EXAMINING IRISH NATIONALISM IN THE CONTEXT OF LITERATURE, CULTURE AND RELIGION

A Study of the Epistemological Structure of Nationalism

by

Eugene O'Brien

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For Áine, Eoin, Dara and Sinéad

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PREFACE

It seems appropriate, as the island of Ireland is about to enter a fresh and as yet unpredictable phase in its collective history, that this book should appear. Politically, the stalled Northern Ireland peace process is about to be restarted; while socially, the influx of refugees and economic migrants from Eastern Europe and the African continent is forcing us as a people to reconsider our image of ourselves as welcoming and compassionate. By isolating and interrogating the nationalist *mythos*, Eugene O'Brien's book problematises the very basis of our thinking about ourselves, yet shows how that thinking is common to nations and nationalist groups throughout the world.

O'Brien's strategy in this book is an important departure in the study of Irish nationalism. Not only does he eschew the normative imperatives of Irish nationalist discourse, but he constructs a very compelling model from poststructuralist theory, which enables an Irish writer, for perhaps the first time, to stand outside the conflict. Earlier, more politically committed writers were, like Schrödinger's cat, altered by the process of scrutiny. The theoretical framework constructed by O'Brien circumvents this problem. In particular, his use of Jacques Lacan's notion of the imaginary order as a paradigm of the processes of nationalism explains, in intellectually compelling terms, the peculiar and often violent effects of nationalism and its enunciations. In producing a coherent *schema* of nationalism, he exposes the myth at the centre of Irish nationalism, and, indeed of all nationalisms. It is mythic in two senses – it represents the imaginary source of the values by which a nation establishes its identity, but it also represents the untruth at the centre of such nationalistic constructs when they are used to oppress the 'other'. Both are major themes of

O'Brien's book.

The book is a logical sequel to his first full-length work, *The Question of Irish Identity in the Writings of William Butler Yeats and James Joyce*, which explored the relationship between ethical nationalism and its expression in twentieth-century Irish literature. The present volume is a political work of some originality and importance. O'Brien has remarked, in this book and elsewhere, that, unlike the French Revolution and the American War of Independence, the Easter Rising of 1916, cradle and touchstone of modern Irish nationalism, had no intellectual underpinning. While the present work does not aspire to validate the Rising, it is an important step in the maturation process of the Irish, when the myths of our origins can finally be abandoned.

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INTRODUCTION

The origins of this study can be traced to an article in the *Irish Studies Review* in 1996 by Willy Maley.[1] His article, 'Varieties of Nationalism: Post-Revisionist Irish Studies,' made some interesting points in terms of mapping the territory of nationalism, or rather, different nationalisms. His point about the necessity for more study of this whole subject before moving on to the realms of 'post-nationalism,' is well taken, as is his notion that the differential facets of nationalism have not received sufficient attention. As he put it, there are as many varieties of nationalism there are varieties of Irishness, and he went on to deplore the tendency of critics to define nationalism as if it were some form of 'flat homogenous whole' (Maley 1996, 35). In a highly significant passage, Maley went on to problematise the status of nationalism by speaking of 'all its overlapping multiplicity' and by exemplifying a number of these multiples 'Catholic, Celtic, colonial, constitutional, critical and cultural' (Maley 1996, 35).

Here, the issue is coming close to what I would see as the crucial point. Maley is undoubtedly correct in defining nationalism as plural; there are as many nationalisms as there are nations. However, in terms of the epistemology of nationalism, is it fair to say that, as Sandra Harding has argued in her recent book, *Is Science Multicultural*: 'all knowledge, no matter how universally valid it is regarded to be, is local knowledge'? (Harding 1998, 72).[2] Is there no connection between Irish nationalism and that of Serbs or Croats or ethnic Albanians? Can connections be made between the possessive attitude of the Serbs towards Kosovo, and that of the Orange Order towards the Garvaghy Road? Is there any connection to be made between nationalisms that have occurred in different temporal periods of history? These questions, it seems to me, are very much

begged throughout many of the discussions of nationalism that are current in political, literary and cultural discourses.

I feel, then, that Maley is correct in asserting that, before we move into 'post-nationalist' discourse, nationalism itself must be subjected to a more detailed analysis. However, if we are to get beyond the 'complex range of discourses, often contradictory and confused,' we must, by analysing these different discourses, attempt to uncover the mode of knowledge that is pertinent to nationalism. I hope to develop my discussion of nationalism in this way, and to provide something in the nature of a theoretical *organon* whereby the concept of nationalism can be brought under examination, without becoming entangled in case histories. The unthought and unexamined assumptions of nationalism, what Gellner terms 'citizenship-through-roots' (Gellner 1997, 74), will be placed under examination here in an effort to tease out their epistemological position.

At this juncture it is important to point out what this study is not. It is not an historical survey of Irish nationalism, nor is it meant to be a political commentary. What I am undertaking here is an attempt to explore, from a theoretical perspective, the epistemological structure of nationalism *per se*. Rather than take it as a given, I hope to uncover the specific mode of knowledge that is particular to the nationalist *Weltanschauung*.

While I offer this critique of nationalism *sui generis*, the structure of this study will be underpinned, given my own background and interests, by examples from the Irish experience of nationalism, both historically in terms of the British-Irish connection, and from a contemporary perspective. Over the last thirty years, issues of nationalism have been to the fore in the euphemistically termed 'troubles' in Northern Ireland. However, rather than clarifying the epistemological implications of the term, I would argue that the Northern Irish situation, and its ongoing reportage, has only served to further confuse the discussion of this term.

This may seem unusual, given the nomenclature that has become part of the common parlance of Irish current affairs, which sees the conflict as defined in

terms of intersecting and overlapping binary oppositions, namely Catholic/Protestant; nationalist/unionist; republican/loyalist; green/orange and, colloquially, Teague/Prod. However, I would argue that it is this unthought usage of terminology that is the very subject of this study. It is my contention that, in terms of the epistemology of nationalism that is being discussed in this book, both the nationalist and unionist positions are, essentially, *nationalist* in ideological formation.

Structurally, this book will analyse different aspects of the epistemology of nationalism in the following manner. The opening chapter will begin with an overview of the definitions and approaches to the modalities of knowledge that are inherent in nationalism. There has been a recent proliferation of studiesin this area, but one still awaits some form of consensual definition of its ontology or epistemology. As Benedict Anderson notes, concepts such as nation, nationality and nationalism 'have all proved notoriously difficult to define' (Anderson 1991, 3). Much of the thinking on nationalism still falls prey to the point raised by Gellner, namely that nationalism sees itself as a universalist human principle which holds that it is simply 'natural' that people should 'wish to live with their own kind,' and that they should be 'averse' to living with those of a different culture, or to being governed by them (Gellner 1997, 7).

The second chapter will offer a theoretical account of the seminal tropes of nationalism, namely unconscious identification and reflection, in terms of language, culture, subjectivity and ideology. The work of the French theorist, Jacques Lacan, will be used to construct a putative theorisation of nationalism. Lacan suggests that self-recognition, or to put it more correctly misrecognition (*méconnaissance*), is constitutive of the development of the human subject. I will argue that this can be extrapolated across different groups, suggesting that the core trope of reflection of the self as an ideal causes a fixation which leads to a hypostasised image of the self, and thence to a dangerous identification with that image.

Lacan's notion of the mirror stage will be looked at in this context as it

provides a metaphor for this process of captation by an image which I see as seminal to the epistemology of nationalism. In the mirror stage, Lacan postulates a child seeing its image in a mirror and becoming fixated on the image, which is both unified and coherent, as opposed to the child's own inchoate motor development. However, the image is also two-dimensional as opposed to three-dimensional. The fragmented infant identifies with, and desires to be like, an image of such wholeness. But while images of wholeness give us an image of ourselves as distinct from the world, they never align with us perfectly. The 'I' who sees the image as an image of itself, is also different from the image, thereby setting up ambivalent relationships of narcissism and aggressivity, which Lacan sees as typical of what he terms the imaginary order, and of the construction of the ego.

I will contend that this captation of the self by a reflected, two-dimensional image of that self, is the *sine qua non* of the epistemology of nationalism. An image of selfhood is set up as an ideal, an ideal which has a dual interaction with the temporal structures of history. This moment of ideal fusion between self and image is often postulated as a mythical *alpha* point, an *ur-beginning*, from which all ideas of the race or *Volk* derive. In an Irish republican context, for example, 1798 or 1916,[3] are such moments which seem to transcend time; from the unionist perspective, 1691, the date of the Battle of the Boyne, would be an analogous defining moment. Kevin Whelan makes the point that Daniel O'Connell's Catholic nationalism also appealed to selective notions of history, 'using an idealised past to destroy the decadent present' (Whelan 1996, 55). However, such moments of fusion are also postulated as a goal towards which the *ethnie*[4] should aim at some undefined time in the future. As we will see, the discourse of nationalism abounds with variations of these two temporal imperatives, as peoples look to regain a lost prelapsarian past, or else to come into their kingdom in some golden futurity.

The remaining chapters will focus on the various modalities of this hypostasised form of reflective misrecognition of the collective self that

comprises this type of nationalist *Weltanschauung*. The third chapter will explore how ethnic groups, what Anthony Smith terms *ethnies* (Smith 1986, chapter 6),[5] have been grounded in a territory through linguistic reflections and misrecognitions. Various literary devices, most notably personification and *prosopopeia*, have been used to anthropomorphise land with human qualities so that a relationship, based on quasi-organic terms and categories, can be created and sustained. In terms of Ireland, this was brought about by the personification and feminisation of the land in both native Irish and Elizabethan cognitive cartographies of place.[6] The various mappings will be examined, as demonstrative of both English and Irish nationalist mindsets, as will the twin apotheoses of such personifications in Irish nationalist history: William Butler Yeats's play *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*,[7] and Patrick Pearse's declaration of a Provisional Irish Government in 1916.

The important aspect of these reflections and misrecognitions of place is that they allow a group of people to define themselves in terms of such hypostasised notions of organic connections with place. Such spatial imaginary structures of fusion leave no place for any demographic or socio-cultural changes in population, nor do they allow for rational discussion as to issues of ownership. If the definition of a people depends on their reflected image in a piece of land that is seen, through literary, religious or cultural tropes, as a two-dimensional mirror image of themselves, then there can be no room for any intrusion of the non-self, the 'other,' in this imaginary fusion of a people and a place. One could term this fusion lococentric in that it is focused on a specific notion of place as central to nationalist identity.

The fourth chapter will look at the strong connections between nationalism and religion, in the sense of superstition, sacred language and mystification. A connection will be made between some of the Irish revivalists and the biblical tradition of monotheistic identity. The theocratic imperatives that underwrote, and still underwrite, so much of nationalist ideology will be discussed, and the importance of literary and linguistic issues in the creation of the faith of

nationalism, the 'faith of our fathers,'[8] will be traced. I hope to demonstrate how nationalist discourse, specifically in the case of Irish Catholic nationalism, initiates a fusion between the ideological and the religious, a fusion that sees one reflected in the other, and then combining to reflect a picture of the *ethnie* back to itself. It is this very fusion of faiths, of religion and politics, that so outraged Simon Dedalus and Mr Casey in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

They recall, at the Christmas dinner episode in the first chapter, the story of 'our friend' who made 'a good answer to the canon': 'I'll pay you your dues, father, when you cease turning the house of God into a polling booth' (Joyce 1993, 29).[9] This fusion, I will contend, is seminal to the epistemology of nationalism, as different registers and modes of knowledge are conflated in such a way as to deny the possibility of any form of critique. By refusing any position outside this mutually reflecting dyad, nationalist epistemology etiolates the space necessary for self-examination, or thought, to use Foucault's late definition of the term. In an interview with Paul Rabinow, Foucault made the point that thought is not what gives a certain conduct meaning; rather it is that which 'allows one to step back from this way of acting or reacting, to present it to oneself as an object of thought and question it as to its meanings, its conditions, and its goals' (Rabinow 1986, 388).[10]

In terms of the motif of a 'chosen people,' this religious dimension of nationalist epistemology serves an analogous purpose to the imaginary notion of place as discussed in chapter three. The idea of some transcendental connection between a people and a religion means that through their sense of being chosen, all religious practices tend to achieve the imaginary reflection that we saw in terms of place. If God has chosen us, the logic seems to imply, then we are special because of that choice. Hence, when the chosen people look at their creator, what they see is a hypostasised image of themselves writ large on a transcendental scale. This transcendental dimension of nationalist ideology allows for sacral time and for sacral notions of text, both of which validate the

ethnie through self-fulfilling prophecies, and both of which never allow for the Foucauldian notion of self-examination or thought.

This chapter will also look at the supposed difference between nationalism *qua* nationalism, and what is termed 'cultural nationalism.' I will interrogate the distinction between the two by demonstrating how the relationship is, at best symbiotic, and at worst causal, as it is through cultural *topoi* and generic modes that the epistemological position of nationalist discourse is created and perpetuated. I will show that the notion of cultural nationalism is an attempt made to avoid the pejorative label of nationalism, while at the same time making use of nationalistic rhetoric and the suasive power of language to consolidate nationalist feelings and desires. It is through literary tropes and images, after all, that the imaginary reflections and misrecognitions of land and religion have been instantiated; indeed, I would contend that there is a definite symphysis between literary language and the political embodiment of nationalist ideology.

In terms of an ultimate objective, I would hope that my investigation of the mode of knowledge that is understood by what we term nationalist discourse, will encourage debate on the nature of nationalism. For too long, the term has been seen as a *datum*, specifically within an Irish socio-political context. To be a nationalist was almost the organic birthright of anyone born in the Republic of Ireland, or in the Catholic districts of Northern Ireland. The constituting factors that made up the nationalist ideology were seldom subjected to any form of analysis, let alone critique.

In a broader context, many of the best and most illuminating studies of nationalism also avoid attempting to analyse the epistemology of nationalism. It is to be hoped then, that this present volume will set in motion a process of critique that will not allow us to use the term 'nationalism' without due care being given to exactly what that term may mean. Perhaps some understanding of how nationalist ideology is constituted, of the central function of the unconscious fixation on a series of images which are then allowed to become reified in the consciousness to the exclusion of all other discourses and perspectives, will allow

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for a more reasoned discussion of its modalities in the political sphere. As an initial step in this process, we must examine the aetiology of nationalism and discuss the development of the term, historically and cognitively.

CHAPTER 1

THE AETIOLOGY OF NATIONALISM: DEFINITIONS

In his *Irish Studies Review* article, Maley does not offer anything in the way of a definition of nationalism. However, in what I consider a telling aside, he gives an implied definition of the nationalist drive, and it is with this aside that I will begin my analysis. Having 'rehearsed some of the most common varieties of nationalism in modern Ireland,' Maley goes on to warn against the dangers of revisionism becoming part of another nationalist project:

> Open any critical text on post-colonialism and shrink in horror as the terms 'English' and 'British' interchange smoothly without any sense of historical awareness. Britain is a multi-nation state, but try telling that to the anglocentric Brits who think otherwise. For all its talk of ambivalence, dialogism and hybridity, much post-colonial discourse keeps in place, naturalises and perpetuates, a stultifying notion of Britishness.
>
> (Maley 1996, 37)

Here, I think, is the place to start in terms of the aetiology of nationalism. The starting point is important for, as Geoffrey Bennington says: 'saying that there is no secure starting point does not mean that one starts at random. You always start somewhere but that somewhere is never just anywhere' (Bennington 1993, 22). Indeed, in the discourse of nationalism, the whole issue of originary points, temporal *points de capiton*, in a Lacanian sense, where meaning is pinned down in terms of the history and teleology of the tribe, or group, or nation, is seminal.[1] Certain dates, usually those of victories of the *Volk* over some other tribe, group or nation (often insignificant in themselves, but important in that they are 'other' and not part of the *Volk*), become points of origin, *ur*-beginnings, from which the history of the *Volk* is written. Here, signifier and signified are knotted together (Lacan 1993, 268), and these quasi-sacral dates become the beginning from

which history can be traced.

It seems to me that despite Maley's rehearsal of the varieties of nationalism, he is, in this passage, pointing towards what might be termed the epistemological core of nationalism. Despite the dissemination of Irish nationalism into an overlapping alliterative signifying chain, 'Catholic, Celtic, colonial, constitutional, critical and cultural,' here, the essence of nationalism is revealed with the use of the term 'anglocentric Brits.' The use of the suffix 'centric' is an index of the essentialism that is at the heart of nationalism. For all Maley's differentiation and explanation of nationalistic subsets, it is here, in an apostrophe to the reader, couched in suasive terms and pointing towards a 'stultifying notion of Britishness,' that the essence of nationalism is to be found. If we are, as he suggests, to fly by the nets of nationalism in Joycean fashion, we must determine from what material those nets are constructed. I think that the two adjectives 'anglocentric' and 'stultifying' bring us near to the mode of construction, especially when viewed from outside of the nation in question. However, before looking at these terms, let us look at the noun 'nationalism' itself. In this context, the etymology of that word may be an appropriate point of departure.

Etymologically, the word can be traced from the Old French *nation*, which was a learned borrowing from the Latin *natio*, *nationis*, meaning 'stock' or 'race,' back to the root term *nasci*, 'to be born' (Bernhart 1972, II, 1370). In Roman law, issues of nationality were adjudicated in terms of the *jus sanguinis*, the 'law of blood,' based on the principle that a person's nation is the same as that of his or her parents, and the *jus soli*, the 'law of the soil,' based on the principle that a person's nation is that in which he or she was born. What this suggests is that the roots of nationalism lie in racial, territorial, linguistic and ideological homogeneity, a homogeneity expressed and solidified by linguistic, cultural and religious practices, and by the exclusion of any other racial input.[2] The passive voice of the root term, *nasci*, 'to be' born, implies a biologism and ethnocentrism at the heart of nationalism. In an Irish context, lococentrism is the *locus standi* of

nationalist identity: in the vast majority of cases one is born a unionist or a nationalist. If one lives on the Falls Road, one is a nationalist, if one lives on the Shankill, one is conversely a unionist.

The question here, of course, arises when one attempts to isolate the constitutive factors that make one a nationalist or a unionist. Are such designations merely signified by one's address, or are there other factors which produce these subject positions? What, in other words, are the modalities of knowledge at stake in defining nationalism? The attempts to clarify and define such identities, keeping in mind all the time the etymological derivation of 'nationalism,' are surely central in any study of this topic. As Katherine Verdery remarked, during the 1980s and 1990s, the scholarly industry built up around the concepts of nation and nationalism became 'so vast and so interdisciplinary as to rival all other contemporary foci of intellectual production.'[3] Paul Treanor has outlined nine academic disciplines which study nationalism and the concept of the nation state: political geography; international relations; political science; cultural anthropology; social psychology; political philosophy; international law; sociology and history (Treanor 1977, 1.5).[4]

Ironically however, despite their number, such definitions are notoriously vague. For example, Benedict Anderson, in his *Imagined Communities*, defines the nation, and by extrapolation, nationalism, as an 'imagined political community.' This definition has achieved widespread currency, but its conceptual force would seem to be etiolated by a *caveat* in the next paragraph, where Anderson notes that all communities larger than primordial villages, are 'imagined.' Hence, the 'imagined community' can hardly be seen to be synchronous with any definition of nationalism in itself. Other attempts at defining nationalism are similarly fraught with difficulty.

John A. Hall provides a conspectus of some contemporary notions in his essay 'Nationalisms, Classified and Explained.' Drawing on the work of Breuilly, Gellner and Hobsbawm,[5] he offers what he terms an omnibus definition, seeing nationalism as the 'primacy of a particular nation' (Hall 1995, 9). Hall notes that

this definition is dependent on a further definition of 'nation,' one which he sees as more problematic, going on to cite Gellner's comment that 'nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist' (Gellner 1964, 169).[6] However, these definitions tell us comparatively little about the mode of knowledge that is enunciated through nationalism. Indeed, the title of the essay suggests that nationalism *qua* nationalism is beyond definition; as Hall puts it, the use of the plural in his title indicates that, for him, 'no single, universal theory of nationalism is possible' (Hall 1995, 8). Of course, if this is true, then one needs to define each 'nationalism' separately, and any form of connection between different 'nationalisms' collapses: what is left is a relativistic series of definitions, each of which is contextually unique, and which has at best, paratactic relationships with other definitions of nationalism.

A conspectus of these different theorisations, as outlined by Treanor, includes the normative theory in political philosophy (Walzer 1983), theories of nationalism as political extremism (Connor 1994), modernisation theories (seeing nationalism as a modern phenomenon); primordialist theories (which dispute the modernisation theories); civilisation theories (often implying a global community); historicist theories (which take the existence of nations as given); and social-integrative and state-formation theories (Treanor 1977, 1.7). All of these definitions focus on different aspects of nationalism, but none offers a comprehensive definition of how nationalism functions, or through what linguistic and cognitive modes does it channel its operation. Clearly, this is unsatisfactory for any mode of intellectual inquiry.

Ernest Gellner offers a different perspective, briskly defining nationalism on page one of *Nations and Nationalism*:

> Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent. Nationalism as a sentiment, or as a movement, can best be defined in terms of this principle. Nationalist *sentiment* is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of this principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfilment. A nationalist *movement* is one actuated by a sentiment of this kind.
>
> (Gellner 1983, 1)

While this definition achieves clarity in terms of stressing the emotive dimension of nationalism, it begs the question of the epistemological status of nationalism by taking 'political' and 'national' as given, and by also taking notions of ethnicity as overt and in no need of explication. Later in the same page, he restates his definition by asserting that: 'nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones' (Gellner 1983, 1). The problem here is the collapsing of the categories of ethnicity and politics. If ethnicity becomes the dominant factor, then politics can never develop beyond a basic binarism of selfhood and alterity, with alterity being seen as wholly alien, resulting in the predication of all political endeavour on ensuring the sanctity of the *status quo* as defined by the criteria of ethncity.

In other words, politics as the practice of allowing people to live together in some form of social structure, becomes attenuated to a self-replicating orthodoxy where notions of the people, of the *Volk*, are the origin from whence all activities are initiated. Interestingly, Gellner utilises affective criteria in his definition, adverting to Nationalist '*sentiment*' as involving the 'feeling of anger' or the 'feeling of satisfaction' aroused by the thwarting or fulfilment of its aims. His ultimate definition of a 'nationalist *movement*' as one which is 'actuated' by such sentiment, seems to me to come close to what we might see as an important facet of the epistemology of nationalism. These emotive and affective factors are, I would suggest, decisive in the constitution of the nationalist *Weltanschauung*, and also in that of the imperative which creates the selfhood which I see as central to the functioning of nationalism.

I would argue moreover, that what is common to all such definitions is a valorisation of a collective notion of such selfhood, a notion whose rhetorical assertion is foundationalist and essentialist in tone. To be an ethnic group, in Gellner's terms, or to insist on the primacy of a nation in Hall's terms, or to see oneself as part of an 'imagined community' in Anderson's terms, seems to me to beg an important question, namely how are such positions achieved? When we speak of ethnicity, or nationality or imagined community, what are the cognitive

and affective modalities of these structures? In order to answer this question, what is required is an examination of the mode of knowledge at work in the creation of nationalism, and thence through the imperatives (the *sentiment* in Gellner's terminology) of nationalism. In terms of definition, I would see two glaring *lacunae* in the already discussed examples: if we are to examine any form of identity, be it singular or plural, then we must look at the core issues of language and the unconscious, which are constitutive of all forms of subjective identification.[7]

If there is to be a core definition of nationalism *qua* nationalism (*pace* Hall), then surely it must focus on the mode of creation of the ethnic group, or on the methods used in imagining the identity of the community in question, or on the rhetorical and suasive strategies used in terms of creating nationalistic sentiment. The modality of these creations or inventions, what Anderson terms 'the style in which they are imagined' (Anderson 1991, 6), is crucial if we are to come to any understanding of how nationalism utters and fashions itself. To quote Bennington: at 'the origin of the nation, we find a story of the nation's origin' (Bennington 1990, 121), and there can be no doubting that this reflexive form of narrative is an important constituent of the epistemology of nationalism. Narratives create the myths of nationalism, and these are both protean and similar in that they feature a telling to the self of the self, a telling which, in the process, is performative in that it is creative of that self, at both conscious and unconscious levels.

Such myths of selfhood or of the *Volk* are, I would suggest, part of the kernel of the nationalist *imaginaire*;[8] indeed narratives can be seen as examples of 'the institutional uses of fiction in nationalist movements' (Brennan 1990, 47). In the next chapter, we will focus on this very notion of language as a medium through which a reflection of the self is created and reified so that it eventually becomes a hypostasised image which fixates and controls the development of that self. This narrative reflection will prove to be a misrecognition of selfhood, and my central premise is that nationalist discourse is constituted by this very act of

misrecognition.

Bennington's focus on narrative, I think, allows us to overcome the antinomies already observed in terms of the problematics of defining nationalism. Every culture defines itself through a process of narrative imagination, a re-telling of stories about its own past which reaffirms the ritual unities of the culture in question. For example, Irish people remember the 1916 Easter rebellion as a nodal point in the political and cultural reaffirmation of Irishness *per se*. Around this period, the major political parties, or their precursors, were founded, and the Gaelic, Celtic, Irish Language and Irish Literary revivals were set in motion. The Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association were set up, and the gradual adequation between the nationalist movement, both political and cultural, and the Catholic church came into being. This period of colonial upheaval – with the almost standard attendant processes of nationalist consciousness-raising, independence movement, armed rebellion, war of independence/liberation and an ensuing civil war – became part of the process of a national imaginary, defining Irishness as it emerged from the colonial shadow of Britain. This whole period, or more correctly, the narrative enculturation of this period, became a nodal point, or *point de capiton* from which particular notions of Irishness were traced.

Such a process is necessary for cultural definition, but there is always a danger that such culturally sanctioned categories may become reified into some form of epistemological orthodoxy which forms a hypostasised centre of identity. As Richard Kearney has noted, such a process of 'ideological recollection of sacred foundational acts often serves to integrate and legitimate a social order' (Kearney 1998, 166). However, he goes on to cite a warning note sounded by Paul Ricoeur, who points out that such a process of reaffirmation can be perverted 'into a mystificatory discourse which serves to uncritically vindicate or glorify the established political powers.' Ricoeur's point is essentially that in such instances the symbols of a community become fixed and fetishised; they serve as lies' (Ricoeur 1973, 29). Ricoeur has noted that imagination can function as two

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opposite poles. At one pole is the confusion of myth with reality brought about by a 'non-critical consciousness' which conflates the two into a societal 'given.' At the other end of the axis, where 'critical distance is fully conscious of itself,' 'imagination is the very instrument of the critique of reality,' because it enables 'consciousness to posit something at a distance from the real and thus produce the alterity at the very heart of existence' (Kearney 1998, 147).[9]

I would argue that the narrative structure of nationalism is clearly allied to Ricoeur's initial pole, that of the confusion of myth with reality through a 'non-critical consciousness.' Such a narrative structure functions mainly at an unconscious level in culture and society, creating structural effects in terms of ethnic and racial stereotypes. Logic, reason and critical thinking allow us to discriminate between the value of stories as fictions, and their constative, truth-telling status. However, by functioning at an unconscious level, through formal and informal apparatuses of communication, narratives and myths create a powerful drive, through which nationalist ideology can be disseminated. They create an imaginary selfhood which is reflected back into society as an ideal form of identity.

The stock example of such a process is Nazi Germany in the 1930s, but there are multifarious examples to be found of the unconscious effect of narratives that are uncritically equated with constative discourse. In an Irish context,[10] perhaps the *locus classicus* of this type of nationalist narrative operating at a pre-critical, unconscious level is Patrick Pearse's rewriting of the history of the United Irish rebellion of 1798. Pearse was a central figure in the Irish Republican Brotherhood, a sub-grouping within the Irish Volunteers, who organised a rebellion against the British Government in 1916.[11] In his efforts to create a narrative of nationalist resistance to British rule in Ireland, Pearse specifically set out to '*remember*' the 1798 rebellion in highly specific terms.

The 1798 rebellion was led by Theobald Wolfe Tone.[12] Tone, a product of the French Enlightenment, had little time for religion, and saw the aim of his organisation, The United Irishmen, as the creation of a country where the terms

Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter would be subsumed under the common name of Irishman (O'Brien 1998, 66). Tone himself, as Marianne Elliott has observed, was a deist, 'who disliked institutionalised religion and sectarianism of any hue.' More importantly in the present context, she makes the point that, based on his writings, he had 'no time whatsoever for the romantic Gaelicism that has become part of Irish nationalism' (Elliott 1989, 1). Hence, if Pearse wished to create a seamless narrative wherein Tone was a historical nationalist avatar, and a Pearsean precursor, he would seem to have some factual historical difficulties with which to contend.

His response to these difficulties is a classic *exemplum* of what I have termed nationalist epistemology. In an oration given at the grave of Tone, in Bodenstown, County Kildare, in 1913, Pearse enfolded Tone in the following narrative structure:

> We have come to one of the holiest places in Ireland; holier even than the place where Patrick sleeps in Down.[13] Patrick brought us life, but this man died for us. He was the greatest of Irish Nationalists.…We have come to renew our adhesion to the faith of Tone: to express once more our full acceptance of the gospel of Irish Nationalism which he was the first to formulate in worldly terms. This man's soul was a burning flame, so ardent, so generous, so pure, that to come into communion with it is to come unto a new baptism, into a new regeneration and cleansing.
>
> (Pearse 1917-1922, II, 58)

Here there is no attempt to commemorate the historical Wolfe Tone, the 'child of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment' whose hope was that Enlightenment rationality would supplant what he regarded as 'superstitious beliefs' (Cruise O'Brien 1994, 100). Instead, Tone is suasively captated into Pearse's own vision of Irish history. It is not accidental that Anderson has noted a 'strong affinity' between nationalist and religious imaginings (Anderson 1991, 10). Indeed, he has made the valid point that the dawn of the age of nationalism coincides with the dusk of religious thought (Anderson 1991, 11), as both tend to work with some form of 'sacred text.' The notion of a sacred text is important here, as the response to such a text is not that of close reading, or of some form of rational critical engagement; rather is it an acceptance, a belief, and a ready

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acknowledgement of the 'truth' that is revealed by this text.

In many ways, and we will explore this adequation between nationalism and religion more fully in chapter four, the effects of nationalist and religious texts can be seen as allomorphisms of each other, as both can eschew rationality and veridical discourse in order to create a mystical synthesis which transcends such prosaic matters. In an Irish context, and speaking specifically in terms of the Gaelic and Celtic revivals, mysticism was part of the cement that helped to 'energise the ideologues of the revival and shape their thoughts' (Jackson 1999, 172), and it is this mystical imperative that we see at work in Pearse's discourse.

His frame of reference is directed at an audience whose unconscious is saturated with Roman Catholic religiosity. The rhetorical device polyptoton[14] is used to cement the adequation of Tone with Saint Patrick in the opening line. This adequation transforms Tone from an historical figure, subject to the veridical discourse of history, into a mythico-religious one, comparable to the legendary Saint Patrick, about whom comparatively little is known, apart from his spectacular religious success. The connection between the two, the hinge upon which the whole rhetorical structure turns, is based on this lococentric comparison in terms of the holiness of a specific place, a trope to which we will return in chapter three. This connection is then developed in the contradiction that while Patrick 'brought us life,' a phrase which clearly implies religious life, Tone 'died for us.' By now, the adequation has done its work, and the unconscious religious background fills in any blanks in the narrative. In Catholic teaching, the notion of sacrifice, the one for the many, is a central tenet. The adequation between Tone and Saint Patrick is now elided and a stronger connection is set up. Given the religious frame of reference (reinforced by the lexical field of the paragraph: 'faith'; gospel'; 'soul'; 'communion'; 'baptism'; 'regeneration'; 'cleansing'), the notion of someone dying 'for us' implies an adequation between Tone and Christ, and at a broader level, between nationalism and religion.

