Empire and English nationalism*

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Empire and nation: foes or friends?

It is more than pious tribute to the great scholar whom we commemorate today that makes me begin with Ernest Gellner. For Gellner's influential thinking on nationalism, and specifically of its modernity, is central to the question I wish to consider, the relation between nation and empire, and between imperial and national identity.

For Gellner, as for many other commentators, nation and empire were and are antithetical. The great empires of the past belonged to the species of the 'agro-literate' society, whose central fact is that 'almost everything in it militates against the definition of political units in terms of cultural boundaries' (Gellner 1983: 11; see also Gellner 1998: 14–24). Power and culture go their separate ways. The political form of empire encloses a vastly differentiated and internally hierarchical society in which the cosmopolitan culture of the rulers differs sharply from the myriad local cultures of the subordinate strata. Modern empires, such as the Soviet empire, continue this pattern of disjuncture between the dominant culture of the elites and the national or ethnic cultures of the constituent parts.

Nationalism, argues Gellner, closes the gap. It insists that the only legitimate political unit is one in which rulers and ruled share the same culture. Its ideal is one state, one culture. Or, to put it another way, its ideal is the national or the 'nation-state', since it conceives of the nation essentially in terms of a shared culture linking all members. Thus 'if the rulers of the political unit belong to a nation other than that of the majority of the ruled, this, for nationalists, constitutes a quite outstandingly intolerable breach of political propriety' (Gellner 1983: 1). What, therefore, for nationalists could be more outrageous than an empire such as the British where a handful of British men and women ruled over millions of Indians, Africans and others, all of whom contained within themselves the seeds of genuine nationhood?[1]

In pitting nation against empire, nationalism against imperialism, Gellner implicitly linked himself to an intellectual tradition running back to the Enlightenment and, especially, the thought of Johann Gottfried Herder. It

was Herder who, of all the Enlightenment thinkers, launched the most passionate indictment of European imperialism, and he did so largely in the name of the nation, that 'natural plant' that Herder considered the essential building-block of humanity.[2] 'Nothing . . . appears so directly opposite to the end of government as the unnatural enlargement of states, the wild mixture of various kinds of humans and nations under one sceptre' (quoted in Muthu 2003: 248). Empires are monstrous growths, inimical alike to freedom and to the specific differences that are the defining principle as well as the glory of nations. This became a commonplace of liberal thought as it increasingly allied itself with the national principle in the nineteenth century. Even those liberals, such as John Stuart Mill and Lord Macaulay, who defended imperialism felt the need to justify empire against the more 'natural' principle of nationality. Empire was acceptable so long as it saw its mission as the guidance and education of less developed peoples towards the goal of national autonomy (see Mehta 1999).

The history of the relations between nations and empires in the last two centuries seems to bear out this perception of difference and divergence. For what has that history been but a revolt against empire in the name of nationality? For much of the last half-century of their existence, the Habsburg and the Russian empires struggled with the question of how to nullify or mollify the nationalist aspirations of their diverse realms, until both empires came crashing down in the cauldron of World War I. Much the same happened with the Ottoman empire. In all these cases what seemed to have triumphed was the principle of nationality, officially endorsed by the victors in President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points of 1918 (see, e.g. Kappeler 2001: 213).

Later came the spectacular series of 'wars of national liberation', in which the colonies of the surviving European empires – British, French, Dutch, Belgian – asserted their independence on the basis of the nationalist doctrine that had become the norm of international relations and that was, again, officially acknowledged in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 ('everyone has the right to a nationality'). Later still, in 1989–91, the 'informal colonies' of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe declared their independence, followed swiftly afterwards by like actions among the various national republics or 'colonies' of the Soviet Union itself (though, as Gellner rightly asserted, it was not nationalism itself that brought down the Soviet Union).[3] The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 seemed to set the seal on the long-drawn-out encounter between nationalism and imperialism, and to most observers there seemed no doubt whatsoever which had proved the victor.

