

Nationalism and the cultivation of culture

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ABSTRACT. On the basis of an extensive sample of European source material, the article investigates the meaning and importance of ‘culture’ in cultural nationalism. The author argues that European cultural nationalism in the nineteenth century followed a separate dynamic and chronology from political nationalism. Cultural nationalism involved an intense cross-border traffic of ideas and intellectual initiatives, and its participating actors often operated extraterritorially and in multi-national intellectual networks. This means that cultural nationalism needs to be studied on a supranational comparative basis rather than country-by-country, concentrating on the exchange and transfer of ideas and activities. A working model is proposed which may serve to bring these ideas and activities into focus.

In the following pages, I want to present what I consider a useful programmatic approach in the study of nineteenth-century European nationalism, aiming to bring into focus the culturally oriented initiatives and concerns of nationalist movements. This topic has hitherto often been dealt with piecemeal (in the context of nationally framed studies) or marginally (as an adjunct to socio-politically oriented analyses). I propose a different, transnationally comparative approach from a cultural historical perspective, by briefly discussing five tenets. These are:

1. All nationalism is cultural nationalism;
2. Cultural nationalism is a topic for cultural history;
3. Cultural nationalism requires a cross-national comparative approach;
4. Nationalism begins as a ‘cultivation of culture’;
5. The ‘cultivation of culture’ can be mapped as a specific array of concerns.

The context taken here is specifically European. The observations in the following pages can claim little or no applicability to nation-building processes in the Americas, Asia or Africa; the focus is on nationalism as it develops in Europe in the long nineteenth century. To compound that development, hugely complex as it is in itself, with other phenomena including anticolonial movements and modernisation processes elsewhere in the world would add an unworkable overload of variables. Even so, the framework presented here is already enormously broad in scope: to account for trends and patterns that would embrace Catalonia and Finland, France and Estonia,

Germany and Slovakia, is almost fatuously ambitious. It is offered only as a working model; but offered in the belief, based on a good deal of source research in a fairly wide sample of national cases, that a firmly delineated typology of European-style cultural nationalism is feasible and, what is more, useful – not only as a frame of reference in order to sort out the enormous mass of historical evidence from diverse backgrounds, but also as a basis on which to envisage thematic-comparative research.

All nationalism is cultural nationalism

We do not easily speak of ‘cultural liberalism’ or ‘cultural socialism’; but the phrase ‘cultural nationalism’ seems plausible and straightforward enough. It stands to reason because the concept at the heart of nationalism, that of the *nation*, refers to an aggregate of people whose ‘peculiar character’¹ is at least in part constituted by cultural factors such as language or historical awareness. Nationalists advance the right to national self-determination, cultural survival and cultural self-expression, as a self-evident and ethically autonomous principle, alongside (not derived from) equality, justice and political stability. If anything, nationalism sees the state as a means to an end (the state should embody its constituent nationality, and derives its right to exist in part from that function²).

Nationalism studies so far have not followed a clear approach to dealing with the cultural dimension of nationalism. Early studies (one thinks with special admiration of the work of Hans Kohn and Isaiah Berlin) approached nationalism as a topic in Europe’s History of Ideas, concentrating on the texts, the thinkers, the rhetoric and viewpoints that brought nationalism into circulation, and that ‘articulated’ the nation as a focus of political loyalty. While such scholars charted, with great learning and acumen, the discourse of nationalism, their analyses and typologies have since then been open to criticism; they seemed often to move in the rarefied atmosphere of elite thinkers and writers, with little obvious connection to the mass movement that nationalism was to become.

Since the days of Elie Kedourie and Ernest Gellner, the emphasis has shifted from intellectual to social and political analyses. The focus has moved to the role of nationalist movements in modern state formation, and to the stage of societal development that could give rise to a nationalist movement. The famous ‘modernism wars’ compounded this.³ Gellner (1983) had been at pains to argue that the scholarly analysis of nationalism should remain aloof from nationalist dogmas and tenets (especially the belief in an extrahistorical, categorical and *a priori* existence of nationality). He therefore stressed the cleavage between the recent (nineteenth-century) emergence of nationalism as a constitutional ideology, and the primordial existence of ‘the nation’ that this ideology invoked, promulgated and in some cases arguably invented. ‘Culture’ for Gellner meant mainly the rhetorical ammunition of nationalist

activists. Nationalism as an ideology was explained in terms of modernisation processes such as exo-education and socio-economic scale enlargement; its cultural engagement was taken out of the analysis and treated in general-formulaic terms such as 'Ruritanian' vs. 'Megalomaniac'. Hobsbawm (1990), for his part, also saw culture as a mere side product of wider societal developments and as an intellectualist tool fashioned with a political agenda.

Those scholars who took issue with Gellnerian modernism (e.g. Armstrong 1982, Hastings 1997) sought not so much to quarrel with ideology's nineteenth-century rise to prominence, as with the dismissal of a pre-existing and underlying 'nation'. In their approach, the cultural agenda of nineteenth-century nationalism was brushed aside by the dominant, contested issue of the cultural existence of the nation. Thus, neither for modernists nor for their opponents do the cultural concerns of nineteenth-century nationalism seem to be very important. For modernists, the cultural rhetoric of nationalists is a legitimising smokescreen or a sort of extra-political fallout; for anti-modernists it merely reflects the ongoing manifestation of a pre-existing fact. All parties concerned tend to locate 'culture' outside the nationalist ideology, as a general, external ambience which was invoked or influenced; rather than analysing cultural rhetoric as an intrinsic part of, and commitment within, the nationalist agenda.