A further dimension of this classic example of nationalist epistemology is to be found in the anagogical vision of nationalism as a force which ultimately

transcends issues of real-world politics and discourse. 'Irish Nationalism' (the double capitals are indicative of the status of the term), is seen, not as a political set of principles, nor as a response to historical pressures and circumstances; instead it is seen as a 'faith,' a belief-system which, by definition, is not subject to any form of rational or intellectual critique. As a 'faith,' nationalism is not required to set out its aims, goals and methodologies; all that is needed is for the people (and Pearse constantly uses the vatic 'us'), to give it their 'full acceptance.' Tone's special value, and it is here that the unconscious religious agglomeration of images is used to full effect, is his ability to 'formulate' the 'gospel of Irish Nationalism' in 'worldly terms.' It is as if this nationalist gospel has some form of mystical existence and requires some form of elite interpreter, some clerisy, to reveal its truth to 'us.' Here one thinks of Ernest Renan's aphorism that a 'nation is a soul, a spiritual principle' (Renan 1990, 19), as this is precisely the realm of discourse which Pearse utilises, as it has a shaping power over our notions of the present.[15]

In terms of this use of the personal pronoun, first person plural, the relationship between the people, 'us,' and this 'gospel' is reflexive and mutually constitutive. We become 'the people' through our shared allegiance to the narrative in question, at both conscious and unconscious levels. The 'adhesion to the faith of Tone' is what creates the notion of the Irish people, or at least those of the people who merit the designation 'Irish Nationalists.' Tone, like Saint Patrick and Christ, becomes one more character in this nationalist narrative. His rhetorical captation from historical figure into mythico-religious icon has been achieved: communion with him brings about 'baptism,' 'regeneration' and 'cleansing.' Pearse clearly saw, like Renan, that 'a heroic past...is the social capital in which one bases a national idea' (Renan 1990, 19); however, unlike Renan, he clearly felt that a religious capital would consolidate this investment. This point is explicitly outlined by Pearse later in the same year:

> The people itself will perhaps be its own Messiah, the people labouring, scourged, crowned with thorns, agonising and dying, to rise again immortal and impassable. For peoples are divine and are the only thing that can properly be spoken of under figures drawn from the

> divine *epos*. If we do not believe in the divinity of our people we have
> had no business, or very little, all these years in the Gaelic League.
> (Pearse 1917-22, II, 91-92)[16]

The significance of such ethno-religious nationalistic adequations has been the subject of much discussion. Hugh Seton-Watson, writing about the influence of Zionism on Israeli politics, makes the point that 'religious heritage...directly reinforces national consciousness' (Seton-Watson 1977, 403), and in the case of the above quotation from Pearse, this is clear.

For Pearse, and we must keep in mind his notion of Tone as the first to formulate in worldly terms the gospel of Irish nationalism, there is something quasi-sacred about the nation. Régis Debray, in an attempt to study the constituent factors of the historical nation-state, has traced, in nationalism, the process whereby 'life itself is rendered untouchable or sacred. This sacred character constitutes the real national question' (Debray 1977, 26). The teleology of Pearse's rhetorical transformation of the people into their own Messiah is to render them 'immortal and impassable.' Nationalistic selfhood creates a people, a *Volk*, which transcends time and death. The religious overtones of this message, allied to strong unconscious influences, combine to create a linguistic and suasive dimension to the epistemology of nationalism which can never be fully examined in any analysis which is not grounded in literary, linguistic, and psychoanalytic techniques. This, I would argue, is why the already discussed definitions will always fail to analyse the workings and imperatives of nationalism. It is only by looking at its modality of expression, and its epistemological status, that we can come to clearer perceptions about its nature.

At no stage in his writing has Pearse offered a scintilla of reasoned argument, or of evidentiary proof as to the adequation of Tone and any of the religious figures with whom he is compared. Instead, his rhetoric relies on the unconscious fideism of his largely Catholic audience. Also, by expressing nationalist goals in religious terms, issues of history and politics are removed from the realm of discussion and debate, instead becoming part of a belief system, validated by a circular structure of unconscious associations of faith,

transcendence and messianistic phantasies. Evidentiary proof, or persuasion based on reason, is not part of his *raison d'être*; he never aspires towards any constative, truth-telling status. Instead, his discourse functions performatively, creating an unconscious phantasy, and enacting through its narrative, the identificatory associations that make the *Volk* the *Volk*.

I have deliberately chosen the adjective 'messianistic' as opposed to 'messianic' to describe the thrust of Pearse's ideologically-driven memory process. In an interesting discussion of memory, and particularly of religious and mythic memory, Jacques Derrida differentiates between these terms. For Derrida, speaking at Villanova University in 1994, the messianic structure is 'a universal structure' (Derrida 1997b, 22), [17] which is defined by waiting for the future, by addressing the other as other, and hence, by refusing to base notions of the present and future on a lineal descent from a particular version of the past. He goes on to note that the messianic structure is predicated on a promise, on an expectation that whatever is coming in the future 'has to do with justice' (Derrida 1997b, 23). What he terms messianism, on the other hand is culturally and temporally limited and constrained to the 'determinate figures' of 'Jewish, Christian, or Islamic messianism.' He goes on:

> As soon as you reduce the messianic structure to messianism then you are reducing the universality and this has important political consequences. Then you are accrediting one tradition among others, and a notion of an elected people, of a given literal language, a given fundamentalism.
>
> (Derrida 1997b, 23)

I would propose that it is precisely this form of messianism that is part of the religious aspect of nationalism in that it selects one tradition, one set of salvific heroes and binds them into a lococentric fusion of place, belief and race, a fusion that is, in fact, a phantasy.

I use the term 'phantasy' here in its strict psychoanalytic sense, as defined by Anthony Easthope. He has noted that phantasy specifies an 'imaginary scene or narrative in which the subject is present'; however the scene is in some way 'altered or disguised so that it may fulfil a wish for the subject' (Easthope 1989,

11). In fact, at both the conscious and unconscious levels, phantasy describes the effect of Pearse's rhetoric, as he attempts to change the perception of Irish history, in order to create a unified narrative and an optative connection between Tone, Pearse himself, the Irish people and the Messiah. The phantasy sets out to fulfil a desire in the structure of the subject through a form of alteration or disguise, and I will suggest in the next chapter that the Lacanian mirror stage and imaginary order are paradigms of this essential structuration of the epistemology of nationalism. Pearse's messianism can be seen as part of exactly such a structure.

In *The Question of Irish Identity in the Writings of William Butler Yeats and James Joyce*, I have already traced the messianistic imperative of Pearse's thought, and adduced a number of quotations to demonstrate that the culmination of this process was the transformation of Pearse himself into a messianistic figure. In his play *The Singer*, he has his hero, MacDara, make the overt statement that 'one man can free a people as one man redeemed the world,' and he goes on to say: 'I will stand up before the Gall as Christ hung naked before men on the tree' (Pearse 1917-22, 1, 44). Here we see the nationalistic phantasy in action, as the religious trope of death-resurrection is transferred to an Irish political situation through the use of the specific Irish-language signifier 'Gall,' meaning 'foreigner,' but referring here specifically to the British. MacDara can be seen as a surrogate for Pearse himself, whose own crucifixion would, he hoped, bring a similar salvation for his version of the chosen people.

Keeping this description of phantasy in mind, let us observe Pearse on the steps of the General Post Office in the centre of Dublin on Easter Monday 1916, when he inscribes his act of rebellion against the British under the rubric of a nationalistic, rhetorical reading of Irish history:

> Irishmen and Irishwomen: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.
>
> (Dudley Edwards 1990, 280)

The imagery here is similar to that of Pearse's earlier quotations.[18] Through the

use of a rhetorical structure largely underpinned by transcendental imagery, Pearse avoids the discourse of reason or of political debate, and instead appeals to the unconscious signification of the powerful images of 'God,' the 'dead generations' and the notion of Ireland as a mother, calling her children to her flag.

The phantasy invoked here is telling. As Easthope has noted, phantasy turns ideas into narratives (Easthope 1989, 11), and the proclamation of a provisional government, while encapsulating a certain social doctrine: (universal suffrage, and guarantees of 'religious and civil liberty, equal rites and equal opportunities to all its citizens') (Dudley Edwards 1990, 281), is largely premised on a narrative structure which creates and defines selfhood in its own terms. Keeping in mind his notion of the people as their own messiah, it is noteworthy that the proclamation concludes by stressing the sacrificial, and ultimately salvific, nature of this struggle. He concludes:

> We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline, and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.
>
> <div align="right">(Dudley Edwards 1990, 281)</div>

The unconscious, pre-critical element that I maintain is a central tenet of the epistemology of nationalism, is evident here through close reading. The proclamation seems to come to a logical conclusion. Pearse's prayer is that the Irish nation must prove itself worthy of the 'august destiny' to which it is called, and this seems to make the act of rebellion almost preordained. Of course, on looking back to the beginning of the proclamation, we find that it is 'through us,'[19] namely the splinter group within the Irish Volunteers, who defied their own command structure in order to undertake the Rising, that the personified notion of Ireland initially summoned 'her children to her flag' and struck 'for her freedom.'[20] Consequently, the seemingly impersonal 'august destiny' is, in fact, part of a suasive rhetorical device which exemplifies the circularity and reflexivity of nationalist epistemology. The 'we' who are called into service as

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the children of a personified Ireland, are the very 'we' who have personified that notion of Ireland in the first place. In terms of an imaginary scene, which is altered in order to fulfil a wish for the subject, this whole exercise can be described as a *locus classicus* of phantasy, a phantasy which is constitutive in terms of defining the national subjectivity in question. This, in turn, produces an alteration from the communal and socially structured relationships of politics into the natural and organic relationships of the family: it is not a case of politically inspired revolutionaries deciding to fight for social or ideological aims, instead, it is children coming to the defence of their mother, an act which in itself requires neither explanation nor warrant.

The suasive and rhetorical effect of this process, when repeated, is to allow a linguistic performative to achieve a constative function. Here, myth and reality are fused in a nationalist *imaginaire*, and the mutual reflection of one in the other combines to create a narrative structure which is impervious to the conventions of political and veridical discourse. This narrative structure is also constitutive of what we might term nationalist identity, given that it reflects a particular type of subjectivity that is deemed to be Irish. No matter how much evidence of Wolfe Tone's attitude to religion is instantiated in biographies, he is still seen as part of a Catholic, Gaelic, nationalist pantheon, as narrated by Pearse, and it is to his grave in Bodenstown that the Provisional IRA have trooped in pilgrimage every year. The fact that their sectarian murder campaign over the past thirty years was the antithesis of everything that Tone stood for, is not seen as any impediment to this process. What Pearse has been attempting is a narrative which will create trans-rational, unconscious, ethnic bonds between the past and the present. The facts of history are not part of such a discourse; they are only of value in selected instances, and if they reinforce the agenda of the narrative: they are creative of an identification, they are creative of an 'us.'

However, such valorisation is actually defined relationally inasmuch as essentialist characteristics are actually predicated on a difference from otherness. For there to be an '*us*,' then there must be a '*them*' who are, by definition

different from '*us*.' This definition of the self promotes a desire for racial, linguistic, ideological, territorial and cultural purity which, at one end of the spectrum, validates a desire for socio-cultural identification and self-definition, and at the other, posits a desire to differentiate one's own group from others, and by extension, a related desire to keep other groupings outside one's native territory, be that territory actual or psychic, and be that desire conscious or unconscious.

It is this territorial imperative which can lead to ethnic, racial or sectarian violence. In psychic terms, such exclusion of alterity can involve segregation of different societal and cultural practices within a community, as well as more overt instances of racial and ethnic violence. This quasi-xenophobia, a trait which I will trace throughout Irish nationalism, is an eloquent silence in Maley's description of 'varieties of nationalism.' I would see this as a central flaw in an otherwise perceptive essay, because it is a core constituent of the epistemology of nationalism, and it also distinguishes nationalism from the other terms he mentions, as the ethnic factor is not quite as strong in terms of 'nation' and 'nationality' as it is in 'nationalism.'

Social, cultural, religious and linguistic factors cohere in the process of unconscious and conscious self-definition that is required to sustain nationalism. These practices function as *enthymemes*, passwords that are known only to those who belong to the same social grouping, and which are often unconsciously validated. The mythico-religious text of Pearse's messianistic co-option of Tone can be seen as this type of *enthymeme*, as his audience would certainly understand it as such. The nature and strength of these enthymematic functions has been debated by various writers. John Armstrong and Anthony Smith, for example, see ethnicity as a seminal factor, though they focus on different aspects of the ethnic.

Armstrong, following Frederick Barth, sees ethnicity as arising from spatial contextualisation which causes populations to develop identity patterns in differential terms; their customs act as borders which demarcate a certain

territory. Smith, on the other hand, looks at the intrinsic meaning given to cultural practices, myths and symbols by ethnic communities which he terms *ethnies*. In both definitions, the *ethnie* is seen as an organic community, wherein social, cultural, religious and ideological practices cohere in a synthesis which promotes self-definition. The methodology of this definition is that of binary opposition; namely, one organic community is defined, not only by its own qualities, but also by its difference from those of other groups or communities. There seems to be an intrinsic essentialism associated with the epistemology of nationalism, as the *ethnie* strives to define and validate itself.

It is in terms of this essentialist view of nationalism that the adjectives used by Maley – 'anglocentric' and 'stultifying' – are relevant. When speaking of nationalism, as a general term, Maley sees it as various and dispersed; he talks about the cognate terms, 'national,' 'nation,' 'nationality' and 'nationhood.' When speaking of Irish nationalism, he talks about 'history, race, gender, class, language, sexuality, Diaspora and, especially in an Irish context, religion,' as well as referring to aspects of its 'overlapping multiplicity – Catholic, Celtic, colonial, constitutional, critical and cultural.' It is only when speaking about British nationalism that this centrifugal discourse changes direction and we see the definition of nationalism become a centripetal one as Maley now speaks of 'anglocentric Brits' and of the perpetuation and naturalisation of 'a stultifying notion of Britishness' (Maley 1996, 35-37).[21]

Why is it that only 'British nationalism' is seen as being at 'its most intense'? Possibly it is because this nationalism is the one which exerts a centripetal force on Maley's own socio-political concerns, and it is this aspect of nationalism that has caused a number of writers to demur, and call into question the nationalist project. As Treanor ironically puts it: all 'secessionist movements are anti-hegemonic and anti-universalist until independence day. After that they become another's hegemonic universalism' (Treanor 1977, 3.3). The nationalistic desire for clear definition of its own community brings with it a homogenising drive in which all other groupings, whether racially, linguistically or territorially

deviant from the nationalistic *ethnie*, are either subsumed or else seen as totally 'other,' and outside this quasi-organic community that is the teleological goal of nationalism.

Maley, as a Scot, would perhaps feel these winds of assimilation on the one hand, and of differentiation on the other. This, I would argue, is another important aspect of nationalist ideology, the desire to create an organic sense of community in a particular territory, to create a centripetal gravitational influence, a lococentric force, which binds people to each other, to their past, and to a place through pre-critical narrations which avail of unconscious desires and phantasies. Belief in the destiny of one's *ethnie* is hugely important, as affective and cultural signifiers can, as we will see, bind a population together more closely than can rational political arguments due to their unconscious appeal. It is this unconscious dimension of these narrative phantasies that remains an eloquent silence in the more sociologically oriented definitions of nationalism, and this is the reason why many of these, while partially correct, never seem to explain the nature of nationalism *per se*. I would argue that this is because, instead of attempting to define what it *is*, its *ordo essendi*, a more effective strategy is to define what type of knowledge-constitutive interests are involved in the nationalist project – its *ordo cognoscendi*.

The Ulster loyalist, for example, believes that he or she is British, and that Ulster (comprising six counties, since partition in 1922), as a political entity, is stable and viable. The Ulster republican, on the other hand, refuses to recognise the state of Northern Ireland, and instead sees Ulster (nine counties, part of the original quinary provincial divisions of Ireland), as part of the whole island of Ireland. The leader of the Orange march at Drumcree, during the summer of 1996, believed that even as these marchers defied the legal ban imposed by Sir Hugh Annesley, the Chief Constable of the RUC (the Royal Ulster Constabulary), he was obeying some higher notion of 'Britishness,' and was able to invoke the Queen in support of the actions of his followers and

himself: 'we are the Queen's subjects, who wish to walk the Queen's highway.'[22]

If the Queen of England is the titular head of the British legislature, then, by extension, the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary is acting in her interests and at her behest through the British parliament at Westminster. From a logical or rational perspective, his enforcement of the law regarding the prohibition of parades from marching in a particular locality is validated by British legal and governmental writ. To claim that by breaking the Queen's law, one is, in some way demonstrating a higher form of loyalty to that Queen, is patently absurd. But of course, as we have seen in the case of Pearse, nationalist narrative is performative as opposed to constative, and this claim of a higher loyalty validates the Orange Order's sense of itself as some form of latter-day chosen people, who are proclaiming a '*true*' notion of 'Britishness' that only *they* can understand. Just as Pearse saw Tone as formulating the 'gospel of Irish Nationalism in worldly terms,' so the Orange Order sees itself as revealing the 'truth' about notions of loyalism and Britishness in a similar manner.

The militant Republicans who bombed Omagh in the Summer of 1998, similarly believed that their action would in some way facilitate the coming into being of a united Ireland. While claiming that it is non-sectarian, the IRA, in all its manifestations, has pursued overtly sectarian policies, by targeting people and premises purely on the basis that they are Protestant, and by extension, unionist and loyalist in political persuasion.[23] Both traditions blend religion and politics, seeing their own creed as true and the other as heretical, and both traditions express their respective identities through a matrix of cultural signifiers: murals, graffiti, songs and icons, a matrix which is constitutive of powerful identificatory unconscious phantasies.[24] This brings to mind one of the most interesting paradoxes prevalent in contemporary discussion of nationalism from a classificatory standpoint.

Nationalism, as John Hutchinson points out, is generally seen as either political or cultural (Hutchinson 1994, 39-63). However, given the

epistemological factors suggested here, it is often difficult to distinguish between the political and the cultural, as both put forward the view that 'sovereignty is located ultimately in the people, and that the world is divided into distinctive peoples, each with unique homelands' (Hutchinson 1994, 41-42). In this context, I would definitely agree with James Snead who makes the positive assertion that European nationalism, specifically in the nineteenth century, seemed to depend on cultural criteria (Snead 1990, 235). Indeed, I would go further and contend that the division between 'nationalism' and 'cultural nationalism' is a false one, an argument that I will develop in chapter four. From the perspective of epistemology, it is through cultural criteria – narrative, literary tropes, phantasy – that the imperatives of nationalism are laid down and reinforced. Here, it seems to me, is the nub of the issue. Nationalism urges a people to see itself as distinct and unique, and cultural and religious practices are decisive in terms of creating this notion of both conscious and unconscious unique identity. All of Maley's 'varieties of nationalism' – Catholic, Celtic, colonial, constitutional, critical and cultural – cohere in terms of this identificatory imperative. The grounding of the *ethnie* in terms of ideology, and in terms of religious, linguistic and social practices, is achieved through cultural means, and specifically through the fixation with an image, or series of images, which are culturally foundational.

Literature, specifically narrative, is the most suasive of these cultural practices as it can synthesise the different constituents of nationalism in terms of archetypes which posit a history that is teleological, and which aspires towards narrative closure. This was clear in our analysis of Pearse's circular appeal to 'august destiny' in his proclamation, and of the Orange Order's notion of a higher loyalty to the Queen. It can also create a relationship between these people and the land they inhabit, a relationship which posits an organic connection between the people and the place which is central to nationalist ideology, as the very act of inhabiting a piece of land becomes an ideological statement of self-identification. In this context, the land becomes the ultimate nationalistic signifier: it is *Heimlich*, in the sense of offering a home to the set

of ideological practices which binds people together. Of course, for this to happen, narrative, historical and socio-cultural texts have to create the *Heimlich* ideological position in the first place, and in the context of Irish nationalism, three of Maley's categories – history, race and language – are combined in the ongoing construction and definition, both conscious and unconscious, of an *ethnie*.[25]

The place of the aesthetic in the construction of this lococentric notion of a homeland is central. Aesthetic ideology has been defined by Terry Eagleton as involving:

> a phenomenalist reduction of the linguistic to the sensually empirical, a confusing of mind and world, sign and thing, cognition and percept, which is consecrated in the Hegelian symbol and resisted by Kant's rigorous demarcation of aesthetic judgement from the cognitive, ethical and political realms. Such aesthetic ideology, by repressing the contingent, aporetic relation which holds between the spheres of language and the real, naturalises or phenomenalises the former, and is thus in danger of converting the accidents of meaning to organic natural process in the characteristic manner of ideological thought.
>
> (Eagleton 1990, 10)

This process of converting the aporetic accidents of meaning into organic narrative constructs is precisely what is at stake in what I see as the epistemology of nationalism. This ideology is a constituent factor in any nationalistic discourse. Hence, we recall that Pearse's rhetorical adequation of Tone, Saint Patrick and Christ was spatially validated as Pearse spoke of Bodenstown as 'one of the holiest places in Ireland; holier even than the place where Patrick sleeps in Down' (Pearse 1917-1922, II, 58). This lococentric concept of place becomes a cultural signifier of the group, as it is in a specific place, either real or imaginary, that the organic group has its being. One need only look at the protracted confrontations at Portadown, during the Summer of 1996, and since, where the Orange Order's desire to march down the Garvaghy Road, and the residents' opposite desire that they should not, caused such a furore. The Garvaghy Road here serves as a potent lococentric signifier for both nationalist and loyalist communities.[26] The connections of both sides to this piece of territory are unconsciously validated, and hence pre-critical and pre-rational. Selfhood is

imbricated with territory to such an extent that the territory becomes an introjection into the group psychology of each community. Each side sees this piece of territory as a signifier of its own identity. Aesthetic narratives of past associations with Garvaghy, for both traditions, are the means of creating a place which is seen as the rightful territory of both sides of the divide, a *Heimlich* place where the *ethnie* can be validated in terms of power and ownership.

Consequently, when the Provisional IRA stand at Bodenstown, they are connected, mythically and unconsciously, *not* with the historical Wolfe Tone, but with a narrative image of Tone, which functions as a *point de capiton* from which they trace their political and ideological heritage. Such a mythic fusion is part of the modality of nationalism, the idea that:

> a whole nation could be like a congregation; singing the same hymns, listening to the same gospel, sharing the same emotions, linked not only to each other, but to the dead beneath their feet.
>
> (Ignatieff 1993, 95)

This bond with the dead imbues the land for which they gave their lives, and in which they are buried, with a lococentric form of transcendence. It is as if, symbolically, by giving their lives *for* the land, they give life *to* the land, and they embody the potential for the resurrection of their ideological positions *from* the land. To further underscore this religious strain in the epistemology of nationalism, Tone functions at a messianistic level in Bodenstown for the Provisional movement, and again I use the term in Derrida's specific sense (a sense reminiscent of Walter Benjamin's 'weak' messianic). Interestingly in terms of our present discussion, Derrida also ascribes 'important political consequences' (Derrida 1997b, 23) to the reduction of messianic to the messianistic, a reduction that I would see as a *sine qua non* of the epistemological position of nationalism.

Discussing this differentiation in terminology, John D. Caputo has made the important point that the distinguishing feature of any messianism is that it 'determines the figure of the messiah' (Caputo 1997, 160), and gives it a 'characterisation and specific configuration,' which situates notions of faith and belief within a specific community, a process which can lead to 'a given

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fundamentalism' (Derrida 1997b, 23). Caputo explores the political significance of this notion of messianism in a manner which is extremely relevant to our present discussion. A messianism which instantiates a determinate messianistic figure:

> contracts the absoluteness of the messianic promise and expectation within the borders of a *people*, so that God is thought to have cut a special deal with Greco-European Christians, or Jews, or Arabs; of a *language*, so that God is said to have spoken Hebrew, Greek – or was it Aramaic? – or Arabic; of a *national history*, so that God is made to take his stand with the destiny of some nation-state and take up arms within the strife among nations.
>
> (Caputo 1997, 161)

The messianicity of Pearse's rhetoric, which fuses the three key terms of Derrida and Caputo, namely a people, a language and a national history, makes it clear that the modality of knowledge operative in nationalism is inextricably bound up with such a mythico-religious appeal. The belief in a God who is *of* the people validates any notions that we may have of *being* a chosen people. The connection between the immanent and the transcendent is achieved through a messianistic figure, someone who dies for the *Volk*, but is reborn through a selective salvific nationalist narrative. Hence, the use of the term 'holy' to describe Tone's grave at Bodenstown is part of this messianistic facet of the epistemology of nationalism. Place must become a signifying aspect of the nationalist narrative; if a place is to be holy, then it must be described in terms of messianistic significance to the cultural position in question. This lococentric confluence of faith and land as aspects of the nationalist *imaginaire* will be examined again in chapters three and four.

The unconscious introjection of notions of place into a nationalist discourse is brought about through narrative. Anderson, as we have noted, has made the connection between the dawn of nationalism and the dusk of religion, and the idea of a place as sacred to a people is central to the epistemology of nationalism. This messianistic discourse initiates a singularity of identification which allows the *Volk* in question to ignore contemporary developments in favour of a nationalist narrative which conflates the categories of a people, a

language and a national history.

Another potent example of the messianistic aspect of the epistemology of nationalism is to be found in the conflict between Serbs and ethnic Albanians, focused on Kosovo. This conflict has its origins in Serb nationalism, and the validation of this position is strongly supportive of my thesis concerning the modalities of nationalistic discourse.[27] *Srpska Mreza* (The Serbian Network), which is published on the World Wide Web, is an expression of the Serbian perspective on the issues of Kosovo, and on the NATO bombing campaign. The title of this website is *The Saga of Kosovo*. This title in itself validates my stress on the narrative closure that is constitutive of the epistemology of nationalism. The events in Kosovo are seen as the latest chapter in a story, a saga, which, by definition, will be brought to some sort of conclusion. This website is full of pictures of church frescos and icons which depict Serbian connections with Kosovo:

> Six hundred years ago, on St. Vitus Day, [the] Christian army of Serbian Prince Lazar and Islamic conquerors under Turkish Sultan Murat fought a great battle on the plain of Kosovo. Serbs were defending themselves and Christian Europe from the Ottoman invasion, but at Kosovo they were defeated. Prince Lazar and the cream of the Serbian nobility all died heroically. Over the centuries, historians have praised the sacrificial courage of Prince Lazar and his army on that day in 1389 - and, as we enter a new century, that same courage is embodied by [the] spirit of all the Serbian people.
> (http://www.srpska-mreza.com/mlad/htm)[28]

Here, the messianistic vocabulary of nationalism is once more evident. In this website dealing with the contemporary situation in Kosovo, the exploits of Prince Lazar, in 1389, are seen as foundational in terms of what this place means to the Serbian community. Kosovo becomes privileged as a holy place, to echo the words of Pearse, and Lazar, like Tone, is valorised because he died for his people.

Of course, in this narrative structure, the modern Serbs are seen to define themselves in terms of his actions: Lazar's salvific struggle is the mirror through which nationalist Serbia defines itself. We are told that modern Serbs, who are fighting in a 'dramatically altered theatre of war,' still possess 'the gallant spirit of Kosovo.' Here, the place is personified, and imbued with lococentric

significance, a significance which is underlined by a religious and sacral dimension, a dimension which is grounded on the sense of communion with the fallen Serbian dead:

> For centuries the territory of Kosovo was the centre of our national and church life.[29] It remained so even after all the destruction by the conquerors, for on it are found the remains of the most important accomplishments of Serbian church architecture, art, and literature. These Kosovo remnants are lodged in the midst of the remaining faithful of the Kosovo region.
>
> (http://www.srpska-mreza.com/mlad/htm)

Here, we see the epistemology of nationalism in action, as place, history and *Volk* are conflated in a narrative that has only one lococentric perspective to unfold. National and church life are seen as synonymous; the large amount of religious artwork is given a strong political dimension in the overall structure of the website. Place is seen as transcendentally connected with historical narrative: region and religion combine to create a messianistic strand in nationalist expression. Both are reflections, images, of the imaginary selfhood of Serbia.

The etymology of the term 'religion' itself is of value here. Derrida has some interesting points to make on what he terms the two possible etymological sources of the word *religio*: '*relegere*, from *legere* ('harvest, gather')' and '*religare*, from *ligare* ('to tie, bind')' (Derrida 1998, 34). It is these notions of binding and gathering that define the religious aspect of the epistemology of nationalism. In many ways, this gathering, itself allied to Heidegger's *Versammlung*, a notion to which he always grants special privilege, is crucial in terms of how nationalistic discourse operates. As Julia Kristeva remarks: 'I don't know who I am or even if I am, but I belong with my national and religious roots' (Kristeva 1993, 2). If communal identity is the ultimate *telos* of such discourse, then notions of binding together in such relations must be stressed, and if necessary, over-determined, in order to ensure that conscious and unconscious tropes of gathering will be mobilised to achieve Heidegger's *Zusammengehören*, 'belonging together.'[30]

The difficulty for definitions of nationalism which are not attuned to the creative and imaginative aspects of nationalist modes of knowledge is that they

are unable to see the essentially performative nature of nationalist discourse. In gathering together different identificatory tropes – race, language, religion, history – in a narrative structure, and in setting them up as an idealised image of what notions of selfhood *should* be, nationalist discourses, be they Irish, Serbian or any others, introduce categories of desire, belief, and unconscious filiation to political structures that are so close to their own identificatory matrices as to place all oppositional discourse in the realm of heresy. Looking again at the Serbian Network website, this conflation of such binding categories is precisely what we need to unpack if we are to fully understand how nationalism achieves its ends:

> The lesson of Vidovdan (St. Vitus Day) for all of us is that eternal values must be placed before earthly ones, that spiritual force is superior to the force of arms. The legacy of Vidovdan teaches us that the forces of darkness and evil are always defeated in the end and that those of light and virtue ultimately triumph, even when such victory may seem impossible.
>
> (http://www.srpska-mreza.com/mlad/htm)

If we are to look for the essence, or *ordo essendi*, of this definitive statement, we would miss much that is of importance as to how nationalism as a discourse actually operates. There is little of constative worth to be found here; what is to be found is the performativity which attempts to persuade those within the *ethnie* of the justice of their cause. The use of the first person plural pronoun, 'us,' is reminiscent of Pearse's Bodenstown speech, as is the equation of place with holiness, and what I would term the sacralisation of the political conflict.

By introducing the criteria of 'spiritual force' and 'eternal values' into this discussion; by valorising a particular time as originary, a time that is connected with the location of Kosovo through the messianistic *personae* of Prince Lazar and St Vitus; and by stressing the moral force of the Serbian cause, this passage performs its own teleology. It enunciates a modality of knowledge, an *ordo cognoscendi*, wherein certain key tropes are repeatedly performed so as to give them a sense of inevitability. It instantiatates the image of Serbian identity as eternal, unchanging and predicated on modern reflections of master figures such as Vidovdan and Lazar, and of a transcendental attachment to the lococentric

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territory of Kosovo. Aspects of history are only adduced if they confer a certain factual accuracy on the claims being advanced.

For example, in an effort to stress the holiness of Kosovo to the Serb people, the following information was offered as proof. The first of more than 180 Serbian churches and monasteries was built in the 12th century. Kosovo was the seat of the Serbian Orthodox church for 900 years, until that seat was moved to Belgrade as a consequence of the second world war. Here, place, or territory, has undergone a *Versammlung* in that it has been enculturated into the narrative of the *ethnie*, but this performative enculturation has a double function in that it also serves to create that very *ethnie* through its retelling: the image becomes transformative of those who are looking at it. This notion of captation and fixation by an image will be an important aspect of the next chapter; it is certainly the definitive trope of nationalist epistemology.

A final Serbian example demonstrates the apotheosis of this nationalistic performative, as name, history, religion and language are melded into a single narrative:

> Kosovo is many diverse things to different living Serbs, but they all have it in their blood. They are born with it. The variety of meanings is easily explained by the symbolism and emotions that the word 'Kosovo' embodies, clearly above anything that the geographic concept might imply. It is in Serbian blood because it is a transcendental phenomenon.
>
> <div align="right">(http://www.srpska-mreza.com/mlad/htm)</div>

Here, the transcendentality that we noted in Pearse's evocation of Irish nationalism is made explicit in the case of Serbian nationalism. Place has become part of the narrative enunciation of nationalism, and as such, it must transcend its material existence and become something beyond itself. Hence the increasing use of religious terminology and ideology in nationalist discourse. When attempting to internalise such supra-material adequations, it makes sense to avail of any unconscious pathways that are already pointing in this direction. Religious belief constantly adequates the temporal and the spiritual, it gathers, or harvests (to revisit Derrida's etymological dimension), a bond between mortal and immortal, and between accidental and pre-ordained. As such it

serves as a template for such nationalist attempts to forge a bond between place and people, between language and emotion and between image and reality.

Similarly in Northern Ireland, religious introjections of place through murals, slogans, and graffiti enculturate different locales as possessions of either unionist or republican communities. In a manner redolent of Kosovo, religion has become a politico-ideological signifier, helping to create the conflations of Catholic/nationalist/republican and Protestant/unionist/loyalist. The naming of place is similarly iconic, with republicans speaking of the city of Derry, a word which derives from the Irish language '*doire*,' meaning 'oak tree,' while loyalists will refer to the same place as 'Londonderry,' a name given by the planters to indicate the new allegiance of the place. Even the language spoken takes on an iconic significance, with the Irish language being seen by republicans as a signifier of a more authentic sense of Irishness than the English language, as witnessed by the use of the Irish language by Gerry Adams at each meeting of the Northern Ireland Assembly in the summer of 1999, and by consequent unionist anger.