But we should be aware that there is another way of telling the story. In this account, empire and nation are not set against each other but appear as twin expressions of the same phenomenon of power. It is perhaps difficult to make this case for the early-modern empires, because the concept of the nation and the ideology of nationalism were both poorly developed before the late

eighteenth century. But it is certainly possible to see the connection in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when nationalism rose to prominence, if not dominance, in the political life of Western nations. Nineteenth-century imperialism can then appear as an extension, perhaps a hypertrophy, of nationalism; by the same token the nation can come to conceive itself in the image of empire, the supreme expression of great power status. 'Imperialism and nationalism', says Christopher Bayly, 'were part of the same phenomenon . . . The rise of exclusive nationalisms, grasping and using the powers of the new and more interventionist state, was the critical force propelling both the new imperialism and the hardening of the boundaries between majority and assumed "ethnic" populations across the world . . . Imperialism and nationalism reacted on each other to redivide the world and its people' (Bayly 2004: 230, 242–3; see also Mommsen 1990).[4]

It is one thing, however, to see a connection between nationalism and imperialism, another to conflate nation and empire. Are empires no more than nation-states writ large? In one obvious sense clearly not, as empires have existed for millennia and nation states for not much more than two centuries. More importantly, with some exceptions it is hard to think of empires as other than multi-ethnic or multinational entities.[5] They thereby breach the cardinal principle of nationalism that state and nation, polity and culture, should coincide. To that extent Gellner and in general the Herderian tradition are right to insist on the fundamental difference between nation and empire.

But matters are not so simple. In the early-modern period, as David Armitage and others have stressed, the concept of empire was often closely related to the original meaning of *imperium* as sovereignty, rather than to its somewhat later – and generally modern – meaning of rule over a multiplicity of lands and peoples. This allowed many absolutist monarchies to declare themselves empires, as in the famous declaration of Henry VIII's Act in Restraint of Appeals of 1533 that 'this realm of England is an empire'. Since, moreover, many of the early-modern states were what have been called 'composite states' where, as in Spain or Britain, one monarch might rule over several territories, this in itself suggests a closer connection than we are accustomed to think between empire and what later evolved into the nation-state. Thus while it may be anachronistic to speak of *nations* as empires in this period, it is certainly possible to speak of states as empires, with the emphasis on state sovereignty rather than rule over diverse peoples. It is indeed this sense of empire that predominates in the writings of Bodin, Hobbes, Grotius and Spinoza (Koebner 1961: 52; see also Armitage 2000: 14–23; Pagden 1995).

But there is a further and perhaps more compelling consideration. Most nation-states, or what became nation-states, like most empires, are the result of conquest and colonisation. England was united by the Norman conquest, and then went on in its turn – largely at first under Norman auspices – to unite the peoples of Wales, Ireland and, eventually, Scotland into another state, the United Kingdom, and another nation, the British nation. Both France and Spain too, starting in the middle ages, eventually achieved nationhood by a

process of conquest launched in the French case by the Capetian kings and in the Spanish case by the crowns of Aragon and Castile. 'France' and 'Spain' were the product of the more or less forcible integration by these monarchs of neighbouring lands and peoples, many of them differing considerably from the institutions and culture of the dominant groups. In the nineteenth century Prussian conquest of the other German states made 'Germany', and Piedmontese conquest of the other Italian states made 'Italy' (hence the famous remark of Massimo d'Azeglio's, 'we have made Italy, now we must make Italians').

Many 'nation-states', in other words, are mini-empires – some not so mini. What was called by contemporaries in the eighteenth century 'the empire of Great Britain' or 'the British empire in Europe', referred not to Britain's overseas empire but to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and – later – Ireland (Kumar 2003: 180).[6] Admittedly this was meant mainly to point to the fact of central sovereign rule over all parts of the kingdom. But from our perspective it can just as well refer to the imperial conquest by the English of the other peoples of the British Isles – the 'first English empire', as Rees Davies (2000) refers to it in his account of the earlier part of this process in the middle ages. To this extent the usage covers both the main meanings of empire: sovereign rule and rule over a multiplicity of peoples and territories (cf. Lichtheim 1974: 38).

