false.”¹² Michelet, going against what he thought contemporary philosophers (by which he meant those in the tradition of the *philosophes*) believed about humans requiring a mechanism to come together, argued that humans were naturally social. They naturally both wanted to love and be loved.¹³ Here again, Herder’s break with earlier theory laid the groundwork. In direct contrast with social contract theory, he had believed that “the natural state of man is society.”¹⁴ He argued that because “as an individual man can subsist of himself but very imperfectly, a *superior maximum of cooperating powers* is formed with every society.”¹⁵ By conceiving of humans as naturally community-oriented, the Romantics were bound to understand individuality in a way that allowed for such natural connectivity.

⁸ Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 331.

⁹ The idea of judging a person or community based on the fulfillment of its own individuality was reflected in Romantic theories of art. Friedrich Schlegel developed a method of artistic interpretation whereby art was evaluated on the goal it had set out for itself. It was the job of a critic, therefore, to determine what a piece was trying to do and then decide how well it had reached its goal, whereas previously art critics had judged art on the basis of generalized or universal artistic principles. Maurice Cranston, *Romantic Movement* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994), 30.

¹⁰ It could perhaps be argued that the individual functioning as a totality in itself is the ideal – the absolute unification of the whole and the part – but that because this ideal is practically unattainable the Romantics instead emphasized the individual as fulfilled in a larger whole, thus approximating the unification of the particularity and the totality.

¹¹ This parallels the Romantic emphasis on the connection of past and future, and the fact that understanding both is necessary to understand reality, in their conceptions of the historical.

¹² Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, George A. Kelly, ed., (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968), 135.

¹³ Jules Michelet, *Le Peuple* (Paris: Comptoir des Imprimeurs-Unis, 1846), 225.

¹⁴ Herder, *Outlines* (1800), 244.

¹⁵ Herder, *Outlines*, vol II (1803), 293.

This is not to say that they did not recognize that strong individual personalities could make associations and collectivities difficult. Michelet believed that the French, because they were such strong-willed and independent individuals, associated only with difficulty. However, he said that this was overcome through associations based on sentiment and friendship. Where there was diversity of interests, he maintained, unity would have to be based on amity.¹⁶ This association of sentiment could therefore allow for strong-willed individuality to flourish within a larger whole. On the whole, however, the Romantics maintained that it was in the individual's best interest to be part of society, that through connection to the whole individuals found their fulfillment, and that through the development of the individual the potential of the whole was realized.¹⁷ Therefore, the Romantics believed that "to pursue the individual self leads to the revelation of the universal, while the truth and fulfillment of the individual self lies in its relation to the whole."¹⁸

This relationship between the individual and the whole certainly speaks to the Romantic understanding of the relationship between individuals and nations. As Anthony Smith notes, individuals use their nationality to define themselves, to discover their 'true selves.' Finding one's individuality through a group is somewhat paradoxical, and "the quest for the national self and the individual's relationship to it remains the most baffling element in the nationalist project."¹⁹ The Romantics certainly embraced this paradox, and their emphasis on the individual's fulfillment in the whole could be directly attached to strong nationalist

¹⁶ Michelet, *Peuple*, 254. It is therefore of note that he makes much of the fact that nationalism is fundamentally friendship, discussed in greater detail in the following chapter. Also, his position demonstrates the strong contrast between Romantic associations, based on sentiment and love, and Enlightenment associations, based on appeals to self-interest. This difference ensured that Romantic collectivism was conceived as having both communitarian means and end, where Enlightenment scholars conceived of associations as the means to individual ends.

¹⁷ This idea is particularly clear in the Romantic emphasis on the role of the scholar or genius in society, discussed below.

¹⁸ Warren Breckman, *European Romanticism: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 19.

¹⁹ Smith, *National Identity*, 17.

sentiment. Michelet, for example, argued that in the French nation “l’individu tire sa gloire de sa participation volontaire à l’ensemble; il peut dire, lui aussi: je m’appelle légion.”²⁰ Nations, he maintained, were distinct from races because they involved the bringing together of diverse elements. Thus France, he argued, was a nation, and Germany a race.²¹ But, this synthesis of diverse individuals created something fundamentally new, so that one could not examine individuals in isolation. Rather, Michelet insisted that one should conceive of the individual as acting in a mass – because no one individual could alone characterize communitary sentiment. Instead, that sentiment was “le vrai caractère d’homme.”²² He illustrated this with the example of the July Revolution, saying that posterity could find no single hero in that event who stood out from the people, but that the people as a whole were the hero of the Revolution.²³

Thus, the Romantics emphasized the importance of individuals belonging to a nation, and perceived this as a way in which their thought differed from that of earlier movements.

²⁰ Jules Michelet, *Introduction à l’histoire universelle* (Paris: Librairie Classique de L’Hachette, 1831), 64. This emphasis on participation in the whole being voluntary is interesting, and somewhat recurring in Romantic thought. For example, Fichte at times seems to say that the individual chooses to give him or herself to the whole. He argued that self-sacrifice for the good of the whole could not be compelled but had to be given freely. (Fichte, *Addresses*, 150.) Moreover, Schlegel insisted that individuals in communities had to maintain their autonomy while contributing to the whole (Schlegel, “Athenaeum Fragments,” 176. – both discussed below). This notion of voluntary participation in the whole demonstrates how the Romantics, although they differed from Enlightenment scholars, were also influenced by their thought. Social contract theory very much emphasized that individuals chose to belong to the whole for their self-preservation, despite that fact that this involved sacrificing a measure of individual freedom. Romantic thought differed from this because, in the first instance, it saw human association as natural rather than requiring a mechanism, and in the second, it believed association led to increased rather than decreased freedom for the individual. Yet, to characterize the Romantic Movement as entirely opposed to the Enlightenment would be incorrect. In many ways they had similar aspirations; it is simply that the Romantics believed the Enlightenment scholars’ solutions were incorrect. Liah Greenfeld argues that the Romantics rejected the Enlightenment because it had failed to preserve a place for the intellectual as it had promised, but that the Romantics held on to this promise (Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 250). However, the issue seems more fundamental. The Enlightenment had promised to protect the individual, to laud him or her above all else, but the Romantics believed in doing so it had created individuals who were isolated and alienated from those things that made them individuals. The Enlightenment called for individuals to be upheld because of their capacity for reason, because of that which made them the same as all individuals. In Romantic thought this was essentially a failure to truly recognize the individual, and the Romantics sought to correct that, but the fundamental desire to uphold the individual remained, which explains why despite their collectivism Romantics could still emphasize individual will, autonomy and the voluntary nature of association.

²¹ Michelet, *Introduction*, 64.

²² Michelet, *Introduction*, 66.

²³ Michelet, *Introduction*, 66.

Moreover, they believed that it was through their attachment to particular cultures and groups that individuals found their identities and distinguished themselves from others. Herder had criticized the Enlightenment because he felt it did not recognize the importance of particularities, and instead adopted a universalism of sorts. He lambasted the *Aufklärer* because they:

have criticized folk-poetry, myth, and music as so much superstition and vulgarity, and they have elevated the artificial dramas of the French court into absolute norms. Even worse, by preaching their new gospel of the cosmopolitan individual, they have made people ashamed of their national identity. People no longer feel that they belong anywhere, because they are told they should belong everywhere. The result: the people are alienated from the very sources of their own culture, their national traditions, language, and history. Now, thanks to the Age of Enlightenment, people will become perfectly alike, the pale ethereal embodiments of a single universal nature. The *Aufklärer* preach tolerance only because they believe everyone shares in this abstract humanity. Never do they value cultural differences for their own sake.²⁴

Not only did Herder perceive the universality of the Enlightenment as an abrogation of national particularities, he also emphasized the importance of cultural particularities as fundamental for the individual. He essentially argued that people could not understand themselves as particular unless they had a concept of a distinct culture to which they belonged. Herder's emphasis on folk cultures was thus a means of asserting individuality, because individual genius unfolded when it was fostered within the particularities of its culture.²⁵

Furthermore, just as Herder perceived nations as fundamentally unique, Romantics considered particular individuals as fundamentally unique, but at the same time individuals' identities were seen as closely tied to the nations to which they belonged. Michelet argued that because each French person's origin is to be found in France, French people know nothing of themselves if they do not know France.²⁶ For this reason, Michelet called for a national

²⁴ Frederick C. Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism: The Genesis of Modern Political Thought, 1790-1800* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992), 204.

²⁵ F.W. Stokoe, *German Influence in the English Romantic Period, 1788-1818: with special reference to Scott, Coleridge, Shelley and Byron* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), 4.

²⁶ Michelet, *Peuple*, 298-299.

education, where every person in France could learn “rien autre que la France,”²⁷ and consequently about themselves, who they truly are. It was in keeping with this idea of the individual as finding his identity through others, through the whole, that Schlegel argued that “no one knows what he is if he doesn’t know what his contemporaries are.”²⁸ And it was befitting Romantic understanding of the complexity of the whole-part dynamic that Fichte declared that “the man who sees the whole in each part always knows where he stands, and is sure of his ground by reason of the insight he has already gained; whereas another man, lacking sure clue or definite certainty, gropes blindly in a dream.”²⁹ The Romantics therefore perceived individuals as both fundamentally individual and fundamentally connected. Thus, Scott could write some of his characters as national-historical archetypes, so that they might be representative of their time and place, but recognized that in doing so they lost some of the individuality that was found in other characters.³⁰

Belonging to a group was not only regarded as a means by which individuals could develop an individual and particular identity, it was also perceived as a moral obligation. In Herder’s words, “the weal of the whole is the greatest good of each individual: for it is the inherent right and duty of every one who suffers under its evils, to ward off those evils from himself, and diminish them for his fellows. Nature has not calculated for sovereigns and states, but for the welfare of men.”³¹ If nature was calculated for individuals, then it was up to individuals to protect the whole in which they found their particular fulfillment. Fichte contended that there were two ways for individuals to subordinate themselves to the community. The first, following the laws and the constitution, he believed was necessary and could be compelled. The second, “the raising and well-being of the community by self-

²⁷ Michelet, *Peuple*, 304.

²⁸ Schlegel, “Athenaeum Fragments,” 254.

²⁹ Fichte, *Addresses*, 5.

³⁰ Walter Scott, *Waverley or ‘Tis Sixty Years Since* (New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell & Co, 1907), 423.

³¹ Herder, *Outlines*, vol II (1803), 317.

sacrifice,” he insisted was an ‘ought’ and had to be given freely.³²

Interestingly, Walter Scott perceived a sense of personal fulfillment through the state as a whole as the very reason people were willing to accept the common good at the expense of individual power. He contended that “because the poorest and most humble citizen beholds himself, in idea, enriched with a portion of the fame and power acquired by the state, and considers himself as a gainer in the good fortune of the commonwealth,” he or she desires that more power be given to the public at the exclusion of his or her own person from power.³³ He believed that because the individual felt a part of the whole, he or she desired success and power for that whole. This contrasted with Enlightenment contract theory, where giving power to the state was seen as a necessary evil to secure the existence and freedom of the individual, and where the success of the state was desired primarily to protect the self-interest of those invested in it.

Fichte, like Scott, argued that past political orders had failed because individuals were only invested in the government as result of self-interest. This created only a tentative link to the community that became weak and would eventually wear away.³⁴ Therefore, he believed that relying on self-interest alone, and thus treating individuals as fundamentally isolated, could not breed true community spirit. Fichte argued that the Germans required a new system of education that taught them to love the good for the sake of the good, rather than for the sake of self-interest. This, he maintained, would not only reinvigorate the ideas of honour and national glory, thought to be illusory by many in Germany, but would also ensure true freedom for the individual, because true freedom is to be found in a will that does what it ought.³⁵ Yet Fichte disagreed with Kant that the ideal society was one where individuals could act autonomously

³² Fichte, *Addresses*, 150.

³³ Walter Scott, *Tales of a Grandfather: Being Stories Taken From the History of France* vol. 1 (Exeter: J.B. Williams, 1833), 11.

³⁴ Fichte, *Addresses*, 8-9.

³⁵ Fichte, *Addresses*, 14-24.

without interference from others, envisaging instead a society of social beings who would work together to achieve the common good.³⁶ It was by feeling genuine attachment to the larger group, therefore, that the Romantic individual found both power and freedom.

Contemporary scholarship on nationalism has suggested that nations were in part developed to confer status on the individual. Liah Greenfeld argues that nationalism affords a measure of dignity and status to all the individuals in the nation, because it affords a sense of belonging to that nation.³⁷ She writes, “*national identity is, fundamentally, a matter of dignity. It gives people reasons to be proud.*”³⁸ Thus the Romantic notion that the individual seeks out an identity through belonging to the whole creates a point of contact between Romantic notions of the individual and the theory of nationalism. Friedrich Meinecke seems to have captured the Romantics’ understanding of the relationship between individualism and nationalism, which they never expressly state, but in everything imply. He writes:

The human being needs the community to sustain him and receive his contributions in turn. The more autonomous, the more individualized he himself becomes, that larger the spheres of his receptivity and influence can be. The spheres of life consequently acquire a richer substance and a clearer outline, and of all the great spheres that a man can enter, there is probably none that speaks so directly to the whole man as the nation, none that carries him so strongly, none that renders so faithfully his entire natural and intellectual being, none that can so readily be or become both macroanthropos and fully realized individual.³⁹

Why the nation could be given this privileged status over other forms of community, when logically any communitarianism seems capable of supporting the interpersonal nature of Romantic individualism remains to be discussed, but this subject is reserved for the following chapter.

Just as they saw the individual as taking his or her identity from the collective, the

³⁶ Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*, 58.

³⁷ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 488-489.

³⁸ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 488. [emphasis original]

³⁹ Friedrich Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism and the National State*, trans. Robert B. Kimber (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970). [first edition 1907], 14-15.

Romantics also had a sense of the whole as defined by its parts, of the nation as characterized by the individuals who composed it. Friedrich Meinecke argues that “it is no coincidence that an era of individualistic strivings for freedom immediately preceded the era of modern national thought. The nation drank the blood of free personalities, as it were, to attain personality itself.”⁴⁰ Herder, writing on the threshold between these two eras, saw the collective as obtaining its personality from its members. In the preface to his *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* he challenged the idea that a term such as ‘cultivated’ or ‘happy’ could be applied to an entire group if its constituent members did not reflect that term. He maintained that an abstract idea like the state could not be said to be happy if its constituent members suffered.⁴¹ Moreover, he argued that the system of government was determined by the nature of the nation, giving the example that a nation of the hunt would have the greatest hunter as its leader.⁴² Following in a similar vein, Thomas Carlyle saw society as defined by its constituent elements, asking that if the aphorism that all men contain within them a mad-man is true, what must this say about society as a whole?⁴³ Functioning on this same principle of nations as defined by the individuals that comprise them, Fichte’s entire proposed system of education was founded on the idea that improving the individuals that make up the nation would improve the nation as a whole. He wrote, “only the nation which has first solved in actual practice the problem of educating perfect men will then solve also the problem of the perfect state.”⁴⁴

Taken together, the opposing ideas that individuals are defined by their nations and nations are defined by their constituent individuals imply a co-constitutive relationship between the part and whole, wherein each is formed by the other. This is certainly reflective of the Romantic conception of the relationship between whole and part, which can therefore be said

⁴⁰ Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism*, 14.

⁴¹ Herder, *Outlines* (1800), v.

⁴² Herder, *Outlines* (1800), 244.

⁴³ Thomas Carlyle, *History of the French Revolution* (Toronto: Ward Lock & Co, 1911), 33.

⁴⁴ Fichte, *Addresses*, 87.

to have laid the groundwork for the possibility of an understanding of nationalism that embraced individualism, and an understanding of individualism that embraced nationalism.

Intersubjectivity

Fundamentally, the idea that individuals found fulfillment in the whole was based on a notion of individuals as ‘intersubjective’ – as intrinsically related to one another, and always requiring the existence of others. Because they saw individuals as necessarily connected, the Romantics perceived fostering one’s fellow nationals as an individual’s moral duty, much in the way that the individual was morally obligated to the group (as discussed above). For example, in his autobiographical *Post-scriptum de ma vie*, Victor Hugo noted that he was one of those republicans “qui aspirent au sacrifice pour eux-même et à la clémence pour autrui,” as opposed to those who sought pleasure for themselves and the guillotine for others,⁴⁵ the clear implication being that it was morally superior to sacrifice oneself for others, than to sacrifice others for oneself, and that the Romantics were morally superior to the Jacobins. In fact, later in the book he wrote, “vivre pour soi seul est une maladie. L’égotisme est la rouille de moi.”⁴⁶ Similarly, Fichte contended that “self-seeking is the root of all corruption.”⁴⁷

This intersubjectivity was seen as being not about dependence, but about fostering interpersonal connection and development while retaining individual autonomy. As Friedrich Schlegel maintained, “a cultivated human isn’t merely an end but also a means both to himself and others.”⁴⁸ Thus, the individual’s moral duty for development was conceived as both personal and social – both the development of the self and of the other. Lynn Sharp notes this phenomenon in her study of Romantic socialism, contending that the Romantics felt a “responsibility to humanity in order to evolve as an individual,”⁴⁹ and so they argued for the

⁴⁵ Victor Hugo, *Post-Scriptum de ma Vie* (Neuchâtel, Suisse: Ides et Calendes, 1961), 64. This also demonstrates a clear indictment of the republicanism associated with the Terror and the French Revolution.

⁴⁶ Hugo, *Post-Scriptum*, 85.

⁴⁷ Fichte, *Addresses*, 7.

⁴⁸ Schlegel, “Athenaeum Fragments,” 176.

⁴⁹ Lynn Sharp, “Metempsychosis and Social Reform: The Individual and the Collective in Romantic

progress and development of individuals, but contended that this could only occur within a collective. They argued against the notion of a society of atomized individuals.⁵⁰

The concept of intersubjectivity, by focusing simultaneously on individuals and on their relationships, allowed the Romantics to emphasize both the self and the other, the individual and the whole, the citizen and the nation. This idea of the fundamental connectivity of individuals had been explained in Herder's thought as a trait peculiar to humans, who, because they were born with almost no instinct, needed to learn from others. This pedagogic chain, Herder contended, ensured that all of humanity was connected – and as individuals were educated, the species was educated, because the species “lives solely in this chain of individuals.”⁵¹ Moreover, people were made people through this educative process, because it was through communion with others that individuals learned reason, and Herder, like the student of Kant that he was, saw reason as the faculty that distinguished human individuals from animals.⁵² He “saw individuals as deeply stamped with the influence of the world around them, but he also insisted that any person's character developed from its own inner springs.”⁵³ Thus, Herder wished neither to say that all of humanity was one, or that it was made up of entirely discrete individuals, but rather that although humanity consisted of individuals, there was a chain “that connects each to the others and to the whole.”⁵⁴ Herder believed that each individuality was unique and particular, but that all humans were united by their humanity, which is why he opposed slavery and colonialism. He maintained that “our dignity as persons (like the value of the communities to which we belong) rests just as much on this universal participation as what makes us each different from others.”⁵⁵ Therefore, Herder did not

Socialism,” *French Historical Studies* 27, no.2 (Spring 2004), 377.

⁵⁰ Sharp, “Metempsychosis,” 371.

⁵¹ Herder, *Outlines* (1800), 226.

⁵² Herder, *Outlines* (1800), 226, 71-82.

⁵³ Jerrold Siegel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 337.

⁵⁴ Herder, *Outlines* (1800), 226-227.

⁵⁵ Siegel, *Idea of the Self*, 334.

conceive of the self as ever isolated from others, and the value of the individual came not only from its particularity, but also from that to which the self was connected.⁵⁶

While in his use of the word ‘chain’ Herder was referring specifically to educational intersubjectivity, he emphasized this self/other paradox, where the self and other are both interrelated and distinct, as characteristic of human life more broadly. For example, he put forward that “as it is impossible that we can love others more than ourselves, or in a different way; for we love them only as part of ourselves, or rather ourselves in them; that mind is happy which, like a superior spirit, embraces much within the sphere of its activity, and in restless activity deems it a part of itself: but miserable is that, the feeling of which drowned in words, are useful to neither itself or others.”⁵⁷ Thus, in Herder’s estimation, our happiness as individuals is inextricable from our social role, just as our love for others is inextricably tied to our own individuality.⁵⁸

Fichte is perhaps the Romantic scholar who most fully and directly addressed this concept of intersubjectivity, and his thought provides important insight into the compatibility of individuality with both collectivism and a theory of autonomy. In fact, in Fichte’s thought it is impossible to speak of individuals in isolation, because his formal argument for the existence of self-consciousness required the existence of at least two rational beings, and he argued that human beings require other human beings in order to exist and that individuals must be brought up by human beings in order to be human beings.⁵⁹ Fichte believed that the self posits itself as

⁵⁶ Seigel, *Idea of the Self*, 333.

⁵⁷ Herder, *Outlines* (1800), 222.

