PERSONS/PEOPLES/POLITY: INTERROGATING NEONATIONALISM IN QUEBEC

A REVIEW OF Joseph H. Carens, ed., *Is Quebec Nationalism Just? Perspectives from Anglophone Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995).

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> Is there any idea at all behind this bovine nationalism? What value can there be now, when everything points to wider and more common interests, in encouraging this boorish self-conceit? And this in a state of affairs in which spiritual dependency and disnationalization meet the eye and in which the value and meaning of contemporary culture lie in mutual blending and fertilization.
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> Friedrich Nietzsche[1]

> Is it only the abstraction of law that must assume that all human beings are one?
>
> Gayatri C. Spivak[2]

> Justice, exercised through institutions, which are inevitable, must always be held in check by the initial interpersonal relation.
>
> Emmanuel Levinas[3]

Dormant for so long,[4] the "*névrose nationale*" which in 1888 Nietzsche condemned for "perpetuat[ing] ... European particularism ...[and] petty politics" is once again prominently on offer as the proper *Weltanschauung* of Euro-merican politics.[5] Evidence of this "nationalist renaissance"[6] is found not only

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1 Nietzsche (1901: paras. 748, 395).

2 Spivak (1992: 796).

3 Levinas (1995: 90).

4 This silence, which we can date from 1945, was of course characteristic solely of Euro-American political speech. Elsewhere, nationalist arguments were a fundamental ingredient of anticolonialism. Regarding the latter, see Anderson (1983: ch. 7); Nairn (1977); and Chatterjee (1993). For meditations on European imperialism, see Memmi (1967); and Said (1993).

5 Nietzsche (1888: W2, 321). Incidentally, Nietzsche's diagnosis of nationalism as neurosis has since become a topos of European denunciations of nationalism: see, for instance, Briffault (1936: 18-19) ("Europe has been robbed of all intelligence and meaning. ... Crazed by the neurosis called Nationalism and the paltry politics that go with it. ..."); and, more generally, Delanty (1995).

6 Matustik (1993: vii).

in national[7] and subnational[8] politics throughout the West but, more importantly for present purposes, in the tone and temper of much contemporary political philosophy. For neonationalism[9] has attracted an ever-growing host of "philosophical friends" who appear intent both on reclaiming nationalism as "a serious topic for normative political philosophy" and on rehabilitating it by "translat[ing] nationalist arguments into liberal language."[10] Whether their objective is in these senses either to justify nationalism or to accommodate nationalism to the principles of liberal political morality, these initiatives[11] typically depart from the understanding that the fact of cultural diversity carries a critically important normative instruction, namely, that national or cultural attachments are in some way or another "constitutive" of human identity and, therefore, "a crucial dimension of political life."[12] If, for these reasons, "the national dimension of history haunts us" still, the habitation, as Nietzsche realized, is as much intellectual and spiritual as geo-political: before any contest over the facts on the ground, what is at issue is moral sense and sensibility, the "moral and political outlook" of which nationalism consists.[13]

Quebec nationalism too has its friends and among them must be counted most, if not indeed all, of the authors of the essays collected in *Is Quebec Nationalism Just?*[14] Conceived and published in the aftermath of the Meech

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7 For a collection of essays on the politics of contemporary European nationalism, see "Nationalism and Its Discontents" (1995) 105 *Telos* 2-132.

8 In addition to the numerous nationalist movements playing out in the former Soviet Empire, Quebec in Canada, Scotland and Wales in the United Kingdom, and the Basque in Spain, are generally cited in this regard.

9 In this essay, "neonationalism" refers to all forms of nationalist argument which invoke collective, cultural identity. In the first part, I contrast neonationalism so conceived with "old nationalism," which I mean to refer to the nationalism which developed in Europe following the French Revolution.

10 O'Neil (1994: 135); MacCormick (1991: 10); Tamir (1993: 14).

11 In addition to Tamir (1993) and MacCormick (1991), see, for instance, Walzer (1983: esp. ch. 2); MacIntyre (1985: esp. 220 and 238) and MacIntyre (1987); Sagoff (1988); Miller (1993) (1988); Kymlicka (1989) (1995b); Taylor (1993b); Kristeva (1993); Moon (1993); and Tully (1995). For a sketch of contemporary nationalist arguments, see "Grounding Nationalism," which is appended to this essay.

12 Moon (1993: 66-68); Tamir (1993: 163).

13 Fitzpatrick (1995: 4); Taylor (1989: 414).

14 Carens (1995). There are of course many others, most prominently Kymlicka and Taylor. For Kymlicka's views on Quebec, see for example, Kymlicka (1995a and 1995b) and — reviewing the Carens collection — (1995c). For Taylor's views, see for example: Taylor (1991b) (1992) (1993a and 1993d) and (1994). For commentary on Taylor, see Birnbaum (1996). For Kymlicka, see Lenihan (1991); and Tomasi (1995).

Lake and Charlottetown Accords and prior to the October 1995 referendum on Quebec sovereignty, the collection "aims to deepen the character of the debate over Quebec by linking that debate to broader philosophical concerns about liberalism, justice, and political community." Unhappily, the collection nowhere nearly makes good this promise and, indeed, on the whole delivers precious little of theoretical interest.[15]

Any at all adequate engagement with the nationalist question in political/ philosophical terms must be grounded in some serviceable conception of justice, nationalism, and secession.[16] The Carens' collection either elides or inadequately provisions each of these matters.[17] There is on display no coherent theory of justice[18] nor, in consequence — and despite the collection's promissory title — is there any real pursuit of the question of the justice of Quebec nationalism.[19] Nor does the collection proceed from or provide any moral theory of secession.[20] Remarkably, the collection makes do, instead, with simply conceding political integrity to the brute majoritarianism on which the referendum process has been twice now based.[21] Justice and secession thus put largely aside, the collection's

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[15] The "little" is provided in Norman's essay (137-159) on political identity and in Adelman's essay (160-192) on secession both in Carens (1995).

[16] Though analytically distinct, clearly these requirements are interdependent. For instance, one's theory of justice will in large measure found one's view of nationality and secession. Conversely, if one approaches nationality from an expressivist standpoint, one can easily elide the whole question of justice and render much more simple the task of constructing a theory of secession. For an expressivist view of nationality, see Taylor (1989: esp. 368-390) and discussion in Appendix I, "Grounding Nationalism."

[17] And, in consequence, fails entirely or in part its other aim of "contribut[ing] to philosophical discussions within liberal theory by confronting abstract, theoretical concerns with the concrete problems and issues of the case of Quebec:" Carens (1995: 3).

[18] To sample such an account, see Brilmayer (1995).

[19] For instance, in editor Carens' second contribution to the collection (1995: 20-81), justice is everywhere alluded to, but nowhere provided any conceptual content beyond vague and repeated references to "the preconditions for a just political order" (50).

[20] I am not discounting Adelman's essay (1995: 160-192) which, despite its title, I take largely to be an essay about the qualities of nationalism which ground secessionist entitlements.

Allen Buchanan (1993a: 593) rightly claims that "an adequate moral theory of secession must consider not only arguments to justify secession but justifications for resisting it as well." For attempts to do so, see Buchanan (1991 and 1993b); Nielsen (1993); Ewin (1994); and Wellman (1995).

[21] To help work this concession, several of the essays involve themselves in the messy, if entirely predictable, business of categorizing persons resident in Quebec. We will explore the reasons for such objectionable enterprises in part 1.

That popular sovereignty cannot alone — if indeed at all — carry the moral burden of

real focus is the nature of Quebec nationalism, its liberal credentials, its origins historically and, in limited measure,[22] philosophically, and its potential aftermath if successful electorally. But even here, in this more cabined endeavour, the collection fails to deliver all that it might have.

The necessary point of departure for any consideration of nationalism which wishes to claim philosophical merit is the fundamental tension between liberalism and nationalism as moral and political outlooks. We can fairly demand of all such endeavours — and especially of those of them which would convince us that, despite its bloody history, nationalism may yet be somehow benign — that they at least forthrightly engage, if not resolve, the apparent contradictions between nationalist collectivism and liberal individualism. The Carens collection offers no such engagement. Instead, it simply assumes away any contradiction by supposing that there is a variety of liberalism which is

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secession is wisdom as ancient as the Enlightenment. Benjamin Constant, for instance, long ago offered the following prudence regarding the moral frailty of sovereignty:

> But while we recognize the rights of that will, that is the sovereignty of the people, it is necessary, indeed imperative, to understand its exact nature and to determine its precise extent. ... If we attribute to that sovereignty an amplitude which it must not have, liberty may be lost notwithstanding that principle, or even through it. When you establish that the sovereignty of the people is unlimited, you create and toss at random into human society a degree of power which is too large in itself, and which is bound to constitute an evil .... Sovereignty has only a limited and relative existence. At the point where independence and individual existence begin, the jurisdiction of sovereignty ends.

See Constant (1988: 175-177). See also Berlin (1969: 163-164); and Elster (1993).

Beyond the prudential, the status of self-determination as a moral and political right is itself notoriously uncertain. For a view which dismisses it as a right of either sort, see DeGeorge (1988: 7). For the view that self-determination is a right which obtains only externally and only in the context of decolonialization, see MacCartney (1988). For a summary of the international law of self-determination — which law permits the right to self-determination to trump sovereignty only in exceptional circumstances, none of which obtains in the relationship between Canada and Quebec — see Cass (1995).

Despite all of this, that the essays in this collection concede in the way that they do is itself a matter of considerable moral and political interest. In the conclusion to this essay, I will argue that, in this, the collection evinces a political paganism of a sort which always attends neonationalism.

22 Two of the essays only — those by Norman and Adelman — can fairly be said to approach the issue of nationalism on philosophical grounds.

nationalist in character[23] and by claiming — but not convincing[24] — that Quebec nationalism qualifies as liberal in that special sense. In consequence, in the place of tackling the critical questions and challenges raised by resurgent nationalism, by assuming but never questioning "Quebec's comforting but superficial postmodernity,"[25] the collection on the whole presents a barely qualified defence of the identity politics which is nationalism's *realpolitik*.[26]

Nationalism in Quebec and elsewhere demands, indeed deserves, a more sophisticated response than that. For whatever else may be said about it, in Quebec or elsewhere, nationalism "raises the stakes of politics."[27] This it does by putting at issue two matters of enormous significance to the philosophy and practice of liberal polity. By proposing that proper politics is a politics thickened by the culturally particular, nationalism puts at issue both the nature of political subjectivity and the aims and ends of the state. The first issue demands an exploration of the nature of contemporary nationalism and, the second, an interrogation of the political morality of the nationalist state.

The remainder of this essay will respond to these demands. More specifically, I will undertake a critical examination of the Carens collection as a way of joining the wider debate about the moral and ethical credentials of the

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[23] In his review of the collection, Kymlicka takes this supposition as a matter of much merit. See Kymlicka (1995c: 14).

[24] Instead of engaging the political philosophical literature on this matter, the two essays which appear devoted to this claim — Carens (1995: 20-81) and Adelman (1995: 82-96) — offer an analytical description of Quebec government policy and practice on immigration. Now, even if these matters are significant in the way that Carens and Adelman believe — namely, that they disclose that the province of Quebec is committed to liberal values — for some very important moral and political reasons to which we will come, that provides no grounds for inferences or even speculation with respect to the political philosophical disposition or practice of some future independent nationalist state called Quebec.

[25] Schwartzwald (1993: 288). This brings to mind Judith Shklar's (1996: 264) remembrance of her early experiences in Montreal: "It was not a city one could easily like. It was politically held together by an equilibrium of ethnic and religious resentments and distrust. And in retrospect, it is not surprising that this political edifice collapsed with extraordinary speed." That the instrument of its destruction was, and is, cultural nationalism, makes the easy suppositions in this collection appear all the more cavalier. For an argument that Quebec nationalism during the 1920s and '30s was permeated with anti-Semitism and sympathies for European fascism, see Delisle (1993).

[26] A caveat here: two of the essays, the forays into constitutional history authored by Vipond (1995: 97-119) and Ajzenstat (1995: 120-136), read more as reluctant apologies than as defences of Quebec nationalism.

[27] Rawls (1993: 228).

contemporary shift to political particularism. For reasons which will become apparent, for the purposes of this essay, I have dubbed the concerns surrounding the nature of nationalism, the Quebec Question, and the concerns about the moral and political costs of the nationalist state, the "Quebec Problem."[28] Only by exploring the matter from each of these vantages, I believe, can the moral meaning and political substance of nationalism in Quebec be fully and finally disclosed.

In an essay devoted to justifying nationalism through confession and avoidance, Neil MacCormick comments in passing that "liberals...mistrust nationalism."[29] In my view, he seriously underappraises any properly liberal response to nationalism. It will be my purpose in this essay to convince that this mistrust, and the passivism to which it characteristically leads, is not nearly enough, and that instead liberals ought actively, fully, candidly, and persistently loathe and oppose the proposal about the human condition and future of which in the final analysis, nationalism is a mere, if pernicious, purveyor.[30] Though completion of the argument for this view must await the conclusion to this essay, to anticipate, let me indicate that I will be indicting nationalism not only for its

[28] Though I believe them analytically distinct and will so treat them here, the question and the problem are clearly intimately related, so much so that one's answer to the nationalist question will determine not only one's approach to the problem, but also whether one thinks there is a problem at all. For instance, by supposing both that liberalism is a possible and credible response to the question and that it obtains in the case of Quebec nationalism, the Carens collection dissolves the problem, and absolves itself from any interrogation of the matter.

[29] MacCormick (1991: 9).

[30] Three clarifications are necessary. First, by taking this attitude towards nationalism, liberals are *not* committing themselves to a position which freezes present geo-political arrangements or which moralizes the nation state's exhaustive colonization of political space. Indeed, in the conclusion, I will argue that a morally fulsome liberal response to nationalism alone promises any relief from the present or any morally attractive alternative for the future. Second, that what I will shortly identify as "old nationalism" might yet inform anticolonial politics is perhaps a caveat to this prescription. Since, however, any such caveat is inapplicable to the relations between Canada and Quebec, I will not dally over the matter here. Finally, my prescription also entails questions relating to the entire matter of liberal citizenship. Though I cannot deal with this issue here, I take Habermas' proposal regarding constitutional patriotism as the minimal point of departure for any explanation of the proper relationship between personal and political morality in the liberal state. See Habermas (1992) (1989b) and (1996); and Ingram (1996). See also Oommen (1997).

