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Art and the integrative revolutions of modern conceptions of the nation

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ATHENA S. LEOUSSI

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NISE ESSAYS 10

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Athena S. Leoussi

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Athena S. Leoussi
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Flanders
State of the Art

Introduction: Art and its contexts

This essay explores the relationship between art and modern ideas of the nation as they emerged from the late-eighteenth century to the Second World War. It sets European art in the context of the two great intellectual currents that shook European societies to their foundations, and made them modern: the Enlightenment and Romanticism. Both of these visions of the world had the nation at their centre, as their ideal community, into which they integrated both the masses and the elites. However, they had very different conceptions of the nation: one imagined it as a community of citizens, the other as a village community. At first antagonistic, these visions of the ideal society would be reconciled and synthesised in attempts to create national communities that could combine both individual liberty, through liberal democratic institutions, and cultural identity, through revival and re-definition of ethno-cultural tradition. The synthesis of Enlightenment and Romantic ideas of the nation would further revolutionise European societies. It would integrate the masses and the elites at *both* political and cultural levels, fusing them into the modern, freer, and egalitarian, nations, whose members share, at least in principle, the same political rights and are guided by the core values of the same cultural tradition. The nucleus of this cultural tradition usually consists of the ideas and values, the culture, of a particular ethno-historic community, what Anthony D. Smith has called, the 'ethnic core'.[1] This nucleus provides the nation with is gravitational centre. Like a switchman, this centre sets the tracks along which the nation pursues its ends in particular circumstances. Within this theoretical framework and historical context, the essay shows, a) how artists engaged with and applied to concrete nations the different visions or models of the nation that were proposed by the Enlightenment, Romanticism, and attempts to synthesise them; b) how artists contributed to the modern integrative revolutions, whose central motor were these modern visions of the nation, which addressed the mass of the people; and c) the deeply transformative effects that artists' engagement with the nation had on European art: first, the emergence of a new type of artist, the 'national artist'; second, the liberation and thus modernisation of European art, hitherto defined by strict academic standards regarding both subject-matter and style; and third, the nationalisation of the cosmopolitan artistic avant-garde. An underlying aim of this essay is to explore the relationship between

tradition and modernity, and, more specifically, to explore the hypothesis that our modern Western world, and modern Western art, are organically connected with the pre-modern world, and with folk and traditional vernacular ways of living and art making. The essay explores this hypothesis by showing the interplay between old and new in the great intellectual currents of the Enlightenment and Romanticism. These two movements that re-shaped Western societies and their art, making them 'modern', drew inspiration from selective revival, re-combination, and transformation of motifs taken, the one, from ancient Classical (Greek and Roman) and the other, from ethno-cultural tradition.

What follows is by no means a systematic study, in time and space, of the engagement of mainly European artists with modern concepts of the nation. This would have been a mammoth task. Instead, I offer examples of the patterns outlined above, and in-depth examination of some key works of leading artists, many of whom would become recognised as 'national artists'. This essay has been immensely enriched by the massive *musées imaginaires* constructed by the Masterbuilder, Joep Leerssen, for the study of nationalism as a pre-eminently cultural project: the two-volume *Encyclopaedia of Romantic Nationalism*, and the ongoing database of SPIN - Study Platform on Interlocking Nationalisms.[2]

The link between art and its social and cultural contexts needs no explanation; it is a sociological and art historical cliché. The specific link between art and its national contexts has been explored most famously by the great art and architectural historian, Sir Nikolaus Pevsner. In 1955, Pevsner delivered his seven famous BBC Radio 4 Reith lectures, entitled, *The Englishness of English art*.[3] As a German Jew who was forced in 1933 to leave Germany and found refuge in England, he recognised in English art a clear expression of the English view of life.

For Pevsner, the work of four English artists, John Constable, William Blake, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and William Hogarth, embodied what he called the *genius loci* – the spirit of the place. For example, for Pevsner, William Hogarth's (1697-1764) self-portrait, *The Painter and his Pug* (1745), expressed English empiricism and the English pursuit of nature. In this self-portrait, Hogarth shows a truthful image of himself, without

William Hogarth, *The Painter and his Pug* (1745), oil painting, 90 × 69.9 cm, Tate Britain.

idealisation, rejection or transformation of features. Another aspect of Hogarth's self-portrait, which points in the same direction, is the 'serpentine line' which we see painted on his palette. Hogarth saw this line as the line of nature, and thus as 'the line of beauty', a type of beauty fundamentally different from continental approaches that set out to fit nature into geometric forms – cones, spheres, cylinders, and pyramids. These approaches were typified in the formal gardens of the palace of Versailles, built in the seventeenth century for the French King, Louis XIV. Pevsner would contrast the gardens of Versailles with the English garden: 'I suggest that the English garden is English in a number of ways, all profoundly significant. The winding path and the serpentine lake are the equivalent of Hogarth's Line of Beauty...'.[4]

In this essay, I wish to broaden Pevsner's scope, and show, in the specific contexts of the Enlightenment and Romanticism, the emergence of artists as active agents in expressing, defining, and promoting, through their images and symbols, national self-consciousness.

Defining the nation in the age of nationalism: the two traditions

From the late eighteenth century onwards, artists across Europe engaged with the idea of the nation, as it became the charismatic object of two modern ideologies, two new visions of the world that would make it modern: the Enlightenment and Romanticism. Both of these ideologies have shaped the ways in which Europeans and those touched by European ideas think, feel, and live today.

Both the Enlightenment and Romanticism saw in the nation the embodiment of a new and better world. However, they defined the modern 'world of nations' in very different ways. The paradox of the modern world is that neither the Enlightenment nor Romanticism proposed entirely new worlds. Both the Enlightenment and Romanticism looked to the past – to past golden ages. They both set out to revive these golden ages, and, in so doing, created the modern age. The Enlightenment set out to revive the Classical Tradition and specifically the ancient, people-governed, *free cities* of Athens and Republican Rome. Romanticism set out to revive, as well as preserve and continue, cultural tradition, and specifically the diverse traditions of *rural communities*.

In both cases, the model communities, the city and the village, were referred to as 'nations'. Both types of nation demanded sovereignty. They also demanded loyalty of their members, i.e. nationalism. This loyalty would be absolute, demanding the ultimate sacrifice (death) for the nation – for its creation and/or preservation.

The French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of August 1789, one of the key manifestoes of the Enlightenment, that was largely inspired by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, affirmed, in Article 3, that: 'The source of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation'.[5] In this new vision of society and indeed of the state, the term 'nation' would no longer refer to the aristocratic classes, but rather, to an association of people who, regardless of their social or cultural background (language, religion, customs, history), have come together on an equal and voluntary basis, in order to govern themselves according to their own collective and sovereign will. In the case of France, the nation was constituted by all the people of the French state, who, together, would now constitute the new sovereign.

As Theodore Zeldin has observed, 'The idea of France having a common personality and interest – as distinct from its all being the possession of one king – did not emerge until the eighteenth century, when the word nation came to be used in a combative sense, to mean the sovereign people, as opposed to its despotic rulers. A despotic country could not be considered a patrie – a word adopted almost as a political slogan by the revolutionaries in 1789 – a patriot being the opposite of an aristocrat'.[6] Any set of people, large or small, and with a variety of characteristics, could come together and form a nation, if they so wished. For a nation, as Max Weber observed and Ernest Renan stipulated, was a voluntary political association. As Weber put it, the '"*national*" idea' is an idea of a more or less closed self-conscious community, which 'normally tends to produce a state of its own'.[7]

In contrast, Johann Gottfried Herder, the source and leader of Romantic or Cultural Nationalism, would find the nation in rural communities. These he saw as naturally diverse and carriers of authentic cultural traditions. This natural human diversity was expressed by different languages which had to be preserved. Herder asked rhetorically, 'Has a nation anything more precious than the language of its fathers?'[8] Herder would coin the terms *Nationalismus* and *Nationalgeist*, seeing nationalism as a cultural project.

The Enlightenment urged the people to 'enter' the city; Romanticism urged the city to go to the village. Both ideologies sought legal-political transformation: the Enlightenment demanded democracy. Romanticism, in the wake of Napoleon's invasion of the German states, would demand a state to protect the culturally-defined nation, whose most authentic expression could be found in rural communities.

We usually refer to the two distinct conceptions of the modern nation that the two ideologies produced, 'civic' and 'ethnic' or cultural. The terms are based on Hans Kohn's recognition of a difference between what he called 'Western' and 'non-Western' nationalisms, in his classic book, *The Idea of Nationalism* (1944).[9]

At first, the relationship between the Enlightenment and Romanticism was antagonistic. Romanticism was a reaction against the Enlightenment; it was the Counter-Enlightenment. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the two intellectual movements would become intertwined in popular demands for both liberty and identity or, to use Ernest Gellner's terms, reason and culture – the ethno-national culture.[10] These demands came together in the *annus mirabilis* of 1848, 'the Springtime of nations'. They were the twin goals and battle cries of the European revolutions for democracy and resistance to imperialism and cultural assimilation, which swept across Europe. These revolutions provided the pattern for subsequent revolutions for democracy and identity, and most notably the 'Velvet Revolutions' of 1989 – the second 'Springtime of nations'.[11]

The intertwining of the Enlightenment and Romanticism was an attempt to bring together logically incompatible values: to combine freedom of thought and association with the orientations, authenticity, domesticity, familiarity, and ties of ethno-cultural tradition. The desire for a synthesis involved dialogue, reconciliation, adaptation, and compromise.

Artists from both camps, the civic-democratic and the cultural, took it upon themselves to create images that would define and amplify, oppose or reconcile the new hopes for a better world. They created images aimed to make their publics see what a world of nations would look like and how it could be achieved. Modern nations were thus painted and sculpted into existence.

The nation as a democracy in the art of the Enlightenment

The message of the Enlightenment was communicated primarily through its classical models. Neo-Classicism was the art of the Enlightenment, and Jacques-Louis David its messenger. David was both a major artist and an important political personality. A member of the extremist Jacobin group led by Maximilien Robespierre, he was a supporter of the Revolution and a member of the *Convention*, an assembly elected to provide France with a new constitution. The *Convention* governed France from 20 September 1792 until 26 October 1795, the most critical period of the French Revolution.[12] David would die in exile in Brussels in 1825 because he had voted for the execution of King Louis XVI in 1792.[13]

As an apostle of Neo-Classicism, David was revolutionary and thus *modern* in both form and content. He would define the art of Neo-Classicism, with his shallow spaces, freeze-like and sparse compositions, rigorous contours, sculpted forms, polished surfaces, and archaeological correctness in his reconstructions of the personalities, costumes, furniture and architecture of the model ancient Greek and Roman worlds. Interestingly, Eugène Delacroix, the great artist of the Romantic movement, would call David, as late as 1860, 'the father of the entire modern school in painting and sculpture'.[14]

David would paint scenes from the lives of Socrates and Brutus, set in democratic Athens and early Republican Rome, respectively. These subjects from ancient Greek and Roman history would carry the message of political freedom and the freedom to think and criticise tradition: they were symbols of democracy and free thought.[15]

In the oil painting, *The Death of Socrates* (1787), David shows the Greek philosopher Socrates (469–399 B.C.) in a prison cell, seated on a bed, preaching to his anguished pupils and about to take a goblet of poison hemlock. His pupils surround him, including Plato, who is seated at the foot of the bed.[16] Plato was not present at Socrates' death, but narrated the event in his work, *Phaedo,* as one of his 'Dialogues'. David had read *Phaedo* and largely based his painting on it. Socrates defied Athenian belief in the twelve gods and was condemned to death for impiety and for corrupting the youth with his ideas. At the same time, and without

Jacques-Louis David, *The Death of Socrates* (1787), oil on canvas, 130x196 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art. [Wikimedia Commons]

renouncing his ideas, Socrates respected and obeyed the democratic laws which protected religious tradition, refusing to save his own life by fleeing Athens, which was an option offered to him. Writing in 1896, the great Victorian thinker G. Lowes Dickinson described Socrates as a precursor of the 'opposition, to use the modern phrase, between science and religion' that 'developed early in ancient Greece'.[17] From the eighteenth century onwards, Socrates, together with Aristotle, enter modern European culture, for having heralded the Enlightenment's faith in reason and modern science. They were seen as advocates of empirical observation, intellectual freedom, and independence of thought.