⁵⁸ Where Herder’s conception of intersubjectivity seems to differ from that of Fichte (discussed below) is that his is tied so closely to his notion of history, wherein individuals are tied to each other not in their own time, but in all time through the great chain of improvement. Contrarily, Fichtean intersubjectivity, while it emphasizes striving and development into the future, is less closely tied with an emphasis on history and the past.

⁵⁹ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Foundations of Natural Right: According to the Principles of the Wissenschaftslehre*, ed. by Frederick Neuhouser, trans. by Michael Baur (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 29-38.

determining the not-self, and also posits the not-self as determining the self,⁶⁰ thereby creating a system that placed a great emphasis on the interplay between the self and other selves. As Mary R. Strand argues, “reaching out to that which is different, to the otherness outside of ourselves, as well as within, will, according to the early German Romantics, enable us to expand our horizons and move beyond the confining isolation of rationalistic Enlightenment notions of the self.”⁶¹ Where Enlightenment individualism was understood as separate individuals bound in social contract of self-interest and competitiveness, Romantic individualism “was seen as extending from individuals to groups and somehow uniting both, according to Izenberg”⁶² Thus, Fichte argued that the individual is made more free by joining in society with other rational beings.⁶³ It was by conceiving of individuality in terms of intersubjectivity that Fichte paved the way for a doctrine that emphasized the importance of communal cohesion. If greater individual freedom was only to be achieved within society, then it certainly made sense to laud communities,⁶⁴ and in fact Friedrich Meinecke has argued that it was the Romantic post-Enlightenment conception of individuality that helped lead to a new conception of the state in Germany.⁶⁵

Fichte’s emphasis on society and ‘intersubjectivity’ is perhaps most expressly developed in a series of public lectures, later published as *Some Lectures Concerning the Scholar’s Vocation*, wherein Fichte contended that “the social drive is one of man’s fundamental drives. It is man’s *destiny* to live in society; he *ought* to live in society. One who lives in isolation is not a complete human being. He contradicts his own self.”⁶⁶ In *Vocation*,

⁶⁰ J.G. Fichte, *Science of Knowledge: with the first and second introductions*, ed. and trans. by Peter Heath and John Lachs (New York: Cambridge University Press 1970), 218.

⁶¹ Mary R. Strand, *I/You: Paradoxical Constructions of Self and Other in Early German Romanticism* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), 1.

⁶² Izenberg, *Impossible Individuality*, 4.

⁶³ Fichte, *Right*, 41.

⁶⁴ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, “Some Lectures Concerning the Scholar’s Vocation,” in *Early Philosophical Writings*, trans. and ed. by Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1988) 156.

⁶⁵ Izenberg, *Impossible Individuality*, 4.

⁶⁶ Fichte, “Scholar’s Vocation,” 156.

Fichte wrote of man's vocation within society as one of striving toward unity and perfection, saying that this requires man to have two cultural skills – to receive (making the most of the effects others have on us) and to give (affecting other free beings).⁶⁷ Fichte presented a society where everyone, because each had an ideal of man that none live up to, encouraged other people to improve in order to live up to that ideal.⁶⁸ Thus, though each limits him or herself to allow for the freedom of the other, it is in the relation with others that true individual freedom and autonomy is achieved,⁶⁹ and that society can be improved. Fichte presented his ideal of society as something that “is neither the free-for-all advocated by liberals nor the statist hierarchy championed by the conservatives.”⁷⁰ Rather, it is a cooperative society wherein all work together for the advancement of all, and not merely a society where each is prevented from interfering with another.

Fichte argued that education and skills development, the cultivation of the self, were fundamentally about the improvement of the world, and thus a subjective means to an intersubjective end. Furthermore, a single individual could never achieve such an end, but rather it was society as a whole that had to strive jointly, so that “what the individual could not accomplish by himself can be accomplished by the united strength of all.”⁷¹ Although it is true, Fichte maintained, that each strove on his or her own, the fact that individuals had different skills and capacities meant that each fulfilled a certain aspect of this societal improvement.⁷² From this, Fichte came to the conclusion that each ought to develop his or her own skills; each ought to improve him or herself, in order to contribute to the rationalization of society. He believed that each ought to do this in order to repay society for all it does for the individual.⁷³

⁶⁷ Fichte, “Scholar’s Vocation,” 160.

⁶⁸ Fichte, “Scholar’s Vocation,” 150.

⁶⁹ Fichte, *Natural Right*, 41.

⁷⁰ Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism*, 58.

⁷¹ Fichte, “Scholar’s Vocation,” 164.

⁷² Fichte, “Scholar’s Vocation,” 164-165.

⁷³ Fichte, “Scholar’s Vocation,” 166-167.

Therefore, the self, which could posit its own agency and its own self-consciousness because of society, reciprocated by contributing to the progress of society.⁷⁴ Thus, in Fichte's thought it was in the striving to posit the world as ideal that one found true freedom.

The Role of the Scholar in the World

Fichte's vision of the world held a special place for the scholar as one who would encourage the development of society. Although he saw it as each person's duty to develop his or her area of skill in order to improve society, he perceived the scholar as particularly bound to do so. Fichte believed scholars were called to be the most ethical class in society, and were therefore to act as examples others could strive to approximate, as models for the improvement of all.⁷⁵ Although Fichte argued that "everyone who lives in society owes it to society to set a good example, because the power of example originates in society,"⁷⁶ he believed it was most important for the scholar, because the scholar was supposed to be better than the other classes. The scholar, therefore, guided the improvement of society.⁷⁷

The importance Fichte placed on improvement and on the scholar's role in that improvement ensured a measure of power for the scholar in society. Fichte was writing at a time when the intellectual classes had very little power in Germany, and, as Liah Greenfeld argues, it was this alienation from real power that encouraged the German Romantic intellectuals toward nationalism.⁷⁸ She contends that these intellectuals, who lived in a time

⁷⁴ Some scholars have seen Fichte's calls for political action (such as those in *Vocation*) as inconsistent with his idealism, which is often interpreted as a kind of solipsism where the entire external world is a creation of the rational self (which would negate the necessity of activism, because the world would be created as rational by the self.) (Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism*, 60-61.) For example, Mary R. Strand argues that "the Non-I, for Fichte, is merely a dependent construct of the I, an other that originates within the subject." (Strand, *I/You*, 8-9) However, this is certainly a misinterpretation of Fichte's idealism. Frederick Beiser more correctly characterized Fichte's idealism as "ethical idealism," which he says is "the doctrine that everything *ought to be* ideal," rather than the doctrine that everything is in fact ideal. (Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism*, 62.) The ultimate goal of the perfection of the world is for Fichte something that cannot in fact be achieved, but must always be striven for.

⁷⁵ Fichte, "Scholar's Vocation," 175-176.

⁷⁶ Fichte, "Scholar's Vocation," 175.

⁷⁷ Fichte, "Scholar's Vocation," 172.

⁷⁸ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 297-302, 314.

when making money in Germany as a writer was virtually impossible, felt drawn to the idea of national identity “because it implied an unassailable dignity for and automatically elevated members of the national collectivity, however lowly, putting them on par with the most exalted nobility.”⁷⁹ Elie Kedourie makes a similar argument, saying that Fichte and his followers were trying to envision a new state structure that would not exclude them from power and status the way their current state did, and that this contributed to their attraction to nationalism.⁸⁰ The Romantics certainly conceived of individuals as finding identity and status through attachment to a whole, as discussed above, and because the Romantics were themselves scholars it was in their own interest to envision a particular place for the scholar in society. In doing so, the Romantics essentially arrogated to themselves the role of champion or protector of the nation. Thus, the special place for the scholar is interestingly individualist and intersubjective, because it lauds the individual scholar, but only insofar as he or she contributes to the whole, and acts as an exemplar for others.

The Romantics’ emphasis on the intersubjectivity of the individual ensured that they would see their own role in society as one that was beneficial and productive for others. The scholar was called to use his or her individuality to give back to society as a whole. Carlyle was highly influenced by Fichte’s idea,⁸¹ and had an entire chapter in his *On Heroes and Hero Worship* devoted to the ‘man-of-letters’ as hero. He maintained that “this same Man-of-Letters Hero must be regarded as our most important modern person. He, such as he may be, is the soul of all. What he teaches, the whole world will do and make. The world’s manner of

⁷⁹ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 314.

⁸⁰ Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1966), 42-45. Eric Hobsbawm too makes a similar argument, saying that the artist at the time worked under less than ideal financial conditions, forced to sell art as a commodity. According to Hobsbawm, “the artist therefore stood alone, shouting into the night, uncertain even of an echo. It was only natural that he should turn himself into the genius, who created only what was within him, regardless of the world and in defiance of a public whose only right was to accept him on his own terms or not at all.” While he contends that this alienation did not shape Romanticism alone, he maintains that it played an important part. Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789-1848* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962), 261.

⁸¹ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes and Hero Worship* (Philadelphia: Henry Altemus, 1899), 208-209.

dealing with him is the most significant feature of the world's general position."⁸² The Man-of-letters, Carlyle noted, is tasked with discerning and bringing out in others the "divine significance, full of splendor, of wonder and terror, that lies in the being of every man, of everything." It was the role of the man of letters to unfold "the Godlike to men."⁸³ These literary men, Carlyle believed, had within them a sacredness, a light that guided the world, even if the world did not recognize that fact.⁸⁴ Thus, it was their uniqueness that gave the scholars prominence in the world, that allowed them to connect and guide, to be "the soul of all." By conceiving of an individual whose very individuality promoted a communitarian and intersubjective ideal the Romantics made it possible to reconcile these seemingly disparate concepts.

This reconciliation of individuality and communitarian sentiment in the person of the scholar is perhaps best summed up by Victor Hugo, who wrote in 1833, "it is only in solitude that one can work for the masses," and in 1864, "the prophet seeks solitude, but not isolation. He unravels and untwists the threads of humanity, tied and rolled in a skein within his sail; he does not break them. He goes into the desert to think – of whom? Of the multitudes."⁸⁵ It is therefore literally in his or her separateness that the scholar or artist is connected to society. The Romantics conceived of individuality as tied to social action, and perceived their personal work, be it art, history, literature or philosophy, as politically productive.

Stephen Bann argues that to a certain extent all art is political, because all art is representative, noting that Hugo saw both political life and literary life as aspects of public life; he believed that theatre could be used to encourage debate.⁸⁶ In his own words, "vie politique,

⁸² Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, 207.

⁸³ Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, 209.

⁸⁴ Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, 210.

⁸⁵ Quoted in H.G. Schenk, *The Mind of the European Romantics: An Essay in Cultural History* (London: Constable, 1966) 197.

⁸⁶ Stephen Bann, "Romanticism in France," in *Romanticism in National Context*, eds. Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 242-243.

vie littéraire, deux côtés d'une même chose qui est la vie publique. Les uns trempent dans la vie publique par l'action, les autres y trempent par l'idée . . . les idées sont toujours des actions, tandis que rarement les actions sont des idées. On entre donc plus profondément encore dans l'âme des peuples et dans l'histoire intérieure des sociétés humaines par la vie littéraire que par la vie politique."⁸⁷ Art and scholarship were therefore intended to be productive, to contribute to society, rather than be for the artist alone, and in this way intended to serve intersubjectivity. Hugo had a very strong sense that art was important for society as a whole, and that the scholar had a special role to fulfill in society. He believed that it was nearly a condemnable offense for the man of letters to believe himself to be above the common good and national interest, to isolate his own life from that of society. He asked, "et qui donc se dévoua, si ce n'est le poète? Quelle voix s'élèvera dans l'orage, si ce n'est celle de la lyre qui peut la calmer? Et qui bravera les haines de l'anarchie et les dédains du despotisme, sinon celui auquel la sagesse antique attribuait le pouvoir de réconcilier les peuples et les rois, et auquel la sagesse moderne a donné celui de les diviser?"⁸⁸ It was the scholar-artist, with a special vantage point somewhat apart from society, who was nevertheless charged with the maintenance of that society.

The Authors, Their Voice, and Their Audience

Hugo's idea of the relationship between the artist and his audience seems to imply a belief that individuals, although unique, could not be radically separated from one another (much in the way that Fichte thought could not account for the existence of self-consciousness without the existence of at least two rational beings). Moreover, it reflects an understanding of the artist as someone who acts as a voice for others, who in speaking about him or herself also speaks about all others. As Jacques Barzun, echoing Hugo, notes, "the lyricist is not always speaking for himself. He captures and reproduces the diverse, the

⁸⁷ Hugo, *Post-Scriptum*, 84-85.

⁸⁸ Hugo, *Littérature*, 231.

conflicting essences of other beings. Who but the artist could do it?”⁸⁹ The Romantics were determined that their art and scholarship should speak to and for the masses, and accordingly they “purposefully positioned themselves as representatives of humanity, rather than as members of one or another political or religious tradition.”⁹⁰ For example, in the preface to his *Les Contemplations*, Victor Hugo remarked that although the work was ostensibly about his own life, it was really about the lives of all. He wrote:

Nul de nous n’a l’honneur d’avoir une vie qui soit à lui. Ma vie est la vôtre, votre vie est la mienne, vous vivez ce que je vis; la destinée est une. Prenez donc ce miroir, et regardez-vous-y. On se plaint quelquefois des écrivains qui disent «moi». Parlez-nous de nous, leur crie-t-on. Hélas! quand je vous parle de moi, je vous parle de vous. Comment ne le sentez-vous pas? Ah! insensé, qui crois que je ne suis pas toi.⁹¹

This conception of the artist as simultaneously writing about himself and the other is reflected in the writings of other Romantics as well. Jules Michelet expressed a similar idea regarding the confluence of the author and his subject. “Ce livre est plus qu’un livre; c’est moi-même,” he wrote to Edgar Quinet in the dedication of *Le Peuple*, in fact saying that the book is not only him, but both of them: “C’est moi et c’est vous, mon ami.”⁹² It seems the reverse, that in discussing the other the Romantic scholar could express himself, was also believed. To a certain extent Michelet’s statement is reflective of the possibility of self-expression through discussing the other, because *Le Peuple* was not ostensibly about himself specifically, but rather about the people of France, of which he formed a part. Thus, in talking about the whole of the people of France, Michelet believed he also discussed each constituent element, including himself and his friend Quinet. In Michelet’s estimation as individual French-men he and Quinet both embodied the whole of France. A.W. Schlegel presented a similar idea about Condorcet, saying that his *Progrès de l’esprit humain* was a monument to himself, and a better

⁸⁹ Jacques Barzun, *Romanticism and the Modern Ego* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1944), 98.

⁹⁰ Sharp, “Metempsychosis,” 360.

⁹¹ Victor Hugo, *Les Contemplations* (Paris: Éditions Garnier Frères, 1962), 1.

⁹² Jules Michelet, *Le Peuple* (Paris: Comptoir des Imprimeurs-Unis, 1846), 5.

one than it could have been had he constructed it out of his own individuality, asking “how could he have appealed better to posterity than by forgetting himself while dealing with it?”⁹³

Because the scholar-artist was seen as speaking for both him or herself and others, he or she personified the paradoxical nature of Romantic particularity, by acting as both part and whole simultaneously. This is perhaps best reflected by Friedrich Schlegel, who wrote that “no artist should be the only, the sole artist among artists, the central one, the director of all the others; rather, all artists should be all of these things, but each one from his own point of view. No artist should be merely the representative of his genre, but should relate himself and his genre to the whole, and thereby influence and control it. Like the Roman senators, true artists are a nation of kings.”⁹⁴ The artist, therefore, spoke simultaneously for him or herself, for others, for his or her particular genre, and for all others. Thus, in Schlegel’s conception, artists were both an individual part and a totalizing whole, and as such also “make mankind an individual” because they connected all time, past and future, bringing them to the forefront in the present, and made the inner soul of humanity concrete by turning it into action in the world.⁹⁵

Schlegel also perceived the integration of part and whole, and particular and universal, in Romantic art itself. In what is perhaps his most famous fragment, *Athenaeum* fragment 116, Schlegel wrote that Romantic poetry was the best and most progressive kind of poetry; it fused all that was poetic, and was constantly in a state of becoming, striving to achieve an unattainable universality. However, in doing so, Romantic poetry, Schlegel contended, fundamentally maintained a specificity and particularity that other poetry could not achieve. He wrote:

It can so lose itself in what it describes that one might believe it exists only to

⁹³ A.W. Schlegel in Friedrich Schlegel, “*Athenaeum* Fragments,” 188.

⁹⁴ Schlegel, “*Athenaeum* Fragments,” 251.

⁹⁵ Schlegel, “*Athenaeum* Fragments,” 247.

characterize poetical individuals of all sorts; and yet there is still no form so fit for expressing the entire spirit of an author: so that many artists who started out to write only a novel ended up by providing us with a portrait of themselves. It alone can become, like the epic, a mirror of the whole circumambient world, and image of the age. And it can also – more than any other form – hover at the midpoint between the portrayed and the portrayer, free of all real and ideal self-interest, on the wings of poetic reflection, and can raise that reflection again and again to a higher power, can multiply it in an endless succession of mirrors.⁹⁶

Moreover he continued by saying that, “romantic poetry is in the arts what wit is in philosophy, and what society and sociability, friendship and love are in life . . . It alone is infinite, just as it alone is free; and it recognizes as its first commandment that the will of the poet can tolerate no law above itself.”⁹⁷ Somehow its infinitude and its reliance on only the will of a single individual were not seen as in conflict, but rather as complementary. The Romantics understood their poetry as infinite precisely because they believed that, unlike neo-classicism, it was free from received ideas, and that its freedom derived directly from the autonomy of its author, who imbued the art with his or her particular personality.

The Romantics believed strongly in the power of books and writing, and were writing at a time when increased literacy and cultural mores gave thinkers and artists a louder voice and a greater audience than they had enjoyed previously.⁹⁸ Moreover, they saw an author’s work as very much reflective of his or her individuality. Herder had written that “an author who produces a book, be it good or bad, in some measure exhibits his own heart to the world, provided this book contains thoughts, which if he have not invented, and in our days there is little that is now left for invention, he has at least *found* and made his own, nay which he has enjoyed for years as the property of his own heart and mind.”⁹⁹ But, Herder insisted, books were fundamentally about communication and conversation, not performance, so an author not only put out ideas, but also connected with his or her readers. This “invisible commerce of

⁹⁶ Schlegel, “Athenaeum Fragments,” 175.

⁹⁷ Schlegel, “Athenaeum Fragments,” 175.

⁹⁸ Roy Porter and Mikulas Teick, eds. *Romanticism in National Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 6-7.

⁹⁹ Herder, *Outlines* (1800), vi.

hearts and minds,” Herder argued, was the great benefit of printing, that authors did not merely present their own ideas, but excited ideas from their readers.¹⁰⁰ In fact, in the preface to his *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, Herder called on his readers to continue the work he began in the book, to build upon his ideas.

Following in this, the Romantics at times considered art to be as much in the hands of the reader as of the author. Morse Peckham argues that Scott’s *Waverley* novels form a cycle “in which every important political turmoil of Scotland during the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries is used,” but leaves it up to the reader to draw the connections and put the picture together.¹⁰¹ The ‘cycle,’ he contends, was a particularly Romantic genre because it recognized that creativity necessitates a relationship between author and reader, and could not be achieved by either in isolation.¹⁰² In essence, by leaving space for the intelligence and creativity of the reader, by allowing him or her to be more independent, the author created a connection between them, because they worked together on the same project. Moreover, Peckham argues that the cycle taught readers imaginatively to create a new world, which could then be applied to the real world in which they lived.¹⁰³ Thus the creative relationship between author and reader had an impact in the practical world, as well as in that of ideas.

Somewhat similarly, Carlyle saw his work as communicating, and therefore creating, a relationship with his reader. He ended his *History of the French Revolution* with a farewell, saying:

And so here, O Reader, has the time come for us two to part. Toilsome was our journeying together; not without offence; but it is done. To me thou went as a beloved shade, the disembodied, or not yet embodied spirit of a Brother. To thee I was but as a Voice. Yet was our relation a kind of sacred one; doubt not that! For whatsoever once sacred things become hollow jargons, yet while the voice of Man speaks with Man, hast thou not there the living fountain out of which all sacredness sprang, and will yet

¹⁰⁰ Herder, *Outlines* (1800), vi.

¹⁰¹ Morse Peckham, *The Romantic Virtuoso* (London: Wesleyan University Press, 1995), 11.

¹⁰² Peckham, *Romantic Virtuoso*, 11-12.

¹⁰³ Peckham, *Romantic Virtuoso*, 13.

spring? Man, by the nature of him is definable as ‘an incarnated word.’ Ill stands it with me if I have spoken falsely: thine also it was to hear truly. Farewell.¹⁰⁴

Carlyle’s clear belief in the personal relationship between the author and reader demonstrates the Romantic emphasis on both the individual authorial voice, and on the power of scholarship and written text to create connections between people. Therefore, while an author’s work expressed his or her individuality, the Romantics believed it also entered that author into a relationship with a community of readers and thinkers.