This dilemma is still noticeable in John Hutchinson's ground-breaking study *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism* (1987). This is rightly considered as one of the outstanding works in the field of nationalism studies, and one which does focus on activism in the cultural sphere. Just how promising that approach is can be gathered from Hutchinson's introduction, which opens a wide European panorama, situates Ireland in a wider context of cultural initiatives and cross-currents, and indeed gives us one of the best outlines of the concerns of cultural nationalism to date. Yet, while cultural nationalism is typologically and thematically identified as one of the book's main concerns and preoccupations, the 'dynamics of cultural nationalism' is ultimately analysed in terms of the social position of cultural revivalists.⁴

Among nationalism scholars, then, culture and nationalism have been like oil and water.⁵ Modernists argued on the whole from societal modernisation models, and anti-modernists studied cultural activities as manifestations of the *nation* rather than as preoccupations of *nationalism*. Likewise, in the many valuable concrete case studies of developing national movements in nineteenth-century Europe (most of them oriented towards single countries, others in a more regionally comparative approach⁶) the analytical trajectory usually follows social-historical vectors, and refers to cultural activism in passing. Tellingly, the crucial dates by which periods are punctuated are always of a political, never of a cultural provenance. If we read of a newspaper being founded here, or a choral society there, or if we see mention of an edition of folksongs or of a certain historical novel, it is usually as an illustrative example, merely serving to indicate a wider, unspecified cultural

praxis or climate. Quantitative details are foregone: few circulation figures, or statistical breakdown of contents; often, no dates are given, or at best something as broad as a decade ('the decade following the Congress of Vienna/the manumission of the serfs. . .'). Often the reference is to nothing more specific than a vague intellectual climate such as 'the spread of the ideas of Herder' or 'romantic medievalism in the style of Sir Walter Scott'. What the reader gets are not cultural facts, but the cultural background against which 'hard' facts can be situated. Culture is a flavour, not a thing.

All the same, the work of Miroslav Hroch (e.g. 1968 and 1996) has argued convincingly that cultural preoccupations do not passively 'reflect' or 'follow' social developments or political movements, but that they tend to anticipate them. The cultural preoccupations of what Hroch terms 'Phase A' nationalism make the nation thinkable as a focus of political loyalty. The social demands of Phase B nationalism, let alone the separatist activism of Phase C, follow and indeed seem to presuppose a cultural consciousness-raising.

To be sure, Hroch's 'three phases' model has its own inner complexities, and in some cases has elicited questions; it could hardly be otherwise, since it involves specific identifications of various 'phases' in various national cases, which may from case to case lead to debate. Yet on the whole the model has demonstrated, fundamentally, that separatist movements often begin in the study, that the schoolmasters and poets who collect proverbs and folktales are the unwitting avant-garde for the social and political activists, and that, while the precise nature of A-, or B-, or C-phase nationalism may vary from country to country, cultural preoccupations stand at the beginning of the alphabet. Hroch's phase model sidesteps one vexed question in nationalism studies, in that it describes, precisely how, in Gellnerian terms, 'nationalism invents nations', whereas for ethno-symbolists it describes how ethnic traditions are retrieved and made available for a nineteenth-century political-ideological investment. In placing cultural consciousness-raising at the vanguard of developing nationalist/separatist movements, Hroch singles out the specificity of nationalism among other ideologies. Nationalism stands out amidst other ideologies in that it formulates a political agenda on the basis of a cultural ideal; following Hroch, we may point out that in its historical gestation, too, nationalism is always, in its incipience at least, cultural nationalism.

Cultural nationalism is a topic for cultural history

Hroch's model, for all its merits, still leaves some desiderata; in addressing these, we may gain a clear focus on a historical approach to cultural nationalism. For one thing, Phase A nationalism tends to be treated in terms of what it leads to, not in terms of what it sets out to do. We may be tempted to view Phase A nationalism as the overture to Phase B; the incubation period, as it were; a warming-up exercise before the real action starts. But does Phase A warrant interest only because of the Bs and Cs for which it prepared the ground?

Once social/political activism gets going, there is a risk of dismissing cultural nationalism as something that has played out its role. Phase A is the match that lit the fuse, and in the greater conflagration ceases to be of particular importance. But should we see these phases as ‘succeeding’ phases? The historical record shows that cultural concerns are not restricted to the early stages of national movements. Culture remains on the agenda even when national movements have obtained a full-fledged social and political activist presence (witness figures like Botev and Rakovski in Bulgaria, or Pearse in Ireland). Even after the achievement of a nationalist objective in the establishment of sovereign statehood, one can see an undiminished concern for the cultivation of the national culture in the set-up of the new state. The two in-depth studies of Gaelic language revivalism in Ireland by Philip O’Leary (1994 and 2004) bear this out: one covers the pre-independence period 1881–1921, the other covers the years after the establishment of the Irish Free State, 1922–39. The sources cited in great detail by O’Leary show a remarkable thematic, ideological and functional consistency. In contrast to what the neat succession of letters A, B and C would suggest, the cultural agenda of nationalism does not cease when subsequent, more activist phases swing into action, but continues to feed and inform these.