Marxists too "mistrust" nationalism. See, for instance, Munck (1986); Blaut (1987); Szporluk (1988); and Nimni (1991). For an essay which condemns the contemporary intellectual reception of nationalism as progressive politics, see Cocks (1996).

fearful potential with respect to tolerance, liberty, and equality but, as well, for its proposal that the human future must and ought consist of the eternal return of the same.

I. THE QUEBEC QUESTION: CONSTRUCTING THE OTHER?

Nationalism in Quebec is perplexing. First of all, Quebec does not at all appear to be "a nation whose state [is] serving it ill."[31] However the matter is viewed, the relations between Canada and Quebec disclose no hint of unfairness in the distribution of social and economic goods, including especially the social bases of self-respect.[32] Nor generally do nationalists any longer offer arguments along these lines in support of nationalism.[33] Secondly — and this is a matter of which much is made by nationalists and their philosophical friends — there is as between French-speaking Quebecers and other Canadian citizens, no apparent cleavage in terms of political values. Yet "Quebec nationalists have become more and more preoccupied with maintaining and enhancing their provincial jurisdiction even as they have become more and more similar to other Canadians in their basic values. They have become more and more insistent on recognition as a 'distinct society,' even as they in fact become less and less distinct."[34] Finally, Quebec no less than Canada faces a world in which the forces of transnationalism and globalization are everywhere let loose and in which, in consequence, any reprieve in proliferating nationhood appears at best illusory.[35]

Still, despite all of this, nationalism in Quebec continues unrepentantly apace and appears, indeed, to be flourishing.[36] I have already suggested that resolving these perplexities is a necessary first step in coming to any acceptable moral or political judgment on the matter of nationalism in Quebec. But not any answer

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31 MacCormick (1991: 11).

32 See Appendix I, "Grounding Nationalism." See also Dion (1992: 78) ("Quebec is the most powerful subnational government in all of the OECD countries in terms of its share of resources and its scope of intervention.")

33 This was not always the case. See Dion (1992: 997-110); and Vallieres (1971). That Quebec nationalism no longer contemplates economics or class brings to mind the Marxist critique that nationalism masks class and is yet another instrument of ideological domination and mystification: see Cocks (1996: 522-523).

34 Kymlicka (1995c: 13).

35 See Smith (1990); Toulmin (1994) and (1990: esp. 160-167 and 192-209); Ishay (1995); and Guehenno (1995).

36 I do not intend to accord to popular nationalist sentiment in Quebec any unity. Indeed, to borrow from Wittengenstein, I believe it every bit a "conglomeration": see Wittengenstein (1980: 67e: "Conglomeration: national sentiment for instance").

will do. Socio-historical answers, for instance, though available, cannot serve because such solutions seek to explain and not to assess the phenomenon.[37] What is required, rather, is an answer which does just that, one which follows upon an examination of nationalism not merely as a local political phenomenon, but as a philosophical proposal concerning the nature and practice of political community.[38] For whatever else it may concern, for friend and foe alike, "the national question is about deciding how we want to live."[39]

"With something like a Library of Babel devoted to the idea of the nation," coming to terms with nationalism turns out not to be an easy task, no matter that the nation is a most "familiar political imaginary."[40] Where the nation is described variously as a "magical notion" and a "mythical idea" and, indeed, as straightout a fiction with "no core, no essence, no definition, no set criteria, no predetermined context" and condemned as a "vague and corrupt symbol,"[41] the nationalism which is its ideological expression is ridiculed for its paucity of intrinsic ideas, as "having emancipated itself from the task of identifying its particularities," as "not a unified set of views of the world."[42] "A fundamentally contested concept" then? Perhaps.[43] But declaring the nation and nationalism that is to resign inquiry, needlessly so in this case. For while the nation and

[37] See, for example, Dion (1992); Dufour (1980); Oliver (1991); and Gougeon (1994). For a comforting mix of sociological speculation and philosophical reflection, see Taylor (1991b).

[38] This is not meant to diminish the phenomenological significance of nationalism as the characteristic form of identity politics in late modernity: see Brown (1995: 52-54). Nor is it to discount — merely instead here to decline — the psycho-social explanations which, since Freud, have been formulated with respect to the matter.

[39] Berman (1995: 56).

[40] Fitzpatrick (1995: xiii); Connolly (1995: 136). In addition to Anderson (1983), which has in short order become something of *locus classicus*, standard references on nationalism include: Kohn (1965) (1944); Minogue (1968); Smith (1991) (1979) (1971); Gellner (1983); Hobsbawm (1991); Kedourie (1993); Ignatieff (1993); Pfaff (1993); and, for present purposes especially, Breuilly (1994). That nationalism is both so prolix and — as Fitzpatrick (1995: 4) puts it — so "resistant to rendition," has everything, I think, to do with nationalism's being a fancy and an expression of the intellectual class. Concerning which, see Gellner (1983) and Kedourie (1993); Cocks (1996); and more generally, Benda (1955). For commentary on the role of intellectuals in Quebec nationalism, see Dion (1992). In what follows, I hope to give cause for taking seriously Zygmunt Bauman's commentary on nationalism, intellectuals, and the masses: "Nationalism ... is a racism of the intellectuals. Obversely, racism is the nationalism of the masses." See Bauman (1992: 109).

[41] Elias (1991: 82); Geulen (1995: 15-16); Valery (1950: 134).

[42] Wolin (1990: 406); Geulen (1995: 14-16).

[43] Kiss (1995: 370). Then again perhaps not. For the notion "fundamentally contested ideas," see Connolly (1983: esp. 1).

nationalism may on first blush appear evanescent, on closer inspection, there is much to disclose. Doing so is critically important for present purposes, since both my proposal regarding nationalism and my appraisal of the essays in Carens very much depend upon a mapping of nationalism's intellectual terrain. In what follows, I will first canvass that terrain, and then adopt what I take to be the most promising and productive view of nationalism.

It should not surprise that the literature approaches nationalism in what, at first, appears as any number of fashions.[44] But there is, I think, order even here. For despite its volume and its oftentimes confusing and confused offerings, the literature reveals four distinct variations or approaches. They are the historical, the definitional/typological, the political/analytical, and the explanatory/functionalist.[45] The first three are important to my argument and criticism, and I will therefore put aside any consideration of the functionalist approach.[46]

The historical approach takes two directions which together yield a distinction between old nationalism and neonationalism. Political histories are concerned to identify nationalism with the destruction of the *ancien regime*[47] and the founding of the modern liberal state. Typically, such scholarship first declares this older form of nationalism a carrier of liberal revolution,[48] and then

44 For an analytical summary of most of these approaches, see Breuilly (1994: 404-424). For another view of the matter, see Geulen (1995). To sample the definitional babel which nationalism has spawned, see Kiss (1995: 370-372).

45 These classifications are, of course, ideal types, and any given piece of literature may exhibit more than one approach or, more likely, compound and confuse them.

46 Functionalist explanations of nationalism stress its origins either in political economy or in modernity. According to the first, essentially marxist view, nationalism is an ideological instrument by which the bourgeoisie consolidated — and continues to consolidate — its position through the masking of class differences in the nation state: see references *supra* note 21. According to the second, nationalism functions to satisfy the "yearning for a firmly rooted identity," a psycho-social need created by the cultural levelling of the modern era: see sources cited in Breuilly (1994: 414-418); Connolly (1995: 135-140); and Berlin (1991: 238-261). As we will see shortly, the psycho-social understanding arms critics of nationalism with charges of atavism and primitivism. For a collection of essays which takes the function of the nation to be sexual, see Parker (1992). For a view of nationalism as the superstructural "religion" of modernity, see Bauman (1993: 135-138).

47 For a commentary on Rousseau's articulation of "the sociological relationship between nationalism and the rise of democracy," see Schwartz (1995: 37-40).

48 See for instance Ruggiero (1995: esp. Part II, ch. V at 416) describing "the old Liberal spirit of nationality"; Wilford (1984: 223-224) arguing that "during much of the nineteenth century, nationalism, through its association with the French Revolution, was an agent of liberation and emancipation" and contrasting that old nationalism with "a new European

goes on to trace its corruption and gradual replacement by a form of nationalism which equates political subjectivity with cultural identity.[49] Intellectual histories, on the other hand, seek to disclose the philosophical origins of this shift in nationalist self-understanding.[50] Generally, neonationalism is thought a "fruit" of German Romanticism which traces its lineage from Herder through Fichte and Schiller to Hegel and even the early Marx.[51] However else it is described,[52] this Romantic turn in nationalism is viewed as constituting a shift in political sensibility from *Gesellschaft* to *Gemeinschaft.* Accordingly, neonationalism is distinct from old nationalism in proposing that political community ought to

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nationalism"; Cohen (1988: 10) arguing that "until the end of the Eighteenth Century, the political theory of Europe centered about philosophies of law, right, duty, and freedom" and that until the nineteenth century, "the relation of citizen to state" was understood as "somehow a moral relation"; and Manent (1994: 78 and 117) associating the nation with a lost emancipatory impulse in Europe. By the early nineteenth century, liberals came to view even this old nationalism with distrust: see Berlin (1969: 162-172). And many contemporary commentators take the view that a nationalism of this liberal sort is too thin a moral gruel: see Berman (1995).

[49] See especially Greenfeld (1992: esp. "Introduction") detailing the logical and historical dependence of liberal politics on national political communities; Skinner (1978: 62ff); and Todorov (1993: esp. ch 3). For an excellent summary of the older, liberal view of nationalism, see O'Neill (1994). Also of interest in this regard is Jayal (1993); and Yack (1995). For the unusual view that old and new nationalism are, historically at least, complimentary, see Cocks (1996: 518).

[50] See especially: Taylor (1989: 414-418 and *passim*); Berlin (1976); Greenfeld (1992: esp. ch. 4); Birnbaum (1996); O'Neill (1994); and Yack (1995). Taylor, incidentally, calls old nationalism, "first wave" nationalism, and neonationalism, "the next wave." He associates the former, historically, with the United States, France, and Britain, and intellectually with the ideas of "political nation and a certain ideal of citizenship." The second wave, which he dates from Herder and associates with language and a politics of identity and authenticity, is presumably the crest which we continue to ride.

[51] See Taylor (1989). For a description of Germans as "the first true nationalists," see Berlin (1979: 350). For Berlin's take on the shift, see Berlin (1991: 238-261). Incidentally, that Hegel at one point disparages romantic nationalism — see Hegel (1952: 5ff) — has not, and quite properly, disqualified him as a source for the Romantic turn in nationalism.

[52] Some, like Taylor, think political expressivism a (barely qualified) good. Others take the German proposal to constitute a prescription for political primitivism. See, for example: Popper (1966: 49ff); Hayek (1976: 133ff); Rubinoff (1981); Mouffe (1992); and Toulmin (1994). Others, most notably Berlin, take a mixed and very cautious view: see Berlin (1991: 238-261); Berlin (1969: 167-172); and Berlin (1979: 350 and *passim*).

cohere around both a thick, culturally-defined identity and the substantive good of cultural expression and uniqueness.[53]

Intellectual and political histories are not typical fare for contemporary discussions of nationalism.[54] Instead, most scholars, foes and friends of nationalism alike, pursue the much easier task of approaching nationalism typologically.[55] This approach is premised not upon the historical (and philosophically accredited) distinction between old and new nationalism, but upon a distinction which is presumed[56] to inhere in neonationalism itself, namely, the distinction between civic (or political) nationalism and ethnic nationalism.[57]

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[53] Taylor takes this shift to be "the seminal idea of modern nationalism": see Taylor (1993b: 31). For views of Quebec nationalism as neonationalism in just this sense, see Ignatieff (1993); Breuilly (1994: 332-335); Birnbaum (1996); and Shell (1993: esp. ch 3).

[54] That Charles Taylor is an exception to this accounts, I think, for his wide-ranging influence among the intellectually less ambitious of nationalism's contemporary friends.

[55] Geulen (1995: 8) claims, rightly I think, that the typological and the psycho-social are "the standard approaches" to nationalism. One could further suggest that generally — but not of course always — scholars pursue psycho-social functionalist explanations with the aim of discrediting nationalism, and adopt the typological approach with the intent of befriending nationalism. For scholarship which proceeds from a typological understanding of nationalism, see Tamir (1993); Kymlicka (1995b: 24 and 200 n. 15) and (1995c: 14); Greenfeld (1995); Ignatieff (1993: 3-6 and 110); and Todorov (1993: 171ff). For commentary, see Geulen (1995); and Yack (1995). For applications to Quebec nationalism, see Ignatieff (1993: 108-134); and Breton (1988). On the matter of ethnonationalism more generally, see Connor (1993); and Brass (1991).

[56] "Presumed" because the typology generally simply elides the crucial question which it ineluctably raises, namely, whether (neo)nationalism might, as Weber thought, be a form of politicized ethnicity *simpliciter*. For Weber's subsumption of nationalism under ethnicity, see Stone (1995). For a similar view, see Smith (1995).

[57] Kohn (1965) distinguishes between open and closed nationalism, the latter characterized by the (illiberal) practice of admitting to political community only those who can trace descent from some common cultural ancestor. Kymlicka appears to have adopted just this calculus for distinguishing between his version of civic and ethnic nationalism: see Kymlicka (1995b: 24) ("What distinguishes 'civic' from 'ethnic' nations is not the absence of any cultural component to national identity, but rather the fact that anyone can integrate into the common culture, regardless of race or colour."). As we will see shortly, the ethnic/civic distinction has a tendency to spawn further distinctions. See for example: Elkins' (1995: 72-75) typology of nations (alternatively designated as ethnic and territorial or as natural, quasi and hybrid states); and Stark's (1992: 124) distinction between Quebec nationalism and separatism.

The Carens collection neither makes a contribution to, nor in any significant sense accounts for, the plentiful scholarship tracing the intellectual origins and development of nationalism, both old and new. In two essays — those by Vipond and Ajzenstat — it does offer political history. But those essays are concerned less with tracking the development of neonationalism in the Canadian context than with answering the Quebec Question on grounds of the contingencies of Canadian constitutional history.[58] In the final analysis, then, these forays into political history do not stand as a departure from what otherwise appears to be the collection's overall objective of credentializing Quebec nationalism.