The vexed terminological debate about whether the study of Irish literature written in English should be called 'Irish' or 'Anglo-Irish' literature is also a symptom of this linguistic phenomenon, as is the oft-quoted motto of the Provisional IRA: '*tiocfaidh ár lá*' (our day will come). Here, the ideology of 'physical force' nationalism, a nationalism that was never mentioned by Maley in his article, is validated by a racial and linguistic imperative. The personal pronoun '*ár*' (meaning 'our') is typical of the nationalist binarism in that it is both inclusive and exclusive, colonising and differentiating. This notion of 'our,' of 'us,' is seminal to the epistemology of nationalism. It plays on the desire of most people to belong to an *ethnie*, to a *Volk*, to a *Versammlung*, to a sense of the *Heimlich*. This suasive appeal to a sense of organic relationship with the language of the home, with 'our' language, is predicated on the notion that 'our' time will come. However, it also begs the question as to the putative role of those who are not 'us,' who are 'other,' when this time comes. The implication is that when

'our' time comes, there can be no others, there can only be 'us,' the organic community of Irish speaking, republican, nationalists. As events in the former Yugoslavia have demonstrated, this way ethnic cleansing lies. By definition, it excludes from this optative future-time those who are not 'us,' those who are incapable of speaking the language of this nationalistic *credo*, those who are somehow 'lesser' Irish people. As was explained on another Serbian website, which posed, and then answered, the question of the 'problem of Kosovo': the 'prime reason for tensions in Kosovo is the explosive growth of the Albanian population' (http://srpska-mreza.com/). Clearly, the '*ár*' in question here has no room for ethnic Albanians.

For nationalism to thrive, it must keep emphasising the sameness of the *Volk*, and the difference of the other. Aesthetic fusions of land, language, religion and ideology serve to do this. Barbara Johnson cites the following example of *Volkisch* ideology in an endnote to her essay on Paul de Man's wartime writings, as described by George L. Mosse in *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*:

> According to many *Volkish* theorists, the nature of the soul of a *Volk* is determined by the native landscape. Thus the Jews, being a desert people, are viewed as shallow, arid 'dry' people, devoid of profundity and totally lacking in creativity. Because of the barrenness of the desert landscape, the Jews are a spiritually barren people. They thus contrast markedly with the Germans, who, living in the dark, mist-shrouded forests, are deep, mysterious, profound. Because they are so constantly shrouded in darkness, they strive towards the sun, and are truly *Lichtmenschen*.
>
> (Moss 1964, 7)

Johnson goes on to make the point that here: 'a desert is a desert but darkness is also light' (Johnston 1992, 22), and this is a classic example of how the performative discourse of nationalism, shrouded as it is in mythico-religious imagery and symbolism, can use narrative tropes such as paradox and chiasmus to penetrate political categories and discourse. Performativity, and the use of aesthetic devices and tropes, are very much at the core of the order of knowing, the *ordo cognoscendi*, of nationalism.

These political and cultural consequences of the aesthetic have been

interrogated by Paul de Man and Christopher Norris. De Man sees the aesthetic as 'primarily a social and political model...a principle of political value and authority that has its own claims on the shape and the limits of our freedom' (de Man 1984, 264). Norris brings out the hidden agenda of high romantic (and post-romantic) writers who see in the power of language the ability to 'transcend the opposition between sensuous and intellectual modes of apprehension' (Norris 1988a, 116). Both writers see, in nationalism, an aesthetic fusion in which all other differentiating and demarcating categories are *aufgehoben*, in a Hegelian sense, by the nationalistic imperative and its drive towards self-identification. I would suggest that these quotations demonstrate the futility of attempting to differentiate nationalism *per se* from cultural nationalism. Given the importance of the image in the creation of nationalist identifications, then the image-generating structures – language, literature, the aesthetic – must be seen as part of the epistemological apparatus of nationalism, an issue which will be explored in greater depth in the final chapter.

Epistemologically, nationalism rests on potentially dangerous foundations; it rests on notions of self and other which insist on the imbrication of the cultural and religious with the political and the phenomenal in an aesthetically sanctioned fusion of race, language, religion, culture and place. Kristeva traces this conflict to the transition between endogamous society (marriage taking place between blood relations), and exogamous society (marriage with those of 'foreign' extraction) (Kristeva 1993, 17).[31] Nationalist ideology also attempts to synthesise knowledge and belief, *epistémé* and *dóxa*, as evidenced in the Irish context by the fusion of Catholicism and Protestantism with republicanism and unionism, and in the Serbian one by a fusion of past and present, race and religion, place and spirituality. In this context, nationalism could be seen to repudiate the Enlightenment projects of secularisation, and of the separation of different levels of knowledge, for example those of politics and religion. Nationalism, it seems to me, is suffused with a post-romantic eschatology wherein language, religion, culture and place become interwoven in a narrative structure which, at both

conscious and unconscious levels, creates, replicates and valorises the *ethnie* through the creation of images in which the *ethnie* sees itself and through which it becomes validated.

Positing an umbilical relationship between the *ethnie* and a piece of territory is very important to nationalism; indeed, this lococentric imperative is seminal to the epistemological position of nationalism, as Mosse stressed in his discussion of land as the soul of a people. If a people can be seen as umbilically connected to a place, like the Serbs in Kosovo, republicans and unionists in Northern Ireland, or the Jews in Israel, then their unique nature becomes evermore clear. If place becomes an image of the people, then place has become part of nationalist ideology. Seamus Heaney, in his poem 'Kinship' in *North*, captures the symbolism of this intersubjective relationship between people and place. This aestheticisation of place allows an *ethnie* to create an identity grounded in a sacral identification with place, a place that is transcendentalised and given personality through the literary trope of personification. The poem speaks of 'our mother ground' which is sour with the blood of those sacrificed to her 'sacred heart,' and goes on to ask the apostrophised Tacitus, who serves as witness, to report: 'how we slaughter/for the common good' and how the personified ground devours 'our love and terror'(Heaney 1975, 45).

For Heaney, this 'goddess' symbolises the deity of nationalism; the deity to whom sacrifices are offered. She is the personification of nationalism, as we saw in Pearse's rhetoric, an ideological construct who is imagined as a mother, 'our mother ground.' This maternal image is a powerful one in the rhetoric of nationalism; it places the relationship between a place and a people as analogous to that between a mother and her children. Given that the family and the family home are archetypal images in human society, the use of the personal pronoun 'our,' in tandem with the image of 'mother' and 'ground,' creates a powerful, aesthetically-sanctioned, organicist relationship between a people and a place. When one also takes into account how the narrative of history can be aesthetically shaped so as to validate this relationship, the self-perpetuating

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nature of nationalism becomes clear. In this, as in many other contexts, the difference between nationalism *qua* nationalism, and cultural nationalism is non-existent as it is through culturally sanctioned criteria that nationalism achieves its enunciation. The notion of a country as a mother, and the people of that country as her children, can only come into being through metaphor, metonymy and personification – in other words through the criteria of cultural nationalism, and the generic structures contained therein such as song, story, poem, image and mythology.

As John Hutchinson notes, many historians, such as Frantisek Palacky in Czechoslovakia, Nicolae Iorga in Romania and Eoin MacNeill in Ireland, were central figures in their own nationalist movements (Hutchinson 1994, 3). They presented their own history as an unfolding narrative in which the nation, characterised by similarity of religious, cultural and linguistic practices, was in the process of autotelic evolution. In this historiographic context, Maley's comment that nationalism has always been 'both a test of faith and a statement of fact' (Maley 1996, 34), points to the epistemological crux that lies at the heart of any attempt to define the essence, the order of being, the *ordo essendi*, of nationalism. Historical narrative, which valorises the *ethnie* in terms of the criteria already listed, is the modality through which nationalism is articulated.

The actual facts of each history are comparatively unimportant, and this is where sociologically and politically driven accounts of nationalism fall short. It is the performativity of these historical narratives that allows us to examine what is central to nationalism as ideology. Given the Kantian dogma, expressed in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic' section of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, that space and time are essential categories for the existence of any system of knowledge, it is natural that history, the study of the past, should be such an important aspect of nationalist ideology. We have already seen how, in the cases of Serbia and Ireland, particular versions of the past, messianistic narratives, have become originary points from which the teleology of nationalism is traced. Hence, the originary past is valued, not just for itself, but as a directional vector towards the

future; just as these messianistic aspects of the past – Kosovo, Prince Lazar, Bodenstown and Tone – are evidence of a selective appeal to the past, so the futurology that is traced from them will be similarly selective.

As we have seen, Pearse personifies Ireland in aesthetic terms, and clearly sees himself and his colleagues as relaying the voice of this personified Ireland: 'Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.' This blending of criteria, through the use of the aesthetic device of *prosopopeia* (the giving of voice to an absent figure), allows Pearse to claim a trans-human warrant for his actions. There is no need to seek a democratic mandate (indeed, the 1916 insurrectionists did not have the widespread support of their own organisation 'The Irish Volunteers'). His actions are predicated on a belief in a mystical lococentric entity, 'Ireland,' and on an aesthetically created sense of communion with the 'dead generations' who have gone before. These dead generations, like the '*ár*' in the IRA slogan '*tiocfaidh ár lá*,' are carefully selected. They are generations who have espoused the nationalist ideology, and died in their attempts at rebellion. They are not the hundreds of thousands of Irish who have been in the British army, or the Royal Irish Constabulary, or the various militias that were in existence throughout Ireland. Just as these alternative versions of Irish identity were to have no place at the pantheon of 1916, the question is begged as to what role is there to be for unionists in a unified Ireland, the teleological goal of Irish nationalism.

Similarly, the 'problem of Kosovo' is posed by the presence there of those who are not part of the nationalist narrative, as defined from the perspective of the Serbs. As the Serbian Network website maintains:

> If it had not been for Kosovo, we would have been a great nation today. It was Kosovo that made us a great nation. It is our Golgotha; but it is at the same time our spiritual and moral resurrection.
> (http://www.srpska-mreza.com/mlad/htm)

This fusion of politics and messianicity is the ground upon which the Serbian nationalist future will be built: it is the signifier of the 'spiritual and moral resurrection' of the Serbs. Again, this selective narrative of the past is the *terminus a quo* from which the future will be traced. There is little of constative

merit in either notion: what we see is a performative enacting its function through the utterance of that function in language. Hence, it is almost impossible to analyse nationalism in terms of its being a codified social theory; there is little in terms of argument or debate that is to be uncovered.

The thrust of my argument then, is that if the different disciplines cannot agree on a definitive notion of the content of nationalism, then perhaps a different perspective needs to be considered. I would suggest that, instead of analysing the order of being, the *ordo essendi*, of nationalism, we should instead look at the order of knowing, the *ordo cognoscendi*. To look for the essence of nationalism in political or sociological research is futile, as the content of different nationalistic ideologies is not the issue. The Heideggerian notion of gathering, *Versammlung*, that is at the core of nationalism is validated by many different criteria. Elie Kedourie has pointed out that in 'nationalist doctrine, language, race, culture and sometimes even religion, constitute different aspects of the same primordial entity, the nation' (Kedourie 1985, 73), and this idea of a nation is predicated on Heidegger's notion of *Zusammengehören*, 'belonging together.'

I would suggest, however, that what the other definitions have missed is the imperative that drives this urge to 'belong together' or to 'gather' in some form of homogenous grouping. As Treanor notes: 'what nationalism blocks, above all, is change' (Treanor 1977, 6.2), and here, I think, we come to an important point in our analysis of the epistemology of nationalism. Once nationalism has set out its image of itself, it becomes fixated on that image, and refuses to allow any other worldviews to impinge upon it. So, to develop Kedourie's point, what is important is the *process* of fixation on issues of language, race, culture and religion, and the unconscious pulsions which drive that process. Desire, that motive force of so much human action, has long been the subject of psychoanalytic theory, but it has seldom been studied in terms of its influence on nationalism. I feel that a theoretical analysis of the processes and cathexes involved in driving people towards notions of gathering and homogeneity would be very worthwhile in this context.

I will argue, in the next chapter, that the psychoanalytic theory of Jacques Lacan can provide an appropriate paradigm of these unconscious pulsions, as it demonstrates the centrality of identification in the development of the human ego. By extending this analysis to examine the unconscious dimensions of such identificatory bondings in terms of a community, I hope to outline the modalities of the *ordo cognoscendi* of nationalism, and to demonstrate that a focus on the mode of knowledge enunciated *by* nationalism and at the same time, constitutive *of* nationalism, is a valuable way of analysing this complex and widespread phenomenon.

CHAPTER 2

NATIONALIST REFLECTIONS AND MISRECOGNITIONS

The unconscious impact of nationalism is something that has received comparatively little attention. There have been some works which connect the nation with the psyche: William Bloom's *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations*, deals with the sense of self, while Dov Ronen's *The Quest for Self-Determination*, explains its theme in the title; however, none see nationalism as driven by purely unconscious impulses towards identity. As we have seen, much of the force of nationalist ideology is replete with unconscious charges. The use of racial, religious and linguistic tropes that are rooted in the individual and group unconscious, gives nationalist ideology a strong hold on the minds of its audiences. Perhaps the most significant analysis, in terms of the psychoanalytic derivations of nationalism in the case of Ireland, was that of Ernest Jones, in 1922. His study, 'The Island of Ireland: a psychological contribution to political psychology,' analyses the dominant image of a female personification of Ireland in terms of how the signifier 'Ireland' has become particularly associated with an 'unconscious maternal complex' (Gallagher 1988, 1).[1] Jones made the point that for island peoples, the associations of their native land with the ideas of 'woman, virgin, mother and womb' are very strong and he went on to add that such phantasies tend to fuse 'in the central complex of the womb of a virgin mother' (Jones 1964, 196).

The many different names that have been given to a personified Ireland – Erin, Cathleen Ni Houlihan, Banba, Mother Ireland, the Shan Van Vocht, the Poor Old Woman (O'Brien 1998, 221) – tend to demonstrate the accuracy of Jones's point, and I would largely agree with Cormac Gallagher's extrapolation

from Jones's thesis that, in the case of Ireland, there is a strong connection between this personification and the 'repressed primary idea of Mother, the closest of all immediate blood relatives, to which powerful unconscious affective interests remain attached' (Gallagher 1998, 4-5).

The importance of this connection for our analysis of the epistemology of nationalism cannot be overstressed. We have already noted the presence of certain *ideés reçues* in the discourse of nationalism. We have also noted that nationalist discourse, as a performative rather than a constative, seems to be more amenable to analysis in terms of its modality of knowledge as opposed to any form of invariant core which all manifestations of nationalism have in common: its *ordo cognoscendi* as opposed to its *ordo essendi*. However, what we have not, as yet, discovered is the motivation that sets nationalist discourse in motion. Clearly the affective and unconscious dimensions of nationalism tend to make it less of a political philosophy. Neither can it be seen as an ideology in its pure sense. So, the question is begged as to how, or why, it comes into being? I would suggest that the answer to this question can be found in the human need for some form of identity.

Gallagher's study points us in the direction of an answer to this complicated question. Developing his point about the connection between the idea of Ireland and that of a mother figure, he points out that if nationalists unconsciously connect their actions with the 'primary idea' of the mother: 'their thoughts and actions will have such a compulsive force that no amount of reasoning or concessions will modify them' (Gallagher 1998, 8-9). It is here, I would contend, that we approach the main epistemological dimension of nationalism. Jacques Lacan, the French psychoanalyst and critic, has identified desire as the most important human attribute, from the perspective of the development of the human ego.[2] I will argue that desire is precisely the compulsive force, unconsciously driven, and oriented towards primary images and ideas, which permeates and originates nationalist ideology. By an analysis of Lacan's paradigms of the mirror stage and the imaginary order, we can see, at an

individual level, the effects and dimensions of this desire on identity; and we can then go on to develop this in terms of the group identity as predicated in the nationalist *imaginaire*.

In Lacan's account of the development of the ego, human identity is seen as emerging from the crossing of a frontier, from what he terms the 'imaginary order' (the dyadic world of mother and child), into that of the 'symbolic order,' which is concerned with symbolic systems, language being the main one (though both stages continue to coexist within the individual afterwards).[3] The imaginary is defined as the 'world, the register, the dimension of images, conscious or unconscious, perceived or imagined' (Sheridan 1977, ix). Lacan's notion of the imaginary order is one wherein the human being becomes attached to an image, and attempts to find a wholeness and unity of meaning through a form of imitation or mimicry of this image.

He sees this mimicry of others as deriving from a central tenet of animal behaviour. Indeed his initial notions of the imaginary order were influenced by the ethology of animals (Lacan 1993, 7-9), and by his exposure to the surrealist movement in Paris in the 1930s.[4] Lacan contributed to the surrealist journal *Minotaure*, where he would have been familiar with the work of the sociologist Roger Callois, who wrote two long articles on animal mimicry.[5] Callois focused on the captivation of insects by their desire to take on the form of their surroundings, and he argued against the prevailing viewpoint that these mimicries were a form of survival-motivated camouflage. Callois disagreed strongly, arguing that such mimicry was often counterproductive in terms of survival. He made the point that often, such camouflage did not save the insect from being eaten by its own kind, or by predators, whose habits are often based on a sense of smell or motion. Also, a creature mimicking its environment might not be recognised by its own kind and so could fail to mate. Instead, in Callois's view, mimicry: 'is a function of the visual experience of the insect itself' (Sarup 1992, 24). Lacan expresses his debt to Callois (Lacan 1977a, 3) in terms of his own theories of the imaginary order and the mirror stage, both of which deal with the

captivation of the self by an image.

It is the idea of the ego as being fascinated, and ultimately fixated, by its image that has such importance for our discussion of the modality of knowledge that is operative in, and through, nationalism. Lacan, after Callois, seems to see such mimicry as constitutive of our identity-generating process as humans. In their book on Lacan, Bico Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy see the imaginary order as including 'the field of phantasies and images,' with its prototype being the 'infant before the mirror, fascinated with his image' (Benvenuto and Kennedy 1986, 81), while Gary Leonard, in his Lacanian study of James Joyce's *Dubliners*, sees it in terms of a 'period of time in which individuals mistake their mirror images for themselves, that is, as proof that they are unified and autonomous beings' (Leonard 1993, 188).[6] As Lacan himself puts it, the imaginary is, at its core, an erotic relationship: 'all seizing of the other in an image in a relationship of erotic captivation, occurs by way of the narcissistic relation' (Lacan 1993, 92-3). Here, he is pointing towards his theory of the importance of the image, or reflection, in the process of identificatory development of the ego, which he defines as a form of construct of self and image.

In a ground-breaking essay entitled 'The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I' (Lacan 1977a, 1-7), Lacan sees one of the seminal stages of this 'construct' as the defining of the self in terms of a reflection. The self is defined in terms of a misrecognition (*méconaissance*) of an image of itself in the mirror, a process which he terms the 'mirror stage.' While initially seen as a moment which can be placed at a particular time in a child's life, between six and eighteen months (Lacan 1977a, 1-2), Lacan would later see this as a structural relationship vital to the formation of the ego.

This essay, originally delivered at the International Congress of Psychoanalysis, held in Zurich, in 1949 (though its original concept was introduced some thirteen years earlier at a previous conference in Marianbad), is a development of the psychological experiments of Henri Wallon.[7] These

experiments, with animals and children, formed the cornerstone upon which much of Lacan's psychoanalytic theory would be based, although the perspectives of both thinkers would prove to be radically different.[8]

In this essay, Lacan outlines what he terms the '*méconaissance*' of the individual self. He pictures a child becoming aware of its own image in a mirror, and goes on to discuss the 'jubilant assumption of his specular image by the child' as it aspires to the totality of that image:

> This…would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the *I* is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject. This form would have to be called the Ideal-I, if we wished to incorporate it into our usual register.
>
> (Lacan 1977a, 2)

The important point to note about this identification is that the image is ideal, it orients the 'agency of the ego' in a 'fictional direction,' it is something towards which the ego may aspire, but which it can never attain. It is also an identification that has no place for anything else outside of its scopic field. Lacan makes the point that the human ego is created as a result of identifying with one's own specular image, so what seems to be individual, internal and unique to the individual is, in fact, the result of an identification with a two-dimensional representation of that individual. Lacan's point here is that the ego is constituted: 'by an identification with another whole object, an imaginary projection, an idealisation ("Ideal-I") which does not match the child's feebleness.' It is this 'alienated relationship of the self to its own image' that Lacan terms the imaginary (Sarup 1992, 66).

Samuel Weber comments astutely on one particular aspect of this theory. He notes that a human being is able, at a much earlier stage: 'to *perceive* the unity of an image than it is to produce this unity in its own body' [*italics original*] (Weber 1991, 12). This is important, especially when we consider that the child who is perceiving this image of unity is itself completely uncoordinated and not in control of its motor functions. Lacan cites this as evidence of what he calls the 'real *specific prematurity of birth* in man' [*italics original*] (Lacan 1977a, 4), and

it is from this position of helplessness that it becomes fixated on the image in the mirror, an image which will always be anterior to the child, and which will become an object of fascination for the child.

As Lacan puts it, the mirror stage is a drama whose 'internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation' (Lacan 1977a, 4), and it is this orientation towards an *image* of the self which is the key to its importance in our discussion. The perceived image offers a wholeness and co-ordination which becomes the object of desire, and which will be the 'matrix of a sense of unity, identity and continuity' (Weber 1993, 12). The child will be unable to provide such a matrix, and as a result, this sense of unity, identity and continuity becomes a fixation which fashions the development of the self. Hence, the imaginary is, in the words of Malcolm Bowie, the scene of a 'delusional attempt' to remain 'what one is' by gathering to oneself 'ever more instances of sameness, resemblance and self-replication' (Bowie 1991, 92).

Lacan makes the point, keeping in mind his interest in animal ethology, that while animal experiments show that chimpanzees, for example, are initially also fascinated by their own reflections (Lacan 1977a, 1), they soon lose interest. Whereas the chimpanzee can recognise the mirror image as 'an epistemological void,' the human child 'has a perverse will to remain deluded':

> The child's attention is seized (*capté*) by the firm spatial relationships between its real body and its specular body and between body and setting within the specular image; he or she is captivated (*captivé*). But the term that Lacan prefers to either of these...is the moral and legal *captation*. The complex geometry of body, setting and mirror works upon the individual as a ruse, a deception, an inveiglement.
>
> (Bowie 1991, 23)

The difficulty here is that the image is both that of the self, and also a form of alterity, in that it is clearly *not* the self. The recognition of the self is actually a misrecognition, but one which exerts a powerful hold on the ego, as it provides the comforting sense of wholeness which the ego desires. This prefigures a sense of alienation from the image, as feelings of narcissistic aggressivity arise in the tension between specular image and real body.

Interestingly, Weber situates such conflicts in terms of temporality. He

makes the point that for Lacan, the future anterior is of crucial importance in his discussion of the construction of identity, as it is through time that such notions are developed. Lacan himself stressed the importance of the future anterior in his own discussion on language and time:

> I identify myself in language, but only by losing myself in it like an object. What is realised in my history is not the past definite of what was, since it is no more, or even the present perfect of what has been in what I am, but the future anterior of what I shall have been for what I am in the process of becoming.
>
> (Lacan 1977a, 86)

Lacan, Weber notes, locates the time of the subject as an 'inconclusive futurity of what will-always-already-have-been...a "time" which can never be entirely remembered, since it will never have fully taken place' (Weber 1993, 9). This introduction of a temporal dimension is part of a growing symphysis between what we have already marked, in the area of nationalism, as originary and sacral time, and the notion of time in the theory of individual subjectivity. In other words, in the mirror stage, the identification of the subject with the *imago* sets up a desire for imaginary wholeness in the future, a future towards which the subject strives, but which it will never reach. Hence, Lacan's vision of the *imago* as an 'alienating destination,' which is reached by facing towards a 'fictional direction' (Lacan 1977a, 2), wherein the specular image 'traps the subject in an illusory ideal of completeness' (Sarup 1992, 66). This ongoing process of captation and misrecognition is a performative through which the ego is created and defined, a process very similar to that which we observed in nationalistic discourse in the opening chapter.

The fictionality of the object of desire is important: the cohesiveness, wholeness and bodily integration of the image in the mirror is untrue; the image is precisely that, a two-dimensional representation of a three-dimensional entity. It is 'a trap, and a decoy (*leurre*),' and it causes 'falsehood' to be 'ingrained into the ego' during its formative stages (Bowie 1991, 23). This is due to the 'transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image,' or what Lacan chooses to call 'the ancient term *imago*' (Lacan 1977a, 2). This term

is defined by Dylan Evans as related to its cognate term 'image,' but as 'meant to emphasise the subjective dimension of the image...it includes feelings as well as a visual representation' (Evans 1996, 84). This affective or emotive dimension is significant, as it connects with the important notion of desire, a prime motif in the identificatory process, and, interestingly, a point that has been made in the context of nationalism by Gellner, who, as we recall, speaks of nationalist sentiment. It also points towards the possibility that violence, or what Gellner terms anger, is part of the modality of nationalism.

For Lacan, narcissistic aggressivity is the result of a desire that can never be fulfilled. Before desire can be mediated through language and the symbolic order, it: 'exists solely in the single plane of the imaginary relation of the specular stage, projected, alienated in the other' (Lacan 1988a, 170). In terms of the use of the Narcissus myth, Lacan has argued firstly, that it was with an *image* of himself that Narcissus fell in love, and secondly, that it was his fascination with this image that led him to commit suicide. Hence the connection between narcissistic captation by an image and aggressivity is further underscored, and is seen as a structural necessity in the development of the ego. I will propose that it can be similarly seen as a structural necessity in the constitution of the epistemology of nationalism.

What we see in Lacan's investigation of the mirror stage, then, is that he radically transformed a psychological experiment into a 'theory of the imaginary organisation of the human subject' (Roudinesco 1990, 143). This stress on the imaginary as a structural ordering of human relationships is important in our discussion of nationalism. It begins in the mirror stage, but continues into all aspects of our lives. Elizabeth Grosz provides a comprehensive overview of the imaginary:

> Imaginary relations are thus two-person relations, where the self sees itself reflected in the other. This dual imaginary relation...although structurally necessary, is an ultimately stifling and unproductive relation. The dual relationship between mother and child is a dyad, trapping both participants within a mutually defining structure. Each strives to have the other, and ultimately, to *be* the other in a vertiginous spiral from one term or identity to the other.

(Grosz 1990, 46-7)

Here, we see the symphysis between the Lacanian imaginary and the epistemology of nationalism. At a basic level, this reflective captation of the subject by an image is what constitutes the imaginary order. Imaginary relationships are predominated by ambivalent emotions; a desire to become the image in the mirror, and, on realising the futility of this aim, a resultant aggressivity towards both the image, and anything which intervenes with, or blocks, the desired identification with that image. The image, as well as being a source of desire, is also, because it is fictional as well as external and can never be fully internalised, a source of hatred. The displacement of this hatred on all that is deemed to be outside this binary specular relationship is a possible explanation of the violence that seems to be inherent in practically all enunciations of nationalist ideology throughout history.

This dyadic relationship of the subject and its image has always been temporally fraught. Did the subject precede the *imago*, or was the captation by the *imago* a necessary step in the constitution of the subject? The importance of the two-dimensionality of the *imago* cannot be overstressed: in the nationalist *imaginaire*, a fixed, hypostasised image of the self, be that individual or societal, is held out both as a *terminus ad quem* towards which all identificatory processes should be progressing, and conversely as a *terminus a quo* from which all deviation should be prevented. The scopic field of this mirror stage is delimited in three ways. Firstly, there is the dyadic nature of the visual relationship: the ego and its image are part of a bijection within which there is no room for any other elements. As Grosz has pointed out, imaginary relationships are mutually defining, and she has used the mother-child example as archetypal of these relationships. Given the already cited discussion by Jones and Gallagher of the prevalence of maternal images of place and territory in nationalist discourse, the connection between the epistemology of nationalism and the Lacanian imaginary would seem to be reinforced.

The second level of delimitation of the mirror stage is that the *imago* with

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which the ego identifies is, by definition, fictive and two-dimensional, and this two-dimensionality would also seem to explain the strategies of exclusion that are constituent of nationalist epistemology. In the case of Irish history, the catalogue of possession and dispossession through the processes of British colonisation has been emblematic in the narrative of Irish nationalism. The racial, political and religious antagonism which has existed between Irish nationalists and English imperial power has been grounded in the historical narrative of conquest and colonisation. However, as Seamus Heaney has so graphically indicated in his book, *North*, this history of invasion, trade, colonisation and gradual cultural and linguistic influences is also true of the Vikings, those Norse invaders who came to Ireland between the eighth and twelfth centuries. There is no nationalistic animosity between the Irish and Scandinavian nations, so clearly, the act of invasion *per se* is not necessarily the point from which nationalist hostility arises.[9] The factual historical data does not correlate with the *imago* of Irish nationalism, and its retrospective temporal structure, which is predicated on the notion of seven hundred years of *British* invasion and colonisation. The desire for wholeness of the *imago* necessitates the elision of other invasions and colonisations in order to foreground the one towards which aggressivity must be directed.

Similarly, in the unionist pantheon, the victory of King William of Orange over King James at the Battle of the Boyne is hailed as a seminal moment in the history of what I will term unionist nationalism.[10] In mural after mural in Belfast and Derry, the triumph of King William is depicted as part of the iconography of a triumphal Protestant victory over the forces of Catholicism. However, in this unionist nationalist narrative, there is no mention that William's banners were blessed by the pope, as part of the latter's ongoing feud with Louis XIV of France, a Catholic monarch. As part of the *imaginaire* of the loyalist-Protestant-unionist nexus, such detail does not fit the two-dimensional reflection of self that is transmitted by this specific narration of the victory of William. Strategies of exclusion are, of course, necessary in all

notions of identity: however, the seamless narrative that critics have observed as part of nationalist discourse can be better understood if we keep the two-dimensionality of the Lacanian imaginary in mind.

Nationalist narratives very often read as coherent and teleological, leading cohesively from past to future. In this sense, Lacan's notion of the future anterior is important as history, rather than being a record of events of the past, becomes a temporal mirror through which the nationalist *imago* is seen and reinforced: 'the future anterior of what I shall have been for what I am in the process of becoming' (Lacan 1977a, 86). The wholeness of the reflected image of the self becomes the goal of the ego. In the narrative of history, this wholeness becomes the *telos*. In a search for such wholeness and unity, as Bhabha notes, the subject assumes a '*discrete* image which allows it to postulate a series of equivalences, samenesses, identities, between the objects of the surrounding world' (Bhabha 1994, 77), and this brings us to the third area of delimitation. The driving force behind these identities is what Bowie terms: 'the false fixities of the imaginary order' (Bowie 1991, 99). The imaginary order attempts to hypostasise and hypertrophy the specular image of itself, and to block any development of this position of fixity: it is 'tirelessly intent upon freezing a subjective process that cannot be frozen' (Bowie 1991, 25). This prioritisation of the static image, and the resultant imperative towards fixity in the viewing subject, necessitates relationships in nationalist discourse which are unchanging and foundational. In an attempt to remove itself from 'the flux of becoming' (Bowie 1991, 92), the nationalist *imaginaire* insists on identifications that are as permanent as it can find, with the most obvious of these being the identification between a people and a place, between a language and a land.

The lococentric relationship between a people and a place, the archetypal nationalistic trope, is by its nature, imaginary because it is fictive. Stressing a monological and temporal essentialism, it cannot cope with aspects of real society which do not correspond to the ideal reflected image. The practices of cultural nationalism all serve to create this mirror, this delusory dyad in which nothing

else exists except this specular definition of selfhood. The aggressivity that is a concomitant of narcissism, the child expelling that which upsets the specular symmetry, is an inherent aspect of the imaginary, and also, I would suggest, an inherent aspect of nationalism. All that is 'other' in terms of the imaginary selfhood must be expelled. Etymologically, the term 'territory' derives both from *terra* (earth) and *terrére* (to frighten) which leads, as Bhabha has astutely pointed out, to *territorium*: 'a place from which people are frightened off' (Bhabha 1994, 99-100).[11] If the people-place relationship is to enact the dyadic nature of the nationalist imaginary, then anything outside that dyadic scopic field must be elided.