There is more ‘Phase A’ than what we see in the rearview mirror of social and political movements. There may be historical things, phenomena, that are not so easily identifiable *postquam* as forerunners of something else. As historians know from Reinhart Koselleck’s work (1979), our study of the past must include the way in which the past envisaged its future – which is not necessarily the way things turned out to be eventually. Nationalism in the nineteenth century opened up many more potential perspectives and scenarios than the path which eventually was taken by the historical course of events. That means, conversely, that we should include in our analyses of national movements more than just the activities leading up to the establishment of states as we know them nowadays. Such a more inclusive look may bring meaningful currents and trends into view. For example, the nineteenth-century revival of the medieval *jeux floraux* festivals spread from Toulouse and Occitanian France, first to Barcelona and Catalonia, and then to Galicia; they inspired each other, and tapped into a shared remembrance of the great days of courtly poetry in Romance languages before the hegemony of Castilian and the Langue d’Oil.⁷ While, however, the renaissance of the *jocs florals* in Barcelona formed part of a salient and well-defined cultural-nationalist movement, its impact in Toulouse never went beyond assertions of Occitan regionalism – the Galician *xogos froraes* taking up an intermediary position between the two. There is, in other words, a sliding scale of separatist potential in such cultural revivals: some will form part of a more activist movement, others will not. The concerns and agendas of regionalism are typologically and structurally quite close to something like an arrested Phase-A nationalism.⁸ As such, it is far from unimportant. It can interact with neighbouring movements (as the histories of Pan-Slavism and Pan-Celticism

show); and it poses fundamental questions concerning the dynamics whereby a mildly regionalist activity can pass a 'tipping point', at an earlier or later stage, into outright separatism. The Welsh *eisteddfod* has, in its longstanding presence since its revival in the 1820s, been a long, slow, subtle galvanising element in the assertion of Welsh difference from England (Edwards 2000). Again, the cultivation of a national culture in Italy and Spain for a long time worked on a regionalist basis: folktales, folksongs, etc. were initially collected as specimens of Sicilian, or Piedmontese or Neapolitan culture, or of Valencian, Andalusian or Aragonese culture, and only gradually obtained a symbolical significance and status as exemplifying the 'national' Spanish or Italian cultural heritage. In the Basque country, the regionalism of Antonio de Trueba stands alongside the nationalism of Sabino de Arana (on whom, cf. Juaristi 2000 and Watson 1996).

Early cultural nationalism does not yet work within the national categories that would later result from its activities. There is a danger of anachronistic distortion if we place Phase A nationalism in a national context which only crystallised later, as a result of subsequent developments. This tends to filter 'failed nationalisms' from our view. In all too many cases, nationalism studies are conducted as a sort of archeology of the modern state: only those national movements and antecedents are singled out which have actually managed to constitute themselves into the states with which we are familiar nowadays. Such a selective view makes it meaningless to argue that the ethnic roots of the modern nation go back further than the emergence of the nationalist ideology. Of course they do; but the problem lies, not so much in the roots of the nation as in the tendrils of nationalism. Prior to the emergence of nationalism, ethnic diversity was a mangrove swamp of inchoate and competing patterns of self-identification, which were not only given a fresh political instrumentalisation, but also filtered, selected, realigned and reconfigured, sometimes to the point of transmutation or invention.⁹

Cultural nationalism requires a cross-national comparative approach

The 'rearview mirror perspective' of looking at early cultural nationalism in terms of what it subsequently gave rise to, projects a twentieth-century mental map of Europe back onto an early-to-mid-nineteenth-century ethnocultural landscape. That landscape, however, was in many cases divided along different classifications from the ones which emerged from historical events. Why and how did Baltic nationalism come up with nation-states like Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – and how did these categories take over from original regional units like Livland, Courland and Samogitia? How did the Morlacks disappear, the notion of 'Illyrianism' briefly appear and then disappear again, as a separate ethnic category in the Balkans?¹⁰ Through what processes did the Albanians and Macedonians manage, and the Vlachs fail, to crystallise into a territorially established nation? That these things happened as they did

is the outcome of a turbulent century where contingency jostles with circumstance and geography. The early grammars, dictionaries and poems situated themselves in a geo-ethnically different landscape from ours, and many activities took place in contexts that now fall outside the states which emerged subsequently. The Albanian Naum Vexilharqi lived and worked in what is now Romania. The beginnings of Serbian literary culture lie in the printing presses of Venice and Budapest. After 1830, Polish and Lithuanian intellectuals looked to Kiev as much as to Warsaw or Wilno/Vilnius; Finnish nationalism tapped into ethnically Finnish areas which then, and now, formed part of Russia. One of the first Bulgarian newspapers was printed in Smyrna.¹¹ Such situations strike us as extraterritorial and therefore slightly anomalous; but the anomaly is wholly of our own projection.