Nor do they depart from the easy presumption from which the whole collection proceeds and on which the merit of its intended contribution to the discourse on nationalism in some measure depends, namely, the typological distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism. Because so much depends on the merit of this approach both for the collection and for my proposal, I wish to inquire briefly into that matter before recommending the political approach to nationalism, and deploying it to assess what I take to be the collection's real contribution to the question raised by nationalism in Quebec.

The typological approach carries two deficiencies, each of them, I think, fatal. First, it elides entirely the issue which matters most regarding nationalism, namely, whether, after all, nationalism reduces to ethnicity. Rather than addressing this question directly and confronting the real possibility that nationalism just might, in consequence, necessarily require an illiberal politics of status and exclusion, the typological approach cringes from any engagement with either the political history of nationalism or the politicization of ethnicity which, on first blush at least, appears to be a corollary to its philosophical defense. This approach, rather, seeks shelter in the servile and sterile confines of definitional fiat;[59] and in so doing, it relieves itself from the singular burden

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[58] The gist of the Vipond (Carens, 1995) and Ajzenstat (Carens, 1995) essays is that the rest of Canada, and not Quebec, is responsible for Quebec nationalism, since it was the rest of Canada, and not Quebec, which abandoned the federalist principles on the basis of which Quebec's demands — which the essays appear to presume worthy — could have been accommodated.

[59] The typological approach is not alone in shrinking from the *realpolitik* of nationalism. Though otherwise engaged in a sophisticated and precise tracing of nationalism's intellectual origins, when it comes to its actual political history, Taylor is all too quick to diagnosis — and trivialize — that history as a peculiarly European disease: "In Europe, one perhaps has had the 'luck' to have suffered the avatars of nationalism and been led to question the limits of strong national identity; this may have created the need to seek out

which any reasonable and responsible account of nationalism must shoulder, which is to explain what "makes nationalism so problematic for both modern political theory and practice."[60] In consequence, the issues we wish most to be explored are hidden in definition and dichotomy, and never finally addressed at all.

But the difficulties with the typological approach do not end there. Since its effect is generally to distinguish between nationalisms normatively,[61] the typological approach also carries the hidden and unsupported normative claim that civic nationalism is superior to ethnic nationalism. Now while on any number of grounds — including especially the ground that the distinction itself is real and makes sense — this could indeed be true, to make the assertion covertly and without identifying those grounds is to offer slight of hand for analysis.[62]

The essays by Carens and Adelman on Quebec immigration policy and practice offer stark evidence of these difficulties. Each proceeds from unsupported normative assumptions — that there are good and bad nationalisms and that liberal nationalism is *the* good nationalism — and, on that basis alone, both seek to convince that Quebec nationalism is liberal and, therefore, both good and benign.[63] Besides the difficulties already mentioned, what of course is wrong with this approach is that it avoids all of the important questions about nationalism in Quebec. By simply assuming the normative significance of an unsupported dichotomy, the essays not only relieve themselves from the intellectual labour required to establish a framework for dealing with

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other principles of collective identity, such as that of constitutional patriotism. However, in other parts of the world, including North America but also the other part of Europe, it is not necessarily the case." This happy consciousness no doubt allows Taylor, in the same essay, quite candidly to equate neonationalism with ethnicity: "During the French Revolution, the word patriotism was attached to a certain conception of law (*droit*) and not to ethnicity. But there has been [a] slide towards the ethnicization of nationalism to such a degree that when we use the word nationalism today and when we think of the unification of a people, what comes to mind first and foremost is unification on the basis of an ethnic culture." See Taylor (1993c: 61 and 67). Quoted in Birnbaum (1996: 35). Taylor also believes, of course, that despite its ethnic origins, neonationalism may yet be liberal in practice.

60 Yack (1995: 180).

61 "Generally" since there may be cases where, as Yack (1995: 180) suggests, the distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism could render real analytical service.

62 Yack (1995: 180) contends that the normative claim lurking behind the distinction is also fairly open to charges of Eurocentrism.

63 Carens (1995: 20-81); Adelman (1955: 82-96).

nationalism, more importantly, they prevent themselves from at all confronting the national question. In consequence, instead of providing an intellectual challenge to nationalism in Quebec, a challenge to which the national question, properly understood, always leads, the essays deliver a happy benediction which both absolves Quebec nationalists and dissolves the national question in a Panglossian solution of all-too-easy presumptions.

What is minimally required of a theory of nationalism is that it take nationalism seriously as a distinctive proposal concerning human association. To do that, a theory must not only avoid the shirking of history and analysis characteristic of the typological approach, it must, as well, engage nationalism on its own terms as an *argument* about the proper bases and terms and conditions of political community. Though such a theory will take account of and be informed by intellectual and political history, it must offer something more. More particularly, it must first identify with precision the nationalist argument, and then explore and offer a position on the moral foundations and political implications of that argument. I take the view that what I have dubbed the political/analytical approach to nationalism meets these requirements. I will now briefly sketch that approach before moving on to the matter of moral and political exploration and to the contribution of the Carens collection.[64]

The political/analytical approach departs from the understanding that nationalism is "a form of politics" distinguished by a specific form of argument concerning claims to state power. Accordingly, in this approach, "the term 'nationalism' ... refer[s] to political movements seeking or exercising state power and justifying such action with nationalist arguments."[65] Of particular importance for present purposes is the nature of the argument which renders political claims nationalist. For it is there that we can reasonably hope to disclose the substance of the nationalist proposal concerning political

64 For the analytical/political approach, I depend throughout on Breuilly. Though Breuilly (1994: xii) identifies his approach as "political analysis" and considers it "the key to a general understanding of nationalism," his theory of nationalism — that nationalism is a form of politics deploying certain forms of argument — is but a part of a larger historical project concerning the rise of nationalism in association with the development of the modern state. My use of Breuilly is confined to the former. For Breuilly's views of Quebec nationalism, which are not of interest here, see 331-339.

65 Breuilly (1994: 1-2). Further on in the piece, Breuilly (1994: 381) defines "a nationalist movement" as one which "seeks to bind together people in a particular territory in an endeavour to gain and use state power."

community. Breuilly offers the following characterization of the nationalist argument which will serve as our guide:[66]

> A nationalist argument is a political doctrine built upon three basic assertions:
>
> (a) There exists a nation with an explicit and peculiar character.
> (b) The interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values.
> (c) The nation must be as independent as possible. This usually requires at least political sovereignty.

The second assertion in this "core doctrine" of nationalism will await my exploration of the Quebec Problem. The third — what Buchanan calls the "normative nationalist principle"[67] — concerns secession and self-determination and for reasons already stated, need not concern us here. It is the first assertion which must occupy us at this point. For it is just that claim which, overall, carries the burden of the nationalist proposal, and it is there that the moral and political significance of neonationalism initially resides.[68]

The claim that there is a nation is the cornerstone of the nationalist position because everything else that nationalism typically proposes — self-determination, secession, and the nationalist state — depends on there being a collective subject, a people, on behalf of which such claims can be made and to which associated cultural characteristics may be attributed. Yet despite its numinous status in nationalist lore, the concept of the people is woefully undernourished in nationalist literature. For instance, after admitting that "the meaning of 'peoples'" presents "an immediate difficulty," Buchanan[69] goes on to disqualify the answer most commonly offered by the friends of nationalism — that "a 'people' is a distinct ethnic group, the identifying marks of which are a common language, shared traditions, and a common culture."[70] "Each of these

66 *Ibid.*

67 Buchanan (1993a: 587-588).

68 Though the assertions which comprise the nationalist doctrine are interdependent, the first is foundational since "without an adequate account of what constitutes a people, there can be no satisfactory theory of secession" nor, in consequence, any conception of the nationalist state: see Ewin (1994: 226).

69 Buchanan (1991: 49).

70 For commentary on this definitional difficulty at the heart of nationalist doctrine, see Ewin (1994); O'Neill (1994); DeGeorge (1988); and Geulen (1995). For an exploration of the origins and uses of "the people" in post-medieval Europe, see Burke (1992).

Quebec nationalists and their friends invariably proffer language as the solution to the people issue. Taylor (1989: 415) for instance, claims that "language is the obvious basis for a theory of nationalism founded" not on "the first wave" notions of "the political nation and a certain ideal of citizenship," but "on the expressivist notion of the special character of each

criteria," he says, "has its own difficulties." And even this is to understate the matter since, as Ewin points out, "one can recognize the history of a people or the culture of a people only *after* one has identified the people."[71] That language, in particular, provides no reprieve from these difficulties would seem to confirm Geulen's claim that, in the final analysis, there is nothing of theoretical substance to the nationalist claim.[72] But that conclusion is, in my view, too easy and too hasty. For despite its failure in meeting the metaphysical demands its assertion of nationhood seems to raise, nationalism does contain a specific proposal concerning political community which stands in stark contrast to what I take to be the liberal account.

According to the liberal view, the establishment of political community is "a morally transformative act in which human beings develop relationships as citizens that tie them together independently of their prior associational ties to family, religion, and the like."[73] Though it discounts the general political significance of pre-political and non-political identity,[74] this view does, in the

people," since language is an obviously "prime candidate for [the] constitutive, essence-defining role" which expressivism accords the people's being and past. For a commentary on the central role played by language in contemporary neonationalism, see Levinson (1995); and Spinner (1994: 140-166). Also see Appendix II, "A Note on Language."

71 Ewin (1994: 228).

72 Geulen (1995: 13). More specifically, Geulen claims that nationalism lacks "any recognizable baseline with respect either to a political program or to the criteria of nationhood."

Quebec nationalists and their philosophical translators — including, without exception, the authors collected in Carens — offer language as *the* solution to the people issue. But that is not quite correct. Better put, they offer language as the self-evident and morally benign basis of nationhood among francophone persons resident in Quebec. Like neonationalism more generally, this notion of language as the mark and source of national cultural identity — *Sprachgeist* — has its origins in the German romantic tradition, in Herder and Fichte especially: see Berlin (1991: 238-261); Taylor (1989: esp. ch. 21); and Birnbaum (1996). But, as it turns out, language is neither as easy nor as benign a carrier of national identity as nationalists would have us believe. For language is not at all a brute, natural fact of the world, nor is language antecedent to politics. For a sketch of such an argument, see Appendix II, "A Note on Language."

73 Ingram (1996: 2). The credentials for this view are as ancient as Hobbes, who defined the people as a consequence of political community: see Hobbes (1972: ch. 7, sec.7). Quoted in Ewin (1994: 225).

74 Generally, but not exclusively, because liberals also believe that certain conditions of injustice — "usually social or political discrimination against a group of people picked out on racial grounds" — may define a people in a thicker, more particular sense, and that the people in that sense may have claims to corrective justice against the state, including, in

final analysis, depend on a view of the shared personality which individuals carry into polity. Indeed, it is just this view, this understanding of the moral personality of persons as such, which makes liberal polity possible. Rawls, for instance, attributes to individuals two moral powers which define a shared humanity, namely, "the capacity to understand, to apply, and to act from, and not merely in accordance with, the principles of justice, and the capacity to form, to revise, and rationally to pursue a particular conception of the good."[75] However it is put, some such normative conception of personhood founds the liberal view of polity, since it is from that conception alone that the institutions and norms of liberal politics arise.[76]

In place of a metaphysics of nationhood, nationalists typically assume the existence of the people and straightaway assert the overweening value of collective self-realization on the people's behalf. In so doing, nationalists commit themselves to an "extended account of the state" that departs fundamentally from the liberal view of political community.[77] Instead of transforming pre-political human relations, nationalist polity becomes a cause and a venue for their perpetuation; and in the place of shared moral personality, "*nation* [is named] the distinguishing mark of the polis."[78] These are not mean measures. For together their effect is to redefine not only political subjectivity, but personal identity as well. The calculus is simple: since national identity — again, generally assumed — need only be elevated to political significance

certain circumstances, the right to secede. But this liberal rationale for secession is "not based on a common culture or anything of that sort; it is based upon arguments about the corruption of the existing government." See Ewin (1994: 229-230). See also discussion in note 21, *supra* and "Grounding Nationalism," which is appended to this essay. From this liberal perspective, First Nation Canadians have a much stronger case for corrective justice than do Quebecers. Because they conceive of the matter in nationalist terms and therefore in terms of identity and authenticity, the essays in the Carens collection which deal with the First Nations in Quebec tend — with one exception — either to moderate this view or to find reasons of definitional fiat to exclude any right of secession by First Nations from Quebec. The exception is Reg Whitaker's essay (1995: 205, 209, 198, 206) which neither moderates nor trivializes the First Nations' claim.

75 Benson (1994: 491). Also see Rawls (1993: 18-19, 29-35, and *passim*); and Johnston (1994: ch. 4).

76 There are, of course, views of liberalism which defend liberal polity not in terms of morality, but in the Hobbesian tradition, as a necessary *modus vivendi*: concerning which, see Johnston (1994: 58ff). For a useful rehearsal of liberal values and institutions, see Johnston (1994: 17-27).

77 O'Neill (1994: 138).

78 Shell (1993: 179).

because, in some sense significant,[79] people *are* that identity, the conflation of political community and nation entails equating political, cultural, and personal identity. Persons and the people thereby become one, and the self is thus rendered at once, and exhaustively, political and cultural.

But once again, whence the national identity which works these results? Beck[80] claims that though today we speak of "cultural identity ... as though something substantial and singular were indicated that is possible to define and distinguish," an "essentialist difficulty" inheres in all such "substantives," and that this difficulty will forever bedevil all such gestures at categorizing and closing the "indistinctiveness and ambivalence" which characterize the world. While this is no doubt true — we will have cause to reflect on the implications of this excess of being elsewhere in this essay — to leave matters there is, in the present context, to forgive nationalists their crude assumption of national identity and to abandon, very early along at least, inquiry about the moral and political significance of the nationalist proposal. What is worse, neither course of action is in the event necessary. For nationalists have become increasingly sensitive to the need to ground their programme, and have proposed a way of viewing national identity which they appear to believe meets objections such as Beck's. And it is there, I think, that the final contours of nationalism are to be found.

