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## Understanding Nationalism

Hogan, Patrick Colm

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# 3

## METAPHORS AND SELVES

*Forefathers, Roots, and the Voice of the People*

BENEDICT ANDERSON HAS pointed out that we cannot possibly experience the nation directly. It constitutes a community for us, but that community is necessarily imaginary. Given the level at which Anderson is discussing nationalism, it is not necessary for him to spell out precisely what constitutes such imagination. However, this is just the sort of issue that a cognitive scientific account must address.

How, then, do we imagine the nation? How do we conceptualize the unity of diverse individuals, widely dispersed in space and time, understanding them all as part of a single, exclusive entity? How do we think about this national oneness, draw inferences from it, respond to it? My contention here is just what one would expect from cognitive neuroscience. We conceptualize the nation in the same way that we conceptualize other abstract entities—through cognitive modeling or metaphor, specifically what is sometimes called “conceptual metaphor.”

Over the last twenty years or so, cognitive theorists, beginning with George Lakoff, have examined the ways in which our thought is organized by a limited number of

metaphorical structures. According to Lakoff and his collaborators, these metaphors organize our conceptual categories, guide inferences, incline us to act in certain ways rather than others (see Lakoff and Johnson 3). I am not convinced that metaphors consistently have these effects. Or, more accurately, I am not convinced that the idioms we use in ordinary speech are necessarily operational metaphors that have these consequences in a significant degree. (In fact, all concepts have networks of association that affect our thought and action. This is not to say that all concepts affect our thought and action as metaphors.<sup>1</sup>) However, it is clear that our thought and action are affected whenever we adopt a cognitive model to think through or act on an idea or problem. Genuine metaphors are a species of such models. At the very least, the pattern of structures manifest in metaphors is likely to tell us something about our general conceptual organization of the “target,” which is to say the abstract topic we are addressing through those metaphors—here, the topic of the nation. In this chapter, I seek to outline the metaphorical patterns that are most prominent in discourses on national identity and to suggest how these patterns, and the specific metaphors that instantiate them, have consequences for the crucial identity parameters—durability, opposability, salience, functionality, and affectivity.

1. For a discussion of some problems with Lakoff’s account of metaphor and an alternative analysis, see my “A Minimal, Lexicalist/Constituent Transfer Account of Metaphor.” Lakoff has influentially extended his account of metaphor to politics. Obviously, Lakoff’s work has been extremely important for the present chapter and readers should consult his *Don’t Think of an Elephant* for an alternative analysis of some of the metaphors I consider. However, there are some fundamental differences between Lakoff’s approach and mine. It would take a separate essay to develop these. However, here are some main points. First, Lakoff views metaphors as guiding thought about policy alternatives. In my account, one often chooses metaphors because one already holds certain policy views. In this way, Lakoff overstates the cognitive consequences of metaphors. Moreover, metaphors foster certain identifications, which themselves have consequences for policies. Thus, the consequences of metaphors are often more indirect than Lakoff indicates. In short, I do not see the operation of metaphors as simply a matter of framing, as Lakoff does. Nor is it clear to me that framing is an adequately well-specified explanatory concept. Second, in keeping with this, Lakoff’s broader theoretical treatment of political thought is, in my view, somewhat reductive. Lakoff stresses the cognitive consequences of metaphors to the virtual exclusion of other equally or more important factors, such as group dynamics, perceptual salience, memory organization, etc. Finally, Lakoff’s central typological division seems overly simple. He takes up THE NATION IS A FAMILY metaphor to distinguish “strict father” and “nurturant parent” political orientations. He then groups many advocates of identity politics together with civil libertarians, environmentalists, certain sorts of Marxists, and others under the “nurturant” category (14). This is valuable for coalition building. But it is probably not the best way of theoretically organizing political programs. It is in any case different from—indeed, in many ways opposed to—the account of identity politics presented here.

## NATIONS AND THEIR METAPHORS

One of our basic cognitive strategies is to think through new and difficult problems in relation to simpler, previously resolved problems. We set out to establish parallels between the more difficult problem and the easier one, trying to use the latter as a means of understanding and resolving the former. Metaphor—or, more broadly, cognitive modeling—is a version of this general strategy. We use this strategy explicitly when we try to analyze, say, the atom on the model of the solar system. We use it implicitly when we draw unselfconsciously on, for example, hydraulics or pressure dynamics to discuss emotion (as when we say that someone had built up a lot of anger and was bound to explode eventually). The point holds in a straightforward way when our task is establishing unity for such abstract and physically dispersed objects as nations. In this case, the problem is to understand, and relate emotionally to, something that we cannot possibly experience or concretely imagine as a single item. We resolve this dilemma by analogizing the abstract and dispersed entity to something that we can experience more directly as a unit and/or by analogizing our relation with that object to a more readily comprehensible relation.

Clearly, we draw on metaphors in a wide range of situations and in response to a wide range of problems. But the metaphors we take up in these various situations and for these various problems are not as variable as one might expect. The work of Lakoff, Johnson, Turner, and others has shown that metaphorical structures manifest patterns of great consistency. This may seem surprising at first. However, it results from two factors. First, humans tend to be interested in the same sorts of things and, given their nearly identical cognitive capacities, they tend to experience the same difficulties in conceptualizing those things. For example, humans tend to be concerned with emotion. Since emotion is difficult to understand (given human cognitive architecture), its conceptualization is likely to be seen as a problem and related to more readily solved problems. But this only explains why the “targets” of metaphors (i.e., their objects of concern) tend to recur. It does not explain why the “source” domains—the sets of concepts we draw on as models for the targets—tend to recur as well. Why, for example, is analogizing emotion to temperature so common? (See, for example, Kövesces. *Metaphor* 178–81, for cases of ANGER IS HEAT<sup>2</sup> metaphors in a range of unrelated languages—Chinese, Japanese, Hungarian, Polish, Zulu, and English.) Indeed, why do we all do this so extensively and

2. It is conventional to print general metaphorical structures in upper case.

easily, even across novel cases (i.e., why is innovation in the use of such metaphors not confined to, say, poets)? For instance, we easily understand John's statement about his boss's recurring bouts of irascibility even after he has been repeatedly placated—"He seems to have come equipped with an automatic re-ignition device." This is not because there is some unique relation between temperature and emotion in general or anger and heat in particular. There are many domains that are more concrete and more comprehensible than emotion. Moreover, it is not clear that the domain of temperature really tells us a lot about emotion. After all, the physics of temperature plays no role in contemporary cognitive accounts of emotion. If there were a significant connection between the two domains, we would expect this to carry over to scientific research.

This leads us to the second factor contributing to the commonality of metaphorical structures. The selection of models or source domains is governed by a shared set of cognitive principles. Of course, in any given case, our minds may select domains in an idiosyncratic manner. However, when this occurs, the resulting choices are unlikely to be passed on and thus preserved, as Pascal Boyer has emphasized (speaking of cultural patterns in general, not conceptual metaphors in particular). Put differently, there are two stages in the social generalization of metaphors. The first is the generation of a metaphor by some individual (or by several individuals independently or collectively). The second is the spreading of the metaphor to other people in the society. The first stage is already governed by human cognitive patterns. However, if idiosyncratic elements work their way in at this level, they are likely to be eliminated at the stage of dissemination, which is also governed by human cognitive patterns, in this case, patterns shared by all those to whom the metaphorical structure is disseminated. Specifically, not all possible models are equally accessible to the mind. Salient properties of the target "prime" or partially activate a number of possible source domains. We are likely to choose a source model from those primed domains. There will be idiosyncrasies in each person's network of lexical connections (i.e., the circuits through which priming passes). However, over enough cases (i.e., over enough different people), those idiosyncrasies should cancel each other out.

But widespread acceptance of individual metaphors is not all there is to the patterning of metaphors. As the example of temperature and emotion suggests, we do not make our metaphors for individual targets in isolation. As Lakoff and his collaborators have shown, we map larger domains onto one another. Thus, in English, we do not merely say that Sally was burning with anger at Bill; we also say that Jane gave John the cold shoulder,

that, despite this chilly treatment, John felt warmth for Jane, and so forth. Why do metaphors tend to cluster into recurring source domains? This is because priming operates across both the source and target domains. As a result, related targets come to prime lexical items from related source domains.

Consider a specific case—lust and heat. Sexual arousal leads to reddening and increased localized surface temperature as a result of changes in blood flow distribution (see Frijda 130–31). It also leads to activity that often results in sensations of heat, perspiration, and so forth. In thinking about sexual desire, our lexical networks undoubtedly prime a number of associated items. These are likely to include lexical items that involve redness, heat, and the production of perspiration—such as the item “heat” itself, as well as “fire,” “burn,” and so forth. As a result, when discussing how desirous someone is, there is a reasonable chance that we will come up with something along the lines of “burning with lust.” This is true even if we have never before encountered temperature metaphors for emotion. This sort of metaphor should have good “survivability” in that it fits well with the lexical associations of other English speakers. From here, it is easy to see how a broader mapping of lust onto temperature could ensue. If great desire is fire, then, by simple inferential logic, less desire is parallel to less fire. Ordinary associations lead easily from this to a dousing of the flame, thus a reduction of the heat, a cooling off, and so forth. Moreover, once we have begun to associate temperature with sexual feelings, temperature is primed as a likely source domain for modeling other emotions, such as anger. (I am not proposing that this is the actual genesis of the temperature model for emotion. I am simply trying to illustrate how cognitive operations produce such modeling relations. On the other hand, conceptual metaphor theorists often view our bodily experiences as the origin of metaphor universals. For example, Kövecses argues that “increase in skin temperature” during anger is a key factor in the development of ANGER IS HEAT metaphors [“Metaphor”; see also Lakoff, *Women* 406–8].)

But just what good does this model do? I began by indicating that metaphors have a problem-solving function. They help us to think through ill-understood phenomena by invoking well- or at least better-understood models. The case of emotion and heat suggests that perhaps this is not always the case. One might argue that the model of fire helps us to understand anger as something that dissipates if it does not have fuel. However, it seems as likely—indeed, more likely—that this understanding of anger precedes the metaphor and indeed is part of the reason for using it. On the other hand, there may be other relevant problems with anger. We may

understand that anger spontaneously dissipates, unless it is reprovoked in some way (through the actions of an antagonist, through reflection on the angering incident, or whatever). However, it is not always very easy to express an idea of this sort accurately and concisely. It may be easier or more effective to analogize the dissipation of anger to the consuming of fuel in a fire. This is a sort of problem solving. However, it is not conceptual. Rather, it is communicative problem solving. It is not a matter of knowledge per se, but of articulating that knowledge.

The mention of communication suggests another possible function for such metaphors. In some instances, we may use metaphors in order to communicate, not just an idea about a feeling, but some sense of the feeling itself. Again, our emotion systems appear to be set up in such a way that emotions are triggered by actual perceptual experiences or concrete, perceptual imagination (see chapter 7 of my *Cognitive Science*), not by generalities. Moreover, in comparison with abstract ideas, concrete images are more likely to trigger emotional memories. For these reasons, concrete images are more likely to enhance one's emotional response to a statement. "He was burning with anger" primes associations with fire, destruction by fire, and so forth. These associations foster certain sorts of concrete imagination. Moreover, they may include emotional memories. As a result, "He was burning with anger" is more likely to inspire an emotional response than "He was very angry." Similarly, we are more likely to have an emotional response to an image of the soil as "nurturing" than to an image of soil having "appropriate amounts of potassium." In these cases, one might say that metaphors solve a problem, not of conceptualization or articulation, but of rhetorical effect.