The Romantic emphasis on the voice of the author, and on the author’s ability to speak for the whole, is interestingly reflected in the practice of autobiography, which became an increasingly popular genre over the course of the Romantic period. While it had roots in the Renaissance, a comprehensive literature of the self was a development of the late eighteenth century, and one that Eugene Stelzig considers a prime indicator of the transition between the Enlightenment and Romanticism.¹⁰⁵ In 1833 Carlyle referred to the times as being ‘autobiographical.’¹⁰⁶ Moreover, many Romantics wrote their own autobiographies: notably Chateaubriand’s *Mémoires d’outre tombe*, or Hugo’s fragmentary *Post-Scriptum de ma vie* or his collection of works *Actes et paroles*. Often times these autobiographical accounts were fictionalized. For example, *Lucinde* by Friedrich Schlegel, probably the most famous novel of the German Romantic movement, despite having been almost universally condemned by critics, was a thinly veiled autobiographical account of Schlegel and his mistress Dorothea Veit.¹⁰⁷ Schlegel seemed to believe that all novels were in some way autobiographical, contending that it was “unnecessary to write more than one novel, unless the artist has become

¹⁰⁴ Carlyle, *French Revolution*, 609.

¹⁰⁵ Eugene L. Stelzig, *The Romantic Subject in Autobiography: Rousseau and Goethe* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 1. “Autobiography” first entered the English language in 1797. James Treadwell, *Autobiographical Writing and British Literature, 1783-1834* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3.

¹⁰⁶ Treadwell, *Autobiographical Writing*, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Peter Firchow, “Introduction,” in Friedrich Schlegel, *Lucinde and The Fragments*, trans by Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 7-8.

a new man.”¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus* functions as a fictionalized autobiography because Teufelsdröck’s development and quest for education mirrored Carlyle’s own.¹⁰⁹ In the same fashion Edward Waverley in the early chapters followed Scott’s own pedagogic path.¹¹⁰ Gerald Izenberg argues that the practice of autobiography demonstrates the truth of Romantic individuality, that it was both finite and particular, both infinite and universal. Thus, in the autobiography, “the details of the individual life are not merely particular, or rather, individual particularity is elevated in Romanticism to a universal principle. Individuality is not only compatible with infinity, it is the very vehicle for realizing the union with infinity.”¹¹¹

The Romantics’ conception of individualism encouraged them to emphasize the particulars of the lives of ordinary people in their art. It is in this context that, similar to the autobiography, the Romantic genre the *Bildungsroman* was developed: it sought to tell the story of the development of the entire life of an individual.¹¹² As a genre it embodied the notion of *bildung*, of an individual’s development in the world, wherein “life in society helped bring the self to cognizance of its own needs and powers because the persons and conditions it encountered there helped to reveal the inner structure of its own being.”¹¹³ *Bildung* was fundamentally about the development of both an individual’s humanity, which he or she shared with all, and of his or her “distinctive individual powers, which are unique to each of us,” and as such was about finding the ideal balance between the self and whole.¹¹⁴ Thus, these novels and stories specifically celebrated the way in which individuals were both isolated and

¹⁰⁸ Schlegel, “Critical Fragments,” in *Lucinde and The Fragments*, trans by Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 153.

¹⁰⁹ Treadwell, *Autobiographical Writing*, 99.

¹¹⁰ James Anderson, *Sir Walter Scott and History, and other papers* (Edinburgh: The Edina Press, 1981), 86.

¹¹¹ Izenberg, *Impossible Individuality*, 15.

¹¹² Roland N. Stromberg, *European Intellectual History Since 1789* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 45.

¹¹³ Siegel, *Self and the Other*, 333.

¹¹⁴ Frederick C. Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003), 27. *Bildung* was also an aesthetic process; striving for the ideal of self and whole was akin to fashioning a work of art.

connected, particular and total.

Jerrold Siegel argues that humans are reflective precisely because they are “simultaneously corporeal and relational” and therefore can never be either entirely. Reflectivity allows them to take a step back from both, and therefore more fully embrace them equally.¹¹⁵ Autobiography and *Bildungsroman* can perhaps be seen as concrete examples of this reflectivity, whereby the Romantics looked upon themselves and at the lives of other individuals in order to negotiate between the notions of individuals as isolated units and as socially interactive beings: reflecting on life to see it as both separate and connected. It was through such an understanding of particularity that the Romantics were able to be simultaneously nationalist and individualist, while both Enlightenment thought and later nineteenth-century nationalism did not strike such a balance.

The Hero and the Genius: Intersubjective Individuals

The idea of the scholar as an exalted individualized figure in society is closely related to the Romantic conception of the hero, discussed briefly in the previous chapter. Carlyle believed that it was a natural human faculty to worship heroes, even saying that “had all traditions, arrangements, creeds, societies that men ever instituted, sunk away, this would remain.”¹¹⁶ Carlyle’s conception of the hero united the individual with the national quite directly. Heroes, he believed, were the force that could keep nations unified. He maintained that Shakespeare could keep the English unified, even if very few of the English lived in England proper; he wrote “soever English men and women are, they will say to one another: ‘Yes, this Shakespeare is ours; we produced him, we speak and think by him; we are of one blood and kind with him.’”¹¹⁷ Just as he perceived Shakespeare as the strongest rallying sign for the English, he believed it was Dante for the Italians, maintaining that because “Italy can

¹¹⁵ Siegel, *Self and the Other*, 17.

¹¹⁶ Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, 269.

¹¹⁷ Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, 153.

speak” through Dante, it was unified regardless of its political separation. It was John Knox, founder of Puritanism, who had created Scotland, by turning it into a “*believing* nation.”¹¹⁸

Thus, for Carlyle the heroic individual was responsible for both creating nations and maintaining their unity. By acting as individuals, these heroes could provide a voice for their nations and ensure their continuation and preservation. The hero was therefore understood as an individual who belonged to the nation, and who in essence, embodied the nation. Thus, the national hero was both part and whole, both individual and social, simultaneously.

Closely related to the Romantic conceptions of scholars and heroes is the idea of genius. Genius is a typically Romantic notion in that it reconceptualized the Enlightenment concept of universal rationality. Where many Enlightenment scholars emphasized everyman’s capacity for reason, the Romantics emphasized the genius: a uniquely creative and intelligent individual, yet one any individual was potentially capable of becoming. In Friedrich Schlegel’s words, “though genius isn’t something that can be produced arbitrarily, it is freely willed – like wit, love, and faith . . . You should demand genius from everyone but not expect it. A Kantian would call this the categorical imperative of genius.”¹¹⁹ They saw genius as more than merely character or talent; Hugo noted that “un homme d’esprit, c’est verni; un homme de talent, c’est doré; un homme de genie, c’est de l’or,” and he held that genius was fundamentally about having a good will.¹²⁰ Interestingly, Hugo saw the genius as a twofold being: one who was internally and spiritually geared toward the absolute, while outwardly attached to the sublunary, and therefore with appetites and faults like any person.¹²¹

Thus, in the Romantic conception, the genius was not an isolated figure, but one who contributed to society. Previously, Herder had contended that geniuses did not invent for

¹¹⁸ Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, 153, 194-195.

¹¹⁹ Schlegel, “Critical Fragments,” 144.

¹²⁰ Hugo, *Post-Scriptum*, 79, 87.

¹²¹ Hugo, *Post-Scriptum*, 82.

themselves, as they did not know how what they produced would be used in the future, and how it would contribute to further and greater invention.¹²² It was these geniuses, in Herder's estimation, who added new links to his "chain of development," but genius alone could not ensure this development, or the maintenance of the integrity of the chain, because the rest of the world was necessary to haul the chain along.¹²³ In his later *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity*, written between 1793 and 1797, Herder presented a similar relationship as having existed between states, writing that:

When one or two nations accomplish steps of progress in a short time for which formerly centuries were required, then other nations cannot, and may not, want to set themselves back by centuries without thereby doing themselves painful damage. They must advance with those others; in our times one can no longer be a barbarian; as a barbarian one gets cheated, trodden on, despised, abused. The epochs of the world form a moving chain which no individual ring can in the end resist even if it wanted to.¹²⁴

This inclination to treat states and nations as following similar patterns and practices as individuals was also picked up by many Romantics proper, who tended to see their own nation as the 'genius' that would lead the world. This is discussed in greater detail below.

Individual idiosyncrasies were considered important because of what they could tell about the whole of society, much in the way that solitude was seen as important because it allowed one to think of the masses. The Romantics emphasized individual lives – be they their own, or those of the heroes they saw in their midst and in their histories. Romantic individuality and the primacy of the particular subject was put forward not as an end in itself, but as a means that had fundamentally social ends. Thus even where not explicitly nationalist, Romanticism was characterized by an emphasis on communitarianism, which could be taken up to justify nationalist aspirations and ideologies, but did not necessarily do so.

Never ineluctably tied to nationalism, Romantic ideas of collectivity could as easily

¹²² Herder, *Outlines* (1800), 243.

¹²³ Herder, *Outlines* (1800), 241.

¹²⁴ Johann Gottfried Herder, "Letters for the Advancement of Humanity," in *Herder: Philosophical Writings*, ed. Michael N. Forster (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 377.

support socialism and other collectivist ideologies. For example, Pierre Leroux and Jean Reynaud were both Romantic socialists.¹²⁵ The very nature of Romantic collectivism, its fluidity and inclusiveness, those very things that distinguished Romantic nationalism from later forms, also diluted Romanticism's connection with nationalism. The nation was only one form of collectivity that could fulfill the individual and harmonize the particular and the universal. However, there were Romantics who argued specifically that the nation was the best form of collectivity – because it was allegedly organic, because they believed it was the true path to global harmony and the best preserver of diversity – and as such they put forward the nation as an ideal to be striven for (this will be addressed directly in the fourth chapter).

The Nation as an Individual

While the connection between Romantic collectivism and nationalism was not a necessary one, the Romantic understanding of nations and nationalism very much paralleled the Romantic notion of the individual and individualism, including the notion of intersubjectivity. When the Romantics were nationalist, theirs was a nationalism consistent with the remainder of their thought. Greenfeld writes that for the Romantics:

to be true to one's nature, or individuality and totality, was the very purpose of human existence. Thus to be true to man's social nature became a matter of ethical conduct; a man who did not feel one with society was not an individual and was not 'whole.' And since 'the state' or 'society' meant at the same time a particular state, or society – the fatherland – nothing but complete fusion with the existence of a particular state answered the requirements of true humanity. Man's individuality was impossible without fusion with the state; his personality drowned in the individuality of the state. For states, too, were individuals, they were living willing organisms. In fact they were more individuals than people.¹²⁶

In the words of Friedrich Schlegel, "the concept of the nation requires that all its members should form as it were only one individual."¹²⁷ Michelet too saw nations as acting as

¹²⁵ Lynn Sharp, "Metempsychosis and Social Reform: The Individual and the Collective in Romantic Socialism," *French Historical Studies* 27, no.2 (Spring 2004), 350.

¹²⁶ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 346-347.

¹²⁷ Quoted in Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 363.

individuals on the world stage, comparing the recent solidification of nations to the development of a person, who comes to know him or herself more profoundly and then demonstrates his or her individual character to the world through works.¹²⁸ Thus, the Romantics' emphasis on particularity "applied not only to individuals but also to communities such as provinces or nationalities," wherein they thought the province or nation functioned as an individual.¹²⁹ This had already been visible in Herder's thought. Herder perceived nations as self-contained units, with their own internal logic and path of development. He argued that every nation "bears in itself the standard of its perfection, totally independent of all comparison with that of others," because each was governed by its own principles based on its internal character.¹³⁰ Believing that the nation's governing principle was particular to it and distinguished it from other nations, Herder argued that the principle that governed Athens was beauty, whereas that which governed Sparta was an emphasis on the patriotic and heroic.¹³¹ He therefore defined nations by their characteristics, much in the way one would define an individual.

Taking this notion of nations having specific characteristics, like individuals, further, Romantics often perceived their nations as unique, and as having important particular or specific roles on the world stage. Fichte saw the German people as unique insofar as they were the 'true descendants' of Teutonic peoples, and he thus believed Germans were those who must first adopt the new system of education he put forward.¹³² He maintained that the uniqueness

¹²⁸ Michelet, *Peuple*, 260.

¹²⁹ Schenk, *European Romantics*, 15. The idea of the nation as an individual is also part of contemporary nationalism scholarship. Hans Kohn writes, "the state is a person like the individual. What man is to himself, the state is to men. The states will remain different as long as men are different. Essentially the state like man remains always the same . . . The perfect citizen lives entirely in the state; he has no property outside the state." Hans Kohn *The Mind of Germany: The Education of a Nation* (London: Macmillan, 1965), 53.

¹³⁰ Herder, *Outlines*, vol II (1803), 293.

¹³¹ Herder, *Outlines*, vol II (1803), 294.

¹³² Fichte, *Addresses*, 45.

of the German “has been his characteristic ever since he began to exist.”¹³³ In fact, the programme for the rejuvenation of Germany that Fichte put forward in his *Addresses to the German Nation* was designed specifically to protect Germany’s perceived individuality, both by ensuring that ‘Germanness’ was the factor uniting the German people, and that only ‘true Germans’ were united under this banner. He argued that every other bond of union or national attachment that existed was illusory or false, that it was “only by means of the common characteristic of being German that we can avert the downfall of our nation which is threatened by its fusion with foreign peoples and win back again our individuality that is self-supporting and quite incapable of any dependence upon others.”¹³⁴ Moreover, Fichte adopted many of his ideas regarding education from Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, whom he lauded for his individuality, and whom he considered to have embodied the German spirit,¹³⁵ implying that individuality exemplified the spirit of Germany.

Fichte’s conception of Germany as fundamentally individual contributed to his idea that Germany would act as a leader in Europe – that Germany needed to adopt the new system of education first, and that this could then be exported to the rest of Europe.¹³⁶ Within a given society Fichte believed that the scholar would be the one to encourage this striving toward perfection, and on the world scale he gave that responsibility to Germany. Michelet conceived of France in a similar light, arguing that because France had both the principle of fraternity and a tradition of great figures, the history of France was really the history of humanity.¹³⁷ He argued that his *Introduction à l’histoire universelle* could have been titled *Introduction à l’histoire de France*. He maintained that this was not about patriotic fealty to France, insisting that “dans sa profonde solitude, loin de toute influence d’école, de secte ou de parti, l’auteur

¹³³ Fichte, *Addresses*, 45.

¹³⁴ Fichte, *Addresses*, 3.

¹³⁵ Fichte, *Addresses*, 135.

¹³⁶ Fichte, *Addresses*, 215. “You will see in spirit the German name rising by means of this generation to be the most glorious among all peoples; you will see this nation the regenerator and re-creator of the world.”

¹³⁷ Michelet, *Peuple*, 280.

arrivait, et par la logique et par l’histoire, à une même conclusion: c’est que sa glorieuse patrie est désormais le pilote du vaisseau de l’humanité.”¹³⁸ For Michelet, France was like the unique individual or scholar who would lead the rest of society by example. Notwithstanding their insistence that they were objective in their choice of leader nation, both Fichte and Michelet are here demonstrating a tendency to be nationalist in a way that approximates and foreshadows later nineteenth-century nationalism.

However, despite this understanding of their nations as uniquely poised to lead the world, the Romantics perceived diversity on the global scale, like diversity of individual personalities, as a good: Michelet contended that the division of the world into nations was the most powerful way in which God created and ensured the maintenance of diversity and distinct originality.¹³⁹ Moreover, he averred that national diversity ensured the maintenance of harmony, because it was through the love of the nation that the individual loved the world. Michelet argued that the more an individual advanced and was educated, the more he or she became integrated into the genius of his or her nation. “Il apprend à connaître cette patrie, et dans sa valeur propre, et dans sa valeur relative, comme une note du grand concert; il s’y associe par elle; en elle, il aime le monde. La patrie est l’initiation nécessaire à l’universelle patrie.”¹⁴⁰ Fichte too believed that the diversity of unique and particular nations would be the basis for peaceful cooperation in Europe.¹⁴¹ He argued that united Christendom no longer existed and never would again, and that without that unity peace would be maintained not by a tenuous balance of power, but by German autonomy, and by ensuring the integrity of particular nations.¹⁴² In a very strongly particularist and nationalist approach to European harmony, he

¹³⁸ Michelet, *Universelle*, 3.

¹³⁹ Michelet, *Peuple*, 263.

¹⁴⁰ Michelet, *Peuple*, 263.

¹⁴¹ Paul Bishop, “Nationalism and Europeanism in German Romantic Literature,” in *Nationalism Versus Cosmopolitanism in German Thought and Culture, 1789-1914: Essays on the Emergence of Europe*, eds. Mary Anne Perkins and Martin Liebscher (Queenston, ON: Edwin Meller Press, 2006), 11.

¹⁴² Fichte, *Addresses*, 195, 197.

declared that “only when each people, left to itself, develops and forms itself in accordance with its own particular quality, and only when in every people each individual develops himself in accordance with that common quality, as well as in accordance with his own peculiar quality,” could the true character of particular nations be maintained, and thus the preservation of Europe be assured.¹⁴³ Therefore, just as the Romantics saw individuals as connected to the nation through their individuality, so they saw individuals as connected to the world through their nations. Both the individuality of nations and the individuality of people, as concepts, were manifestations of the Romantic notion of the particular: both were about separateness and communion simultaneously. Individuals were therefore understood as connected in their nations, and nations as connected in the totality of the cosmopolitan world, even as each protected its own particularity.

Friedrich Meinecke argues that the main idea holding together Romantic thought was that “the universe contains within itself an endless profusion of individualities and that its unity is not loosened or shattered by this but is instead strengthened by it, so that the universe is in itself an individual and a personality.”¹⁴⁴ The Romantics themselves recognized that their conception of the particularity of nations paralleled their notion of individuality. Walter Scott argued that “the degree of national diversity between different countries is but an instance of that general variety which Nature seems to have adopted as a principle through all her works, as anxious to avoid as modern statesmen to enforce, anything like an approach to absolute uniformity.”¹⁴⁵ They saw national diversity and individual diversity as simply two examples of particularity in the world. As a consequence the Romantics spoke of nations as particulars, as they would speak of individuals.

¹⁴³ Fichte, *Addresses*, 197-198.

¹⁴⁴ Friedrich Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism and the National State*, trans. Robert B. Kimber (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 50.

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in Schenk, *European Romantics*, 15.

Nations as Intersubjective

Somewhat parallel to their conception of individuals as intersubjective – formed in relation to other individuals – the Romantics perceived nations as defined in contrast to their neighbours. Jules Michelet attributed much of France’s concept of self to opposition to the English. He argued that their animosity refined French nationality and ensured that the disparate provinces saw themselves as a single people in the face of this foreign threat. Michelet compared this directly with the Romantic notion of the individual knowing him or herself in opposition to the other, saying “Il en est des nations comme de l’individu, il connaît et distingue sa personnalité par la résistance de ce qui n’est pas elle, il remarque le moi par le non-moi. La France s’est formée ainsi sous l’influence des grandes guerres anglaises, par opposition à la fois, et par composition.”¹⁴⁶ Although defining nations against one another seems somewhat more conflictual and oppositional than Romantic intersubjectivity, which was more focused on mutual than oppositional definition.

Michelet used comparison with other nations to explain the nature of France, and put forward that France’s individuality, that which allowed France to be seen as a ‘person,’ is what distinguished France from other nations, saying that where “l’Angleterre est un empire, l’Allemagne un pays, une race; la France est une personne.”¹⁴⁷ Chateaubriand expressed a similar idea when he wrote that “les Anglais ont l’esprit public, et nous l’honneur national.”¹⁴⁸ This unity of France, the fact that its centralizing forces were strong and its local life weak, Michelet argued, was its strength as a nation. France may not, he asserted, have England’s industry and wealth, but neither did it have “le desert de Haute-Écosse, le cancer de l’Irlande.”¹⁴⁹ Thus not only did he define France in contrast to the other, much like an

¹⁴⁶ Michelet, *Histoire de France*, 80.

¹⁴⁷ Michelet, *Histoire de France*, 87.

¹⁴⁸ François René de Chateaubriand, *Génie du Christianisme* Tome II (Paris: Calamn-Lévy, 1843), 93.

¹⁴⁹ Michelet, *Histoire de France*, 87.

individual, but it was in that contrast that he declared France the nation to be an individual, a person. The Romantics understood their nations as particular by recognizing others as such, and understood their nations as unique individuals by recognizing the ways in which they differed from others. Walter Scott, in his novel *Waverley*, often used comparison with England to explain the nature of Scotland, noting the peculiarity of certain Scotch traditions, and how they differed from England's, such as the practice of keeping a fool, which had fallen out of favour in England but remained in Scotland.¹⁵⁰ This use of alterity as a device both helped emphasize the 'otherness' of Scotland compared to England, and made Scottish character more intelligible to the reader through understanding that which it was not.

This necessity of defining nations in contrast with one another, according to Michelet, was a result of the diversity of nations in modernity. Whereas in antiquity unity was maintained by a single power (Greece and then Rome), in modern times, Michelet contended, unity was found in the harmony of the differences among nations, and one could not understand a single nation without understanding those surrounding it. He wrote, "nous ne pouvons dire ce qu'a fait la France, ce qu'elle est et sera, sans interroger sur ces questions l'ensemble du monde européen. Elle ne s'explique que par ce qui l'entoure. Sa personnalité est saisissable pour celui-là seul qui connaît les autres états qui la caractérisent par leur opposition."¹⁵¹ Thus, not only did he believe France required other nations in order to define itself, but also that the harmony of modernity required the diversity only possible when there was variety among individuals, who are in this case nations.