Contemporary nationalists want a thick identity without committing to the glue of traditional ontology.[81] For instance, while he is committed to the view that "each people has its own way of being, thinking, and feeling, to which it ought to be true," and while he admits that this view requires "roots ... in the nature of things, ... in [a people's] being and past," Taylor is quick to distance himself from any suggestion of "a natural order conceived in the old hierarchial mode."[82] But in the absence of essentialism, grounding the cultural identity that constitutes the people is no easy task. Language has been enlisted by many nationalists, including Taylor, to shoulder this burden; but that solution is

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79 See Kymlicka's discussion of the significance of identity (1995b: 84-95). For his part, Taylor (1993a: 190) claims "our identity is what defines us as human agents; it is 'who' we are."

80 Beck (1996: 379).

81 Though I cannot pursue the matter here, it occurs to me that nationalists cringe from ontology because they understandably wish to distance themselves from the defences of "the people" offered by European fascism earlier in this century. Indeed, on a larger scale, it could be argued that the theoretical evanescence of contemporary nationalism as a whole has everything to do with that very same matter.

82 Taylor (1989: 415).

fraught with all manner of difficulties.[83] Perhaps as a result, nationalists are taking more and more seriously the historicism which their abhorrence of ontology provides them, and are increasingly moving to what may be termed a social constructivist understanding and defence of cultural identity.

According to this view, despite its "naturalistic legitimating narratives,"[84] what nationalism is about is not the reclamation or expression of identity, but its formation. Which is to say, the nation is a socially and politically constructed category which originates in nationalism itself and not in nature.[85] If, therefore, "nationalism comes before nations,"[86] and if, in consequence, nationalism "constructs identities anew"[87] and is, in that sense, performative rather than descriptive, the focus of inquiry shifts from the origins of the people in nature to the nature and origins of the nationalist construction of the people.

Laid bare, nationalism is, for these reasons, simply a "way of classifying groups of human beings."[88] But this simplicity quickly evaporates in a series of

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83 See my Appendix: "A Note on Language."

84 Brown (1995: 53).

85 See, for example, Anderson (1983: 15-16) (the nation "is an imagined political community"); Gellner (1983: 11 and 55); Hobsbawm (1991: 9f); Breuilly (1994: 1, 405-406, and *passim)*; Arnason (1990); and on politics, more generally, as "the constitution of political community ... where a 'we' is constituted," Mouffe (1992).

This turn away from nature and to social practice for the origins of national identity carries two very important consequences. First, by committing themselves to this understanding, nationalists are situating nationalism on the same terrain as liberals as regards the transformative significance of political community. For now "in spite of appearances..., nationalism rests not on the idea of the nation, but on the idea of the State": see Ruggiero (1959: 416). What, therefore, will henceforth distinguish nationalism from liberalism is not the origins of the people, but the nature of the people to be constructed. Combined with nationalism's romantic origins, this understanding compels as a second consequence, the aestheticization of politics. Unlike liberalism, due to these romantic lineaments, nationalism projects a poetic dream about the absolute self-creation of the collective subject; and this in my mind accounts for the nature of nationalist narratives about the people. For a discussion of national aestheticism, see Lacoue-Labarthe (1990).

86 Gellner (1983: 11).

87 Breuilly (1994: 406).

88 Hobsbawm (1991: 5). The authors in Carens join the classification fray with abandon. Adelman's (Carens, 1995: 164, 185-188) contribution in this regard is particularly byzantine. After first distinguishing between Quebecois and Quebecers, he segregates minorities in Quebec into three classes — English, immigrants, and First Nations. Not to be out done, editor Carens (1995: 47) distinguishes between immigrants and residents, and separates the latter as anglos, aboriginals, and ethnics.

more fundamental perplexities. To begin, what does it mean to undertake a task of this sort? And then, how and why would it be undertaken? Before reengaging Carens, and in order further to disclose the nationalist proposal, I will briefly explore these questions. My intention in doing so is to argue that nationalism is a political practice of fracturing both human society and political community.

Because it is about the construction of identity, nationalism constitutes a claim about the Other, about the Other's status and its relation to Us; and because nationalism is a call for control of state apparatus, it is a claim as well for power with respect to the Other. Our present concern is the former.[89] Nationalism implicates the Other because identity is differential. Connolly puts the matter succinctly: "every identity is particular, constructed, and relational."[90] That identity is relational means that "to assert one's own differential identity involves ... the inclusion in that identity of the Other, as that from whom one delimits oneself."[91] National identity, too, is relational in just this way:[92]

> [N]ationality is a relational term whose identity derives from its inherence in a system of differences. In the same way that 'man' and 'woman' define themselves reciprocally (though never symmetrically), national identity is determined not on basis of its own intrinsic properties but as a function of what it (presumably) is not. Implying 'some element of alterity for its definition,' a nation is ineluctably 'shaped by what it opposes.'

While there is "no single kind of 'other' of what a nation is to which all [instances of nationalism] can by the same structuration be definitionally opposed,"[93] many take the view that nationalism necessarily requires conceiving of the Other as an enemy.[94] There is, of course, an abundance of historical evidence for this view. As a theoretical matter, however, the case is more complex. If all identity is relational and if identity is ineluctable, then to establish this view one would have either to propose that all relations between people are characterized by enmity or else distinguish political relations from all other sorts of differential relations. Present purposes happily do not require a resolution of this question. It is sufficient to understand that what nationalists are

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89 The second matter will serve as my point of departure in exploring the Quebec Problem.

90 Connolly (1991: 46).

91 Laclau (1995: 148).

92 Parker (1992: 5).

93 Parker (1992: 241).

94 See for example: Schmitt (1976); Verdery (1991); Edelman (1988); Gilroy (1990); and Salecl (1990:25) ("National identification ... is based on the fantasy of an enemy, an alien who has insinuated himself into our society and constantly threatens us with habits, discourse, and rituals which are not 'our kind.'") See further, *infra*, note 165.

about in the construction of national identity is the construction of the nation's Other.

Miller claims that "national communities are constituted by belief," and not by any shared "natural" trait such as race or language.[95] i ek adds the blush that national identities arise from the belief "that others (members of my community) believe."[96] These are critical insights. Not only do they explain the leading role of intellectuals in nationalist movements — intellectuals, of course, create, defend, and disseminate nationalist beliefs[97] — they also provide essential direction to any attempt to lay bare nationalism. For they establish the critical question which any such inquiry must ask: what is it that nationalists are believing when they believe in the existence of the people? Having answered this question — which I will attempt to do in a moment — the investigation may then with confidence move to the normative issue on which the whole and hold of nationalism finally depends, namely, the grounds on which nationalist beliefs are thought proper.

Nationalists believe that "at the root of the 'I,' there is a 'we.'"[98] That is, they believe that persons are defined — morally and culturally always, existentially sometimes — by their location and membership in the collective, cultural category nationalists designate as 'the people.' This understanding takes one or the other of two forms.[99] According to what might be termed the strong

[95] Miller (1993: 6). For another statement along these lines, see Wells (1961: 780) (defining the nation as an "accumulation of human beings who think they are one people"). This understanding has its origins in Weber who defined ethnic groups as "human groups (other than kinship groups) which cherish a belief in their common origins of such a kind that it provides a basis for the creation of a community." See Runciman (1978: 364). See also Stone (1995).

[96] i ek (1990: 52).

[97] On the matter of intellectuals in nationalism, see *supra* note 40.

[98] The wording is Giovanni Gentile's, quoted in Sternhall (1976: 345). Simone Weil's counter to such sentiments — "Any sentence which begins with the word 'We' is a lie": quoted in O'Brien (1994: 101) — is not, incidentally, necessarily the liberal view. Indeed, the productive sense — a sense captured by Levinas' notion of the interpersonal — in which views such as Gentile's are inevitably, and perhaps tragically, true is the point of departure of any mature theory of liberalism.

[99] These strands of nationalist understanding are, perhaps surprisingly, united in the view that collective cultural particularism is itself a universal feature of the human condition. See Laclau (1995: 150); Geulen (1995: 8-10); and Bauman (1992: 109-117).

nationalist position,[100] the national category is so entirely consuming that persons are mere *effects* and *instantiations* of the happenchance of their cultural location.[101] More moderate nationalists, on the other hand, tend to think of national identity as an *achievement* which, therefore, allows for and preserves personal autonomy.[102] These understandings, however, remain united at a more fundamental level. For each proposes both that membership in a 'people' is an inevitable and necessary mark of personal identity and, therefore, properly of political identity as well *and* that 'peoples' differ — that they are 'other' to one another — in terms of the cultural substance and opportunities of the membership each provides.[103] When nationalists believe in the existence of the people, it is to just these proposals about the human situation and political community that they are professing faith.

Nationalists offer two arguments in support of these beliefs.[104] Neither argument really grounds nationalism. On the contrary, their purchase is to render the nationalist proposal, on the one hand, attractive and, on the other, necessary, always on the assumption that nationalism's overall understanding of the human situation is somehow correct on some other, independent and undisclosed

[100] But not by them alone. All order of marxists and postmarxists share a similar view. For an exploration of the host of difficulties this persisting superstructuralism has caused left theory and practice, see Cocks (1989).

[101] Though traces of this view can be found everywhere in nationalist literature — and as we'll discover, for good reason — it has been most candidly and consistently advanced by neonationalists on the extreme right. See for example: Koellreutter (1938); Larenz (1934); and Johanny and Redelberger (1941).

[102] This understanding is characteristic of those nationalists who incorporate into their positions the theoretical view that nationalism is a matter of belief and not of nature. Most of these, in turn, are 'liberal' nationalists of whom Tamir has in short order become the archetype. I will argue in a moment that the twin commitments of liberal nationalists to collective authenticity and liberal values cannot both be sustained, and that this tension accounts for a slippage back into strong nationalist positions.

[103] The last part is necessary because otherwise the existence of peoples would carry no purchase, and nationalists would be forced to abandon the particularism which is their mark in favour of a thick universalism of a suspiciously cosmopolitan sort.

[104] The argument from authenticity and the argument from integration are analytically distinct and freestanding and not all nationalists express both. Taylor (1989: 415), for instance, connects authenticity and integration: language "bring[s] cohesion to modern societies" because it expresses national identity. Others — such as Adelman and Norman — advance one or the other in support of nationalism.

basis.[105] The first offers an argument from authenticity which portrays nationalism as a political practice whose purposes are human flourishing and fulfilment. The second consists of the claim — sometimes empirical, sometimes normative, oftentimes a confusing mixture of both — that national identity alone can provide cohesion and integration in modern societies. In the Carens collection, Adelman's essay on secession offers a version of the first argument, and Norman's essay on unity in the multi-nation state, a version of the second. As such, these contributions provide a welcome opportunity to evaluate the strength and to assess the implications of the arguments nationalists typically muster to carry the burden of their proposals.

Liberals think political community a precondition for personal authenticity, and they associate authenticity with the life projects and moral choices of individuals. Accordingly, under the liberal view, political community establishes the moral and legal conditions for societies to flourish, and a flourishing society is a society of individuals who articulate and pursue their own, always renouncable, visions of the good life under those conditions. Nationalists take a very different view of flourishing because they thicken the measure of authenticity. While for liberals the cognate of authenticity is personal freedom, the politically conditioned capacity to choose one's self and one's identity,[106] for

[105] In consequence, the core beliefs of nationalism are really articles of faith. Why one would arrive at that faith, rather than a liberal faith — why one would prefer disunity over unity, the local over the universal, a particularist promise over a cosmopolitan one — is a matter of much interest which cannot be pursued in this essay. In my view, nationalism is finally motivated by a psycho-social reaction to the social and spiritual conditions of modernity which expresses itself in anxiety and resentment. See generally, *supra* notes 38 and 46. For an exploration of anxiety, see Fromm (1941). On resentment, see Scheler (1972). For Berlin on these matters, see Berlin (1991: 260-261 and 244-247). For a happier view of the fluidity and provisionality characteristic of the modern experience, see Berman (1982).

As for those other, undisclosed reasons, it is surely the case that nationalism expresses and ultimately depends upon a cultural relativism which argues that since there is no view from nowhere, every view is context dependent and specific and irredeemably local. For Taylor's understanding of this sort of perspectivism, see Taylor (1993b: 66-85). For a thorough-going moral and ethical critique of perspectivism, see Mohanty (1992).

[106] This is not to equate freedom with authenticity, nor therefore to implicate or to endorse paternalism. Liberals associate authenticity with liberty precisely to forbid just that. See Beehler (1990). Nor does the liberal view depend on any ontology of the 'atomist' sort for which it is often criticized. Not only is no such view theoretically required, it has in fact not been proffered in the intellectual history of liberalism. See McClain (1992).

nationalists, authenticity descends from fidelity to one's culturally defined identity.[107]

Nationalists claim that this national identity deserves fidelity because it constitutes the truth of persons — each of us, they say, has a 'true self,' a "noumenal self," in just this sense — and they think that this truth, in turn, demands fidelity, since any apostasy in this critical regard condemns the unfaithful to lives which are not really their own.[108] The obvious source of all of this is nationalism's organic view of the nation and of the self. If nations have each their unique ways of being, and if ethical truth for empirical individuals resides in those collective ways, then the meter of authenticity must indeed be the correspondence between individual lives and the expressive unity to which they belong and owe allegiance.[109]

But even this does not fully capture the nuance of the nationalist notion. Paul Ricoeur draws a distinction between two senses of identity — identity as sameness and identity as self. The first, he claims, consists of a description of the same, especially in terms of uniqueness and permanence, while the second takes shape in the ascription of the self, its self-authorization. National identity is an identity of sameness in Ricouer's sense. It lays claim to the national 'same'

[107] The implications of this association as it regards freedom will be discussed in the second part of this essay. For now suffice it to say that the nearer the association becomes to equation, the more diminished is liberty. And in any event — as Berlin (1969: 160) recognizes — the nationalist relationship between authenticity and fidelity necessarily compromises freedom at least to the extent that the freedom on offer in nationalism is always in consequence "a hybrid form of freedom."