David's *The Lictors Bringing to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons* (1789), also illustrates Enlightenment ideas. Although commissioned by King Louis XVI, it was exhibited in the Paris Salon when the French Revolution was already underway, thereby acquiring an unanticipated political significance. It

Jacques-Louis David, *The Lictors Bringing to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons* (1789), oil on canvas, 323 cm x 422 cm, Louvre Museum. [Wikimedia Commons]

was hailed by Republicans. Brutus would embody the new scale of values and the new priority: that the protection of political freedom from royal and tyrannical usurpers is superior to the protection of the family. Brutus, founder of the Roman Republic and the first Roman Consul, drove the kings away from Rome and ordered the execution of his sons because they had supported the monarchy. David shows, on the left of the scene, the Lictors, who were Roman officers, bring in the corpses of his sons for burial. On the right of the composition, Brutus' brightly lit wife and daughters are distraught at the sight of the corpses, while Brutus sits isolated in the foreground, on the left, under the shadow of a statue personifying the city of Rome. The statue bears the inscription '*Dea Roma*'. The city of Rome is the supreme value.

The nation as a community of culture in the art of Romanticism: the apotheosis of national cultures through art

Romanticism inspired an entirely different kind of art, in both subject-matter and style. The Enlightenment sought to revive the city of Athens of the fifth century BC, seeing the nation as 'a community of citizens', of self-determining, free thinkers, like the citizens of Athens.[18] For the Enlightenment, human beings, in order to become rational again, should free themselves from the superstitions, obligations, and customs, that tradition (i.e. the ideas, values and practices of their ancestors) had piled on them. Human beings should be rational and culture-less. As Ernest Gellner graphically put it, the view of the Enlightenment was that modern, enlightened men and women should have no navel.[19] Rule by rational human beings was expected to bring consensus and peace.[20]

Romanticism reacted against this vision of culture-less free thinkers, without memories, feelings or traditional obligations. It demanded and defended tradition. For Herder, the inherited wisdom of the ages was stored in native languages and literatures, hence the emphasis on language of most of those movements that set out to revive the national culture. As Herder put it: 'Has a nation anything more precious than the language of its fathers? In it dwells its entire world of tradition, history, religion, principles of existence; its whole heart and soul'.[21]

Herder's cultural nationalism challenged the empires of his time. Herder had argued against all forms of coercion, and above all political empire – the forced imposition of one culture on another or forced mixing of cultures. For Herder, the Roman Empire, the archetype of empire, was an unnatural monster: 'a lion's head with a dragon's tail, an eagle's wing, a bear's paw, ['glued together'] in one unpatriotic symbol of a state'.[22]

The invasion of Germany by Napoleon's *Grande Armée* in 1806 rapidly transformed Herder's primarily cultural impulse into a militarism which, in the German case, is usually associated with Fichte who urged Germans to fight for independence from France.[23] It transformed cultural nationalism into political-military nationalism.[24] The principle of political nationalism was simple. As Gellner put it, nationalism is the demand that 'as a character in *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* observed, every girl ought

to have a husband, preferably her own'.[25] So, nationalism became the marriage between culture and state. As Gellner also noted, the course of true nationalism never did run smooth. It involved conflict, violence, and death.

The marriage between culture and state created a new type of state – the nation-state. As Anthony D. Smith has noted, the nation-state is the means 'to attain or maintain autonomy, unity and identity for a social group which is deemed to constitute a nation'.[26] The nation-state would express and protect the cultural community, transmitting its culture through state-sponsored educational institutions. At the same time, and as Smith has emphasised, defining the national culture is a contested issue. There are 'alternative conceptions of national identity', with 'frequent clashes of ideas' and 'social and political divisions'.[27] Consequently, the main concern of national mass education is not to 'homogenise' the population, but to try and 'unify' them under widely accepted, common symbols, traditions, memories and myths.[28]

Like Smith, Joep Leerssen has stressed the importance of culture in nationalism: 'All nationalism is cultural nationalism'. On this basis, he has described nationalism as the 'cultivation of culture'.[29] Nationalism has led to an explosion of cultural creativity: the production of works of art whose subjects and forms have been inspired by the idea of the nation. Artists have sought to capture the distinctive patterns, sights, and sites of the collective life – past, present, and future – of their nation. Through their visual representations of the nation, artists have created mirrors in which the members of the nation could glimpse reflections of themselves, actual or potential, and from which they could derive a sense of identity and belonging. However, like the Enlightenment idea of liberty, culture was difficult to define. Artists therefore participated, together with other intellectuals, in the debates over the cultural identity of the nation: what it was and what it should be.[30] The idea of the nation as a charismatic and sovereign community of culture (*Kulturgemeinschaft*) transformed both European art and the role of the artist. It made them 'modern'.

Romanticism and the nationalisation of European art

The idea of the nation as a distinct cultural community revolutionised European art in the following key respects:

1. subject-matter
2. hierarchy of subject-matter, and
3. style

The national turn in art would generate a new kind of artistic culture, national artistic culture.[31] European art academies had, since the Italian Renaissance, defined the subjects worthy of artistic representation and had created a hierarchy of these subjects, from High to Low. The traditional academic hierarchy of artistic subject-matter divided subjects into History, the most important type of painting, usually on a large scale, Portraiture, Genre, Landscape and Still-Life. Study of the academic hierarchy of artistic subject-matter and of its transformations under the impact of the idea of the nation, is revealing. It provides a structured and hugely productive entry point into how nations were defined in the course of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries, until the academic hierarchies were eventually abandoned, having been challenged by liberal and egalitarian ideas, including the idea of the nation. The range of artistic subject-matter further reveals the multiple dimensions or aspects of national identity. I shall consider each category of subject-matter in turn, according to the traditional academic hierarchy, indicating the transformations that each underwent.

History

I The Nationalisation of Military History

In the European academies, History subjects had typically consisted of images showing the military prowess of monarchs and aristocrats, and illustrations of subjects taken from Greek and Roman History (usually Military History), Mythology, and from the Bible. As the idea of the nation grew, launching the 'age of nationalism', artists, together with other nationally-motivated intellectuals, transformed conventional History subjects into national History, or ethno-History subjects. They started exploring, celebrating and, as John Hutchinson has observed, reviving

their ethno-national political and religious history and mythology.[32] This artistic turn is particularly visible from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards. Arminius, leader of the ancient Cheruscans, becomes prominent in nineteenth-century German art, as a national hero who defended the freedom of the German tribes against the invading Roman legions in the Teutoburg Forest in 9 CE. Tacitus, in his *Annales*, had referred to him as 'without doubt Germania's liberator'.[33] Caspar David Friedrich (1744-1840), whose art Goethe would deride as 'New German, religiously patriotic', would paint *Rocky Valley* (ca. 1813/1814), featuring the tomb of Arminius, during the Napoleonic Wars.[34] The German Chancellor of the first German nation-state, Otto von Bismarck, would raise a monument to Arminius to mark German victory and unification following the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871.[35]

The *Hermann Monument*, raised on the mountain of Grotenburg near Detmold, was completed in 1875 by Ernst von Bandel. Although built in the context of the wars of German national unification, both defensive and offensive, the meaning of *Hermannsdenkmal* has now changed into 'a memorial for peace and international understanding'.[36]

In England, Alfred the Great would be celebrated in both painting and sculpture in the decorations of the new houses of Parliament that would illustrate primarily Englishness through scenes from English history.[37] The oil painting, *Alfred Inciting the Saxons to Prevent the Landing of the Danes* (1847), by G.F. Watts, known as 'England's Michelangelo', is a case in point. Bought by the Fine Arts Commissioners to hang in a Committee Room in the Houses of Parliament, King Alfred the Great is shown leading the Anglo-Saxons into battle against a Danish invasion force in 876.[38] Such images of national armies defending their nation against foreign rule would become widespread from the nineteenth century onwards. They affirmed and cultivated the consciousness of national unity and independence.

These images contrast with most earlier battles and images of battles. Earlier battles would typically be led by mercenary knights whose self-interest was to extend the battle in order to increase their pay. Leonardo da Vinci's battle of Anghiari is a good example. Leonardo was commissioned to paint it in 1503 by the Florentine government in the Palazzo

della Signoria in Florence. Although the work was destroyed around 1560, Leonardo's representation of this battle was made famous by a copy by Rubens.

Ernst von Bandel, Hermann Monument (*Hermannsdenkmal*) (1838–1875), copper plates riveted together and supported by an iron frame, Height of the monument, 53.44 m, Teutoburger Wald, Detmold. [Wikimedia Commons]

In 1875, the Belgian artist Constantin Meunieur would paint popular national resistance to foreign rule in *The Flemish Peasants' War, 1798-1799*. Here he shows the heroism of the anonymous Flemish peasants, resisting French rule in 1798-1799 as Napoleon's armies occupied the Southern Netherlands, including modern Belgium, Luxembourg, and parts of Germany, during the French Revolutionary Wars.[39]

Alphonse Mucha, the Czech artist at the forefront of Parisian Art Nouveau, with huge commercial success, especially through his posters and *panneaux décoratifs* that showed the 'New Woman' of the Belle Époque (e.g. Sarah Bernhardt) with streaming hair and flowing robes, would turn, in the closing years of the nineteenth century, to Czech and more broadly Slav national subjects.[40] In 1899, Mucha conceived a series of paintings that would be a monument for all the Slavonic peoples. He devoted the latter half of his artistic career to the realisation of this work aimed at 'ennobling art and his birthplace'.[41] Between 1911 and 1926, he produced a series of paintings showing the history of the Slav people, *The Slav Epic* (*Slovanská epopej*). He offered it to the city of Prague.[42] *The Slav Epic* is a series of twenty monumental canvases (the largest measuring over six by eight metres) depicting the history and culture of the Slav people. An example of the series is *Slavs in their original homeland: Between the Turanian Whip and the Sword of Goths* (1912). First in the series, it begins the history of the Slav people 'in the fourth to sixth centuries, when the Slavic tribes were agricultural folk who dwelled in the marshes between the Vistula River, the Dnepr River, the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea'.[43] Without strong political organisation to defend them, their villages were under constant attack from the East and the West. Here, Mucha combines visionary symbolism with historical events. In a night landscape, with the sky studded with stars, two survivors of one of the invasions hide in the foreground as their village is shown burning on the horizon. The floating silhouette of a pagan priest, *žrec*, from pre-Christian Slav history, dominates. Behind him the dark shadows of attackers. He stretches out his arms asking gods to prevent tyranny and wars. On his left, a girl, frightened by raiders, bows her head crowned with green leaves symbolizing peace. On his right stands a young warrior in armour. The Slavs are thus shown as peaceful bearers of agriculture, ready to defend themselves, but eventually displaced by nomadic Turanians, Huns and Avars from the east

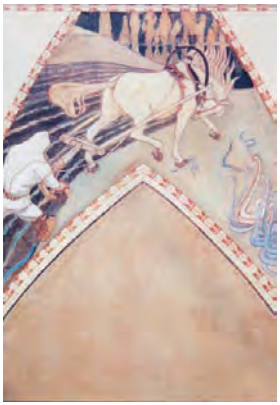
or Goths, Germanic raiders from the west, seeking to subjugate them. The white clothes of the priest and the girl symbolise purity and innocence, contrasting with the red fire of the invaders.