In the realm of culture, Vienna can be a Bulgarian or Greek centre of learning even though geographically and politically it is far removed from the Rodopi mountains or the Peloponnese. Heinrich Heine, based in Paris, famously called the German language his 'portable fatherland' (*mein portatives Vaterland*). The extraterritorial (or rather: territorially a-specific) location of many early concerns and workers in cultural nationalism is not an anomaly, but a fact of life. Whereas nationalism as a social and political movement takes place in a geographical space, cultural processes take shape in a mental ambience which is not tethered to any specific location.

The territorial indistinctness of early cultural nationalism is a factor of great importance. It accounts for all the geopolitical and territorial disputes which emerge once the cultivation of culture is translated from the realm of learning and letters into that of social and political action. Cultural consciousness-raising is concerned with traditions, patterns and practices; political activism will raise, on that basis, territorial claims on the locale of those traditions and practices, leading to competing and conflicting geographical demands on mixed regions. Emerging German nationalism led to strenuous debates concerning mixed borderlands such as Schleswig-Holstein, Limburg, the Belgian Eastern Cantons, Luxemburg, Alsace-Lorraine and the South Tyrol; Irish nationalism engenders the case of Ulster; further East, there are the Greek-Albanian or Greek-Macedonian frontiers, and indeed most Balkan frontiers and ethnically mixed areas, including Vojvodina, Bukovina and Transylvania.

The territorial indistinctness of cultural nationalism means that all European nations can be immediately juxtaposed, compared, brought into contact. They are each others' immediate 'virtual neighbours'. Early cultural nationalists and intellectuals work in dense patterns of mutual influence and exchange, even though the ethnicities in question are situated at distant points on the European map. The Lithuanian Jonas Basanavičius and the Ukrainian Yurij Venelin work in, and on, Bulgaria; the Slovene Jernej Kopitar is approached by the Portuguese Royal Academy concerning the edition of a medieval *cancioneiro*. Jacob Grimm corresponds with the Finn Lönnrot and the Breton La Villemarqué, and makes the Irish grammarian

John O'Donovan a member of the Prussian Academy.¹² In the intellectual and cultural history of European nationalism, a given national movement can be situated, not only in its 'proper' country, with its specific socio-economic circumstances and conditions, but also in an intellectual and ideological climate of mutual contact and inspiration. Nationalism, certainly in its cultural manifestation, is a truly international European pandemic.

Cultural nationalism needs another explanatory context beyond the socio-political infrastructure of its home country (however that may have been configured or constituted at the time). The various manifestations of cultural nationalism in Europe need to be studied in their mutual contacts, as part of a comparative cultural history. The analogy I have in mind is Romanticism: another European pandemic, almost contemporary with cultural nationalism (and with many points of overlap). Where would literary and cultural historians be if we studied Romanticism piecemeal, country by country, in each case pondering the stage of modernisation of that country, the position of its middle classes, its educational system and economic scale? While such factors establish the background for a Romantic movement in a given context, the main understanding of Romanticism works on the basis of charting the spread of a certain poetical programme: authors influencing other authors, ideas and attitudes concerning literary beauty and literary inspiration spreading across networks and in a dynamics which the cultural sociologist Dan Sperber has aptly described as a *contagion des idées*, or 'epidemiology of beliefs' (Sperber 1990 and 1996). We understand Romanticism not as something sociologically generated by a political or economic infrastructure, but as something triggered by the cultural communication and dissemination of ideas. Human actors are, in such an approach, the carriers, enunciators and disseminators of notions, ideas and attitudes. What matters is not just the social situatedness of these actors, but also their function in the dissemination of ideas, as relay stations in a spreading cultural movement.

Comparative Literature has done much to trace and typify European Romanticism in this way.¹³ A similar approach may be useful for the tracing and typology of cultural nationalism.

Nationalism and the 'cultivation of culture'

Over the past decade, the project *Philologists and National Learning* (www.hum.uva.nl/philology) has collected a database on early cultural nationalism in Europe, now containing some 3,000 records on activities termed 'cultural' in the critical literature. This spans a bewildering variety of practices and endeavours: the compiling of dictionaries and grammars, the erection of commemorative monuments, the establishment of newspapers and university chairs, the edition of ancient documents (legal, historical or literary), the writing of historical novels or patriotic verse, the composition of national music, the organisation of sporting events and the opening of museums and

reading rooms. Clearly, the notion of what ‘culture’ stands for in cultural nationalism covers a wide spectrum of meanings; even so, a certain consistency can be discerned.