This practice of defining national identity through alterity interestingly combines individualism and communitarianism. It is communitarian insofar as other nations are required to define and understand the nation, but it is individualist insofar as the nation is defined

¹⁵⁰ Scott, *Waverley*, 57.

¹⁵¹ Michelet, *Universelle*, 27.

specifically in contrast to the other, thus emphasizing the nation's particularity and uniqueness. Such an understanding explains why Fichte was so adamant that the Germans maintain their perceived linguistic purity and thus their ideated direct tie to their Teutonic origins:¹⁵² he wished to preserve their supposed particularity and not blend with the other against which they defined themselves. He argued that adopting a foreign language meant the nation adopted a culture that was not its own, and that as a result "they get symbols which for them are neither immediately clear nor able to stimulate life."¹⁵³ Fichte made much of the fact that at the time of his *Addresses* the Germans were not particularly 'German,' but rather were in a period of foreign influence. He argued that original cultures developed by being stimulated by foreign practices, which then gave rise to profound original creativity, but that there was a time lag between the stimulus and original creativity, and that the Germany of his time was in one of those time lags.¹⁵⁴ Fichte conceived of nations as influenced from the outside, but believed this did not detract from their individuality as nations: they could be original regardless of external influence, because they took that influence and infused it with their own particular identity. This conception of the nation certainly prefigures later nineteenth-century nationalism, while remaining somewhat more temperate in its approach to foreign influence.

National identities are often understood as formed through conflict or contact with other identities. John Armstrong argues that identities are created in relation to one another, and he stresses the "boundary properties instead of the 'essence' of ethnic identity."¹⁵⁵ The emergence of German political nationalism is commonly seen as a response to the 1806 Napoleonic invasion of the German states, and certainly a group of nationalists did emerge in response to French policies, in particular the Rheinbund, which was considered an "alien

¹⁵² Fichte, *Addresses*, 47 – 50.

¹⁵³ Fichte, *Addresses*, 54.

¹⁵⁴ Fichte, *Addresses*, 92-93.

¹⁵⁵ John A. Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 291

intrusion.”¹⁵⁶ Although the preservation of German culture was helped along substantially by hatred of France, in many cases (particularly that of Fichte) “this had less to do with ethnic prejudices than with disappointed expectations. The enlightened liberators [of the French Revolution] turned out to be more despotic than the wildest excesses of Louis XIV.”¹⁵⁷ Thus many in Germany opposed France’s claim to being the universal nation, and “saw in the new France, the *nation un et indivisible*, both an adversary and a model.”¹⁵⁸ Previously, Herder, opposing imitation of the French, wrote in his epistolary critique of the Revolution *Briefe, die Fortschritte der Humanität Betreffend* (Letters Concerning the Progress of Humanity, 1792), “we want to learn from the French; but never, not even for the great National Assembly on the day of judgment, do we want to become and be a France.”¹⁵⁹ This rejection of simply mirroring France was consistent with Herder’s conviction regarding the autonomy and particularity of cultures, and was paralleled by Fichte’s emphasis on the necessity for originality in culture, even if that originality was the result of foreign stimulus.

Therefore, the process of defining one’s nation in opposition to others could be somewhat antagonistic, insofar as the nation was protecting itself from foreign dominance or threat, or it could be quite benign and even cosmopolitan, insofar as one recognized diversity and difference as a good to be preserved. The difference may be that while the former was often a political reality, the latter reflected the Romantic ideal. This tension between the reality of opposition and the ideal of harmonious difference reflects the tension inherent in the Romantic understanding of the relationship between that particular and the whole. By defining oneself against the other, one necessarily limits toleration of diversity, but one also simultaneously recognizes the existence of that diversity. That degree of emphasis on

¹⁵⁶ Brendan Simms. *The Struggle for Mastery in Germany, 1779-1850* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 91.

¹⁵⁷ Simms, *Struggle for Mastery*, 92.

¹⁵⁸ Simms, *Struggle for Mastery*, 91.

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism*, 217.

diversity, and therefore difference and particularity, also helps distinguish Romantic thought from that of the Enlightenment. In contrast to the Enlightenment, argues Leerssen, Romanticism “will always define national identity on the basis of international difference. National differentiation after Herder obtains a fundamental, categorical status in cultural and political thought. Following Herder, a nation’s sense of identity will crucially, fundamentally, be based on the way in which that nation stands out from humanity at large.”¹⁶⁰ Romantic national identity was therefore fundamentally about particularity, about the way the nation was different, rather than about a universal concept of ‘nation’ that could then be applied to any given unit.

* * * *

The idea of individuality inherently calls to mind notions of difference and isolation, but for Seigel, “much of the history of modern thought and culture is a story of the ways people have found to call all these claims for individual independence into question, to transcend mere selves by fusing them with communities, nations, classes or cultures.”¹⁶¹ Thus the ways people have come to understand themselves as individuals are related both to their particularity and their connectedness, their difference and their sameness. In fact, the origin of the word ‘identity’ is ‘sameness’ – the quality of being identical.¹⁶² The Romantics negotiated between solitude and connection, striving for perfect balance between the two, even though that was impossible. This negotiation is perhaps best expressed by historian Warren Breckman:

Romantics were acutely aware of the inadequacy of a naked individuality shorn of roots, connections and belonging. The tension in Romanticism’s basic view of the human person fueled a search for a principle that would combine a liberating ideal of individuality with the fullest possible identification of the individual with a greater whole. In political terms, we might say that Romanticism desired the individual freedom promised by modernity with none of its centrifugal, alienating, and divisive

¹⁶⁰ Joep Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 100.

¹⁶¹ Seigel, *Idea of the Self*, 4.

¹⁶² Seigel, *Idea of the Self*, 15.

effects. Stated more broadly, this desire drove a Romantic quest for the most radical emancipation of the creative person, *and*, with equal fervor, it fed a yearning for a connection with something larger and grander than the self, whether with nature and God or with community and nation. The goal of this Romantic dream was not the obliteration of the individual but a harmonious and endlessly enriching exchange between the individual and the totality. This was, strictly speaking, impossible. This underlying impossibility helps to explain why in Romanticism, despite the Romantics' dream of harmonious unity, emphasis could swing between the self and the totality, the individual and the collective, and the assertion of autonomous selfhood and the submission to a higher power.¹⁶³

Because the Romantics could not fully succeed in unifying individualism and collectivism they had a tendency to vacillate between the two. This tendency to strive for the impossible is therefore perhaps what has made Romanticism so difficult to define concretely. In trying to be all things simultaneously, the Romantics often succeeded only in emphasizing each aspect in tandem, making their thought seemed random or confused, when in fact it was simply imperfect and developing toward a professed perfection it could not achieve: a perfection where individuality and collectivity would not be mutually exclusive.

Romantic particularity should not be equated with isolation, but rather with a solitude that was intended to serve other particularities, and thus share in a totality. Romantic individuality was fundamentally, therefore, about action in the real world. The Romantic self was independent, but would be destroyed if it did not engage in reality, because it was precisely that engagement that brought the self fulfillment. The Romantics certainly had a place for solitude, particularly as a mode for striving for the infinite, the totality, but isolation was seen as dangerous.¹⁶⁴ Contrarily, the Enlightenment and French Revolution were seen as proponents of isolation: of the nation organized 'exclusively,' or the individual defined as 'universal,' and thus without uniqueness. Moreover, whereas isolation lends itself concurrently to subjectivistic individualism (in the sense that the particular – whether it be an individual or a

¹⁶³ Breckman, *European Romanticism*, 4.

¹⁶⁴ Alan Menhemmet, *The Romantic Movement* (London: Croom Helm, 1981) 33-34. He gives the example of the hermit, a figure that although it "occurs not infrequently in the romantic novel and is usually sympathetically portrayed, it never represents the final wisdom for the author." (34).

nation – becomes its own autonomous model for development) and totalizing universalism (because the particular then seeks to apply its own model to all), solitude distances itself from both these expressions of the subjective and the universal. Larry H. Peer thus argues, “Romantic individualism may be called *qualitative*, in contrast to the *quantitative* notion of individualism of pre-Romantic Western culture. We may understand how radical Romanticism is in this regard when we remember that Romantic individualism is the individuality of *Einzigkeit* (uniqueness) rather than *Einzelheit* (singleness).”¹⁶⁵ Singleness, like isolation, limits the possibility of connection between individuals, where uniqueness, like solitude, does not. Romantic solitude and uniqueness was capable of finding a balance between the subjective and the universal, because it sought not to break Hugo’s ‘skeins of humanity.’ Rather it sought to unify organically past and future, while recognizing the otherness of that past, and unify the particular and the whole, while recognizing the autonomy and uniqueness of that particular. These were mirror processes toward which – in keeping with Fichte – one must strive, despite their being unattainable.

¹⁶⁵ Larry H. Peer, ed. *Inventing the Individual: Romanticism and the idea of Individualism* (Provo, UT : International Conference on Romanticism, 2002), 2.

Chapter 4 – Nationalism in the Middle: The Nation as the Ideal Unifier of the Historical Particular and the Universal

While much of the previous discussion concerns ways in which Romantic thought generally was compatible with nationalism – via the willingness to imagine, the belief in the power and stress on community – there were of course Romantics who discussed nations directly. They theorized about their nature, their role in the world, and their impact on classes and regions within the nation. Thus, not only were Romantic sensibilities compatible with theoretical nationalism, but Romantic authors themselves at times expressly made the connection between the two. In particular, Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Jules Michelet, often echoing and developing upon the work of Johann Herder, focused on theories of nations and nationalism in their writings, and at times demonstrated a tendency to be nationalist themselves.¹ However, in their discussions of nations, and even at their most nationalistic, the Romantics consistently demonstrated their dual emphasis on individual and community, as well as their emphasis on both the particular and the universal.

As Warren Breckman argues, in the early nineteenth century the nation was an ideal to be striven for in much of Europe, rather than an existent political reality to support. Nationalism was primarily a “cultural and ideological project aimed at constructing the very idea of the nation, fostering people’s identification with the ‘nation,’ and building political unity on the national principle.”² Breckman maintains that where Romanticism coincided with nationalism it provided philosophical and historical arguments to support this burgeoning

¹ However, just because they discussed nations did not necessarily make them ‘nationalists,’ and particularly not in the way that nationalism is defined today. Herder, for example, hated his native Prussia, had no interest in unification of Germany, and considered himself a citizen of Riga, his adopted city. Yet, despite this reluctance, he valued German culture, literature and language, and was angered by German mimicry of French style in art and writing. J.L. Talmon, *Romanticism and Revolt: Europe 1815-1848* (Norwich: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1967), 96-97. This certainly seems to imply a certain measure of nationalist sentiment, but perhaps one that was more cultural than political.

² Warren Breckman, *European Romanticism: A Brief History With Documents* (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2008), 31.

ideology, and created ideas and images that fostered and encouraged nationalist sentiment.³ Romanticism provided fertile soil for nationalism, but was not so closely tied up with it as to make the connection between the two ineluctable. Romantics were as often preoccupied with individualism or cosmopolitanism as with nationalism. Where Romantics did prove nationalist, or did discuss the nature of the nation, their ideas were very much consistent with the remainder of their thought: emphasizing particularity, authentic organic connection, sentiment, and a complex relationship between whole and part.

Romantic understandings of the nation differed substantially from, although certainly laid the groundwork for, later nineteenth-century conceptions, which tended to be isolationist and exclusionary, in that the Romantic nation was envisaged as more fluid and cosmopolitan. This may be explained by Breckman's observation that Romantic conceptions of the nation, unlike those of their later nineteenth-century counterparts, were more closely tied to striving for an ideal than with programmatic political action. Romantic conceptions of nation tended to be somewhat utopian – nations were discussed as philosophical constructs, almost theoretical entities, rather than as practical units for the organization of society. The latter approach was certainly not absent from their thought, but the preponderant Romantic attitude toward nations is perhaps made most clear if one considers their discussions to be articulations of what nations ought to be, rather than simply descriptions of what they were. The Romantic nation was proposed as the ideal unit through which particularity and universality were harmonized, because the nation functioned as a point of connection between particular individuals and humanity as a whole. The Romantics' understanding of the nation as the meeting place for the individual and humanity, and consequently as the ideal unit for the truest fulfillment of both, can be seen in those elements they used to define the nation (language, territory, the people), in their conceptions of the nation as superceding and elevating those elements, and in their nation-

³ Breckman, *European Romanticism*, 31.

based cosmopolitanism.

Defining the Nation: The Role of Language

One of the elements that the Romantics considered to be a fundamental building block of the nation was language. They conceived of language as important not only as a unifier and a definer of national character, but also as a means of connecting organically to a ‘national past.’ In this they were following the tradition of Herder. He believed that each nation had a particular *Volksgeist* or popular-spirit,⁴ and that the history of the world was the history of progress within the context of particular cultural-linguistic groups.⁵ Herder conceived of nations as units that grew organically, defined and maintained by their language as it grew with them. Language, he believed, preceded the nation, which then grew out of its linguistic foundations, rather than the nation (or a language) being something that was consciously selected or formulated.⁶ In his thinking, a nation’s linguistic connection naturally rooted it to an ‘authentic’ past, ensuring that language was more than an outward sign of a nation’s individuality and character: it was part of what forged that character. Herder believed that the best way to understand the diversity of characteristics present within humanity would be through a comparison of languages, because “every language bears the stamp of the mind and character of a people.”⁷ “The genius of a people,” Herder insisted, “is no where more displayed than in the physiognomy of their language.”⁸

In Romantic thought the nature of a language characterized the nature of a people: Michelet conceived of language as a primary feature of the nation, noting that the history of France began with the French language, because “la langue est la signe principale d’une

⁴ H.G. Schenk, *The Mind of the European Romantics: An Essay in Cultural History* (London: Constable, 1966), 15.

⁵ Maurice Cranston, *The Romantic Movement* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1994), 23.

⁶ Talmon, *Romanticism and Revolt*, 100.

⁷ J.G. Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, trans. T. Churchill (New York: Berman Publishers, 1800), 237.

⁸ Herder, *Outlines* (1800), 237-238.

nationalité.”⁹ Scott too seems to have recognized a connection between nations and their languages. In his discussion of early Scottish poetry, he noted that when the Scots adopted the Saxon language, they were careful to maintain Celtic traditions and practices, particularly surrounding the royal family (Celtic ballads were performed at coronations, for example). This implies an understanding that the loss of an ‘indigenous’ language in favour of the adoption of a foreign one could mean a loss of identity, an identity which then needed to be protected in other ways. Furthermore, Scott noted that even as the language faded from the Lowlands, Celtic poems and songs remained in collective memory for some time.¹⁰ While Scott did not expressly state that these Scottish poems should have been remembered and preserved because of their connection with the original Celtic language, he did state generally that the early poetry of a nation should be preserved because of what it could communicate about the history and character of that nation,¹¹ implying that he believed art and language connected the nation to its origin and helped to define it.

Scott conceived of poetry as able to distinguish both the individual poet and the nation, while simultaneously seeing poetry as something that could unify all humanity. Poetry, Scott insisted, was the mark of all nations: “it would be throwing away words to prove, what all must admit,” he wrote, “the general taste and propensity of nations in their early state, to cultivate some species of rude poetry.”¹² He therefore regarded poetry as a common inheritance of nations, insofar as it was characteristic of all of them, but believed it also distinguished them one from the other, insofar as it differed from nation to nation. As Scott wrote, “poetry seems a plant proper to almost all soils, yet not only is it of various kinds, according to the climate and country in which it has its origin, but the poetry of different nations differs still more widely in

⁹ Jules Michelet, *Histoire de la France* (Paris: Robert Laffont & Le Club Français du Livre, 1971), 31.

¹⁰ Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy on the Scottish Border* (Edinburgh and London: Clive and Boyd, 1932), 17-18.

¹¹ Scott, *Minstrelsy*, 6.

¹² Scott, *Minstrelsy*, 1.

the degree of excellence which it attains.”¹³ This level of poetic quality, Scott argued, was a result of the character of the people, their language and circumstance, but most importantly relied on the existence of a gifted individual poet, as even the earliest tribes would have recognized that poetry required special skills, and the individual with those skills would have been singled out.¹⁴ Thus the Romantic understanding of national poetry managed simultaneously to highlight the individual poet, the particular nation, and all nations as a whole.

For the Romantics language, like poetry, was about more than the nation alone; they insisted it could provide common ground that encouraged a cosmopolitan outlook, and that it could provide a unique voice for the individual. Such an understanding of language began earlier, with Herder. For Herder, while each nation had a unique language, language itself was characteristic of all humanity. He made much of the fact that language and one’s ability to communicate ideas through it made one human, and that language was the means by which education was propagated.¹⁵ In his estimation, language, therefore, connected all of humanity, but, as discussed above, it also broke down the world into particular nations: Herder emphasized the fact that language belonged “to separate societies and to man’s experience ‘as a creature of the herd.’”¹⁶ In this sense, language was conceived as connecting individuals to both the particular, in the form of the nation, and the universal, in the form of humanity. Language was also seen as important at the level of the individual, because it was the means by which people expressed their individual thoughts and feelings. Herder emphasized the importance of language as the “true voice of feeling.”¹⁷ Thus for Herder language simultaneously made a person unique and ensured his or her belonging to a community – both the community of the nation, and of the world. It was this cosmopolitan quality, at times

¹³ Scott, *Minstrelsy*, 5.

¹⁴ Scott, *Minstrelsy*, 5, 3.

¹⁵ Herder, *Outlines* (1800), 226, 71-82.

¹⁶ Cranston, *Romantic Movement*, 23.

¹⁷ Cranston, *Romantic Movement*, 23.

adopted from Herder, that, when present, would most distinguish Romantic nationalism from later forms.

Proceeding from Herder's example, Fichte had an appreciation of language as both individual and communitarian. He believed that an individual's development was tied up with the character of his¹⁸ language, saying that the language that an individual used to explore the depths of his mind, "either hinders him or gives him wings," dependent upon that language's character.¹⁹ Simultaneously, he thought that same language united all those who spoke it "into one single and common understanding" and in doing so united the worlds of sense and spirit so that one could not tell where one ended and the other began.²⁰ Individuals, in Fichte's estimation, were thus bound by their common parlance, which made them capable of communication, and therefore connection. Accordingly, and also in keeping with Herder, Fichte saw language at the foundation of nations, contending that "those who speak the same language are joined to each other by a multitude of invisible bonds by nature herself, long before any human art begins; they understand each other and have the power of continuing to make themselves understand more and more clearly; they belong together and are by nature one and an inseparable whole."²¹ These, he maintained, were the original and most natural

¹⁸ Fichte typically uses only male pronouns, and seems to pay little to no attention to the question of gender. This is not the case with all Romantics, and the idea of the feminine at times played an important role in Romantic thought. For example, scholarship has commonly noted that with respect to German Romantic poets "the definition of the male artist in Romantic texts typically occurs vis-a-vis a female character, who is depicted as the true source of poesy." (Martha B. Helfer, "The Male Muses of Romanticism: The Poetics of Gender in Novalis, E.T.A. Hoffmann, and Eichendorff," *The German Quarterly* 78, no. 3 (Summer, 2005), 300-301.) For example, in F. Schlegel's *Lucinde* the title character acts as the inspiration for Julius, the character modeled on Schlegel himself (Helfer, "Male Muses," 299). Moreover, some Romantics specifically investigated questions of gender formation. Novalis in his *Fichte-Studien* examined Fichtean intersubjectivity in terms of gender, contending that "the self-positing of the Fichtean ego in terms of gender categories perforce demands the autoproduction of the male subject," and saw fluidity between gender categories, arguing that "men are to a certain extent women, just as women are to a certain extent men." (Helfer, "Male Muses," 302.)

¹⁹ J.G. Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, ed. George A. Kelley (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968), 59.

²⁰ Fichte, *Addresses*, 59.

²¹ Fichte, *Addresses*, 190.

boundaries of states: those created by language. Yet, as was typical for a German nationalist of his time, he did not conceive of states and nations as necessarily congruent.

In contrast to late nineteenth- and twentieth- century nationalism, which emphasized the ideal congruence of nations and states, Fichte's conception of the nation did not absolutely require a totalizing state apparatus: the nation did not require unification under a single government. He argued that his vision of national education was for all German nationals, regardless of state, and that as a consequence each German state should run the new education system independently.²² However, his concept of the nation remained highly political, as he maintained that the preservation of the German language required political independence. He argued that even if the language could be sustained in literature without political autonomy, such literature would be empty of meaning, because what a writer truly desired was to "influence public life and the life of all, and to form and reshape it according to his vision."²³ Thus he believed language, even in cultural expression and literature, was fundamentally political and national, because writers, in addressing the public, used language to develop and improve political life in their nations. Moreover, in that sense, he conceived of language as a medium through which the individual writer found connection with, and personally influenced, the nation as a whole.