II The Nationalisation of Mythology

Greek and Roman Mythology would be replaced or supplemented by illustrations of national or wider, pan-national mythologies, the latter seeking to forge bonds among nations belonging to families of culture. Pan-Slavism was one example, and Mucha, mentioned above, would be one of its artistic propagators. Pan-Scandinavianism was another case in point. It sought to promote a common Scandinavian cultural consciousness and a degree of political unity, based on common cultural bonds - linguistic-grammatical, literary (saga and *Edda*), pre-Christian religious similarities and common heritage. Flourishing from 1815, after the Napoleonic wars, Scandinavianism inspired artists to reject the rigid Classicism of their national and European academies, focused on Greek and Roman gods, and explore the 'gods of the North'. Of course, not all artists took this turn. The great Neo-Classical Danish sculptor, 'Bertel Tholvaldsen never warmed to the idea [of Norse myths in sculpture], staying loyal to the Classical heritage'.[44] However, the Swede Bengt Erland Fogelberg, for example, would engage with the Norse gods, such as his sculpture of *Odin* of 1830, in the National Museum of Sweden. As Knut Ljøgodt has noted, 'The 1840s saw a new national vogue in Scandinavia – often referred to as the National Romantic movement, partly inspired by the liberal ideas that swept across Europe, partly by domestic developments'.[45]

Outside Scandinavia, Finland also shows artists' turn towards national mythology. Akseli Gallen-Kallela would begin in 1889, illustrating myths from the Finnish epic, the *Kalevala*. Projecting a distinctively Finnish view of the world, and developing his own interpretation of the international Arts and Crafts style, a style inspired by vernacular architecture, arts and crafts, and championed by William Morris in England, Gallen-Kallela would become 'Finland's national artist'.[46]

The *Kalevala* became the Finnish foundation myth. It had been compiled earlier in the nineteenth century, in 1834, by Elias Lönnrot.[47] Gallen-



Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Study for the fresco *Ilmarinen ploughing the Viper-field* (or *Ilmarinen Ploughing the Field of Vipers*) for the Finnish pavilion at the World Fair in 1900 (c.1900), fresco, National Museum of Finland. [Wikimedia Commons]

Kallela would become known as 'the *Kalevala* illustrator'. As Wahlroos, Director of the Gallen-Kallela Museum has noted, 'A need to depict Finland's national epos followed him throughout his life'.[48] In his depictions of Finnish myths, he would show the distinctive Finnish landscape, folk-costumes and objects. Wahlroos also observed that:

> In late 19th century Finland, the whole concept of Finnishness was under a new formulation since our national position as a Grand Duchy of Russia was changing. There was a national need to define Finnish identity and Gallen-Kallela gave his answer through his art. His depictions of Finnish nature, people, and the *Kalevala* were recognised to be important because they showed the potential of our own heritage and culture.[49]

Gallen-Kallela saw the *Kalevala* as an integral part of his mental world, its figures, natural and supernatural, with their adventures and vicissitudes having inhabited and shaped his imagination since childhood, when he first heard these tales:

> In regard to their themes, the old tales of the *Kalevala* evoke in me the warmest feeling of familiarity, as if I had lived and experienced it all myself. But when I use

> these themes, it is not in order to 'illustrate' them, but because their reality corresponds to my own imagination and they arouse in me a yearning to put them on canvas. Nor do I proceed from the theme, but rather from my own state of mind and conception of painting, the images that appeared in mind, having already lived in my soul since my early childhood.[50]

Wahlroos further observes that Gallen-Kallela 'faced the challenge of how to bring into pictures the mythological imagination, which was at the same time very concrete and multifaceted, real and supernormal'. Abandoning French Realist style as inadequate to convey the world of mythical creatures and events, Gallen-Kallela would express, from the 1890s onwards, his own mental images of the *Kalevala* in a new and evolving style, characterised by simplification – stylization, archaism, primitivism –, symbolism and eventually a more decorative impulse. *The Defence of the Sampo* (1896), *Joukahainen's Revenge* (1897) and *Lemminkäinen's Mother* (1897) all belong to the symbolist phase. His style, as well as his iconography, would also be increasingly informed by folkloric and ethnographic research.

Gallen-Kallela would use the *Kalevala* as metaphor of Finnish national resistance to Russian imperial rule. In 1806, supreme rule over the Grand Duchy of Finland had been transferred from Sweden to the Tsarist Empire. Russian rule eroded Finnish constitutional liberties and pursued Russification policies.[51] Among his mural decorations for the Finnish Pavilion for the Paris International Exhibition of 1900, Gallen-Kallela would paint *Ilmarinen plowing the field of vipers*. With strong outlines and bold colours, Gallen-Kallela shows Ilmarinen, the 'eternal hammerer' and hero of the *Kalevala*, clearing a field of vipers, where the vipers symbolise Tsarist rule.

III The Nationalisation of Religious Subjects

Traditional religious painting, inspired by the Old and New Testaments, undergoes both a revival, alongside Romantic revivals of traditional Christian belief, and a transformation, becoming a vehicle of modern

experiences and longings – both national and universal. The nationalisation of Biblical subjects took different forms. European artists set out to depict the religious identity of the nation. They showed the national history of Christianity, such as their nation's conversion from paganism to Christianity. They also showed modern, national life inspired and ruled by the Bible. The Norwegian artist, Adolph Tidemand would show the conversion of Scandinavia's Vikings/Norsemen to Christianity under the leadership of King Olaf of Norway (1015–1028), in a series of sketches, drawn in the 1840s, and intended for the University of Christiania (they were never executed).[52] Artists would also celebrate living, regionally diverse Christian traditions and combine them with stylistic innovation. This new orientation would be part of a wider 'regionalist' artistic movement that would apply ethnic and local diversity to modern concepts of the nation.

In *Le Christ jaune [The Yellow Christ]* (1899), now in the collection of the Buffalo AKG Museum in New York, the French artist Paul Gauguin would celebrate Breton regional religious rituals and traditions, combining them with stylistic innovation. It was in the Brittany paintings that Gauguin would introduce blocks of colour and bold outlines, that would lead him away from Impressionism and towards Symbolism.[53] Gauguin shows the isolated life and piety of the Breton peasants of the village of Pont-Aven, several of whom are pictured dressed in their distinctive regional costume and kneeling at the foot of the cross during the evening hour of Angelus – a Catholic prayer recited daily at 6am, noon, and 6pm.

In Brittany, the autumn harvest that Gauguin symbolises with the yellow colour that suffuses the canvas, possessed deep spiritual significance. Grain was believed to undergo a process parallel to the religious cycle of Christian life – birth, life, death, and rebirth. Gauguin made his Christ yellow in harmony with the colour of the autumn harvest, affirming the simplicity and spirituality of rural France as a protest against the centre: the artificiality and sophistication of modern Parisian life.

As Eric Storm has observed, Gauguin, through his modern, Symbolist approach created 'generic', symbolic images of Breton peasants.[54] He created Breton types through simplification and by avoiding individual

characterisation and inessential ethnographic and topographical detail in the depiction of Breton costume and landscape. Gauguin thus brought regional culture, and specifically the Breton peasant, to the forefront of the avant-garde's attention.

We also see the transformation of biblical personae into national icons. For example, Mucha would identify Bohemia, one of the Czech lands, with Jesus.

Alphons Mucha, *France embraces Bohemia* (1918), oil on canvas, 105x122cm, Mucha Museum. [Wikimedia Commons]

In his painting, *France embraces Bohemia* (ca. 1918), he creates a radically innovative image of the Crucifixion. The image offers a conceptualisation of the creation of Czechoslovakia as an independent nation-state from Austrian Habsburg rule, following defeat of Germany and Austria-Hungary in the First World War. Mucha's conceptualisation shows a female figure, who symbolises Bohemia, tied to the cross, draped with a piece of cloth bearing folk designs. On top of the painting, and behind the cross, a muscular man turns around to kiss her. He wears a red Phrygian cap, that the French Revolutionaries had associated with the cap used by emancipated Roman slaves, thereby making it a symbol of Liberty. What is unusual here is the male personification of France, who is typically female in the image of Marianne. In Mucha's painting, France, a democracy, and one of the victorious powers of the First World War, releases crucified Bohemia from the ropes that had tied her to the cross.

The metaphor of the Czechs as crucified was an old image, going back to the Battle of the White Mountain (1620) when the Czechs were defeated by the Austrians in the conflict between Catholics and Hussites.[55] Mucha's image of liberated Bohemia is a representation of French recognition of the independence of Czechoslovakia from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In June 1918, France recognised the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris under the leadership of the Member of the Reichsrat and subsequently President of Czechoslovakia, Thomas Masaryk.[56] Mucha would also nationalise the New Testament episode of the Annunciation in his swirling Art Nouveau painting, *Madonna of the lilies* (1905). Here, he shows a vision of the Virgin Mary, surrounded by a mass of white lilies, symbolizing purity, looking down at a seated young girl dressed in Slavic costume, wrapping her with her swirling drapery, as if to protect her. The young girl holds a wreath of ivy, the symbol of remembrance.[57]

In his several paintings of the Crucifixion, Marc Chagall would transform the Christian image of Jesus' suffering on the Cross, an image of hope for humanity, into an icon of despair at the endless suffering of the Jews.

In works such as *The White Crucifixion*, now in the Art Institute of Chicago, painted in 1938, in the wake of *Kristallnacht*, Chagall would transform Jesus into a symbol of the tragic history of the Jewish people in an image that

Marc Chagall, *White Crucifixion* (1938), oil on canvas, 154.6 x 140 cm, Art Institute of Chicago.

displays the recurrent devastation of Jewish lives by pogroms and Nazi extermination camps.[58] Chagall's Crucifixions offer an ethnicised account of a universalistic and vital tradition shared by both Jews and Christians, and rendered in a radically modern style. In *The White Crucifixion*, for example, borrowing from Cubism, Expressionism, Suprematism and Surrealism, Chagall created an image of both universal and particular, Jewish suffering, in which Jesus' loin cloth is replaced by the Tallit – '*le Christ est judaïsé*'.[59] Through the use of Jewish ethnic symbols, Chagall reminded viewers that Jesus was Jewish, thereby emphasising the Jewish origins of Christianity, the religion of Europeans who, despite this fact, persecuted and wanted to exterminate the Jews.