As we have already noted, in Kantian epistemology, time and space are the necessary prerequisites for knowledge. The spatial modalities of nationalism will be looked at in detail later in this work; the temporal ones have already been briefly touched upon. Temporally, the nationalist imaginary can both deny the pluralism of the present, where other groups occupy the territory of the *ethnie*, and look back to a prelapsarian past when the land and the *ethnie* were one, while also looking forward to the specular image of an optative future when 'our time' will have come. In fact a specific notion of time can be seen as a master signifier, what Lacan terms *m'être à moi-même*, of the epistemology of nationalism.[12]

In the establishment of the ego, as we have seen, the desire for some form of identity is paramount. From infancy, we seek to be desired and loved by the 'other,' a term which, as Mark Bracher notes, alters as we develop. Initially, at the beginning of life, this designation refers to the 'mother, then both parents, later one's peers, and finally any number of bodies or figures of authority, including God, Society and nature' (Bracher 1993, 24). In many ways, it is the growth and development of our notion of the other that structures the type of identity which we develop. If the other is allowed to remain static, if it becomes hypostasised in an imaginary dyad, then this attenuation of the other will result in a concomitant attenuation of the development of the self. These master signifiers also form some of the *points de capiton* which Lacan sees as necessary for

normal interaction within discourse.

For Lacan, meaning is endlessly deferred along the signifying chain of language: 'it is in the chain of the signifier that the meaning "insists" but that none of its elements "consists" in the signification of which it is at the moment capable' (Lacan 1977a, 153). Consequently, language, the signifying chain, does not allow for a clear passage between signifier and signified; he postulates 'an incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier' (Lacan 1977a, 154), and the result is that language tends to 'signify *something quite other* than what it says' (Lacan 1977a, 155). In terms of the subject, Lacan makes the core assertion that the definition of a signifier is that it 'represents a subject not for another subject but for another signifier' (Lacan 1972, 194). Hence, the signifying chain constitutes subjectivity by placing the subject within its system, the symbolic order, which functions independently of that subject. For Lacan, the signified slides under the signifier, and meaning is intended along the signifying chain, a chain which is imaged as the 'rings of a necklace that is a ring in another necklace made of rings.' Meaning 'insists' along this chain, but no individual element 'consists' in the signification 'of which it is at the moment capable.'

However, certain anchoring points are necessary for meaning to be generated, and these are what Lacan terms *points de capiton*, the 'minimal number of fundamental points of insertion between the signifier and the signified for a human being to be called normal' (Lacan 1993, 268-9). These points are where the 'signifier stops the otherwise endless movement of signification' (Lacan 1977a, 303). Such master signifiers can block the ongoing process of transformation and change of the signifying chain, and by so doing, they can delimit the conceptual development of ideas and identities. Notions of an *ur*-beginning, an *alpha*-point from which the history of the *Volk* derives, are a *sine qua non* of the enunciation of nationalism. Debray has charted such processes, demonstrating how 'a point of origin is fixed' and then instantiating such points as 'the mythic birth of the *Polis*, the birth of Civilisation, or of the Christian era, the Muslim hegira and so on' (Debray 1977, 27). Such notions of zero points can

serve as master signifiers, and as such they can block the development of the signifying chain, and freeze the ego in the dyadic imaginary. There is an over-determination of such *points de capiton* in nationalist discourse, as certain performatives become reified as master signifiers which control the flow and development of the discourse in question.

For example, a specific narrative of the past can also be used as a binding factor in this imaginary relationship, as witnessed by the rhetoric of the imaginary that is to be found in the *Green Book*, the training manual of the Provisional IRA. Here, the imaginary identification of a whole people with a minority movement is enacted through the creation of a temporal master signifier which anchors a particular reading of Irish history:

> Commitment to the Republican Movement is the firm belief that its struggle both military and political is morally justified, that war is morally justified and that the Army is the direct representatives *[sic]* of the 1918 Dáil Éireann parliament, and that as such they are the legal and lawful government of the Irish Republic, which has the moral right to pass laws for, and claim jurisdiction over, the whole geographical fragment of Ireland...and all of its people regardless of creed or loyalty.
>
> (O'Brien 1993, 350)

This is the discourse of nationalism *par excellence*, embodying its imaginary epistemology. Time is frozen in a specular identification with the 'Dáil of 1918,' a term which is a *point de capiton* in Irish republican narrative. All subsequent elections and democratic expressions of will are null and void; they do not correspond to the totalising image and must therefore be deemed invalid. All territory and people, 'regardless of loyalty or creed,' are claimed as part of the nationalist imaginary; the chilling question of exactly what is to be done with those whose loyalty is not to the Dáil of 1918 being left unasked and unanswered. Here, the master signifier sets limits to the development of the other in the discourse of Irish nationalism. The development of which Bracher spoke is stunted. Instead, the passive narcissistic desire (the desire to be the object of the other's love, idealisation or recognition) (Bracher 1993, 20) of the addressees of this document (IRA members), is fixed on an other which defines itself in terms of the *point de capiton* of an election in 1918.

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Another master signifier in the above declaration is the term 'belief.' Here there is to be no rational debate, or attempt to win over opponents through force of argument. Instead, all that is necessary is that one should *believe* in the moral right of the IRA to carry out its political and military actions. As Renan has noted, nationality has a sentimental side to it: 'it is both soul and body at once; a *Zollverein* is not a *patrie*' (Renan 1990, 18).[13] The connection between belief systems, religion and nationalism will be explored in more detail in chapter four, but in general terms, the specular image in the imaginary order achieves a measure of cultural grasp through the *point de capiton* of a lococentric fusion of religion and land.

Conor Cruise O'Brien, in his book *God Land*, reflects at length on this connection.[14] For Cruise O'Brien, nationalism is both an ideological position as well as 'collective emotional force in our culture' (Cruise O'Brien 1988, 2). He traces the notion of the biblical 'chosen people,' and makes the connection explicit between the belief of this people and the acquisition of territory. Speaking of the Old Testament, he notes that: 'nationalism, at this stage, is altogether indistinguishable from religion….God chose a particular people and promised them a particular land' (Cruise O'Brien 1988, 3). A belief, and here we return to the IRA *credo*, in the 'rightness' of the God who has chosen the people and promised the land, becomes a master signifier in the societal *imaginaire* that is the enunciation of nationalism, as this belief becomes an imperative in the constitution of a people as a people, of a *Volk* as a *Volk*. As Timothy Brennan has observed, one of the benefits of a broadly cultural approach to the question of nationalism has been the ongoing illumination of nationalism's dependence on religious modes of thought (Brennan 1990, 51), and these hypostasised notions of a quasi-religious sense of the origins of nationalism exemplify this dependence. Pearse, Tone and Lazar are far from isolated examples: instead, they embody the master signifier of belief that helps to create and fix the social and cultural imaginary.

Here, then, is the epistemology of nationalism: a misrecognition, a

méconaissance, in which self and image cohere to the exclusion of all others. According to Lacan, the ego is constructed as the child struggles to achieve the specular image of wholeness that is observed in the mirror; an image:

> that is both accurate (since it is an inverted reflection, the presence of light rays emanating from the child: the image as icon); as well as delusory (since the image prefigures a unity and mastery that the child still lacks).
>
> <div align="right">(Grosz 1990, 39)</div>

For Lacan, this specular relationship initiates the imaginary order where the self is dominated by an image of the self, and it seeks definition through reflected relations with this image. The nationalistic *ethnie* is forever gazing towards a specular image that is fictional, optative and of necessity, a source of aggressive impulses when it cannot be internalised. In this specular dyad, there is no place for a developing, growing 'other,' as outlined by Bracher. Instead, the specular image is fixed in a two-dimensional realm, and all three-dimensional changes which blur the purity of this image are alien, and must be purged.

This imaginary reflection is the driving force behind all nationalistic discursive formulations. As we have seen, the deistic sceptical Enlightenment thinker, Wolfe Tone, is captated by the nationalist imaginary into a quasi-Catholic martyr, who died for his people in a salvific act. For the IRA, the ebb and flow of the signifying chain of Irish history is punctuated by a temporal master signifier – the 1918 Dáil Éireann parliament – which renders insignificant and meaningless all prior and subsequent electoral contests and democratic processes. When these refuse to validate the imaginary nationalistic vision of Ireland embodied in the 1918 Dáil, they are simply elided from the historical narrative structure. As Lacan tellingly put it: 'history is not the past. History is the past in so far as it is historicised in the present' (Lacan 1988a, 12), and the ideological and emotive elements which govern this historicisation are those of the nationalist *imaginaire*.

Hence, the image of a subject being captated by a reflection, which is both idealised and at the same time frozen, is a paradigm for the identificatory processes of nationalism. The captation of the child by his or her reflection is an

analogue of the captation of a people by their nationalist mirror-image. The dual nature of the scopic field between an *ethnie* and the projection of its identity is central to nationalism. That there is no third party in this scopic bijection is another cogent factor. The identification is mutually fulfilling: there is no room for anything or anyone else. Such is the mindset of the IRA declaration which sees itself as having: 'the moral right to pass laws for, and claim jurisdiction over, the whole geographical fragment of Ireland.' Here we see a fusion of territory with a notion of religious warrant, as an essentially political movement expresses itself in terms that are profoundly religious in tenor: 'belief...moral right.' The specular imaginary deals with identities that exist outside of its scopic field in an acquisitive way: the IRA here encompasses 'all of its [*Ireland*'s] people regardless of creed or loyalty' (O'Brien 1993, 350). The choice for any other form of identity existing outside the nationalist imaginary is simple: leave the territory, or else be absorbed into the nationalist *mentaliteé*.

This mirror stage identification functions as a creative source of nationalist subjectivity. In its role as part of the structure of subjectivity, it contributes, Lacan argues, to the 'formation of the *I*' (Lacan 1977a, 1), and as such, has also influenced the ideological formulation of the societal constituents of subjectivity put forward by Louis Althusser, who says that the 'structure of all ideology, interpellating individuals as subjects...is specular, i.e. a mirror-structure' (Althusser 1977, 168). For Althusser subjectivity is an ambiguous term:

> a free subjectivity, a centre of initiatives, author of and responsible for its actions; a subjected being, who submits to a higher authority and is therefore stripped of all freedom except that of freely accepting his (*sic*) submission.
>
> (Althusser 1977; 169)[15]

He goes on to suggest that through ideology, society '*hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects*, by the functioning of the category of the subject' [*italics original*] (Althusser 1977, 162), his point being that as ideology calls them, so they recognise themselves as the response to that call. Whereas we seem to have free choices, a point underscoring Althusser's initial meaning of subjectivity we are in fact, subject to the creative force of societal

ideology. In a thought-process similar to that of Lacan, Althusser uses the term 'mirror phase' to describe an aspect of this process. He goes on to describe ideology as a 'necessarily imaginary distortion' of the relationships between individuals and the relations of production (Althusser 1977, 155).

The nationalist *imaginaire* hails subjects in an analogous manner. Through a nexus of cultural, spatial, linguistic and religious discourses, the mirror stage is transposed into a cultural creative reflection. The subject is interpellated through these discourses; he or she chooses to become like the specular image in this socio-cultural generative mirror, and hence the ego comes into being. For Lacan, this recognition of the self in the image is always a *méconnaissance*, a misrecognition, the reflection seeming far in advance of the individual, while at the same time being a two-dimensional projection of a three-dimensional entity. This two-dimensionality is inherent in the nationalist *Weltanschauung*, as anything that attempts to interfere in the scopic field of a people and their nationalistic reflection is seen as dangerous. In the original Lacanian formulation, such misrecognition takes place in the scopic field, the visual plane. However, in this socio-cultural application of Lacanian theory, the misrecognition takes place linguistically, with language being used to cement the relationship between a people and their idealised image: literature, song, rhetoric, religion, myth and music all combine, as cultural nationalism, to create the nationalistic imaginary.

In the nationalist *imaginaire*, reflections and misrecognitions take place through misreadings, or partial readings of texts, be these literary, geographical, social or historical; these misreadings prioritise essentialist identifications as opposed to hybrid or pluralist areas of difference. Hence certain modes of linguistic expression – placenames, names of people, religious symbols, rallying cries – are seen as transcending the usual arbitrariness of meaning, and become master signifiers or *points de capiton*, as the seemingly arbitrary signifying chain is anchored in precise sections so as to produce a constant, fixed generation of meaning, a meaning which will have a powerful interpellative effect on the subjects with whom it comes into contact.

Perhaps the most basic question in terms of this Lacanian view of the epistemology of nationalism remains to be answered at this juncture. We can see *how* the imaginary structure, initiated by the mirror stage, can act as a paradigm of the modality of knowledge that is expressed through nationalism, and we can also see how unconscious forces and pulsions are of seminal importance to nationalist discourse. The final point at issue, however, must be the motive force of this identificatory discourse: the *why*. Why have people, throughout history, and separated by large disparities of language, culture and historical circumstance, felt the need to bond together as a group? Why has this group needed to identify itself in antagonistic terms to other groups contiguous to it? And above all, why have so many nations and ethnic groupings been so willing to engage in forms of genocide against other groupings, using any and every reason to justify their ends? The answer to these question is to be found in the concept of unconscious desire, specifically in terms of identity.

Lacan has made the point that: '[*d*]*esidero* is the Freudian *cogito*' (Lacan 1977b, 154), and has stressed the primacy of desire as a motive force in the construction of our humanity. He argues that 'desire is the essence of man' (Lacan 1977b, 275),[16] and goes on to explain how desire functions in the development of identity: 'man's desire is the desire of the Other' (Lacan 1977a, 264). For Lacan, identity necessitates the unconscious process wherein consciousness needs inter-subjective validation if it is to emerge as self-consciousness. In other words, the specular drama of the mirror stage makes the point that the 'I' is always predicated on, and focused towards, an 'other,' whether that other is a fictional misrecognition of the self, or a genuine form of alterity. Desire for some form of identification is, according to Lacan, the fundamental aspect of the growth of the ego. He further differentiates between need, demand and desire, stressing that need and demand are connected, in that to fulfil a 'need' (a concept that is close to Freud's *Instinkt*), the child must 'demand' through communication. Initially these demands are preverbal, but eventually are articulated in language. Hence 'demand' is directed at others

through language and it situates the subject in a social connection: the 'I' is necessarily part of a 'we.' The demand of the child can be answered or refused, and this, according to Lacan, initiates the child into the social order of family and later of society as a whole.

Hence, for Lacan, demand and the notion of language run close together; however, there is a residue which operates at the margins of demand, and it is here that Lacan locates the notion of desire:

> Desire is situated in dependence on demand – which, by being articulated in signifiers, leaves a metonymic remainder that runs under it, an element that is not indeterminate, which is a condition both, absolute and unapprehensible, an element necessarily lacking, unsatisfied, impossible, misconstrued (*méconnu*), an element that is called desire.
>
> (Lacan 1977b, 154)

The important difference, in terms of our discussion, is that desire is an unconscious process, which cannot, by definition, be satisfied. Indeed, it is even difficult for it to be articulated, given what Lacan terms: 'the incompatibility between desire and speech' (Lacan 1977a, 275). Keeping this incompatibility in mind, Lacan attempts to enact the processes of desire through the trope of metonymy. Given that desire is that of the other, and that it is always the 'desire for something else' (Lacan 1977a, 167), then as soon as one desired signifier is reached, it is no longer the object of desire and the metonymic movement along the chain is repeated. Thus, for Lacan: 'desire *is* a metonymy' (Lacan 1977a, 175) [*italics original*].

The imaginary desire for some form of full, self-present identity can thus never be achieved. The mirror stage provides both the need and demand for such identification, as well as the knowledge that self and image can never be truly united. The unconscious residue of this process gives rise to desire, which, while never satisfied, is incessant in its operation. The imaginary relationship between the ego and its specular image is one of identification, and alienation, which Lacan sees as 'constitutive of the imaginary order' (Lacan 1993, 146). This alienation is due to the identification of the ego with its specular image, as Lacan notes: 'I is an other' (Lacan 1977a, 23), and gives rise to narcissistic aggressivity.

For Lacan, this aggressivity arises in the tension between the uncoordinated real body and the unified specular image.

The desire to be that image is thwarted by the subconscious awareness that this identification can never take place, and in the margins of such desire, aggressivity lurks. Language is a central aspect of this flow of desire, a point noted by Lacan: 'it is as a derivation of the signifying chain that the channel of desire flows' (Lacan 1977a, 259), and this desire is fundamental to our processes of identification. As Anthony Easthope has observed, Lacan: 'defines identity as a *process,* one strung out between subject and object' (Easthope 1983, 39), and goes on to cite the Lacanian dictum that the subject's ego is that 'which is reflected of his form in his objects' (Lacan 1977a, 194). Easthope observes that in the mirror stage, the subject does not occupy a position of fixity, it is neither the seeing eye, nor the reflection, rather it is the very process of looking and being looked at that exists between the two, an identity produced in a structure of alienation.

Given this desire for wholeness and harmony of identification, the constitutive process of alienation and aggressivity both drives this desire and undermines it at the same time. Aggressivity is one of the 'intentional co-ordinates of the human ego' (Lacan 1977a, 25), in that we are haunted by images of the fragmented body, what Lacan terms the *corps morcelé*. This idea of the fragmented body is the engine that drives the identification of the mirror stage, as we face the image of wholeness from a perspective of a human imagination haunted by: 'images of castration, emasculation, mutilation, dismemberment, dislocation, evisceration, devouring, bursting open of the body' (Lacan 1977a, 11). From this perspective, a posited identification with a more coherent, stable version of the ego is wholly desirable, hence the mirror stage.

From this viewpoint of the body in fragments, an idea whose source Lacan finds in the subject's early manifestation as an 'inchoate collection of desires' (Lacan 1993, 39), the notion of identification with imaginary images of wholeness becomes highly attractive. Images of wholeness and completeness are

valorised, while anything that harks back to the inchoate state of the subject at the beginning is seen as negative and outside of the imaginary identification of the self. Aggressivity can thence be directed at any images or sources which would intrude on this imaginary identification which locks the subject into a series of static fixations. Nationalism, I would suggest, functions on precisely this level. Land, language, structures of belief and notions of home are all welded into a discourse which is fixed and which exists in an imaginary framework which can block the real relationships between subjects and a language which allow for change and development. One could see it as prompted by an unconscious fear of the dislocation of forms of stable, or seemingly stable, identity.

The connection between self and other, a connection that is constitutive of nationalist discourse, is also central to Lacan's notion of subjectivity: the other is 'strange to me, although it is at the heart of me' (Lacan 1992, 71). To avoid facing this alienation and fragmentation that is at the heart of the ego, imaginary desires and specular images of wholeness tend to obscure these unpleasant truths, and instead, to validate a series of identifications which offer security and fixity through which the subject is interpellated and captated to the exclusion of all other discourses.

In the mirror stage, what Lacan terms the ideal-ego is formed, which he sees as premised on the desire for a future synthesis, it is the 'transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image' (Lacan 1977a, 2). The fact that this image is outside the subject initiates a process of alienation and aggressivity as the subject seeks an imaginary unity with the image, a unity that has strong linguistic components. As the subject anticipates the imagined and imaginary future wholeness, which will never arrive, and which is announced in the future perfect tense: 'the subject becomes at each stage what he was before and announces himself – he will have been – only in the future perfect tense' (Lacan 1977a, 306).

The final point to be made about the imaginary identification of the mirror stage and the epistemology of nationalism is in terms of how this relationship

affects all that is outside it, in other words, the other. In a number of schemata, but specifically in schema L, Lacan has traced the interaction between the 'wall of language' of the imaginary, and the modes of communication between the subject and the discourse of the other.[17] These algebraic schemata are notoriously difficult, but Dylan Evans has provided an intelligent account of what is being signified in schema L:

> The main point of the schema is to demonstrate that the Symbolic relation (between the other and the subject) is always blocked to a certain extent, by the imaginary axis (between the ego and the specular image). Because it has to pass through the imaginary 'wall of language,' the discourse of the other reaches the subject in an interrupted and inverted form.
>
> (Evans 1996, 169)

Hence the imaginary identification between self and image forms a barrier to any real communication between self and other. Any messages which disrupt the specular dyad are filtered out of the communicative pathway, or if not, they are so distorted as to give rise to aggressive responses.

I think it is now clear that the unconscious desire for identification is mapped by the mirror stage. The *ordo cognoscendi* of nationalism privileges this dyadic relationship; indeed, it places it as an *alpha* point, a primordial beginning, which reifies the twin desires of bonding with a mother figure in search of security, and of achieving some form of anticipated synthesis with the *imago* in the mirror. Given the fact that desire is never satisfied, nationalist aetiology tends to hypostasise the mirror image, and to oppose any developments which cause this image to be changed.

Hence, in late 1999, when the Official Unionist Party, under David Trimble, was in the process of voting on the Mitchell Review of the Good Friday Agreement, which entailed their joining Sinn Fein in devolved government before the IRA began a process of decommissioning, he was denounced by the Reverend Ian Paisley of the Democratic Unionist Party in terms redolent of a religious inquisition:

> Trimble, you still have to face the real opposition, of people whom you have by deceit and lying betrayed. Your sin is unpardonable and unforgiven and we can never accept any word from your mouth.

Here, the rhetoric of nationalism sets up what Evans termed the 'wall of language'; it makes use of religious tropology to equate political decisions with religious ones. Notions of political change are seen as taboo, and as 'unpardonable and unforgiven' in terms of the *Volk*, the *ethnie*, whose voice is signified by the use of the personal pronoun, first person plural.

I have no doubt that Reverend Paisley would take strong exception to my use of the term 'nationalism' to describe his political philosophy; however, the core of my argument here is that in terms of the modalities of knowledge through which it speaks, and by which it operates, his brand of unionism is, *de facto*, nationalist in epistemology. Ideologically and epistemologically, this type of unionism, and the more fundamentalist brands of republicanism, share these notions of self and other as predefined and fixed in an imaginary specular relation. Perhaps the ultimate 'sin' committed by the Official Unionist Party, and by Provisional Sinn Fein, is to attempt to change this image, and to complicate the essential simplicity of the relationship between selfhood and its two-dimensional image that is the *credo* of nationalist thinking.

The modalities of Paisley's nationalist *imaginaire* are enunciated in terms of religion and of a personified notion of place, as we will see from the following example from the same speech: 'Let me say every hand that is raised for Trimble today and for his prophecy is a hand just as much the enemy of Ulster as a hand of the IRA.' Here, Ulster, as lococentric place, is personified; it becomes mapped as an organic unit which is capable of feeling enmity, and of being struck with a hand.[18] This personification or *prosopopeia* of place, combined with the religious iconography of the term 'prophecy,' sets out the twin pillars of nationalist thought, fusing organicised notions of place with an appeal to a sacred, revealed notion of language which brooks no discussion. These notions set up the imaginary wall of language, as signified in the Lacanian schema L, which serves to reflect and refract communication with the other to such a degree that the voice of the other finds it impossible to break through this linguistic barrier, and the

self-reflective discourse of nationalism proceeds uninterrupted.

This static, sacred notion of nationalist discourse could well be seen as the linguistic analogue of the specular image of the mirror stage, as it, too, is frozen in time, and is not subject to change. The idea of revealed truth in religious discourse lends itself easily to nationalist discourse in that the similar trope of a 'chosen people,' to whom this divine image has been revealed, binds people, place and image in one seamless, quasi-organic whole. I will deal with this messianistic aspect of nationalist thought more fully in the fourth chapter. First, however, it is necessary to look at how the personification of place that we saw in Paisley's address to his party, and which is also to be found in republican discourse, is such a macrocosmic aspect of the epistemology of nationalism.

This personification and organicisation of place has been a central trope in the politics of nationalism in all countries. If one is to die for one's country, then some imaginary connection between place and person must be initiated to make such action possible. Thus, when Paisley talks of Trimble being the 'enemy of Ulster,' he is not talking about an Ulster that is divided into electoral district, borough councils and corporations; he is not talking about an Ulster which is mapped on an ordinance survey map, and he is definitely not talking about an Ulster which is proportionally 38.4% Catholic (Elliott and Flackes 1999, 395). I would also contend that in speaking in biblical and moralistic tones, he is not using his political positions of Member of Parliament at Westminster, nor as a Member of the European Parliament. Instead, he is speaking as almost the chosen voice of the organicised place, the *vox loci*, as it were of a lococentric Ulster.

This notion of a chosen speaker voicing the desires of a quasi-organicised place is not confined to Ian Paisley nor, indeed, to Northern Ireland. It is my contention that it is a constituent part of all nationalist *imaginaires*, in that through a conflation of language, desire and personification, the inanimate matter of place can become the sacred soil of home, a *Heimlich* notion which contains within it the seeds of *Unheimlich* violence aimed at the purging of all of those who do not adhere to the mystical connections between place and race.

CHAPTER 3

MAPPING NATIONALISM – LAND AND LANGUAGE

In terms of Irish history, we have already seen the centrality of the tropes of personification and *prosopopeia* in the enunciation of the different strands of Irish nationalism. From Pearse to Paisley, the image of the land has been infused with quasi-organic qualities in order to forge a connection between the people and *their* land, a connection which transcends all notions of legal or politically-validated possession. The aim of such a process is the underpinning of the lococentric aspect of place, an aspect which stresses the primacy of territory in the definition of the *ethnie* itself. This definition, grounded as we have seen, in the Lacanian imaginary, reifies a two-dimensional image of the self which will be the *terminus ad quem* towards which nationalistic identification will be directed.

Here, we are reminded of Renan's aphorism that a 'nation is a soul, a spiritual principle,' or of his assertion that 'a *Zollverein* is not a *patrie*,' and of Mosse's point that the nature of the soul of a *Volk* is determined by the native landscape. Perhaps a lococentric mapping of place, a mapping which sees place and race or people as fused together by connections which are beyond those of the immanent concerns of the societal and the political, is the most important precept in the achievement of Heidegger's *Zusammengehören*, 'belonging together.'

This chapter will explore how the *ethnie* has been grounded in a territory through linguistic reflections and misrecognitions. Various literary devices, most notably personification and *prosopopeia*, have been used to anthropomorphise land with human qualities so that an imaginary relationship, based on quasi-organic terms and categories, can be created and sustained. In terms of Ireland,

this was brought about by the personification and feminisation of the land in both native Irish and Elizabethan cognitive cartographies of place. Both of these cartographies used the same methodology, personification, to establish an imaginary *locus* of identity with which to identify, though each achieved this in dissimilar ways.

Sigmund Freud has pointed out that identification can occur in disparate ways, and his comments can shed some light on the contrasting ways in which the feminised image of Ireland can be used as an imaginary specular image. He suggests that identification can occur as an emotional tie with an object, but also as a 'libidinal object-tie' which is a more regressive form of connection: 'in the first case one's father is what one would like to *be*, and in the second, he is what one would like to *have*' [*italics original*] (Freud 1955, XVIII, 106-8).[1] In our context, the native Irish saw the *prosopopeia* of Ireland as something towards which they might aspire; a form of maternal organic unity and cohesion which would be fruitful; in short, what they would like to *be*. The Elizabethan English, on the other hand, saw this personified image of Ireland as something that they could take control of, a libidinal object-tie, a possession which would, by belonging to them, increase their own sense of selfhood: it is what they would like to *have*. Such notions of *being* and *having* are the identificatory imperatives that drive the different forms of cognitive mapping with which we will be concerned in this chapter.[2]

Such mappings, as we will see, were not confined to spatial representations and line drawings. Description, narrative, symbol and image were central tools of the cartographer, and I will demonstrate how such literary devices helped to formulate Elizabethan discourses of power within an Irish context. Mappings of Ireland as a female entity helped to enforce the organic inevitability of the Elizabethan conquest of Ireland just as strongly as they encouraged autochthonous forms of resistance to the violation of the motherland. I hope to trace the literary devices of anthropomorphism and *prosopopeia* which enabled such mappings to take place, and also to

demonstrate the political effects on different places and their inhabitants of the naturalisation of such practices. These various mappings will be examined, as demonstrative of both English and Irish nationalist attitudes, as will the apotheosis of such personifications in the Irish literary canon in William Butler Yeats's play *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*. In both the cartographies and the play, the imaginary nature of the relationship between a people and a place is enunciated through the captation by an image, an image which is quasi-organic in its modalities.

The importance of alternative topographical paradigms to the study of nationalism cannot be overstressed. Given the unconscious desire for identification that constitutes the epistemology of nationalism, some specular reflection of the territory, the *locus* of the nation, is obviously going to be very important. In nationalist discourse, the connections with the land are invariably over-determined in the sense that there is always some form of motivated relationship between *ethnie* and territory which validates the trope of exclusive possession. Here, we hark back to Jones's point about the associations of the land with a maternal idea being especially important for island peoples, though the perspectives from which these images originate will ensure that they appear very different in orientation.

This humanisation of place through processes of repetition in both cartographical and literary descriptions, has over time, created a mythology which has became naturalised in terms of the viewing of different parts of Ireland as organically connected to different ideological, religious and political positions. The effects of such a mythic politicisation of territory have been all too obvious in terms of the opposition between the Orange Order and the residents of the Garvaghy Road in Portadown, in Northern Ireland.[3] Ironically when place or territory is organicised and anthropomorphised through personification and *prosopopeia*, then the people who are living in that place are rendered voiceless. By giving the place a voice, the people living in that place can be factored out of any political equation. Hence, Elizabethan writers can talk about Ireland as a

wench in need of a husband, thereby eliding any need to take into account the native people of that place, and their disparate political structures. The attenuation of complexities and differential strands of identity is an important effect of the creation of a singular organicised *persona* for a territory. So also, the Garvaghy Road can be seen as a sanctified place in the Orange Order's celebrations; warrant can be cited by the recitation of the generations of Orangemen who have 'walked the road' in times past, when there were no Catholic housing estates built on it, hence rendering those Catholics currently living there essentially voiceless as they are not part of that imaginary structure.

We have already noted a parallel process in the mythology of Kosovo, where it is the presence of ethnic Albanians on the sacred soil of the *ethnie* that is seen by the Serbs as creative of the 'problem' in the first place. We are again in the territory of the specular image of the mirror stage, which is permanently frozen in an imaginary past:

> For Serbs, Kosovo is holy ground. It is the cradle of our nation. It was the centre of Serbia's empire of the Middle Ages, at one time the strongest empire in the Balkans.
>
> (http://www.srpska-mreza.com/mlad/htm)

That this 'holy ground' (a concept to which we will return in chapter four) is now occupied by ethnic Albanians is not a fact; it is merely a disruption of the dyadic relationship between race and place, a disruption that is, by definition, unholy, as it defiles the holiness of the place for the Serbs. As the Serbian Network website so graphically puts it: 'in contrast to all of the Serbian historical monuments in Kosovo, there is not even one that is Albanian' (http://srpska-mreza.com). Whether in Ireland, or in the Balkans, the imaginary reflection towards which the nationalist selfhood aspires is a dyadic structure with no place for political, demographic or intellectual change. Anything outside the dyad is not part of the scopic field, and hence is not part of the narrative of the *ethnie*.

Narrative as genre is one of the most central constituents of the nationalist *imaginaire*. What might be termed literature-as-mythopoeia is an important part in the totalising drive of that myth-making project. As Adorno and Horkheimer point out: 'myths signify self-repetitive nature, which is the core of the symbolic,'

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and these myths are created through a language which was symbolic in the sense that 'sign and image were one.' Such a trope of sameness and repetition can be seen as persuasive of essentialism; indeed: 'unending renewal and the permanence of the signified are not mere attributes of all symbols, but their essential content' (Adorno and Horkheimer 1979, 17). Such narratives were not confined to the realm of fiction and story. Much of the mapping of Ireland was carried out through the word as well as the line, and the image of Ireland, as enunciated by colonised and coloniser alike, was very much a narrative structure, as we will see when we look at the beginnings of the mapping of Ireland from the perspective of the Elizabethan English colonisers.

The second half of the sixteenth century was the point from which all mappings of the space of Ireland can be traced. Such map-making was not an objective project of mensuration and quantification of Irish space; rather did the impetus for mapping and surveying Ireland come from the plans and ventures of Elizabethan administrators after the midpoint of the century (Lennon 1994, 2). This impetus then, derived from a political source, as Richard Helgerson notes, a source which was attempting to create a 'cartographically and chorographically shaped consciousness of national power' (Helgerson 1992, 108). In their influential study *Representing Ireland*, Brendan Bradshaw, Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley have argued that Ireland was, in a number of different ways, a representation of England in that: 'English representations of Ireland were in fact representations of *England*' [*italics original*] (Hadfield and Maley 1993, 1). Hence, from an early stage, Ireland was a highly politicised space, and Irish cartographic projects were as much involved in the defining of Englishness as they were in the defining and mapping of Irishness. In other words, what was at issue here were nationalistic concepts of Englishness and Irishness, defined contrastively. In Lacanian terms, Ireland was to be the mirror wherein the specular image of Elizabethan English nationalism was to be defined.