Despite its cosmopolitanism, Romantic nationalism could at times approximate the sensibilities of later forms of nationalism. Romantics could be 'nationalist,' in the commonly accepted meaning of the word: they could perceive their own nations as above all others, as having a special place in the world. Fichte saw language as justification for the particularity of the German nation – for the unique position he conceived it to have on the world stage (or, at the very least, in Europe). He argued that the Germans, unlike other Teutonic peoples, did not

²² Fichte, *Addresses*, 168.

²³ Fichte, *Addresses*, 183.

move away and adopt a foreign language, but rather remained in their homeland. However, in Fichte's mind it was not the connection to original Teutonic territory that ensured that Germans maintained their 'Germanness,' but rather it was their retention of their supposed original language, which he contended provided a foundational link between the current German nation, and the German nation in ancestral form.²⁴ Thus the German language could be said to be 'living.' In Fichtean thought, for a people to speak a living language, they must speak the language of their ancestors, and not have adopted a foreign tongue. This ensured that the language was connected to the people and grew with them, such that life and mental culture would be connected rather than separate.²⁵ Although the language certainly changed over time, Fichte noted, those changes were gradual and only recognizable after the fact, so that the language could still be said to provide a continual link with the past.²⁶ Fichte believed that by retaining their language the Germans remained connected to their origin, to their history – instead of adopting a different language, and therefore a history that was foreign and unconnected to them.²⁷ He argued that “men are formed by language far more than language is formed by men,”²⁸ and that being connected to the language of one's people, the language to which one is in essence 'supposed' to be connected, ensured both an individual and collective fulfillment that could not otherwise be achieved. Accordingly, the Germans' having stayed on Teutonic territory was only important to Fichte insofar as it insulated them from foreign languages and influence, and ensured their direct and organic connection to their own origin. Fichte therefore saw a special place for Germany, but this position was non-exclusionary

²⁴ Fichte, *Addresses*, 47.

²⁵ Fichte, *Addresses*, 68.

²⁶ Fichte, *Addresses*, 49-50.

²⁷ Fichte, *Addresses*, 54. Fichte contended that when a people adopt a foreign language they “receive the flat and dead history of a foreign culture, but not in any way a culture of their own. They get symbols which for them are neither immediately clear nor able to stimulate life, but which must seem to them entirely as arbitrary as the sensuous part of the language. For them this advent of history and nothing but history, as exposition, makes the language dead and closed in respect of its whole sphere of imagery and its continuous onward flow is broken.”

²⁸ Fichte, *Addresses*, 48.

insofar as other nations, if they too were directly connected to their past, could be said to have had a ‘living language.’

Fichte’s emphasis on a national language, while consistent with his thought generally, can also be seen as a politically judicious position. As Elie Kedourie argues, an emphasis on language as the basis for the nation made political sense for a Germany whose territory was politically fragmented.²⁹ In Hagen Schulze’s words:

German national literature, music and theatre created a unity of taste and judgment which transcended territorial boundaries. Anyone writing in German did so not only because the literary market demanded it, but also because he was thereby proclaiming his allegiance to the unity of an enlightened middle-class spirit, which stood above territorial boundaries and consciously distanced itself from the French language and culture prevalent in court life. It was these cultural boundaries which gave the German educated elite its national identity.³⁰

Language was therefore particularly important as a unifier when territory was not unified.

Defining the Nation: The Role of Territory

Fichte’s emphasis on language, as well as the political reality with which he had to contend, seems to have led him to minimize the importance of territory as integral to nations. He argued that “man easily makes himself at home under any sky, and the national characteristic, far from being much changed by the place of abode, dominates and changes the latter after its own pattern.”³¹ Moreover, he maintained that no German-born prince ever marked out his territory with rivers or mountains, or considered his subjects as bound to the soil.³² However, despite Fichte’s contention, the idea of landscape or territory played an important role in Romantic nationalism. In fact, Warren Breckman argues that the new prestige that landscape painting achieved in the nineteenth century can be explained by its connection to national identity.³³

²⁹ Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1966), 69.

³⁰ Hagen Schulze, *The Course of German Nationalism: From Frederick the Great to Bismarck, 1763-1867*, trans. Sarah Hanbury-Tenison (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 46.

³¹ Fichte, *Addresses*, 47.

³² Fichte, *Addresses*, 126.

³³ Breckman, *European Romanticism*, 35.

Many scholars have focused on divergences between French and German understandings of nation and citizen, often contrasting the legalistic emphasis on individualism of French nationalism, and the historical-*volk* aspect of German nationalism,³⁴ or alternately noting that French citizenship is tied to territory, while German is tied to blood, similarly implying that the French concept of nation is more political-legal, and the German more ethno-cultural.³⁵ While French and German Romantics did differ somewhat in their conception of nation, the differences ought not to be overstated or simplified. Rogers Brubaker argues that “to characterize French and German traditions of citizenship and nationhood in terms of such ready-made conceptual pairs as universalism and particularism, cosmopolitanism and ethnocentrism, Enlightenment rationalism and Romantic irrationalism, is to pass from

³⁴ Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1961) 357. Kohn contrasts French nationalism, which he sees as tied up with Rousseau’s notion of general will, with German nationalism which he presents as based in nature and history, not a collective will. This implies the historically based nationalism at its purest – German *volk*-nationalism – is fundamentally incompatible with individuality-based nationalism. Yet at the same time, individuality based nationalism (like that of Rousseau) is universalist, whereas folk-nationalism is in itself particular and individual. Kohn writes, “Western nationalism seemed to be something artificial, a creation of politicians and political movements, while German nationalism appeared spontaneous, inspired by nature itself, springing from the depths of the past, rooted not in universal and rational principles, but in an individual and indigenous folk genius.” Kohn, *Idea of Nationalism*, 352. However, it seems quite possible to overstate the differences between German and French nationalism at this time (and Kohn’s excluding Germany from ‘Western’ Europe is somewhat curious, and perhaps more attributable to the political climate of the 1940s in which he wrote than to the realities of the Romantic era). The Romantics of both countries clearly saw the nation as rooted in history, and both emphasized the role of the individual and of the whole, and attempted to harmonize these seemingly dichotomous ideas.

³⁵ In his, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, Rogers Brubaker states, “in both France and Germany, to be sure, as throughout Continental Europe, citizenship is ascribed to children of citizens, following the principle of *jus sanguinis*. In Britain and the Americas, by contrast, citizenship is ascribed to all persons born in the territory, following the principle of *jus soli*. What I want to highlight here is the sharp difference in the extent to which France and Germany, sharing the same basic principle of *jus sanguinis*, supplement this principle with elements of *jus soli*. France and Germany represent polar cases: French citizenship law includes a substantial territorial component; German citizenship law includes none at all. Most other Western European *jus sanguinis* countries include some complementary elements of *jus soli* without going as far as France.” Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 81. With respect to Brubaker’s characterization of British citizenship laws, one should note that *jus sanguinis* is in fact practiced there, and that *jus soli* has been somewhat limited since 1983 when a law came into effect granting British citizenship only to those born in the United Kingdom to a British citizen or someone legally settled in the United Kingdom, whereas previously citizenship had been extended to all persons born on British soil. “Who Has Citizenship?: If You Were Born in the UK or a Qualifying Territory,” (*UK Border Agency*) <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/britishcitizenship/othernationality/Britishcitizenship/borninukorqualifyingterritory/> (accessed June 20, 2009).

characterization to caricature.”³⁶ Both French and German Romantics saw an important place for history, culture, and the individual citizen in understandings of nationhood. If one were to characterize their difference, it seems more apt to say that for the German Romantics the nation was founded essentially on language, and that, while the French certainly had a place for language in their conception of the nation, territory also played an important role.³⁷ Michelet, in direct opposition to Fichte’s thoughts on the subject, saw territory as intrinsically tied to national characteristics.³⁸ Michelet believed that nationalities and national character derived not only “de nos caprices, mais sont profondément fondés dans l’influence du climat, de l’alimentation, des productions naturelles d’un pays,” and that while these might change over time, they would never disappear.³⁹ Territory, in Michelet’s conception, therefore lent a certain permanence and gravitas to the nation. It literally grounded it in the soil and gave the at times ephemeral idea of nation something solid to which it could cling. It was in this spirit that Michelet contended that history was fundamentally geography, because the history of the nation began with the physical and geographic division of the nation. However, understanding geography was not seen as sufficient; one also had to look to the people and their exploits.⁴⁰ The territory was at the very least the stage upon which those exploits were centred, and, for Michelet, it was more than that. He was adamant that “ce sol n’est pas seulement le théâtre de l’action. Par la nourriture, le climat, etc., il y influe de cent manières. Tel le nid, tel l’oiseau. Tel la patrie, tel l’homme.”⁴¹ In Michelet’s estimation the territory itself was therefore one way

³⁶ Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, 2.

³⁷ Hobsbawm argues, however, that the French would fight for a definition of nation not based on language so that they could include territory such as Alsace in their ‘nation.’ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 19-20.

³⁸ Michelet saw the national connection to territory as something particularly French, although he did not contrast this with Germany. Rather, he said that the people of France were connected to their soil in a way people in England would never be because in England those who owned the land were not those who worked it. Jules Michelet, *Le Peuple* (Paris: Comptoir des Imperimeurs-unis, 1846), 5.

³⁹ Michelet, *Peuple*, 260.

⁴⁰ Michelet, *Histoire de France*, 31-32.

⁴¹ Michelet, *Histoire de France*, 5.

in which the unity of the nation influenced the individuals that comprised it. Citizens, he believed, were literally shaped by the soil that fed and sustained them.

Walter Scott, too, placed emphasis on the influence of territory on national sentiment. For example, he argued that as a nation Normans were not prone to patriotism, because they emphasized chivalry as an attribute, rather than local attachment.⁴² He therefore linked patriotism to territory, and thus to a particularity, in direct opposition to attachment to a universal or ideal. In Scott's estimation it was precisely because the Normans valued teaching the universal ideal of chivalry to their children that their children did not cultivate attachment to their particular territory, and therefore did not develop patriotic sentiment. He noted that they broke filial ties early (which were thus presented as the building blocks of the broader ties of *patrie*) and sent their children to be educated in foreign courts.⁴³ Scott's ideas are suggestive of the fact that the Romantics perceived the nation not as a universal concept to be applied to a variety of circumstances but as a discrete element defined by its particular attributes.

This emphasis on territory was very much tied up with an emphasis on personal attachment to the nation, and therefore, often, to an emphasis on history and ancestry. Scott believed that individuals were less likely to feel strong attachment to a country in which they or their ancestors were not born. He maintained that "whatever allegiance the emigrated strangers might yield to the monarchs who bestowed on them their fiefs, it must have been different from the sentiments of filial attachment with which men regard the land of their birth and that of their ancestors, and the princes by whose fathers their own had been led to battle, and with whom they had shared conquest and defeat."⁴⁴ The Romantic concept of national attachment was therefore tied up inextricably with notions of particularity – of particular memories and

⁴² Walter Scott, *The History of Scotland, vol 1 of The Cabinet History of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1845), 68.

⁴³ Scott, *History of Scotland*, 69.

⁴⁴ Scott, *History of Scotland*, 68.

histories and families - and sentimental attachments to those particularities. This implies an understanding of the nation as something that was felt and remembered, rather than something that was calculated and campaigned for: a more sentimental and historical attachment to the nation than a programmatic political one.

Defining the Nation: The Nation as its Constituents

Liah Greenfeld argues that nationality's uniqueness, "which distinguishes nationality from other types of identity, derives from the fact that nationalism locates the source of individual identity within a 'people,' which is seen as the bearer of sovereignty, the central object of loyalty and the basis of collective solidarity."⁴⁵ Thus, in a certain sense, all nationalist movements are mass movements because they claim to speak for all. In Romantic nationalism this claim is paradoxically tied to the notion of individualism. Nations were often conceived as defined by the individuals who comprised them, echoing Herder's contention that just as individuals could be swayed by an emotion or ideal, so too could humanity as a whole be swayed, "for of individual members the whole consists."⁴⁶ Warren Breckman notes that despite the fact that Romantic nationalism was politically ambiguous – sometimes leftwing and sometimes right – it was always characterized by the notion that sovereignty lay with the people.⁴⁷ The nation, for the Romantics, was often defined as the people who comprised it. Hans Kohn contends that it was the French Revolution that replaced royal sovereignty with the sovereignty of the people, and that while the prince naturally unified power, insofar as he was a single being, the people "had to become one in a higher sense of the word."⁴⁸ In his estimation it was this sentiment of nationalism that provided such unity; this nationalist sentiment, rather than belief in princely power, was the force that held peoples together.⁴⁹ One could perhaps

⁴⁵ Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 3.

⁴⁶ Herder, *Outlines*, vol II (1803), 317.

⁴⁷ Breckman, *European Romanticism*, 34.

⁴⁸ Kohn, *Idea of Nationalism*, 237.

⁴⁹ It should perhaps be noted that Kohn is here speaking particularly to French nationalism, which he sees as

argue that somewhat paradoxically this ‘nationalist’ justification of statehood inherently places greater emphasis on individuals than a monarchical one, because where nationalism, in its emphasis on the masses, necessarily entails the importance of all individuals, monarchy only entails the importance of one. However some Romantics were monarchists, or became monarchists, often as part of a rejection of what they perceived to be the excesses of the French Revolution. Yet, political support for the monarchy was not necessarily at odds with an understanding of the nation as founded on the people. For example, while Michelet opposed the July Monarchy, Thierry did not, and his arguments regarding the end of history were used to bolster the Monarchy’s position.⁵⁰ Yet both men saw the nation as tied to its people: Thierry argued that national history should tell the story of all the masses or it would not be truly national, and Michelet insisted that France truly became a nation only when its diverse elements came together as a single *peuple*.⁵¹

This demonstrates one way in which Romanticism, in all its variety, differed from, but also grew out of, Enlightenment principles. By challenging the position of the monarch, the French Revolution helped create the possibility for a conception of the state as founded on the people. However, the Romantics rejected French Revolutionary, and particularly the Jacobins’, methods and extremism even while adopting a form of populism. In this they were following Herder, who in his *Briefe, die Fortschritte der Humanität Betreffend* (1792) argued that the Revolution should be examined impartially, so that its positive elements could be utilized and

manifested in Rousseauian general will (the sum of individual wills). He contrasts this with German nationalism, as noted above.

⁵⁰ Arthur Mitzman, “Michelet and Social Romanticism,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 57, no. 4 (Oct., 1996), 681.

⁵¹ Thierry, *Lettres*, 15; Michelet, *Peuple*, 259. It should be noted that even the Bourbon restoration, which was not a constitutional monarchy like the July Monarchy, also found support amongst some Romantics – demonstrating the political diversity inherent in Romanticism. Maurice Cranston argues that because Napoleon had utilized neo-classicism for his political and propagandistic purposes the Restoration Bourbons saw Romanticism as a possible source of ideological support one that was “a clear-cut alternative to the rationalism which had propelled France through the errors of the Enlightenment to the excesses of the Revolution.” (Cranston, *Romantic Movement*, 84) As a consequence Romantic scholars could hold important positions within government. Chateaubriand, for example, became a Viscount and was active in politics for the entire restoration period (Cranston, *Romantic Movement*, 85).

its negative elements rejected,⁵² but he denounced Louis XVI's executioners as "demons, the lowest rabble on earth," and opposed the Jacobins, not necessarily for their convictions, but because of their willingness to use extreme and violent measures, which contradicted his strong belief in self-determination.⁵³

When they viewed the nation as primarily made up of its citizens, the Romantics often specially emphasized the lower classes, or those who had historically been neglected. Michelet maintained that the poor loved France better than the rich – they loved France as though they were obliged to it, while the rich loved France as though it were obliged to them. Michelet believed that the way each class related to France was a testament of the moral character of a class, and his evaluation would seem to have favoured the poor over the rich.⁵⁴ What is perhaps most notable about Michelet's conception of the relationship between the classes and the nation is that he defined the particular classes by their various and unique forms of relation to the nation. It was only in seeing their position and relationship within the larger unity, therefore, that he believed one could truly understand these particularities. The classes may have been diverse in the way they related to France, but it was the way in which they were connected in that diversity that was most crucial for Michelet, because that defined the nation. Indeed, "c'est au moment où la France a supprimé dans son sein toutes les Frances divergentes, qu'elle a donné sa haute et originale révélation."⁵⁵

Many Romantics conceived of the nation as founded on the masses, as being made up of, and defined by, all its citizens, not simply the elites or rulers, or inhabitants of the major cities or central provinces. It was for this reason that Thierry argued that no history of France had ever been written; he conceived of the nation as containing everyone and felt there was no

⁵² Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism*, 217.

⁵³ Quoted In Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism*, 219.

⁵⁴ Michelet, *Peuple*, 118.

⁵⁵ Michelet, *Peuple*, 259.

history that accurately captured that collectivity. In particular, he argued that the history of France should not focus on the Ile-de-France, the historical province that included Paris and its environs, alone, but rather should be the history of all the provinces. He called for histories to throw off their fictional unity and embrace France's true variety, because he insisted that only in the recognition of that variety could the unity of the nation be encouraged.⁵⁶ This idea of unity through variety is very much in keeping with Romantic understandings of particularity and totality as examined in the previous chapter. It also indicates that the Romantic conception of nation could be quite inclusive, as in Thierry's case, in the sense that it was non-centrist.

The concept of nations as formed by all their citizens, also encouraged some of the Romantics to call for an end to class conflict. Consequently, Romantics often called for the nation to overcome class boundaries, such as when Fichte argued that education based on a living language would eliminate the divide between the intellectual elites and the common person, and that for the education system to be truly national it could not be for one class alone, but must be open to all classes.⁵⁷ Similarly, Michelet agitated for national education for everyone in France, regardless of class, on the grounds that as citizens of France they needed to understand the nation in order to understand themselves. He argued that even if inequality would always exist, children should, if only for a moment, live in equality and witness the diversity of their nation first-hand.⁵⁸ This is not to say that Romantic nationalism was always, or even necessarily mostly, egalitarian. In many ways it foreshadowed the chauvinist and integral nationalism that would emerge with vigor in the latter half of the nineteenth century, because they often called for the protection of the nation's culture or language from external influence, even while lauding perceived diversity in that culture or between cultures.

⁵⁶ Augustin Thierry, *Lettres sur l'histoire de France, pour servir d'introduction a l'étude de cette histoire* (Paris: Just Tessier Libraire, 1836), 40-41.

⁵⁷ Fichte, *Addresses*, 13.

⁵⁸ Jules Michelet, *Le Peuple* (Paris: Comptoir des Imprimeurs-Unis, 1846), 304-305.

The Romantics therefore saw nations as defined by a complex interrelationship between parts and whole, individual and collectivity, classes and national identity, common people and intellectual elites. Another complementary relationship existed between periphery and centre. They believed the centre, because it was informed by both itself and the periphery, functioned as a microcosm of the whole. It could not function alone; it required the extremities. As Michelet argued, understanding how Paris became the centre of France would require not only the history of Paris, but the history of all of France. All parts working in concert, working toward the centre, and yet for the glory of the whole – for him this defined what made the nation a nation. This belief allowed Michelet to declare on one page that “la force et la beauté de l’ensemble consistent dans la réciprocité des secours, dans la solidarité des parties, dans la distribution des fonctions, dans la division de travail social” with action in the periphery and intelligence in the centre, and to say on the next that “dans la France, la première gloire est d’être Français. Les extrémités sont opulentes, fortes, héroïques, mais souvent elles ont des intérêts différents de l’intérêt national; elles sont moins françaises.”⁵⁹ Michelet thus defined France both as an abstract concept and as a concrete reality. As a concept he saw France as a particular set of characteristics to which reality would ideally conform, while as a concrete reality he defined it in its aggregation of diverse elements. His work exemplifies the paradoxical dichotomy inherent in the Romantic understanding of nation, which is simultaneously diverse and unified, diffuse and centralized, egalitarian and elitist. Thus, while these provinces may have been ‘less French’ than Paris, for Michelet they were also necessary for defining what ‘French’ was. And in their very variety, he argued, they provided the French with advantages, particularly for foreign affairs, because France could approach its neighbours with people similar to them.⁶⁰ Therefore he thought France was made stronger because it was

⁵⁹ Michelet, *Histoire de France*, 84, 85.

⁶⁰ Michelet, *Histoire de France*, 85.

not homogenous, and all parts of society, all provinces, ought to have been recognized as intrinsic elements of the nation, precisely because they served that nation.

This Romantic tendency toward integration of society, this willingness to draw from all quadrants and classes, contributed to the nation's perceived strength, and not only by adding to its supposed unity and cohesion. The Romantics thought that because the nation could draw on the talents and capabilities of all members of society, its collective ability was noteworthy.