Portraiture

Portraiture was transformed from the portrayal and celebration of monarchs and aristocrats to what we might call national portraiture. We can distinguish between two types of national portraiture. The first type comprises the portrayal of particular individuals, historical or contemporary, either as founders, leaders and defenders of the nation, and/or as representative examples of the nation's talents and achievements – political, cultural, economic, social. The nationalisation of individuals would transform exceptional and charismatic persons, whose significance may also have been universal, into symbols of a specific nation and its virtues.[60] The statue of *Adam Mickiewicz* (1798–1855) in Krakow, by Teodor Rygier, inaugurated in 1898 to celebrate the poet's one hundredth birthday, is an example of all three phenomena: a great Romantic poet, a poet who defined a nation, and a poet who was nationalised. Indeed, Mickiewicz is an example of the interesting phenomenon of a great poet claimed by different nations. Mickiewicz has been regarded as the national poet of Poland as well as Lithuania. He was 'Lithuanised' during the interwar period of Lithuanian nation-building and on the basis of the love of Lithuania that he expressed in some of his poetic works.[61] At the same time, Mickiewicz was a political activist for Polish independence. He shaped ideas about the Polish nation, its history, character, messianic mission, and need for independence, in his many historical and literary works, such as *Books of the Polish Nation and Its Pilgrimage* (1832), and his poetic masterpiece, the great epic poem, *Pan Tadeusz* (1834).

A second distinct type of national portraiture consists of portraits of the nation as a corporate entity. Artists embarked on creating icons, symbols of the nation as a whole. Personification was a key device; artists would create allegories of the nation depicted as one person – all the people in one. Usually, the nation is represented as a woman. This person is often presented like the gods or goddesses of ancient Greek sculpture: with generalized features, wearing classical robes, and bearing motifs symbolizing distinctive national traits, as in the image, or indeed, the various images of Britannia that appeared during the nineteenth century. Britannia is an ancient personification of the British Isles, created by the Romans. Appearing mainly on Roman coins, she originally symbolized the Roman

William Dyce, *Neptune Resigning to Britannia the Empire of the Sea* (1846), oil painting on paper laid down on board, preparatory work for a fresco at Osborne House, the family home of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, still to be seen on the wall above the stairwell, now open to the public, 32 x 49cm, Sotheby's auction, 19 January 2024, Lot 37. [Wikimedia Commons]

conquest of the British Isles. By the seventeenth century, Britannia was transformed. Instead of a symbol of submission, it was used in England to celebrate English monarchy and power.

During the nineteenth century, Britannia would become a symbol of the British nation, whose evolving attributes – Roman helmet, trident, and shield – would represent national traits of British strength and imperial power over the seas of the world.[62]

The German nation was also personified in female form, in Germania. Germania would appear in many guises. During the period of German unification, she appears as a *Freiheitsbraut*, the bride of liberty, a young virgin fighting for a liberal-democratic constitution against the old elites, within a German nation-state.[63] She would preside over the assembly in St Paul's Church in Frankfurt, that prepared the first national parliamentary elections in 1848. Painted by Philip Veit and Edward von Steinle, she is shown blond, with a sword, cast shackles at her feet, and holding the German tricolor, inspired by the French Revolution. Despite her liberal attributes, her innocent expression and static appearance were seen as signs of weakness and were criticized by liberals. Furthermore, her medieval robes and sword evoked the medieval Holy Roman Empire and its view of the sacred authority of government, thereby presenting a more conservative image of Germany. She would become a *Siegesbraut*, a victory bride, in Lorenz Clasen's *Germania guarding the Rhine* (1860). Here, Clasen's Germania is a warrior maiden in action, uniting the Germans, divided in their political ends since 1848-49, in defence of the Rhine against French invasion. She holds a sword with the inscription: 'The German sword protects the German Rhine'. The picture would become a popular symbol of German military mobilisation against the French in 1870-1871.[64]

In Ukraine, Berehynia, a figure from Slavic mythology representing the hearth mother and protector of the home, would become the personification of the Ukrainian nation and, in the current context of the war in Ukraine, a symbol of national independence from the Russian Federation. The column of Berehynia in Kyiv that replaced a statue of Lenin, in what is now Independence Square by Anatoliy Kushch of 2001, shows the persistence to the present day of Ukrainian myths in defining the Ukrainian nation.[65]

Genre

Traditionally, 'Genre' involved images of daily life and especially daily life in the countryside – peasant life. Genre had also been associated with the picturesque and, in aristocratic Europe, and especially eighteenth-century Rococo France, with the sub-category of *fêtes champêtres*, or *fêtes galantes*. The *fêtes champêtres* was a type of painting invented by the French painter Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684-1721).

Watteau, Jean-Antoine, *Fête Champêtre* (c.1722), oil, 54 x 65,7 cm, Dulwich Picture Gallery. [Wikimedia Commons]

It depicted scenes involving fashionable aristocratic couples apparently leading the lives of simple and care-free rustics, gathering in a glade, hanging their bagpipe on a tree, collecting flowers and making love.[66]

Genre was also associated with the eighteenth-century aristocratic Grand Tour of Europe that culminated in Italy, where artists would also go to paint souvenirs of *contadini* and especially *contadinas* for the mostly British Grand Tourists.[67]

With the new focus on the national community, artists set out to discover, record, and thereby celebrate the distinctive customs, habits and ways of life of the national-cultural community to which they felt they belonged. They sought to turn the nation into art – to turn the nation into a modern icon. Interestingly, not all iconic images of the nation were made by artists who were members of the nation or sub-nation. For example, the Welsh painter Augustus John would create one of the iconic images of Ireland in *Galway*, showing Irish peasant men and women, the latter in shawls, a motif which had fascinated the artist. *Galway*, consisting of three canvases painted in oil in 1916 (retouched in 1920), was commissioned for the Arts and Crafts Society exhibition at Burlington House in 1916.[68]

The focus on the life of the common people caused the reversal of the academic hierarchy: Genre scenes became the new History painting. In the new History painting, the nation emerged as a rural, moral community whose patterns of life were sacred, exemplary, and must be preserved. This sacred, charismatic status was expressed in the monumental size of the new peasant art that rivaled the size of academic History painting. Scenes of rural life became ethnographic studies of the nation, and their status raised to that of History painting. As rural life acquired national significance, artists took their easels to the village to capture its communal ethos, religious faith, costumes, customs, and habits.

The national conceptualisation and validation of rural life ran counter to feudal and socialist attitudes towards the peasant. Feudalism tied the peasants to the land and subjected them to taxes and the *droits du seigneur*. Socialism idealised the urban industrial working-class as the agent of the future and dismissed the peasant. Marx and Engels would famously refer to 'the idiocy of rural life'.

The Herderian idea of the nation saw the nation in the rural *Volk* which it regarded as the authentic, spontaneous, and natural community of cul-

ture. It turned the peasant into the new symbol of human dignity and cultural authenticity, a carrier of religious piety and ancestral wisdom, against the artificiality and cosmopolitanism of the city. The *Volk* would be, to use Weber's terms, the repository of 'irreplaceable culture values'.[69]

The Ukrainian artist-poet Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861), the son of serfs, a democrat, and a fierce critic of Russian autocracy, would become a hero of the Ukrainian national movement, from the 1840s until his death in 1861. He is regarded by many, including Hugh Seton-Watson, as the first Ukrainian 'national intellectual'. Under the impact of Herder's ideas,

Taras Shevchenko, *Peasant Family* (1843), oil, 60 x 72.5 cm, National Museum Taras Shevchenko. [Wikimedia Commons]

Shevchenko would represent, in both his art and poetry, rural life in Ukraine as Ukrainian national life.[70] He would be imprisoned and exiled, with Tsar Nicholas I ordering that he be placed 'Under the strictest surveillance, with a ban on writing and painting'. However, he would persist with his art, and become recognised in Ukraine as 'the founder of critical realism and the folk element in Ukrainian fine arts'.[71]

Shevchenko's Realist representations of the daily life of the Ukrainian peasants, such as *Peasant Family* (1843) in the Shevchenko Museum, are critical comments on the poverty, and social and national oppression of the Ukrainian people by the Tsarist regime. As the website of the Shevchenko Museum notes, Shevchenko's art 'was based on the Ukrainian national-liberation movement'. His paintings 'expressed the moods of the oppressed masses not only in Ukraine; they also expressed the aspirations and hopes of working people of different nationalities'. He 'strived to convey in his compositions the sacred aspirations and deeds of the Ukrainian people, to truthfully portray their everyday life and reproduce the images of their heroical past'.

In France, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, we also find an additional, political motivation for the national turn to the countryside.French defeat in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871 gave a new meaning to the French countryside.[72] It would implicate French artists of all stylistic persuasions, both academic and avant-garde, in the nationwide attempt to re-construct a French identity that would enable a *revanche* and recovery of Alsace and part of Lorraine, lost to Germany. The re-construction of French national identity involved the discovery and celebration of French regional diversity, a phenomenon which Eric Storm has examined so incisively in his comparative study of regionalism in French, German and Spanish art, *The Culture of Regionalism* (2010).

Jules Bastien-Lepage's *Jeanne d'Arc* of 1879 is a good example of artistic regionalism and *revanchiste* nationalism. Born in Domrémy, in Lorraine, Joan of Arc (ca. 1412–1431) naturally became a patriotic symbol when, as noted above, France ceded the province of Alsace and part of Lorraine to Prussia. The conquest of these French largely German-speaking provinces would complete Bismarck's campaign of German unification and

creation, in 1871, of the first modern German nation-state. Like Joan of Arc, Bastien-Lepage was born in a poor family from the rural province of Lorraine, and in a village close to Domrémy where Joan of Arc was born.[73] Bastien-Lepage had, himself, defended his country and had been wounded in the chest during the Franco-Prussian War. With his paintings, Bastien-Lepage contributed to the patriotic awakening for revenge on the Germans. In this painting, Bastien-Lepage depicts the moment of Joan's patriotic awakening when Saints Michael, Margaret, and Catherine appeared to her in her parents' garden, where she had been spinning wool, rousing her to fight the English invaders in the Hundred Years War. This is a large painting, 254x279.4 cm, typically the size of a History painting. Although the epic, historical association is certainly part of the subject, this is in practice, a Genre scene of what had been an ordinary peasant girl, before she became a national hero, and then a saint, becoming beatified in 1909 and canonised in 1920. Here the artist emphasises the peasant rather than royal and aristocratic roots of French independence from the English. He also adopts a more avant-garde artistic style, that of the Impressionists, who burst on the scene, in 1874. As Kenneth McConkey has noted, when he painted this painting, Bastien-Lepage, who had been known as an academically-trained proponent of the more conventional style of Naturalism, had begun to respond to the Impressionists' use of freer brushwork and lighter colours.[74]

Swedish art of the turn of the twentieth century also shows the attachment to rural life, another aspect of what in Sweden became known as National Romantic, as noted above. It was inspired by French painting of rural life of this period, much of which was now suffused with the luminosity and colour of the landscapes of the French Impressionist avant-garde. It included works such as Carl Larsson's *Crayfishing* (ca. 1894), Nils Kreuger's *Seaweed Carters on the Halland Coast* (1898), and Anders Zorn's *Midsummer Dance* (1897).[75] These works depict distinctly Swedish customs outside the cosmopolitan urban centres, re-rooting Swedes to nature and tradition.