That this is so also renders problematic another theme in contemporary nationalist literature, namely, the association of recognition and freedom. Under this view, the demand for recognition attaches itself to the real or true self assumed by the association of authenticity with fidelity and this, in turn, implicates freedom because, as put by Taylor (1993b: 50 and 25), "we can only flourish to the extent that we are recognized." But, again, as Berlin (1969: 158-159, 163-169) recognizes, since the recognition articulated in this fashion is not one which seeks something from the other(s) of the nationalist community, but one that is inner directed and instead seeks, consistent with its expressivist origins, "for union, closer understanding, integration of interests, a life of common dependence and common sacrifice," its association with liberty is at least very problematic. For Taylor's views on Quebec nationalism and recognition, see Taylor (1991b: 64-65).

[108] On the truth of the national self and authenticity, see Berlin (1969: 131-141 and 146-147); and Taylor (1989: 374ff and 413-418).

[109] For the organicism of nationalist theory, see Berlin (1991: 223-227 and 238-261) and Berlin (1969: 132-135 and158-162); and Taylor (1989: 374-377 and 415-418), and Taylor (1993b: 31).

in order always to proclaim its uniqueness and to privilege its permanence.[110] Liberal authenticity, on the other hand, is just as much an expression of identity-as-self, which is to say, of a view of identity as self-authorship. Viewed in this fashion, nationalism and liberalism cannot be separated on the ground that the one but not the other is a political theory of self-realization, since liberalism is every bit as much concerned with authenticity as is nationalism. The difference lies instead in their respective understandings of the nature of the self to be realized and of the political conditions proper to that end.[111]

In his "Quebec: The Morality of Secession," Howard Adelman[112] offers what he takes to be a complete reply to the Quebec Question. Nationalism in Quebec is not, in his view, about consent to governance (though consent, he is quick to add, is "a procedural prerequisite"), nor is it about justice.[113] Rather, what accounts for the grip of nationalism in Quebec is "collective identity, collective autonomy, and collective fulfilment," the desire of "French Canadians in Quebec to be '*maîtres chez nous*.'"[114] With this reply, Adelman aligns himself squarely with the nationalist argument from authenticity and with the host of sins for which that argument is always an occasion. Adelman's rehearsal of the matter, though typical, is rewarding at least in its candour. After a perfunctory nod to

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[110] Ricoeur (1991). That nationalist authenticity resides in an identity of this sort probably accounts for the lack of purchase of 'liberal' theories of nationalism such as the one articulated by Tamir. While one may easily characterize national identity as an object of individual choice, such a characterization cannot carry the burden of the view of authenticity to which nationalists are committed. This is so because nationalist authenticity rides on an identity of the sort described by Ricoeur, an identity pregnant from the very beginning with the normative stuff of uniqueness and permanence. For this reason too, self-consciously constructivist theories of normative nationalism also fail: since under the constructionist view "no identity is true identity" [see Connolly (1991: 46)], such theories forbid themselves the sort of identity required to shoulder the claims they nonetheless always make about authenticity. These difficulties no doubt also account for the slippage between constructionist and natural identity talk so characteristic of constructivist theories generally and 'liberal' theories in particular. Equally, I think, they disclose that nationalism's purchase finally turns on the attribution, implicit or otherwise, of a thick natural identity and on the adoption, express or not, of *Voelkgeist* ideology. For views along these lines, see Birnbaum (1996).

[111] For explorations of authenticity more generally, see Golomb (1995); Ferrara (1993); Berman (1971); and Adorno (1973). For commentary on contemporary theorizing of authenticity, see Lysaker (1996); and Cooke (1994).

[112] Carens (1995: 160-192).

[113] Carens (1995: 165-170).

[114] Carens (1995: 170).

Quebec nationalism's liberal credentials,[115] and after proposing that "a sovereign people takes moral and political precedence over the sovereignty of a state,"[116] Adelman enlists authenticity to define nationalism, to identify the Quebecois nation (and to segregate its Other), and to measure political legitimacy.

According to Adelman, nationalism is about "the creative expression of the power of the nation."[117]The nation, in turn, — and this is where the candour begins — starts with "a concept of a people," which is to say, with the concept of the "Staatsvolk, the ethnic group that [ought to] define[] the character of the state"; and the nation in that sense is defined by what it is not, by its ethnic Other(s).[118] Adelman names Anglos, immigrants, and persons of First Nations ancestry as "Other" to the Quebecois nation.[119] From this (unpleasant) business, Adelman then draws a distinction between political and national identity, between membership in a state and membership in a people, which grounds his application of authenticity to political legitimacy.[120] Notwithstanding that all persons resident in Quebec — Quebecers he calls them[121] — are entitled, presumably by force of democratic principles alone, to participate in the determination of their governmental representatives, and notwithstanding that the issue of Quebec sovereignty must depend solely on majoritarian preference so expressed, the Quebecois nation alone is the source of "authentic authority"

[115] Carens (1995: 160-164). Adelman contrasts liberal nationalism to what he terms "nativist" nationalism, the one open and the other closed with respect to membership at least in political community, and perhaps in national community as well. For the origins of the open/closed dichotomy, see *supra*, note 57.

[116] And thereafter naming — alas, with no sense of the irony involved — opponents of nationalism as "defenders of statism." See Carens (1995: 161 and 171). For another ironic twist of subsequent fate in Adelman, see Carens (1995: 192, fn. 35).

[117] Carens (1995: 175).

[118] Carens (1995: 163, 181-182). Adelman thereby equates nationalism and ethno-ationalism with the (allegedly liberal) caveat that the ethno-other might yet convert to the majority identity (164 and 183-189). He proceeds, however, to compromise whatever integrity the caveat might otherwise tenuously have by then construing national identity as a "natural" identity (184). That Adelman appears unaware how his proposal generally — and his equation of political and natural Volk in particular — sounds in history I think remarkable: see Koellreutter (1936: 71f); Huber (1939: 153ff); and Ward (1992: *passim*). I deal with Adelman's pauline proposal in part II.

[119] Carens (1995: 185-189).

[120] Carens (1995: 183-185).

[121] Carens (1995: 164).

in Quebec.[122] This is so because "sovereignty is decided by allegiance and identity," that is, by "a people," "a stäatsnation."[123] With this — and despite his curtsy to liberal norms and majoritarian practice — Adelman discloses what is always the bottom line of the nationalist argument from authenticity, namely, that its import is to name a people through identification of the people's Other, and that its effect is to conflate state and nation, political and cultural identity.

This welcome candour is not the essay's only reward. It also serves well to disclose two fundamental difficulties which invariably attend the argument from authenticity. Not only does the argument fail to provide a means for determining national membership, it also confuses and dilutes the distinction between persons and 'the people.' The confusion arises both from a failure to discriminate between personal and social identity, and from a too easy conflation of social and national identity. While it may indeed be true that social identity is important to one's sense of self, without more, that does not mean that national identity is the most important source of social identity or that personal identity is consumed by social identity whatever its source. The dilution is the result of the nationalist conflation of political and cultural identity. Once politics is reduced to nationality, personal identity becomes lost to cultural identity, and ceases to serve as a reference for either polity or civil society. It simply disappears. It becomes extinct.

The second difficulty arises indirectly from the first. In the place of a metaphysics which would defend their position on authenticity, nationalists (Adelman included)[124] typically offer a critique of what they take to be the liberal premises of polity. Generally, after first claiming that liberalism is premised upon an ontology which takes persons to be disencarnate subjects, these critiques proceed to declare liberal ontology mistaken on the grounds that identity is instead historic, contingent, and communal. That these criticisms are themselves mistaken, that radical liberal autonomy is normative, a prescription about political community and practice and not remotely an ontological description, that the grand historicist revelation on which they are based by itself offers answer to no issue of political interest, is not presently the point. The point instead is this: that rather than shouldering the burden of their position, nationalists seek refuge in a critique which can offer them neither solace nor

[122] Carens (1995: 176). On the apparent inconsistency here and as regards especially the possibility that Anglos and ethnics might frustrate national will, Adelman manages only to remark that such an eventuality "would provide an enormous psychological boost for separatist forces" 170).

[123] Carens (1995: 180, 177-182).

[124] Carens (1995: 171-183).

direction, which is simply to say, nationalism has its own case to meet. Its integrity as a political proposal must turn on the force of its defence of the ethical predicate — "the people" — which it has claimed as its own; and that case has, on the one hand, everything to do with persuading that, in some sense relevant, "the people" does indeed exist and, on the other, nothing to do with the ethical premises of liberalism (or any other competing proposal), whatever they are and however mistaken they might be.

Norman's essay also answers the Quebec Question. His answer, however, relies not on authenticity, but on the second nationalist argument, the argument from cohesion.[125] The cohesion argument appears at first to offer a purely empirical claim. Shared political values — including especially, the distinctively liberal values of justice and equality, tolerance and rights — are not sufficient, not at least alone, to provide the unity necessary for political community; what political unity instead requires is the solidarity which pre-political national identity alone can provide.[126] Norman's redaction too appears mainly empirical in intent and origin.[127] He submits that "a stable national unity" requires a shared political identity thicker than the identity which attaches to liberal values and one instead that relies "less on shared values" than on "a national identity" moulded by "myths, symbols, and ethnicity;"[128] but he argues primarily by analogy, by historical reference, and by political anecdote,[129] and only rarely (and inadequately) by theoretical engagement.[130] That this argument is so often, as here, undersold theoretically, does not mean that it is without theoretic interest. Just the contrary. The attraction and, finally, the frailty of the argument from cohesion is fully normative and thoroughly theoretical.[131]

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[125] Carens (1995: 137-159). For an early statement of Norman's argument in "The Ideology of Shared Values," see Norman (1994).

[126] Whether the "instead" should (instead) read "in addition" is ambiguous. Norman's position is demonstrative. At one point, he concedes that "there are some sorts of values that members of a liberal democratic society have to share," yet he concludes a discussion of the relationship between identity and values — common identity leads to shared values, not "vice versa" — by announcing "the spectacular irrelevance of shared values to national unity" (143 and 147-149).

[127] Indeed, Norman (156) expressly defers any consideration of the philosophical literature on the matter.

[128] Carens (1995: 138-139, 143, 149 and 155).

[129] Carens (1995: 147, 141-142, 145-154, 130-140).

[130] Carens (1995: 143-145, 147).

[131] Incidentally, the argument is problematic even empirically. Ingram (1996: 3), for instance, suggests that as an empirical matter, "the particularity of shared political institutions may be no less conducive to solidarity than pre-political identities."

It is sometimes suggested that the cohesion argument has liberal credentials. Kylimcka, for example, cites Mill in this regard.[132] But this is surely wrong. For the most fundamental of reasons, liberals must be committed to some version of what Habermas calls "constitutional patriotism" and must, therefore, oppose any proposal that would premise polity on national identity.[133] Liberals and nationalists have profoundly divergent ethical orientations to human and political community. For the nationalist, community is an always already existing ethical configuration, the political and moral import of which is expression and preservation. As Mill well knew, for the liberal, community presents an entirely different problem politically. Because for liberals, community is not simply there prior to politics — not at least in any form which is not itself an issue of politics — the liberal problem is not the continuation of pre-political community, but the creation morally of a distinctively political community. While nationalists seek to protect a community of persons who have everything in common, liberals seek to found a community among those who, prior to politics, have nothing in common.

The weakness of the nationalist argument resides in this difference. For the argument from cohesion to have any purchase beyond prudence or prediction, for it to carry the moral force reasonably required of any proposal concerning the terms and conditions of human community, it must defend, morally and ethically, the community which it takes to be the polestar of politics. But it is

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[132] See Kymlicka (1996: 125), citing Mill's (1991: 428, 430) comment on "fellow-feelings" in "Of Nationality, As Connected With Representative Government":

> Among a people without fellow feelings, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion necessary to the workings of representative government cannot exist.... [I]t is in general a necessary condition of free institutions that the boundaries of governments should coincide in the main with those of nationalities.

On the face of it, Mill's claim appears purely prudential. That this is so gains support from his later, much more normative comments in the same essay — a comment not referenced by Kymlicka — denouncing nationality (430, 432):

> If it be said that so broadly marked a distinction between what is due a fellow countryman and what is due merely to a human creature, is more worthy of savages than of civilized beings and ought, with the utmost energy, to be contended against, no one holds that opinion more strongly than myself. But this object, one of the worthiest to which human endeavour can be directed, can never, in the present state of civilization, be promoted by keeping different nationalities of anything like equivalent strength, under the same government..... Whatever really tends to the admixture of nationalities, and the bleeding of their attributes and peculiarities in a common union, is a benefit to the human race.

[133] See *supra* note 30.

just this that nationalists, here as elsewhere, refuse to do. Instead, they assume not only the sociological existence of community, but more significantly, its moral and ethical significance as well. Whereas, then, liberals candidly lay bare the substance of their project, nationalists in effect decline theirs, and seek purchase instead under the cover of ambiguity and in the safe confines of armchair sociology.

What, then, may we conclude with respect to the Quebec Question? On the basis of the preceding engagement with nationalist literature, both in Carens and beyond, we can, I think, fairly conclude that nationalists and their friends neither in fact provide, nor can they possibly provide, an answer. They fail because in the place of argument, they offer assumptions. Their assumption of 'the people' renders the nation a pure consciousness with neither bodily support or definition nor political or moral significance. When they proffer authenticity and cohesion as arguments on behalf of the nation, those claims are fated to fail. For what is being tendered is an authenticity without purpose and a cohesion where none is needed. The whole of the nationalist proposal, in this fashion, disappears into the sinkhole created by the corrosive absence of any proper defence, any real substantiation or any acceptable theory, of 'the people,' the subject whose name and cause the entire nationalist project allegedly serves.

But this fatal omission of the metaphysics on which all else appears to reside cannot be attributed simply to ineptitude or to intellectual laziness or dishonesty, though there is much, I think, of each afoot in the political and philosophical discourse of nationalism. To think nationalism a failed or incomplete metaphysics, to interpret it as somehow an unaccomplished "dream of a fundamental ontology," is seriously to miss its point.[134]Nationalism's "ultimate irrationality... as a political ideology" arises only in one sense from intellectual failure.[135] At a deeper level, nationalism fails to provide what its claims appear to require, because nationalism is not finally about intellectual inquiry or the moral defence of political proposals; nationalism is a form of politics, and it is therefore about — and only about — power. This is the reason nationalists cannot possibly provide a coherent reply to the question of Quebec nationalism: intellectual rigour or integrity is not their business, seizing power is. The "cunning of nationhood" is that nationalism leads us to believe otherwise.[136]

[134] Spivak (1992: 796).
[135] Breuilly (1994: 399).
[136] Huyssen (1992: 65).