Walter Scott put the matter similarly:

It cannot be denied that a state which can thus engross, for the public service, all the estimable and useful qualities of its citizens, presents an imposing spectacle, grand and unconquerable in the talents and capacities which it unites, and commanding at pleasure all that can be sacrificed in its cause, from the knowledge of the most profound philosopher, to the courage and life of its hardiest peasant.⁶¹

Thus, the very power of the nation – its greatest strength in the Romantic mind – was this propensity to unify diverse abilities for the sake of a common cause. Precisely because the nation as a collectivity consisted of a diversity of individualities, and precisely because it integrated these diversities into a larger whole, the Romantics believed it superseded that which would be accomplished by a simple leveling of all into a homogenous whole.

Because the Romantics conceived of nations as defined by the diverse units that comprised them, they could not abide by the idea of a collectivity that destroyed its constituent elements. For the Romantics, unity that destroyed individuality was not true unity, because homogeneity in fact created isolation. As Anthony Smith argues, while homogeneity is often presented as the ideal of all nationalists, it was an ideal that was defined in a variety of ways.

Many Romantics, rather than calling for fairly thorough homogeneity, as some later nationalists would,⁶² were “content with unification and identification around core values,

⁶¹ Scott, *Tales of a Grandfather: France*, 11-12.

⁶² When nationalism does emphasize thorough homogeneity as an ideal it tends to be ethnic homogeneity. William H. McNeil argues that although the ideal of ethnic homogeneity was never actualized, it rose to prominence in the late eighteenth century and flourished until the 1920s. (Although this date is often put much later, and one could even argue that the ideal still exists today). William H. McNeill, *Polyethnicity and National Unity in World History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 7.

myths, symbols and traditions, expressed in common customs and institutions as well as a common homeland.”⁶³ In keeping with this, Michelet wrote that the unity of nations “n’est pas l’unité monotone, mais l’unité harmonique où toutes les diversités s’aident.”⁶⁴ Michelet identified this idea of harmony in diversity as an ideal that his time did not live up to, demonstrating the Romantics’ characteristic disdain for the failings of modernity and the legacy of the Enlightenment. He argued that “c’est le mystère étrange de cet âge; le temps où l’on agit le plus ensemble, est peut-être celui où les coeurs sont le moins unis. Les moyens collectifs qui mettent en commun la pensée, la font circuler, la répandent, n’ont jamais été plus grands, jamais l’isolement plus profond.”⁶⁵ This, Michelet attributed to the ‘machinism’ of the age, which saw political machines creating uniformity in social action, and industrial machines creating uniformity through the replication of goods.⁶⁶ He maintained that such machinism led to the state without nation, industry and literature without art, and humanity without humans. Despite its advantages, machinism gave to humanity what Michelet considered a terrible ability: “celle d’unir les forces sans avoir besoin d’unir les coeurs, de coopérer sans aimer, d’agir et vivre ensemble, sans se connaître.”⁶⁷ He thus believed the moral power of association was lost entirely in the face of mechanized association. One can infer from Michelet’s disdain for machinism that he desired the opposite: true connection between individuals, and the creation of associations that produce art and national feeling. Thus Romantic collectivity was about sentiment and attachment, rather than homogeneity. Homogeneity could lead only to the isolation of individuals, and subsequently their destruction (for, as discussed in the previous chapter, individuals only found true fulfillment in belonging). By conceiving of collectives as founded on sentiment and true attachment, therefore, Michelet left the way open for

⁶³ Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1991), 146.

⁶⁴ Michelet, *Peuple*, 297.

⁶⁵ Michelet, *Peuple*, 123.

⁶⁶ Michelet, *Peuple*, 124.

⁶⁷ Michelet, *Peuple*, 126.

individuals, and by providing arguments for the importance of collectivity and the nation he helped pave the way for nationalism.

Michelet, in particular, emphasized nationalism as a matter of sentiment and personal attachment. He noted that the word for *patrie* used to be *amitié* (friendship), saying that “la patrie c’est bien en effet la grande amitié qui contient toutes les autres. J’aime la France, parce qu’elle est la France, et aussi parce que c’est le pays de ceux que j’aime et que j’ai aimé.”⁶⁸ He maintained that individual friendships functioned as the first step toward ‘national friendship,’ and that accordingly the nation, “la grande amitié,” contained within it all attachments and relationships.⁶⁹ At the same time, addressing France personally, Michelet called for it to “faites que nous nous aimons en vous!”⁷⁰ Thus, while he saw communion between individuals as a vital step toward national sentiment, he proposed that the very existence of the nation encouraged, or even permitted, such connection. In Michelet’s mind national attachment was therefore a unity containing innumerable particulars – in this case, of sentimental connections – wherein the particular connections contributed to the unity and the unity fostered the particular connections.

Despite their tendency toward somewhat sentimental idealism, the Romantics, because they were fundamentally calling for real change in the world, could also be quite practical. For example, Michelet recognized that overcoming local attachment for the sake of larger unity was not easily achievable. In fact, he considered this desire for unity despite diversity to be the constant problem of human sociability, the solution to which humanity was consistently advancing by degrees. This unity, however, could not be achieved by conquest, because “la conquête peut attacher ensemble, enchaîner des parties hostiles, mais jamais les unir.”⁷¹

⁶⁸ Michelet, *Peuple*, 223-224.

⁶⁹ Michelet, *Peuple*, 224.

⁷⁰ Michelet, *Peuple*, 257.

⁷¹ Michelet, *Histoire de France*, 87.

Rather, in Michelet's estimation, unity required sentiment – that the various localities come to know one another, and their natural differences, based on climate and nature, and through this encounter give way to a new collectivity, based on politics and history. Interestingly, Michelet presented this as a triumph of humanity over the 'tyranny of circumstances.' He saw it as a negotiation between the individual's tendency toward the material and the local, and humanity's tendency toward the universal, resulting in the middle-ground unity of the nation.⁷² While later manifestations of nationalism would move away from this Romantic understanding of the nation, by providing arguments for the nation's existence the Romantics certainly helped lay the foundation for the popularization and dissemination of nationalist ideology and therefore nationalism.

The Nation as More than the Sum of its Parts

Moreover, the Romantic conception of nation was not always populist, since the Romantics at times embraced concepts of the nation that bordered on elitist, and therefore more directly presaged nationalism's later variants. The Romantic emphasis on the scholar, discussed in the previous chapter, was quite elitist, even considering that the scholar was put forward as the champion of the masses. Particularly in Fichte's thought the scholar was given that role because Fichte believed scholars were superior to the other branches of society. Friedrich Schlegel demonstrated a tendency to define Germany based on an ideal, and only those who conformed to that ideal did he consider to be proper Germans. As he wrote, "the Germans, it is said, are the greatest nation in the world in respect to their cultivation of artistic sensibility and scientific spirit. Quite so – only there are very few Germans."⁷³ Fichte too emphasized the idea of "true Germans," saying, for example, that in the Middle Ages the history of the true German

⁷² Michelet, *Histoire De France*, 88. "L'homme individuel est matérialiste, il s'attache volontiers à l'intérêt local et privé; la société humaine est spiritualiste, elle tend à s'affranchir sans cesse des misères de l'existence locale, à atteindre la haute et abstraite unité de la patrie."

⁷³ Friedrich Schlegel, "Critical Fragments," in *Lucinde and The Fragments*, trans by Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 157.

spirit was to be found in the history of the burghers and imperial cities, and that all else from that period was “unworthy of mention.”⁷⁴ Moreover, he also emphasized the idea of “true nations” or “true people,” defined by their originary and original connection to their proper and natural language, claiming that because Germans were an original people they had the right to call themselves “simply *the people*.”⁷⁵ Novalis, writing in “The Athenaeum Fragments,” revealed a similar tendency to see ‘Germanness’ as an attribute or quality and not a political status, but did so in a characteristically cosmopolitan fashion. He argued that there were Germans everywhere, arguing that ‘Germanism’ was not confined to particular states, just as ‘Romanism’ or ‘Hellenism’ were not, or contemporaneously, ‘Britainism.’ He believed that these were “universal characteristics of humanity that have only on occasion achieved perfect universality. Germanism is genuine popularity and therefore an ideal.”⁷⁶ This implies an idea of the nation as being more than just its constituent elements – the nation as something greater than the sum of its parts and even extending beyond its geographical boundaries. Seeing national characteristics as somehow above the characteristics of the people commonly considered to be part of the nation might suggest an understanding of the nation as having an infinite or universal meaning: as an objective entity that exists regardless of changes to the everyday. For example, Fichte emphasized that although languages warped over time, it was the constant thread of connection to the original language through its permutations that made a people ‘original.’⁷⁷ But of course the nation was also particular and tied to the particularities of those who comprised it. It was both universal and particular, infinite and finite, just as the individual was conceived as being both a particular human and a fulfillment of the ideal of

⁷⁴ Fichte, *Addresses*, 89.

⁷⁵ Fichte, *Addresses*, 92. Fichte can take this quite far, saying Germans are not only a true nation, but the only true nation: “It must be obvious at once that only the German – the original man, who has not become dead in an arbitrary organization – really has a people and is entitled to count on one, and that he alone is capable of real and rational love for his nation.” Fichte, *Addresses*, 111.

⁷⁶ Novalis in Friedrich Schlegel, “Athenaeum Fragments,” in *Lucinde and The Fragments*, trans by Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 203.

⁷⁷ Fichte, *Addresses*, 49-50.

‘humanity.’ However, this privileging of abstract national characteristics over the reality of its constituent elements also set the stage for xenophobic nationalism that would seek to purge those elements that did not fit the abstract character, and were therefore declared to be ‘non-national.’

Fichte very much emphasized that true nations were totalities, wherein individuals lived together in society and continually created “themselves naturally and spiritually, [and brought forth,] out of themselves, a totality.”⁷⁸ ‘Totality’ as a concept implies something greater than simply an aggregate, and as a result allows for plurality and unity simultaneously: something that is total in this sense is a single complete unit, but also has a variety of aspects working in concert to make up that unit. By perceiving the nation as total, and therefore simultaneously as an entity connected to something greater than itself, and as a self-contained and particular unit, Fichte put forward a conception of the nation that he believed could provide insights about the nature of totality and about its larger meanings. This becomes clear in Fichte’s discussion of the relationship between the nation and its ‘divine law.’ Fichte contended that the nation functioned under a special divine law, which united the masses of the nation both in the material and the spiritual world. The law, he proposed, defined the national character, and thus gave the nation both permanence and importance beyond the simple sum of its citizens (and in that sense contributed to the nation’s ‘totality’). Moreover, perhaps more importantly, Fichte insisted that this law could only be understood as a whole: it could not be grasped by anyone, because all were under its influence, but its existence and significance could be gleaned if one looked at a particular example of a true people, a true original nation (Fichte in his characteristic nationalism gives the example of the Germans.)⁷⁹ Therefore, for Fichte, the nation had significance because it was connected to that law, i.e. a concept greater

⁷⁸ Fichte, *Addresses*, 115.

⁷⁹ Fichte, *Addresses*, 115.

than itself, but that very concept could only be understood through examining a particular example of a nation. The nation as a unit was therefore, he believed, the medium through which totality and the divine law that this totality reflected were understood. He insisted that this understanding could not be obtained by looking at individual humans alone or at the world as a whole. For Fichte, the nation functioned as the fundamental unit of analysis to understand society, precisely because it supposedly struck a balance between the particular and the total, by encompassing both simultaneously.

In Romantic thought the nation thus functioned as a sort of bridge between the fleeting individual and the eternal – it was seen as a medium through which people were connected to something both greater than themselves and permanent. Fichte argued that national sentiment was not about a citizen’s love for the constitution, but rather it was about embracing “the nation as the vesture of the eternal.”⁸⁰ Accordingly, Fichte saw the goal of his system of education as instilling a sense of the nation as eternal into the minds of the German people.⁸¹ He believed that understanding the nation as eternal was of benefit to the individual and to the nation. It benefited individuals because people’s belief that they could contribute to an eternal influence in the world was predicated on their belief that their people was an eternal people. By conceiving of their lives as eternal lives, Fichte believed, individuals were united with their nations, and then through their nations were united with humanity as a whole. In fact, he argued, an individual’s eternity or “permanence is promised to him only by the continuous and independent existence of his nation.”⁸² He deemed it necessary for individuals to reach for something greater than the temporal nation in order to benefit from the advantages of belonging to a nation.⁸³ In that sense, he saw belonging to a nation as fulfilling the goal of humanity,

⁸⁰ Fichte, *Addresses*, 120.

⁸¹ Fichte, *Addresses*, 129.

⁸² Fichte, *Addresses*, 116.

⁸³ Fichte, *Addresses*, 120.

which, according to Fichte, was “to plan and to cultivate the eternal in the temporal – not merely in an incomprehensible fashion or in a connection with the eternal that seems to the mortal eye an impenetrable gulf, but in a fashion visible to the mortal eye itself.”⁸⁴ If they believed the purpose of humanity was to find the infinite in the finite, to find attachment to something that is larger than individual humans, then, given the Romantics’ understanding of the nation, it makes sense that they would turn to it as the medium through which humanity could find fulfillment. Fichte even went as far as to say that individuals had to be willing to sacrifice their lives for the eternity and permanence of their nations. One can extrapolate that he believed this was because in principle their lives would be meaningless, would find no communion with the eternal, were the nation to perish.⁸⁵ In that sense, their self-sacrifice would paradoxically have been self-fulfilling.

Therefore, the nation was seen as not merely a collection of individuals; rather, in unifying under the guise of the nation, the Romantics maintained individuals could accomplish more than if one simply added together their particular efforts. As Alan Menhennet argues, the Romantics’ understanding of the state (or nation) is a clear demonstration of their desire to “achieve a relationship between the individual and general in which the former is not lost in the latter, but found again at a higher level.”⁸⁶ In essence, they believed the nation provided the cohesion necessary to provide agency to individuals, as well as a lasting platform and unifying goal for their efforts. Individuals could thus strive for the nation, lending their labour and skills to support the very institution that would purportedly lend value to their actions. Michelet saw the nation as united through friendship, a bond he believed would not break as long as the nation existed, a bond that ensured it would exist forever. In his estimation, the nation, “n’est nulle part plus indestructible que dans leurs âmes immortelles. Elle finirait dans le monde et

⁸⁴ Fichte, *Addresses*, 113.

⁸⁵ Fichte, *Addresses*, 117.

⁸⁶ Alan Menhennet, *The Romantic Movement* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), 35.

dans l'histoire, elle s'abîmerait au sein du globe, qu'elle survivrait comme *amitié*."⁸⁷ Because this sentiment would never be destroyed, neither would the nation.⁸⁸ Moreover, since Michelet perceived the nation as the medium through which people would realize their particular nature, he perceived its permanence as of particular benefit to the individuals who comprised the nation. He gave the example of Athenian genius, which he claimed would have disappeared without Athens, never becoming known.⁸⁹ For the Romantics, the nation therefore ensured that human exploits would have larger applicability and greater meaning, as well as historical influence, which meant that the permanence of the nation was considered to be of value to the individuals who helped make it eternal.

The Romantics concluded that individuals or provinces within the nation served a higher national purpose precisely because they believed the nation as a whole served a higher purpose – both externally and internally. Externally, they maintained, the nation contributed to the world stage, where it acted as a particular individual and contributed to cosmopolitanism. Internally, they imagined the nation served a higher purpose because it aggrandized the individuals and localities that comprised it, by providing them with purpose and with greater freedom. Thus, in Romantic thought, the particular was made whole by contributing to the nation, because the nation was able to make particulars whole and serve the greater totality of humanity.

However, the Romantics supported a very specific conception of the nation and could be skeptical or dismissive of its other variants. Their nationalism differed from the strongly exclusionary and xenophobic nationalism of the later nineteenth century, and although Romantic nationalism could have exclusionary elements, many Romantics agitated explicitly

⁸⁷ Michelet, *Peuple*, 224.

⁸⁸ This was very similar to Fichte's belief that because love is eternal individuals cannot love either themselves or their nations unless they conceive of both as eternal. Fichte, *Addresses*, 117.

⁸⁹ Michelet, *Peuple*, 262.

against such an uncompromising and isolating understanding of the nation. In this they were quite influenced by Herder, whose love of nationality was a love of diversity and interrelationship between nations, wherein each nation completed every other. As Hans Kohn argues, “nothing seemed more ridiculous to Herder than national pride. What, he asked, would be the yardstick for comparisons among nations?”⁹⁰ Herder virulently opposed imperialism, because while it claimed to be about ‘civilizing,’ it was really about violence and slavery.⁹¹ Following in that tradition, Walter Scott argued that patriotism, once it became excessive, was a vice rather than a virtue. He wrote: “to pillage and oppress, to conquer and subdue the freedom and independence of other states, is not laudable, any more that to rob and to slay for the maintenance of our own household: though, to provide for our family by lawful means, is an imperious duty.”⁹² Thus, care for the nation, like care for the household, should operate within certain moral standards. However, the ideal Romantic nation, expressed most clearly by those scholars who particularly emphasized the nation, was envisaged as a self-regulating preserver of liberty, rather than something to be feared, and in that sense they provided fodder for nationalist rhetoric, even of the more exclusionary variety.

This view of the nation as preserver of liberty was another way in which the Romantics saw the nation as ‘more than the sum of its parts:’ they believed belonging to the nation ensured its members were free in a way that would not be possible outside the nation. This concept was closely tied to Romantic notions regarding intersubjectivity and the importance of association generally, and distinguished Romantic thought from that of the Enlightenment, where association was seen as sacrificing freedom for the sake of security, as will be discussed below. Those Romantics who emphasized the nation saw it as particularly able to provide

⁹⁰ Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1961), 435-436.

⁹¹ Frederick C. Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism: The Genesis of Modern German Political Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 203.

⁹² Walter Scott, *Tales from a Grandfather: Being Stories taken from the History of France* vol 1 (Exeter: J & B Williams, 1833), 12.

freedom for its constituents, in a way that other types of association were not necessarily able to achieve. Fichte saw the nation as particularly adept at protecting the freedom of individuals precisely because it had a larger purpose. In direct opposition to Enlightenment social contract theory, he contended that, if the only purpose of the nation were the maintenance of internal peace, then there would be no limit to how much individual liberty could be limited in order to achieve that end, and that “it is only the higher view of the human race and of peoples which extends this narrow calculation.”⁹³ He argued that the highest cultures allowed as much freedom as possible, even at the expense of peace, thus making the work of government more difficult.⁹⁴

Because Fichte believed the purpose of the nation was to strive toward the eternal and the original, he believed individuals required freedom. Freedom, he maintained, was necessary only and precisely for the higher purposes that transcended the state. Thus he argued that original nations required freedom, and that freedom ensured the existence and continuance of original nations.⁹⁵ However, he insisted it was the individuals conceiving of their nations as eternal that ensured the protection of their freedom. Fichte argued that if people were not seeking something eternal – something greater than the nation itself – they would submit to being slaves so long as they were well-treated and peace was maintained. But because comfort and peace, he believed, were not enough for a person who sought the eternal, they would struggle against slavery.⁹⁶ Since Fichte so strongly connected the idea of the nation as eternal with national sentiment (what he calls “love of fatherland”), he contended it was precisely the individual’s ‘love of fatherland’ that ensured individual freedom. It did so by “placing before [the state] a higher object than the usual one of maintaining peace, property, personal freedom,

⁹³ Fichte, *Addresses*, 118.

⁹⁴ Fichte, *Addresses*, 118-119.

⁹⁵ Fichte, *Addresses*, 119.

⁹⁶ Fichte, *Addresses*, 120. The example he gives is of the Protestant Reformation, where because the reformers were fighting for the eternal (for both heaven and generations unborn), they were willing to take on the princes.

and the life and well-being of all.”⁹⁷

Michelet too saw the nation, and France in particular, as the best medium for freedom, because he thought it balanced its freedom with equality. He wrote, “la liberté sans l’égalité, la liberté injuste et impie n’est autre chose que l’insociabilité dans la société même. La France veut la liberté dans l’égalité, ce qui est précisément le génie social.”⁹⁸ Therefore, France, in Michelet’s estimation, had more equality and more liberty than England because French society was founded on a principle of sociability that allowed for a measure of leveling, while England emphasized pride, privilege, and heroism.⁹⁹ However, Michelet recognized the inherent tension between liberty and equality, and presented “l’égalité dans la liberté” as an ideal to strive for that would never in fact be fully achieved.¹⁰⁰ He contended that it could best be approached in societies like France that had brought together and united an admixture of peoples, such that they had “en même temps le génie du morcellement et celui de la centralization.”¹⁰¹ Thus, when Michelet wrote that the sociability and leveling of France allowed it to have more equality in its liberty than did England, he was referring to its perceived ability to bring together diverse elements in order to create something greater. Because he saw it as simultaneously diverse and unified, and as more than simply the aggregate of its constituents, Michelet believed France could simultaneously offer equality and liberty to its inhabitants.

This image of France, as almost cobbled together from a variety of elements, was central to Michelet’s understanding of it. France, he believed, had a centre, and was thus particular like an individual. But what made France like a person in his thought was its fabrication from diverse elements – its apparent willingness to usher to its centre that which

⁹⁷ Fichte, *Addresses*, 119.