Finally, not all metaphors are a matter of problem solving even in this broad sense. In some cases, we make metaphors simply because our minds are set up in such a way as to isolate and elaborate parallels with ease. We notice that humans start out small and grow bigger, eventually drooping over and dying. We notice that plants start out small and grow bigger, eventually drooping over and dying. As a result, we develop one of the most common metaphorical structures, PEOPLE ARE PLANTS (see Lakoff and Turner 6, 12–15). It is difficult to imagine that our ancestors really understood plant growth better than human growth, or that they found it easier to talk about plants than about people. It is also difficult to imagine that the analogy served emotional purposes, since we generally care more about people than about plants.

Thus, we have four types of metaphor. We might refer to them as *inferential* (metaphors that guide our thought about a target), *articulatory*

(metaphors that facilitate our communication of ideas about a target), *emotional* (metaphors that facilitate our communicative transferal of feelings regarding a target), and *unmotivated* (metaphors that express a spontaneous recognition of parallels, initially without further functions). All four types have a role in the discourse of nationalism. Our primary concern will be with inferential and emotional metaphors. Common articulatory and unmotivated metaphors certainly enter from areas outside nationalism. However, insofar as they are important in nationalist discourse, they tend to be taken up in inferential or emotional ways. For example, as we will discuss, PEOPLE ARE PLANTS has an important place in nationalist discourse. In its origins, this is almost certainly an unmotivated metaphor. However, its use in nationalism is both inferential and emotional.

Before going on to consider the patterns that recur in nationalist metaphors—first of all, the limited source domains that dominate these metaphors—I should say something more about the inferential consequences of metaphors. There is a common view that metaphors somehow determine our thought about certain topics. Thus, we think of arguments as combative because we use metaphors such as “winning,” as if an argument were a war. I do not hold to a view of this sort. First, we have many meanings for terms in our internal lexicons. Even if we learn the word “win” first in the context of battle (which seems unlikely), it is clear that we develop other meanings for the term beyond “defeat in warfare”—including something along the lines of “show superiority along some axis of comparison.” Thus, if I say, “Kerry won the debate,” I need not be using “won” metaphorically or drawing on a model of warfare. Second, even when we use a term metaphorically, we have a great ability to select meanings from that (metaphorical) term. If I say that Oscar is a big old bear of a man, my auditors know that I am referring to some aspects of his physical presence. They are in no way inclined to suspect that Oscar poses a threat to campers.

However, this is not to say that metaphors make no inferential difference. They do. They do not determine what we think. But, once we hit on a metaphor, it primes certain ideas and not others. Thus, it orients our thought in certain ways. As a result, we are more likely to ask some questions rather than others, more likely to look for answers in certain areas rather than others, more likely to choose certain sorts of actions rather than others. If I say that Oscar is a big old bear of a man, you know not to imagine that he catches fish with his teeth. But “eating raw meat” is primed for you anyway. As a result, you may be surprised to hear that Oscar is a vegetarian—more surprised than if I said nothing about him, or if I said that he is a big old Santa Claus. If Oscar was coming over for dinner, you

may even have cooked more meat than usual. All this can occur without you reflecting for a moment on what you believe about Oscar's eating habits. On the other hand, even if you do reflect, that may not make any difference. Reflection on a metaphor does not necessarily undo its inferential consequences. Indeed, it may enhance or extend those consequences, if one self-consciously takes the metaphor to be broadly valid. For example, if one self-consciously accepts the idea that the nation is a sort of person, one may draw more extensive conclusions from the metaphor than if one uses it unreflectively.

Finally, metaphors are particularly consequential for inferential reasoning if we are not thinking through an issue on our own, but rather listening to or reading someone else's arguments. When a nationalist rhetorician uses certain metaphors, we may find his or her conclusions more compelling insofar as those metaphors do not prime relevant alternatives. Put simply, when we have not thought extensively about an issue on our own, the use of certain metaphors can help to inhibit our critical reflection on that issue, particularly when combined with a forceful articulation of one position on that issue. Consider, for example, an argument for preserving ethnic tradition in which the speaker asserts that a nation is like a plant—it will wither and die if it has no roots. If one has not thought much about the value of ethnic tradition for national well-being, one may find even a simple statement of this sort to be compelling. It introduces an explicit model and asks us to think of the nation in terms of that model. We are likely to do so. As a result, we are likely to come to certain conclusions about nations (e.g., that preserving ethnic tradition is important for national well-being), conclusions that may not be very plausible and that may not even have occurred to us otherwise.

Of course, metaphors may be illuminating for much the same reasons. By orienting our associations in a particular way, they may foster the formulation of valid conclusions that would not otherwise have occurred to us. On the other hand, this sort of innovative thinking tends to occur only with highly novel metaphors, for obvious reasons. In most cases, national metaphors are not highly novel. Again, in general single metaphors tend to be part of recurring (thus non-novel) conceptual structures. For example, PEOPLE ARE PLANTS is the larger conceptual structure from which we specify such single metaphors as "Johnny really shot up like a weed." Those larger structures may be particularly constraining on our primed associations, thus particularly compelling for our inferences or our acceptance of inferences. In the case of nationalism, the problem is exacerbated by the fact that nationalist discourse tends to draw on a very limited set

of source domains, producing a limited number of recurring conceptual structures.

To understand the nature of nationalist metaphors and to explore their consequences, then, we need to understand how they are structured in relation to their source domains. A first step toward achieving such an understanding is isolating those domains. To do this, it is helpful to return to our basic account of what constitutes a nation. That account identifies the properties that prime circuits from which people are likely to draw metaphors for the nation. As a result, it provides a framework for understanding recurrent patterns in nationalist metaphors.

As discussed in the opening chapter, our basic understanding of any identity category is defined by some inclusion criterion. In the case of nations, this criterion is formalized in international law. Of course, our intuitive sense of inclusion criteria for a given group may not be the same as the legal criteria. (Obviously, the intuitive sense is what bears on priming and the generation of metaphors.) However, the legal criteria do seem to capture our intuitions about citizenship. Specifically, Levi explains that the crucial issue in this area is what “represents a genuine link” between a person and a nation. There is no single, definitive criterion. Thus, “Birth in the state’s territory (*ius soli*) or the parents’ nationality (*ius sanguinis*) are not necessarily conclusive.” However, “either is a very strong link to justify nationality.” Moreover, “Under international law, marriage may give the individual the nationality of the spouse” (150).

The inclusion criteria for a national identity category, then, commonly involve one or both of these two domains—family and land. The connection with the land is unsurprising, for the nation is, in part, distinctively defined by a national territory. The family criterion may seem less expected. However, the family is the initial, most salient, most emotionally powerful, most functional, most opposable, and most enduring group for virtually everyone.<sup>3</sup> In consequence, the family is always a possible rival to any other identity group. One way of coopting the family is simply to incorporate it as the primary constituent unit of the larger in-group. Thus, the family is folded into ethnicity, race, religion—and nation. Indeed, it becomes a sort of guardian for the larger in-group, a crucial element in the defense of the in-group against out-groups and against internal hierarchical disruption. More positively, the family is the basic social unit of reproduction. Fundamentally, it reproduces the family itself (or the lineage of the

3. It is enduring for two reasons. First, even if disinherited, one is still the biological child of one’s family. Second, one’s familial ancestry necessarily extends back to the earliest humans. The same point cannot be made about other identity categories, such as the nation.

family). But, once incorporated into another group, such as the nation, the family serves as the primary unit for reproducing that group as well. In both ways, then, it is crucial for the nation.

In keeping with their roles in the definition (and practical operation) of national identity, land and family are two of the three crucial source domains for metaphors about the nation. Specifically, two of the most common forms of nationalist metaphor are homologies of the following form: (1) The citizen is to the nation as [metaphor] is to the family,<sup>4</sup> and (2) the citizen is to the nation as [metaphor] is to the land. In the former, the possible values for the variable are constrained in a straightforward way. The citizen is to the nation as some family member is to the family. We might first expect the possible values for the land variable to be more diverse. However, in this case, previously existing metaphorical structures come into play, most importantly the conceptual metaphor PEOPLE ARE PLANTS. The widespread use of this structure leads to the following, more fully specified homology: The citizen is to the nation as a plant is to the soil.

The majority of nationalist metaphors derive from these two domains. However, there is, as I mentioned, a third domain as well. Like the domain of the family, this is common across identity groups. Indeed, it even serves as a model for the family. The family may be the basic social group. However, it is not the basic human unit. The basic human unit or single, unified identity—thus a basic model for all human groups, including nations—is the individual person.<sup>5</sup>

The general idea that nationalism uses models drawn from the family and the person has been noted by some other authors. For example, Herzfeld writes that “the metonymic extension of ‘those we know’ to include a huge population is not confined to nation-states; they are not the only imagined communities. Perhaps people everywhere use the familiar building blocks of body, family, and kinship in order to make sense of larger entities” (5). However, Herzfeld’s formulation here is a bit too narrow. When used as a source domain for modeling the nation, the person may be either a body or a mind. Thus, one might use the body as a model, saying that the father is “head” of the family, the police are the “arms” of the nation (cf. “the long arm of the law”), and so on. But one might equally say the nation is one spirit, sharing (national) interests or a common grief.

Almost all standard nationalist metaphors seem to derive from one

4. In general terms, this metaphor is fairly widely recognized (see, for example, Lakoff, *Don't*).

5. This, too, is fairly widely recognized in general terms (see Lakoff, *Don't*).

or another of these three domains. Most nationalists combine all three in their imagination of the nation. Consider, for example, the following case, discussed by Greenfeld: “The Russian national idea consisted in the following: The Nation was (1) defined as a collective individual, (2) formed by ethnic, primordial factors such as blood and soil, and (3) characterized by the enigmatic soul, or spirit” (261). The collective individual with an enigmatic soul draws on the person domain, while “blood” and “soil” refer to the kinship and land domains, respectively. Of course, many Russian nationalists no doubt believed that these claims were somehow literally true. Indeed, that tendency is common for nationalists from a range of countries. But that does not change the point. No matter how literal they imagine their claims to be, the modeling operates in the same way, and these are the crucial domains for that modeling.

In the remainder of the chapter, I will consider each of domains in turn.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE AND THE CANCER IN THE BODY OF THE NATION

Modeling the group on the individual is probably the most fundamental form of metaphor, not only in nationalist discourse, but in the discourse of other identity groups as well. It is the basic way in which we come to imagine the unity of a diverse set of people. As such, the metaphorical structure, *GROUPS ARE INDIVIDUALS*, pervades our everyday speech. We speak of “groupthink” taking over in a committee meeting.<sup>6</sup> We refer to the “voice” of a society. We call a set of diverse legislators a “body.” Moreover, this is not merely a matter of speech, but of thought and feeling as well. When we say that the committee members began to think as a group, we are trying to explain why certain errors or biases crept into their report, uncorrected by the diversity of individual opinions. When we refer to groupthink, we are also trying to communicate an emotional attitude.

In the case of nations, the first use of *GROUPS ARE INDIVIDUALS* is simply to give us a way of imagining this vast, diverse collectivity that

6. One could object that groupthink involves the group taking over individual thought and is thus opposed to individuals. That is true. But, to say that groupthink *models* the group on the individual or *metaphorizes* the group *as* an individual, is *not* to say that it supports individuals. Rather, it treats the group as a single individual—one person, with one brain, one set of beliefs, and so on. The implication is that the real individuals in the group are now only components of that encompassing individual. Thus, the group/real individual opposition is a part of the metaphorization of the group as an individual.

cannot possibly be experienced by anyone. As developed and particularized, it clearly has inferential and emotional functions in keeping with this imagination. For example, many national allegories share a common structure. This first of all involves a personification of the nation in one character. This character must choose between different possible spouses for his or her future. Those possible spouses commonly represent policy alternatives for the nation.