There is, however, another conclusion, one having more to do with nationalism's philosophical friends than with its political practitioners. It is this: that we have an abundance of very good reasons soundly to reject nationalism as a form of politics. Gyorgy Konrad[137] claims that "*the* question for philosophy" is not, as some of the existentialists believed, suicide, but murder. By this, he means that it is our attitude to the Other, and not our attitude to the self, that finally matters to all the questions that really matter. Nationalism's consuming collective narcissism informs an attitude of condescension towards the Other.[138] The Other, wholly and simply, is that caught in the opaque and homogenizing happenstance of its cultural or linguistic or ethnic or racial situation. The meter of difference does not really matter. What counts is nationalism's instruction in the name of difference and the consequences to which faith in that teaching ineluctably leads. Nationalism commands the faithful to categorize the world. It would have its stewards produce "an ethnicization of the world," and with that, a settling of ethical possibility and a levelling of political promise.[139]

An unconvinced nationalist, Isaiah Berlin, counsels that human hope rests on our "inhabit[ing] one common moral world."[140] By declaring proper a practice, personal as well as political, of encountering others not as corporeal persons but as each a synecdoche, an instantiation of some differential whole, nationalism not only disfigures, but vitiates the ethical encounter between embodied individuals which alone may serve as a basis for moral unity. By conceiving of difference in the categoric fashion in which it does, the authenticity which nationalism proposes constitutes an intrinsic assault on individuals, on their corporeal reality and on their social relations. The Other's face, as Levinas would have it, never appears in a nationalist world.[141] What appears before the convinced nationalist, rather, is "a character within a context," an Other defined in relation to something else.[142] By choosing "to thematize the Other and consider him in the same manner one considers a known object," the nationalist refuses "being in direct relation with the Other,"[143] denies the ethical possibility of his "being-for-the-other,"[144] and forsakes empathy as the way of being-with-others. With this foreclosure of empathy, the nationalist abandons the

[137] Konrad (1990: 9).
[138] For an exploration of "ontological narcissism," see Connolly (1991: 30ff).
[139] Birnbaum (1996).
[140] Berlin (1991: 206).
[141] Levinas (1985: 85-92). See also in this regard Lingis (1994: esp. 39-67).
[142] Levinas (1985: 86).
[143] Levinas (1985: 57).
[144] Levinas (1985: 52).

preconditions of the moral unity on which Berlin so wisely hinges hope.[145] For empathy alone provides that inter-subject place "beyond ontology," the forum of the social, in which beings burdened with difference may yet encounter one another as equal persons.[146]

The reasons we have to reject nationalist politics are, then, both ethical and moral, and they are as good as our commitments to solidarity and equality, to the possibility and promise of human communion within and beyond difference.[147]

II. THE QUEBEC PROBLEM: MANAGING THE OTHER?

Because it is about the construction of identity, nationalism constitutes a claim about the Other; and because nationalism is a call for the control of the state, it is a claim as well for power with respect to the Other. The Quebec Problem attends this second claim and concerns, therefore, the political morality of the nationalist state. More particularly, what has to be disclosed is the nature, origin, and moral costs and consequences of this claim. I will argue that the costs are great, inevitable, and never-ending, and for purposes of illustration, I will explore the unsettling account of nationalist morality offered in several of the essays in the Carens collection.

Breuilly[148] identifies the priority of national interests and values over all other interests and values as the second characteristic of nationalist politics. If this is correct — and nationalists neither can, nor in fact do, dispute it[149] — then

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[145] For explorations of empathy along these lines, see Vetlesen (1994) and Deigh (1995).

[146] Vetlesen (1994: 259-260); Levinas (1985: 58).

[147] Nationalist efforts to calculate equality — never mind solidarity — between nations are fated to fail because the critical distinction between merit and luck appears not to apply to cultural collectivities. See, for example, the curious outcome to Taylor's (1993b: 66-73) investigation of equality between cultures. Beyond the difficulties encountered in these attempts to ground objective evaluations from the outside, there is, of course, the additional matter of the uncertain status of equality as a public and personal commitment within nationalist cultures. See, in this regard, Berlin (1991: 176-177) (defining nationalism as "a belief in the unique mission of the nation, as being intrinsically superior to the goals or attributes of whatever is outside it").

[148] Breuilly (1994: 2).

[149] That they can't, I will demonstrate in a moment. That they don't, see for example Taylor (1993b: 58) ("It is axiomatic for Quebec governments that the survival and flourishing of French culture is a good. Political society is not neutral between those who value remaining true to the culture of our ancestors and those who might want to cut loose in the name of some individual goal of self-development."); and Taylor (1991b: 126) ("[O]ne cannot conceive of a Quebec state that would not be called upon to defend and promote French

nationalists not only “covet agency for the community” before coming to power,[150] they also must “act as agents of their nation” after seizing the state.[151] The matter of interest is not so much that nationalist states act in the interests of the nation as what acting in those interests involves, and why.

It is generally proposed that, since what Taylor calls the “identificatory function” cannot be “confin[ed] ... only to ‘private’ institutions” and “cannot [therefore] be excluded from the public domain,”[152] the nationalist state must conflate ‘people’ and politics, state and nation, law and *Weltanschauung* and, thereby, perforce become the “Subject-State,” the “fully realized metaphysics” of the people.[153] It is not, I think, anywhere in dispute that the nationalist state does politicize civil society, that it is, to some degree at least, variously a *Kultur-Staat*, a *Voelkisch Staat* and a *Bewegungsstaat*.[154] What may be contested, however, is the argument to those conclusions. For it would appear that something more than the nationalist state's concern with the nation is required to make the case that the morality of the nationalist state is, in some sense significant, suspect. I want to argue that the reason the nationalist state's morality is not just suspect, but indeed condemnable, has to do not with the state's concern for national culture, not at least directly, but with certain features which inhere in the very fabric of nationalism as a description of the human situation.[155]

Nationalism supposes and espouses a “singular and coherent identity.”[156] Which is to say — and no matter whether it is put in terms of natural essence or in terms of constructive accomplishment — nationalism proceeds from the

language and culture.”). I will come shortly to the parties against whom culture has to be protected, and why.

150 Jayal (1993: 150).

151 Brilmayer (1995: 8).

152 Taylor (1993a: 127).

153 Lacoue-Labarth and Nancy (1990: 294-296, 303-307). Under this view, then, the metaphysics which nationalism fails to provide theoretically, it provides politically.

154 The nationalist state is, after all, nationalist precisely to the extent that it expands the reach of the state to culture, that it proposes to act in the name of a people, and that its leadership takes itself to be leading a movement.

155 It is sometimes claimed that the problem arises from the very status of national interests: that because “the interests of a native land are an abstraction” and because the nationalist state yet claims to act on that basis, the state is confined in nothing it does, since anything it may do could be legitimated on those empty grounds. Once again, while this is no doubt true descriptively, it fails, in my view, to disclose what it is about nationalism which, among other things, makes the national interest an abstraction. See Konrad (1990: 10).

156 Cocks (1996: 534).

understanding that national identity is somehow both secure and closed. From this vantage, nationalism is every bit "a postulate of homogeneity."[157] But there's the rub: we *know* this homogeneity to be false. We know, that is, that there exists no such robust commonality whatever is the ground — nation or class or race or gender — nominated for its securement. For if modernity carries any "insight," it is one "about the fundamental failure of identity."[158] Identities, national identity included, are never coherent because they are "always constitutionally fractured" and, in consequence, invariably unstable.[159] This is so not only because identities are "dependent upon the other"[160] — though in the case of national identity, we will soon discover, that feature turns out to be critical — but also, and more generally, because "life exceeds identity."[161]

This condition leaves nationalism itself somewhat fractured constitutionally. For, in the result, there exists within nationalism a very real and very unavoidable "tension between the myth of a community, be it cultural or ethnic, and the reality of disunity." This tension in turn defines two very pronounced tendencies within nationalism. On the one hand, there is the tendency "to suppress the differences within a nation" and, on the other, what has been termed "the centrifugal force inherent within nationalism," namely, the tendency that "each 'ethnic and cultural group' within [the] existing nation" will claim "its own nation."[162]

That the identity it supposes is fraught with these fractures and tensions, that though endlessly proclaimed, national identity can never really be either secure or consolidated, places the nationalist state too in the most insecure of positions, since both its ethical premise and its political project are thereby rendered, in

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157 Bauman (1992: 105).

158 Schwartzwald (1993: 289). Curiously, nationalists who argue from cohesion generally point to the failure of all other identities as a way of bolstering their claims about the centrality of national identity to political integration: see, for example, Norman (1994: 146) (disparaging class identity).

159 Geulen (1995: 18); Spivak (1992: 803); Breuilly (1994: 405-406); Stychin (1995: esp. ch. 6).

160 Stychin (1995: 105).

161 Connolly (1991: 170).

162 O'Neill (1994: 141). The first is what makes nationalism not just a postulate of homogeneity, but [Bauman (1992: 105)] "a programme of unification" as well. Among the essays in Carens, Reg Whitaker's "Quebec's Self-Determination and Aboriginal Self-Government: Conflict and Reconciliation?" is by far the must clear-eyed about both the proliferating effects of nationalism, and its possibly tragic consequences. See Carens (1995: 214-217).

theory and in practice, "unfulfillable." Bauman eloquently and incisively describes the "endemic nervousness" which this radical instability at the very heart of matters ineluctably compels "in the nations spawn[ed]" by nationalism. I will quote him at some length:[163]

> [N]ations can never stay still; complacency and fading vigilance is their worst sin — a mortal (suicidal) sin to be sure. The order that sustains them and which they sustain ... is, after all, artificial (even though proclaimed to be, and conceived of, as 'natural', that is merely reflecting what soil and blood dictate), and hence precarious from stem to stern.... Nationalism breeds ... an endemic nervousness in the nations it spawns. It trains the nations in the art of vigilance that cannot but mean a lot of restlessness while promising no tranquillity; it makes nationhood into a task always to be struggled for and never to be fulfilled.... It prompts feverish defence of the soil and frantic blood-testing. It creates the state of permanent tension which it claims to relieve; it thrives on that tension, it draws from it its life juices; it is, after all, the selfsame tension which it sustains that makes it indispensable — indeed, welcome, sought after, and once found or offered, eagerly and gratefully embraced. Nationalism is self-defeating, but it needs its 'unfulfillment' to make an impression, an impact, to be effective — to survive.

In this passage, Bauman is uncovering the etiology and range of the *névrose nationale* which, much earlier, was Nietzsche's diagnosis of neonationalism. But Bauman goes further still by extending the diagnosis to the morality of the nationalist state. Again I quote at necessary length:[164]

> Unlike the unreflectively self-perpetuating 'communities of belonging' of which it pretends to be one but is not — the nation must defend its existence: actively, daily, full-time. Natural as the traits by which it defines itself might be, the nation may survive only through a contrived and constantly invigorated, ongoing, guided, structured, rule-led discourse, and at the cost of enormous work of defining, arguing, legitimating, heresy-banning. Because of that, nationalisms normally demand power — that is, the right to use coercion — in order to secure the preservation and continuity of the nation: the condition of immortality is the right to manage earthly discourse.... Once the state has been identified with the nation, ... nationalism need not rely any more solely on the persuasiveness and cogency of its arguments, and still less on the willingness of the members to accept them. It has now other, more effective means at its disposal.... The strength of nationalism rests in the end on the

[163] Bauman (1992: 113) ("[A]ll nationalisms [are] endemically unfulfilled — and in all probability unfulfillable — projects. Nationalism must be forever unsatisfied with every concrete sedimentation of its past labours. Nothing can quite come up to the standards that make nationalist practices, simultaneously, feasible to perform and doomed to failure. Nationalism must remain loftily confident about its proclaimed purpose and contemptuously critical of everything that has been done, ostensibly, to promote that purpose").

[164] Bauman (1992: 115). Regarding those more efficient means, Bauman offers the following: "State power means the chance of enforcing the sole use of the national language.... It means the possibility of mobilizing public resources to boost the competitive chances of the preferred national culture.... It also means, above all, control of education... [which] permits the training of all inhabitants... in the values of the national formula...."

> 'connecting' role it plays in the promotion and perpetuation of the social order as defined by the authority of the state. Nationalism, so to speak, 'sequestrates' the diffuse heterophobia and mobilizes this sentiment in the service of loyalty and support for the state and discipline toward state authority.

Pace Breuilly, with this, Bauman is subordinating nationalism to state power, and connecting state power with "popular heterophobia."[165] Accordingly, in service to the precarious identity which simultaneously is its premise and its programme, the work of the nationalist state is not merely, then, to construct the Other, but to fashion the Other as the fearful source of nationalist anxiety over identity against which the power of the state may properly be deployed.[166]

This understanding permits a more precise identification of the nationalist Other as those who voluntarily by their views or, without more, by their very designation, serve to compromise the unity which the nationalist project proclaims and promises. Both are quite properly termed minorities, but their status as such derives from very different sources. Those who are voluntarily Other are those who, from the nationalist perspective, are properly members of the national community and who yet dissent from the national formula. That there is always a minority in this sense justifies the view held by many that the nationalist "appeal to a national culture or tradition is uniformly an appeal to the culture and tradition of one component group of a nation and the call for its hegemony over others."[167] The other minority is comprised of those constructed and named by the assertion of national identity as such. In Quebec — as the authors in Carens are keen to point out — these others are those named Anglos, immigrants, and First Nations through the assertion of Quebecois national identity. Since their status derives from that assertion alone, people populate these minorities passively and entirely independently from their views on the

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[165] Bauman (1992: 117).

[166] And it is from this that arises the view of the other as enemy: see *supra* note 93 and accompanying text. While this view is a seductive possibility of nationalist thought, it is not one to which all nationalists must succumb. For it occurs to me that there is a real moral difference between fear and enmity, and that fearing the other need not — though clearly it often in practice does — occasion viewing the other as being actively hostile.

[167] O'Neill (1994: 140); Breuilly (1994: 405).

national question.[168] Mordecai Richler's minority status is, for instance, logically and politically independent from his outspoken views on nationalism.