This process of politicising a particular space proceeded through the activity of mapping. This conception of mapping, however, differs greatly from

our modern conception of cartography, with its connotations of mensuration, accuracy and objectivity, what Julia Reinhard Lupton terms the 'Cartesian plane of homogenous, calculable space.' Lupton goes on to demonstrate that at this point in time, the linear method of delineating space did not yet dominate the two other fundamental signifying systems of cartography: '*the word* and *the image*' [*italics original*] (Lupton 1993, 102). The verbal and imagistic dimensions of Elizabethan cartography place it firmly within the *locus* of the imaginary order which, as we have seen, is the domain of captation by an image. In this context, what we are discussing could well be termed imaginary mapping. Signifying structures which are ideologically constituted, such as description, narrative, simile and contrast, all became part of the cartographical process, and it is on both the word and the image that our discussion will concentrate, as many of the received images of Ireland, especially those of personification and *prosopopeia*, derive in part from this process, a process which, as we have already noted, by giving voice to the land, can render the natives of that land voiceless. As Lacan has observed: 'in human speech the sender is always a receiver at the same time' (Lacan 1993, 24), and this will prove especially true of the mappings of Ireland.

The word 'natives' itself is an emotionally charged one in our own postmodern frame of reference. One would imagine that, in its original existence, it merely described those who lived in a place in a manner which would distinguish them from those who were involved in their description. However, one would be wrong. Hadfield and Maley make the point that in Roderick O'Flaherty's *Ogygia, or, A Chronological Account of Irish events*, published in 1685, the indigenous Irish are called 'natives…that is born of the earth,' and this connection between people and land is further made by Sir John Davies (1569-1626), Attorney-General of Ireland, who takes 'native' to signify 'belonging to the land' (Hadfield and Maley 1993, 2). Hence, the mapping process produced narrative and literary images of the Irish, as well as attempting to delineate their territories, and thus made the point that the natives, who were belonging to the land, had few rights of ownership over that land. In both examples, it is the

anthropomorphised land which exercises rights of ownership over the 'natives,' and this chiasmatic reversal of the categories of sentience and non-sentience, and ownership and belonging, is a determining example of what one might term 'rhetorical cartography' in that the suasive power of anthropomorphism and personification allows the land to claim ownership of the natives. To follow these implications to their conclusion, to possess the land (and we should keep the Freudian notion of *having* in mind here), is to possess the people living on that land.

In Lacanian terms, it is through the image of the land as human that the natives have been captated, and fixed as possessions of that land. Through such a rhetorical swerve, the land, though populated, could be mapped as if it were empty, as if to map the land was to map its natives. Hence the relationship that is represented by the mapping process is now a direct one, between the colonisers and the sentient land. The land has become a specular image of the English sense of selfhood, in a manner that is redolent of the imaginary relationship that is central to nationalist epistemology. In terms of Lacan's schema L, the actual knowledge of the people who are living in Ireland is blocked by the wall of language that is created by these personified notions of Ireland as woman. This can be seen as a form of paranoiac knowledge (Lacan 1977a, 2), involving as it does a delusion of mastery and absolute knowledge of the personified place.

Of course, the function of such linguistic delineation was to establish an image of the land, and thus to politicise it through the discourse of imaginary cartographic power. The personification of Ireland in a map instantiates the attenuation of a three-dimensional entity onto a two-dimensional image, which can then be possessed by the owner of that map. As Robert Beale noted in 1592, the ambitious governor needed two things with which to govern within the queen's domain, namely a 'booke of the mappes of England' and a 'good descripcion of the Realm of Irelande' (Harley 1983, 27). In this sense, such mappings of Ireland had a performative as well as a constative function in that by

the very act of making a map, the function of ownership and possession, over both land and its natives, was being enacted.[4] As David J. Baker puts it, cartography extended political authority and maps could be seen as spatial emblems of power in society (Baker 1993, 77), thereby enacting the Freudian concept of *having* in terms of identity construction.

To reduce a space to a scale, to demonstrate spatial mastery through such representations, enacted political control and domination over the space in question. It served the purpose of freezing the image in a static, two-dimensional representation. Such scale representations also presented the space as empty space, which was in need of population and control. This served the same function as verbal personification of the land, namely the voiding of that land in terms of population. The administration of a particular space would be a lot easier if that space could be subjected to representation and mensuration. Hence places were being administered along the lines laid down by the theodolite, the cross staff, the plane table – the instruments of the cartographer (Baker 1993, 81). This correlation of cartography and power has been much commented on in the field of Elizabethan studies.[5]

Of course, in the context of our discussion, such maps serve the same purpose as the specular image of the mirror phase: they are two-dimensional representations of a three-dimensional entity. The neat quantifiable, encompassable lines of a map, or the stories and images of verbal cartography, will never correspond to the complexity and diversity of the three-dimensional entity that is being mapped. The empty spaces on a map give no hint as to a population which may have little desire to be mapped. Instead, they offer virgin space, an idealised *locus* wherein the *imago* of the nationalist selfhood may be defined in terms of possession and conquest. The map transforms an alien location, and a possible site of struggle in terms of one's own identity, into a libidinal object-tie which can thus be possessed and domesticated more easily. To ensure that this relationship is expressed in terms of the epistemology of nationalism, a connection between the land and the initial other, the mother, is

often set up (Bracher 1993, 24). What can seem like a collection of lines and drawings needs some form of organic equation to ensure that it fits into a nationalist perspective of spatial control and belonging. This is often supplied by rhetorical personifications, feminising the land so as to foreground an adequation between the image of place and a mother figure, to whom the cartographer can appeal, an appeal that helps create the wall of language that is part of Lacan's schema L, and his idea of imaginary knowledge. This rhetorically constructed linguistic barrier blocks any knowledge of reality by projecting an imaginary projection of that reality, one which is far easier to identify with and possess.

Richard Helgerson has made the point that spatial representations in maps allowed the Elizabethans to take visual and conceptual possession of the land of Ireland (Helgerson 1992, 107). In this sense, there is what Frederic Jameson might term a process of cognitive mapping taking place wherein the English adequation between the body of the queen and the body politic was extrapolated to the Irish situation through the trope of personification. As Anne Fogarty has stated: 'Elizabethan iconography is permeated by a belief in the inviolable identity of the monarch and her state' (Fogarty 1989, 87), and she goes on to add the salient point that many portraits of Elizabeth represent this interconnection in cartographic terms. One thinks of the Ditchley portrait of Queen Elizabeth, in the National Portrait Gallery in London, which depicts the queen standing on a map of Britain, a relationship which personifies the connection between queen and nation.

This interconnection between queen and country, suggesting that the relationship is both organic, in that the queen is standing almost naturalistically on the ground of Britain, and symbolic, in that she is the personal representation of her country, is a powerful metaphorical image. The function of this 'map' is to fuse queen and land into a totality which anthropomorphises the land through the *persona* of the queen. Hence, the connection between power and place is clear, as mapping, which is 'far from being ideologically neutral,' proceeds to open up 'a

way to look upon space as open to appropriation' (Harvey 1990, 228). Politically, such mapping of personhood onto a particular space is a valuable function. The metaphorical fusion makes a relationship that is essentially arbitrary (kings, queens and dynasties changing places quite often), seem to be pre-ordained, giving rise to the almost mythical formulation that the queen, or king, and the land are one. The imaginary nature of this dyadic relationship is clear: a two-dimensional position of fixity is initiated through a reflection that is a misrecognition, a misrecognition which gives rise to an imaginary notion of identity, and this notion becomes an ego-ideal which, in turn, gives rise to the *ethnie*. The desire for the *ethnie* to identify with this holistic image, to *be*, in Freud's terms, this image, is what gives rise to the unconscious desire of nationalism.

This fusion of queen with land is brought about by deliberate falsifications of scale, with the queen seeming to be some six times larger than the country. It is as if the epistemology of this map captures some deeper, symbolic connection that cannot be charted in a linear form, but which must be expressed metaphorically. Hence, this notion of some form of connection between a people and a land was common to both Irish and English representations. The cartographic process was a form of spatial connection between those who were able to chart and scale down the land so as to possess it in a map, or book of maps, and the land itself. To map a landscape was to lay claim to a form of ownership through representation. Given Lupton's idea of mapping as both verbal and visual, and keeping in mind the anthropomorphic comments of O'Flaherty and Davies, the drawing of borders proceeded analogously with the verbal representations of connection and ownership between the Elizabethans and their conquered space. In terms of their relationship with Ireland, the Elizabethans attempted to create a similar rhetorical field of force through which Ireland could be symbolically reflected, refracted and rhetorically mapped. In other words, the cartographical representation of Ireland was imaginary in orientation in that it initiated a

dyadic, fictional and ultimately false relationship between self and its image, an image predicated on identification as possession.

Such a visual relationship could be codified and solidified through the verbal trope of *prosopopeia*. Just as the portrait of Elizabeth atop her land symbolised an organic relationship, so the rhetorical mapping of Ireland could be similarly figured to demonstrate a metonymic, and by extension organic, relationship between English power and Irish land. We have already noted O'Flaherty's view of the native Irish as being 'born of the earth,' an image which implicitly figures the earth as a fecund female. One can trace a similar *prosopopeic* female metaphor in Davies's formulation 'belonging to the land,' which also sees the land as a parental figure. Both of these images attempt to posit a motivated, organic connection between power, possession and space; it is as if conquest is to be mirrored through a metaphorical chain of personal relationships. In this context, the figuration of Ireland as a woman was an ideal device to accomplish these ends. The gender-politics of the time, where women were seen as the possessions of men, helped to validate such a metaphorical personification of place as a woman. Of course, such personifications also attenuate any socio-political considerations of this cartographical colonisation by translating the whole debate into the realm of gender politics, a politics where the rules were already clearly drawn.

In the Elizabethan textual accounts, there is ample evidence that this adequation of place and female person was part of a mapping strategy which would allow the colonial relationship between Elizabethan English adventurers (and by extension English power) and Ireland to be seen as natural, in the sense of being metonymic of the relationship between men and women. Ireland, if mapped as a woman, could be courted, wooed, or if necessary ravished, by male Elizabethan adventurers. Here, the aggressivity that we have seen to be part of the specular relationship between self and other, in the imaginary order, is given full scope through this performative transformation of land into a female organic entity. Luke Gernon's *A Discourse of Ireland*, circa 1620, is a *locus classicus* of

this device, imaging Ireland as: 'at all poynts like a yong wenche that hath the greene sicknes for want of occupying.' He goes on to argue that Ireland, due to her being 'drawne out of the wombe of rebellion,' is now in need of a 'husband, she is not embraced, she is not hedged and diched, there is noo quicksett putt into her' (Hadfield and McVeagh 1994, 66).[6] John Derricke continues this *prosopopeia*, referring to Ireland's troubles as 'her exceadyng Ire' (Hadfield and Maley 1993, 3).[7] Here, through the use of the personal pronoun, third person singular, he makes the feminisation of Ireland seem commonplace, as the equation of place with gender is further strengthened in a narrative structure that makes possession a seemingly obvious interaction with this contrastive *imago*. The narrative here makes it seem as if the feminised Ireland is lacking the imaginary wholeness, or sense of unity that is desired, and this can only be achieved through an imaginary dyadic and sexual relationship with Elizabethan power, in the shape of these colonising cartographers.

Hence, the mapping that is being postulated transmutes a political relationship onto the plane of a sexual relation between self and other, a relation which is imaginary in modality, expressing the desire of the self through the image of the other. We are reminded of Lacan's notion that all seizing of the other in an image is an essentially erotic relationship (Lacan 1993, 92-3), and it is this quasi-erotomania that we see in the cartographic *prosopopeia* which transforms the politics of colonisation into the politics of gender. Desire is essentially an unconscious force, which supersedes, at a biological level, societal or political constraints. Here, the desire for possession of Ireland is seen as sexual, as opposed to political: it is imaged as a natural human desire for sexual relief, and Ireland as a wenche is seen as being in need of such an insertion of 'quicksett.' Of course, in terms of the Lacanian schema L, what is going on here is a blocking of the political reality through the paranoiac wall of language that the imaginary order initiates. Instead of achieving some form of actual knowledge of the object of the mapping, this troping of Ireland as a woman is in fact a form of reflected discourse about Elizabethan identity itself, just as the Freudian notion

of possession, '*having*,' is a facet of the identity of the subject who is enacting the possessing.

The hypostasised feminine image of Ireland is set up as a negative image of England. It is important to note that the signifier 'Ireland' was the English name for the country, a name which is already a translation of some other language (Hadfield and Maley 1993, 3). In their comments on Irish representations and English alternatives, Hadfield and Maley list a number of English writers who pun on the notion of Ireland as a 'land of ire,' most notably Barnaby Googe's poem 'Cupido Conquered,' where the narrator says that: 'Then shuld I wreak mine Ire of him/that brought me to this Land,' as well as comments by others such as John Derricke and Sir John Davies (Hadfield and Maley 1993, 3). The classic speaking position for an English writer was to be placed in this land of ire, and complain about its difference from his own home, by implication, a land of calm and prosperity. Importantly, this also has the effect of creating to a large degree, the selfhood and identity of the Elizabethan writers themselves in the reflexive process that we have seen as a *sine qua non* of the performative epistemology of nationalism.

If Ireland is seen as an imaginary reflection of a woman, then the identity of the Elizabethan ego, which is going to 'occupy' this wench, and put the 'quicksett' into her is, by definition, male. Given the fraught notions of identity that were rife in Elizabeth's time, with Scottish wars, dynastic and religious struggles for hegemony within the court and the country, the constant threat from Spain and the fears about the lack of a male heir, it is clear that Elizabethan identity was far from being either unified or coherent. The Kildare rebellion in the 1530s shook English power in Ireland to its foundations, and the defeat of the English, ironically with the assistance of Irish troops, by the Scots at Jedburgh on February 27th, 1545 further destabilised notions of English selfhood and coherent identity. The persistent threat of civil war was perhaps the greatest hazard, with its connotations of a fractured national identity, a concept redolent of Lacan's notion of the fragmented body, the *corps morcelé*. We recall that this refers to the

human imagination haunted by: 'images of castration, emasculation, mutilation, dismemberment, dislocation, evisceration, devouring, bursting open of the body' (Lacan 1977a, 11). Lacan sees this as the initial source of the drive towards images of imaginary wholeness on the part of the developing ego. I would argue that such fears would have an analogous effect on the consciousness of an emerging nation's self-identity.

Indeed, the dynastic situation which pertained in the Elizabethan court further undermined any notion of a static political identity. Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, had been executed by Henry VIII. Mary Queen of Scots, a first cousin once removed, was executed by Elizabeth. Mary was the granddaughter of Henry VIII's sister Margaret, and the mother of James VI who eventually succeeded Elizabeth. When one adds to this the ongoing religious problems that were rife in England during this period, with Elizabeth being excommunicated on February 25th 1570, then the dehiscence of identity that was rife in England becomes all the more clear. Consequently it is in this *milieu* of the threat of identificatory dehiscence that the oversimplified two-dimensional mappings of Ireland need to be seen in their cultural and political contexts. In this society, the search for identificatory stability, for Heidegger's *Versammlung*, for some form of societal *imaginaire*, was all-important, and the imagery used to constitute this idealised form of static identity is just as central a tenet of the epistemology of nationalism as are any political considerations.

Thus, in a reflexive misrecognition, the image of the Elizabethans that is reflected back to themselves from the mirror of a feminised Ireland in need of Gernon's quicksett, is creative of their 'Ideal-I,' their imaginary ego ideal. By defining themselves as the strong male power, coming to the aid of the misguided female place, the identificatory matrix of English nationalism is constituted. Through the enunciation of this narrative of possession, the narrator himself (and I use the masculine pronoun deliberately, as this identity is created in masculine mode), is created. This mapping initiates a coherent narrative of Elizabethan identity in the shape of the male who will desire and conquer this feminised

locus.

There are numerous similar representations of Ireland as a female form in need of husbandry, courtship, or even as a target for rape, to be found in Elizabethan verbal mappings of Ireland. Derricke again presents the native Irish as inadequate suitors for their own country, as he marvelled to see: 'a Bride of heavenlie hewe' forced to choose 'an ouglie Peere.' He goes on to make this metaphorical mapping explicit by noting that: 'this Bride it is the Soile/the Bridegrome is the karne' (Small 1883, 49),[8] and this metaphorical adequation further advances the verbal mapping by introducing the connection between Ireland as a woman, and a bridegroom, or suitor. Spenser's *Irena* in *The Faerie Queene* is another such figuration of Ireland as female and in need of a husband in this emerging narrative of Elizabethan identity created in what Bowie, as we remember, has termed the delusional attempt to gather into oneself instances of sameness and replication. In this context, those instances are reflected through the image of a feminised Ireland.

There are many further images which feminise Ireland through *prosopopeia* as a verbal device. The land is seen as a wench or whore, and as awaiting the fertilising interaction of settlers or colonisers. There are numerous *blazons*[9] which similarly depict Ireland from the perspective of those who had the power to map Ireland in terms of description. The sexual metaphor that such texts introduce will be further explored in this discussion, but first, attention must be paid to the power of this trope of Ireland as a woman. Through such a personification of place, the politicisation of it is rendered more straightforward. The relationship between the colonisers and the land itself is now placed on a quasi-organic and one-to-one basis; there is no need to take into account the native Irish, nor is there a need to enter into a debate with any previous notions of politicisation of the land. Having scotomised more complex identities, the personified Ireland is a *tabula rasa* on which the Elizabethan political and colonial mappings can be writ large.

I have already noted that in terms of temporal actuality, Elizabethan identity was far from cohesive or singular. One could see, in the many rebellions and conflicts in Ireland, that the colonising process was also fractured, and the spectres of Henry VIII's wives would certainly have haunted the political proceedings at court in London. Indeed, Lacan's image of the fragmented body, the *corps morcelé*, was very much a reality in the court of the Tudors. In an effort to deny this fragmentation, the verbal cartographies of Ireland served to produce a coherent form of Elizabethan identity which sought temporal closure. The organicised personification of masculine imperial identity partook of Lacan's notion of the future anterior, a time which, as Weber has observed, can never be fully remembered as it has never fully taken place. It is this temporality of 'what–will-always-already-have-been' (Weber 1993, 9) that is invoked by writers like Gernon and Derricke in their imaginary cartographies. Their narrative of political conquest transformed into sexual desire is constitutive of a strong, cohesive male presence which is, in turn, valorised by the *imago* of Ireland as female. Here is the ultimate performativity of the discourse of nationalism: the selfhood of the narrator is brought into being through the very process of this lococentric narrative of possession.

Declan Kiberd has made this notion of Ireland as England's 'other' a central plank in the theoretical organisation of his *Inventing Ireland*.[10] In a chapter aptly entitled 'A New England Called Ireland?,' Kiberd begins with the provocative statement that if 'Ireland had never existed, the English would have invented it.' Kiberd is speaking in a purely political and cultural context here, and is not referring to any unconscious desires or pulsions. However, in a manner that has striking similarities with the Lacanian mirror stage, he goes on to make the point that the original invaders of Ireland were: 'little more than an uneasy coalition of factions,' whose members did not have any great security in terms of their own identity (Kiberd 1995, 9). Hence, they began to create an image of Ireland as an 'other' against which they could proceed to define themselves. In this case, Ireland became the specular image in a mirror stage

through which the English notion of self became defined. What is reflected back to the English notion of selfhood here is the duality of which we spoke in our discussion of the mirror stage: a narcissistic desire to be the 'the Bridegrome' of the personified land: 'the Bride it is the Soile,' as well as the aggressivity towards the 'ouglie Peere' who is already in possession of the land. Hence, the Irish *imago* becomes a stage in the process of desire and identification of Englishness because, if Lacan's theory of the fictive designation of the ego is correct, then all identification is necessarily bound up with images, with language, and with literature. The fascination with the image, a feature of the imaginary stressed, as we recall, by Benvenuto and Kennedy, is here seen as central to the creation of English nationalism. It is as if the English only became English when they were perceived as such by the Irish, Scots and Welsh.

Of course, the creation of an image of Ireland as a negative reflection of Elizabethan England is merely one aspect of the nationalist *imaginaire* as it relates to what we might term the imaginary enculturation of place. The image of Ireland for the Irish would always be radically different to that already discussed. Yet, in many ways, the image of Ireland as female as fashioned by the Irish themselves has a lot in common with that of the Elizabethan cartographers. Ireland as a female personification has a long tradition in the cultural and political iconography of Irish history. Indeed, 'Mother Ireland' is one of the most powerful tropes in Irish nationalist discourse, serving, as we have seen, to validate Pearse's desire for some form of transcendental warrant (having declined to seek a democratic one), for the 1916 Rising. Having examined the personification from the perspective of the English *imaginaire*, let us now turn to the personified image of Ireland, as seen through the scopic field of Irish nationalist discourse.

The Irish name for Ireland, 'Éire,' or 'Éireann,' is female, as are the many female embodiments of Irishness (Erin, Cathleen Ni Houlihan, Banba, Fodla, Mother Ireland, the Shan Van Vocht, the Poor Old Woman). From ancient Irish writings to the most modern, the image of a female deity is seminal to Irish

conceptions of self-identity. One thinks immediately of Yeats's plays based on Cathleen Ni Houlihan, or of Pearse's poems 'I am Ireland' and 'The Mother,' but the origins of the trope can be traced into pre-history. The most important geographical denominations of Ireland are Celtic or pre-Celtic goddesses of the land, Fodla, Banba and Éire (Ériu). Hence, the land itself is the bride of the king or chieftain, and after his death it becomes his widow (Leerson 1996, 154). Here we see, not a different use of the trope of personification, but another side of the complex process of equating a place and a race: the English *imaginaire* saw a feminised Ireland as a land in need of control and possession. Through the language of sexual conquest, in all its guises, their desire for the possession of territory was enunciated in a familial type of discourse, hence subordinating political discourse to that of gender politics. By so doing, their own nationalistic desires were set out in performative fashion as these narratives of sexual conquest and possession unfolded. In the different context of an Irish nationalism, the imaginary desire was not to possess, to *have*, in a Freudian sense, the image, but to *be* the image in terms of helping and serving it.

There are many poems and stories in Irish literature which prioritise this *prosopopeia* of the land in terms of a metaphorical marriage with a king or chieftain.[11] Joep Leerson cites two poems, one from 1403 dedicated to Tadhg Mac Cárthaigh, and another from 1649 dedicated to Eoghan Rua Ó Néill, wherein this trope of Ireland as bride to both chieftains appears: 'Ireland has lost her true husband' and 'Patience a while, O Eire! Soon shalt thou get a true spouse' (Leerson 1993, 155). The similarity of the personification across some two and a half centuries demonstrates the strength of this image in native Irish literature. Later in the same book, itself a landmark study of the shifting threads of Irish identity, Leerson enumerates the many different proper names under which this *prosopopeia* of Ireland was known among different poets: Clíona na Carraige, Caitlín Ní Uallacháin, Gráinne Mhaol, Síle Ní Gadhra, Cáit Ní Dhuibhir, Méidhbhín Ní Shúilleabháin, etc. (Leerson 1996, 247). In a further variation, Ireland is personified as an old crone, who could be rejuvenated

through the love of a hero. This trope of the *puella senilis* in many ways mirrors the 'wench in need of a husband' motif of the Elizabethans, as well as accentuating the quasi-organic connection between one tradition and the land. It also, of course, transforms the bond with the *imago* of Ireland from that of a sexual relationship to that of a mother and child relationship, the very cornerstone of the Lacanian imaginary. As Grosz has noted, the mother-child relation is a synecdoche of the imaginary order, typifying a mutually defining, mutually exclusive structure: 'there is no way out of the vacillation between two positions and the identification of each with the other' (Grosz 1990, 47).

Perhaps the most telling instance of this form of identification is to be found in Pearse's declaration of a provisional Irish government in 1916, where it is a personified 'Ireland' who 'summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom' (Dudley Edwards 1990, 280). Here, we see the apotheosis of the imaginary female personification of Ireland, as the nationalist *imaginaire* identifies with the fixed and two-dimensional *imago* which defines it. Given the structurations of desire that govern the pre-oedipal, mother-child relationship, the unconscious pulsions of nationalism are reinforced by these images of a mother calling on her children to die for her. Here there is a classic imaginary performative identification, as it is the self-defined 'children' who are the only ones to hear the call of Ireland as mother, just as it was the self-defined Elizabethan colonisers who saw themselves as the desired 'bridegrooms' of the land of Ireland. By seeing political relationships reflected through the imaginary sexual and pre-sexual tropes, politics can become personalised, and the primacy of familial desire and kinship can overrule the discourse of politics and compromise. The images of blood-loyalty and sexual imperatives can be adduced to reinforce nationalist ego-construction and invention through a process of naturalisation. Just as sexual desire is natural among animals, so, it is implied, is nationalistic desire equally natural among peoples. The equation of a place with a person, and the resultant lococentric *prosopopeia* that we have been discussing is an important tenet of nationalist epistemology.

The fusion of phenomena and cognition, or thought and thing, that constitutes these personifications and organicist images is a major concern of conventional aesthetic ideology.[12] Paul de Man sees the philosophical foundation for much post-Romantic aesthetic ideology as stemming from Hegel's *Aesthetics*, where art is seen as 'symbolic' in that the symbol mediates between mind and the physical world. This recalls Adorno and Horkheimer's notion of the symbolic in terms of the fusion of sign and image. The metaphorical feminisation of Ireland can be located under this Hegelian rubric by means of which a symbolic mystification of land and language takes place. We have already noted Eagleton's definition of aesthetic ideology as a confusion of 'mind and world, sign and thing, cognition and percept,' a confusion which is always in danger of: 'converting the accidents of meaning to organic natural process in the characteristic manner of ideological thought' (Eagleton 1990, 10). As we have seen, this very process has been set in motion in dialectical fashion, between coloniser and colonised, as both sought to map anthropomorphic characteristics and traits onto the land of Ireland.

Both de Man and Norris see issues of aesthetic ideology as having political as well as epistemological implications.[13] Organicist myths, conflating land and language, have long been used to defend nationalistic designations of the '*Volk*' and alienation of the 'other.' Through a politicised cartography which brings into being a *vox loci*, English and Irish writers have succeeded in mapping the three-dimensional diversity and the plurality of the differing traditions which live in Ireland, onto a two-dimensional, reduced scale model which denies such diversity the right of speech and any form of identity. In Pearse's *prosopopeic* definition of the Irish people, it is very clear that the 'children' of Ireland are only those who share Pearse's definition of freedom and the 'old tradition of nationhood.' The same is true for those who do not subscribe to the foundational value of the 1918 Dáil Éireann parliament, or for ethnic Albanians who are living on the 'holy ground' of Kosovo. This epistemological orphaning of other traditions is brought about by the rhetorical cartography and aesthetic ideology

which we have been discussing. This is a classic example of the political effects of such a mythopoeic politicisation of place.

The search for a cultural utopia, which can serve as an imaginary mirror which will reflect an idealised form of nationalist identity, such as the Elizabethans' vision of Ireland as awaiting their fertilising presence, or of an *ur-*Ireland as implied by the Gaelic poems, can easily be transformed into a purging of the 'other.' Bhabha alludes to this notion in his book *The Location of Culture*:

> The hideous extremity of Serbian nationalism proves that the very idea of a pure, 'ethnically cleansed' national identity can only be achieved through the death, literal and figurative, of the complex interweavings of history, and the culturally contingent border-lines of modern nationhood.

(Bhabha 1994, 5)

Notions of a territory that is sacred to a people are usually defined in terms of an aesthetic: 'for it is as a political force that the aesthetic still concerns us as one of the most powerful ideological drives to act upon the reality of history' (de Man 1984, 264). As Jean Francois Lyotard has noted: the '*Volk* shuts itself up in the *Heim* and identifies itself through narratives attached to names' (Lyotard 1988, 218).

It is with this notion of the aesthetic, as exemplified specifically in Yeats's play *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, that we will conclude our analysis of the mapping of Ireland as a female personification. In what is, perhaps, one of the most programmatic works in the pantheon of Irish nationalism, this trope is given voice in a way which embodies the epistemology of nationalism. This play, written in collaboration with Lady Gregory in the Summer of 1901, has been described by Conor Cruise O'Brien as: 'probably the most powerful piece of nationalist propaganda that has ever been composed' (Cruise O'Brien 1994, 61). The play itself is set in Killala in County Mayo in 1798, the year that French troops landed in support of the United Irish rebellion. The Gillanes, a reasonably prosperous Catholic family, are preparing to celebrate the marriage of their son, Michael, to Delia Cahel, when they are visited by a character known only as 'The Poor Old Woman.' This term is yet another synonym for the personification of

Ireland, in the form of the *puella senilis*, which we have been discussing in this chapter. The only difference is that here, this nationalistic political trope would seem to have been transposed into its proper generic setting, namely the aesthetic. However, as we will see, in the discourse of nationalism, aesthetics and politics form a chiasmatic relationship which is both intersubjective and mutually reinforcing. The epistemology of nationalism is transgeneric in that tropology and performativity, two essentially literary constructs, are of fundamental importance to its constitution and utterance. These suasive tropes allow for new generations to become enculturated into the nationalist *Versammlung*, a process that is as much cultural as it is political.

The plot revolves around the gradual unfolding of the symbolic message of the Poor Old Woman. Her vatic discourse is completely at odds with the more pragmatic commercial aspects of the marriage settlement, as Michael's father, Peter, stresses that he 'made the bargain well' for his son (Yeats 1992, 77), while his wife Bridget underscores her own market value in this marital economy by stressing how hard she has worked on the farm when they had little money. It is into this commodified bourgeois household that the Poor Old Woman enters, with her talk of trouble, of 'strangers in the house' and of her 'four beautiful green fields' which had been taken from her (Yeats 1992, 81). This is an Irish nationalistic symbol, an *enthymeme*, which refers to the four provinces of Ireland as four green fields, with green being the symbolic signifier of Irish nationalism.[14] It also functions as crucial to the nationalist *imaginaire* in its simplistic transformation of a political and historical conflict into a domestic squabble between a mother figure and strangers, stemming from the seizure of family land. In terms of the mirror stage, what is reflected here is the image of a need to come to the defence of this maternal figure whose wanderings from home (itself a loaded term), have been caused by those outside the *Volk* – strangers.

She goes on to describe a notion of love that is hugely at odds with the provincial materialism of the Gillanes, telling how 'yellow-haired Donough that was hanged in Galway' died for love of her, and adding that 'many a man has

died for love of me' (Yeats 1992, 82). She explains that some will die on the following day, and by so doing, the temporality of her discourse has been gradually sacralised. Keeping in mind Lacan's idea of the imaginary as an erotic relationship, what is happening here is a *locus standi* of such captation. The Poor Old Woman is attempting to seize the other in an image (Lacan 1993, 92); her voice is now the *vox loci*, the lococentric voice of Ireland. Indeed, in the aural field, she occupies a position homologous to that of the already mentioned Ditchley portrait of Queen Elizabeth, who was the image of her nation in the scopic field. Her temporal domain is that of the future anterior, as she talks of 'when the graves have been dug tomorrow...the burying that shall be tomorrow' (Yeats 1992, 85). Her voice is that of personified Ireland, calling her children to fight and die for her, an image that is proleptic of Pearse's political proclamation some fourteen years later. She speaks in tones of prophecy, stressing that: 'the dead that will die tomorrow….They will have no need of prayers' (Yeats 1992, 86). She creates an imaginary connection between the people who are willing to die, and herself, the imaginary specular image for whom they are willing to die. The power to seemingly circumvent the finality of death is enunciated in her *symploce* of paradox and performativity:

> They shall be remembered for ever,
> They shall be alive for ever,
> They shall be speaking for ever,
> The people shall hear them for ever.

(Yeats 1992, 86)

The paradoxes of this speech-cum-prayer are synecdochic of the epistemology of nationalism. In constative terms, these words are contradictory: the dead shall be alive, the silent shall speak and the voices of the silent shall be heard by the people. This use of the term 'people' is over-determined in the sense that their very status as 'the people,' the *Volk*, is constituted by the sacrifices of these young men at the behest of the Poor Old Woman, the imaginary mother, in their attempts to get the strangers out of her house, and to repossess her four green fields. So, in effect, what the Poor Old Woman is doing is using her own discourse to performatively construct both the 'they' of her anaphoric closing

lines, as well as the 'people' who will hear them.