We will return to this 'inner empire' of Great Britain. But one last general point has to be made. Anthony Smith (e. g. 1986) has made a powerful case for the view that all nations are constituted by 'core' *ethnies,* around which may cohere other ethnic groups. Such core *ethnies* lend their distinctive character to the nation. Might we not extend that observation to empires as well? Most empires are constructed by a particular people – the English, the French, the Russians, the Turks – who oversee the development of the empire. Whatever their numbers, it is they who tend to define the character of the empire, and to provide it with its sense of meaning and purpose. They are, we may say, the 'state-bearing' peoples of the empire. It is from the empire that they get their sense of themselves, their identity. Were it not in many cases anachronistic as well as, in the end, probably misleading, we might be tempted to call this a national identity. But we can at least speak of a collective identity that comes from their role as carriers of the imperial mission.

Once more therefore the gap between nation and empire appears narrower than normally conceived. Imperial peoples may develop a consciousness that has many parallels with national consciousness. There are limits to this parallel, as we shall see; but it does suggest an approach to the question, or the puzzle, of English national identity.

An imperial people

When the question of English national identity became a matter of public debate in the 1990s, it was often remarked how little there was to go on. While

there was a certain tradition of discussing Englishness and the idiosyncrasies of the English character, there was nothing like the resources that the French or the Germans or the Italians were able to draw upon in reflecting on their national identity and the character of their nationalism.[7] Works such as Linda Colley's *Britons* ([1992]1994) provided some much-needed guidance, but in general the scholarly literature on the subject was remarkably thin, as were more general reflections by public figures.

There can be many reasons for this absence. One has to do with the notorious confusion of 'English' with 'British', so that both English and other British are often uncertain whose identity is in question, England's or Britain's. This is in fact partly a consequence of what is the more important problem, the absence of a tradition of reflection on the English state itself, and of its character in comparison with other states.[8] One result of this is that 'state' and 'nation' are often used interchangeably, with no attention to the possible – and indeed frequent – divergence between them. This is especially important in a multinational state such as the British.

What I wish to suggest is that we consider the English state as primarily an imperial state, and the English people as an imperial people. This is not so unusual, in the context of discussions of the *British* empire as that is conventionally understood. It is less usual in relation to England's position in the United Kingdom, and to its role more generally in the British Isles. But this role is no less imperial than in the former, more familiar, case. With the dissolution of Britain's overseas empire, it may indeed turn out to be more consequential for English nationalism and the development of English national identity.

The English were, as Sir John Seeley noted in his influential *The Expansion of England* (1883), imperial in a double sense. They first created a land empire, Great Britain or the United Kingdom, formed by the expansion of England from its southern position at the base of a group of islands off the north-western coast of Europe (the 'East Atlantic archipelago'). They then constructed an overseas empire, not just once but twice: first in the western hemisphere, in North America and the Caribbean, and later in the east, in India and South-East Asia. Adding the large African and Pacific possessions, this empire comprised at its height after the First World War nearly a quarter of the earth's surface and a quarter of the world's population – the largest empire they world has ever known (Ferguson 2004: 240).

It is true that while the first empire, the 'inner empire' of Great Britain, was largely an English creation, in the case of the second 'outer' or overseas empire Scots, Welsh and Irish all played a prominent and even disproportionate part (Colley 1994: 126–32; Kumar 2003: 170–2). But whatever the question of numbers, there was never any doubt in the minds of either rulers or ruled that it was predominantly the English who were in command, as much in the overseas empire as in the 'home' empire. It was the English Common Law, the English parliament, the English monarchy (even when occupied by Scots or Germans) that supplied the key institutions to the two

empires.[9] Crucially of course it was the English language that became the common possession of both empires. It is hardly surprising that the English – and many others, both Britons and foreigners – say 'English' when they mean 'British'. It is a clear if largely unconscious recognition of the brute facts of the matter.

If the English are to be thought of as an imperial people, then it may be that it is wrong to compare – as say Gerald Newman does in *The Rise of English Nationalism* (1987) – English nationalism and English national identity with the more conventional forms of nation-state nationalism that we associate with the new nations of Italy and Germany in the nineteenth century, or the many new or recovered nations of the twentieth century, such as Ireland or Poland. The more helpful comparisons would be with other imperial peoples – the Russians, the Austrians, the Turks, perhaps the French.[10] It is their identities, and the peculiar qualities associated with them, that may offer some clue to the puzzle of English national identity.

