

THE HISTORICAL PRACTICE OF DIVERSITY

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*Transcultural Interactions from the
Early Modern Mediterranean to
the Postcolonial World*



Edited by

Dirk Hoerder

with

Christiane Harzig and Adrian Shubert



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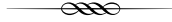
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CONTRIBUTORS



Editors

Dirk Hoerder teaches North American social history and history of migrations at the University of Bremen. His areas of interest are European labor migration in the Atlantic economies, history of worldwide migration systems, and sociology of migrant acculturation. His publications include *Labor Migration in the Atlantic Economies: The European and North American Working Classes during the Period of Industrialization* (1985) and, with Leslie Page Moch, *European Migrants: Global and Local Perspectives* (1996). He has taught at York University, Toronto; Duke University, Durham, N.C.; and the University of Toronto. His most recent publications are *Creating Societies: Immigrant Lives in Canada* (1999) and *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium* (2002).

Christiane Harzig was Assistant Professor at the University of Bremen where she taught North American history. She has published on nineteenth-century migration (ed., *Peasant Maids, City Women*, 1997), on German-American women, and on gender and migration. She edited a special issue on migration for *Magazine of History* published by the Organization of American Historians, and recently finished a book on post-World War II immigration policies in Europe and North America.

Adrian Shubert is Professor of History and Associate Vice-President International at York University. He holds degrees from the universities of Toronto, New Mexico, Warwick, and London. He is the author of a number of books on modern Spanish history, most recently *Death and Money in the Afternoon: A History of Spanish Bullfighting* (1999). In 1997–98 he was a Guggenheim Fellow, and in 1999 he was invested as Commander of the Order of Civil Merit by King Juan Carlos I of Spain.

Authors

Fikret Adanir is Professor at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany. His interest is the history of southeast Europe, especially Ottoman-Turkish history. Among his recent publications are "Armenian Deportations and Massacres in 1915," in D. Chirot and M. E. P. Seligman, eds., *Ethnopolitical Warfare* (2001); "Kemalist Authoritarianism and Fascist Trends in Turkey During the Inter-War Period," in Stein Ugelvik Larsen, ed., *Fascism Outside Europe* (2001); "Imperial Response to Nationalism: The Ottoman Case," in H. Cavanna, ed., *Governance, Globalization and the European Union* (2002); "The Formation of a Muslim Nation in Bosnia-Herzegovina: A Historiographic Discussion," in F. Adanir and S. Faroqhi, eds., *The Ottomans and the Balkans* (2002).

Jane Jenson is Professor at the Université de Montréal, Département de science politique. She has also taught political science at Carleton University and Canadian studies at Harvard University. Since June 1999, she has been director of Réseau de la famille, Réseaux canadiens de recherche en politiques publiques. She holds a Canada Research Chair in Citizenship and Governance. Her publications include: J. Jenson and B. de Sousa Santos, eds., *Globalizing Institutions: Case Studies in Social Regulation and Innovation* (2000); with J. Laufer and M. Maruani, eds., *The Gendering of Inequalities: Women, Men and Work* (2000); "Against the Tide: Childcare in Quebec," in R. Mahon and S. Michel, eds., *Child Care Policy at the Crossroads: Gender and Welfare State Restructuring* (2002); with M. Papillon, "Challenging the Citizenship Regime: The James Bay Cree and Transnational Action," *Politics and Society*, June 2000.

Michael John teaches social and economic history at the University of Linz. His main subjects are the history of everyday life, migration and ethnicity in Austria in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, oral history, history of minorities, and Jewish history in Austria. His publications include: Michael John and Albert Lichtblau, *Schmelztiegel Wien – einst und jetzt. Geschichte und Gegenwart der Zuwanderung nach Wien* (1993); Michael John and Oto Luthar, eds., *Un-Verständnis der Kulturen. Multikulturalismus in Mitteleuropa* (1997); Michael John and Albert Lichtblau, "Jewries in Galicia and Bukovina, in Lemberg and Czernovitz," in Sander Gilman and Milton Shain, eds., *Jewries at the Frontiers* (1999); Michael John, "Upper Austria, Intermediate Stop: Reception Camps and Housing Schemes for Jewish DPs and Refugees in Transit," in Thomas Albrich and Ronald W. Zweig, eds., *Escape through Austria: Jewish Refugees and the Austrian Route to Palestine* (2002).

Bernd-Peter Lange teaches English literary and cultural studies at Magdeburg University. He was Visiting Professor at Mumbai University and a member of the World Council of Einstein Bhavan at Santiniketan University (West Bengal). Publications and teaching experience include

the utopian tradition, eighteenth-century literary theory, modern British literature, cultural history, British and postcolonial studies, and contemporary writing in English.

Peter S. Li is Professor of Sociology at the University of Saskatchewan, and Chair of Economic Domain, Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration. His research areas are race and ethnic studies, immigration, and multiculturalism. Among his books are *Destination Canada: Immigration Debates and Issues* (2003); ed., *Race and Ethnic Relations in Canada* (1999, 1990); *The Chinese in Canada* (1998, 1988); *The Making of Post-War Canada* (1996); *Racial Oppression in Canada* (co-author, 1988, 1982), and *Ethnic Inequality in a Class Society* (1988). Currently, he is conducting research on immigrants' earnings and the Chinese diaspora.