A good instance of this is Rabindranath Tagore's *The Home and the World*. This novel concerns a young woman, Bimala, and her husband, Nikhil. Nikhil has in the past tried to support the development of home industries in India. Currently, however, he is opposed to the increasing violence and communalism (Hindu-Muslim conflict) of the nationalist *swadeshi* movement for home industry. The third main character is a *swadeshi* activist, Sandip. Bimala is drawn to Sandip, not only politically, but personally. Thus, she is faced with the dilemma of choosing between Nikhil and Sandip. In the course of the novel, Bimala is analogized to the nation generally and to Bengal in particular. Nikhil and Sandip rather transparently represent different political options for the nation (and for Bengal). In keeping with this, the novel as a whole develops—indeed, narrativizes (elaborates into a story)—the GROUPS ARE INDIVIDUALS metaphor. It does this by way of the love triangle, allegorizing the society's choice of a political future. It also emotionally biases this choice by portraying the *swadeshi* activist as self-serving and dishonest and by making his selection illegitimate, since it would be adulterous.<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, in Derek Walcott's epic poem, *Omeros*, the character of Helen straightforwardly represents St. Lucia. She has two suitors—Achille and Hector. Achille is linked with the Afro-Caribbean rediscovery of African heritage. Hector, in contrast, is linked with Americanization. In the course of the poem, Helen's affections shift between the two men. Ultimately, Hector's craze for financial success proves literally self-destructive. When Hector dies, Helen returns to Achille. However, there is a complication here. Helen is pregnant and the father is uncertain. Pregnancy is a common metaphor for the future of the nation—unsurprisingly, as it is a common metaphor for the future generally. The poem leaves open the precise course of St. Lucia's future. However, it clearly suggests that, in Walcott's view, the right future is for St. Lucia to affirm African heritage. No matter what, that future will be the result (the "offspring") of both African tradition (Achille) and Americanization (Hector). But it should culturally affirm the former.

7. On Tagore's novel, see chapter 2 of my *Empire and Poetic Voice*.

Here, too, we see a narrativization of GROUPS ARE INDIVIDUALS (specifically, THE NATION IS A PERSON) by way of the love triangle plot, in this case extended to encompass pregnancy.<sup>8</sup>

A Marxist example of this general sort may be found in Peter Abrahams's *Mine Boy*. This work concerns Xuma, a black miner in South Africa. For a while, he is attracted to Eliza, a beautiful woman, but also a cultural mimeticist (i.e., someone who seeks to imitate the practices of the culturally dominant group—in this case, white people) and possessive individualist who thinks of herself as white. As he becomes increasingly aware of his national and class position, however, Xuma realizes that his future lies with the less glamorous, working-class character, Maisy, who is in touch with folk traditions. Abrahams's allegory involves the complex, allusive interweaving of particular historical conditions and events, political platforms, and individual leaders connected with debates over class solidarity and nationalism in South Africa (for discussion, see my "Allegories"). Nonetheless, the novel still takes up the GROUPS ARE INDIVIDUALS metaphor, narrativizing it in relation to a love triangle, which represents the possible future of the nation as mimeticist and driven by possessive individualism or as connected with folk traditions and motivated by solidarity for collective benefit.<sup>9</sup>

Of course, personification of the nation is not confined to love triangles or fictional works. Katherine Verdery brings together many common elaborations of this model when she explains that "nations are conceived—like individuals—as historical actors, having spirits or souls, missions, wills, geniuses; they have places of origin/birth (cradles, often, in the national myth) and lineages (usually *patrilineages*), as well as life cycles that include birth, periods of blossoming and decay, and fears of death; they have as their physical referent territories that are bounded like human bodies" (229).

There are three ways in which "individuals" may be understood, and thus three ways in which the GROUPS ARE INDIVIDUALS structure may be developed. First, individuals are spirits or souls. Second, individuals are bodies. Finally, individuals are persons, which is to say, a combination of body and spirit. It is commonly the case that nationalists invoke different aspects of the individual human source domain depending on the context or purpose of the metaphor.

8. On the national allegory in Walcott's poem, see chapter 5 of my *Empire and Poetic Voice*.

9. Another Marxist example, one from Ireland, may be found in Patrick Hogan's *Camps on the Hearthstone* (see Hogan, "Revolution").

Emphasis on the *spirit* is crucial when stressing, not only the oneness of the people, but their close relation to divinity. This is perhaps obvious in the case of monotheisms, such as Christianity and Islam. But the point applies equally to other traditions. For example, some Indian nationalists have drawn on Vedāntic metaphysics in this respect. Put rather simply, Vedāntism maintains that all souls are ultimately identical with God and that the appearance of differences among individual souls is merely illusory. Some Indian nationalists in effect posited an intermediate, national level between individual souls and the all-encompassing Absolute. For example, the important Indian nationalist leader, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, stated that “God and our nation are not separate, on the contrary, our nation is one of God’s forms” (quoted in Stevenson 47). Stevenson explains the concept by reference to “the Advaita Vedanta system to which Tilak subscribed” (47).

Of course, spirit need not be treated in this transcendental way. Moreover, it need not be treated as absolutely uniform. We commonly see the human spirit as having attributes or components. These may be mapped onto the nation as well, preserving its unity but simultaneously isolating distinct functions (e.g., in the national hierarchy). For example, we may conceive of some politicians or social critics as the “conscience of the nation.” Such organization or subdivision may draw on a more psychological version of this domain as well, referring to the national *mind*, rather than the national spirit. Here, nationalists may emphasize the ethics of the nation, instead of its divinity. Most obviously, the nation is likely to be endowed with particular ethical virtues, such as bravery, generosity, and compassion. Moreover, the enemy is likely to be characterized in terms of the opposites of these virtues—cowardice, greed, and cruelty. Nationalists may also look to the national mind for intellectual virtues of reasoning or imagination. In connection with this, Greenfeld explains that, for German nationalists, “German superiority was evident, first and foremost, in its thinkers, ‘the German mind’” (366). This celebration of the lucidity of the in-group may be paired with a characterization of the enemy as inscrutable or insane. Extending the metaphor in a slightly different way, the national in-group may be viewed as mature or adult while the enemy is characterized as having a childlike intellect or suffering from senility. It has been widely observed that, during the period of modern European colonialism, children served as one common European model for Africans (see my *Culture* 136–38 and citations; see also Lakoff, *Don’t* 11, 70, for current cases). The point applies equally to African national groups, who were considered not yet mature enough for self-government, which is to say, not yet mature

enough to make life decisions for themselves. While the childhood model was used for perhaps every colony, some colonies were also interpreted in terms of senility. As Ashis Nandy discusses, this was a common way of understanding and justifying colonialism in India (see *Intimate* 17–18, and *Traditions* 39).

As the references to national virtues and vices suggest, it is also commonplace to draw on this metaphorical domain by making assertions about national *character*. Thus, we may believe that the French character is aristocratic; the Irish character is bibulous; the Spanish character is quick-tempered. Recently, I was speaking with a colleague who claimed Hegel's master/slave dialectic was very much in keeping with the German character. All such assertions involve stereotypes. They frequently involve severely prejudicial attitudes toward the national out-groups in question and may often enhance opposability. In each case, they are based on a particular form of modeling in which the national out-group is assimilated to a single individual with a particular character. Of course, we use the character model for our in-groups as well. Unsurprisingly, we are likely to attribute positive character traits to our in-group. On the other hand, in some cases, these positive traits are a matter of potential, rather than actuality. For example, an Indian nationalist might claim that Indians are spiritual people, but they have been diverted from spiritual goals by the possessive individualism of the West. Thus, they must make an effort to return to their natural character. This attribution of character traits to the in-group is bound up with the establishment of ideals and the homogenization of practical identity.

A predictable extension of the mental model involves assimilating national history to personal *memory*. Indeed, this connection has become so entrenched in our way of speaking and thinking that the idea of a national memory may seem literal. But it is not literal. History does not happen to one person. History does not even happen to a single nation. By assimilating national history to personal memory, one creates the sense that national history has intrinsic unity, that it is not merely a tendentious selection of past events designed to suit a contemporary purpose. Moreover, the model of history as memory is combined with the idea of a national character to produce a particular account of how history operates. There is an obvious sense in which each of us, individually, is the product of our innate tendencies combined with our experiences. Insofar as history is memory, the nation may be construed as having a national character that is the product of some initial propensities combined with a set of historical experiences. For example, in this view, the American character may be seen as beginning with an impulse toward freedom, which is then reshaped by such

events as the arrival of the Puritans and the expansion to the West. But is it really the case that the individuals who vote in elections, the corporate executives who have such influence on those elections, the politicians who are elected and who make policy decisions, in any sense share this national character? They are certainly shaped by their own individual memories. But are they shaped by a collective, national memory? Of course, to some extent, national history may become personal memory through movies, television, education, and the like. (For example, I may be deeply affected by a portrayal of slavery.) But, outside this context—which applies to non-national history as well—it seems that there is no real basis for the assumption of a continuity of national memory. Yet this model has become so naturalized that almost all of us use it unreflectively. Put differently, in order for national memory per se to have any causal effects, it would have to be real. But just what would constitute a real national memory? It would have to be some sort of Jungian collective mental system. But there is no reason to believe that any such thing exists, or could exist. We are led to talk as if it exists simply because our use of this metaphor has become so naturalized.

Indeed, many writers extend the analogy, drawing on particular theories of memory. Consider, for example, Santayana's famous statement that "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (284). The statement implicitly relies on a sort of Freudian account of memory. Not having worked through my Oedipal antagonism toward my father, I may repeat that antagonism with every authority figure I encounter. Similarly, if we as a nation do not self-consciously work through our traumatic memories of the past, they will continue in our unconscious and lead us to repeat them.<sup>10</sup> But, in fact, history does not operate this way. If something happened to some people one hundred years ago, that may or may not affect me. Indeed, in some cases, it may affect me only if I become aware of it. Consider, for example, the dissolution of Yugoslavia. In that case, it seems more appropriate to say that ethnic and religious conflicts were exacerbated by memory. The recollection of old communal grudges gave the subnational oppositions greater emotional force. Wachtel reports that, by the end of the 1960s, "the lower a person's level of education, the greater the chance that he or she would express integrationist views"

10. Of course, the account does not have to be literally psychoanalytic. The point is simply that it is of the same type. It presupposes that not remembering leads to compulsion, while remembering does not. Sometimes, that may be true. Often, however, it is not. Many people simply translate Santayana's statement into the commonplace that one should learn from one's mistakes. But that is not what the statement actually says.

(Wachtel 191). This suggests that, among other things, these grudges were not preserved popularly and spontaneously, but disseminated through literary and historical education. A similar point could be made about India. Recent attacks by Hindus on Muslims have been fostered in part by Hindu politicians' repeated invocation of the Muslim oppression of Hindus and desecration of Hindu temples centuries ago. Such oppression and desecration were not repressed memories, forcing ordinary people to act out their unconscious impulses and attack their neighbors. Rather, they were resentments fostered by contemporary political rhetoric.

In this context, it seems that Renan was closer to the mark when he drew on the same general metaphorical structure, but reached the opposite conclusion. Specifically, Renan wrote that "Forgetting . . . is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation, which is why progress in historical studies often constitutes a danger for nationality. Indeed, historical enquiry brings to light deeds of violence which took place at the origin of all political formations" (11). Similarly, Susanna Moodie wrote in 1853 that Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants should not "perpetuate the memory" of "an old national grievance" that led to "hatreds and animosities" (quoted in Trumpener 254).