- All these pursuits are carried by an overlapping network of actors, who in very many cases undertake initiatives in various of these fields. Sir Walter Scott, notoriously, was a creative writer, an antiquary and historian, and staged George IV’s visit to Edinburgh; Jacob Grimm was a lexicographer, grammarian, legal historian, folktale collector and editor of old literary texts; the list of such ‘multitaskers’ could be extended indefinitely (Leerssen 2004a). Clearly, for the literati concerned, there was some intellectual continuity between these various initiatives.
- There was also a shared institutional and social framework. The actors involved seem to be situated, almost all of them, at the interstice between *belles lettres*, private erudition, and a professionalisation that involved appointments as librarians, archivists and professors (both at universities and at *lycées* or *Gymnasia*). Across Europe, archives and libraries came under direct or indirect state control, as did universities, where new chairs in language, literature or philology were established (Rüegg 2004). Appointments in these institutions created career opportunities and a publically established working environment for literati and scholars who until then would have worked in private networks or through semi-private associations like the Percy Society or the Bannatyne Club. Conversely, these appointments formed part of a reorganisation and reinventory drive in the libraries and archives of Europe that brought many forgotten or neglected texts, codices and documents to light. The rediscovery and publication of ‘national classics’ such as *Beowulf*, the *Chanson de Roland*, the *Nibelungenlied* and *Reinhart Fuchs* all follow this pattern (Leerssen and Mathijsen 2002), as does the initiative to publish national documents in large-scale endeavours such as the *Monumenta Historica Germaniae* or the *Rolls Series*.
- Besides the institutional framework, there was also an underlying intellectual template that linked the various manifestations of early cultural nationalism. That template may be described as *philological*, not in the limited sense familiar to us nowadays (‘lang.-and-lit. studies’), but in the sense as originally enunciated by Giambattista Vico in his *La scienza nuova* of 1724 (Hummel 2003). Philology, in that scheme, is the scholarly investigation of the certainty and truth which humans had made for themselves: man-made certainties and world-views as articulated through language, poetry, mythology, history, law and institutions. In Vico’s view these were originally a single, undifferentiated whole: primeval poets, law-makers, historians and priest were indistinguishable and had a sole shared function in defining a nation’s culture and world-view.

Strikingly, the cultural spheres here grouped together by Vico as the investigative field of *philological* learning are fairly precisely the fields where

we can place the activities of a generation of early-nationalist intellectuals. These naturally combine legal history and the study of language, literature, manners and customs, and mythology, in a dense network with a lively exchange of ideas across specialisms and national frontiers.¹⁴ Once again, Jacob Grimm is a paradigmatic case in that he was an outstanding scholar in all these fields.¹⁵ Also as a ‘networker’ and institutional inspiration his name may be mentioned: in 1846 he brought together a conference of *Germanisten* (the first of its kind), uniting literary/linguistic scholars, historians and legal scholars.¹⁶

Vico’s ‘philological’ programme was aimed at understanding national characters (the *natura delle nazioni* that features in the subtitle of the *Scienza Nuova*). This programme, with an added historicist investment, underpins all cultural-national pursuits of the subsequent century. The classical scholar August Boeckh defined philology in a phrase that Vico would have appreciated: he called it *die Erkenntnis des Erkannten*, the ‘understanding of how/what we understand’.¹⁷ In a similarly recursive phraseology, I suggest that the underlying, unifying concern of early cultural nationalism and romantic historicism lies in the *cultivation of culture*. By that phrase I understand specifically the new interest in demotic, vernacular, non-classical culture, and the intellectual canonisation process that constitutes such vernacular culture, not merely as a set of trivial or banal pastimes, or as picturesque ‘manners and customs’, but as something which represents the very identity of the nation, its specificity amidst other nations.¹⁸

This *cultivation of culture* underpins, I contend, nationalists’ scholarly, creative and political-propagandist concern with language, with folktales, history, myths and legends, proverbs, ancient tribal/legal antiquity, mythology, antique heirlooms, etc. All of these undergo, at a specific historical juncture, a crucial transformation. They are lifted from their context of origin by a professionalising philological intelligentsia; they are recontextualised and instrumentalised for modern needs and values; they are studied as organic growth processes and data for the historical track-record of the nation in a prevailing intellectual climate of historicism, which will tend to study ‘*what is* in terms of *how it became*’ (Leerssen 2004a and 2004b); and as a result they are invested with a fresh national symbolism and status. Complex as these processes are, they can nonetheless be mapped as a specific array of concerns, allowing us to address the agenda of cultural nationalism in analytic rather than merely descriptive terms.

The ‘cultivation of culture’ can be mapped as a specific array of concerns

The idea that early ‘Phase A’ style nationalism essentially involves a cultivation of culture would be no more than a phraseological pirouette if it did not allow us to gain a more specific analytical understanding of what that actually involved. What exactly do we mean by ‘culture’ and by ‘cultivation’?

It would be quixotic to try and impose a definition of the notoriously protean concept of culture. Most readers will have a commonsense, albeit unspecific understanding of the term. Rather than fitting historical evidence into *a priori* definitions, it seems preferable to inventorise manifestations of what is commonly considered a cultural endeavour, and to attempt some pragmatic systematisation on that basis. This would at least have the heuristic value of being able to 'place' a given cultural endeavour vis-a-vis others, to situate a given activity in a more systematically diversified and specified template of the notion of 'culture' in nationalist activism.

The model I present here does not, therefore, claim to reflect the inner structure or capture the true essence of 'cultural' nationalism; it is merely a grid, a heuristic device, to sort out and situate various aspects and practices. It is as uncongenial, as artificial and arbitrary, as the system of meridians and parallels of longitude and latitude is to the outline of the earth's continents: it does not describe the earth as it is, but allows us to fix a position on its surface.

So what is culture, and how is it cultivated? A first line of systematisation involves the type of cultural *field* in question; four of these seem to cover most of the data in a meaningfully differentiated fashion.