In Lacanian terminology, the relationship between children and the imaginary mother is fraught with danger. As Evans notes, the view of the imaginary mother as an engulfing force, which threatens to devour the child, is a constant theme in Lacan's work (Evans 1996, 117), as he stresses the need for both child and mother to progress from this dyadic relationship. In *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, the imaginary relationship deconstructs the more real one between Michael and Delia. It is the Poor Old Woman that Michael follows, leaving Delia as a static spectator to his departure.

Perhaps the classic moment of *anagnorisis* in the play is when Delia, Michael's putative fiancée, asks him: 'Why do you look at me like a stranger?' (Yeats 1992, 87). The answer would be that the imaginary relationship between Michael and the Poor Old Woman has completely displaced Delia, the real woman in his life. In the scopic field of the play, the Poor Old Woman has successfully scotomised the real woman, Delia. The Lacanian wall of language has successfully blocked any real communication between Michael and Delia to such an extent that she has become a 'stranger' to him. In a final irony, she has become analogous to the 'strangers' who had taken over the Poor Old Woman's home. The message is clear: if one is not part of the nationalist *Versammlung*, then one is part of the 'other,' and hence no longer part of the imaginary dyadic performative structure. Here is another repetition of the trope of an imaginary *prosopopeia* rendering voiceless the real people who actually live in the place that is lococentrically captated in this imaginary relationship. Just as the autochthonous natives were elided from the cartographies of the Elizabethan map-makers, just as those of the Anglo-Irish protestant tradition have been silenced in the republican tradition, just as the ethnic Albanian presence in Kosovo has been silenced by Serbian nationalist discourse, so Delia is excluded from the *Zusammengehören* that is in the process of being initiated in Kilalla in 1798, the imaginary time of the play. It is Poor Old Woman's imaginary notion of 'for ever' that is attractive, as opposed to the here and now of his marriage.

In the paradoxical framework that is the epistemology of nationalism, the French soldiers, who are in reality strangers, are welcomed by Michael, while his own fiancée now assumes the role of the stranger. Cruise O'Brien makes the telling point that the central idea of the play is religious in that the central idea is: '*vocation*. Michael hears the Call and rejects his terrestrial bride-to-be' [*italics original*] (Cruise O'Brien 1994, 68). In terms of the Lacanian notion of the eroticism that underlines all imaginary relationships, the final off-stage transformation of the Poor Old Woman into a 'young girl, and she had the walk of a queen' (Yeats 1992, 88), repositions the mother-son eroticism and transforms it into a male-female erotic relationship where sex and death, Eros and Thanatos, are fused in this *imaginaire*. The salvific and sacrificial connotations of this play have strong religious overtones, a point that will be more fully explored in the next chapter.

The process at work here is broadly equivalent to that which we saw in operation in the *prosopopeic* Elizabethan cartographies of Ireland. Just as then, the indigenous population of Ireland was rendered voiceless as the writers and mapmakers addressed this personified Ireland, so now, a living woman, Delia Cahel, is cast aside by Michael in his rush to do homage to the Poor Old Woman, the *puella senilis*, who, through his blood-sacrifice, is renewed and given a fresh and even more idealised identity in the form of a 'young girl' with the 'walk of a queen.' The transformative potential of this image is also constitutive of the nationalist *imaginaire*. The idealised identity which lococentrically connects place, race and person, becomes the reflective mirror of Irish nationalism, a nationalism where sacrifice of the individual is the performative that allows for the continuation of the *Volk* itself. That this image, or *imago*, is constructed through literary tropes is clear: the connection between the Poor Old Woman of this play, the politically driven Elizabethan images of Ireland as a wench and Pearse's image of Ireland as a mother, are different only in generic origin, and not in any sense of their construction. The supposed differences between nationalism *per se* and cultural nationalism merely stem from an incomplete understanding of

the nature of the epistemology of nationalism.

In terms of the lococentric discourse which equates a people, a place and a personified notion of identity, the aesthetic and political ramifications have been discussed, but another important factor in the process of nationalist *Versammlung* has been uncovered in our discussion of *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, and that is the notion of religion. We have already noted Cruise O'Brien's point that the central motif of the play is religious in that it deals with a nationalist vocation. The whole concept of blood-sacrifice, and the tropes of death and resurrection, have haunted both the text of this play, and the broader text of the epistemology of nationalism. Cruise O'Brien cites two contemporaries of Yeats as foregrounding the religious implications of this play when they first saw it: P. S. O'Hegarty considering the play as 'a sort of sacrament,' while Constance Markievicz made the point that Yeats's play was: 'a sort of gospel to me' (Cruise O'Brien 1994, 68). In the next chapter we will look at the religious aspects of the epistemology of nationalism, keeping in mind the two different etymological sources of the term, the word *religio*: *relegere*, from *legere* ('harvest, gather') and *religare*, from *ligare* ('to tie, bind').

We have already gestured towards a religious modality of knowledge in the nationalist *imaginaire*, but what we have not yet done is to analyse the importance of religion, and I am keeping both aspects of the etymology of the word in mind here, in terms of the binding of a people to an image, an image which is transcendentally grounded and which is unchanging and eternal, and the harvesting of these connections in the narrative of nationalism. All religions initiate such imagery, but in Ireland, there is a high level of symphysis between the politics of nationalism and the iconography and imagery of religion. Indeed, the terms 'Irish Catholic' have become synonymous in people's minds, and the religious iconography of the conflict in Northern Ireland has been much commented on. I will suggest that it is through this conflation of religious notions of eternal images, and the identification and politicisation of these images, that the epistemology of nationalism achieves its goal.

A further value of a religious modality of knowledge to the epistemology of nationalism is the lack of necessity for evidentiary proof or logical argument within the field of religious discourse. Most religions are founded on faith, as opposed to reason, and this quality of belief is very much to the fore in nationalism, as people can *believe* that they are mystically connected to the past, in some form of communion, without any need for veridical warrant. In terms of binding a people to their image of themselves, of believing in the truth of that image, and of seeing their own political beliefs as 'right,' or morally justified, there is much in common between the epistemology of nationalism and the binding and harvesting of religion.

CHAPTER 4

NATIONALISM AND FAITH

In spite of what I have said in the closing pages of the last chapter, there is a school of thought which sees religion and nationalism as basically incompatible. This perspective sees religions as generally transnational phenomena, which adopt a centralised worldview, and hence have little to do with the drives and pulsions of nationalism. For example, Christianity and Islam are both universalising doctrines which neither begin nor end at the borders of nation states. John Hutchinson summarises the views of writers such as Elie Kedourie in the following quotation which is relevant to this issue:

> For the great religions are universalistic and transethnic in their appeal and their organisation; they have as their concern success not in this world but in a higher spiritual realm; and their written languages have historically been those of 'dead' tongues, generally those of the sacred text in which the divine relation has been inscribed. By contrast, nationalism is limited, directing loyalty to a particularist territorial and hostorico-cultural unit; it is this-worldly, promoting the welfare of an activist political community.
>
> (Hutchinson 1994, 68)

One can see the attractions of this position; there is a neat subdivision of the political and the religious, the secular and the sacred. However, in the context of Irish history, and in that of our Serbian examples, it becomes clear that the points of intersection between religion, nationalism and notions of identity, are many and varied. Indeed, as we suggested in the last chapter, it is possible to see a strongly religious strand of thought in much nationalistic discourse. So, the question is begged as to which view of the role of religion in connection with nationalism is the more correct?

I would suggest that this seeming aporia stems from what we have already seen as the poorly-defined nature of the modalities of knowledge which are involved in nationalism. To see religion as the *fons et origo* of nationalism or, conversely, to see it as being far too preoccupied with universals to have any connection with a particularist ideology, is to miss the point. The epistemology of nationalism, as we have observed, is predicated on the idea of a hypostasised essentialist identificatory *imaginaire*, and on the Heideggerian postulate of *Versammlung*. The imperative is to gather, and this gathering is based on shared characteristics which correspond to an imaginary specular image of identity. This identity, in turn, is based on an unconscious desire to emulate some idealised image of selfhood, as seen in paradigm in the mirror stage. The performativity of nationalist identification is such that, as the ideal image of the self is created, so in turn it is responsible for the creation and interpellation of the selfhoods who are in the process of being captated by this very image.

As Hugh Seton-Watson put it, there is no scientific basis for establishing what nations have in common (Seton-Watson 1977, 5), and this is precisely because the process of nationalist identification is performative as well as being ongoing. Hence, to look for the constative elements of nationalism, for an *ordo essendi* that unites all nationalisms, is to look in vain. Instead, as I have contended, it is the *ordo cognoscendi* that can provide us with a clear analysis of nationalism, and how it works. The constituents of the specular image of the *ethnie* will invariably be different due to varying political, cultural and historical contexts. However, it is the imperative that brings them together in the first place that remains constant: the desire for essentialist communal identity, for *Versammlung*. In terms of Lacanian theory, the process of identification with others, and with one's image in the mirror stage, has been cogently summarised by Bowie:

> The identification of oneself with another being is the very process by which a continuing sense of selfhood becomes possible, and it is from successive assimilations of other people's attributes that what is familiarly called the ego or the personality is constructed.
>
> (Bowie 1991, 30-1)

Religion is often, though not always, a constituent of this imaginary specular image, as it can be one of the bonding factors that allows for a *Versammlung*. If a people share a sense of the transcendent, then it is logically easier for them to share ideas of the immanent. If territory is a vital component of the nationalist *imaginaire*, and we have seen that in the case of Ireland, a quasi-organic bond with place has proven central to the discourse of nationalism, then any form of ideology which can imbue place with some transcendent connection with race, is a further building block in the structure of nationalist epistemology. It is not so much religion *per se* that concerns us, but rather a religious mode of thought, as signified by Derrida's dual etymology of the term, which binds the selfhood to the territory and harvests any connections which it initiates.

The point here is that it is the two-dimensional imaginary specular image of selfhood as the guarantor of the authenticity of that selfhood that is critical to the epistemology of nationalism. The components of that specular image – language, race, place, religion – may alter with different circumstances, but their epistemological function is always similar: the validation of the nationalist *imaginaire*, the desire for *Zusammengehören*, and the cementing of the reflected similarities between the self and the specular image. It is not, then that religion *sensu strictu* should be discussed in this context, rather it is the religious dimension of the imaginary identification of a people with their hypostasised image that concerns us.

Hence, in terms of nationalism, it is religion *sensu lato* that interests us because it encapsulates the imaginary performative captation that is constructive of nationalist ideology. To worship a God who has made a people in his image is a classical religious trope. The adequation that: 'you shall be our God, and we shall be your people,' instantiates this imaginary mindset as God is hypertrophied in terms that a people can worship and with whom they can identify. By so doing, they are creating their sense of themselves as a people, a process that is exactly analogous to nationalism as we have defined it. God, as a specular image of a chosen people, further reinforces this imaginary captation:

his 'specialness' derives from his having chosen a particular people, just as their sense of being a people ultimately derives from having been chosen in the first place. It is this dyadic relationship that constitutes the religious dimension of nationalism.

If by religion then, we mean the Christ-like *dicta* of doing unto others as we would have them do unto us, and of loving our neighbours as ourselves, then religion and nationalism are far apart both epistemologically and ideologically. If, however, we mean the mindset that derives from Derrida's dual etymology of religion, that of binding and harvesting, then there is a definite causal connection. What Kristeva terms 'sacred nationalism' (Kristeva 1993, 23) is a potent component of the epistemology of nationalism in that it contributes to the *Volkgeist*, the 'spirit of the people,' which, of course, is but another designation of the nationalist *imaginaire* of which we have been speaking.

This is the very mindset that has encouraged the Serbs to see Kosovo as the centre of national and church life, and which has also validated and reified the memory of these events as sacred to the Serbs as a people. Through this religious tropology, place is seen as transcendentally connected with historical narrative: region and religion combine to create a messianistic strand in nationalist expression, and both combine to create a lococentric notion of Kosovo in which people, religion and place are fused in a sacral space, which is validated through sacral time (in this case Saint Vitus' Day in 1389). We remember the already quoted comment that the importance of the word 'Kosovo' is above and beyond: 'anything that the geographic concept might imply. It is in Serbian blood because it is a transcendental phenomenon' (http://www.srpska-mreza.com/mlad/htm). This fusion of blood, the very fluid of our mortality, with notions of the transcendent exemplifies the religious modality of knowledge, both in tone, and in the typological use of the trope of the Eucharist, the changing of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. It is this religious dimension of the epistemology of nationalism that

reinforces this lococentric concept of place, because place has always had a symphysial relationship with religion, indeed Liah Greenfield directly links the origins of English nationalism to the Tudor reformation (Armstrong 1995, 36-7).

To return to our discussion of the chosen people motif, Cruise O'Brien makes the point that in the Old Testament, nationalism is indistinguishable from religion in that: 'God chose a particular people and promised them a particular land' (Cruise O'Brien 1988, 3). This may be an unusual way to look at the Bible, but I think that this territorial defamiliarisation of a sacred text offers a useful methodology in the analysis of the religious dimensions of nationalism. In the *Book of Genesis*, the promises to Abraham are explicitly lococentric: 'for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever' (*Genesis* 13, 14-15), and: 'unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates' (*Genesis* 15, 18). That the deity should be so obliging as to ensure defensible borders which would also serve as a source of irrigation is further proof of the lococentric dimension of the nationalistic religion of the Old Testament.

I would agree with Cruise O'Brien's reading and further extrapolate that nationalism *per se* is in fact an agglomeration of political, cultural, racial and religious strands, all of which cohere performatively in the creation of the nationalist *imaginaire*. The importance of a religious modality of knowledge to the lococentric concept of place is seminal. It is also, at a much more fundamental level, a feature of practically all organised religions to have holy places. One thinks of Jerusalem for the Jews (or indeed for Christians and Muslims), Olympus and Parnassus for the ancient Greeks, Mecca, Medina, Rome, the Japanese Imperial palace, the place where Buddha achieved enlightenment – all these are deeply lococentric, and deeply necessary to the anchoring of religion to the earth, and of the concomitant transcendentalisation of that earth.[1]

In an Irish context, both political nationalism and cultural nationalism have strong biblical connections.[2] Having looked at the seminal stages of identity

formation in Ireland, in both literary and political spheres, and at the religious influences on those notions of identity, I will now examine the specific influences of the Bible on Irish nationalism, both in terms of the 'chosen people' trope, and in terms of a specific tradition of biblical interpretation. Already, we have seen that nationalism *qua* nationalism is grounded on notions of essentialism. Qualities that differentiate the self from the other are of primal importance, and in the creation of the *imago* of the mirror stage, religion, in both etymological senses of the term, is an influential factor. What Kristeva terms the 'mystical calls of the *Volk*' (Kristeva 1993, 45) often serve as a Lacanian wall of language, blocking other, more discursive, strands of communication.

This double sense of religion – binding and harvesting – makes it an important factor in the nationalist interpellation of future subjects. By connecting a people's belief with a particular place, religion participates in the lococentric imperative that helps to make the idea of possession of a territory somehow transcendental with respect to the territory in question. Often, it is not that we possess the land for ourselves, we do it to honour the memory of those who, like Lazar and the sacralised Wolfe Tone, gave their lives for it. In a sense, as we saw in our discussion of the Elizabethan cartographies of the 'natives' in chapter three, the land (or a lococentric narration of the land), possesses the people, just as the Poor Old Woman eventually possessed Michael Gillane.

In Irish history, there has long been a connection between nationalism and religion: that between Catholicism and nationalism being particularly well-documented. If we go back to the Irish resistance against Elizabethan colonisation, we see Hugh O'Neill making the point that the allies who fought with him fought for: 'the Catholic religion and the liberties of our country' (Boyce 1995, 61). Whelan has noted that Daniel O'Connell's Catholic nationalism also appealed to selective notions of history: 'using an idealised past to destroy the decadent present' (Whelan 1996, 55). In other words, religion was part of the idealised specular image towards which people should aspire. Daniel Corkery was of a similar mind when he noted the importance of: 'Nationality,

Religion, Rebellion' in the psyche of 'Irish-Ireland' (Corkery 1989, 8). In terms of the definition of this seemingly tautologous term, 'Irish-Ireland,' its history is interesting. It was coined by the journalist D. P. Moran, who founded the nationalist newspaper *The Leader*. Moran was writing at the cusp of the Irish, Gaelic and Celtic revivals, and was an influential figure in the developing definitions of Irishness that were being set out at this time. For Moran, 'Irish Irelanders' were primarily: 'people of native Irish stock, descended from Gaelic speakers, professing the Catholic religion, and holding some form of the general political opinions held by most people of this origin and religion.' He goes on to consolidate this nationalistic *Versammlung* by defining those who do not belong to this definition of the *Volk*, and who are, by definition, other. He says that 'secondarily' the term 'Irish race' applies to: 'people of settler stock in Ireland, and Protestant religion: to the extent that these cast in their lot with people in the first category, culturally or politically, or preferably both' (Cruise O'Brien 1972, 51).

In terms of the nationalist *imago*, the notion that one had to be native, Gaelic and Catholic places the Irish Irelanders firmly within the *locus* of a chosen people, fusing as they do, race, religion, place and language. The theocratic imperatives that underwrote, and still underwrite, so much of nationalist ideology will be discussed, and the importance of literary and linguistic issues in the creation of the faith of nationalism, the 'faith of our fathers,' will be further analysed, both in Irish and Jewish contexts. The reason for this particular articulation of the Irish and the Judaic lies in their common melding of religious and nationalist discourses, a point already clear in the Irish case, and stressed in the Israeli case by Seton-Watson, who notes that the influence of Judaism on the life of the Israelis, and on the formation of the Israeli national consciousness: 'can certainly not be explained in terms of party manoeuvres, or limited to professed believers….the religious heritage thus directly reinforces national consciousness' (Seton-Watson 1977, 403).[3]

Anderson has argued that it is the 'magic of nationalism to turn chance

into destiny' (Anderson 1991, 12), and religious modes of thought have been essential to this achievement. He goes on to make the point that language, when reified and hypostasised, functions as a major contributor to this process. As he puts it: all the great 'classical communities conceived of themselves as cosmically central, through the medium of a sacred language linked to a superterrestrial order of power' (Anderson 1991, 13). Catholic teaching underscored this notion of the sacredness of the language of the Bible by stressing its monological authority. The Catholic tradition of scriptural reading is very much at odds with that of the Protestant churches. As the following quotation makes clear, the tradition of hermeneutic readings, developed by Freidrich Schleiermacher and William Dilthey, which is: 'associated with the function of transmuting what is beyond human understanding into a form that human intelligence can grasp' (Palmer 1969, 13), has no parallel in Catholic teaching:

> Now the Church of Rome would seem at the length to beat a motherly affection toward her children, and allow them the Scriptures in the mother tongue: but indeed it is a gift, not deserving to be called a gift, an unprofitable gift: they must first get a licence in writing before they may use them; and to get that, they must approve themselves to their Confessor, that is, to be such as are, if not frozen in the dregs, yet soured with the leaven of their superstition.
>
> (King James Bible 1899, xiii)

This is a vital point in the understanding of biblical influences on Irish nationalism; the way the Bible has been taught and read in what may be termed 'Catholic Ireland' has been completely different to its reception in other cultures. In Ireland, lay reading of the Bible has been frowned upon. It has been the role of the clergy to read passages from both the Old and New Testaments, and then, in homily, to interpret these readings for their flock.

This achieves the function of limiting the play of understanding and signification of this language, rendering it as a two-dimensional construct which is frozen in time. Hence, it functions as part of a socio-religious *imaginaire* which embodies the imaginary sense of identity to which Catholic Ireland would be seen to aspire. In the above quotation, it is significant that the Catholic church is

personified as a 'motherly' presence which beats 'affection towards her children.' Once again, we are in the familiar domain of the imaginary order, where inanimate objects and structures are personified in order to make the relationships contained therein more simplistic and more easily construed. A Catholic Bible will, almost by definition, be far different in intent and in orientation from its Protestant counterpart, specifically in the area of translation. Indeed, the history of biblical translation, as Susan Basnett observes, is a history of western culture in microcosm (Basnett 1991, 46). She also notes the fate of two of the earliest translators, namely John Wycliffe (1330-1384) and William Tyndale (1494-1536). The former was branded as a heretic, he and his group being denounced as Lollards, while the latter was burned at the stake in 1536 (Basnett 1991, 46-47). Tyndale and a disciple of Wycliffe's, John Purvey, attempted to create a translation that would make the Bible accessible to the laity, and remove its dissemination from the hands of what they saw as a corrupt clergy.

It is clear from these examples that the Bible and its various translations was never a religious document *sensu strictu*; instead, as Stephen Prickett has observed, it is: 'in the fullest sense of the word, a political document' (Prickett 1993, 16), and it is with these political implications of religion, and in particular, the influence of the Bible, that we are concerned here. The very act of translating of the Bible was often a performative wherein the biblical text became the property of a people. Indeed, it was this vernacular enunciation of the Bible that made a people feel that they were, in a sense, a second chosen people. In this context, it is no accident that when Martin Luther sent his *Circular Letter on Translatio*n, in 1530, he used the verbs *übersetzen* (to translate), and *verdeutschen* (to Germanise), almost indiscriminately. By translating the Bible into vernacular German, Luther was sacralising the German language, and thereby making the enunciation of a sense of pan-Germanic nationalism far more assured because it was now transcendentally validated. Cruise O'Brien terms such a process 'holy nationalism' (Cruise O'Brien 1988, 16), and it is this strand of the epistemology of nationalism that concerns us in the present chapter.[4] This

is not to say, however, that it was only Reformation and Protestant translations and readings of the Bible that were political in intention; in fact precisely the opposite is true. I have used Luther as an example, but in the case of the Catholic church's position on biblical translation and interpretation, a different but equally strong political agenda was in place, one which would be yoked in tandem with Irish nationalist ideology to produce the symphysis of nationalist Catholic Irishness that has persisted to the present day.

In our discussion of the mirror stage and the nationalist imaginary, the constructed nature of the image has been studied in some depth. The notion of a people being chosen by some transcendental force is an important part of the nationalist *imaginaire*. As we have seen, Luther's Germanising of the Bible allowed for scattered Germanic states to create a coherent imaginary identity with which they could bond and strive to emulate. Religion, likewise, seeks a similar sense of certainty in terms of identification. For Protestants, the text of the Bible is in itself sufficient; it requires no extra-textual authority to interpret its message. For Catholics, on the other hand, doctrine and the *magesterium* of the church are necessary intermediaries in the interpretation of the Bible. Here, the hermeneutic drive is mediated through the authority of the church. As we will see, the Catholic church ensured that any reading of the Bible would be done only in accordance with its own teachings, and these strictures would be analogous to the imaginary modality of knowledge which we have seen to be essential to nationalism.[5] The position of fixity which the Catholic church set down for the interpretation of the Bible will be seen to parallel nationalism's own two-dimensional *imaginaire* of identity.

In the introductory material which precedes the Roman Catholic Bible, from which all references in this chapter are taken, some guidelines as to reading and interpretation are given which make the desired line of understanding very clear. In discussing the 'principal author of the Bible,' the introduction (interestingly entitled 'Facts about the Catholic Bible'), relays its message very clearly. When 'human writers' penned the various books of the Bible, they:

were working under a special interior prompting of God which is called inspiration. The thoughts and the ideas that they wrote were the thoughts and the ideas that God wanted them to write. They wrote nothing that God did not want written. Hence the Bible is the Word of God.

<div align="right">(O'Connell 1956, viii)</div>

As the Bible is the 'Word of God,' and as 'God cannot make a mistake,' then: 'as God is its author, the Bible can contain no error' (O'Connell 1956, ix). Here is an ideology which is both essentialist and fundamentalist. The Bible is to be taken as inspired throughout, and as the Word of God, it is not open to error. Hence, to question the Word of God is to imply the possibility of error, and that is anathema.

Given these authorial strictures, the freedom of the reader to interpret the Bible was thus severely limited within the Catholic *Weltanschauung*. Pope Leo XIII, in *Providentissimus Deus*, taking note of this, exhorts Catholic scholars to:

loyally hold that God, the Creator and Ruler of all things, is also the Author of the Scriptures – and that therefore nothing can be proved either by physical science or by archaeology which can really contradict the scriptures.

<div align="right">(O'Connell 1956, xxvi)</div>

Catholic teaching must result in a 'definite and ascertained method of interpretation' (xxii) which is in line with the 'divine and infallible *magesterium* of the Church' (xxiii). Here, the church foregrounds the desired line of interpretation that priests and scriptural students alike should take. Authorial closure is a theme that all of the above quotations have in common; the freedom to interpret meanings is not given to Catholics. The Bible is the Word of God, and the *magesterium* of the church is the only fitting mediator of that word.

From an epistemological perspective, the analogy between this dyadic relationship of the Bible and the Catholic church could not be more overt. The church is validated by its image in the text, and this text serves as a hypostasised, reified account of the transcendental connection between this latter-day chosen people and their God. While such modalities of knowledge are inherent in all religions, it is their application in the sphere of nationalistic discourse that is the focus of our attention at this juncture. Here, the politicisation of the transcendent

is brought about by the sacralisation of language. As David Stevens has perceptively noted: 'the modern nation incorporates into itself all the images of the divine' (Stevens 1997, 252). The nexus of nationalism and religion in general, and of Irish nationalism and Roman Catholicism in particular, is a *point d'appui* of this process, as the sacralisation of the political is the *brisure* on which turns the politicisation of the sacred.

It is clear then, that the teaching of the Bible, as laid down by the Catholic church, is monological in that interpretation is governed by strict rules from an infallible *magesterium*, and the literal words, and literal truth of the Bible are sacrosanct. This sacred text is the language of the *imaginaire*, the language which will transcendentally validate the Irish nationalist *Weltanschauung*. Here, we are in territory analogous to Maley's structurally creative adjectives 'stultifying' and 'anglocentric,' as there is absolutely no room for change or transformation in the readings of scripture, and 'anglocentric' can be substituted by theocentric, or even logocentric, to use the term coined by Derrida. Here, what Derrida has often termed a 'metaphysics of presence' (Derrida 1976, 74), is prioritised and the movement of thought is very much towards that centre. In fact, such thinking, and here I refer to Maley's anglocentrism, the church's theocentrism, and the lococentrism which we have been considering, is symptomatic of the epistemological constituents of nationalism. I have discussed aspects of this topic in some depth in *The Question of Irish Identity in the Writings of William Butler Yeats and James Joyce*, the main point being that such thinking:

> seeks to ground itself vertically in terms of historical development along a single ethnic and identificatory wavelength; the past has defined Irishness, and the contemporary function of literature is to conserve and preserve this handed-down heritage; its spatial dimension is narrow in the extreme, encompassing the verities of the transcendental signifiers of Irishness, Catholicism, Celtism, republicanism, nationalism, and language.
>
> (O'Brien 1998, 33)

Contextually, such a perspective constantly looks towards these pre-defined 'centres,' centres which are never subjected to critique, as they combine to form the nationalist *imaginaire* which constantly enacts the identity of the nation.

We have already seen how imaginary constructions of place, race and language have created the two-dimensional specular image which has become the focus of nationalist identificatory desire. The fact that, at the turn of the century, so many of the Irish language revivalists were priests, provides the point of entry for our discussion of the religious dimension of nationalism in an Irish context. This dimension has always been nascent in the Irish situation: we have seen how Pearse was strongly Catholic in his outlook, and also how his rebellion was couched in quasi-religious terms, through a personified image of Ireland as a mother figure, with himself as the point of intersection and mediation between the immanent and the transcendent.[6] I think that the attempt by the Catholic hierarchy to ensure the fixity of the Bible as a sacred, unchanging text, in need of a similar degree of mediation, is a strongly analogous process, both in general epistemological terms and, as we will see, as a precedent which was taken up by a number of writers in the Irish, Celtic and Gaelic revivals in Ireland at the turn of the century.

From the Catholic perspective, the Bible was seen as a text which must be taught, rather than debated; it was, in Bakhtin's terms, *monoglossic* rather than *polyglossic*. Just as the Word of God was mediated to the Israelites of the Old Testament by patriarchs and prophets, so the Bible *in toto* was to be mediated and taught to a new 'chosen people' by the priests, operating under the authority of the *magesterium* of the church. By analogy, if the Bible cannot be in error, then those who interpret it according to 'the divine and infallible *magesterium* of the Church' cannot be in error either. It is this notion of certainty that has often been seen as a nationalistic imperative: the Serbs and their bond with Kosovo, Northern Irish Catholics and Protestants and their respective bonds with the Garvaghy Road in Portadown, could all be seen to be motivated by this 'chosen people' trope.

In the writings of the Irish language revival, a number of the proponents of the Irish language were Catholic priests, whose rhetoric and style of writing were imbued with this religious certainty which they transposed quite easily into

the areas of the social and the political. Hence, the comments of the clerical revivalists were couched in tones that brooked no debate. Their linguistic and cultural *dicta* were delivered, as it were, from on-high. Their audience, conditioned to hear and obey, was greatly influenced by the fact that the speaker was a priest, embodying the authority of the church and of God, in a manner similar to that of the Israelites of the Old Testament, who saw the statements of the prophets and patriarchs asfigures of power and influence. Cruise O'Brien makes this very connection between nationalism and religion, stressing a new typology which saw the Old Testament as prefiguring: 'whichever nation happened to be talking about itself,' and he goes on to cite the seventeenth century *exemplum* of an Irish-language poet who equates the Catholics struggling against Cromwell with 'Clann Israel' (the 'Children of Israel') (Cruise O'Brien 1988, 27).

Biblical discourse did not differentiate between religious, social and political spheres. The prophets and patriarchs spoke on all matters affecting the Israelites, hence the identity of the Jews was political, cultural and religious at the same time. The clerical proponents of the Gaelic Revival carried this sense of certainty into the political sphere by equating the political struggle between England and Ireland with the religious struggle between Protestant and Catholic, as symbolised in the contrast between the King James and the Douay Bibles. The biblical influence on the worldview of these clerical revivalists saw no need for the Enlightenment notion of separation between church and state. These priests saw their role as analogous to that of the Old Testament prophets who blended moral, religious, cultural and political discourses, and saw all of their opinions as transcendentally validated. The corollary of this position, of course, was that all of their opponents were, almost by definition, morally or religiously wrong. Such opinions placed them outside the nationalist imaginary, and also as a possible intrusion in the performative dyadic relationship between the nation and its hypostasised specular image.

That literature and language have a seminal role in the creation of identity

is clear from our discussion to date. At this historical juncture in Ireland, the language that was to be used in the creation of a specifically Irish literature was a contentious political issue. Yeats, Synge, Lady Gregory and others saw translation of the old Irish myths into the English language, and literature about Irish topics and themes but written in English, as the correct route to follow. However, the clerical revivalists, the Gaelic League and the Christian Brothers teaching order all lined up in opposition. These, as I will demonstrate, were fired by a quasi-religious zeal; theirs was not a tactical approach, it was visceral. Their view was that building a literature: 'without laying its foundations in the actual living speech of the people is like building your house commencing at the chimney' (O'Leary 1994, 11). It is a small step from this perspective of equating nationality with a particular linguistic discourse, to equating it with a specific religious discourse. The intersection between issues of biblical teaching, and those of nationalistic revival, are almost indistinguishable at this juncture in the discourse of Irish nationalism.

As we have seen, the great tradition of hermeneutics, of biblical scholarship, was never part of the Catholic ethos. In deference to the papal instructions already noted, the Bible was read to their flock by the priests, and then set passages were explained in a homily, or sermon, after the readings from the Old and New Testament. The main role in the teaching of religion in Irish education fell to the Christian Brothers, an organisation founded in the 1820s by Edmund Rice, and approved by a bull of Pope Pius VII (Beckett 1966, 312). Here, the Catholic faith was seen, not just as a possession of the Irish people, but as a radical signifier of difference from the British coloniser. Here too, the Bible, or at least its interpretation and manner of being taught, also becomes a signifier of nationhood. The following quotation from the *Catechism of Irish History* makes this identification very clear:

> Q. Have the Irish preserved the faith preached to them by Saint Patrick?
> A. Yes; the Irish have ever been conspicuous for their devoted attachment to the faith from which not all the horrors of persecution nor the blandishments of proselytism have been able to separate them.

In this example, as in many others, the notion of preservation of the faith is indistinguishable from the efforts of the British to separate the Irish from this faith. Here, a religious modality of knowledge is clearly an important factor in the epistemology of nationalism. It is also worth noting the unquestioned nature of Catholicism as a defining part of Irishness – one might wonder where this leaves Irish revolutionaries such as Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone, both Protestants? The use of the word 'catechism' is also relevant, as it is a name for a religious primer, full of questions and answers dealing with matters of faith; that it should be used in this political context speaks volumes for the merging of religious and political dimensions in Irish nationalism. Here is a seminal biblical influence on Irish nationalism: the merging of the religious with the political, in terms of rhetoric and ideology.