⁹⁸ Jules Michelet, *Introduction à l’histoire universelle* (Paris: Librairie Classique de L’Hachette, 1831), 62-63.

⁹⁹ Michelet, *Universelle*, 60, 62.

¹⁰⁰ Michelet, *Universelle*, 65.

¹⁰¹ Michelet, *Universelle*, 65.

surrounded it, and bring these peripheral parts under the influence of its character. France, Michelet noted, “a méridionalisé le nord, septentrionalisé le midi; a porté au second le génie chevaleresque de la Normandie, de la Lorraine; au premier la forme romaine de la municipalité toulousaine, et l’industrialisme grec de Marseille.”¹⁰² It was precisely this heterogeneity that in the Romantic conception made nations the ideal unit for organizing society.

The Harmony of Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism

Just as they conceived of nations as collections of individuals or regions brought together in a new unity, so too did the Romantics conceive of the world (or at the very least Europe) as in some ways a unity of the nations that comprised it. Given this conception, the Romantics at times demonstrated cosmopolitan sensibilities, but ones that were in keeping with their national and particularist perspectives. As Warren Breckman has noted, the utopian dimension of Romantic nationalism is its hardest aspect to understand from a modern perspective. He asserts that “the twentieth century has taught us to regard nationalism as inherently dangerous, linked to fantasies of superiority and the insidious and violent dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. Far from sharing these misgivings, Romantic nationalists were inclined to believe that nations could harmoniously coexist; perhaps even stranger to our ears, they tended to believe that the nation is the best vehicle for the achievement of true human universality.”¹⁰³ The Romantics’ cosmopolitanism was fundamentally based on the integrity of the nation, as well as a celebration of the diversity of nations. In this way they followed in the tradition of Herder, whose calls for a German national literature and a revival of folk-culture went hand in hand with calls for national literatures and folk-cultures everywhere.¹⁰⁴ Romantic cosmopolitanism was therefore distinct from an Enlightenment-style cosmopolitanism based on a universal conception of humanity that emphasized sameness rather than diversity.

¹⁰² Michelet, *Universelle*, 49-50.

¹⁰³ Breckman, *European Romanticism*, 31.

¹⁰⁴ Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*, 212; Schenk, *European Romantics*, 15-16.

Theirs was therefore not the only way to conceive of cosmopolitanism, and the Romantics in fact recognized that some brands of cosmopolitanism could at times be a barrier to nationalism. Walter Scott argued that the feudal system discouraged national sentiment because knights were not tied to any place, and were as a result ‘citizens of the world,’ implying that he believed a cosmopolitanism based entirely on universal principles was incompatible with preserving national particularities. Moreover he maintained that because vassals could hold fiefs in various nations, they felt no particular attachment to any. Scott concluded that this lack of attachment would create problems when those nations were at war with one another, and the vassal’s loyalties were divided.¹⁰⁵

However, in many ways cosmopolitanism was seen as the logical result of nationalism. The two were perceived as so connected that Fichte wrote that “cosmopolitanism cannot really exist at all and that in reality it must necessarily become patriotism.”¹⁰⁶ Just as the Romantics believe particular individuals found communion in the nation, so too did they think particular nations found communion in humanity as whole. Furthermore, many Romantics could be quite nationalist even in their cosmopolitan sensibilities: seeing their particular nation as having a special role in the world, wherein it alone could encourage global harmony. This notion interestingly paralleled the Romantic concept of the hero as a single individual who brought together the nation, uniting its members in common sentiment. This was certainly the image Michelet had of France: the best and highest nation in Europe, which was therefore charged with the elevation of European life as a whole. He wrote that “la liberté de la France est juste

¹⁰⁵ Walter Scott, *The History of Scotland*, vol I of *The Cabinet History of England, Scotland and Ireland* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1845), 69.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Friderich Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism and the National State*, trans. Robert B. Kimber (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 74. Meinecke contends that the “more profound” Fichte scholars conceived of the leap from Fichte’s cosmopolitanism to his nationalism as a not very great one, recognizing that the two concepts were not so far apart as one might believe. He argues that Fichte “saw cosmopolitanism and love of fatherland ‘intimately united’ in the educated man, and he asserted that love of fatherland is realized in such a man’s deeds; cosmopolitanism is realized in his thoughts.” (Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism*, 73).

et sainte. Elle mérite de commencer celle du monde, et de grouper pour la première fois tous les peuples dans une unité véritable d'intelligence et de volonté."¹⁰⁷ In his estimation the French recognized their role on the world stage, believing "qu'il ne peut rien faire de plus profitable au monde que de lui donner ses idées, ses moeurs et ses modes."¹⁰⁸ Michelet believed that this 'French-style conquest' differed from the conquest desired by England or Rome, because it was an export of ideas, language, and literature – not political or economic dominance.¹⁰⁹ And while one could perhaps call this cultural imperialism, France, in Michelet's estimation, also *imported* new ideas: "De même que Rome avait admis dans son sein les droits opposés des races étrangers, l'élément étrusque, et l'élément latin, la France a été dans sa vieille législation, germanique jusqu'à la Loire, romaine au midi de ce fleuve."¹¹⁰ It is such qualifications that made this position closer to cosmopolitanism than a desire for nationalist dominance, but certainly a nationalist position all the same. As Michelet believed that France truly was the height of European culture, it seemed only logical to him to then believe Europe would be best served by following its example.

Even the Romantics who most emphasized cosmopolitanism tended to see a special place for their own nation. Novalis' *Christendom or Europe* certainly called for a cosmopolitan unification of Europe, rather than specifically national development. Novalis believed such unification would come as the result of religion, arguing that "Christendom must again become alive and effective, and form for itself a visible Church without consideration to national frontiers."¹¹¹ Yet, despite his emphasis on the revival of Christendom and the unification of Europe under the guise of religion, Novalis envisaged a particular role for his native Germany within this framework. Germany, he believed, was more advanced than the

¹⁰⁷ Michelet, *Universelle*, 63.

¹⁰⁸ Michelet, *Universelle*, 53.

¹⁰⁹ Michelet, *Universelle*, 53-54.

¹¹⁰ Michelet, *Universelle*, 54.

¹¹¹ Novalis, "Christendom or Europe," in *The Political Thought of the German Romantics: 1793-1815*, ed. H.S. Reiss (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), 141.

other European cultures, and would thus provide the model for all others to follow.¹¹²

Displaying quite a strong sense of national sentiment, he wrote:

Germany goes its slow but sure way in advance of other European countries. While they are occupied with war, speculation and the party-spirit, the German educates himself with great zeal to become a member of a higher epoch of culture, and this advance must in the course of time give him a marked superiority over the others. . . . The new born child will be the image of its father, it will be a new golden age with dark infinite eyes, a prophetic age which will perform miracles and heal wounds, which will comfort and kindle eternal life – a great age of reconciliation, a saviour who, like a true genius, will be at home among men, believed but not seen, and visible to the faithful in countless forms.¹¹³

His thought was similar to Fichte's as both saw Germany's national development as the model for a new Europe, but Fichte was more concerned with Germany than Europe. Where Fichte emphasized German development, saying "the German nation itself presented the features of Christian Europe in microcosm,"¹¹⁴ and that consequently the German people had a special vocation to perfect the human mind and spirit, Novalis emphasized the unity of Europe.

However, Fichte maintained that his conception of German patriotism was not inconsistent with political cosmopolitanism, saying that "the final aim of all national development (*Nationbildung*) is that it should spread throughout the whole race of man," thus arguing that Germanic liberation was in fact a portion of the ultimate goal of man's liberation.¹¹⁵ This directly paralleled his notion that an individual's personal development was a means toward national development, discussed in the previous chapter. Fichte, as expressed in his *Patriotism and Its Opposite*, saw Germany as specially placed to improve the world precisely because it was best able to express and develop philosophy, and he believed that the widest possible dissemination of philosophy should be the purpose of humanity. He believed that Germans, as the best philosophers, were the only ones to truly understand this purpose.

¹¹² Novalis, "Christendom," 136-137.

¹¹³ Novalis, "Christendom," 136-137.

¹¹⁴ Mary Anne Perkins and Martin Liebscher, eds. *Nationalism Versus Cosmopolitanism in German Thought and Culture, 1789-1919: Essays on the Emergence of Europe* (Queenston, Ontario: Edwin Meller Press, 2006), 10.

¹¹⁵ Quoted in Roger Cardinal, *German Romantics in Context* (London: Studio Vista, 1975), 59.

“This purpose is the only patriotic goal,” he wrote, “Only the German can therefore be a patriot. Only he can, in the interests of his nation, embrace all mankind.”¹¹⁶ For Fichte therefore Germany functioned on the world stage the way the scholar did within the nation. Fichte expressed an “ideal of political and social will toward European cooperation which grew out of the maturing of the moral ‘personality’ of individual nations.”¹¹⁷

Moreover, Fichte’s belief that European unity would be achieved through the development of individual nations was, like his belief that societies were improved by individuals improving themselves, not something that was to be finally achieved, but rather something to strive for.¹¹⁸ He recognized that European unity had existed in the medieval past, but that states had historically evolved as fragmented. Fichte thus argued that what mattered presently was the promotion of unique national spirits, such that they might over time contribute to the whole.¹¹⁹ He believed that “every nation wants to disseminate as widely as it possibly can the good points that are peculiar to it. And, as far as it can, it wants to assimilate the entire human race to itself . . . an urge on which the community of nations, the friction between them, and their development toward perfection rest.”¹²⁰ Friedrich Meinecke argues that this “is one of the most profound and significant statements of this period,” because it demonstrates a newfound appreciation for the particularity of the nation,¹²¹ in direct contrast to the Enlightenment emphasis on universals. He adds, “the nation no longer appears simply as a creation and modification of a higher universal. On the contrary, the primal and individual impulses of nations appear to be the force that creates the general and the supra-national.”¹²²

Thus, Fichte believed it was in their very particularity that nations were able to reach outside of

¹¹⁶ Quoted in Perkins, *Nationalism Versus Cosmopolitanism*, 12.

¹¹⁷ Perkins, *Nationalism Versus Cosmopolitanism*, 12.

¹¹⁸ Perkins, *Nationalism Versus Cosmopolitanism*, 11-13.

¹¹⁹ Perkins, *Nationalism Versus Cosmopolitanism*, 11.

¹²⁰ Quoted in Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism*, 79.

¹²¹ Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism*, 79.

¹²² Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism*, 79.

themselves, to be more than they could be were they simply reflections of a universal, rather than particular and unique units. It was precisely because he conceived of nations as individual that he thought they could contribute to the perfectibility of the world. And it was by seeing this as a matter of striving towards an unachievable end that Fichte was able to vacillate between nationalism and cosmopolitanism, between being forward looking and backward looking, between the ideals of the individual and the collective.

However, Fichte, who was perhaps the most categorical in his nationalism of all the Romantics, when he discussed preserving the diversity of nations on a global-scale, did so in a way that at times seemed to privilege the supposed integrity of nations over cosmopolitan communion. Although he was technically arguing that the world would be a better place if national diversity and therefore each nation's particular characteristics and qualities were preserved, he did so by saying that "if these [national] qualities are dulled by an admixture of and worn away by friction, the flatness that results will bring about a separation from spiritual nature, and this in its turn will cause all men to be fused together in their uniform and collective destruction."¹²³ And while he animadverted against nations conquering each other, in part so that each would not become 'diluted,'¹²⁴ in his emphasis on the nation's coherence as a distinct unit Fichte anticipated the exclusionary nature of later nineteenth-century nationalism.

This connection between the nation and the world as a whole was another way in which the Romantic saw the nation as superceding its logical confines. The nation was perceived as the fundamental unit of society, through which the world developed (like Herder's notion of the nation as the unit for historical development of the world). In Michelet's words "la nationalité, la patrie, c'est toujours la vie du monde. Elle morte, tout serait mort."¹²⁵ Thus, theirs was not a cosmopolitanism that would destroy the variety of nations, but rather one that

¹²³ Fichte, *Addresses*, 198.

¹²⁴ Fichte, *Addresses*, 197-199.

¹²⁵ Michelet, *Peuple*, 265.

sought to preserve it, just as the Romantics' nationalism sought to maintain the diversity of individuals and regions within nations. For example, in his 1849 speech at the Congress of Peace in Paris, Victor Hugo argued that “un jour viendra où vous France, vous Russie, vous Italie, vous Angleterre, vous Allemagne, vous toutes, nations du continent, sans perdre vos qualities distinctes et votre glorieuse individualité, vous vous fondrez étroitement dans une unité supérieure, et vous constituerez la fraternité européenne, absolument comme la Normandie, la Bretagne, la Bourgogne, la Lorraine, L'Alsace, toutes nos provinces, se sont fondues dans la France.”¹²⁶ Hugo compared his call for European unity directly with national unity, drawing a parallel between the unification of provinces into a single nation and the unification of nations into the unity of humanity (or in this case, Europe). However, equally striking was his insistence that within any unification of Europe the diversity and ‘glorious’ individuality of each nation would remain intact.

Because Romantic cosmopolitanism was really rooted in an understanding of nations as particular units whose unique characteristics should be preserved, it moved away from universalist cosmopolitanism and laid theoretical groundwork necessary for the emergence of exclusionary nationalism. Liah Greenfeld argues that in Germany an emphasis on national identity took hold later than elsewhere because cosmopolitanism was so entrenched there.¹²⁷ This suggests cosmopolitanism had to be ‘overcome’ in order for nationalism to emerge. If this is true then the Romantic move away from a universalist toward a particularist understanding of cosmopolitanism can be seen as the first step on a continuum between universalist cosmopolitanism and integral nationalism. Although they were seeking to strike a

¹²⁶ Victor Hugo, “Congrès de la Paix à Paris: Discours D'Ouverture” in *Actes et Paroles: Avant L'Exil 1841-1851* (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1875), 383. Anthony Pagden argues that the “project of the United States of Europe [which Hugo is discussing in this speech] was a response more to the conscious desire to adopt the European states to the demands of a new international environment than to an innate desire to unify them.” Anthony Pagden, ed. *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 176. However, what is most important to note is not whether this unity was the ideal, but rather the fact that Hugo insisted that diversity could be maintained within this unity.

¹²⁷ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 314.

balance between the preservation of the nation as an integral unit and the maintenance of harmonious diversity on a global scale, the Romantics could not stop later thinkers from dropping the latter in favour of the former.

While the Romantics seemed somewhat utopian in their belief that diversity and unity were simultaneously sustainable, it was a belief to which they held fast, and which they could perceive as possible insofar as it was an ideal to be striven for, even if never achieved. Consequently they perceived the nation as fundamental to this striving for the development and perfectibility of the world. Because it was seen as providing a literal middle ground between the particularity of individuals and the world as a whole, the nation perfectly encapsulated the Romantic ideal of particularity in unity. If one believed the nation could bring together these two ideals, then it was only logical to conclude that it would raise both the individual and the whole to heights it could not otherwise reach. In Michelet's words, "le rêve humanitaire de la philosophie qui croit sauver l'individu en détruisant le citoyen, en niant les nations, abjurant la patrie . . . je l'ai immolé de même. La patrie, ma patrie peut seule sauver le monde."¹²⁸

Anthony Smith contends that nationalism functions on a number of levels. Firstly, on a political level he argues nationalism is a doctrine that sees the world as split up in nations as units of political power. Secondly Smith avers, on an economic level, nationalism is manifest as a desire for autonomous control of 'national resources.' Thirdly, he asserts nationalism functions on a social level by presenting the nation as a 'family' of sorts. "But," he maintains:

at the broadest level nationalism must be seen as a form of historicist culture and civic education, one that overlays or replaces the older modes of religious culture and familial education. More than a style and doctrine of politics, nationalism is a *form of culture* – an ideology, a language, a mythology, symbolism and consciousness – that has achieved global resonance, and the nation is a type of identity whose meaning and priority is presupposed by this form of culture. In that sense the nation and national identity must be seen as a creation of nationalism and its proponents, and its

¹²⁸ Michelet, *Peuple*, 314.

significance and celebration too is the handiwork of nationalists.¹²⁹

The Romantics certainly embraced nationalism to varying degrees, and often approached its study from a number of different levels: the nation was seen as the primary unit for the unfolding of history and the development of the world, it was conceived as a platform upon which individuals could find meaning for their exploits, they understood it as a collection of individuals, a territory, a language. Nationalism for the Romantics was a lens through which one could understand the world, more than it was a programmatic political platform.

In fact, conceived of as a political ideology, rather than simply a sensibility, Romantic nationalism appears particularly confused and complex. As Warren Breckman points out, especially in comparison to later nineteenth-century nationalism, Romantic nationalism was politically ambiguous: it cannot be described as firmly left or right wing.¹³⁰ However, the Romantic tendency to avoid political categorization, to be neither wholly regressive nor progressive, fits well with its historical sensibilities. Because they embraced both remembrance (or even revival) of the past and striving toward the future, the Romantics found themselves incapable of being entirely conservative. And because they embraced the freedom of the individual, but saw this freedom as best fulfilled (and not limited) through belonging to a collective, they could not be entirely liberal. Therefore, it is no surprise that their particular brand of nationalism should also have defied such dichotomous characterization.

This is not to say that Romantic nationalism was apolitical – as that was certainly not the case. The Romantics saw the nation as politically important: as a promoter of increased liberty for its constituent individuals, as the vehicle for the development of the world, as the protector of national language and culture. The nation was intended to effect concrete change in the world and public sphere, and in that sense it was necessarily political, but that did not

¹²⁹ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1991), 91-92.

¹³⁰ Breckman, *European Romanticism*, 33.

necessarily connect it with formal political institutions like governments. Moreover, the Romantic nation had very important cultural and philosophical dimensions, although not necessarily divorced from its politics. Romantics conceived of the nation as a way for individuals to connect to the eternal, precisely because they saw nation as both particular and whole. In their striving toward the harmonization of the individual and the whole, the particular and the totality, the Romantics settled upon the nation as a middle ground that most approximated their ideal, and therefore exalted both the individuals that comprised it and the whole of humanity.

Thus, although they emphasized particularity in a way the Enlightenment scholars had not, the Romantic did not eschew universality entirely. Rather, they, like their Enlightenment predecessors, fundamentally sought universality, but they believed it could not be achieved directly: it required the particular to be understood. This is reflective of Jacques Barzun's 'more reality' thesis, discussed in chapter 2. The Romantic desire to incorporate all aspects of reality into their thought ensured they would ignore neither the universal nor the particular, but try to integrate both. The Romantics believed one literally found universality through the particularity of the nation, because they believed the nation was itself a particularity with connections to the eternal. This was not Enlightenment universality or later nineteenth-century exclusionary nationalism; although beholden to the former and presaging the latter, Romantic nationalism was a balance between the two. It was rooted universality and fluid nationalism.

Conclusion

Hugh Seton-Watson, in his 1977 *Nations and States*, argues that studying the doctrine of nationalism is of no value because “as a doctrine it is not very interesting, being essentially a variant of eighteenth-century doctrines of popular sovereignty, with half digested chunks of socialism added to the broth in the course of time.”¹ While this characterization is certainly overly derisive, it is not without insight. In many ways the doctrine of nationalism did incorporate eighteenth-century notions of popular sovereignty, and emphasize the role of the masses, but it imbued these ideas with a greater emphasis on particularity. Popular sovereignty as a doctrine was intended to protect the rights of the individual against arbitrary rule, and it therefore vested power in the hands of the masses. Nationalism emphasized the masses, but more as the unique manifestation of particular culture than as a theoretical means to legitimate power. As Anne-Marie Thiesse remarks, “la nation ressemble fort au Peuple de la philosophie politique, ce Peuple qui, selon les théoriciens du contrat social, peut seul conférer la légitimité du pouvoir. Mais elle est plus que cela. Le Peuple est une abstraction, la nation est vivante.”² By this final statement she seems to suggest that where *le peuple* was conceived as a universal concept essentially transferable from case to case, the nation was defined primarily by its individuality and its unique characteristics. She notes that when Renan famously remarks that the nation is a daily plebiscite, what he is intimating is that the object of the plebiscite is a symbolic and material heritage; those who participate are therefore heir to that common united patrimony. Accordingly, he believed nationalism was about constantly choosing to belong to a community founded on a particular shared culture. In that sense, nationalism at its most fundamental seems to take the doctrine of popular sovereignty and adapt it. Instead of seeing

¹ Hugh Seton-Watson *Nations and States: And Enquire into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (London: Methuen & Co, 1977), 3.

² Anne-Marie Thiesse, *La Création des Identités Nationales: Europe XVIII^e-XX^e siècle* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1999), 12.

the masses as imbued with power in order to protect the ideal of individualism in the political arena, nationalism calls for agency and power for its particular nation's grass roots elements and individuals in order to protect that nation's particularity.