1. Foremost among these four is clearly that of language. From Herder to the generation of the Humboldts, Schlegels and Grimms, language comes to be seen as the essential soul of a nation's identity and position in the world.¹⁹ An extraordinary number of cultural-nationalist initiatives are concerned with language: from grammar-writing to purism,²⁰ from language revivalism to language planning.
2. Closely attendant on this is language's twin sister in the mind-set of emerging philology: the discursive realm of literature and learning. One thinks primarily of novels, theatre and verse, but this should not exclude the more referential genres of disquisition, such as antiquarianism and cultural criticism. A crucially important genre is history-writing, which in the Romantic decades immediately preceding its academic professionalisation begins to focus on the nation-at-large as its main protagonist.
3. Outside the fields of language and discourse we can identify a category of 'material culture': artefacts such as painting, sculpture, antiquities, monuments, architecture; symbols such as flags and heraldry; public buildings.²¹
4. Finally, that leaves the performance of immaterial culture: cultural practices, involving folkdances, pastimes and sports, manners and customs and (last but not least) music.

There are, of course, overlaps between these fields. The establishment of national theatres not only involved the writing of plays, but sometimes also a public purpose-built theatre, and performances of 'national' or nationally inspired ballet and music alongside, or within, the dramatic programme. On the whole, however, the division along the lines suggested here provides a workable sorting-grid.

And what about the idea of ‘cultivation’? This refers to the agenda on the part of cultural-nationalist actors and activists, their intended instrumentalisation of the national culture. Here, the data suggest a division into some three types of endeavour, which we might call *salvage*, *fresh productivity*, and *propagandist proclamation*, respectively.

1. The first of these (possibly also the earliest in time, with an appreciable pre-romantic run-up in the eighteenth century) is content with mere inventorisation (of language, discourse, artefacts or practices, as per the four fields listed above). Cultural studies in the Romantic period often follow a ‘salvage paradigm’; particularly so if the cultural topic involved is of an informal, popular and vernacular provenance. It is part of a romantic mindset to celebrate specimens of ancient tradition as ‘the last of their kind’, final remaining samples of a vanishing, almost vanished inheritance.²² Manuscripts are seen as the surviving vestiges of a pre-Gutenberg world eroded by dispersal and loss; oral poetry is stereotypically snatched from the lips of aging folk with one foot in the grave; folktales and folk music are invariably part of a lifestyle swept away by modernisation. (Ironically, this modernisation process is feared as a threatening, eroding force by the very scholars whose work it enables and facilitates.) A similar salvaging impulse, reaching out to a receding antiquity from a modernising vantage-point, concerns ancient buildings, monuments, historical sites or symbolically invested landscapes; or superstitions, pastimes and performative traditions. The link between the emergence of folklore and of nationalism is well established. In sum, a primal urge in the cultivation of culture is that of *inventory* and *salvage*.
2. A second type of activity involves fresh cultural *productivity*: contemporary initiatives emerge, inspired by historicist inventories and remembrances. Linguists no longer just inventorise language by means of grammar and dictionaries, they argue about orthography, standardisation, the status of dialects vs. a central norm. Often the ambitions of a vernacular language to literary prestige are signalled by initiatives to translate the Bible (or other ‘world classics’). We see the writing of patriotic or historical verse, or narrative, or drama; the emergence of a new type of national history-writing, taking ‘the nation’ for its collective protagonist rather than the deeds of monarchs and generals.²³ Literary criticism and literary history-writing formulate a canon and an agenda for a literature now understood as a national pursuit (cf. Spiering 1999). In the field of material culture, we encounter the establishment of national museums and the restoration of ancient buildings. In music culture, there is the rise of schools of ‘national composition’ – which, tellingly, means two things: (a) nationally distinctive, in that it makes the nation stand out amidst others, and (b) drawing for that purpose on the idiom of demotic, non-classical musical traditions (folk music and folk dances). The lifestyle of the peasantry inspires the genre of rustic-‘realist’ narrative, full of local and folkloric colour, which

takes over after the Romantic historical novel has played itself out. Traditional sports and pastimes, or even traditional dress, may be revived or cultivated by clubs and associations.

3. Thirdly, the national culture thus salvaged and perpetuated may be used for propagandist proclamation: drawn upon to suffuse the public sphere with a sense of collective national identity. The vernacular (national) language is taught, or used in, or spread by means of, education. National history becomes a school subject, as does the nation's literature. Pageants, ceremonies, historical monuments and pantheons proclaim the nation's rootedness and presence. Historicist architecture (neo-Gothic or otherwise) is used; newly-built streets are given dedicatory names taken from the nation's past. Festivals, awards and other public manifestations are held involving linguistic, literary, historical or folkloristic agendas.

This gives a differentiated idea of how nationalism can position various aspects of culture, and aspects of its cultivation. If we juxtapose these two dimensions, 'culture' and 'cultivation', into a matrix, the 'cultivation of culture' takes on the shape shown in Table 1.