Following Norway's independence from Sweden, in 1905, Norwegian artists would consolidate Norwegian national consciousness through images of Norwegian peasants nursing and teaching children, and being paradigms of virtue. They would thus present the nation as 'a primal family

rooted in nature', as in Edvard Munch's mural paintings in oil for the University of Oslo, *Alma Mater* and *History*, painted between 1909 and 1916. Through these works, Munch became a 'nation builder'.[76]

Joan Miró, '*Peasant with a Catalan Hat*' (1925), oil on canvas, 92.40 × 73 cm, Tate Modern. [Wikimedia Commons]

The painting by the Catalan artist, Joan Miró (1893-1983), '*Peasant with a Catalan Hat*' of 1925 in Tate Modern, London, offers another example of the engagement of the artistic avant-garde with national themes and especially the theme of the peasant.This painting, one of four versions that Miró painted, the first in 1924, 'fuses the explicitly Catalan imagery, which had characterised much of his work between 1923-1924, with the "automatic" style he had developed in Paris, under the influence of the Surrealist group'. Miró represents the Catalan peasant in a minimalist fashion, primarily through his distinctive red 'barretina' cap, a type of *béret* hat, made of wool, shaped like a bag, and often worn folded, usually in red or purple colour. As Sophie Howarth notes, '[T]his cap was regarded as a symbol of nationalism, and was probably included as a response to the Spanish government's suppression of Catalan nationalism and specifically the Catalan language at the time'.[77] The few other motifs that appear floating against a light background of very thin, almost translucent wash of blue oil paint mixed with turpentine, are more ambiguous and suggest the dream-like state which the Surrealists, inspired by Freud's notion of the unconscious mind, sought as a source of inspiration. Wisps of hair suggest a beard, or pubic hair (also associated with Surrealist attachment to Freudian theories of sexuality), but also roots, implying the rootedness of the peasant in the land he works.

Another dimension of national art is the celebration of folk music. In the nineteenth century, folk music, like folk art, would become elevated to the status of High, Classical music.[78] Mucha's poster *The Moravian Teacher's Choir* (1911) would celebrate Czech folk music. According to the website of the Mucha Foundation and Trust :

> From humble beginnings, the Moravian Teacher's Choir became a world-renowned professional ensemble. Some of the songs in their varied repertoire of classical, folk and popular music were composed by Leoš Janáček, a fellow choirboy at Mucha's secondary school in Brno and a celebrated composer of modern Moravian folk music Mucha depicts a girl in traditional Moravian folk dress from the town of Kyjov. She cups her hand to her ear to listen to the songbird perched on a branch behind her...'

Birdsong was an inspiration of much folk music. Both were incorporated, in the course of the nineteenth century, in Romantic art that modernised the Classical canon as well as nationalised it. Apart from the works of Janáček or Smetana, Beethoven's 'Pastoral' (1808), Schumann's '*Waldszenen*' (1849), are cases in point. Folk art would also inspire artists, incorporating in their works motifs and methods from traditional arts and handicrafts. As noted, William Morris would lead the international Arts and Crafts Movement of the turn of the twentieth century. Arts and Crafts work was a catalyst for the radical forms of Modernist nation branding, especially in continental Europe.[79]

Landscape and Still-Life

Under the impact of the idea of the nation, Landscape painting is transformed into what Anthony D. Smith has called *ethnoscape*.[80] There is a recognition of the land as a home. Man's need for a home is primordial. It found one of its fullest ideological expressions in the doctrine of nationalism.[81] The idea of the homeland is central to the idea of the nation conceived as a spatial community. It had a profound influence on landscape painting. It transformed it from the representation of picturesque topography or classical landscapes, such as those by Valenciennes and Claude, to *ethnoscapes*.[82] Artists became interested in the representation of the national territory as the 'home' of both the rural and the urbanised population: as the common, national homeland.

The local landscape was seen as the natural force that shaped the national character. According to Herder, the physical diversity of nature had created the cultural diversity of mankind. Thus, localism and cultural diversity should be maintained as natural: 'Whom nature separated by language, customs, character, let no man artificially join together by chemistry'.[83] The native land, as this became extended from the particular place of a person's birth to the national territory, acquired the primordial charisma and affection of the family home, precisely because it included one's own birthplace, the place where 'one's life and the life of one's family [was] propagated, sustained and transmitted'.[84] The land as sovereign territory was 'home' because, as in the privacy of one's home, the ethnonational community can freely translate its ideals into practice and create

its habitat. The nation-state thus becomes a 'home': the place to which one belongs, where one can behave naturally and spontaneously, and the place where, to quote the American poet Robert Frost, 'when you go there, they have to take you in'.

These meanings can be found, often combined, in such *ethnoscapes* as Caspar David Friedrich's depictions of 'our German sun, moon and stars, our rocks, trees and plants, our plains, lakes and rivers'.[85] Constable's art, which, for Pevsner, typified the Englishness of English art, is also a case in point. In Constable's images of domesticated and fruitful nature, such as *The Haywain* (1821), and *The Cornfield* (1826), we find an idea of the English countryside as Arcadia and a self-sufficient, life-sustaining 'home'. Furthermore, Constable's landscapes are also literally 'home' for they are images of his native Suffolk.[86] Here, as the American Romantic poets put it, 'going out, was really going in'.

Johan Thomas Lundbye (1818-1848) drew inspiration from his native Denmark, particularly the wild and unspoilt coast of Røsnæs, a landscape he knew intimately. Lundbye rejected the depiction of Neoclassical landscapes - timeless, idealised, and Italianate. Instead, he tried to capture the characteristics of his native landscape, and especially its burial mounds. These became a symbol of the antiquity and continuity of the modern Danish nation.

Set within a beautiful landscape, the massive burial mound in *Dolmen at Raklev, Røsnæs* (1839) connects the present with Denmark's ancient history and customs. By the time of his death at the age of twenty-nine, having unexpectedly enlisted in the Danish Army in the war against Germany, Lundbye had become one of his country's most noted Romantic painters – an artist who would express his patriotism and pride in Danish art.[87]

Joan Miró, already mentioned, also exemplifies the attachment to the native soil even of the most internationally oriented, cosmopolitan, artistic avant-garde of Paris of the 1920s.[88] Interestingly, Miró's stay in Paris, where he yearned to go, to join the avant-garde, and where he eventually went early in 1920, made him understand his Catalan roots, and long for his native land. He would thus become, as he said, 'an international

Johan Thomas Lundbye, *Dolmen at Raklev, Røsnæs*, or *A burial mound from ancient times by Raklev on Refsnæs* (1839), oil on canvas, 66.7 x 88.9 cm, Thorvaldsen Museum. [Wikimedia Commons]

Catalan'.[89] Nancy Spector stresses Miró's attachment to Catalonia and his 'idyllic conception of his homeland' in her examination of the painting *The Tilled Field*, in the Guggenheim Museum in New York.[90] Miró began painting *The Tilled Field* during the summer of 1923. It is a view of his family's farm in Montroig, Catalonia. Distinctly national motifs appear in the three flags: Catalan or senyera, French, and Spanish.[91] The French and Catalan flags are joined together, affirming his attachment to France, what he called 'the Paris-Barcelona axis' which we also find in his painting *Nord-Sud* (1917). This painting is also the first example of Miró's experimentation with Surrealism. As Spector notes, Miró's Surrealist vision is evident in the painting's 'fanciful juxtaposition of human, animal, and vegetal forms and its array of schematized creatures constitute a realm visible only to the mind's eye, and reveal the great range of Miró's imagination'. I quote below Spector's analysis of *The Tilled Field* as an instance of an emphatically national iconography and a national conceptualisation of the artist's family farm:

> The complex iconography of *The Tilled Field* has myriad sources, and attests to Miró's long-standing interest in his artistic heritage. The muted, contrasting tones of the painting recall the colors of Catalan Romanesque frescoes, while the overt flatness of the painting – space is suggested by three horizontal bands indicating sky, sea, and earth – and the decorative scattering of multicolored animals throughout were most likely inspired by medieval Spanish tapestries. These lively creatures are themselves derived from Catalan ceramics, which Miró collected and kept in his studio. The stylized figure with a plow has its source in the prehistoric cave paintings of Altamira, which Miró knew well. Even the enormous eye peering through the foliage of the pine tree, and the eye-covered pine cone beneath it, can be traced to examples of early Christian art, in which the wings of angels were bedecked with many tiny eyes. Miró found something alive and magical in all things: the gigantic ear affixed to the trunk of the tree, for example, reflects his belief that every object contains a living soul.

Miró's spirited depiction of *The Tilled Field* also has political content. The three flags – French, Catalan, and Spanish – refer to Catalonia's attempts to secede from the central Spanish government. Primo de Rivera, who assumed Spain's dictatorship in 1923, instituted strict measures, such as banning the Catalan language and flag, to repress Catalan separatism. By depicting the Catalan and French flags together, across the border post from the Spanish flag, Miró invoked liberty, defended by the French, and announced his allegiance to the Catalan cause.[92]

Finally, Still-Life painting was also transformed along national lines. Examples include Picasso's Cubist *Spanish Still Life* (1912) in which Picasso, like Miró, declared his Catalan roots by incorporating in the image the Catalan flag.[93] Chagall's Cubist-cum-Suprematist *Collage* (1921) is another contribution to the national transformation of the Still-Life category. Its ethnic component is a triangular shape, akin to Jewish tombstones, inside of which there is an inscription, in Hebrew, 'TSEDEK', meaning 'Justice.'

Pablo Picasso, *Spanish Still Life* (*Nature morte espagnole. Sol y Sombra*) (1912), oil and ripolin on canvas, 46 x 33 cm, Musée d'Art Moderne, Villeneuve D'Ascq. [Wikiart]

Art and the integrative revolutions of ideas of the nation in the Enlightenment and Romanticism

The Enlightenment gave a new, 'modern' meaning to the term 'nation'. It made it encompass the mass of the people, and affirmed their entitlement to elect representatives and make laws, as opposed to aristocratic elites, such as 'lords and bishops' who, since the Middle Ages, had constituted the nation in this political sense. Led by intellectuals, both the Enlightenment and Romanticism were people-centred or populist, in the sense of non-elite-oriented movements.[95] They focused on and idealised the mass of the people.