In the Old Testament, the law was both the law of God and the law of the state, such as it was. The Israelites looked for divine warrant for their laws, and religious laws were blended with social and cultural ones. Obviously, there was no division between social and religious authority; as in *Exodus*, they combine in the person of Moses, while in later books, it is the prophets who retell God's law to the people. This theocratic form of legislation served a dual purpose, for, as the Israelites suffered captivity in Egypt, and later as they wandered in the desert, these laws and this religion both differentiated them from the other tribes in the area, and bonded them together as a people. Their socio-religious practices served to forge a separate identity for them. That the Bible also included literary writing further strengthens my view as to the synthetic nature of its identity formation for the Israelites, and at a broader level, as to the synthetic nature of nationalism *per se*, as opposed to any differentiation between political and cultural nationalism. This text was their political law, their religious law and prayer book, their cultural forum and their literary repository. Of course, it also served as their specular image of themselves, an imaginary reified image which they attempted to emulate and imitate, and which, in turn, defined their identity.

This specular image was an important constituent of the Jewish identity as a chosen people. Given the Semitic ancestry of many of the races of the Middle East, religion proved an ideal signifier of separateness, a trope which would be repeated many times throughout the history of nationalism. This Old Testament notion of 'a chosen people,' then, is in many ways a foundational element of Irish, and indeed all, nationalism in its validation of a *Versammlung* of the *Volk*. We have already noted the importance of the imaginary in the establishment of an idealised identity for the *Volk*. A further development of this identity is the need for some groups to be outside the imaginary dyad. To be 'chosen' by definition implies that others are not chosen; they are 'other,' and again by definition, lesser, than those who have been chosen. Being 'chosen' becomes a central aspect of the identity of the *Volk*, and the need to remain different from others has been the source of many religious and societal rules and customs, as we will see.

In an Irish-English context, the notion of separate identity is equally difficult to categorise. Racially, the Irish and English are indistinguishable. This caused difficulties on both sides of the Irish Sea, with much racial theory being adduced by English ethnologists connecting the native Irish with non-white races for the purpose of seeing them as savages in need of saving.[7] While English nationalism was creating these signifiers of difference, Irish nationalism was at work on a similar project from a different perspective. In Ireland, the language issue was becoming central towards the end of the nineteenth century, in terms of separating the Irish from the English. Essentialist views of identity decreed that to be Irish, one must speak the Irish language,[8] and as we have seen, in tandem with the language issue, religion was to be another seminal signifier of Irishness. To be Irish then, was to be Catholic and Gaelic, and the religious teaching order of the Christian Brothers enforced this ideology on certain members of a generation who would, in 1916, rebel against British rule. This view was a central premise of Catholic cultural nationalists, who preached linguistic and cultural separatism in a manner similar to the laws and customs of the Jews of the Old Testament, where the chosen people kept a linguistic and cultural distance, and where notions of

'*kosher*' purity were strong signifiers of cultural separation. Given, as we have observed, that the peoples of the Middle East share common racial characteristics, the need for socio-religious edicts preaching separateness of identity becomes clear.

One thinks of passages from *Leviticus*, chapter 11, where dietary and social strictures are set in place to preserve and conserve the identity of the Jews. This sense of separateness is reinforced in *Leviticus*, chapter 18:

> 3 You shall not do according to the customs of the land of Egypt, in which you dwelt: neither shall you act according to the manner of the country of the land of Chanaan, into which I will bring you, nor shall you walk in their ordinances.
>
> (O'Connell 1956, 99, 18:3)

The same message is seen in *Deuteronomy*, chapter 7. Here, the notion of a 'chosen people' is spelled out:

> 6 Because you are a holy people to the Lord thy God. The Lord thy God hath chosen thee, to be his peculiar people of all peoples that are upon the earth.
>
> (O'Connell 1956, 153, 7:6)

This idea of being a 'holy people,' a socio-religious elite, is underscored by more prohibitions against intermixing with 'pagans.' Having spoken of how the Lord will have destroyed other nations around the Israelites: 'the Hethite, and the Gerggezite, and the Amorrhite, and the Chanaanite, and the Pherezite, and the Hevite, and the Jebusite,' the message of *Deuteronomy* continues:

> 2 Thou shalt make no league with them, nor show mercy to them. 3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them. Thou shalt not give thy daughter to his son, nor take his daughter for thy son, 4 for she will turn away thy son from following me.
>
> (O'Connell 1956, 152, 7:2-4)

This passage, I would contend, is an index of politico-religious separatism. It, along with the previous quotation, and numerous other edicts from the Old Testament, functions as a warrant for *Versammlung*, and for a conservative notion of community. This warrant is a transcendental one, which is 'handed down' to the people. The numerous dietary restrictions (*Leviticus*, 7: 22-27; 11: 1-47; *Deuteronomy*, 14: 3-21) also served as a signifier of identity; the food that was allowed and not allowed served to widen the perception of difference from

the other races surrounding the Israelites. Eating became a socio-political act, a signifier of difference, and this lesson was not lost on the Irish Irelanders, except that for them, eating would be replaced by speaking, writing and reading. Acts that reinforced the ethnic unity of the community were to be praised, whereas those which did not could now, by analogy, be seen as impure and unholy and hence worthy of condemnation. In terms of the creation of a nationalist *imaginaire* these religious precepts would form a template for the revivalists.

What this demonstrates conclusively is that, in the epistemology of nationalism, it is the identificatory pulsion, as seen through Lacan's mirror stage, the need for *Zusammengehören*, that precedes any of the categories that create that notion of specular identity in the first place. In other words, the *ordo essendi* is preceded, and indeed, constituted, by the *ordo cognoscendi*. Once the *Volk* have seen the need to gather, and by extension, to differentiate some notion of selfhood from that of otherness, then the criteria of this specular image of selfhood are fluid and changeable. All that matters is that they bind the people to each other, functioning as *enthymemes* to initiate and maintain a sense of difference from the other. For the Jews, such a seemingly neutral category as food could become a central aspect of their specular image of identity, signifying a sense of *kosher* purity.

This preaching discourse, this 'laying down' of the law, a law that was 'given' to the prophet/patriarch from above, is replicated in the discourse of the clerical nationalists of the Irish language revival. These priests saw their role in terms of the Old Testament prophets and patriarchs. Their function was to fuse religion, language and culture into a synthetic symbol of Irish identity, a nationalist *imaginaire*, with the role of the Catholic church in any revival of 'Irishness' being no less than that of Judaism in the identificatory structure of the Israelites. These clerical revivalists used both pulpit and secular platforms to drive home this message that Irish, Catholic and Gaelic were one and the same; they also preached, in a literal sense, the gospel of Irish Catholic Ireland. They promoted the notion that Irish literature must be written in the Irish language with

Old Testament zeal. Any opposition to this view was not to be tolerated, as one priest noted: 'if they won't accept it, it will have to be forced on them as food is forced on turkeys' (O'Leary 1994, 11).

Keeping our biblical sources in mind, the following quotations from Philip O'Leary's comprehensive study of the cultural politics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *The Prose Literature of the Gaelic Revival*, serve to underline the biblically inspired origins of the ideology expressed therein by priests. The first comes from An tAthair Peadar Ua Laoghaire (Father Peter O'Leary), in an article which foregrounds the biblical inspiration of the sentiment by its original title, 'The Story of Job and the Story of Ireland.' He says that there is 'enmity between the Irish language and infidelity. They cannot keep house together. If Irish is inside, infidelity must remain outside.' There are a number of points of interest to note here.

Firstly, this text was originally delivered as a sermon, on January 21st, 1914 (O'Leary 1994, 20). The use of the pulpit to make such a nationalistically inspired declaration is very much in line with biblical precedent.[9] The second point is the implicit personification of Ireland in this title. History is seen as a narrative: just as Job endured suffering and hardship, so too must Ireland; but similarly, just as Job found a form of redemption, so too Ireland will be redeemed. The image posits a narrative closure, a point of transcendence when the 'story of Ireland' will have an ending. It points to a space outside of history towards which the nation of Ireland is journeying. It posits a teleology of history, a national destiny where Catholicism, the Irish language and holiness are ineffably connected, and this teleological point is, of course, the nationalist specular image which we have been exploring. This is the role of the religious modality of knowledge in nationalist epistemology, both binding and harvesting the nationalist *imaginaire* through the creation of a sense of the transcendental for the history of a people. As Mircea Eliade puts it in *The Myth of the Eternal Return, or Cosmos and History*, the abolition of time, and here he means secular aleatory time, is achieved through the: 'imitation or archetypes and the repetition

of paradigmatic gestures' (Eliade 1974, 35). In a specifically mythical and religious context, such views of temporality are consistent: 'among the Jews and Christians, the "history" apportioned to the universe is limited,' and hence: 'the end of the world coincides with the destruction of sinners, the resurrection of the dead, and the victory of eternity over time' (Eliade 1974, 129).

The third point is the personification of both the 'Irish language' and the concept of 'infidelity'; they are seen as being unable 'to keep house together.' This homely image naturalises and validates the otherwise difficult to characterise opposition between a language and a moral concept. By dint of careful use of such suasive rhetoric, the necessity for rational explanation has been avoided. The final point to note is the apodictic certainty with which the binarism: 'if Irish is inside, infidelity must remain outside' is stated; one is immediately reminded of the similar certitude with which different categories are branded as 'clean/unclean' in *Deuteronomy*, and of the encompassing power of those notions in terms of race, religion and politics. The religious constituent of the epistemology of nationalism further strengthens the specular image of identity through the use of habits of thought which see certain areas, notably those of belief, as not being in need of referential warrant or truth-constitutive status. The fact that this was originally a sermon means that it was delivered as part of a performative discursive event which necessitated a silent audience, who had come to listen and learn from the priest: in other words, a group who were already believers. This belief in the precepts of the church then, is seen to lead, seamlessly, to an analogous belief in the need for the Irish language to be a part of the Irish nationalist *imaginaire*.

One finds a similar rhetorical style in a Gaelic League pamphlet, *Ireland's Defence – Her Language* (the Gaelic League being an organisation set up to revive the Irish language and Irish cultural practices). Father Patrick F. Kavanagh again sees language as an index of identity and purity:

> There is no stronger rampart behind which nationality can entrench itself than a native language. Erect, then, the defence around your nationality which your foreign enemy has so long striven to destroy.
>
> (O'Leary 1994, 20)

Again, the defensive and separatist strategies that we saw in the Old Testament, and in the Catholic ideology of biblical interpretation, are rife in the rhetoric of this passage. The image chain is that of a siege: 'rampart; entrench; native; defence; foreign enemy; destroy,' and the concept of nationality is that of a finite, fixed essence which must be protected from all outside influences. The epistemological thrust is that of the enunciation, and ensuing protection, of the imaginary specular image, with the Irish language seen as an essential rampart to keep the *Volk* pure, and the other at a distance. Again, any notion of historical or social change is implicitly equated with evil, and the imagery equates all foreigners with enemies. Again, we note the personification of Irish nationality, and of a foreign enemy (singular); and the use of the imperative mood with the apostrophe to an undifferentiated notion of 'the Irish people.' The aesthetic is used to blur any need for separation of the emotive and cognitive dimensions of such discourse. We are very close here to the separatism and racial purity of the Israelites: it is a small step to the ideology of '*sinn féin*' – 'ourselves alone,' and another small step to the imperative that those who are not part of this notion of 'ourselves' should be driven out, or purged, or ethnically cleansed. As Ignatieff has put it, one of the central tenets of nationalism is the justification of: 'the use of violence in the defence of one's nation against enemies, internal and external' (Ignatieff 1993, 108), and the image chain of siege would seem to underscore this point.

Two further statements, the first by Father Patrick Dineen, who wrote the standard Irish-English dictionary, in a lecture to the Keating branch of the Gaelic League in 1904, and the second by Father John O'Reilly, four years earlier, in a lecture entitled *The Threatening Metempsychosis of a Nation*, again illustrate this view of all that originated outside of Ireland as unclean and tainted:

> This country is, to a large extent, still untainted by the teaching of the positivist, the materialist, the hedonist, which pervades English literature whether serious or trivial….It will be difficult to prevent that literature from planting the seeds of social disorder and moral degeneracy amongst even our still untainted population.
>
> (Dineen 1904, 9-10)

Once more, we note the moralistic and socio-religious terminology used. The 'unclean' foreign influence will plant 'social disorder and moral degeneracy' among the hitherto 'untainted' population of Ireland. Personification is used to give support to the argument, with both Ireland and England personified to make the examples seem more personal. The thesis here is that if the Irish speak a different language, then separatism and cultural isolation will be all the easier to maintain, as the imaginary image of identity will further differentiate the Irish selfhood from its other.

Language here functions in a manner that is typical of the imaginary by constructing the two-dimensional image. The repetition of 'untainted' foregrounds the distaste with which all English influences are viewed. One thinks of the mindset of *Leviticus* (18: 3), where the Israelites are told: 'you shall not do according to the custom of the land of Egypt' or of *Exodus* (10: 12-13), where the people are warned to beware: 'thou never join in friendship with the inhabitants of that land, which may be thy ruin' (O'Connell 1956, 77). All of the 'inhabitants of that land' are evil, and their customs and practices must be destroyed. There is no proof offered, but according to the parameters of the religious mindset, it is not required; the transcendental is not to be subjected to any form of critique. The use of the broadly accepted belief system eschews the need for argument or evidentiary discourse.

The second quote, cited by Philip O'Leary, sees Father John O'Reilly in even more virulent mood. He is writing about the 'English spirit' and his tone and rhetoric are strongly reminiscent of that of *Leviticus* and *Exodus*. Of the 'English spirit,' he says:

> It is a fleshly spirit, bent towards earth; a mind unmannerly, vulgar, insolent, bigoted; a mind whose belly is its God...a mind to which pride, and lust, and mammon are the matter-of-course aims of life...a mind where every absurd device, from grossest Darwinism to most preposterous spiritualism, is resorted to, and hoped in, to choke the voice of eternity in the conscience.
>
> <div align="right">(O'Leary 1994, 21)</div>

To be English, it seems, is to be in a state of sin; it is to choke the 'voice of eternity' with fleshly appetites. The Irish language, on the other hand, like the

religion, laws and customs of the Israelites, is the signifier of difference which will stem this fleshly tide, as it is a language: 'unpolluted with the very names of monstrosities of sin which are among the commonplaces of life in English-speaking countries' (O'Leary 1994, 21). There is no evidence adduced for this opinion, but, if the warrant for this opinion is the Old Testament, then there is no need for evidence; in terms of religious identity, the English are the modern version of the 'Hethite, and the Gerggezite, and the Amorrhite, and the Chanaanite, and the Pherezite, and the Hevite, and the Jebusite,' and should be treated accordingly. The use of biblical typology, as suggested by Cruise O'Brien, means that there is already a receptive mindset for such apodictic discourse. The specular image towards which the *ethnie* is directed has now assumed a moral and religious dimension, and part of the certainty of nationalism is surely due to this religious strand in its epistemology.

Linguistic commerce with the English spirit could be likened to the biblical injunction against commerce, communication or marriage with 'idolaters.' The same mindset is to be found in the injunctions of *Exodus* as was seen in the remarks of the clerical revivalists cited above:

> 15 Make no covenant with the men of those countries lest, when they have committed fornication with their gods, and have adored their idols, someone call thee to eat of the things sacrificed.
>
> (O'Connell 1956, 77)

Here there is no doubting the evil that is contained in these 'idolaters.' To communicate with these people is to open the 'ramparts' of the Law to the voices of the other, and the certainty that these 'voices' are evil is similar in the texts of both *Exodus* and those of the clerical revivalists. In both cases, there is no doubt in the minds of the speakers that to be 'other' – either English or Semite – is to be evil, and the fact that biblical warrant can be cited for such a perspective is an important aspect of the nationalist mindset.

Religion, language and custom are all ideological weapons in the creation of the nationalistic imaginary, and any dissenting voices are not tolerated. The clerical revivalist saw a convergence of interest between two sets of besieged chosen people, surrounded on all sides by the 'fleshly' English spirit on the one

hand, and 'fornicating' idolaters on the other. The prophetic tones of the Old Testament served as a template for the prophetic tones of the revivalist priests, whose flock similarly needed protection from the materialism and hedonism associated with English culture. The fusion of the religious and the political, so typical of Old Testament discourse, is paradigmatic of the fusion of the political, religious and aesthetic that is to be found in Irish nationalist ideology. The imperative towards *Versammlung* is furthered by this religious dimension: a people's belief in the transcendent can become a major constitutive factor in the transcendentalisation of their own sense of selfhood, and when this belief is used as a suasive device to argue for the 'naturalness' of the Irish language as a form of *enthymeme*, then it becomes a highly supportive pillar of the nationalist *imaginaire*. In terms of exhorting people to die for their nation, religion is also a powerful signifier, something we have already seen in the previous chapter.

The religious subtext of *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* has already been commented upon, and its major force is to transform a death sanctified by nationalism from an end into a new beginning. We recall the ringing tones of the Poor Old Woman at the conclusion of the play, stressing the transformational paradoxes of death for the *Volk* in terms of the dead as being still alive, the dead still speaking, and the dead still being heard. This is uttered in a prayer-like discourse which is foregrounded by the anaphoric repetition of 'for ever,' itself a verbal formula in much Catholic ritual, with many prayers ending in the phrase 'forever and ever, Amen.' It is this sacralisation of sacrifice for the nation through a religious and mythopoeic discourse that concerns us here. As Gill Baillie cogently remarks:

> The tomb of those who died violently is a myth in store. Both the myth and the tomb relate the story of past violence and give it meaning. They exonerate those who fall under their mythic influence from oral responsibility for collective violence. They edify and unify the mourners.
>
> (Baillie 1995, 228)

Of course, as we recall, the founding act in the formation of the Irish Republic was such a sacrificial gesture, with the tombs of the executed rebel leaders

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serving as potent signifiers of a revived nationalism. The religious modality of knowledge that we are tracing through the epistemology of nationalism has this added value: it encourages such sacrificial gestures by transforming the dead into martyrs, transcendental signifiers who take their place in the nationalist *imaginaire*.

Ignatieff extrapolates this, correctly in my view, to refer to nationalism in general:

> Nationalism seeks to hallow death, to redeem individual loss and link it to a destiny and fate. A lonely frightened boy with a gun who dies in a fire-fight ceases to be just a lonely frightened boy. In the redeeming language of nationalism he joins the imagined community of the martyrs.
>
> (Ignatieff 1993, 148)[10]

Here, we are back in the discourse of Pearse's valorisation of Tone, and of Serbian exaltation of Prince Lazar. As Stevens has pointed out: 'the modern nation incorporates into itself all the images of the divine,' and the nation also: 'often interacts with traditional religion but it is the nation which is transcendent' (Stevens 1997, 252). While I would agree with the thrust of Stevens' remarks, I would suggest that rather than *interacting* with religion, nationalism is, in part at least, constructed *through* a religious discourse.

A final example of the potency of the religious component of the nationalist imaginary is to be found in the ringing assertion of An t-Athair Cathaoir Ó Braonáin, in a 1913 pamphlet entitled *Béarla Sacsan agus an Creideamh i nÉirinn* (*The English Language and the Faith in Ireland*). Here, the identificatory continuum of politics, race and religion is laid down in a discourse redolent with biblical certainty. Ó Braonáin writes:

> English is the language of infidelity. It is the infidels who for the most part speak English. It is the infidels who for the most part compose literature in English. Infidels have most of the power in the English-speaking world….The sooner we discard English and revive our own language, the better off the Faith will be in Ireland.
>
> (O'Leary 1994, 24)[11]

All of these cited statements of the clerical revivalists exemplify the biblical influence that we have been tracing in this discussion, both in terms of seeing

aspects of identity as a sacred text, and in terms of tapping into the religious mindset of the vast majority of the Irish people. We have seen the rhetoric of siege, stemming both from the Bible, and from the Catholic teaching of the Bible; we have seen the monological note of certainty in the position that to be Irish, one must speak Irish and we have seen the fusion of political, religious and cultural criteria in that Englishness – both language and race – is constantly equated with the 'unholy.' When some of these injunctions are spoken by priests, and use imagery broadly similar to that of the 'clean/unclean' language of *Deuteronomy*, the comparison becomes even clearer. Under the rubric of religious rhetoric, the political and cultural consequences of attempting to ground the creation of identity in the revival of historically constituted linguistic and cultural customs become sanctified by the transcendental and the imaginary; they become part of a greater religious and moral struggle between good and evil, the holy and the unholy. The nationalist imaginary specular image has now taken into itself a moral and religious modality of knowledge, wherein the difference between knowledge (*epistémé*) and belief (*dóxa*) is blurred beyond recognition. The placement of the cultural struggle within a cosmic framework allows any dissenting voice to be branded heretical, and this can be done in both secular *fora* and media as well as sacred ones.

Perhaps the most vibrant example of the influence of religion within nationalist epistemology is to be found in the life and death of Patrick Pearse. Pearse's rhetoric, as we have already observed, is full of Catholic-inspired biblical fervour. Like the clerical revivalists, Pearse was imbued with a desire to see the Irish language become *the* cultural signifier of identity. Two of his slogans which summarise this are: '*Eire Saor, Eire Gaelach*' (Ireland Free, Ireland Irish [speaking]), and '*Tír gan teanga, Tír gan anam*' (A country without its language is a country without a soul). The latter slogan in particular, foregrounds the symphysis of a sense of Irishness with a concomitant sense of Catholicism. The degree to which he had internalised the views of the clerical revivalists on linguistic and cultural issues becomes clear from a 1901 lecture to a

Catholic Commercial Club. Here, Pearse talked about the 'War Between Two Civilisations':

> One of them is a civilisation concerned with spirit, mind, intellect, good manners and piety. That is the civilisation of the Gaels. The other is a civilisation of the body, worldly force, the strength and power of money, and the comfort of life. That is the civilisation of the English.…The native language is the barrier and firm protective wall against the onslaught of the enemies of our nationality and our civilisation.
>
> (O'Leary 1994, 26)[12]

The fusion of Gaelic and Catholic qualities here is typical of the Irish nationalist specular image, an image which still exerts a considerable gravitational pull on republicans and nationalists in contemporary Ireland.[13]

On a broader level, however, these comments have a greater importance. In the context of our Lacanian focus on the imaginary nature of the epistemology of nationalism, it is highly significant that the view of language taken by Pearse and the clerical revivalists is expressed in terms of its being a defensive mechanism. The native language is seen as a 'barrier and firm protective wall' against the enemies of Irish nationality, and the rhetoric of this passage calls to mind Lacan's scheme L, with its idea of the blocking of the symbolic relation (between the subject and the other). Because it has to pass through the imaginary 'wall of language,' the discourse of the other reaches the subject in an interrupted and inverted form. Here, this Lacanian wall of language assumes an almost literal function as it now serves as a rampart, to use Father Patrick F. Kavanagh's term, and as a barrier. As Treanor has already noted, what nationalism blocks, above all, is change (Treanor 1977, 6.2), and it is this desire to block such change that is at work in the paranoiac knowledge (Lacan 1977a, 2) of Pearse's discourse, involving as it does a delusion of mastery and absolute knowledge of the desires of the people of Ireland.

In Pearse's case, there is a further development in terms of biblical influence on nationalistic ideology. Unlike the clerical revivalists of the opening section of this chapter, Pearse identified strongly with the New Testament, and especially with the life of Christ. In Catholic ritual, the year is divided into

different aspects of the life of Christ: celebrations of his birth at Christmas, and of his passion, death and resurrection at Easter. These form a repetitive cyclical pattern which repeats itself each year. Pearse was, consciously or unconsciously, captated by an image of himself as a Christlike figure who would also sacrifice himself for his people. He also identified strongly with Cuchulainn, a mythical Irish hero, who after a glorious career, sacrificed himself so that his country (or province, for Cuchulainn hailed from Ulster) might be free. As Eliade has suggested, within the religious *Weltanschauung*: 'all sacrifices are performed at the same mythical instant of the beginning; through the paradox of rite, profane time and duration are suspended' (Eliade 1974, 35), and this is exactly the template upon which Pearse based his notion of sacrificial rebellion, seeing it as a method of transcendentalising Irish politics and of sacralising history into a religious mythology. We will return to this synthesis of identification, but first, Pearse's fusion of the Catholic with the Irish and the political will be examined.

Earlier in this study, we observed how Wolfe Tone, a Protestant and Enlightenment rationalist, was suasively included by Pearse in an Irish Catholic, nationalist pantheon. In terms of the nationalist *imaginaire*, Pearse clearly felt that some form of religious component was necessary if Tone was to be seen as his precursor, or to use a religious image, a John the Baptist figure to Pearse's own Christ. The increasing fusion of the religious and the political continues, with Tone's *Autobiography* being seen as the first gospel of Irish nationalism by Pearse (Cruise O'Brien 1994, 101). Pearse brought Robert Emmet into this worldview by dint of the same rhetoric, one year later, in New York, at the Emmet Commemoration. Here, Pearse referred to patriotism as: 'a faith which is of the same nature as religious faith' and went on to describe Emmet's death as: 'a sacrifice Christ-like in its perfection...such death always means a redemption' (Cruise O'Brien 1994, 101). Just as lococentrism served to transcendentalise the immanence of place, so this religious strand of the epistemology of nationalism seeks to both bind and harvest mortality into a form of transcendence within the *Volkgeist*, the 'imagined community of martyrs.'

As we can see, the New Testament influences become gradually more explicit in Pearse's rhetoric. Here narrative and history are fused with religion to create a teleological narrative analogous to that of the life of Christ, as told in the gospels. Just as Christ saw his role as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, so Pearse saw his as the fulfilment of the work of Tone and Emmet, but this 'work' was to be defined in his own sacral rhetoric. Both Tone and Emmet served as proto-messiahs for the Irish people, and if the sacramental archetype is to be fulfilled, these deaths must result in some form of redemption. This sacralisation of Irish political nationalism into a quasi-religious ideology is further evidence of a biblical influence. The wars waged by the Israelites were waged at the behest of the transcendental; throughout *Exodus* and *Numbers*, the battles of the Israelites are sanctioned by the Lord, for example: 'I have delivered him, and all his people and his country into thy hand' (*Numbers* 21: 34). Now, both a personified Ireland, and a Catholic deity oversaw and validated Pearse's increasingly violent nationalism.

Pearse's nationalist ideological position was increasingly expressed in the rhetoric of the New Testament. Having fused politics and religion, he went on to gather the language question into the weave, seeing it in aesthetic terms as part of his messianistic synthesis of Irish identity. In 1913, in an article prophetically entitled *The Coming Revolution*, Pearse uses the scriptural notion of the Messiah to transcendentalise the people of Ireland, stressing that the 'people itself' will be 'its own Messiah' (Pearse 1917-22, II, 91), here fusing nationalism and religion into the same epistemological structure. In this context, we see the apotheosis of Cruise O'Brien's point about nationalist typology, as the *Volk*, or rather the specular image of the *Volk*, becomes the object of its own worship. As Stevens has put it, the nation incorporates into itself all the images of the divine: 'the nation, as transcendent, makes absolute claims on its citizens; in particular, it demands that they, if necessary, should die for it' (Stevens 1997, 252). In his nationalist specular image, religion, language and nationality will become one and the same, and this synthesis is brought about through largely cultural means,

a point which brings us to the final issue of this chapter, namely is there a difference between political and cultural nationalism?

Perhaps the most common distinction made in the study of nationalism is that between nationalism *per se*, and what is termed cultural nationalism. John Hutchinson summarises a generally held view when he notes that cultural nationalism: 'does tend to develop from a cultural to a political movement, but its goals and techniques differ from those of political nationalism' (Hutchinson 1994, 46). I will contest this distinction between the two by demonstrating that they both conflate into the epistemology of nationalism, which as I think we can now begin to see, is largely enunciated through cultural *topoi* and generic modes. Indeed, I would argue that the notion of cultural nationalism as a separate entity stems from a lack of clarity in the definition of the epistemology of nationalism through a concentration on its *ordo essendi* as opposed to its *ordo cognoscendi*.

We have already seen the importance of imagination and the aesthetic in providing the epistemological methodology for the construction of the nationalist *imaginaire*. The personified Ireland in Yeats's play *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, the personified Ireland of the Elizabethan cartographers, and the personified Ireland invoked by Pearse on the steps of the general Post Office in 1916, differ only in terms of their genre, and not at all in terms of their construction, or of their epistemological content. The tropes of personification and *prosopopeia*, the performative discourse and the imaginary reification of an image, are all culturally achieved manifestations of a political will. Also religion, *sensu strictu* or *sensu lato* is predominantly a cultural phenomenon in terms of its structures, enunciation and modalities. Similarly, the specular images of identity which we discussed in the opening chapters were constructed from linguistic and cultural criteria, with notions of displaced unconscious desire coming firmly within the ambit of studies of language and the psyche.

In short, cultural criteria are hugely important in the construction of the nationalist *imaginaire*. However, given the powerful political implications of these images, it would be incorrect to assume that they can be sidelined into the

genre of cultural nationalism. The centrality of the concept of *Versammlung*, and the essentially performative and reflexive nature of the construction of the nationalist *imaginaire*, would seem to make any division between political and cultural nationalism redundant. If nationalism *qua* nationalism is seen as political in its orientation and effects, then any cultural project which participates in the creation or consolidation of a nationalist imaginary specular image is, *ipso facto*, political in its effect. In a similar manner, a politically inspired gathering of people as a *Volk* must have huge cultural implications, as it is through cultural criteria – language, narrative, images – that such political structurations are initiated. As we have seen, the political connection between a people and a place can be stated in a constative discourse, but such a discourse will find it hugely difficult to make people feel any sense of ownership of, or connected with, that place. Instead, it is through the lococentric imperative, an imperative which, as we have discovered, fuses notions of race, history, language, myth and religion, that people come to feel a bond with place, a bond for which they will, if necessary, die.

What is at work here is a form of narrative imagination, a telling of the story of a people in a place in order to vindicate the people who live in that place, and who call it home. This process, containing religious, mythic and historical strata, is necessary for cultural definition, but there is always a danger that such culturally-sanctioned categories may become reified into some structure of epistemological orthodoxy which forms a hypostasised centre of identity. We recall Kearney's point about a societal need to recall 'sacred foundational acts,' but we must also recall his warning, *via* Ricoeur, about the dangers of reifying such recollections. Such symbolic recollections can become perverted into a form of mystificatory discourse which can become 'fixed and fetishised,' in short, they can serve as lies (Kearney 1998, 166). It is such a process of fixation and fetishisation that we have termed the nationalist imaginary, an image which serves as an audience for the story of a people in a place, and as a limit point of the content of that story.

In other words, it is through the lococentric encoding of place in language that such concepts of centrality or origin can become associated with a particular location, and a particular *Volk*. This enculturative process, fusing religion, narrative, myth and identificatory desire, and using these to personify a place, be it the Garvaghy Road in Portadown, or Pristina in Kosovo, is rife with dangers and with notions of violence. Notions of historical, cultural, religious and ethnocentric centralities are often invoked and reified in order to create a form of social imaginary, which then becomes a position of fixity. They serve as transcendental signifiers under whose rubric *selfhood* is valorised in contradistinction to *otherness*; violence towards those who are not part of 'our' centre of identity is perpetuated, and ethnic cleansings of terrifying proportions are deemed to be justified. This reified identity then, whose consequences are clearly political, is very obviously cultural in origin.

For example, walking down the Garvaghy Road, in Portadown, has become a central signifier of unionist identity, and the effects of this are clear from the year-long protest by Orangemen, and the nightly scenes of violence during the high summer marching season. It is, I would argue, no accident that the starting point of much of these demonstrations is the Protestant church at Drumcree.[14] Analogously, the persecution and forcible eviction of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo is justified by claims that this area is the cradle of Serbian culture, with Pristina being the site of the foundation of the Serbian orthodox church, centuries ago. Notion of home, and the various cognate terms – 'homeland,' 'home place,' 'spiritual home,' 'ancient home,' or 'cradle of our civilisation,' are often of central importance in this process, as they define a centre, a place of origin from whence a mythology and a history can be created. Of course, such notions can only be enunciated through cultural criteria, once again, pointing out the futility of attempting to differentiate between nationalism *per se*, and cultural nationalism.