So consumed are they by the nationalist myth,[169] the essays in Carens are largely silent on the matter of apostate nationals.[170] The essays by Carens on immigration, by Adelman on secession, and by Whitaker on Quebec and Aboriginal self-determination do, however gingerly, engage the issue of named minorities and the nationalist state. Adeleman's essay will serve as my primary focus not only because his is the most extensive treatment of the matter, but also because his reveals best what I take to be the ingredients fundamental to neonationalism which necessarily constrain and define the morality of the nationalist state.

The hard case, the case on which the nature of the public morality of the nationalist state finally depends, is the case of an obdurate and dissenting minority.[171] For in uncovering how the nationalist state is constrained to treat that sort of minority, a minority whose persistence is not merely culturally

[168] Liberal' nationalists — Tamir and Kymlicka, for instance — typically try to dodge this implication by collapsing the distinction between voluntary and involuntary minorities: see Tamir (1993: 20ff) (arguing that national identity is an object of choice); Kymlicka, (1995b: 11ff) (distinguishing between ethnic and national minorities); and for antecedents, Todorov (1993: 222-227) (discussing Renan's view of national identities as open and subject to choice). According to this view, which is prominently on display in Carens, minority status in the nationalist state is no different from the status of minorities in liberal states, which is to say, it is purely political and transitory, because a matter always of abandonable belief and changeable choice. That this will not do I will attempt to demonstrate shortly.

[169] Whitaker's essay is an exception to the collection's overall enchantment.

[170] The matter of fallen-away nationals presents the hard case for nationalist political morality in sharper relief than does the matter of named others, since in the case of apostates, the issue of how the nationalist state is to deal with an obdurate and dissenting minority is raised directly and in a fashion unmediated and uncomplicated with cultural minority status. That, with one minor exception, the collection does not engage this issue is, therefore, a substantial defect. The exception is Adelman's essay on secession. Unhappily, however, Adelman's treatment of the matter produces a bizarre definitional muddle — are apostate nationals yet Quebecois or are they French Canadians in Quebec and therefore themselves a named minority? — which serves more to obfuscate than to illuminate. See Carens (1995: 186-188).

[171] This is, of course, also the case with respect to the liberal state. Liberal political morality derives from the postulate of moral equality, and takes the form of a commitment to negative tolerance instantiated institutionally by a regime of rights. That rights constrain the liberal state from interfering with the loathed other is, in consequence, the foundational norm of liberal political morality.

passive but politically active and insistent, one is disclosing the liminal possibilities of the nationalist state as a moral agent. Adelman, unfortunately, elides that crux of the matter.[172] Yet what he instead provides is, nonetheless, illuminating.

Adelman offers named Others — Anglos, immigrants, and Aboriginals[173] — "three choices." They may simply choose to persist by "remain[ing] a minority in the Québécois nation and continu[ing] to reside in Quebec"; they may choose to emigrate or, as he puts it, "to migrate to the political jurisdiction" in which variously "their fellow nationals are the majority" or "the nationality which they wish to join is in the majority"; or "they may acquire Québécois nationality." Which is to say, he would have minorities chose between exodus, conversion, and what we will discover to be, a politically limited persistence. Of immediate interest in this formulation is the absence of any reference to the nationalist state. Adelman's choices have a curious monological quality about them which not only presumes the political conditions in which alone these choices become choices, but also avoids any discussion or recognition of the role of the nationalist state in creating those conditions. But — and this is the rub — his formulation is yet correct for these are indeed, for other, very real and important reasons, the whole of the possibilities which the nationalist state offers minorities.

Take first the option of persistence. Adelman tells minorities that they have the choice of simply hanging on.[174] But since he forbids their politicizing their persistence with the "creat[ion of] a separatist movement themselves," he is assuming that to hang on is to hang forever on presumably for reasons no more political than pure cultural insistence. It is no matter for the moment that the

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[172] So too do Carens and Whitaker. Carens avoids the issue by assuming that any resistance by immigrants will be cultural and passive. In consequence, and though he proclaims that "cultural transformation is [not] a prerequisite for becoming a full Quebecer," he does not entertain the possibility that immigrants might actively dissent from the nationalist formula (47ff). Whitaker reaches the same result by more interesting means. After what appears at first to be a full recognition of the centrifugal force of nationalist claims, he posits a closure premised upon a voluntaristic reconciliation (214-218). This move prevents him from encountering one of the two cardinal features of nationalism which constrain nationalist morality, namely, that nationalism is antinationalistic.

[173] Carens (1985: 185-189). Though he thinks aboriginals a separate case in so far as they have, in his view, a yet inchoate right to self-determination, there appears to be no reason that the options he describes as available to Anglos and immigrants would not apply equally to aboriginals.

[174] Carens (1985: 186-188).

politics of the nationalist state might, for other reasons, make this option, if not impossible, then at least unpalatable. What bears inquiry presently is the origin of this 'choice' theoretically. As we have seen, a proliferation of national claims is a tendency which inheres in nationalism. Perhaps surprisingly, the nationalist response to this tendency is anti-nationalism.[175] That is, nationalism as a doctrine privileges the national identity of the cultural entity making the national claim, and simultaneously forbids other nations from invoking that privilege at least with respect to the any portion of the geo-political space which is the subject of the prior claim. The contradiction between this doctrine and the universalism to which nationalism otherwise attaches itself becomes somewhat less gross, if not for that reason any more forgiveable, once we remember that the second element of nationalist politics is the unqualified political and moral primacy of national interests and values.

The anti-nationalism resident at the conceptual seat of nationalism has two very important consequences. First of all, it becomes an unspoken corollary of nationalism that "the national aspirations of different cultures cannot be met on the normative basis of the nationalist principle."[176] Secondly, and more to the present point, whatever else may be true of the morality of the nationalist state, it is unavoidably the case that the national state cannot treat minorities within its boundaries as national units with claims as good as the claims on basis of which the nationalist state itself was established. This axiom sets the boundary within which the other particulars of nationalist political morality must work themselves out.

Adelman's other options — exodus and assimilation — arise not from the tendency to proliferation, but from the myth of national unity, and both are politically conditioned by the associated tendency of the nationalist state to suppress difference. Exodus assumes that there exists a monolithic identity from which minorities will flee, and another to which they will travel in search of solace. With this choice, therefore, Adelman is not only assuming that the world is fully occupied morally by national identities, he also is endorsing the seamlessness of national identity as such. With the choice of assimilation, on the other hand, he assumes that national identity is at least porous, and that it is not in any event an exclusive difference. He theorizes neither choice in any significant fashion. As regards conversion particularly, we are simply told that though nations have a "natural" membership, it is yet "possible to assume membership in two different peoples," because membership is "an internal

[175] Cocks (1996: 523); Matustik (1993: 25).
[176] Matustik (1993: 25).

decision about identity."[177] Once again, this existentializes matters to the individual Other, and ignores entirely the nationalist state.

According to Adelman, then, and (presumably) excepting solely its prohibition against nationalist politics by minorities, the nationalist state is not at all involved in what happens to its minorities. That, rather, is a matter for them: they may leave or if they choose to stay, they may either continue as minorities or convert to the dominant national identity. This happy view of things fails at all to account for the ideological instability of the nationalist state and its chronic nervousness, which together constitute the context in which the possibility for persistence and assimilation can alone be assessed. Kaplan claims that "political religions are more terrible in that they tend to minimize the possibility of conversion as opposed to elimination."[178] Nationalism is every bit a political religion. Premised upon the myth of national unity, at one moment blind to the facts of diversity which spell the absence of unity in the nationalist sense, possessed at another by an ever lingering anxiety which feigned myopia cannot cure, nationalism pledges its proponents to prefer elimination through exodus over either assimilation or the status quo of identities. And in the event the Other does not help matters along simply by disappearing, the nationalist state is much more likely to prefer the suppression of difference to recognition. For difference, as such, is the source of nationalist anxiety; and it is to the elimination of difference that anxiety inevitably leads. Though that mission is in the end impossible — nationalism, after all, requires the Other that causes its pain — nationalist states, as Bauman indicates, are nationalist just to the extent that they are vulnerable to the belief that a cultural homogeneity is both proper and possible.

Adelman's account fails, as well, in not once engaging the liminal case which his allowance for persistence permits, the case of the minority which is both obdurate and dissenting. This particular failure is not, however, in the least surprising, since rare is the collectivist of any stripe — marxist, communitarian, or otherwise identitarian — who wants to deal directly with the nuts and bolts of the ideal community. Alasdair MacIntyre is one such rarity, and in his ruminations on the *realpolitik* of morally-thickened polities are revealed, I think, the core morality of the nationalist state. In contrasting the communitarian polity he endorses to "contemporary American society," MacIntyre offers the following:[179]

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[177] Carens (1995: 184-185).
[178] Kaplan (1994: 155).
[179] MacIntyre (1987: 108).

> Precisely because those engaged in making and sustaining [the type of community I am envisaging] will be able to act effectively only if guided by highly determinate conceptions of the institutions and the way of life they are engaged in creating, they will have to exclude and to prohibit a variety of types of activity inimical and destructive of those institutions and that way of life. These exclusions and prohibitions will be the negative aspect of a law, shared respect for which will be a necessary constituent of any community within which such an overall conception of human life is to be realized. ... For those educated into and participating in the life of such a community, such a law will be primarily an enabling resource, whose enforcement is understood as the work of the community as a whole. For those external to or not yet educated into full participation in the community's life, it will appear as negative and oppressive, a barrier to a variety of claims to liberty of choice.

MacIntyre's candour teaches the following lesson: to the extent that a polity moves away from a purely procedural liberalism, from a liberalism predicated upon absolute moral equality and productive of a morality of tolerance and a regime of rights, it is moving towards a polity the morality of which is not just paternalistic, but directly and without compromise, a threat to liberty as well. To the extent that the proposed nationalist state in Quebec constitutes such a move — and though they hedge on the implications, nationalists are nowhere heard to deny that, as put by Taylor, the nationalist state will be a vocational state[180] — it will, without more, produce a politics which diminishes liberty. The authors in Carens and theorists like Taylor believe that this move can be made without moral or political cost. They believe that if the prospect of a morally-expanded state together with the maintenance of liberty and equality is simply repeated enough, it will somehow come to pass. But that, in that happy future, we can have an alternative liberal polity which is at once the guardian of national identity and the guarantor of the legal subject, is pure and pernicious illusion. The whole history of nationalist politics and the entire theoretical edifice of nationalism, if only we listen, will tell us that this belief is neither true of the past nor conceivably true of the future. For to accept that some "cultural or any other non-political unit of humanity ... can be regarded as the true basis of legitimate politics ... is to abolish the autonomy and limits and, ultimately, the rationality of politics," both in theory and in practice.[181] The authors in Carens are deaf to this instruction. And their infirmity leads them, instead, to diminish nationalism by diminishing its political significance as a free-standing and distinct proposal about political community. Better, much better, is MacIntyre's intellectual courage: he refuses himself the silly solace of the belief so much on display in Carens, that there are, at this level of politics, soothing half-way measures.

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[180] Taylor (1993a: 126; 1993b: 58; 1991b: 70-73).
[181] Breuilly (1994: 400).

Nationalists criticize liberalism for providing polity insufficient moral ballast. Where liberals think the guarantee of rights a sponson which alone steadies and constrains the state morally, nationalists decry it as far too thin and too formal a basis for polity.[182] The 'liberal' nationalists, in particular, claim that rights cannot carry the whole of the burden of political morality; and they nominate 'the people' as the more robust foundation which politics requires. Loyalty to this state will depend not on procedural fairness and formal rights, but on the promise of fidelity to the common values and interests of the *Volk*. I have identified the moral costs which inhere in this move to authenticity, and I have argued that those costs increase in precise proportion to the state's fidelity to this expanded standard of legitimacy. By way of concluding this essay, I will turn now to the larger issues on which this contest between liberal and nationalist politics stands to judged.

III. CONCLUSION

> The whole notion of passing over, of moving from one identity to another, is extremely important to me, being as I am — as we all are — a sort of hybrid.
>
> Edward Said[183]

> Identity [is] a wound.
>
> Gayatri C. Spivak[184]

> Not until the single individual has established an ethical stance despite the whole world, not until then can there be any question of genuinely uniting....
>
> Soren Kierkegaard[185]

Liberalism and nationalism ground practices of encountering others and of experiencing ourselves and are, therefore, at once both moralities and ethics. But the ethics and the moralities each informs are fundamentally different. Liberalism begins and ends with the individual person. In contrast, at the centre of nationalism, there stands not a corporeal individual but an abstract collectivity, 'the people.' 'Liberal' nationalists claim that this difference, while it matters much in other regards, does not matter at all with respect to the possibility and preservation of the liberal way of life. Throughout this essay, I have been leading to the argument that they are tragically and dangerously wrong in this. In this conclusion, I will attempt to draw together the threads of that argument. More particularly, I will try to show that that difference makes

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[182] Berman (1995: 48).
[183] (1991: 182).
[184] (1992: 770).
[185] (1978, 106).

a world of difference, since it reveals liberalism and nationalism to be "two profoundly divergent and irreconcilable attitudes towards the ends of life."[186]

Earlier in this paper, I indicated that I would be indicting nationalism on the grounds of its barbarous potential and its repugnant promise. That nationalism invites barbarity and promises an ethical straightjacket for a future is what so fundamentally and irreconcilably distinguishes it from liberalism. What, however, delivers these features and ultimately compels this result is another matter, a moral consequence which inheres in nationalism's very point of departure. I am referring to the political paganism which is a corollary to the nationalist conflation of state and nation.

Though nationalism does subordinate morality to politics — that after all is the meaning of the shift to authenticity — its paganism does not in the final analysis reside there. Its political paganism consists, rather, in a prior "de-moralization of the political" which in turn, is the work of nationalism's reduction of the political to 'the people.'[187] Whatever its metaphysics, 'the people' is for nationalism a metapolitical category. 'The people' is that supramundane entity for which politics exists, but which is not itself an object of politics.[188] In consequence, for the nationalist, the state becomes the political agent of a pre-political principal. It is just this understanding which sucks politics dry of morality. For predicating politics on a pre-political given not only leaves politics an over-the-shoulder, backward-looking affair, it robs politics of any moral justification. Nationalist politics is, in that sense, anti-political: since 'the people' in whose service politics is performed is situated beyond politics, nationalist politics has no justification beyond the positions it has won on 'the people's' behalf.[189]

Nationalism's barbarous potential, its constant threat to tolerance, liberty, and equality, arises from the moral vacuum which, for these reasons, exists at its very core. Rorty claims that the nerve of political liberalism is "the

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[186] Berlin (1991: 166).