Who the people were, and who belonged to a people would vary with different definitions of the nation. This question would become a *casus belli* – a source of both internal, national, and international instability. It would make nations, as John Hutchinson perceptively remarked, 'zones of conflict'.[96] Both the Enlightenment and Romanticism deeply transformed European societies, opening up new possibilities for human self-realisation and social organisation, inspiring, each separately or in combination, multiple modernities. In these innovations, these 'modernities', the nation, as a collective entity, emerged as both the agent and the target.[97]

Both the Enlightenment and Romanticism were, to use Clifford Geertz's apt phrase, 'integrative revolutions'. Although they addressed different problems – one, the problem of individual freedom in society, and the other the problems of cultural freedom and cultural status – the 'demand that the [cultural] identity be publicly acknowledged as having import… "as being somebody in the world"' – they both converged on the term 'nation'.[98] Hans Kohn had pointed to the power of nationalism to integrate the masses into the political and cultural centres of the new, national societies, to make them the nation: 'With the advent of nationalism, the masses were no longer in the nation, but of the nation'.[99] Nationalism also extended mass consciousness and the bonds of affinity beyond the village to a national circumference of collective existence.

The idea of the nation would not only nationalise the masses, as George L. Mosse had noted, it would also nationalise the elites. It would integrate

both the masses and the elites into the modern horizontal community of the nation as a community of equals – political, cultural or both.[100] Both the Enlightenment and Romanticism were thus socially inclusive, albeit in different ways. They both transformed deeply the relations between centre and periphery, High and Low culture. In France, Jules Michelet, in his famous book, *Le Peuple*, which he began writing in January 1845, described, with approval, this social-cum-cultural transformation as the entrance of the 'barbarians' in the city:

> Souvent aujourd'hui l'on compare l'ascension du peuple, son progrès, à l'invasion des Barbares, (sic) Le mot me plaît. Je l'accepte…Barbares! Oui, c'est-à-dire pleins d'une sève nouvelle, vivante et rajeunissante. Barbares, c'est-à-dire voyageurs en marche vers la Rome de l'avenir, allant lentement, sans doute, chaque génération avançant un peu.[101]

The Enlightenment turned subjects into citizens. Under its influence, the political periphery entered the centres of power as the new sovereign. With Romanticism, rural culture, the village, entered the city, changing urban culture, while at the same time transforming, streamlining, and modernising itself largely through state-sponsored and compulsory education.[102] Romanticism, as Isaiah Berlin put it, was the desire for *Annerkennung* – the desire of the despised, 'low', cultural periphery to raise its bent back – to become part of High culture and High society.

The Enlightenment and the integration of the people into the community of citizens through art – conceptualising the nation as the demos

The integrative message of the Enlightenment idea of the nation as a liberal democracy, a community of citizens, inspired new symbols and gave new meanings to the old. Artists created a new iconography to express the vision of the nation as a *demos* (different from the Herderian, culturally defined *Volk*). Visual conceptualisations of the nation as a modern *demos* drew on the Classical repertoire of motifs and characters.

Jacques-Louis David *The Triumph of the French people* (1794?), drawing for a decorative project, most likely for the curtain of the Opéra, 32.5 x 70.7cm, Musée Carnavalet. [Wikimedia Commons]

The drawing of *The Triumph of the French people* (1794) in the Musée Carnavalet, in Paris, by Jacques-Louis David, whom I have already mentioned, is a case in point. David would see in the muscular figure of Hercules, the greatest Greek hero with the twelve labours, the image of ordinary French men and women who laboured heroically with their hands. He would thus transform Hercules into a 'Gallic Hercules', symbol of *all the people* of the French state, turned into citizens.[103]

The modern *demos* was not identical with the ancient. The modern conception of democracy, for example, claimed participation in the making of laws, as a *universal*, human right, at least in theory. In its universal ambition, its application to all human beings, it would begin the long struggle against slavery and privilege and, in modern democracies, offer asylum to those persecuted by tyrannies. As Articles 1 and 2 of the 1789 French Declaration of the Rights of Man put it,

> 1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good.
>
> 2. The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.[104]

Delacroix's famous painting *Liberty Guiding the People* (1830) would create another, both national and international symbol of the 'people,' turned into the nation, fighting for democracy.[105] Liberty is represented as a cross between a Greek goddess and an ordinary working-class woman. She is given a popular Christian name, Marianne, to convey the idea of the people's nation. Given the Greek inspiration of modern, Enlightenment democracy, Delacroix shaped Marianne on the muscular, thrusting statue of the Victory of Samothrace, of the second century BC (190 BC), which he had seen in the Louvre. Armed with a bayonet, Marianne holds the French Revolutionary flag and wears a red phrygian cap, which had become a symbol of liberty due to its popularity during the American and first French Revolutions. This image of the free citizens of France would persist into the twenty-first century as an image of the sovereign people in France and around the world.

The vision of the nation as a community of free-born individuals with equal political rights as citizens had been at the root of the American War of Independence that preceded the French Revolution. However, the ideal of liberty became more emphatic and came somewhat closer to reality during the period of Reconstruction (1863 or 1867–1877) that followed the war and the abolition of slavery.

The famous *Statue of Liberty*, or, to give its full name, *Liberty Enlightening the World* (dedicated 1886) on Bedloe's Island or Liberty Island in the Upper New York Bay, was designed by sculptor Frédéric Bartholdi in collaboration with engineer Gustave Eiffel. It was a gift from France to mark the centenary of American independence in 1876.[106] Initiated by the French abolitionist Édouard René de Laboulaye, the 'Father of the Statue of Liberty', and supporter of Abraham Lincoln, it was originally conceived as an abolitionist symbol and an emblem of the friendship between the people of France and the U.S. expressing their mutual desire for liberty. As noted on the official website of the statue, 'Over the years the Statue has become much more. It is the Mother of Exiles, greeting millions of immigrants and embodying hope and opportunity for those seeking a better life in America. It stirs the desire for freedom in people all over the world. It represents the United States itself'. As President Grover Cleveland, remarked, upon accepting the *Statue of Liberty* on behalf of the U.S., October 28, 1886: 'We will not forget that Liberty has here made her home; nor shall her chosen altar be neglected'.[107]

The statue is green from the copper sheets that cover it which are supported by an internal iron framework devised by Eiffel. It is 93 meters high including its pedestal. It personifies liberty as a strong woman with a classical face and drapery, a modern goddess, holding a torch in her raised right hand and a tablet bearing in Roman numerals the adoption date of the Declaration of American Independence (July 4, 1776) in her left. Her

Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi with Gustave Eiffel, *Liberty Enlightening the World* (dedicated 1886), copper sheets supported by an internal iron frame, 93 meters high including its pedestal, Bedloe's Island or Liberty Island in the Upper New York Bay. [Wikimedia Commons]

crown has seven spikes to evoke sun rays and the seven seas and continents, symbolising the universal nature of freedom. Bartholdi placed a broken shackle and chains at her feet to symbolize the end of slavery and more generally liberation – the end of oppression and tyranny. The figure of Liberty with all her attributes conveys the message of freedom and democracy for the world. At the same time, it conveys the message of America's own openness to the world and willingness to receive and integrate immigrants from around the world. This message was made clear in the famous poem that Emma Lazarus composed in 1883 for the pedestal of the statue, *The New Colossus*.[108] Lazarus would present the statue as different from the famous ancient colossus of Rhodes: it was not a conqueror of lands – 'with conquering limbs astride from land to land'. This 'mighty woman with a torch' was the 'Mother of Exiles', and cried 'with silent lips',

> Give me your tired, your poor,
> Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
> The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
> Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
> I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

This message would be echoed in 1908, in Israel Zangwill's play, *The Melting Pot*. The play presented America as tracing a path towards new forms of social inclusion that would transcend or melt through mixing, i.e. through love and intermarriage, ethno-cultural prejudice and historic enmity, uniting mankind. Zangwill dedicated the play to Theodore Roosevelt 'in respectful recognition of his strenuous struggle against the forces that threaten to shipwreck the great republic which carries mankind'.[109]

Hans Kohn would also see in America, on which he modelled his 'Western' type of nation, a form of human association that was more integrative than the 'non-Western' or cultural type of nation. For Kohn this 'nation of many nations' lifted the age of cultural nationalism above itself and pointed the way forward to deeper liberty and to 'higher' forms of social integration.

Enlightenment social egalitarianism and the integration of the modern urban worker in the nation through art

The Enlightenment idea of the nation integrated the rural periphery into the national centre, overturning traditional social and cultural hierarchies, and turning peasants into citizens. This egalitarian conception of the nation also integrated into itself the urban working men and women. They themselves had just entered the modern industrial city from the village, supplying the modern industrial labour force, while gradually expanding the electoral body as citizens. Artists would promote the inclusion in the nation of working men and women by creating images that would idealise the people showing them as the heroes of modern life: the carriers of modern liberty and national identity, and the engines of the modern industrial economy. The national integration of the working people was expressed in a number of artistic innovations. It was also signalled in the positioning of images of labour in urban public spaces, in docks and squares, and, as Aronsson has shown, in the case of the agricultural worker, in national museums.[110] For this reason, sculpture would become a key vehicle of the idealisation-cum-nationalisation of working men and women.

A new 'Realist' style emerges in European sculpture from ca. 1875, that shows the physical reality of work as well as the physical beauty of the worker. In this 'New Sculpture', we see images of workers with strong and harmonious bodies that resemble those ancient Greek statues that had become the embodiments of beauty since the Italian Renaissance. These ancient images of gods, heroes and athletes would become central in modern conceptions of humanity and nationality, as this physical type became the desire of all nations during successive waves of Classical Hellenism from the eighteenth century onwards.[111] In Germany, the Greek physical ideal would become a fatal obsession and a principle of national disintegration and exclusion, in what Louisa M. Butler would call, 'the tyranny of Greece over Germany'.[112] However, before the catastrophe of the rise of Nazi Germany could happen, the humanistic conception of the Greek athletic ideal would contribute to the integration of working men and women into the nation. In England, the great aesthetic writer, Walter Pater, and others, would recognise Greek *Discoboli* among working-class young men, and among 'half-stripped navvies, and [in] the

titanic forms of men employed in gas and other plutonic works'.[113] The great English sculptor Sir Hamo Thornycroft, RA (1850–1925), who made some of London's best known public sculptures, and a leading figure in 'The New Sculpture' movement, would show the Greek beauty or what he called 'sculpturesque' qualities of the agricultural labourer, in works like *The Mower* (1888–1889) in the Tate Gallery, London.[114] The pose of the mower replicates the celebrated and classically inspired statue of the Biblical hero, David (ca. 1440) of the early Renaissance Florentine sculptor, Donatello. Thornycroft's 1884 version of *The Mower* was one of the first life-size statues of a contemporary labourer in the nineteenth century.[115]

Thornycroft would also urge art students to recognise the classical beauty of the bodies of urban labourers, navvies and builders: 'Even in London one sees, not infrequently, among the navvies, or those workmen who dig out the foundations of buildings, men who look sculpturesque in their wrinkled corduroy trousers, buckled in at the knee with a strap, with a loosely-fitting shirt, soft and pliable'.[116] The 'New Sculpture' modernised Victorian sculpture with its realism: its subjects taken from everyday life, and its punctilious naturalism, inspired by the fifth-century BC Parthenon sculptures, acquired by the British Museum in 1816. Getsy described the new 'realism' as involving 'greater degrees of representational fidelity, an expanded range of materials and formats for sculpture, a broader conception of sculpture's social roles, and a reconsideration of the conventional subject matter considered appropriate for sculptural representation'. The 'New Sculpture' would spread across Europe, inspiring the art of Constantin Meunier in Belgium and Auguste Rodin in France.[117]

We find the same appreciation of the classical beauty of the modern labourer expressed in American photography.[118]

Lewis Wickes Hine, *Power House Mechanic working on Steam Pump* (1920–21), gelatin silver print, image: 34.3 x 24.1 cm, Brooklyn Museum. [Wikimedia Commons]

Constantin Meunier, *Three Female Miners* (1885), oil on canvas, 94 cm x 74 cm, Helmond Museum. [Wikimedia Commons]

Understanding the conceptual power of photography, Lewis W. Hine (1874-1940), a New York City school teacher and photographer would show, in his *Power House Mechanic working on Steam Pump* (1920), the muscular mechanic in the pose of the famous Classical statue of *Discobolus*, the discus thrower, by Myron (460-450 BC). In 1919, Hine shifted from 'a gritty documentary style to what he called "interpretive photography" – an approach intended to raise the stature of industrial workers, who were increasingly diminished by the massive machinery they operated'.[119] Hine would capture the changing face of American labour, rapidly transformed, after the Civil War, by mechanisation: its devastation and its majesty. By including in his photographs immigrant workers, who were arriving at Ellis Island in the millions from Europe at the turn of the twentieth century, he would seek to integrate them into his image of American society. He believed that America was a society of immigrants. Hine's images would celebrate the 'courage, skill, daring and imagination' of American workers, including those who constructed

the Empire State Building.[120] His photographs would express most fully the 'daredevil feats of the workers who raised 57,000 tons of steel to frame the building'.