Certainly, there are cases where Santayana is roughly correct. It routinely happens that societies do bad things, then enact laws to prevent those bad things from recurring. If we are not aware of the history of a certain law or practice, we may not recognize the purpose it serves. If we then change the law or practice, we may unwittingly lead the country back to the earlier harmful behaviors. For example, after the Vietnam War, the U.S. government tended to hesitate about committing troops to occupy a foreign country and the U.S. population tended to look with disfavor on suggestions of sending such troops. However, as people began to forget the horrors of that war, the general aversion to invasion declined. This ultimately allowed the invasions of Afghanistan and then Iraq. One could reasonably argue that U.S. occupation of these countries is, at least in some ways, a "reliving" of the occupation of Cambodia and South Vietnam. On the other hand, even here things are more complex than the metaphor suggests. For example, the "repetition" of Vietnam in Iraq is not a psychoanalytic acting-out or any similar compulsion (whether understood in Freudian terms or not). It is, rather, a parallel invasion based on political and economic interests. There are some ways in which Santayana's claim fits this situation. But the metaphor biases our thought about these situations, and may limit our analyses.<sup>11</sup>

11. Even in the case of Renan and Moodie, it tends to bias our judgment—for example,

This model is not confined to Santayana. It appears in a range of writings by political activists and commentators, as well as fictional works, where it is often extensively elaborated. This is particularly true in the treatment of national “traumas”—either traumas of suffering, where the national in-group was brutalized, or traumas of guilt, where the national in-group itself committed atrocities. Margaret Atwood’s *Surfacing* is, in part, a story of Canada. The main character had an abortion and has repressed the memory. The story suggests that the European killing of the Native Americans is similarly repressed (see my “Identity” for discussion). Interestingly, the literary use of this idea need not be post-Freudian. Discussing William Godwin’s 1817 novel, *Mandeville*, Katie Trumpener finds “the repressed trace memory of the 1641 Ulster Plantation Uprising” leading to a character’s “mental collapse” (225; see also her discussion of John Galt’s 1831 novel, *Bogle Corbet* on 287–88). As in *Surfacing*, the point bears on an individual character. However, its implications concern the nation as a whole.

Indeed, in Atwood and Godwin, we have examples of another common specification of the GROUPS ARE INDIVIDUALS structure. In this specification, violent subnational conflict is assimilated to mental conflict, even insanity. The most famous case of this sort is *King Lear*, where Lear’s descent into madness parallels the descent of England into civil war. Another example of this is Bessie Head’s *A Question of Power*. There, too, the main character suffers mental collapse. Her madness is inseparable from the oppressive racial divisions of South African society.<sup>12</sup> The same point could be made about Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The main character’s mental disintegration reflects the racial and related colonial divisions that mark her society.<sup>13</sup> Speaking of Walter Scott, Trumpener writes that “the displacement of geopolitical struggle into mental conflict transforms public, political, and moral problems of power and of collective destiny into merely private neuroses, subjective mental states, and problems of emotional health” (189). She goes on to contrast some other writers with Scott. These authors “insist that the trauma of colonization can never be exhausted or recovered from. Instead they describe the neuroses . . . suffered in perpetuity by collective and individual ‘national characters’” (247). For our purposes, the differences here are less important than the continuities, specifically the identity of the metaphorical source domain.

Finally, a somewhat different use of the metaphor of mind concerns the

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by turning our attention to knowledge of history, rather than, say, current economic and political conditions.

12. For discussion, see my “Bessie Head’s *A Question of Power*.”

13. See chapter 3 of my *Colonialism and Cultural Identity*.

difference between sleeping and waking. Nationalists commonly analogize the state of a nation that has little nationalistic enthusiasm as “sleep.” They then speak of the development of nationalist “consciousness” as a process of “awakening.” For example, Hoffmann quotes writers on “the awakening of the German people into national consciousness” (119; my translation). Anderson explains that, “In Europe, the new nationalisms” of the nineteenth century “almost immediately began to imagine themselves as ‘awakening from sleep’” (195).

In comparison with spirit metaphors, *body* metaphors seem to be associated more commonly with internal hierarchy. Generally, the body is one of the most important source domains for imagining authority, with the “head” being in charge of the various “limbs” and “organs.” The “eyes” of the nation become the individuals who recognize and report sedition or treachery. The “arms” of the nation are those who enforce its policies. The nation’s “central nervous system” may be some aspect of infrastructure, such as the communications system. Alternatively, it may be the set of administrators who keep the nation running. Indeed, the two uses are related, for the crucial part of infrastructure is precisely what allows these administrators to do their job. Thus, fear of a terrorist attack on the nation’s “central nervous system” would be any attack that disrupts the ordinary operation of the country.

Outside of hierarchies per se, we invoke the heart of the nation when discussing its ideals. Similarly, we may also speak of national taste (usually the taste of a small fraction of the nation, as Bourdieu has argued) or of how the nation will have to “tighten its belt” during periods of decreased government expenditures, of how the nation has “grown fat” due to deficit spending, and so forth. The rhetorical effects of such metaphors are largely self-evident.

Some bodily metaphors bear on in-group/out-group relations. Thus, the “spine” of the nation is whatever makes it stand tall, rather than cowering in fright. If the nation does not have a large, well-equipped, and well-trained military, we may say that the nation has grown weak, or is out of shape. A particularly interesting aspect of the body metaphor is that it facilitates the emotion of disgust, since most of what we find disgusting is associated with the body. This introduction of disgust is most often recruited to characterize out-groups, especially as those out-groups may be understood as a threat to the bodily “health” of the nation. In these cases, the threat is often internal, the threat of disease. This use of the body metaphor tends to go along with a fascist or semifascist attempt to align the national category with other identity categories, such as religion or race. In this usage, those

who are of the wrong religion or race are akin to a disease or parasite in the national body. They need to be removed. Examples from Nazi Germany are obvious and ubiquitous. However, this metaphor turns up in “respectable” outlets as well. For example, Chomsky cites an editorial in the *Washington Post* that, somewhat mixing its attitudes, refers to “the aggrieved Kurdish minority” as Turkey’s “national cancer” (*New* 8). Sometimes the images are more graphic and the effect of disgust more straightforward. Anderson notes “that the brilliant, young, radical-nationalist [Hungarian] poet Sándor Petöfi (1823–1849) . . . on one occasion referred to the [non-Magyar] minorities as ‘ulcers on the body of the motherland’” (103).

Not all uses of this model result from an effort to align national and other identity categories. Some are used to characterize groups that disturb legitimate national hierarchies or disrupt national unification (e.g., through fascist policies of alignment). For example, Rabindranath Tagore referred to dictatorships, such as those of Hitler and Mussolini, as “the worst form of cancer to which humanity is subject” (quoted in Das Gupta 45). Chomsky cites a *New York Times* article on “What It Would Take to Cleanse Serbia.” “Cleanse” here means “purge,” as when one purges the body with a cathartic. The goal, according to the article, is to “stamp out the disease” of “extreme Serb nationalism” (96). As this suggests, what is seen as rightful nationalist identification from one point of view is often seen as a sub- or transnational sickness from another point of view. This is most obvious in the case of revolutionary movements, such as those in some former European colonies. For example, Sicherman notes that even “moderate” settlers in Kenya saw the Kenyan anticolonial Mau Mau revolutionaries as “a subversive organization which is like a disease” (77, quoting one of those settlers).

This metaphor may be literalized as well. Thus, we find that, in anti-Semitic writings, Jews are not only characterized as a disease in the body of Germany, but are blamed for transporting diseases into Germany (see, for example, Gilman 96, 221). Bapsi Sidhwa represents similar ideas regarding the British in India. Thus, one character in her novel, *Cracking India*, attributes the spread of polio to the English (25–26) and another links the English with syphilis (70). The literal and metaphorical uses tend to reinforce one another, conceptually and emotionally. Both encourage a particularly sharp opposition between the nation and its disease-bearing/diseaselike enemy. The metaphor dehumanizes the out-group, permitting, indeed encouraging, the killing of that enemy, like the killing of bacteria or parasites. The literal connection adds urgency and apparent medical rationality to that behavior.

There are also more straightforward spatial and temporal mappings of the nation onto the human body. In the spatial mapping, the national territory is the body of the nation. This model is used most frequently when the national territory is not unified, but rather some part of the territory has been lost, thus (in one use of the metaphor) amputated. We find an example of this in Bapsi Sidhwa's novel about the partition of British India into India and Pakistan. The heroine has a nightmare that "men in uniforms quietly slice off a child's arm here, a leg there. . . . I feel no pain. Only an abysmal sense of loss—and a chilling horror that no one is concerned by what's happening" (31). Baxmann cites the example of Maurice Barrès who lamented the condition of "the body of France, from which Alsace-Lorraine was amputated" (354). She also cites the view of a German nationalist in 1930 that "The German people must form their political body, which is now mutilated." She explains that "The 'recovery' and 'regeneration' of the national body" have been central to "left-wing and right-wing political discourse" in both Germany and France (355; my translation).

Temporal mapping models the nation on the stages of life of a human body. The most obvious and most pervasive of these images is that of birth. From international law to film and literature, this metaphor is pervasive. Levi explains that "Once a state is born, it exists until its demise" (120). D. W. Griffith's most famous film portrays *The Birth of a Nation*. Salman Rushdie's award-winning novel, *Midnight's Children*, allegorically parallels Saleem's birth with the beginning of Indian nationhood. A slight variation on this occurs in the notion that a newly empowered or successful nation has experienced a "second birth" or renaissance.

As the quotation from Levi suggests, the final stage of human life is also important in our understanding of the nation. Nations are not only born, but may die. Indeed, Levi has an entire section devoted to "The Death of States" (see 122). The idea of the death of a nation may be combined with its rebirth, as when Hindu nationalists see their nation as having died with the Muslim conquests, but as being reborn with a new, Hindu India. Indeed, the motif of national death and rebirth is common in postcolonization literature.

Abraham Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address draws on this complex of metaphors in fascinating ways. The speech was, of course, delivered at a cemetery. Moreover, it was delivered during the Civil War, when there was a great deal of literal death and great concern about the death of the nation. Lincoln begins the speech with the famous statement that "our fathers brought forth . . . a new nation, conceived in Liberty." Lincoln extends the standard metaphors that parallel the history of the nation with the bodily

life of the individual. First, he posits that the nation, like the individual, has parents—"our fathers." (This obviously leads us into the THE NATION IS A FAMILY structure, which overlaps with the THE NATION IS AN INDIVIDUAL structure on this point.) The nation is not only born, but it is "conceived" prior to being born.

Lincoln goes on to the issue of demise, questioning whether the nation will "long endure." He notes that the cemetery is being dedicated "as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live." Here the (metaphorical) life of the nation is established as parallel to, but far greater than, the (literal) lives of soldiers. Lincoln suggests that the nation will not die, since the deaths of its citizens give it life. The end of the speech is more explicit about this idea, stating that "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." This concluding phrase suggests not only the eternity of the United States, but also America's salvatory role in bringing democracy to the world and guaranteeing the eternal life of democracy. In both ways, Lincoln is tacitly taking up and simultaneously negating the metaphor of bodily life. The nation is like a body in being born. But it is not like a body in that it will not die. The affirmation of immortality is particularly important in this context, for the division of the nation must have seemed a sort of national death—and, again, it was bound up with a great deal of literal death.

This mixed use of the stages of life model is possible because Lincoln tacitly joins the body metaphor with the spirit metaphor. Specifically, he affirms that "this nation, under God, shall have a new birth." This not only takes up the metaphor of bodily life, it spiritualizes the national "life." This "new birth" that is "under God" suggests both baptism and, even more important, resurrection. In both cases, the nation is not only alive, but sanctified. In this way, Lincoln effectively integrates the metaphor of the nation as individual spirit (which is undying and is connected with God, but is not precisely born) with the metaphor of the nation as individual body (which is born, but which dies). This prepares us for the subsequent assertion of national immortality and the suggestion of a salvatory role for the United States, making both more effective rhetorically.