I have argued elsewhere (Kumar 2000, 2003: 30–5) that imperial peoples can be said to have, or to develop, a 'missionary consciousness' in relation to their empire, and that it might therefore be possible to talk of an imperial or missionary 'nationalism'. The kind of consciousness I have in mind is that of a group of people who feel they have a special destiny or mission in the world, a special task that requires that they suppress the ordinary manifestations of nationalism. Nevertheless, since nationalist ideology often also endows the nation with the sense of its own uniqueness and goodness, its special role in history and its superiority to other nations, it may be fitting to speak of imperial or missionary nationalism.[11]

But whether or not it is acceptable to speak of 'missionary nationalism', it is very different from nationalism as we have come to understand that phenomenon from its nineteenth-century forms. The difference is this: the imperial nation might – and usually does – insist on the superiority and special nature of its *empire*, but it cannot equally insist on its *own* superiority or special nature, its superior quality as a *people*. So Romans, Turks, Austrians, Russians and English might feel pride in their imperial creations, but that pride has to be reserved for the creations rather than the creators.

The reason is fairly obvious. Empires are typically made up of many peoples, of many different ethnicities. To govern the empire one needs to make as many of these peoples as possible feel that they belong, that the empire is as much theirs as it is that of those who originally created it (which might have been a very long time ago). Now in practice there *is* usually a people who are the creators or 'state-bearing' people of the empire – Romans, Russians, English, etc. The temptation might be for them to beat the drum, to go on about their greatness in creating such mighty structures.

That temptation has to be resisted. It can cause envy and resentment. The right attitude has to be modesty and perhaps even self-deprecation. The dominant people in the empire get their sense of themselves – their collective consciousness – from their creation, the empire, and the cause or purpose –

the 'mission' – to which the empire is officially committed. In the Russian case, the missions have variously been Orthodoxy and Communism; in the case of the Ottomans, Islam; of the Habsburg Empire, Catholicism (and perhaps 'Europe'); of the French, *la mission civilisatrice*. The imperial peoples see themselves as the carriers of the mission. But the obverse of that consciousness is a necessary playing down of themselves as a 'mere nation', with the mundane purposes – self-aggrandisement, self-importance – and inward-looking nature of much nationalism. Imperial nations cannot afford to be 'just another nation'. Theirs is a nationalism, if we wish to call it such, with more to celebrate than merely themselves.

English nationalism: a case of mistaken identity?

It is this perhaps that is the cause of much of the perplexity surrounding the question of English nationalism. We have been looking in the wrong place. English nationalism is not like German or Italian nationalism, not like Greek or Polish nationalism, not like Czech or Romanian nationalism. It is not even like French nationalism (see note 10, above). It is closer to Russian nationalism, and to that of other imperial peoples whose collective consciousness has not been ethnic.[12] For our models of English national identity we need to look at the ideologies and identities of other historic empires – not excluding such exemplars as Rome (see, e.g. Pagden 2003: 19–37).

What were the causes or missions with which the English identified themselves? In the first place, there was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Protestantism. This was not, it should be noted, a 'national' cause in the narrow sense of that term. Protestantism was an international movement, as international as the Catholicism it opposed in every quarter. But, especially after the defeat of the Spanish Armada of 1588, the English had a surge of confidence that made them see themselves as leading the Protestant crusade on behalf of Protestants everywhere. England became a refuge for persecuted Protestants from the Continent – not for the last time in its history, making it a home for many skilled craftsmen and a haven for many distinguished scholars, scientists and artists.

The Protestant cause was also immensely valuable in the second main mission with which the English identified: the making of Britishness, especially after the union with Scotland in 1707. Wales had of course long been conquered and incorporated; Ireland was much more of a problem, and it was not until Cromwell that its conquest was assured. The Scots had never been conquered; and, though they shared a king with England from 1603, it was not until the early eighteenth century that they could be pressurised into a parliamentary union with England. Once that had been accomplished, however, the English set about constructing a British identity that, while not necessarily substituting for other identities, provided a capacious umbrella under which all groups could find shelter (Kumar 2003: 130–74). In this task

Protestantism, especially when pitted against the national enemy, France, played a major role (Colley 1994; see also Colley 1992: 314–23). Of course that left out much of Ireland (though binding the northern part – Protestant Ulster – more firmly into Britain than perhaps any other part of the kingdom). For the Irish, however, there was the common enterprise of the overseas British empire, in which Catholic Irish shared along with their Protestant counterparts in the rest of the kingdom (see e.g. Jeffrey 1996).