It is with this very conflation of a people with a place that we began this chapter, as we looked at the seminal 'chosen people' trope, with all of its

religious and biblical overtones. What we have discovered is that this trope is yet another example of the imperative towards *Versammlung*, towards a form of identificatory desire which has been seen to be the defining drive of nationalism. To return to Derrida's etymological archaeology of the term 'religion,' the harvesting function is brought about through the binding of a people to a place. This binding is initiated and consolidated through the creation of an imaginary relationship with an image of the *Volk* as in some way chosen and fixed.

To attempt to subdivide this process into political and cultural nationalism is to completely misunderstand the suasive power of the desire for identity that drives nationalistic discourse. These three master tropes of nationalism – personification, anthropomorphism and *prosopopeia* – are the means by which eudaemonic notions of pleasure and pain are transferred into the political sphere. Through the giving of face or the personalising of a territory, the adherents of a nationalist cause seem to form a personal relationship with that territory, a relationship which transcends the political and ideological. Yeats's play, *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, as we have observed, exemplifies this genre, with the transformation of the Poor Old Woman being brought about by the sacrifice of her people. The fact that a similar personification was used by Pearse would seem to collapse further the quasi-distinction between political and cultural nationalism. Perhaps the final words on this subject should be left to the author of the play himself. In his volume *Last Poems*, Yeats, in 'The Man and the Echo,' asks the potent question:

> Did that play of mine send out
> Certain men the English shot?

> (Yeats 1979, 393)

I think the answer must be that yes it did, and therefore, in a manner that is synecdochic of the epistemology of nationalism as I see it, cultural and political nationalisms are fused in a structure that is nationalism pure and simple.

To bring this argument to a close, in this chapter we have looked at the huge import of religious modalities of knowledge and belief in the construction of the nationalist imaginary. Now religion, I would assert, is a cultural as opposed to

a political phenomenon, and religion, in terms of the Bible as a sacred text, in terms of the trope of the chosen people, and in terms of its imagery of sacrifice, death and resurrection, is influential in terms of the creation of the nationalist specular image. In terms of the Bible, Luther's blurring of the distinction between *übersetzen* (to translate) and *verdeutschen* (to Germanise) indicates the necessity for all factors of nationalist epistemology, especially those that are culturally validated, to be taken into account when discussing the epistemology of nationalism. As we have discovered, it is the creation of the specular image that is the *ordo cognoscendi* of nationalism – the criteria that are used in this creative process are necessarily plural and disparate, depending on different temporal and spatial contexts, and to attempt to categorise them in terms of some generalised essence is to fail to see the imaginary structuration of the epistemology of nationalism.

Hence, the imbrication of the cultural and the political strands of nationalism is such that to separate them would be to attenuate the complex nature of nationalism's epistemological structure. The creation of a specular image is an imperative of any form of *Versammlung*: a people need some form of image of themselves with which they can identify, and towards which they can aspire. The constitutive elements of this image must, *de facto*, be constructed through cultural means. The mythic narrative structure which brings notions of transcendence to the aleatory connections between a people, a language, a religion and a territory is cultural by definition. Its effects, however, are definitely political in the bonding that it creates. The ongoing perpetuation of such notions of nationalism are again created through cultural and literary tropes, with Lacan's schema L suggesting the best analogy in that the culturally derived language of nationalism creates and perpetuates a discourse which blocks much of the communication between self and other by its creation of a parallel communication between the self and the imaginary two-dimensional specular image of that self.

To look for purely political constitutive criteria of such nationalist

discourse, then, is to look in vain. The essence of nationalism is an appeal to what Gellner has termed 'sentiment,' and if this appeal is to succeed, it must utilise cultural criteria. This appeal is to the eudaemonic senses of pleasure and pain: the pleasure of *Versammlung*, of *Zusammengehören*, of gathering and belonging together, and the pain of feeling alienated and of not being part of such an identity. As we have seen in this chapter, religious narratives, which imbricate notions of the transcendental with those of the lococentric vision of the *Volk*, are a means of achieving this sense of identificatory pleasure in identifying with a specular image of selfhood which defines that selfhood in terms of tropes involving sacrifice and resurrection. Here, the political is suasively captated into the religious, with notions of selfhood equated with the godhead, and conversely, notions of otherness equated with evil. The binding aspect of religion thus achieves a political harvest.

CONCLUSION

By now, it should be clear that any analysis of the effects of nationalism in our culture must attempt to define its modality of knowledge, as opposed to attempting to define some invariant core which all nationalisms are deemed to share. I have suggested that this mode of knowledge can be expressed in terms of Lacan's notion of the imaginary order, an order of identity wherein a dyadic and mutually exclusive relationship is initiated between the self and an image of that self. This imaginary relationship creates a specular image of selfhood, which then becomes the reified image of the unconscious desire for some form of identity. This relationship, as postulated in Lacan's schema L, also sets up an internal form of communication, a 'wall of language,' which performatively and reflexively defines that selfhood, while at the same time blocking any real communication with those outside of the selfhood.

I have also suggested that the need for some form of communal identity, for *Versammlung*, is an unconscious desire shared by practically all cultures and societies, and one which is utilised by nationalist ideology to validate its aims. The modalities of nationalism are successful only insofar as they further this sense of communal identity, an identity usually achieved at the expense of some form of otherness which is contrasted negatively with that imaginary sense of self. The specular image of the *Volk* is, as we have observed, a two-dimensional one which is set up and then reified as a form of ideal identity, an identity which is strongly resistant to change or development. We have also seen that this image of selfhood is largely culturally driven, and we have traced the imbrication of these cultural criteria throughout the epistemology of nationalism.

We have also noted that the narrative imagination which offers a

lococentric reading of a place and a people has a lot in common with the religious narrative of a chosen people, whose covenant with the transcendent makes them the ideal possessors of immanent territory, a territory which, through the lococentric imaginary, becomes transcendentalised within their culture. This performative quality, where one trope leads immediately to another, is typical of the dyadic nature of the nationalist imaginary, as images are created, projected, and then reflected back to further reinforce the selfhood from which they originated. Just as in the mirror stage, where it is impossible to see either the self or its image as originary, so in the epistemology of nationalism, the two-dimensional image both originates from, and performatively defines, the selfhood, the *ethnie*, that is being gathered together. Consequently, the narrative of a people in a place helps to define the selfhood of that people precisely through their fusion with that place, which, through lococentric narrative, becomes their transcendental possession.

Our example of the Serbs and the Battle of Kosovo has demonstrated this process, as narratives of lococentrism, religion and race fuse in a nationalist *imaginaire*. We are told that: 'the magnitude of Kosovo reverberates across the centuries. It has survived 609 years and throughout the succeeding generations Kosovo has become the inspiration of an entire nation.' This battle, very much an originary event, is seen as exerting a 'religious example,' and significantly it is also seen as exerting a contemporary force: 'historians have never spoken of Kosovo as though it were an event in the past that will never happen again' (http://www.srpska-mreza.com/library/facts/kosovo_intro.html). As Stevens puts it: 'nationalism provides stories of loyalty, nobility and self-sacrifice that will inspire emulation and bind present generations to the glorious dead' (Stevens 1997, 343), and we have seen this to be true of both the Serbian and Irish examples cited. I would contend that this is achieved through the fusion of living and dead within the specular image of the nation, wherein all are gathered into the nationalist *imaginaire*, a structure which can be, in a sense, existent outside time. This trans-temporality allows nationalists to locate their own actions as part

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of a seamless narrative: a new testament which typologically enacts the prophecies of an older one. The religious terminology used here is not accidental, for as we have discovered, a religious narrative is a central force in the binding (and here, we note Stevens' use of this term) and harvesting that are essential to nationalist epistemology.

On looking further at the religious modality of knowledge involved in nationalist epistemology, we observed that the salvific power of blood-sacrifice has been a central trope in the ideology of Irish nationalism, as has been the ongoing personification of Ireland in a lococentric swerve which transforms politics into familial and quasi-organic categories. As we saw in chapter three, both English and Irish nationalism availed of this trope, and I would venture that most nationalisms adopt *prosopopeia* for a similar purpose: one thinks of Mother Russia, the Fatherland, Uncle Sam, John Bull, Britannia – the list goes on. This appeal to personification demonstrates the fusion of the literary, the cultural and the political in the epistemology of nationalism. I have argued that this fusion, itself an example of a type of meta-*Versammlung*, is constitutive of the *ordo cognoscendi* of nationalism.

As was demonstrated in earlier chapters, the messianistic rhetoric of Pearse, and the aesthetic identification of Ireland as a woman in *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, stemmed from the same nationalist *imaginaire*. It is important to remember that the narrative of Irish nationalism posits a connection between Tone, Emmet and Pearse, and similarly, between the resurrection of nationalist hopes and political desires in the aftermath of a sacrifice. Hence, in Pearse's proclamation from the General Post Office in 1916, we see a combination of the notion of a chosen people ('us…her children'), fused with the personification of Ireland as a mother, by a man who identifies himself with the sacrifice, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as much as he does with the nationalistic sacrifices of Emmet and Tone. Old and New Testaments combine in an apotheosis of the religious and mythical aspects of nationalism, and all of this is brought about through cultural criteria, by means of personification and *prosopopeia*.

This trope of resurrection is a significant one on which to draw this discussion to a close. The handing down of a tradition, so important to the Israelites, and embodied in the books of the Bible, is a factor in keeping the past alive for the *Volk*. The complicated genealogical tables in *Genesis*, and the careful conservation of customs and laws that are central to biblical discourse, are also central to Irish nationalist consciousness. The clerical revivalists insisted on linguistic purity, seeing the Irish language as a form of communication with the past of their *ethnie*, as well as a form of the Lacanian wall of language, an *enthymeme*, which blocked communication with the English other. Through the establishment of this imaginary narrative which binds the past with the present, and which serves as a consequent guide to the future, nationalist discourse can posit a resurrection of ideas and ideological positions that can transcend temporal constraints. As Eliade puts it: 'an object or an act becomes real only insofar as it imitates or repeats an archetype' (Eliade 1974, 34), and it is through the establishing of these archetypes in the narrative imagination of the *Volk*, that they can become part of the nationalist *imaginaire*.

The trope of resurrection validates the trope of a chosen people in that through conservation of the past, the possibilities for resurrecting that past by means of its placement as part of the specular image, are maintained. Hence, we see *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* transformed from an old woman into a young queen. This image of resurrection is cogently commented on by Seamus Heaney, in his poem *Requiem for the Croppies*. Written to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising of 1916 (Cairns and Richards 1988, 143), Heaney perceptively writes not about the 1916 rebellion, but instead about that of 1798, the United Irish rebellion led by Wolfe Tone, with the term 'croppies' referring to a sobriquet given to the rebels who had shorn their hair in imitation of the French revolutionaries.

In this poem, Heaney writes of how the 1798 rebels in Wexford, their 'pockets full of barley,' fought under the leadership of a Catholic priest, Father John Murphy, until they were defeated at Vinegar Hill where, poorly equipped,

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thousands died facing English cannons and muskets with scythes:

> The hillside blushed, soaked in our broken wave.
> They buried us without shroud or coffin
> And in August the barley grew up out of the grave.
>
> (Heaney 1969, 24)

This image of resurrection symbolises the continuity between the tradition of the rebels of 1798 and those of 1916. Physical death cannot prevent the resurrection of the nationalist seed, and this seed, nourished by the blood of the *Volk*, springs from the transcendentalised soil of the lococentric narrative of nationalism. It is this quasi-organic narrative, fusing cultural, literary, religious and identificatory elements that is, I would assert, the *ordo cognoscendi* of the epistemology of nationalism.

NOTES

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1   Willy Maley, 'Varieties of Nationalism: Post-Revisionist Irish Studies,' *Irish Studies Review* no. 15 (1996), 34-7. This article is a thought provoking discussion on the nature of nationalism, and of the place of nationalism in the current debate about Irishness and colonialism. Indeed, Maley's article places definitions of nationalism squarely at the forefront of the intersection between theory and politics. The article is part of a thread which began in the Irish Studies Review in 1994 with Colin Graham's discussion of 'Post Nationalism/Post-Colonialism: Reading Irish Culture,' *Irish Studies Review*, no 8, 35-37, followed by Gerry Smyth's 'The Past, the Post and the Utterly Changed: Intellectual Responsibility and Irish Cultural Criticism,' *Irish Studies Review*, no 10, 25-29, followed by Colin Graham's, 'Rejoinder: The Irish "Post-"? A reply to Gerry Smyth,' *Irish Studies Review*, no 13, 33-36. A number of the issues discussed in this book have derived from this interchange.

2   In this book, Harding argues that science, in terms of its epistemology, can never be value-neutral, and argues for a more emancipatory epistemology of science through the application of aspects of postcolonial and feminist theory. See my review essay in *Event Horizon*, vol 1, number 1,107-118.

3   1798 was the year in which the United Irishmen and the Defenders rebelled against British rule, under the leadership of Wolfe Tone. 1916 was the date of the Easter Rising, a rebellion carried out by the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the Irish Citizen Army and Cumann na mBan (the Women's Army), under the leadership of Patrick Pearse and James Connolly in Easter week of that year. Both events will be discussed later in this study.

4   See John Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism*; Anthony D Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* and Fredrik Barth, *Introduction* in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*.

5   Smith distinguishes between post-eighteenth-century nationalisms and nations, and earlier ethnic communities and ethnic sentiments, which he terms *ethnie*. I would question this temporal differentiation, as to my mind, there has been little epistemological difference to be found in terms of this particular temporal parameter.

6   I have coined the term 'lococentrism' to describe this process whereby a place and a people are fused through different forms of mythic narrative, religious enculturation of place as partly transcendent, and literary and cultural discourses. It is related to Derrida's neologism 'logocentrism,' but, as will be seen in the following chapters, exists separately from this term.

7   Roy Foster, in *The Apprentice Mage*, adduces textual evidence to suggest that a lot of this play was in fact written by Lady Gregory, in collaboration with Yeats, in the Summer of 1901, 249 and 580.

8   This term is the title of a Roman Catholic hymn which was sung in Ireland at religious services. The hymn conflates politics and religion in terms of an ethnocentric and theocentric worldview:

> Faith of our Fathers! living still
> In spite of dungeon, fire and sword,
> Oh how our hearts beat high with joy,
> Whene'er we hear that glorious word!
> Faith of our fathers, holy faith,
> We will be true to thee till death.

Our fathers chain'd in prisons dark
Were still in heart and conscience free.
How sweet would be their children's fate,
If they, like them could die for thee!
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,
We will be true to thee till death.
(*Praise to the Holiest* 1977, 213)

9   For a fuller discussion of the relationship between James Joyce's writing and contemporary notions of Irishness as enunciated in aspects of the Irish and Gaelic revivals, see *The Question of Irish Identity in the Writings of William Butler Yeats and James Joyce*,183-248

10   In this late interview, Foucault seems to be changing his opinion on the position of philosophy and theoretical thinking with respect to the interests of enlightened human understanding. He seems to be moving beyond his power-knowledge equation to a more complex view of these issues. For an informed discussion of this late development of Foucault's thought, see Norris's *Truth and the Ethics of Criticism*, 121-128.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1   The term *point de capiton* has been variously translated in English as a 'quilting point' or 'anchoring point.' In effect, it refers to moments in language which give the illusion of a fixed meaning, it is the point: 'at which the signifier stops the otherwise endless movement of the signification' (Lacan 1977a, 303).

2   My own focus in this study will be on how such notions of homogeneity are created. In a similar manner, when looking at Benedict Anderson's seminal work *Imagined Communities*, I will be examining exactly how such imaginings are set in motion.

3   Interestingly in terms of this point, the four authors whose work has come to dominate the study of nationalism all hail from different disciplines: Ernest Gellner (*Nations and Nationalism*) worked in the philosophy of sociology; Benedict Anderson (*Imagined Communities*) taught international relations; Anthony Smith (*The Ethnic Origins of Nations*) is a sociologist, while Eric Hobsbawm (*Nations and Nationalism since 1780*) is a social historian.

4   As this is an internet publication, I have cited the date and paragraph number in parenthesis, as well as giving the full details of the journal, *Sociological Research Online*, Volume 2, Number 1, and the web address. I have followed the same procedure for all other internet publications referenced in this work.

5   Hall provides the following references to these works: Breuilly, chapter 1; Gellner, chapter 1 and Hobsbawm, 9-13 and chapter 1.

6   I would not necessarily agree with this, as both terms are mutually dependent, and therefore impossible to separate. I will demonstrate that, etymologically and epistemologically, these terms share a notion of selfhood which is both fabricated, and predicated on a sense of hypostasised sameness (validated by a similar concept of difference), and which is politically and socially regressive as its focal direction is always fixed on the past, and on notions of sameness.

7   While I subject these three writers to what seems to be a critical reading, I must stress that I chose them as exemplary discourses, not to set them up as 'straw men,' but precisely because they seem to state, either implicitly or explicitly, the problematic nature of the definition of nationalism most clearly. That I have learned from all three is in no way to be questioned. I see my own work as supplementing, as opposed to replacing, that of these writers.

8   This term is used in a specific, theoretical sense. It is part of Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theoretical apparatus, as the imaginary order and will form a central plank of this discussion.

9   I have taken this quote from Richard Kearney's translation of 'L'imagination dans le discours et dans l'action.' I can think of no better introduction to the work of Ricoeur than Kearney's *Modern Movements in European Philosophy*. Two of Kearney's other books, *Poetics of Modernity* and *Poetics of Imagination* contain excellent discussions of Ricoeur's work, as well as contextual placements of that work in terms of contemporary critical debate.

10   Here, I would cite the *caveat* mentioned by Benedict Anderson in the acknowledgements to *Imagined Communities*, where he notes that his own academic training, specialisation in Southeast Asia, accounts for 'some of the book's biases and choices of examples' (Anderson 1991, ix). My own academic specialisation is in the area of Irish Studies, so this will, similarly, account for many of my own choices of examples, as well as for some of the biases in the book.

11   Perhaps the best available biography of Pearse is by Ruth Dudley Edwards, and is entitled *The Triumph of Failure*.

12   Marianne Elliott's *Wolfe Tone: Prophet of Irish Independence*, is an excellent biography of Tone, and the monumental *Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone*, compiled by his son William T. W. Tone, and edited by Thomas Bartlett, has been reissued by Lilliput Press.

13   This reference is to Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland.

14   The repetition of a word with varying grammatical inflections.

15   While agreeing with Renan in terms of the spiritual, unconscious dimension of the nation, I would take issue with his view, stated in 1882, that religion was no longer a defining factor in the epistemology of the nation. His point that religion has: 'ceased almost entirely to be one of the elements which serve to define the frontiers of peoples' (Renan 1990, 18), does not hold true in the case of Ireland, where different religious practices are very much indices of socio-political borders.

16   I have quoted this same passage, and discussed it under a different, but related agenda, in my *The Question of Irish Identity in the Writings of William Butler Yeats and James Joyce*, 25-33. In this book, I look at different formulations of Irish identity and at the different Gaelic and Celtic revivals at the turn of the century which are an important aspect of this topic. There is not a specific focus on nationalism *per se*; instead, the notion of identity, both political and cultural, is discussed.

17   John D. Caputo has published the text of this colloquium, along with a series of discussions about issues raised therein in his *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*. It is probably one of the best serious introductions to Derrida's thought currently available, and it has the added virtue of accessibility. As the first part of the book features Derrida's response to a series of questions, while the second is comprised of a commentary by Caputo, I will cite pages 1-28 as (Derrida 1997b) and pages 29-214 as (Caputo 1997).

18   While the text of the proclamation was agreed in discussion with the other members of the military council, the proclamation itself was 'mainly Pearse's work' (Dudley Edwards 1990, 279).

19   It is possible that this construction, 'through us,' is a conscious or unconscious homage to the Great Doxology for the Mass Liturgy: 'through Him, with Him, in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, Almighty Father, for ever and ever.'

20   For a comprehensive bibliography of the 1916 Rising, and issues associated with it, see Dudley Edwards, 363-369.

21   I have discussed the importance of the two terms 'centripetal' and 'centrifugal' as matrices through which different aspects of Irish identity can be viewed in my *The Question of Irish Identity in the Writings of William Butler Yeats and James Joyce*, *passim*, but especially in chapter one, 25-87.

22   This exchange was recorded on the BBC news on July 12th, 1996.

23   A record of the deaths in Northern Ireland, of those of all persuasions has been published in Malcolm Sutton's *An Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland 1969-1993*.

24   In terms of the wall murals that have become something of an art form in Northern Ireland, there is an interesting website created by Rich Hitchens at the following web address: www.webgate.net/~rh/murals.html.

25   Maley's 'anglocentric Brits' observation makes the point that one person's *Heimlich* position is *Unheimlich* to someone of a different ideological and epistemological framework. Indeed, the rhetoric of this passage makes it look as if some 'British' homogenising drives tend to stick in Maley's throat, suggesting a further dimension of this term, the *Heimlich manoeuvre* as a possible alternative.

26   I think Maley is absolutely correct in his remark that: 'Unionism is...like Republicanism, a variety of nationalism.'

27   Much of the information on Serbia and Kosovo is to be found on the World Wide Web on the 'Srpska Mreza' 'The Serbian network' site: http://srpska-mreza.com/. The piece in question is entitled The Saga of Kosovo: http://www.srpska-mreza.com/mlad/index.htm. While there are still a lot of question marks over the value and veracity of websites in academic discourse, particularly in the case of ones like this, which are unmoderated, nevertheless I feel that it is this very quality which makes these sites valuable in this study. They allow for an outlet of nationalist sentiment which is in no way constrained by editorial checks, or by the need for balance. Here, I would suggest, the narrative of nationalism is allowed to flow without any blockage.

28   Much of the information on this website is accredited to William Dorich, who wrote Kosovo in 1969.

29   This adequation of the religious and the nationalistic will be further discussed in chapter four, where the religious dimension of nationalist discourse will be addressed.

30   For Heidegger's analysis of identity as a belonging together, see his book Identity and Difference.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1   Cormac Gallagher makes the point that this essay was first read at a particularly important time in Irish history. Jones's paper was delivered to the British Psychological Society on June 21st 1922, as the Irish War of Independence was gradually being transformed into the Civil War (Gallagher 1998, 1).

2   There are some excellent books on Lacan in English. Elizabeth Grosz has produced a feminist account of his writing: Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction, while Malcom Bowie: Lacan, and Madan Sarup: Jacques Lacan, have produced introductions to his work which outline much of the territory. Samuel Weber's Return to Freud is another work of interest. Bico Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy: The Works of Jacques Lacan, is also useful. Dylan Evans has produced a valuable tool for Lacanian studies in his An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis, which details and discusses much of the terminology of Lacan's work. Elisabeth Roudinesco has produced a biography, Jacques Lacan, which details much of his personal, intellectual and professional life.

3   For an interesting account of the interaction of Lacan's three orders – the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real – in a societal context, see Mark Bracher's Lacan, Discourse and Social Change: A Psychoanalytic Cultural Criticism.

4   The first issue of Minotaure contained contributions by both Salvador Dali and Lacan.

5   These were 'La Mante religieuse' and 'Mimétisme et psychasthénie légendaire.'

6   Interestingly, Lacan devoted a year of his Seminar, in 1975-6, to the study of James Joyce.

7   Wallon was the editor of the volume of the Encyclopédie Française in which Lacan's first article on the family, 'La Famille,' appeared, in 1938.

8   Ironically, the importance of Wallon's theory was such that Lacan made great efforts: 'to play down Wallon's name and present himself as the sole originator of the term' (Roudinesco 1997, 110).

9   For a more detailed reading of the polyglossic nature of Heaney's North, see my 'North: The Politics of Plurality,' Nua: Studies in Contemporary Irish Writing, Volume II, Numbers 1 & 2 (Autumn 1998/Spring 1999), 1-19.

10   I realise that the term 'nationalism' is seldom used in connection with the Orange Order, or with unionism itself. However, I hope to demonstrate that in terms of the modality of knowledge through which Orangism and unionism enunciate their worldviews, they can both be seen as types of nationalism in their own right.

11   Bhabha cites The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, volume II, 215 for this definition.

12   The translation of this term is to be found in Bracher's Lacan, Discourse and Social Change, wherein he has provided quotations from some of Lacan's seminars as yet untranslated into

English, as well as some not published in either language, but whose text has been established by Jacques-Alain Miller.

13   In his translator's notes, Martin Thom explains the term *Zollverein* as the German term for a customs union.

14   This book is the published text of the *William H. Massey Sr. Lectures in the History of American Civilization*, delivered at Harvard University in 1987.

15   Catherine Belsey discusses the Althusserian concept of the ideological constitution of subjectivity specifically in terms of the common-sense view of the subject in broadly Cartesian terms. She cites Althusser's notion of 'Ideological State Apparatuses' whose existence helps to underline and perpetuate the existing social formation. These ISAs are prime factors in the project of ideology: 'the destination of all ideology is the subject (the individual in society) and it is the role of ideology to *construct people as subjects*' (Belsey 1980, 58).

16   Here, one of Lacan's many debts to Spinoza is to be found, as the latter makes a similar point in his *Ethics.*

17   Schema L first appeared in the French version of Lacan's *Écrits* (Lacan 1966, 53) with a simplified version appearing in the English translation and selection (Lacan 1977a, 193).

18   There is an iconic pun at work in this image, as in terms of the traditional iconography of Ulster, the symbol of the province was a red hand, hence the extra layer of meaning at work here.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1   I am indebted to Malcolm Bowie for bringing this quotation to my attention in his chapter 'Inventing the "I" ' in his book on Jacques Lacan.

2   Of course, despite their differences, both Irish and English personifications often blurred issues of sexual difference in that while Ireland as a wench was in need of a husband, England, when imaged as female, was self-sufficient and capable of standing alone.

3   Keeping in mind the various Balkan conflicts in recent years, the Irish *exemplum* is but one strand in a macrocosmic series of imaginary relationships between different peoples and their sacral notions of place.

4   Jacques Derrida has interrogated the essential differences between the terms 'constative' and 'performative' in a noteworthy discussion with the analytic philosopher John Searle. The argument is too complex to rehearse here, but Derrida certainly does challenge the stability of this opposition. This discussion can be found in his *Limited Inc*. In the present context, this point is to some degree borne out in the blurring of the constative and performative with respect to the activity of mapping. As we will see, to map a place is both to represent that place in writing, but also an activity which enacts the power to create such representations in the first place.

5   See the works of Baker, Lupton, Helgerson, Fogarty and Bradshaw, Hadfield and Maley.

6   See Siobhán Kilfeather, 'Sexual Identity and National Identity in Early Irish Fiction' *Critical Matrix*, 2, 4-6 (1986), 1-31.

7   It is worth recording that a similar rhetorical adequation between negative qualities and the term 'Ireland' is traced by Hadfield and Maley in this article. The name 'Ireland' is the English name for the island of Ireland. This is the name that appears on all maps, denoting this particular politicised space. Hadfield and Maley trace a number of punning references to Ireland as a 'land of Ire' (Hadfield and Maley 1993, 3-4).

8   This image is cited and discussed in Hadfield and Maley's article, 3-4.

9   This was a poetic genre wherein the poet described a woman's body from the head downwards. In the present context, it could be seen as a synecdoche of the cartographic process, especially descriptive verbal mapping.

10   He developed this point in an earlier Field Day Essay: 'Anglo-Irish Attitudes,' 1985.

11   Joep Leerson has a number of interesting examples of this *prosopopeia* of Ireland in his excellent *Mere-Irish and Fíor-Ghael*, 154-156; 216-220; 136-238 and 246-249.

12   De Man's *The Resistance to Theory* and *Aesthetic Ideology* are invaluable in terms of the study of this ideological function of the aesthetic, as is Norris's study of de Man's writings, which deals with the latter's thoughts on aesthetic ideology.

13   It is somewhat ironic that de Man's later essays, which stressed these implicit dangers associated with aesthetic ideology: 'the potentially violent streak in Schiller's own aesthetic theory,' were read under the shadow of the discovery of de Man's wartime journalism published in *Le Soir* and *Het Vlaamsche Land*. Interestingly, Norris traces a connection between these writings, and de Man's later academic and intellectual career, noting that deconstruction evolved, in de Man's work: 'as a form of ideological critique directed against precisely that seductive will to treat language and culture as organic, quasi-natural products rooted in the soil of some authentic native tradition (Norris 1988, 182).
      For a discussion of the issues raised by de Man's wartime journalism, see:
      Christopher Norris (1988) *Paul de Man: Deconstruction and the Critique of Aesthetic Ideology*, 177-198; Geoffrey Hartman (1989) 'Looking Back on Paul de Man,' in *Reading de Man Reading. Theory and History of Literature*, 3-24; David Lehman (1991) *Signs of the Times: Deconstruction and the Fall of Paul de Man*; K. M. Newton (1994) Review of David Lehman's *Signs of the Times*. Textual Practice, 8, 2 (Summer), 348-358; Rodolphe Gasché (1998) *The Wild Card of Reading: On Paul de Man*; Jacques Derrida (1989) *Mémoires: For Paul de Man*.

14   Indeed, the flag of the Republic of Ireland, the tricolour, is green, white and orange vertical bands, with the green symbolising nationalism, the orange, unionism while the white signifies some form of accord between them.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1   I am indebted to Tony Corbett for this point, and for many other valuable suggestions.

2   I have used the terms 'political nationalism' and 'cultural nationalism' in their generally accepted senses. However, in the closing section of this chapter, I will be interrogating the basis for such a differentiation between them, a differentiation which I see as based on flawed notions of epistemology.

3   Seton-Watson's study is a monumental study of nationalism. However, I would take issue with his contention that: 'English nationalism never existed' (Seton-Watson 1977, 34); as we have seen, it was very much alive and well, certainly in Ireland.

4   Cruise O'Brien makes a number of highly significant connections between the Bible and nationalism, but he does not probe the issue of translation in any great detail (though referring briefly to German biblical translation). This is a pity as it would have made a good argument better.

5   It is important to state the *caveat* that I am not offering a critique of Catholic teaching *per se*; rather it is the modality of knowledge inherent in that teaching that is being discussed. I will argue that this monological form of interpretation creates an unyielding, fixed sense of the Bible which can then be used by nationalist ideology to validate its own hypostasised notions of identity.

6   There is a strong similarity between Pearse's idea of himself as the voice of this organicised Ireland, and the already cited instance of Paisley as a similar voice of a personified Ulster (though both, I am sure, would be equally horrified at this connection).

7   For an interesting account of such strategies, both academic and popular, see Thomas Gallagher *Paddy's Lament: Ireland 1846-1847, Prelude to Hatred*. See also L .P. Curtis Jr, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: A Study of Anti-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England*, and *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature*.

8   The general term for the Irish language is Gaelic; however in Ireland, this term is anachronistic. The more usual term for the native language is the 'Irish language,' a term which will be used in this chapter.

9   This has been a common occurrence in Irish nationalistic discourse. In one of the most famous scenes in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Simon Dedalus recounts a comment made by an unidentified friend to a priest in the aftermath of the Parnell controversy during which the Catholic church had assumed a strongly anti-Parnell stance. The comment itself pinpoints the

measure of resistance which Joyce felt towards such a conflation: 'I'll pay you your dues, father, when you cease turning the house of God into a pollingbooth' (Joyce 1993, 39). Much of this Christmas Dinner episode is permeated with the connection between the church and politics.

10   I am indebted to David Stevens' article on nationalism and religion for bringing some of the works mentioned in this chapter to my attention. The article is a lucid and brief discussion of many of the key issues: 'Nationalism as Religion,' *Studies*, volume 86, number 343, Autumn 1997.

11   This is O'Leary's translation from the original Irish language piece. I would agree with the thrust of the translation, with the *caveat* that his rendering of 'fidelity' for the Irish word 'creideamh' doesn't fully capture the connotative dimensions of this word, which would more usually be translated as faith, implying the Catholic faith. In terms of cultural specificty, I think 'heathen' or 'pagan' or even 'unbeliever' would be more accurate than 'infidel.'

12   Again, this is a translation from an Irish language piece: 'Le h-Aghaidh na Gaedhilgeóiridhe' (For the Irish Speakers), originally published in *The Weekly Freeman, National Press and Irish Agriculturalist*, March 2nd, 1901.

13   There remains a good deal of work to be done on the epistemological difference, if any, that exists between the terms 'nationalist' and 'republican.' They are often used indiscriminately, but at other times, there is a different nuance suggested by each term. I would suggest that the notion of 'republicanism' itself, in a specifically Irish historical and political context, is deserving of a great deal of intellectual and ideological unpacking, and it is a subject to which I hope to return in more detail in the future.

14   The point must be made that the Protestant clergy of Northern Ireland have been at pains to distance themselves, and their church premises, from the demonstrations which have occurred.

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