Other variations on the model of the nation as a human body may be found, for example, in literary works where there is an abortion, miscarriage, or some other problem with birth or infancy. This abortion or miscarriage commonly represents the failed promise of the new nation. This may be followed by a second birth, which may represent a more genuine hope for the future. We see a case of this in Atwood's *Surfacing*. As we have already noted, the abortion appears to represent a founding national crime

in which the original inhabitants of the place were killed. The second pregnancy, announced at the end of the novel, may hold out the possibility of national renewal, renewal that does not succumb to the cultural, political, and moral invasion of “the pervasive menace, the Americans” (226; note that Atwood systematically establishes opposability through this recurring characterization of the enemy—the United States being widely viewed as the major threat to a distinctive Canadian sense of identity).<sup>14</sup>

Another instance occurs in Moufida Tlatli’s highly praised film, *The Silences of the Palace*. Most of the action of the film takes place during the Tunisian war for independence. The main character, Alia, is a sort of new Tunisia, just coming of age during this period of turmoil before decolonization. Indeed, the connection between Alia and Tunisia is indicated directly when an anticolonial militant sits with Alia beneath a map of Africa and compares her to the nation. He goes on to explain that she will become a singer. As such, she represents the voice of the people (an aspect of the nation as person metaphor). The new Tunisia, then, will not be subservient—like Alia’s mother and the other women who kept “the silences of the palace” in the face of unjust domination. Rather, the new Tunisia will be free and will speak with its own, popular voice. In keeping with this, toward the end of the film, Alia defiantly sings a nationalist song at a public gathering. Simultaneously, her mother dies from an induced abortion. The abortion suggests that a new society will not be born from the old generation, the old Tunisia of servants and aristocrats. But, as it turns out, it will not be born from the new generation either, the new Tunisia of artists and revolutionaries. When the film moves to a time ten years later, after independence, the situation has not changed. Now, Alia characterizes her own life with the former revolutionary as a series of abortions. The new, independent nation has also failed to give birth to the promised society.

A further variation on these metaphorical structures may be found in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *Petals of Blood*, an allegorical novel about Kenya. In this novel, Wanja represents (roughly) the people and land of Kenya today. Like the people, she is seduced and betrayed by (a member of) the nascent capitalist class. The result of this false seduction is the birth of a child—in effect, independent Kenya—whom she throws into a latrine (291). For a long time, she tries to conceive again, thus to give birth to a new society,

14. Alternatively, this may not be Canadian national renewal, but supranational humanism. For example, the narrator hopes that this new child will be “the first true human” (230). As we will see in subsequent chapters, certain ways of developing nationalist stories involve a narrative and emotional logic that ultimately pushes beyond nationalism. *Surfacing* may be an instance of this sort.

but fails to do so. In the end, she finally conceives by joining with a former Mau Mau rebel. This suggests that the hope for a new Kenya lies in the union of the people with the radical activism of the revolutionary movement, not their union with the African bourgeoisie.

In a little-known, but very insightful essay, Walter Ong discusses the metaphorical assimilation of the nation to the human life cycle. He explains that “our tendency to represent a nation to ourselves as an individual human being who is born, lives and dies,” our “tendency to consider the so-called ‘life’ of a nation by analogy with human life is all but overpowering” (85). Ong rightly points out that this is not a neutral matter. Viewing the nation as a living body tends to occlude the real lives of the real human beings who make up nations, and it tends to occlude the common humanity that links human beings across nations. Of course, what Ong does not point out is that this is one of the most important functions of this model. Without occluding both the real individuals and the transnational category of “human,” the nation would not long endure.

The *person* source metaphor turns up perhaps most obviously in the development of national “mascots,” personal representations of the nation—Uncle Sam, Dame France, Marianne, John Bull, Germania, Deutsche Michel, and so forth. However, it is used most extensively to specify the GROUPS ARE INDIVIDUALS structure when one’s concern is deliberate and unified national action. In some cases, the metaphor focuses on government, subordinating the small persons of the nation to the big person of the state. For example, Greenfeld cites Adam Mueller, “the political philosopher of Romanticism *par excellence*” (346), who asserted that one should regard “the state as a great individual encompassing all the small individuals.” Similarly, Ong cites Thomas Hobbes’s idea of Leviathan. He refers particularly to illustrations “in which the state or Leviathan is pictured . . . as nothing more or less than an oversize man made up of an agglomerate of little men” (86).

In other cases, however, the metaphor concerns the people. For example, speaking of the United States in the eighteenth century, Greenfeld refers to Joseph Galloway’s “view of a nation as a ‘society animated by one soul, which directs all its motions, and makes all its members act after a constant and uniform manner, with a view to one and the same end, namely the public utility’” (410). (Note that this is not simply a spirit metaphor or a body metaphor. It concerns a spirit animating a body, thus a person.) The same metaphor is found across nations and periods. Greenfeld subsequently quotes Friedrich Schlegel to the same effect, as follows: “The concept of a nation requires that all its members should form as it were only

one individual” (363). Referring again to Mueller, she writes that, when one recognizes this personal unity of the nation, “then one understands that human society cannot be conceived except as an august and complete personality” (347). Along the same lines, Hobsbawm quotes a German Imperial decree in which the Franco-Prussian war is “presented as the rising of the German people ‘as one man’” (“Mass-Producing” 278). Malla reports that, “It is said that the Indian nation arose as one person against the British in India” (7). A related extension of the metaphor involves the analogizing of democracy to individual speech, as when we say that, through the recent election, “the people have spoken.” The ideal here is well expressed by Baxmann, the people speaking “with ‘one voice’ as ‘one man’” (359; my translation).

These cases are interesting for several reasons. Perhaps most significantly, the claim of complete national unity is patently untrue. In the case of India, for example, there was widespread opposition to British rule, but there were many different degrees of opposition. There was also indifference, and collaboration. In keeping with this, we would be highly suspicious of any election in which all the votes were cast for one candidate. Here as elsewhere, one could make the metaphor fit this diversity, as when we say that a person is ambivalent, that he or she engaged in the action, but without full commitment. However, the use of personification does encourage us in the direction of seeing the nation as engaged in single-minded action. It tends to deemphasize diversity of attitudes and actions, and is not, so to speak, welcoming of the idea of dissent.

Perhaps the most consequential use of the *THE NATION IS A PERSON* metaphor is to be found in international law, with its idea of nations as juridic persons. As Levi puts it, “Subjects of law are individuals (natural persons) or groups of individuals (juridic persons) directly recognized by that law as capable of having rights and duties and of acting with legal consequences.” Juridic persons include corporations and states. He goes on to explain that, in international law, “states remain the only entities having the fullest measure of rights, duties, and the capacity to act legally” (64). Moreover, “as long as nationalism remains strong, states will try to retain their monopoly of subjectivity” (63).

## ROOTS IN THE NATIONAL SOIL

Probably the most distinctive set of nationalist metaphors derives from the relation between the people and the land. However, these metaphors are

also, in some ways, the thinnest. They are almost certainly the least diverse in their particularizations. Nonetheless, simply through repetition, they account for a large number of the particular uses of nationalist metaphors, and they certainly contribute to thought and feeling about nationalism.

The main use of the land as a source domain comes in enhancing opposability, primarily through polarization. It does this through a simple contrast between those who supposedly have their roots in the national soil—or, by extension, in the national culture—and those who do not. As the metaphor has developed, it also fosters a sense of durability, for the land is presumably timeless and the roots can be very deep, thus of long duration. Specifically, the most common use of this domain for nationalism relies on the general metaphorical structure, PEOPLE ARE PLANTS. It combines this with THE NATION IS THE LAND. The result is a homology—the relation of the people to their nation equals the relation of plants to land. There are three obvious implications of this. First, plants have their roots in the land. Thus, people have their proper place in the nation. Second, plants draw their nutrients from the land. Thus, people draw their life from the nation. Third, when they die, plants may contribute to the regeneration of the land. Thus, the death of citizens may contribute to the regeneration of the nation.

In each of these three cases, elements are drawn from the source domain that require further interpretation. In the first case, we find that roots suggest some long-term relation to the soil. In keeping with this, roots may be deep or shallow. The obvious correlate of roots is ancestry. If one has had many generations of ancestors in a given nation, then one has deep roots in the nation. Insofar as having deep roots is understood as involving greater belonging to a place or greater rights to a place, then someone with a longer ancestry in a place has greater belonging to that place and greater rights to that place. This may seem so obvious and so obviously true as to be banal. However, it is not banal. In fact, it is not at all self-evident that ancestry gives anyone a greater claim on a national place. Suppose Jones and Smith are both U.S. citizens and both were born and raised in the country. But Jones's parents immigrated to the United States, while Smith's great-great-grandparents did. Does this mean that Smith is somehow more American than Jones? The metaphor of roots encourages us to think that ancestry has such consequences for national belonging. However, it does not provide us with any rational reason to take up this view.

Of course, the metaphor of roots does not *force* us to think that greater ancestral connection entails greater national belonging. The metaphor may be used for very different purposes. For example, the land of the source

domain may be connected, not to the national territory, but to the national culture. In this case, the analogy is, roughly, plant/land//person/national culture. This version of the metaphor does not celebrate people whose ancestors have lived in the national territory for a long time. Rather, it celebrates people who are deeply immersed in and committed to their national culture.

An interesting variation on the plant metaphor may be found in V. S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*, which treats Asians and Africans who have been born in the Caribbean due to a "New World transplantation" (118). This variation in effect combines the physical and cultural mappings of the model, deriving cultural rootlessness from ancestral rootlessness. Specifically, Naipaul portrays men and women whose cultural lives—including, for our purposes most importantly, their national politics—are unreal, mere mimicry, a sort of playacting in which "we each became our character" (196). In other words, they are men and women without real cultural roots. In part, this condition results from their ancestral displacement or *uprooting* from a physical place. One metaphorical image for this condition is a great uprooted tree, specifically one that floats in the water, like Indians and Africans crossing the ocean to the Caribbean: "on the beach I could see the stripped remains of a great tree, washed up, I had been told, months before, coming from heaven knows what island or continent, drifting on the ocean night and day for weeks, for months, for a year, until stranded on our island, on this desolate beach" (106).

Needless to say, this metaphorical structure—even as specified in complex, double mappings onto both culture and national territory—is not confined to works of literature. A professor of geography, B. S. Butola, describes the condition that results from "large scale transnational migrations," as follows: "nations are over populated by the people with no culture of their own and no roots. . . . Nations are increasingly being peopled by" inhabitants who are "rootless" and "live in a cultural vacuum and emotional void without any commitment to any thing that can match with national ethos, heritage, and ethics" (141).