It was a marked feature of Britishness that, of all the nations of the British Isles, it was the English who most subordinated their identity to it, to the point where over time the difference between English and British became elided.[13] This of course reflected the fact that it was the English who had the highest stake in the venture. To have celebrated their own English identity, as the creators and directors of Great Britain, would have been impolitic in the extreme. Most English statesmen recognised that. So too, perhaps even more, did the monarchy, which especially in the person of Victoria made a conscious effort to tie together the various peoples of her kingdom by cultivating their ways and finding opportunities to dwell among them.

It was under the sign of Britishness, too, that the English gained their sense of identity from the other great projects that they launched upon the world. In the nineteenth century, with the decline of all-out religious conflicts, Protestantism gradually ceased to be the main concern. But now there was the Industrial Revolution, a truly great cause with which the English, along with other British ethnic groups, could identify. With the Industrial Revolution the English-British inaugurated a new type of civilisation which, for good or ill, transformed the world for ever. Britain was the world's first industrial nation. But it became rapidly clear that industrialism was not and never could be merely a national thing. Like the capitalism of which it was a part it was from the start a global phenomenon. Industrialism might, as Gellner argued, give rise to nationalism; but as an economy, a culture and a way of life it always transcends it. In inventing and committing themselves to industrialism, as earlier to Protestantism, the English found both a national purpose and a cause that took them beyond nationalism.[14]

This was probably even truer of the other great project of nineteenth-century Britain: the British overseas empire. One aspect of this makes this especially clear. The British empire was always informal as much as it was formal. Long ago John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson (1953) propounded the idea of 'the empire of free trade', pointing out that the British were just as happy to achieve their ends without formal annexations of territory as they were – when forced – to do so by extending the formal bounds of empire. In championing free trade, the English not only furthered their own interests but could do so on the basis of what could be put forward as a universal idea, a universal formula for the betterment of all peoples and nations. The 'empire of free trade' had the same libertarian ring as 'the empire of the seas'. Just as, under international law, no one could control the seas, so no one controlled or directed free trade. It was a happy circumstance that allowed the English, as

the core nation of British society, to link themselves to a cause that both expressed their national interest and at the same time loudly proclaimed its non-national or anti-national character.[15]

But, if compelled to extend their empire by taking formal possession of territories, the English had no difficulty in finding causes with which to identify. Here we find the familiar tropes of 'the civilising mission', the 'white man's burden', the carriers of civilisation to 'lesser breeds without the law' (see. e.g. Mehta 1999; Pitts 2005). It is not difficult to see hypocrisy in all this, the disguising of self-advantage under the cover of a benevolent mission. It is less easy to accept that it might be sincerely meant, and that it might for many, from missionaries to soldiers and administrators, express a genuine conviction that empire represented progress in the lives of its subjects.

For the English this was especially clear when the comparison was made with other European empires. While European rule might be the fate of the larger part of the world, it was better for that world that the English take charge in as large a section as possible. In his *Heart of Darkness* (1902), Joseph Conrad pointedly contrasted the horrors of the Belgian Congo with the more constructive British empire, where 'one knows that some real work is being done' (Conrad [1902]1995: 25). In his laconic way Conrad summed up the conviction of many Englishmen that their institutions had not only led them to world power but could be put at the service of all mankind. Parliamentary government, the rule of law, the glories of the English language and English literature, all were 'Anglo-Saxon' achievements that had long outgrown their parent society and were available for adoption the world over. When the statesman William Huskisson spoke of planting 'in every quarter of the globe . . . the seeds of freedom, civilization and Christianity', he equated that undertaking with bringing to the lands of the empire 'English laws and English institutions' (in Noonkester 1997: 283).