Constantin Meunier, also known as the 'sculptor of the Belgian people', would pay homage to modern labour in a series of statues, statuettes and reliefs.[121]

These show the anonymous men and women who slaved away in his nation's mines, factories, and foundries. Meunier focused particularly on

Hamo Thornycroft, *The Mower* (1888–1890), bronze, 58.5 × 33 × 18.5 cm, Tate Gallery. See also the life-size (overall 190.5 cm) bronze cast (1884), in The Walker Art Gallery. [Liverpool Museum]
Donatello, *David* (ca. 1440), bronze, 158cm, Bargello. [Wikimedia Commons]
Constantin Meunier, *The Docker* (1885–1893), bronze, c.2m, multiple versions, in Royal Museums of Fine Arts, Brussels, Antwerp Harbour, and elsewhere. [Wikimedia Commons]

the miners of the Borinage, dockworkers of Antwerp, metalworkers, and women labourers. He created icons of the young Belgian nation born in 1830 following the Belgian Revolution.

Meunier shows the *Docker* (1885-1893) standing confidently upright, in graceful classical contrapposto, reminiscent, like Thornycroft's *Mower*, of Donatello's *David*, although in the *Docker*, both hands are grasping his sides. In paintings like *Trois Hiercheuses* [*Three Female Mine-Workers*] (1885) in the Helmond Museum, The Netherlands, Meunier would also transform female mine workers, who were unique in Belgium, into Belgian national icons.[122]

At the same time, Meunier would show working-men and women exhausted and worn out by labour, as in *The Puddler* (1884/1887-1888, Bronze. Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium). As Dekeukeleire explains, the 'puddler – a labourer in the steel industry who was responsible for continuously stirring the liquid mass of raw iron – is shown seated in a moment of rest'. His 'immeasurable exhaustion is shown in his hunched back, limp left arm, and woeful facial expression'. Dekeukeleire rightly emphasises the importance that Meunier attached to the physique of his labourers: 'The shirtless puddler is muscular, sure, but a classical athlete or hero he is not; his is a body hardened and worn by constant manual labour in the toughest of conditions'.[123]

Meunier contributed to the transformation of the 'Genre' image of the labourer into History painting and sculpture, and indeed into *national* History painting and sculpture. As Van Gelder has shown, Meunier introduced a new '*type* of representation into artistic tradition, in other words into History painting at that time, and into monumental sculpture at the end of the nineteenth century, that of the male or female labourer'. Distancing himself from Belgian socialism which he found utopian, he nevertheless had 'an innovatory social message'.[124] It was a socially and indeed nationally integrative message. Feeling immense gratitude towards the male and female labourers of his country, he sought, through his art, to show their grandeur. He saw them as the 'carriers' of the modern and modernising Belgian nation that depended, for its economic modernisation, on both agricultural and industrial labour. Labourers deserved

respect and 'a fully acknowledged place in society'. By integrating labour in his art in the grand manner, he 'strove towards the right balance between the higher and the lower groups of the population', pleading for 'mutual respect'.[125] As Maarten Van Ginderachter has shown in his deeply insightful and nuanced book, *The Everyday Nationalism of Workers* (2019), Belgian workers themselves became nation-builders and patriots, trying to negotiate their sense of belonging through their complex loyalties to Socialism, with its notion of an international working-class without a country, the idea of a Belgian nation-state, and ethno-nationalist movements that engaged with linguistic and confessional differences between Flemings and Walloons.[126]

Romanticism and the national integration of diverse regional cultures through art

The idea of the nation that was rooted in Romanticism, would lead to attempts to integrate culturally diverse regions into the national orbit, a) without destroying them, and b) by promoting the cultural periphery as the new centre – a source of core, national values. These multi-polar, pluralist processes of nation-building, of forging national solidarity among the ethno-regions of existing states, are observable with particular urgency in France. After the Franco-Prussian war, the Third French Republic (1870-1940), which succeeded Napoleon III's Empire, led campaigns of national integration and regeneration, that represented the nation as 'diversity aspiring to unity'.[127] These campaigns nurtured the unity of *revanchisme* that would contribute to the First World War, and would return, in 1918-1919, thanks to French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, the lost territories to France. French artists would respond to these campaigns in various ways. As I showed above, artists like Jules Bastien-Lepage would paint Lorraine, one of the lost regions of France, thereby cultivating in French national consciousness the belief that Lorraine belonged to France. Others would paint the cultural and geographic diversity of France. As Anne-Marie Thiesse has noted, 'The Republicans sought to celebrate it [France] as "Nature's beloved daughter", as shown by the incomparable diversity of her soil, her climates, and her peoples, thus making it a nation superior to all others'. This more secularist vision was different from the earlier monarchist, and culturally (religiously) homogenising view of France as the 'eldest daughter of the Church'.[128]

As Eric Storm has observed, regionalism emerges as a new artistic movement in European art, especially in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Regionalist artists 'saw the countryside as the essence of the nation. But this was no generic countryside. Every region had its particular characteristics, and, precisely through its uniqueness, it constituted an indispensable part of the greatness of the nation. Exploring the character of a particular region was thus considered to be a patriotic deed'. In the case of France, Storm shows how Brittany, with deep Celtic roots and few Roman traces, came to be seen not just as one of the French regions, but as a special region where 'traces of the true, original character of

France could still be studied', as opposed to the cosmopolitan character of the Parisian metropolis. Storm discusses the engagement with Breton subjects of the artists Lucien Simon and Charles Cottet.[129]

Paul Cézanne, *Bathers at Rest* (*Baigneurs au repos*) (ca. 1875–1876), oil on canvas, 82.2 × 101.2 cm, The Barnes Foundation. [Wikimedia Commons]

In my own research, and through study of the *motif* of the bather in the art of the Impressionist avant-garde artists Paul Cézanne and Pierre-Auguste Renoir, I have explored how Provence became another French region that acquired, through its Mediterranean climate and, contrary to Brittany, *because* of its historic Graeco-Roman ties, national significance. From the 1880s until the First World War, Provence would become a centre of French *revanchisme* and source of national physical regeneration, through imitation of the natural and athletic life of ancient Greek youth spent in the sun and the sea.[130] Cézanne would also paint local Provençal customs as in his series of card players (e.g., *The Card Players*, 1890–1892, the first in the series). We have here an interesting case not only of regionalisms, but also of different regions being claimed as primary centres and sources of national identity, as noted by Smith and Hutchinson; national identities evolve, compete, and are contested.

In Britain, the attempt to integrate the ethno-regions into a United Kingdom is evident in the 1829 painting by Sir David Wilkie (1785-1841), of *George IV* (*wearing a Highland, Scottish kilt*) (reigned 1762-1830), now in Buckingham Palace, London. The painting, commissioned by King George IV, cannot be detached from the struggle for power and identity between the centre, England, and the periphery, Scotland, which Michael Hechter has described as a part of 'the Celtic fringe'.[131] As noted by the Royal Collection Trust, George IV's portrait was made on the occasion of his visit to Scotland in August 1822. Significantly, his visit and costume were designed by leaders of the Romantic Scottish cultural revival, Sir Walter Scott and David Stewart of Garth. Therefore, the king's dress and pageantry of his visit were not so much inventions from above, as Hobsbawm's theory of the 'invention of tradition' would have it, as a revival and attempted recovery of the past from below.[132] By adopting the Highland dress, the king would recognise symbolically the distinctiveness of Scottish identity, and cultivate a mutual sense of belonging. George IV was the first reigning monarch to visit Scotland since Charles II. At his visit he wore full Highland dress. The success of King George IV's visit was due to the preparations of Sir Walter Scott, the historical novelist, poet and dramatist, who revived Scotland's romantic past in the pageantry of the state visit. He was assisted by David Stewart of Garth, one of the founders of the Celtic Society, who helped devise the King's Highland dress.[133]

The desire for a synthesis: Citizenship and Identity

In the course of the nineteenth century, the two integrative revolutions, the two conceptions of the nation, that of the Enlightenment and that of Romanticism, would often be combined in people's desire for both citizenship and cultural identity. The democratic nation-state organised around certain core cultural principles taken from a dominant cultural tradition would emerge as the means of achieving this synthesis.

Anthony D. Smith had recognised in nationalism the desire for a synthesis of democracy, or citizenship, and culture. Both are integral in his definition of the nation, especially in his early writings. For Smith, the nation consists, among other things, of 'cultural differentiae' *and* 'direct membership with equal citizenship rights'.[134] Similarly, Breuilly has noted that 'one never finds a case of nationalism which does not both include some account of collective identity and of rights of participation for individuals in national affairs'.[135] However, in actual fact, and as Elie Kedourie had observed, the idea of the nation-state did not tie the culturally-bounded state to a specific type of government – it only demanded that the ruler and the ruled should speak the same language.[136] Cases abound of nationalism being combined with authoritarian and totalitarian, repressive regimes, especially from the 1930s onwards. This ill-fated combination would give nationalism a bad name and result in current identification of nationalism with Fascism and the genocide of ethnic and national minorities.