Butola's use of the metaphor is obviously critical of migration and its results. But, here as elsewhere, the metaphor does not absolutely dictate one attitude or conclusion—even when understood as mapping the earth of the source domain onto the national territory of the target domain. The metaphor does seem intrinsically biased in that direction. However, when developed in the right way, the structure can be used to present a positive view of migration. For example, Bessie Head took up the (transplanted) Cape Gooseberry as a model for her own existence as an immigrant in

Botswana. The main character in *A Question of Power*, Elizabeth, grows the Cape Gooseberry; “eventually Elizabeth became known as ‘Cape Gooseberry.’” The link could appear merely humorous, but the narrator explains that “a complete stranger like the Cape Gooseberry [which was not indigenous to the area] settled down and became a part of the village life” (153). Note that, in this context, the metaphor does not evaluate people on the basis of whether they have deep roots in the land/ancestral connections to the place. Rather, it evaluates the fit between a society and a given person, the degree to which the person flourishes and contributes to the well-being of the community. The implicit presumption of the model is that plants should be planted wherever they will thrive and benefit people and, likewise, people should be able to settle and “put down roots” wherever they will thrive and contribute to social life. This is a perfectly reasonable use of the metaphor. What is perhaps most interesting is that its consequences directly contradict those of the more standard uses of the model.<sup>15</sup>

It is only a short step from the metaphorical specifications we have been considering to the idea of hybridization. Writers such as Homi Bhabha have referred to people whose national culture is mixed as “hybrid” (see, for example, Bhabha 314). This, too, takes up the metaphor of people as plants and the nation as land. However, it suggests a third variation. In this case, the “native” plants have the roots. However, the immigrant, or the immigrant culture, is grafted onto a plant. The result is a combination of the two parent plants. In this case, too, the implication is most often that this should be done insofar as it allows people to thrive, or perhaps insofar as the product (i.e., the result of the grafting) is of value to the community, much as a hybrid fruit or vegetable may be of value. Bhabha is widely praised for developing a revolutionary theory of postcolonial culture. Whatever one thinks of Bhabha’s account, however, it is not revolutionary in its sources. Fundamentally, it is a variation on standard nationalist metaphorical structures. (Of course, Bhabha is not alone in this. A point repeatedly stressed

15. One reader of this manuscript commented that some people might raise “a scientific question” bearing on “invasive species.” If so, it indicates the degree to which the metaphor of people as plants has been naturalized and the extent to which it biases our thought against migration. The suggestion would be that some immigrant groups *really are* like plants that take over the land, choking out the native species. My point is simply that we may use the metaphor in different ways, selecting some aspects and discarding others. Thus, the metaphor itself does not *determine* whether we support or oppose migration, even if it does involve a bias toward the latter. The scientific discovery that some transplanted plants are “good” and others are “bad” simply offers one further possible use. (The person who made this comment seems to have had aggressive colonizers in mind. But the fact that this alters what metaphors we favor suggests the metaphors themselves are not determinative.)

by conceptual metaphor theorists is that even apparently radically innovative metaphors are most often instances of common metaphorical patterns. See, for example, Lakoff and Turner on literary metaphors.)

Turning to the second homology—that plants draw their nutrients from the land—one might reasonably ask about the national correlate for “nutrients” in this case. These nutrients are commonly taken to comprise anything in the culture that serves to sustain one physically, emotionally, or intellectually. This metaphor might have operated to suggest that the national culture should be developed in such a way as to provide the maximum growth for the individual citizens. For example, it might have been used to suggest the need for national health care. However, this usage seems rare, perhaps nonexistent. Rather, this homology is used most often to urge individual conformity to (putatively traditional) national culture. In this context, the metaphor suggests that, if one does not set down one’s roots in a national culture, one will be deprived of the nutrients of such a culture. Thus, one will wither and die. Thus, if some citizens are socially afflicted and emotionally troubled, nationalists might invoke a lack of roots or a disconnection from roots to explain their condition. Again, the metaphor could be used just as easily to criticize the national culture. For example, it equally fits the view that the national culture has not provided proper nutrients to all these citizens, who are rooted in the nation simply by the fact of being citizens. However, the metaphor is not commonly used in this way. As a result, it is not a model that fosters improvement in national policies in order to increase human happiness. Rather, it is a model that fosters loyalty to national culture and commitment to its homogenized practices.<sup>16</sup>

A version of this metaphor turns up in a range of postcolonization narratives that present the dilemmas of “deracinated,” which is to say uprooted, characters. For example, one character in Walcott’s *Omeros*, Philoctete, combines several of the concerns we have been discussing. He suffers from a physical wound. But the physical wound is really an outward manifestation of an inner trauma, itself produced by historical conditions—specifically, the trauma of slavery. Philoctete recovers from his

16. As we have seen, many metaphors seem to bias usage in one direction or another. *Prima facie*, I do not see any reason why that would be the case here. I suspect, therefore, that the use of the metaphor is itself biased by views—prominently, the views of nationalist activists—that preexist the use of the metaphor. These views would include a disproportionate emphasis on the duties of citizens to the nation, rather than duties of the nation toward its citizens. However, it may also be connected with the broader cognitive salience of (concrete) individuals relative to the (abstract) nation. Thus, our focus in the metaphor is on people (CITIZENS ARE PLANTS IN THE SOIL OF THE NATION), not on the nation (as it would be in THE NATION IS THE SOIL IN WHICH CITIZENS GROW AS PLANTS).

physical and mental suffering only when he takes in the healing properties from an African root. It is only when he “reconnects” with his “African roots” that he is able to overcome the wound left by the ankle chains of slavery and the psychological trauma of colonial history (see 246–48).<sup>17</sup>

The third homology—that the death of some plants regenerates the land—obviously has the greatest bearing on self-sacrifice in war or revolution. The death of patriots nourishes the nation in the way that the death of plants nourishes the land. Moreover, this homology may be combined with ancillary information to produce new “blends” (to use Mark Turner’s and Gilles Fauconnier’s term). Most important, plants require not only fertile soil, but water. Linked by the ideas of fertility and generative capacity, the metaphor of rain may be combined with the metaphor of death to produce one common metaphor of “national martyrdom,” that the blood of the martyrs will nourish the soil of the nation.<sup>18</sup> I take it that the implications of such metaphors—for thought, feeling, and action—are too obvious to require comment.

Sometimes, *THE NATION IS THE LAND* may be used on its own, without reference to *PEOPLE ARE PLANTS*. In these cases, the precise metaphor is often altered to enhance the value of the nation. A common version of this sort is *THE NATION IS A GARDEN*. Greenfeld cites an apt example—“France as a garden, an earthly paradise, *le jardin de France*” (102). On the other hand, if one’s judgment of the nation is less positive, the metaphor may be altered in less flattering ways as well.

A noteworthy use of *THE NATION IS THE LAND* may be found in Wole Soyinka’s early play, *The Swamp Dwellers* (first produced in 1958). A blind beggar tells the story of his homeland. It is a story about farming and drought. But it is also, implicitly, the story of a nation, specifically a nation after the end of colonial rule. (Soyinka is alluding in particular to the decolonization of Africa, begun in 1957 with the independence of

17. It is important to note that this is not an exclusionary vision, one that confines the nation to Africans. Indeed, one of the most striking and innovative aspects of the poem is that Walcott presents the rediscovery of African roots as curative for the main European character as well as the Afro-Caribbean characters (see my *Empire* 171–74)—suggesting once again the cognitive flexibility of the metaphor.

18. Sean O’Casey presents a variation on this in *The Plough and the Stars*. Drawing on Eucharistic imagery (a further “blend”), one character asserts that the “heart of the earth needed . . . the red wine of the battlefields,” poured out “for love of country” (164). In another variant, the martyrs’ blood is not rain, but seed planted in the soil. Lyons presents an example from the popular Irish novelist, Canon Sheehan—“the blood of the patriot will be the sacred seed from which alone can spring new forces, and fresh life, into a nation” (91). McHugh reports an instance from George Bernard Shaw—“the martyrs whose blood was the seed of the present Irish Free State” (361).

Ghana.) The beggar explains that “the land had lain barren for generations” (98), a metaphor for the colonized nation during the period of colonialism. However, at a certain point, “hope began to spring in the heart of everyone” when rain fell in abundance and kola trees and wild millet began to grow. Though “[t]he village had been long unused to farming,” the people set to work. This is an extremely innovative and yet very straightforward use of the standard structure. Here, the work of self-government and nation building are analogized to farming the land (thus cultivating the nation). The colonial period kept people from this work. But, with national independence, they turned to it with vigor. Recapitulating the euphoric feelings of national unity that tend to accompany independence, he explains that, “This was the closest that we had ever felt to one another.” But the locusts came and devoured whatever had grown. Then everything returned to the way it was before. There are few hints in this play as to the meaning of the locusts. But the great problem in the main story of the play is a corrupt leader. Judging from this and from Soyinka’s other works, we may infer the meaning of the image. Soyinka, it seems, wishes to suggest that national independence did not secure communal well-being. The crops of the newly fertile land, which is to say the benefits of the newly independent nation, were devoured by a class of greedy parasites who did none of the work. As a result, the euphoria of independence quickly gave way to the feeling that nothing had really changed in the shift from colonial subordination to independence. Though based on one of the three standard structures of nationalist metaphor, Soyinka’s narrative here greatly extends and complicates the specification of that metaphor. Moreover, Soyinka uses this specification to give emotional force to a complex, critical analysis of nationalism and particularly of national hierarchies.

## CHILDREN OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS

In addition to the land, Soyinka refers to the feelings of the farmers. To indicate their great sense of unity, he says that they were a single “household” (99). This is an instance of our final source domain for nationalist metaphors—the family. For its emotional impact, and for its inferential effects, the domain of the family is almost certainly the most powerful of the three domains standardly used in modeling the nation.

THE NATION IS A FAMILY structure has several important functions. The first is to enhance affectivity. Especially when embedded in narratives, metaphors of this type may recall feelings one has toward parents

or siblings and direct those feelings toward the nation. A second function is to enhance the sense of durability. Insofar as the nation extends back through ancestral generations, it has clearly endured in the past; insofar as it stretches forward through descendants, it promises to endure in the future. Third, this metaphor structure in effect coopts the defining trait of ethnic and racial categories. There may be an intense conflict between ethnic/racial categories, on the one hand, and the national category, on the other. Again, fascist and related nationalisms try to solve this problem by making ethnic/racial categories literally coincide with the national category, often by “cleansing” unwanted ethnic/racial groups.<sup>19</sup> Nationalisms that reject ethnic cleansing and other forms of literal alignment often respond to the same problem by metaphorically aligning national and ethnic/racial categories.

Instances of the familial metaphor are frequent and widespread. American nationalism posits “founding fathers” of the nation, as if we all have a common ancestry as Americans. A number of nationalisms make the nation itself into a mother or father, characterizing all citizens as brothers and sisters. The Irish nationalist Padraic Pearse asserted that, “The nation is the family in large” (quoted in ní Fhlathúin 163). Hobsbawm explains that the Don cossacks saw themselves as “sons of the holy Russian land” (despite the fact that their ancestral “origins were extremely mixed”; Hobsbawm *Nations* 65). Hoffmann quotes a German nationalist as saying, “We are one people of brothers” (120).

A number of good examples may be found in English political rhetoric during the Malvinas/Falkland Islands war. As Kevin Foster explains, “the family” served “as a symbol of the nation.” It was important at this time that English people shared “the conviction that despite the traditional divisions of region, class, race and gender, the nation, like the family, is a naturally cohesive unit” (47). He gives an example, quoted from the BBC’s *Nine O’Clock News*: “The Prime Minister said today that the courage and skill of the men in the Task Force had brought a new pride to this country. Mrs. Thatcher said it made us realise we are all really one family” (53). Here as elsewhere, the use of metaphor is connected with literal claims as well, in this case claims about the family, and related attempts to coopt the family as the elementary constituent of the nation. As Foster puts it, “The official, celebratory line on the conflict identified the family as a model

19. In fact, ethnic alignment is impossible. As Balibar puts it, “no national state has an ethnic basis,” except via “a fictive ethnicity” (49). But this does not really make any difference. Ethnic cleansing is despicable whether the dominant group is genuinely ethnically homogenous or not.

social unit, a source of domestic harmony, communal coherence and an ideal of social organisation.” In keeping with this, “official accounts made much use of the royals” as “a family that represents the nation, in itself a symbol of national unity and social solidarity” (57, citing Glasgow University Media Group 119). But Foster is careful to point out the relation of this propaganda to real families. Specifically, “The military’s primary interest in the family . . . is centred on loosening its most basic ties, interposing itself between service personnel, their partners and children in order to nullify their potential threat to the good order of the fighting force” (61). The point is, of course, generalizable. The nation must supersede the family (or any other group) in cases of conflict. Insofar as nationalism cannot coopt familial ties, it must undermine them.