The rise of English nationalism?

The argument so far is that the English did not need, or at least did not develop, nationalism in the usual understanding of that term. 'English nationalism' sounds strange, both to the English and to others. The English were, for much of their modern history, implicated in a range of enterprises which suppressed the common manifestations of nationalism. There was and is English patriotism, and certainly English xenophobia. There was and is racial Anglo-Saxonism. There is even the 'Whig interpretation' of English history, which celebrates English achievements and England's fortunate separation from the European Continent, with its disastrous history of authoritarianism and civil conflict. But there is no English Herder or Fichte; no English Mazzini or Garibaldi; no Michelet or Mickiewicz, or any equivalent of the nineteenth-century literary quest to discover the 'Russian soul'. There is nothing in England like the Scottish Declaration of Arbroath

(1320), nothing like the idea of 'national war' as 'holy war' invoked in the Greek Proclamation of Independence (1822) (Kohn 1965: 116).

Is there an English nationalism today? The transnational causes that gave the English a sense of identity – Protestantism, industrialism, imperialism – are either weak or absent. The European Union, to many English people, is as much a threat as a promise. The presence of a large minority of non-European, non-white, citizens continues to be a source of anxiety to a considerable section of the white majority in the country. Scots, and to a lesser extent Welsh and Irish, show a disposition to pull out of the United Kingdom and to make their own arrangements with Brussels. Looking at the matter in one way, we might be tempted to say that the protective layers that allowed the English to ignore questions of national identity have now all fallen away. The questions are back with a vengeance. There are several small groups around which think they have the answers, though they are yet to convince most people. Of greater significance is a Conservative Party which, swept out of the Celtic regions, may be the English nationalist party in waiting.

But perhaps it is wrong to see English nationalism as 'the dog that did not bark', as if there is something unnatural about the English in not having embraced nationalism. There is nothing natural about nationalism, as Gellner above all has taught us. The English developed their own forms of identity consistent with their character as an imperial people. With empire gone, together with the other historic causes to which the English attached themselves, there is certainly a felt need to find a new role in the world. But should that role be seen in the banal terms of nationalism? Is English nationalism the right response in a world, and at a time, when nationalism seems increasingly quaint, if not downright reactionary and backward-looking? There is certainly a lot of nationalism about, and the temptation might be simply to join the club. But this would be a disappointing fate for a people which has played so active and significant a part in the great movements of the world. As the example of Sweden shows, one can be a relatively small country and yet still be outward looking, still committed to the great causes of humanity. The European Union is but one theatre in which the nations can suppress their rivalries and antagonisms for the greater good of all. There is a wider world out there, with wider opportunities. It is time for the English to reach out, not to turn inwards.

Notes

1 For those, such as Dominique Schnapper, who emphasise democratic citizenship rather than common culture as the central principle of nationality, the opposition between inherently undemocratic imperial structures and 'the community of citizens' that defines nations is equally absolute: see Schnapper (2002: 3).

2 'For Herder the concept of a people, a *Volk*, and the concept of empire, were simply incompatible. Sooner or later all the world's empires were destined to collapse back into their

constituent parts', seen as natural units of peoples or nations (Pagden 2003: 131; and see generally Muthu 2003: 210–58). Of course there was nothing natural about nations for Gellner, nor did he share Herder's anti-imperialism. What he did accept though was the categorical difference between nations and empires.

3 The important thing, however, as he noted, was the perception that nationalism had a prescriptive right to succeed, when compared with the reactionary imperialism of the Soviet Union. 'Nationalism had not contributed much to [the collapse of the Soviet system] . . . but benefited from it, and decisively contributed to the break-up of empire after economic defeat . . . had been conceded' (Gellner 1998: 57).