To properly accommodate this model to the available data, two other categories have been identified. These are not specific to any given pursuit/field set out here, but rather function as a facilitating framework to all of them. One is the social ambience (the public organisation of cultural pursuits), and the other the institutional infrastructure created by the modern state. One is 'bottom-up', generated by an urban sociability most strongly represented among the professional and middle classes, involving the establishment of associations, city academies, book rooms, reading societies and clubs, and the establishment of newspapers or periodicals. The other is 'top-down': initiated,

Table 1. *'Culture' and its 'cultivation' arrayed in a matrix*

		TYPES OF CULTIVATION		
		salvage	productivity	propagation
CULTURAL FIELDS	language	language description	language maintenance	language activism, language planning
	discourse	text editions	translations, literature, history-writing, criticism	education, festivals, commemorations
	material culture	archeography	monument protection, musealisation, architecture	dedicatory investment of public space
	practices performed	folklore studies	folklore revival, national music, rustic literature	folk pageantry

funded and/or overseen by the authorities, involving the establishment and management of state-controlled institutions such as archives, libraries, universities or university institutes, national academies, museums or galleries; or else, government-sponsored surveys of the national culture or of the documentary sources of the nation's history.

Once these two institutional/social frameworks are factored in, the resulting matrix is shown in Table 2.

Again, this model does not describe or characterise cultural nationalism. It is merely a heuristic accessory in order to locate, in a set of coordinates, a given pursuit or practice in the cultivation of culture. In nationalism studies, the field of culture, and the traditions of cultural nationalism, have too often been referred to in unspecified ways, by means of one or two sample instances meant to betoken an entire, unspecified realm of 'all that cultural stuff'. By at least diversifying and specifying how we can place 'all that cultural stuff', a precondition may be created for a more detailed comparative study.

Future research can on this basis address two other dimensions: the various nationalities involved, and the chronology. What happened in Iceland in 1820, what in Slovenia in 1850? Which came first where? Is it possible to see certain pursuits more heavily represented in established nation-states like Denmark, others in marginal minority cultures such as Estonia? Which ideas

Table 2. *A matrix coordinating aspects of the cultivation of culture in nationalism*

	1: SALVAGE, RETRIEVAL INVENTORY	2: FRESH CULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY	3: PROGATION, PROCLAMATION IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE
LANGUAGE	dictionaries, grammars L1	orthography debates, standardisation/dialect debates, language purism L2	language activism, language planning, language education L3
DISCOURSE	editions of older -literary texts -historical documents -legal sources D1	translations/adaptations (Bible, classics), national/historical drama, novel, poetry, national history-writing, literary history, criticism D2	history education, historical pageants, commemorations, events/festivals/awards D3
ARTEFACTS, MATERIAL CULTURE	archeography monumental remains symbolically invested sites A1	monument protection policy historicist architecture, design restorations, museums A2	monuments, dedication of public spaces A3
PRACTICES, PERFORMATIVE CULTURE	editions of oral literature, proverbs, superstitions, pastimes, folklore manners and customs folk dances/music P1	rustic-realist literature, traditional sports/pastimes revived, national music composed P2	revived or invented traditions, events/festivals/awards (folklore, sports, music) P3
SOCIAL AMBIENCE	associations, congresses, academies; publishing ventures, reading societies, book clubs, periodicals		S
INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE	universities/chairs, libraries, archives, state museums, state academies, government agencies		I

and initiatives spread where, and along which networks and in what chronology?

Conclusion

Cultural nationalism is an international movement, not just the cultural fall-out of separate political-nationalist movements. It is as international a movement as Romanticism, with ideas and initiatives from one country picked up, imitated or applied elsewhere in a swirl of cross-border intellectual traffic. The actors who carried it were concerned, not just with a single nationality or cultural tradition to the exclusion of all others, but with a philology and taxonomy of Europe's diversified cultural landscape, involving a reassessment and revalorisation of the various individual, vernacular cultures. In the process they bequeathed to their political fellow-travellers a discourse, rhetoric and mental template concerning their nations' roots, specificity and autonomous cultural status.

The 'cultivation of culture' configures and articulates cultural traditions in the diverse European landscape as 'national'; it transmutes them from informal vernacular/demotic practices to discrete elements in the structural systematics of a European continent considered as a set of nations. In this respect, cultural nationalism is a central, fundamental and persistent aspect of nationalism across Europe throughout the last two centuries. It pursues concerns of its own, which should not be seen merely as a side issue in the margin of political nationalism. While its chronological development is connected with known factors of nation-building and state formation (such as the rise of middle-class sociability, the spread of literacy, the penetration of mass print and the centralised organisation of universities, libraries and institutions of learning) it also follows a chronology and dynamics of its own, influenced by intellectual factors such as the rise of the philologies and of literary historicism.

What is more, cultural nationalism is territorially much more free-floating than are social movements and their political demands. It offers a standing reminder that 'German nationalism' or 'Greek nationalism' is not the same thing as 'nationalism in present-day Germany' or 'nationalism in present-day Greece'. It was initiated and pursued in multi-ethnic metropolitan centres and imperial capitals as well as rural borderlands, by scholars on the cusp of a professionalisation process, with careers that took them to different places, and who maintained transnational networks where influences and debates could pass speedily from one corner of Europe to another. It addressed cultural traditions which at the time were often imprecisely located or demarcated in people's minds or in the real world.

Sociopolitical analyses of nationalism have tended to focus on modernisation processes and public-sphere activism rather than on the rarefied and often nostalgic realms of philology, folklore, literature and traditionalism.