Parallel to this, Romanticism both took from and made changes to Enlightenment thought. The Enlightenment scholars lauded the individual as a bastion of universal human rationality, so theirs was an individualism that was fundamentally universalist, but not necessarily collectivist. The Romantics also lauded the individual, not only in terms of his or her equality with all, but also as a unique particularity, as a discrete unit, and this conception informed much of their thought more generally. "Romanticism's very identity is bound up with the independent self, transcending internal hindrances and external obstacles in the progressive assertion of autonomy," all the while attempting to avoid the downsides of emphatic individualism.³ As a result, the Romantic emphasis on individuality was certainly not inherently to the exclusion of collectivism. Theirs was instead an individuality that required sociable connection. As Roger Cardinal has noted, "for all his heightened sense of individuality the Romantic longs to expand his being into a community. The manifestations of this desire are many: the circles, the Brotherhoods, the collective publications, the value placed on intellectual friendships. Even where broader political views diverge, Romantics are agreed on the basic principle that some means of healing the rift between men must be sought."⁴ While this emphasis on the collective was not always manifest as nationalism, the two notions were quite compatible.

The compatibilities between Romantic sensibilities and nationalism are such that in important ways Romanticism may be said to have laid the groundwork for the possibility of nationalism. While some Romantics purposefully strove to lay such groundwork, arguing for

³ Larry H. Peer, ed. *Inventing the Individual: Romanticism and the Idea of Individuality* (Provo, UT : International Conference on Romanticism, 2002), 1.

⁴ Roger Cardinal, *German Romanticism in Context*, (London: Studio Vista, 1975), 28.

the nation as the ideal unit for the organization of society, much of what Romanticism did to encourage nationalism was somewhat indirect or incidental. As ideologies Romanticism and nationalism had similar historical roots; for example, both are commonly seen as responses to the experience of the French Revolution, and thus it is quite logical that they would also have similar tendencies. Frequently, nationalism adapted Romanticism's aesthetic sensibilities and turned them to a political end. Wherever Romantic scholars themselves advocated for nationalism they did so in a way that was very close to their aesthetic sensibilities, in contrast to proponents of later variations of nationalism who were much less concerned with upholding Romantic aesthetics. Whereas Romantic nationalists tended to be cultural pluralists, both within and between nations, and did not necessarily connect nationalism to governmental politics, later nineteenth-century nationalism tended to be exclusionary, xenophobic, and focused on the congruence of nations and states. However, despite these differences, Romantic sensibilities also helped lay the groundwork for later nationalism, and could at times come close to its chauvinism. Many Romantics emphasized the superiority of their own nations above others and expressed concern for the protection of their nation's linguistic or cultural purity, much in the way integral nationalism would. However, Romantic nationalism was by no means uniform within the movement – many Romantics were not nationalist at all – and so its manifestations varied substantially.

Moreover, while it is certainly true that Romantic nationalism could differ in substance from nationalism's later forms, perhaps Romantic nationalism's most striking difference was its relatively limited scope. In the time of the Romantics nationalism existed primarily in their minds, and the type of nation they envisaged certainly only existed there. (Perhaps because, as Warren Breckman argues, nations were ideals to be striven for, and not yet political realities to support.⁵) In the early nineteenth century nationalism was not yet the nearly ubiquitous

⁵ Warren Breckman, *European Romanticism: A Brief History With Documents* (Boston and New York:

ideology it would become, but at the very least that ideology existed in nascent form.

Romanticism emphasized the imagined and the ideal, a sensibility that nationalism shared. Elie Kedourie argues that rather than being perceived as something practical, “politics, to them [nationalists], was, rather, a golden key which gave entrance to fabled realms. But since politics usually deals with actual realms, nationalists must operate in a hazy region, midway between fable and reality, in which states, frontiers, compacts are at once both real and unreal.”⁶ The Romantics bridged the real and the unreal in a number of ways. They envisaged an important place for mythology and fiction in their understanding of history, but still saw the importance of scholarship. Nationalism similarly treats past as both truth and fiction. Thiesse argues that the nation begins with a heritage that is collectively diffused – but it is a heritage that is chosen from a number of potential options, and in that sense is invented, although not entirely divorced from fact.⁷ In Tom Nairn’s words, “the universal folklore of nationalism is not entirely wrong. If it were it would be unable to function as myth. On the other hand, it would be equally unable to function in this way if it were true.”⁸

The Romantics also bridged the real and the unreal in that they strove for ideals and the unattainable, such as harmonious diversity and the unification of the particular and the totality, but did so in order to ensure concrete and actual change in the world. In fact, those Romantics who considered the nation as the best way to organize society, as an ideal to be striven for, did so precisely because they believed it was the meeting place of the particular and the universal – that is, essentially, the meeting place of the practical and the ideal. Nationalism too is steeped in the ideal, “it always imagines an ideal ‘people’ (propped up by folklore studies, antiquarianism, or some surrogate for these) and it always searches urgently for vital inner,

Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2008), 31.

⁶ Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1966), 71.

⁷ Thiesse, *Créations des identités*, 12-13.

⁸ Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis of Neo-Nationalism* (London: NLB, 1977), 334.

untapped springs of energy both in the individuals and the mass.”⁹

Another point of contact between Romanticism and nationalism was their emphasis on art. Nationalism, perhaps more than any other political movement, has invested in artistic production. It creates and relies on bodies of folklore, poetry, stories of national heroes, songs, and national imagery – symbols around which a national identity may be fostered. Artists themselves, and not just the content of their art, may also act as national symbols. Of course other political movements and ideologies have utilized art, but not quite so fundamentally. Eric Hobsbawm argues that in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth- centuries art was very clearly involved in the political and in public life, and that this was particularly the case in countries undergoing national liberation or unification. He notes that, “naturally enough, such nationalism found its most obvious cultural expression in literature and in music; both public art, which could, moreover, draw on the powerful creative heritage of the common people – language and folksong. It is equally understandable that the arts dependent on commission from the established ruling classes, courts and governments, architecture and sculpture, and to a lesser extent painting, reflected these national revivals less.”¹⁰

The Romantics certainly emphasized the role of artists and scholars in society, and also emphasized the political and practical application of art. They believed that art and scholarship could change the world. Perhaps their emphasis on these cultural expressions helps to explain the Romantic reconciliation of the individual and the national. Art is very much tied to both the person of the artist and that author’s audience. Art cannot exist without the interplay between the two. Moreover, cultures are often defined or represented by their cultural expressions – artists are taken up as national heroes, and their works as national symbols. By conceiving of art as something productive, as well as reflective, the Romantics brought the

⁹ Nairn, *Break-Up of Britain*, 102-103.

¹⁰ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789-1848* (London: Weiderfeld and Nicolson, 1962), 256.

individual-communitarian duality inherent in art into the political realm. This is not to say that earlier thinkers did not also see art as political, but the Romantics saw it more as fundamentally so.

The Romantic understanding of the particular and the universal also helped open the door to nationalism. Anne-Marie Thiesse argues that before nations could be constructed the way in which the universal and the particular interrelate had to be redefined. Where previously universality was conceived as the comprehensive adoption of a single principle to the exclusion of all others, the new universality, put forward by Herder and others, and systematized by Hegel, allowed for variety, because it attributed value to particular manifestations of the same essence.¹¹ Romanticism may be distinguished from the Enlightenment precisely because of this emphasis on diversity and particularity, and not blanket universality. Joep Leerssen notes that Enlightenment scholars tended to speak of ‘literature’ or ‘culture’ as abstracts, focusing on their universality rather than their variety, whereas scholars following in Herder’s tradition emphasized the variety and diversity of particularities as a good.¹² Moreover, Romantic arguments for the nation were very much tied to its role as the negotiator between the particular and the universal. Because they believed that it connected simultaneously with the individuals that comprised it and the world as a whole, and that it connected organically to a heritage and a memory that gave it permanence, the Romantics conceived of the nation as both particular and universal, individual and total. Those Romantics who considered the nation to be the ideal unit for the organization of society did so precisely because they believed it fulfilled Romanticism’s objectives by rebuilding the modern world in the image of their thought.

¹¹ Thiesse, *Créations des identités*, 23, 40. This redefinition, she contends, also shifted the nature of culture, which turned from the classical era to the medieval period, from the Mediterranean to Northern Europe, and from refined salons to rustic cottages (23).

¹² Joep Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 99.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Carlyle, Thomas. "On History." In *Selections from Carlyle*. Edited by Henry W. Boynton. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1896.
- . *History of the French Revolution*. Toronto: Ward Lock & Co Limited, 1911.
- . *On Heroes and Hero Worship*. Philadelphia: Henry Altems, 1899.
- Chateaubriand, François René de. *Génie du Chrstianisme*. Tome II. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1843.
- . *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*. Edited by Ed Biré. Paris: Garnier Frères, 1904.
- . *Mémoires D'Outre Tombe*. Volume II. Librairie Gallimard, 1951.
- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb. *Addresses to the German Nation*. Edited by George A. Kelly. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968.
- . *Science of Knowledge: with the first and second introductions*. Edited and translated by Peter Heath and John Lachs. New York: Cambridge University Press 1970.
- . "Some Lectures Concerning the Scholar's Vocation." In *Early Philosophical Writings*. Translated and edited by Daniel Breazeale. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1988.
- . *Foundations of Natural Right: According to the Principles of the Wissenschaftslehre*, ed. by Frederick Neuhouser, trans. by Michael Baur. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Herder, J.G. *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*. Volume II. Translated by T. Churchill. London: J. Johnson, 1803.
- . *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*. Translated by T. Churchill. New York: Bergman Publishers, 1800.
- . "Letters for the Advancement of Humanity." In *Herder: Philosophical Writings*. Edited by Michael N. Forster. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Hugo, Victor. *Les Misérables*. Vol. 1. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1994.
- . *Littérature et Philosophie mêlées*. Paris: Nelson, Éditeurs, 1834.
- . *Les Contemplations*. Paris: Éditions Garnier Frères, 1962.

- . *Post-Scriptum de ma Vie*. Newchâtel, Suisse: Ides et Calendes, 1961.
- . *Actes et Paroles I: Avant L'Exil 1841-1851*. Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1875.
- . *Actes et Paroles II: Pendant L'Exil 1852-1870*. Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1875.
- . *Actes et Paroles III: Depuis L'Exil 1870-1876*. Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1876.
- . "Congrès de la Paix à Paris: Discours D'Ouverture." In *Actes et Paroles: Avant L'Exil 1841-1851*. Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1875.
- Michelet, Jules. *Histoire de France*. Paris: Robert Leffort & Le Club Français du Livre, 1971.
- . *Histoire de la Révolution Français*. Volume II. Angiers: Éditeurs de l'Ouest, 1952.
- . *Introduction à l'histoire universelle*. Paris: Librairie Classique de L'Hachette, 1831.
- . *Jeanne D'Arc*. Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1888.
- . *Le Peuple*. Paris: Comptoir des Imprimeurs-Unis, 1846.
- Novalis. "Christendom or Europe." in *The Political Thought of the German Romantics: 1793-1815*. Edited by H.S. Reiss. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955.
- Schlegel, Friedrich. "Athenaeum Fragments." In *Lucinde and The Fragments*. Translated by Peter Firchow. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971.
- . "Critical Fragments," in *Lucinde and The Fragments*. Translated by Peter Firchow. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971.
- Scott, W., D. Laing and T. Thomason, editors. *The Bannatyne Miscellany; containing original papers and tracts, chiefly relating to the history and literature of Scotland*, vol III. New York: AMS Press, 1973.
- Scott, Walter. *Manners, Customs and History of the Highlanders of Scotland*. Glasgow: Thames D. Morison, 1893.
- . *The History of Scotland*, Vol I of *The Cabinet History of England, Scotland and Ireland*. London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1845.
- . *Waverley or 'Tis Sixty Years Since*. New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell & Co, 1907.
- . *Minstrelsy on the Scottish Border*. Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1932.

------. *Tales of a Grandfather: Being Stories Taken From the History of France* vol. 1. Exeter: J.B. Williams, 1833.

Thierry, Augustin. *Lettres sur l'histoire de France, pour servir d'introduction a l'étude de cette histoire*. Paris: Just Tessier Libraire, 1836.

------. *Récits des Temps Mérovingiens*. Paris: Librairie A. Hatier.

Secondary Sources

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* New York: Verso, 2006.

Anderson, James. *Sir Walter Scott and History and other papers*. Edinburgh: The Edina Press, 1981.

Armstrong, John A. *Nations Before Nationalism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982.

Bann, Stephen. "Romanticism in France," in *Romanticism in National Context*. Edited by Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Bann, Stephen. *Romanticism and the Rise of History*. Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan Canada, 1995.

Barzun, Jacques. *Romanticism and the Modern Ego*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1944.

Beiser, Frederick C. *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism: The Genesis of Modern Political Thought, 1790-1800*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992.

------. *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Bishop, Paul. "Nationalism and Europeanism in German Romantic Literature," in *Nationalism Versus Cosmopolitanism in German Thought and Culture, 1789-1914: Essays on the Emergence of Europe*. Edited by Mary Anne Perkins and Martin Liebscher. Queenston, ON: Edwin Meller Press, 2006.

Blûche, François. "Introduction," in Jules Michelet, *Histoire de France*. Paris: Robert Leffort & Le Club Français du Livre, 1971.

Bourgeois, Émile. "Jeanne D'Arc et Michelet," in Jules Michelet, *Jeanne D'Arc*. Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1888.

- Bowman, Frank Paul. *French Romanticism: Intertextual and Interdisciplinary Readings*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.
- Breckman, Warren. *European Romanticism: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008.
- Breuilly, John. *Nationalism and the State*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982.
- "Introduction." In Ernest Gellner. *Nations and Nationalism*. 2nd Edition. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.
- Brubaker, Rogers. *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Cardinal, Roger. *German Romantics in Context*. London: Studio Vista, 1975.
- Colley, Linda. *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*. London: Pimlico, 2003
- Cranston, Maurice. "Romanticism and Revolution," *History of European Ideas* 17, no 1 (1993), 13-30.
- *The Romantic Movement*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1994.
- Charlton, D.G. *The French Romantics*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Eichner, Hans. *'Romantic' and its Cognates: The European History of a Word*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972.
- Engelhardt, Dietrich von. "Romanticism in Germany." In *Romanticism in National Context*. Edited by Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988..
- Engel-Janosi, Friedrich. *Four Studies in French Romantic Historical Writing*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1955.
- Ferguson, William. *The Identity of the Scottish Nation: An Historic Quest*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998.
- Firchow, Peter. "Introduction," in Friedrich Schlegel, *Lucinde and The Fragments*. Translated by Peter Firchow. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971.
- Fritzsche, Peter. "Specters of History: On Nostalgia, Exile, and Modernity" *American Historical Review* 106, no. 5 (December 2001), 1587-1618.
- Furst, Lilian R. *Romanticism*. London: Methoun & Co Ltd, 1969.

- . *Romanticism in Perspective: A comparative study of the Romantic movements in England, France and Germany*. London: Macmillan, 1979.
- Gellner, Ernest. *Thought and Change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.
- . *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983.
- . *Nations and Nationalism*. 2nd Edition. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.
- Glendening, John. *The High Road: Romantic Tourism, Scotland, and Literature, 1720-1820*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.
- Greenfeld, Liah. *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Hall, Catherine. *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Hall, Catherine, Jane Lewis, Keith McClelland, and Jane Rendall. "Introduction." *Gender and History* 5, no. 2 (Summer, 1993), 159-164.
- Hartman, Elwood. *French Romantics on Progress: Human and Aesthetic*. Potomac, Maryland: Studia Humanitas, 1983.
- Hayes, Carlton J.H. *Essays on Nationalism*. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966. [first edition 1926].
- . *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1931.
- Helfer, Martha B. "The Male Muses of Romanticism: The Poetics of Gender in Novalis, E.T.A. Hoffmann, and Eichendorff." *The German Quarterly* 78, no. 3 (Summer, 2005), 299-319.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789-1848*. London: Weiderfeld and Nicolson, 1962.
- . *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Honour, Hugh. *Romanticism*. London: Penguin Books, 1979.
- Izenberg, Gerald N. *Impossible Individuality: Romanticism: Romanticism, Revolution and the Origins of Modern Selfhood, 1787-1802*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992.

- Johnson, Douglas. "Historians." In *The French Romantics*, vol II. Edited by D.G. Charlton. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Kedourie, Elie. *Nationalism*. London: Hutchinson University Library, 1966.
- Kelley, Donald R. *Faces of History: From Herodotus to Herder*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Kohn, Hans. *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background*. New York: MacMillan Company, 1961. [first edition 1944]
- "Romanticism and the Rise of German Nationalism," *The Review of Politics* 12, no. 4 (Oct., 1950), 443-472.
- *The Age of Nationalism: The First Era of Global History*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962.
- *The Mind of Germany: The Education of a Nation*. London: MacMillan, 1965.
- Leerssen, Joep. *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006.
- Liebich, Andre. "Searching for the perfect nation: the itinerary of Hans Kohn (1891–1971)" *Nations and Nationalism* 12, no. 4 (October 2006) 579–596.
- Löwry, Michael and Robert Sayre. *Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.
- McNeill, William H. *Polyethnicity and National Unity in World History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985.
- Meinecke, Friedrich. *Cosmopolitanism and the National State*. Translated by Robert B. Kimber. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.
- Menhennet, Alan. *The Romantic Movement*. London: Croom Helm, 1981.
- Mitzman, Arthur. "Michelet and Social Romanticism." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 57, no. 4 (Oct., 1996), 659-682.
- Mosse, George L. *Masses and Man: Nationalist and Fascist Perceptions of Reality*. New York: Howard Fertig, 1980.
- "Nationalism and Respectability: Normal and Abnormal Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century." *Journal of Contemporary History* 17, no. 2 (April, 1982), 221-246.
- *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle Class Morality and Sexual Norms in modern Europe*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988.

- Nairn, Tom. *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism*. London: NLB, 1977.
- Pagden, Anthony. Editor. *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Peckham, Morse. *The Romantic Virtuoso*. London: Wesleyan University Press, 1995.
- Peer, Larry H. Editor. *Inventing the Individual: Romanticism and the idea of Individualism*. Provo, UT : International Conference on Romanticism, 2002.
- Perkins, Mary Anne and Martin Liebscher, editors. *Nationalism Versus Cosmopolitanism in German Thought and Culture, 1789-1919: Essays on the Emergence of Europe*. Queeston, Ontario: Edwin Meller Press, 2006.
- Pittock, Murray. *Scottish and Irish Romanticism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Pitts, Jennifer. *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Porter, Roy and Mikulas Teich. Editors. *Romanticism in National Context*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Redfield, Marc. *The Politics of Aesthetics: Nationalism, Gender, Romanticism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.
- Renan, Ernest. *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation? Et autres essais politiques*. Edited by Joël Roman. London: Presses Pocket, 1997.
- Rigney, Ann. "The Untenanted Places of the Past: Thomas Carlyle and the Varieties of Historical Ignorance." *History and Theory* 35, no 3 (October 1996)
- Rosenberg, John D. *Carlyle and the Burden of History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.
- Schenk, H.G. *The Mind of the European Romantics: An Essay in Cultural History*. London: Constable, 1966.
- Seton-Watson, Hugh. *Nations and States: And Enquire into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism*. London: Methuen & Co, 1977.
- Schulze, Hagen. *The Course of German Nationalism: From Frederick the Great to Bismarck, 1763-1867*. Translated by Sarah Hanbury-Tenison. New York: Cambridge university Press, 1994.
- Sharp, Lynn. "Metempsychosis and Social Reform: The Individual and the Collective in Romantic Socialism," *French Historical Studies* 27, no.2 (Spring 2004)
- Siegel, Jerrold. *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the*

- Seventeenth Century*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Simms, Brendan. *The Struggle for Mastery in Germany, 1779-1850*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- Smith, Anthony D. *The Ethnic Origin of Nations*. New York: Blackwell, 1986.
- . *National Identity*. Toronto: Penguin Books, 1991.
- Stelzig, Eugene L. *The Romantic Subject in Autobiography: Rousseau and Goethe*. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 2000.
- Stokoe, F.W. *German Influence in the English Romantic Period, 1788-1818: with special reference to Scott, Coleridge, Shelley and Byron*. New York: Russell & Russell, 1963.
- Strand, Mary R. *I/You: Paradoxical Constructions of Self and Other in Early German Romanticism*. New York: Peter Lang, 1998.
- Stromberg, Roland N. *European Intellectual History Since 1789*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1986.
- Talmon, J.L. *Romanticism and Revolt: Europe, 1815-1848*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967.
- Thiesse, Anne-Marie. *La Création des Identités Nationales: Europe XVIII^e-XX^e siècle*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1999.
- Thorlby, Anthony. *The Romantic Movement*. London: Logmans, 1966.
- Treadwell, James. *Autobiographical Writing and British Literature, 1783-1834*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Trevor-Roper, Hugh. *The Invention of Scotland: Myth and History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- White, Hayden. "The Politics of Historical Interpretation: Discipline and Desublimation," in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore: John's Hopkins University Press, 1987.
- "Who Has Citizenship?: If You Were Born in the UK or a Qualifying Territory." *UK Border Agency*
<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/britishcitizenship/othenationality/Britishcitizenship/borninukorqualifyingterritory/> (accessed June 20, 2009).