Nevertheless, a bond was struck between democracy and cultural tradition. It would persist to the present day, especially in the Western world and in regions inspired by it.[137] Furthermore, Anthony D. Smith's ethno-symbolic analysis of the formation of modern nation-states, that draws on Emile Durkheim's sociology as well as Ernest Renan's definition of the nation, has shown that it has been possible, over a *longue durée* and under modern inclusive, liberal-democratic conditions, for ethnic and national minorities to be integrated into a wider national community whose gravitational centre is a corpus of shared ideas and values. In liberal contexts, the ethnic symbols and ethno-historical narratives and myths of a dominant *ethnie* (e.g. the Gallic cock of the French Republic, but also the tricolor and *Marianne*)[138] become the rallying symbols and narratives of

both dominant and minority communities as minorities are invited to join the common cultural and political heritage and consider it their own, through voluntary identification with and attachment to it.[139]

The desire for *both* democracy and cultural identity is most visible in the buildings of national parliaments that emerged in the capitals of Europe, gradually in the course of the nineteenth century (especially after 1848), and massively in the aftermath of the First World War and the Treaty of Versailles of 1919. The treaty would make the self-determination of peoples – the right of peoples to determine their own destinies typically through a state of their own – a principle in international law. As I have shown elsewhere, the commonest architectural style of European parliament buildings is Classical – columns and pediments, proclaiming the ancient Athenian roots of modern democracy. However, through the use of local materials (e.g. stone from Kuusamo, in the North of Finland, in the Finnish parliament) and the subjects of the paintings and sculptures (e.g. *The Viking Age*, as late as 1958, by Otte Sköld in the Swedish parliament) that decorate these buildings, we find affirmations of the territory, ethno-history, and myths of dominant nations.[140] Modern parliaments would become central sites for the ongoing dialogue between liberty and ethno-cultural tradition. As Hutchinson has noted, '[T]here can be no finality to the national project'.[141]

Art and the integrative power of death for the nation

The demand for democracy and identity, ideally in a state of one's own, would become so vital as to integrate, i.e., unite people unto death. Defined in these terms, nationhood would come at a cost – the sacrifice of one's life in the fight against tyranny, the destruction of one's culture, and the humiliation or persecution and extermination of the carriers of this culture. This has always been the price of an ethical stance.

Artists have made clear in images drenched in blood and the pathos of death, the cost of nationhood – the cost of holding liberty and cultural tradition as ultimate values – as things without which life is not worth living. Artists have also shown the willingness and ability of people to coordinate and mobilise to resist and kill tyrants, a citizen's obligation that went back to democratic Athens. Originating in Solon's proclamations, the Law of Demophantus of 410 BC enjoined all Athenians (perhaps only men above a certain property class) to perform an oath ritual by which they pledged to 'kill by word and by deed … anyone who overthrows the democracy of Athens'.[142] Jacques-Louis David shows the killing of the tyrant (Louis XVI) in *The Triumph of the People* which I discuss below. David also painted the killing of those who conspired with tyrants in his painting *Brutus* (see above). The Athenians themselves had raised statues of tyrant killers, such as the bronze group of the lovers, Harmodios and Aristogeiton, of ca. 510 BC, set up by the polis of Athens in the Athenian Agora to encourage others to do the same.[143]

We find the fight for freedom unto death clearly expressed and documented in both painting and sculpture throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. Delacroix's *Liberty Guiding the People*, of 1830, is strewn with the dead bodies of the revolutionaries who overthrew the absolute monarchy of the Bourbons that had been restored after the defeat of Napoleon.[144] Philipp Foltz's painting of 1852, *Pericles's Funeral Oration* would project the great Athenian's call to arms for the maintenance of Athenian democracy and way of life. Foltz's painting is reproduced in contemporary Greek passports. In his famous 'Funeral Oration', which Thucydides has reported in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Pericles, alluding to Marathon, made a direct connection between the democratic freedoms, prosperity and beauty of Athens and Athenian independence.

He also upheld Athens and its way of life as a model for the rest of Hellas – 'the School of Hellas'. On these grounds, he urged Athenians to continue to fight the Spartans, (... believing that to be happy is to be free and to be free is to be brave, do not think lightly of the perils of war'.[145] As Rosen has noted, Pericles was revived in the nineteenth century, by George Grote and John Stuart Mill, in the context of the liberalism of the time.[146]

The link between liberty (both individual liberty and collective, national liberty or independence) and self-sacrifice for its achievement or defence is made most explicit and visible in the architectural complex of the modern Greek parliament in Athens, in Constitution (Syntagma) Square. Below the parliament building there is Emmanuel Lazaridis' monument to the Unknown Soldier, designed in 1929-1930. Its includes a large bas-relief designed by Kostas Demetriadis, representing a dying, heavily armed ancient Greek soldier (a hoplite). It bears inscriptions with extracts from Pericles' Funeral Oration. The juxtaposition of the monument to the unknown soldier and the parliament building above it proclaim the dependency of democracy on the self-sacrifice of the nation as the demos. The monument also has an ethno-cultural dimension: it proclaims the ethno-cultural continuity between the ancient and the modern Greeks.

Picasso's famous painting *Guernica*, painted in monochrome for the Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 Paris World's Fair, offers another symbol of the price of resistance to tyranny and attachment to identity against forced cultural homogenisation: death and destruction as Basques resisted Franco's dictatorship, suppression of their cultural traditions, and destruction of the ancient Basque town of Guernica.[147] *Guernica* exposed, in *avant-garde* Cubist and Surrealist style, Fascist Spain's assault on regional national traditions.

Integrating through art the nations of the world

The vision of a world of nations did not privilege certain nations over others. It idealised all nations, affirming their dignity, liberty, equality and solidarity or brotherhood. The equality of free and indeed Republican nations was integral in Herder's vision of the world of nations.

Frédéric Sorrieu, *République universelle démocratique et sociale – Le Pacte* (*The Dream of Worldwide Democratic and Social Republics – The Pact Between Nations*), (after 1848), colour lithograph, image: 43.5 x 53.2 cm, Musée Carnavalet. [Wikimedia Commons]

The universal solidarity of all nations that was advocated in the revolutions of 1848, is clearly expressed in the famous print by Frédéric Sorrieu (1807–ca. 1861) of this very year, *République universelle démocratique et sociale – Le Pacte (The Dream of Worldwide Democratic and Social Republics – The Pact Between Nations)*.[148] The print which was part of a larger ensemble (as shown on the cover of this essay), was circulating widely from 6 December 1848. It showed men and women from all walks of life and social classes grouped into nations, parading in a long line that unites them in peace and brotherhood towards a common destination. Interestingly, the ideal of universal unity, and indeed brotherhood, *fraternité*, one of the three core aims of the French Revolution – *liberté, égalité, fraternité* – is here legitimised by reference to Christianity. Sorrieu conceptualises the alliance of all nations as a holy alliance by showing the nations marching under the sign of the cross that appears in the sky, with the word *fraternité* appearing in capital letters above it, presenting it as a Christian obligation – the will of God. The nations walk towards a tree of Liberty and a white statue of the Universal Republic or Liberty. With her classical drapery, Revolutionary Republic or Liberty affirms the classical, both Athenian and Roman Republican sources of Enlightenment's liberal ideals. In Sorrieu's image, Liberty leans on a printing press and holds a copy of the 1793 *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, alluding to the spread of liberal ideas through the printing press. Each nation pays homage to the statue as it passes by. Each nation is identified by their flag and national costume. At the head of the procession are the United States and Switzerland, both established nation-states by the mid-nineteenth century. France, under the famous revolutionary *tricolore*, has just arrived at the statue. The French contingent is followed by the people of Germany, Italy, and others.

The solidarity of all nations, as the building blocks of humanity, all integrated in a modern world of independent nations and families of nations would also be affirmed in the very title of Mucha's painting, number 20, of *The Slav Epic* cycle, *Apotheosis: Slavs for Humanity. Four Stages of Slav History in Four Colours* (1918).[149] The Mucha Foundation provides the following explanation of the paining, that measures over six by eight metres:

> In the last painting in the series, Mucha sought to bring together all the themes addressed in the other 19 episodes of the *Slav Epic* and celebrate the independence of the Slav nations. The painting is composed of four different parts characterised by four different colours. Each represents a successive period in Slav history: the blue in the bottom right of the painting represents the early years of Slav history; the red in the top right corner signifies the bloodshed in the Hussite wars during the Middle Ages; the figures cast in shadow below represent the enemy and the repeated attacks inflicted on Slavic tribes; finally a yellow band in the centre lights up the Czech and Slovak soldiers returning from World War I, signalling the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the dawn of a new age for the Slavic people. They are saluted by young boys who wave green branches at them. The bare-chested figure at the centre of the composition is the embodiment of the new, strong and independent republic, guided and protected by a Christ figure behind.[150]

The date of the painting, 1918, is significant. It marks the end of the First World War and with it the birth of new states, including Mucha's independent Czechoslovakia. These new states were founded on the principle of national self-determination. This principle was championed by then US President Woodrow Wilson. Agreed, as Wilson noted, by 'all the peoples of the world', brought together into a League of Nations, national independence and democracy were expected to secure peace in the world.[151] It was the 'pact' that the revolutionaries had hoped for in 1848.[152]

After the Second World War, it was Pablo Picasso's painting *Guernica* (1937) that would become the symbol of a new future world of international peace and reconciliation. This new world, it was hoped, would be built on a common morality; on universal standards of human behaviour – freedom, equality, reason, and the dignity and brotherhood of all human beings. These universal standards, codified in the UN Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, were another attempt to pacify humanity through deeper integration. They would often require the transformation

of national cultures, filtering out what Elie Kedourie had called the 'Dark Gods and their Rites', i.e., those ideas, values, and customs that were incompatible with them - tyranny, the lower status of women, human cruelty to other humans, clitoridectomy, and many others. These standards would also set the parameters of cultural and specifically moral growth. Finally, these standards would set limits to the moral relativism of Herder's acceptance of all human cultures, and thus all moralities.

On 13 September 1985, a tapestry replica of *Guernica*, commissioned in 1955 by Nelson A. Rockefeller, U.S. Vice-President and New York governor, was loaned to the United Nations and placed at the entrance to the UN Security Council Chamber, in New York, where it hangs to the present day. Not an image of peace, but war, *Guernica*, with its dismembered, distorted, and distressed figures, both human and animal, is set up by the UN as a reminder to the representatives of the peoples of the world of the horrors of war - the horrors of national and international disintegration.[153]

Conclusion

This essay showed how the Enlightenment and Romanticism inspired distinct visions of the nation: one modelled on the democratic city of Athens, and the other on the village community. Both visions combined elements of tradition and innovation. The two visions, although antagonistic, would become intertwined in modern national communities that sought both individual liberty and the guidance of ethno-cultural tradition. Artists engaged with all these different visions of the nation, generating a host of artistic innovations, both iconographic and stylistic. They made what we might call, 'national art', a part of modern art. The idea of the nation would penetrate the academic hierarchy of subject matter, reversing it and re-orienting History, Portraiture, Genre, Landscape and Still-Life towards national motifs. Artists contributed to the integrative revolutions of the Enlightenment and Romanticism that incorporated the people into the body of the nation as citizens and bearers of a new High culture. They transformed the people and their ways of life into High Art, turning them into History subjects. The people entered High Art in a variety of ways: scenes of the daily life and labour of the people would increase

in importance as a subject worthy of representation, and treated on a large scale, thereby becoming the new History subjects. Artists would also apotheosise or heroise working men and women by showing, in paintings as well as public sculpture, the Classical beauty of physical labour, both agricultural and modern industrial. In this way, artists would recognise that these modern citizens were also the heroes of the modern national economy that depended on work more than war. Finally, the idea of the nation would attract the cosmopolitan artistic vanguard who would treat national themes in modern styles (Impressionist, Cubist, Surrealist etc), and draw on folk art in search of formal innovation.

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