Also, single-country case studies will tend to marginalise the radically transnational dynamics of ideas that came from ‘abroad’, that were expressed in different languages, or that were undertaken in places outside the borders of the present-day state. The early-nationalist cultivation of culture was a pervasive and hugely important concern, but its data have seeped into the footnotes and *obiter dicta* of political and literary histories. Nonetheless, it poses a rich field of study with its own profile, its own problems and perspectives, and it is indispensable for our proper understanding of nationalism at large.

Notes

1 Smith’s five-fold typology opens: ‘The world is naturally divided into nations, each of which has its peculiar character and destiny’ (quoted Smith 1998: 187); Breuilly’s three-part definition opens: ‘There exists a nation with an explicit and peculiar character’ (Breuilly 1993 [1982]: 2).

2 The last point was borne out in a mid-1990s incident in the Netherlands. A social-democrat party leader, Thijs Wöltgens, pointed out that Dutch sovereignty was not necessarily to the advantage of Dutch interests in the European context. Powerful German *Länder* such as Bavaria or Northrhine-Westphalia, owing to their leverage in the German Federal Republic, could exert greater (albeit indirect) influence in European affairs than could a small, though sovereign, state like the Netherlands. Reactions to this provocative thought experiment made a telling point: the Dutch public felt that the prime importance of Dutch sovereignty (and hence the fundamental *raison d’être* of an independent Dutch state) lay, not so much in the pragmatic advancement of Dutch interests internationally, as, emotively, in the safeguarding and maintaining of a ‘Dutch identity’. The concept of a ‘Dutch identity’ was, and is, ill-defined, but involves cultural factors such as lifestyle, mentality, traditions and language (Bolkestein 2003).

3 For a sense of the various ongoing debates: Smith 1971; Lawrence 2005; but also Hall 1998 and the special issue of *Nations and Nationalism* (Guibernau and Hutchinson 2004).

4 For an alternative approach, see Leerssen 1996.

5 Literary scholars and historians, for their part, have continued to study the intellectual and rhetorical history of nationalism, usually in the form of small-scale, article-length studies of individual sample cases, at best gathered into thematic collections such as Teich and Porter 1993; Cubitt 1998; Giesen 1991; Berding 1994 and 1996; Řežník and Sleváková 1997. Alongside such essay collections, there are also thematic volumes such as Flacke 1998 and White and Murphy 2001. Monograph studies are scarcer; particularly inspiring are Thiesse 1999 and Geary 2002.

6 Examples of such regionally-comparative studies are Loit 1985; Reiter 1983; Mitchison 1980; Michel 1995; Hettne et al. 1998.

7 Ripert 1917: 58–60. For the Catalan dimension: Miracle 1960; for Galicia: Máiz Suarez 1984; Barreiro Fernández 1982–83.

8 See Thiesse 1991 for France; Van Borgt et al. 1996 for the Netherlands; Jensma 1998 for Friesland.

9 This perhaps reconciles the views of Gellner and Smith as argued out in their famous Warwick Debates, see *Nations and Nationalism* 2 (1996): 357–70.

10 Wolff 1994 and 2001; Kohn 1960.

11 On Albania: Faensen 1980; Iancovici 1971; Islami 1969; also Elsie 1996. On early Serbian print culture: Holton and Mihailovitch 1988; Király 1993. On Ukraine: Lindheim and Luckyj 1996; Luckyj 1983; Prymak 1996. On Finnish: Klinge 1980. On Fotinov’s Bulgarian newspaper: Lord 1963: 264.

12 On Basanavičius: Senn 1980; Krapauskas 2000. On Venelin: Kohn 1960: 66–7. On Kopitar and the *Cançãoiro da Ajuda*: Michaëlis de Vasconcellos 1904. On Grimm’s Celtological correspondence and contacts: Lauer et al. 1991.

- 13 Classic studies that come to mind are Van Tieghem 1969 [1948]; Praz 1930; Béguin 1946; De Deugd 1966; Gusdorf 1993.
- 14 For the 'cultural transfer' across Europe through nineteenth-century philological networks: Espagne and Werner 1990 and 1994.
- 15 On Grimm and his position in emerging *Germanistik*, see Bluhm 1997; Wyss 1979.
- 16 This also demonstrates how cultural initiatives anticipate political activism: the *Germanistenversammlung* foreshadowed the Frankfurt *Nationalversammlung* of 1848. Fürbeth et al. 1999, especially Habermas's contribution (Habermas 1999); also Leerssen 2006 and Netzer 2006.
- 17 Repeatedly in Boeckh 1877; cf. Hummel 2003: 218–20.
- 18 I argue the case in greater detail in Leerssen 1999 and 2004b.
- 19 Caussat et al. 1996.
- 20 On purism, Van der Sijs 1999. On language standardisation, Fodor and Hagège 1983–94.
- 21 Much of this has become popular among cultural historians under the heading of *lieux de mémoire*, following the seminal collection of Pierre Nora (1997 [1984–92]), which has had spin-off projects in various European countries.
- 22 For the trope of 'the last of . . .': Stafford 1994. For the notion of a 'salvage paradigm' in anthropological studies: Clifford et al. 1987.
- 23 A comparative project on such national history-writing (*Representations of the past: the writing of national histories in Europe*) is now being conducted under the auspices of the European Science Foundation (www.uni-leipzig.de/zhs/esf-nhist/index.htm).

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