In nationalist developments of the familial metaphor, different components of the source domain—parents, children, siblings, and so forth—are often drawn out of the structure and elaborated on separately, sometimes developing their own characteristic uses. For example, the appeal to sibling relations may be used in any assertion of unity. However, it is commonly invoked in cases of acute internal division and is aimed at ending subnational conflicts. In keeping with this, it is not uncommon in nationalist narratives for two brothers to be fighting on different sides in a civil war. Liam O’Flaherty’s famous story, “The Sniper,” provides a good illustration. It concerns a soldier who engages in a battle with an enemy sniper during the Irish civil war. Only after killing the sniper does he realize that it was his brother. Stories of this sort recur in part because they are likely to be emotionally effective in opposing subnational divisions. The fracturing of the society is here assimilated to the fracturing of a family. The suggestion is usually that the national division is no less painful, immoral, and unnatural than the familial division. Anderson gives a good example from the United States. “A vast pedagogical industry,” he explains, “works ceaselessly to oblige young Americans to remember/forget the hostilities of 1861–65 as a great ‘civil’ war between ‘brothers’ rather than between—as they briefly were—two sovereign nation-states” (201).

The NATION IS A FAMILY structure may also be used with a focus on parents or ancestors. An obvious case of this, already mentioned, is the American “Founding Fathers.” Again, the founding fathers are metaphorical ancestors of all Americans. As such, they allow all Americans to share a (metaphorical) ancestry and thus to be one race, ethnicity, family. As Anderson puts it, “The son of an Italian immigrant to New York will find ancestors in the Pilgrim Fathers” (145). The general idea is by no means confined to the United States. Hobsbawm refers to a similar “cult

of Founding Fathers” in “Latin American states” (“Mass-Producing” 272). The Malian epic hero Sundiata is hailed as “the father of Mali” (Niane 82). The Welsh national anthem celebrates Wales as the “Land of My Fathers” (Morgan 79). Needless to say, nationalists did not stop with merely mentioning these founding fathers. They often incorporated national ancestors into stories, usually heroic stories. In keeping with this, the Indian nationalist and novelist Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay insisted that it was crucial for Indians to learn about “the glorious deeds of their forefathers” (quoted in Chatterjee 76).

The emphasis on metaphorical fathers may be used to stress the brotherhood of the people. But it may also be used to reenforce the hierarchy within the nation (cf. Lakoff, *Don't* on the strict father model). This is commonly the case when the national leader is assimilated to a father or, less commonly, a mother. Such an assimilation operates both conceptually and emotionally. Conceptually, it suggests that the hierarchy of national authority is as necessary, benevolent, and natural as the hierarchy of authority in the family. This has more particular consequences as well. For example, parents do not have to explain all their decisions to their children. The children must simply assume that the parents have greater knowledge or wisdom, and have the well-being of the family in mind. The implications of this for national authority structures are obvious.

Emotionally, the family domain enhances the internal, national hierarchy by activating our feelings of filial respect and love, then directing these toward national leaders. We see this when a king is referred to as a father, or when a prime minister, such as Indira Gandhi, is viewed as a mother to the nation. In some cases, the metaphor becomes an explicit homology. For instance, in the great Ming dynasty novel, *Three Kingdoms*, a royal decree states that “in the human order the bond of father and son is foremost, and . . . in the social order the obligation between sovereign and servant is paramount” (Luo 66). Of course, a mere statement that the leader is our national father is unlikely to have emotional impact of any great significance. The metaphor needs to be developed. As elsewhere, the affective function of the metaphor is particularly likely to be strong when it is incorporated into narratives. On the other hand, even a brief reference to the supposedly parental qualities of a national leader does humanize him or her, and thus inclines us toward affective involvement in a way that abstract titles (e.g., “president” or “prime minister”) may not.

As the preceding reference to “parental” qualities and the example of Indira Gandhi indicate, fathers are not the only precursors who define the nation. Mothers do so as well. However, it is less common for historical

figures to serve as “mother of the nation.” Indeed, we saw a striking case of this in Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, when he states that “our fathers brought forth . . . a new nation, conceived in Liberty.” Here, Lincoln is referring to historical figures as fathers even as he attributes to them the maternal function of giving birth.

Foremothers do appear once in a while. For example, this use of the maternal metaphor, along with other aspects of the familial structure—and, indeed, the plant structure—are taken up in an interesting and complex way by Anne Hébert in *Le Premier Jardin*, a novel treating Québec. Her heroine is an actress who takes on the diverse roles of the nation and thus stands for that nation—or, more properly, the women of the nation. In keeping with this, she searches for “the mother that she never knew” among past “mothers of the country” (100; my translation here and below). The fact that she herself is orphaned (see 100–101) may suggest the absence of national “mothers” from official national histories. In the context of the familial metaphor, an absence of women from such histories is aptly assimilated to the loss of one’s national mother. Utilizing both the family and plant models, Hébert elaborates on the metaphor of the foremother, writing of “the queen with a thousand names, the first flower, the first root,” the original ancestor now “fragmented into a thousand fresh faces . . . in all her multiplied verdure, her womb fecund” (99). However, this use of the family metaphor remains rare—just as Hébert’s treatment of lost national mothers would suggest.

On the other hand, mothers are often personifications of the nation. In these cases, rather than real people serving as metaphorical parents at some time in the past, we have the nation itself serving as a metaphorical parent for all the citizens. This personification can occur with fathers in the celebration of the fatherland. Sometimes, the two sorts of metaphorical fatherhood are even joined, as when Tsar Peter I was referred to as “the father of the Fatherland” (Greenfeld 196).<sup>20</sup> However, the personification of the nation as a parent seems to have more affective force when it is maternal (at least this is what the frequent emotional appeals to national motherhood suggest). Obvious instances include “Mother India,” as in Mehboob Khan’s famous melodrama, and the “Old Woman” who is Ireland as an aging mother (see, for example, Lyons 131), the old woman who was the topic of so much Irish nationalist literature (e.g., W. B. Yeats’s *Cathleen ni Houlihan*). As Edna O’Brien puts it, “Countries are either mothers or

20. Eugene O’Connor has pointed out to me that the metaphor dates back at least to Roman times, when *Pater Patriae* (Father of the Fatherland) was applied to Julius Caesar, Augustus, and others.

fathers, and engender the emotional bristle secretly reserved for either sire. Ireland has always been a woman" (11). The influential nineteenth-century nationalist writer Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay proclaimed India, "The Mother that used to be, that is now, and that will be." He called on his fellow Indians to "Worship Mother Ind," for we are all "offspring of one mother . . . brothers all" (quoted in Abhijit Chowdhury 88–89). Uma Bharati, a Hindu nationalist in India, recently called on fellow Hindus to "console our crying motherland" (quoted in Nandy et al. 53). Greenfeld discusses the phenomenon in sixteenth-century France. "Contemporary authors," she writes, "constantly returned to this image of France—the mother, holding them [her children] at her nourishing breast. . . . Their patriotic concerns derived quite directly from this filial relation" (107). Subsequently, she cites Gérard François, the physician to Henri IV, on "offering" France "all the support that every child naturally owes his mother" (108; see also 240 for a Russian example). Wachtel cites a Yugoslav nationalist insisting that the religion of individual Yugoslavs is unimportant. What matters is that they are "all sons of the same mother" (103).

As these examples suggest, maternal metaphors take up the usual functions of the family structure. Thus, they may support internal hierarchy or oppose subnationalism. As to the former, Daniel explains that a "political state" may be "considered as the mother of a nation" (55), a conception that tacitly identifies the authority of the mother over her children with the authority of the state over the citizens or subjects. With respect to subnationalism, the metaphor is sometimes extended in clever ways to accommodate ethnic diversity or to establish a hierarchy of subnational groups. For example, Simón Bolívar made an attempt to reconcile literal ethnic differences in Latin America with metaphorical shared ancestry, stating that, "Born all of the same mother, our fathers [are] of different origins and blood" (quoted in Sommer 81). A nineteenth-century nationalist history from India extends the metaphor to adoption: "India is the true motherland only of" Hindus, and "only they have been born from her womb." Nonetheless, "the Muslims are not unrelated any longer. She has held them at her breast and reared them." Muslims are, then "her adopted children." As a result, there is now "a bond of brotherhood between Hindus and Muslims" who must "unite in taking care of our Mother." In keeping with the different status of natural and adopted children, however, "our leader" must be a Hindu (Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay, quoted in Chatterjee 111).

In other cases, the metaphor is extended into complex aspects of mother/child relations, often in combination with THE GROUP IS AN INDIVIDUAL structure. For example, Gonglah seeks to psychoanalyze

subnational insurgency in Nagaland by reference to “the failure of relationship between the mother (India) and the child (Nagaland) due . . . to [the] deeply wounded psyche of the child and carelessness of the mother” (156). He goes on to say that the insurgency is fueled by “the carelessness of Mother India” (157). Along similar lines, Binayak Dutta reports that some Assamese complain that the government has given their state “step-motherly treatment” (210) in extracting their resources and sending those resources elsewhere. Clearly, this metaphor uses the same familial domain, but it does so toward subnational ends. India, according to this model, is not the true mother of the Assamese, but a sort of usurper who will never treat the Assamese fairly.

In some instances, writers take up the metaphor to repudiate it. In Mohammed Dib’s *La Grande Maison*, young Omar is faced with colonial propaganda that France is the national mother. He does not respond by asserting that Algeria is his national mother. Instead, he reflects simply that his mother is at home and that he does not have two mothers. Whether or not it is his nation, he thinks, it is not his mother. That identification is just a lie (20–21). In his novel *The Home and the World*, Rabindranath Tagore takes up the inflammatory use of this metaphor, criticizing the “hypnotic texts of patriotism” (36), prominently the slogan “Bande Mataram!”—“Hail Mother!” More important, the novel as a whole is designed to show the terrible consequences of thinking about the nation as a mother—for what violence is not justified in the name of defending one’s mistreated mother, particularly in a culture where that mother (thus the nation) may be deified? For example, at one point Tagore has his heroine, Bimala, exclaim, “I would make my country a Person, and call her Mother, Goddess . . . for whom I would redden the earth with sacrificial offerings” (38).

We have seen that, drawing on the domain of family relations, the nation may be metaphorized in terms of fathers, mothers, and siblings. Our understanding of and response to the nation may also use the relation between lovers or spouses as a model. Thus, the South African poet Frank Chipasula wrote “A Love Poem for My Country” (Maja-Pearce 163) and the Nigerian poet Odia Ofeimun refers to “my land, my woman” (Maja-Pearce 186). Though usually used to express and inspire patriotic devotion, the metaphor may also be used more critically. The great Pakistani poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz drew on Arabic, Persian, and Urdu poetic traditions (particularly as manifest in the ghazal form) to portray Pakistan as a cruel beloved whose cruelty kills her lovers (see, for example, the poem “Spring Comes,” 37). Stephens takes up the metaphor to make Ireland the abused wife of England: “We are a little country and you, a huge country, have

persistently beaten us . . . you have never given Ireland any reason to love you, and you cannot claim her affection without hypocrisy or stupidity” (101–2).

One of the most common extensions of this metaphor assimilates attacks against the nation to rape. Examples are ubiquitous. To take one more or less at random, Frank Chipasula draws on this metaphor to express his obligations as a poet, writing in “Manifesto on *Ars Poetica*” that “I will address our raped land and expose her wounds” (quoted in Maja-Pearce 182). Trumpener discusses an example of this from eighteenth-century Ireland (135), while Buckley and Kenney treat the use of this metaphor in Northern Ireland (52–53, 65). Kennedy and Power point to the partially literal, partially metaphoric use of this image by Tamil rebels (22).