4 For J. A. Hobson, the great critic of imperialism, imperialism was 'a debasement of . . . genuine nationalism, by attempts to overflow its natural banks and absorb the near or distant territory of reluctant and unassimilable peoples' ([1902]1988: 11). Mommsen (1990: 212) also refers to imperialism as a 'deformation' of nationalism, although only if one takes the liberal nation-state as the norm. For Hobson, as for other liberal nationalists, nationality still appeared the natural and desirable principle, with imperialism being a corrupted version of it. But later thinkers were less sure about this, preferring in many cases to see imperialism as the direct outgrowth of the virulent principle of nationalism. For them, the climax of this process was seen in the 1930s, in the imperialistic designs of Italian, German, Japanese and to some extent Russian nationalism. Here nationalism and imperialism revealed their affinity. See on this especially Kohn (1932: 49–76) and Arendt (1958: 123–302); see also Lichtheim (1974: 81); Hobsbawm (1987: 158–61); Pagden (2003: 132–8); Zimmer (2003: 35–8). This was also generally Joseph Schumpeter's view of modern imperialism, which 'does not *coincide* with nationalism and militarism, though it *fuses* with them by supporting them as it is supported by them' (Schumpeter [1919]1974: 97). The Marxist view, which sees imperialism as the last or 'highest' stage of capitalism – initially carried by the nation-state – generally goes along with this view of the affinity of nationalism and imperialism.

5 A feature they have had since Roman times, as evident in the evolution of the meaning of the word *imperium* from 'sovereign rule' to 'rule over a plurality of peoples'. See Koebner (1961: 1–18).

6 There is a parallel here in the later attempt, notably by Charles Dilke and J. R. Seeley, to see 'Greater Britain' – including the white colonies and dominions – as an extension of England. See especially the forthcoming book by Duncan Bell (2006). See also Wellings (2002: 106).

7 See, for the French, Germans, Italians and others, the references in Kumar (2000: 594–5). See also, for the absence of a tradition of reflection on English national identity, Kumar (2003: 18–21, 39–41). A recent roundtable discussion in *Prospect* magazine (Ascherson et al. 2005), involving Neal Ascherson, George Brown, Linda Colley, Tariq Modood, and others, brought this out particularly clearly.

8 A brave attempt to fill the gap is Corrigan and Sayer (1985). The weakest part of that work is, however, precisely the question that is of the greatest significance in our context, the relation between the English state and the English nation.

9 It is true of course that the Act of Union with Scotland (1707) left the Scots in charge of their own religion, their own education, their own law, and certain aspects of local government. But I have argued elsewhere (Kumar 2003: 151–4) that with the possible exception of religion Scottish institutions developed largely under the tutelage of English ones. For the contrary view, see, e.g. Paterson (1994).

10 I have tried to argue elsewhere that the French, though clearly an imperial people, differ in some important ways from other imperial peoples, especially the English. See my 'French and English nationalism: comparisons and contrasts' (forthcoming in *Nations and Nationalism*).

11 It is of course problematic to speak of missionary *nationalism* in the case of those empires – e.g. the Spanish and the Portuguese, not to mention the Roman – that existed well before the birth of nationalist ideology in the nineteenth century. One could probably find more precise or more acceptable terms. I use the term nationalism merely to point to some interesting correspondences

between imperial and national identities. For another treatment of 'missionary peoples', see Smith (2003: 95–130).

12 It is frequently, but wrongly, claimed that Russian nationalism is ethnic in character. See, e.g. Greenfeld (1992: 189–274). For a criticism of this view, see Kumar (2000: 584–8).

13 To many of course, especially today, this is a cause for lament rather than, as it might have appeared in the past, for celebration. Cf. this *cri de coeur* of Billy Bragg, in the *Prospect* discussion: 'We are invisible. England doesn't have its own parliament or national anthem. I watch the rugby, and I see the Welsh singing "Land of our Fathers", and the Scots have "Flower of Scotland", while we are singing a song that doesn't even mention our country. These are small things but millions of people are starting to notice that England is the elephant in the room that no one wants to talk about' (Ascherson et al. 2005: 22).

14 There was of course always a strand in English culture which resisted industrialism. See Wiener (1981). But this can be exaggerated, and certainly misrepresents the picture for the nineteenth century, the period in which English/British industrial supremacy was the source of much national pride. See on this especially Rubinstein (1994).

15 See the quotation from Richard Cobden in Ferguson (2004: *xix*), which nicely points up both the universalism of free trade and the way in which this could be deployed *against* the acquisition of (formal) empire.

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