[187] Cohen (1988: 10).

[188] This is so even for those nationalists who displace naturalism with constructionism since, by definition, all nationalists must believe that the state exists to express the identity of a (somehow) antecedently existing people.

[189] Though I cannot go into the matter here, this also commits nationalist politics to a brute decisionism and probably as well, to some form of political existentialism. Concerning which, see Wolin (1990). For the view that anti-politics is a tendency of all identity politics, see Kauffman (1990).

distinction between persuasion and force."[190] He is right. The burden of that distinction is carried by the principle of moral equality between persons from which liberalism departs. Not only is nationalism deprived of any such moral foundation and to that extent, morally unconstrained from the very beginning, the metaphysical story which it instead proffers as its foundation offers cause for additional worry. Elsewhere in this essay, I argued that the nationalist view of the foundations of politics disfigures the personal relation between persons which alone provides ground for communion and empathy. I will not now rehearse that argument except again to emphasize that nationalism is thereby starved of the moral grounds for political constraint. Instead, I wish very briefly to explore the popular implications of this political morbidity, since it is there that theoretical propensities of nationalism come home to roost.

Berlin defines nationalism as "an inflamed condition of national consciousness which can be, and has on occasion been, tolerant and peaceful."[191] This view begs the question of what tips different nationalisms in one direction or the other. In my view, the answer to this question has everything to do with the nature and extent of the impact of nationalist rule and belief on the empirical people. Bauman claims that the nationalist ascription of "belonging" can lead "the masses" thereby defined to take 'the people' "as something given and complete, ... something that cannot be changed, not by human action."[192] In that event, he goes on to argue, the masses become a force which independently aggravates the condition of generalized political morbidity. Submerged in a category they take to be natural and inevitable and, in consequence, robbed of their sense of individuality, the masses may become "the staunchest bulwarks of nationalism and xenophobia...the most enthusiastic fans and most resolute warriors of collective glory." All of which is to say, whether the potential of nationalism to destroy political fellowship comes fully to pass turns not just on the moral vacuity of nationalism as a political doctrine, but on the extent to which real people assume the mantle of peoplehood which nationalism bestows upon them. That Berlin so qualifies his claim to nationalist tolerance speaks volumes regarding just how seductive that mantle can be.[193]

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[190] Rorty (1992: 67).

[191] Berlin (1991: 245). He goes on to describe Quebec's as an "acute nationalism."

[192] Bauman (1992: 109 and 125).

[193] The political logic of this seduction is clear and easily compelling. The myth of unity takes political form in the assertion of a right to national difference which always tempts further translation into a right to unity. Conceiving of politics in either fashion — as, that is, about either a people's entitlement to difference or worse still, its right to cultural and political unity — begs people to believe morally defensible the repression of difference and boundary building to which these views inexorably lead. Which is to say, by casting the "need for a

Both liberalism and nationalism are, I have argued, political theories of self-realization. Yet they remain unalterably opposed theories due to their fundamentally different views both of the nature of the self to be realized and of the political conditions proper to that end. For the nationalist, the self which centres politics is collective both in substance and in origin. It is collective in the first sense because as we have seen, according to nationalists, cultural attachments are constitutive of personal identity. It is collective in the second sense, because nationalists think the culture which defines the self is a bequest of 'a people's' past. Together these understandings yield a view of the self as inheritance. Notwithstanding its fashionable historicist premises, this view ironically[194] commits the self to transcendence since, save for the cultural past of which the individual is an expression, all else — including, especially, others — is contingent and transitory.[195]

An inherited self is a self for whom identity is fate and to whom the future is closed. Part of some sedimented 'same,' defined always and entirely by the gross happenchance of its cultural circumstance, the nationalist self faces a world fundamentally foreclosed. Since it remains always a variation on a collective theme, there is for it no possibility of ethical individuality nor chance for moral independence. The nationalist self is instead instructed to satisfy itself with expressing what the past has made of it, to become the best it can be of that, a true and authentic instance of 'the people' to which it belongs. And it is told that the modern state is the proper venue and necessary condition for this, its life-long practice of authenticity. Since the whole of the world is occupied by 'peoples,' since every view is a view from some peopled place, since states therefore always express some culture, authenticity requires a state that is 'the peoples' own, one that expresses its unique and distinct culture and not the culture of some other 'people.' Accordingly, political emancipation is presented to the nationalist self as the first task of authenticity. Emancipation accomplished, the nationalist self is promised mastery of its own political house, a mastery hallmarked by the conflation of citizenship and culture, state and

degree of cultural and social homogeneity organised under the protection of a single political unit" in terms of rights, the nationalist state tends to trump moral hesitation and quandary among its nationals: see Bellamy (1992, 161-162). On the right to difference, see Piccone (1993-94). On boundary building, see Bauman (1988).

[194] Nationalism is ripe with irony. Besides this transcendental impulse, consider its universalist foundations, its anti-nationalism and, last but not least, its constitutive attachment to the modern state despite its nostalgic sentiments.

[195] That cultural attachments are sometimes thought a matter of autonomous choice does not alter this, since even then, persons are bound to choose, and personal identity remains bound to whatever culture is chosen.

nation, people and polity. In that happy circumstance, any barrier between authenticity and public purpose will vanish, and the business of authentically reproducing the past can progress without impediment.

Liberals believe everything nationalists do not. Liberals think that identities are wounds to be healed, not bequests to be prized, because they consider persons to be moral beings who can and ought author themselves.[196] They think that the precondition for authenticity is tolerance of others and not emancipation from the Other; they believe authenticity to be a matter of self-construction, not the faithful rendering of some cultural past; they think the state necessary, not as an organ for the expression of collective identity, but as the guarantor of the social conditions required for self-expression; they believe rights to be moral means for preventing closure, and not merely a containment on otherwise desirable public purposes. Liberals, that is, believe that human life is more than what has been so far made of it; that being exceeds identity; that redemption requires personal rebellion and not political salvation; that a proper future resides in the deracination of the present and the dissolution of identities and not in the perpetuation and consolidation of frozen forms of life; that the selves which polity must serve are always beings becoming and never merely the ethically dead deposit of lives now spent; that the fidelity owed to politics is a fidelity to the conditions which preserve these possibilities of being and not ever a pledge to their containment and closure. Where, in consequence, the nationalist state is an emanation[197] of 'the people' which hedges freedom in the cause of consolidating and preserving some presumed social being, the liberal state is a practice of liberty which bleeds the world of fixity, which (always) compels provisionality, which — as so poetically put by Marx — melts everything solid into air.[198]

My purpose in this essay has been to oppose nationalism. I have sought to give cause for a principled condemnation of the nationalist proposal for political community by revealing its theoretical infirmity, its ethical repugnance, its moral inadequacies, and its so dangerous political propensities. Nietzsche once wrote of nationalism as "scabies of the heart." Since he wrote, nationalism has seared and scared our hearts time and again. Presently, nationalism marches under the banner of a progressive politics of identity, and there are many, in the

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[196] For ruminations on identities as wounds from a decidedly non-liberal perspective, see Brown (1995: c. 3).

[197] For a chilling reminder of the antecedents to this view of the state as emanation, see Sternhall (1976: 356).

[198] Berman (1982).

academy and elsewhere, who have been seduced to join the nationalist parade in the belief that in so doing, they are enlisting in a party of hope. I have tried to show that their belief is mistaken and their hope misplaced. That mistake is also, I will end by saying, tragic and a matter for much sorrow — as in Quebec for so long, so many lives consumed and intellects wasted, so many hearts turned sour, in the cause of the twisted logic of a spiritually vacuous political disease.

APPENDIX I

Grounding Nationalism

Contemporary friends of nationalism — there being no Schmitt among them[199] — seek to provide "a moderate and liberal theory of nationalism," a "reasonable nationalism,"[200] by at once partly particularizing liberalism and wholly depoliticizing nationalism. Alas, while these moves save safe the critical liberal distinction between sociology and state, culture and politics, they do so at the dual cost of diluting liberalism's political purchase and of diminishing nationalism's fearful potential. Because, in consequence, these theories fail to answer "important questions about why nationalism in practice tends to become so politicized,"[201] their success is their Panglossian irrelevance.

Neonationalist theories accord the nation normative status on two, very often intermingled and confused grounds. In one strand of this scholarship, a political morality of cultural recognition works to moralize nationality, while in another, the burden is carried by a requirement of cultural expression. These strategies are, of course, fundamentally different. The first has sophisticated liberal credentials — Rawls, for instance, counts the social bases of self-respect, among which is recognition, as "the most important primary good" of liberal polity[202] — and compels a concern with such typically liberal matters as autonomy, rights, and justice. The expressivist strategy, in contrast, has its origins in Romanticism, and instead of leading to assessments in terms of autonomy and justice, simply declares authenticity a free-standing and foundational moral and political value. Because the threshold to the first strategy is the identification of injustice in the distribution of the social bases of self-respect, nationalist movements in the West, Quebec separatism included, generally proceed from

[199] See Schmitt (1976) and Palaver (1995).
[200] MacCormick (1991: 8 and 18).
[201] Yack (1995: 167).
[202] Rawls (1971: 440).

the second strategy which requires no such mandate in what Rawls calls the "objective" circumstances of justice. That injustice is such an onerous requirement — that, indeed, "a vigorous sense of justice" appears from the very beginning to be "incompatible with nationalism"[203] — probably accounts as well for the slippage between recognition and authenticity in the scholarship theorizing these movements.[204]

APPENDIX II

A Note on Language

Since at least Wittgenstein, philosophers of language have been concerned to denaturalize language. Richard Rorty[205] puts the case as succinctly as anyone. "[L]anguage," he says, "no more has a nature than humanity has; both have only a history." And this not only puts paid any claim arising from a view of languages as separate essences appearing naturally in the world, it also makes sense of what we, in fact, encounter in the world so far as language is concerned, namely, corporately their hybridization, and individually their devolution into separate linguistic groups, traditions, and cultures. So much are these, instead, the "natural" facts of language, that some of nationalism's friends have moved away entirely from language as the mark of nation.[206] I dealt with the voluntarism of this redacted nationalism elsewhere in this essay, and sought there to convince that its importance lies in requiring us to reflect upon what exactly nationalists are believing when they believe in the existence of the people.

Not only, however, is language an historical experience and not a natural category, more importantly, since language also is very much a normative enterprise, how we conceive of it has everything to do with politics. Lyotard, for one, draws a distinction between the demotic and civic senses of language.[207] The demotic, natural sense defines "a natural and cultural community" in which "the individual is recognized as such not for his right to speak, but for his birth, language, and historical heritage." The civic sense of language, on the other

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[203] Johnston (1990: 191).

[204] For the philosophical origins of these strategies, see Taylor (1989: esp. 374-418); Taylor (1991a and c: 40); and Honneth (1995). For Rawls on recognition, see Johnston (1990: 111-117 and 154-160).

[205] Rorty (1992: 66).

[206] See, for example, Miller (1993: 6) ("[N]ational communities are constituted by belief: a nationality exists when its members believe that it does. It is not a question of a group of people sharing some common attribute such as race or language").

[207] Lyotard (1993: 138-139).

hand, defines a polity in which "the citizen is the human individual whose right to address others is recognized by others." Contrasting the two, Lyotard comments "the people keeps the other out, the city interiorizes the other."

Given all of this, the question becomes why Quebec nationalists and their friends would continue to tender this "metaphysical privileging" of language in answer to the people issue?[208] While one can never be absolutely sure about such matters, two explanations come to mind — it is easy, and it is attractive. For assuming a natural relationship between language and nation clearly both avoids the difficulty of defending nationalism in terms of justice[209] and presents the nationalist proposal in a much more benign light than would, say, any more direct invocation of *Blut* and *Boden*. But the gentleness of language as nation is, on any inspection, only superficial. Not only does it inevitably lead — as it has in Quebec since Bill 101 — to the erosion of what Ricoeur terms "linguistic hospitality"[210] and, in consequence, to the end of what Rorty calls "the expectation of tolerant reciprocity,"[211] not only does "worshipping national language arouse ... feelings of revenge and narcissistic satisfaction,"[212] despite the always attending nod to pluralism,[213] the conflation of language and nation produces a conception of politics that probably is racist.

Though much of what I have argued concerning nationalism's production of otherness applies equally to language nationalism, for reasons of focus, I cannot here flesh out in much further detail my claim that language nationalism in particular is racist. Arguments from history are of course available in ripe abundance. Otto Koellreutter, for instance, provides a terrifyingly familiar rendition of the conglomeration that is the notion of nation as language: "The Volk is a community of destiny based upon a common culture, which came into being through common descent and reproduction, which is formed through the life in a specific area, and which reveals itself predominantly through a common language."[214] Also easily at hand are views which take the German proposal,

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[208] Habermas (1989a: 449).
[209] See Appendix I, "Grounding Nationalism."
[210] Ricoeur (1995: 5).
[211] Rorty (1992: 61).
[212] See Kristeva (1993: 34); and also Ignatieff (1993: 116) (describing the "fetishiz[ation of] language" in Quebec).
[213] Birnbaum (1996: 37).
[214] Koellreutter (1938:71).

generally, and Quebec's language nationalism, in particular, as racist.[215] However, the most telling argument for the racism of language nationalism arises, I think, from the view that "the biological continuum may be fragmented on the basis of language" and not just by "a strictly biologizing conception of race."[216]

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[215] Concerning the former see, for instance, Birnbaum (1996: 37) and Fitzpatrick (1995: 4 and 18); and, concerning Quebec, Shell (1993: 41, 49, and 179) exploring "the tribal quality of the politics of language" in Quebec.

[216] See Milchman and Rosenberg (1996: 105). For a view of the relationship between language and otherness more generally, see Harman (1988). For a useful discussion of the concept of racism, see Appiah (1990).

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