Some works combine and vary these metaphors in complex ways. In Yeats’s *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, Ireland is both an aged, grandmotherly figure and a youthful beloved—though her relation to motherhood is not straightforward. At the start of the play, Cathleen is an old woman who has been deprived of her land by strangers (53), just as the national territory of Ireland has been taken over by the English. In the course of her life, she has had many lovers—allegorically, Ireland has had many lovers/patriots. She explains that “many a man has died for love of me” (54). Despite her age, she has never become a mother, thus never given birth to the new nation. At the end of the play, there is an uprising against foreign rule. But now, as Cathleen walks down the path, no one sees an old woman. There is only “a young girl” with “the walk of a queen” (57), suggesting the renewal of the ancient, enduring nation. That nation is now, once again, the beloved of the patriots, thus the young girl who can, perhaps, give birth to the new nation.

A final extension of the structure goes from people to places, modeling the nation on the house or home. In metaphors of this sort, the nation is analogized to the place where the family lives, where they form a family, feeling relaxed, free, and “at home.” Anderson points out that “languages describe [the nation] . . . in the vocabulary of kinship (motherland, *Vaterland*, *patria*) or that of home” (143). He gives German and Indonesian examples, from among numerous possibilities. Indeed, in *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, Cathleen’s dispossession is the result of there being “[t]oo many strangers in the house” (53).

These metaphors operate to enhance our sentimental attachment to the nation by associating feelings for our literal home with the nation or “homeland.” (Again, this is most effective not in isolated statements, but in narratives.) They also help to guide our sense of who belongs in the nation,

how and when someone should be allowed to enter, how long outsiders should be allowed to stay. For example, it makes perfect sense to have very tight border control if one's nation is one's home. After all, one can hardly allow anyone to just walk into one's house. Moreover, it makes sense that one should have very strict constraints on naturalized citizenship, just as one would have very strict constraints on who could move into one's house. The image may even suggest limits on privacy, depending on just what we consider appropriate for parental snooping. In this respect, it is probably fitting that the Bush administration referred to dangers from terrorism as "homeland security." Moreover, it is fitting that "homeland security" is the stated justification for the administration's attempt to expand surveillance. The implicit use of the structure THE NATION IS OUR HOME may have helped foster a sense that government observation of our computers, and so on, is justified in just the way that parental observation of children's computer files is (supposedly) justified.<sup>21</sup> The point may be clearer if we simply substitute a closely related metaphor. Imagine that, instead of viewing the nation as a home, we view it as a neighborhood. It seems clear that the implications of the metaphor are different on such issues as immigration and privacy. We do not in general feel that we can rigidly screen people who can move into the neighborhood. Nor do we feel that we can check our neighbors' computer files.

Though commonly used to enhance national identification, THE NATION IS OUR HOME metaphors, too, may be used more critically. For example, in Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, the home transferred to Saleem's family at the moment of Indian independence clearly parallels the new nation—or, perhaps more properly, the state apparatus of the new nation. Rushdie cleverly explores the possible parallels, examining the ways in which aspects of the English house affect the behavior of the Indians who now live there. As it turns out, the new owners of the house/state "failed to notice" that the contents, organization, and routines of the house/state were "changing them" as they imitated English manners, interests, and customs (113)—including the regular observance of cocktail hours that leads Saleem's father into alcoholism. Trumpener explains that Walter Scott's novel *Guy Mannering* involves a parallel of this general, critical sort as well. Specifically, in this work, "Domestic mismanagement is repeatedly linked to imperial mismanagement" (188).

21. In general, I feel that parental snooping is wrong. The point here is simply that most people seem to believe it is fine. Insofar as they analogize governmental snooping to parental snooping, they are more likely to find the former acceptable as well.

## MY COUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE

In order to understand the actual operation of these metaphorical structures, it is valuable to look in greater detail at the rhetoric of a popular patriotic text. An obvious choice for this would be a national anthem. However, the national anthem of the United States is tacitly embedded in a heroic plot and would be better analyzed in relation to narrative structure. “My Country 'Tis of Thee” has a status similar to that of “The Star Spangled Banner,” and it is less narrowly emplotted (though it, too, is involved with heroic narrative in the third and fourth stanzas).

Perhaps the first thing to notice about the song is that it borrows its music from “God Save the King.” In this way, it is directly paired with, and directly opposed to, English nationalism. This is not metaphorical. However, it is an aspect of the song that enhances opposability. This is furthered by the contrast in the lyrics between “My country” and “the King.”

The song begins with a direct address to the nation, referring to it with the singular and familiar personal pronoun, “thee.” This personifies the nation immediately, if unobtrusively. It also suggests intimacy and singularity. There are no doubt many reasons for the use of “thee,” rather than “you.” It may seem more elevated, more associated with high literature and ritual. It may help with the rhyme scheme. But one crucial aspect is that it cannot be plural. “You” would be ambiguous. It could refer to a single, personified country. But it could equally refer to all the many people who comprise the country. “Thee,” in contrast, refers necessarily and solely to an individual.

The next line explains that the addressee is the “Sweet land of liberty.” Several things are going on here. First, the emphasis on land is in keeping with the metaphor schema THE NATION IS THE LAND. However, this is developed in a peculiar way. It characterizes the land as “sweet.” We commonly use this word to refer to foods or to personality traits (“Doe is so sweet”) or to express affection (as in “my sweet”). All three apply in this case. The term suggests the fertility of the land in food production. It also suggests the kindness of a person. Since “sweet” is more commonly applied to women than to men, it may suggest that the nation is a mother or a beloved as well. It also expresses the poet’s—and the singer’s—affection for this (personified) nation. Finally, “liberty” contrasts with the rule of the king in the musical source. Thus, it serves to further opposability.

“Of thee I sing” repeats the personification. It also suggests the possibility of a romantic model since the beloved is almost certainly the primary “thee” about whom a poet is likely to sing. In addition, the line implicates

not just the poet, but the singer—for example, me, if I am singing the song. (Contrast, “Of thee, I write my song.”) Moreover, since the song is often sung by a group, the “I” may suggest that the entire group constitutes a single self.

The family metaphor enters overtly with “Land where my fathers died.” The reference is clearly intended to connect all those singing the song with a familial heritage that is tied to the land. It does not matter that one may be an immigrant whose ancestors died in India or Ireland.<sup>22</sup> The subsequent line, “Land of the Pilgrims’ pride,” links the fathers who died with an enduring national history. Moreover, it celebrates the pilgrims for their pride, thus their refusal to submit to the conditions in England and their positive joy in the new land. It also implicitly identifies the speaker with these pilgrims, because most Americans are in fact immigrants or the descendants of immigrants—thus, loosely, pilgrims (i.e., people who made the pilgrimage to this land) or the descendants of pilgrims. The praise of “my country” included in the song further links the singers with the pilgrims by suggesting that the singers’ relation to the land is also one of pride. Finally, there is a religious suggestion in the term “pilgrim,” which is developed later in the song.

The first stanza ends with the lines “From every mountain side, / Let freedom ring!” “Freedom” here continues the opposition to autocratic rule, as celebrated in “God Save the King.” This may seem anachronistic. However, it is a commonplace of the American national self-concept. We are the enemy of dictatorship. First, it was the English monarchy. More recently, it was the Soviet autocracy, then the religious authoritarianism of the Taliban and the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. In this way, our self-understanding is inseparable from the idea that we spread freedom.

The second stanza begins with reference to the poet’s and the singer’s birth, addressing the nation as “My native country, thee.” Here the suggestion is that we are the children of the nation. I take it that this encompasses all those who are singing the song and who accept the United States as their motherland, even if they were not literally born in the United States. However, it could also be understood as excluding new immigrants from the national community. This jarring ambiguity—which reflects a division in American nationalist ideology—may be one reason why singing of this song often stops with the first stanza. Even without thinking through the

22. I say that it is intended to encompass immigrants whose ancestors died elsewhere because otherwise the song would include only Native Americans, since “my fathers” refers to one’s entire male ancestry. Of course, this does not mean that no one might try to use the verse to exclude, say, recent or non-European immigrants.

reasons, people may have felt that there is something not quite right in the second stanza, something not quite in keeping with the unifying purposes of communal song.

The second line explains that the nation is the “Land of the noble free.” The phrase is intriguing. It in effect coopts the idea of aristocratic lineage for all people in the country. We are all “noble” and all “free.” None of us is subject to a ruling family. We are all of the same, aristocratic ancestry.

The third line then shifts to the romantic version of the family metaphor. “Thy name I love.” Initially, the line seems peculiar, especially given the rather awkward name of the United States of America. The line is designed to recall the lover’s obsession with the beloved’s name and his or her tendency to repeat it fondly. It also suggests that the speaker (thus all of us singing the song) loves the free union suggested in that name. In any case, the following lines go on to elaborate on this romantic link, enumerating the beloved’s delightful features: “I love thy rocks and rills, / Thy woods and templed hills.” “Templed” is an interesting term here. It suggests the temples of a person’s head, thus a bodily metaphor for the mountains that rise above the rest of the land. But it also suggests that the hills have places of worship on them. “Temple” particularly points toward the ancient, Judaic heritage. This obviously gestures toward the association of the national in-group with God. The point is made clear in the closing lines, “My heart with rapture fills / Like that above.” The singer feels the same sort of delight with the nation as he or she does with God. His or her patriotic rapture is directly comparable to religious devotion and the joy of union with God, “that [rapture] above.”

The third and fourth stanzas develop this spiritual point, strengthening the link between America and God. Since this is more a matter of national emplotment, especially heroic national emplotment, I will not treat these stanzas. However, it is worth mentioning that they continue the personification of the nation and the land, even going so far as to call on the “rocks” of the national land to “break” their “silence” and sing “Sweet freedom’s song.” It also enhances opposability further by ending with an invocation of our only “King,” who is “Great God.” The contrast with England (and any subsequent autocratic societies) is obvious.

“My Country ’Tis of Thee” is, then, pervaded by standard nationalist metaphors. These metaphors serve nationalist purposes by enhancing salience, opposability, durability, affectivity, and, to a lesser extent—through its references to freedom and God—(perceived) functionality. The song is not at all unusual in doing this. In fact, it is typical of popular patriotic texts in this way. It also suggests a point of conflict in nationalist ideology

regarding precisely who counts as a member of the nation. This sort of conflict is common, as we have seen. However, it does not always manifest itself in patriotic works, which are generally designed to smooth over disagreements.

In sum, nationalist discourse draws extensively on metaphors from three domains. It assimilates the nation to an individual soul, body, or person; it homologizes the relation between citizens and nations to the relation between plants and the land; and it models the nation on the family. These metaphorical structures are specified and extended in many ways. In some cases, the specifications and extensions may be critical of nationalism. Far more commonly, however, they operate to enhance nationalism—increasing our sense of the unity of the national identity group, sharpening our imagination of its polar difference from national out-groups, naturalizing the internal hierarchies that organize power and authority in our society, and so forth. Perhaps most important, these structures help to develop the motivational force of the national identity category and to orient its behavioral consequences.

On the other hand, the motivational force and behavioral consequences of the national identity category are developed far more fully by the extended trajectories of human emotion and action set out in narratives. Indeed, as I have repeatedly indicated, even non-narrative techniques of nationalization, whether monuments or metaphors, have their greatest effect by being integrated into stories—complex, causal sequences of non-ordinary, emotionally significant events and actions. This, then, leads us to what is perhaps the most complex and consequential part of nationalist thought and action—narrative structure or emplotment.