Paul E. Lovejoy is Distinguished Research Professor, Department of History, York University, Toronto, and recipient of the Canada Research Chair in African Diaspora History. He is author of *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (2nd. ed., 2000), and (with Jan Hogendorn) *Slow Death for Slavery: The Course of Abolition in Northern Nigeria, 1897–1936* (1993), which won the Wallace K. Ferguson Prize of the Canadian Historical Association (1994). His most recent books include *Identity in the Shadow of Slavery* (2000), and, with Robin Law, *The Biography of Mahommah Gardo Baququa* (2001). He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and Director of the Harriet Tubman Resource Centre on the African Diaspora at York University (affiliated with the UNESCO Slave Route Project, on whose International Scientific Committee he serves).

Mala Pandurang is Head of the Department of English at the Dr.B.M.N. College, Matunga Mumbai. She is also visiting faculty at the postgraduate departments of the University of Mumbai and the SNDT Women's University. She is a Post-doctoral Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH), Germany. She has received an associateship from the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. She has also been a recipient of the INDAL Fellowship in Social Sciences for a project on the East African Asian diaspora. Her areas of specialization include postcolonial theorizing and diaspora studies. Currently, she is investigating problematic entry points to theorizing the Indian diasporic experience. Publications include: *Post-Colonial African Fiction: The Crisis of Consciousness* (1997); *Articulating Gender* (co-ed., 2000); *Vikram Seth: Multiple Locations, Multiple Affiliations* (2002); as well as a number of articles in Indian and international journals.

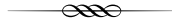
Norbert Rehrmann teaches cultural studies (Spain and Latin America) at the University of Dresden, Germany. Since 1996, he has been conducting a research project on the Sephardic heritage in Spanish literature, sponsored by the VW Foundation (Volkswagen-Stiftung).

Tamara Palmer Seiler is an Associate Professor at the University of Calgary, where she teaches courses in Canadian studies. Her major interest is in immigrant experience and ethnic diversity, particularly as they have been represented in literature. She has written a number of articles on this topic, including "Ethnicity and Canadian Culture," *An Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples* (1999), which she co-authored with Beverly Rasporich. She is also interested in western Canadian history, and has co-authored two books in this area, *Peoples of Alberta: Portraits of Cultural Diversity* (1985) and *Alberta, a New History* (1990). She is currently President of the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association.

Adam Walaszek is Professor of History at the Institute of Polish Diaspora and Ethnic Studies, Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland. He received his Ph.D. from Jagiellonian University ("Return Migration from the United States to Poland after World War I: 1919–1924"). The thesis for his habilitation was published as *Polish Workers, Work and Union Movement in the United States of America, 1880–1922* (1988). From 1988–90, he participated in the international research project "Conflict and Cooperation: Immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe in Cleveland, Ohio, 1880–1930." He is a member of the Polish American Historical Association and the Polonia Research Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences and, since 1991, a member of the editorial board of the *Przegląd Polonijny* (Polonia Review). Most recently, he was the editor and co-author of *Polska Diaspora* (Polish Diaspora) (2001).

REVISING THE MONOCULTURAL NATION-STATE PARADIGM

An Introduction to Transcultural Perspectives



Dirk Hoerder

The composition of Europe's and North America's peoples has changed dramatically since the 1950s. Public discourse, however, remains welded to traditional concepts of national cultures, and scholarship continues to concentrate on a dichotomy of "Old World" emigration countries, considered culturally homogeneous, and "New World" immigration countries, considered pluralist or multicultural. While multicultural composition of state populations has become a catchphrase in public debates, few realize that cultural interaction was the rule throughout history. Late-medieval peasants visiting a roadside inn met itinerant traders carrying spices, imported from the South Sea islands, to an abbot's residence. Europe's Christian faithful undertook pilgrimages to a nearby shrine, to St. Jacques de Compostela in northern Spain, to Rome, or even to Jerusalem; others prayed to Black saints such as Mauritius and Benedetto il Moro or to one of the many images of saintly Black virgins. Early modern cities such as Kraków, Copenhagen, Frankfurt am Main, Paris, Marseilles, or Seville housed large immigrant populations: Scottish traders; Italian architects, scholars, and artists; Dutch Protestant refugees; Afro-Caribbean slaves; Muslim North African traders and sailors; as well as Jewish scholars and merchants, to name only a few. It took centuries of preaching to turn the "Occident" into a monoreligious Christian world, which, however, still divided itself into two major and numerous minor creeds often warring with each other and generating religious refugees. In the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries this Christian realm further divided itself into "nations," assumedly as monocultural as dynastic states had claimed to be monoreligious. Nation-states, in fact, had one hegemonic cultural group which ruled over others, and in the process generated political-cultural refugees.

In North America, the many cultures and polities of the First Peoples initially traded with European immigrants, then were pushed back or succumbed to diseases introduced from Europe and Asia. Anglicans, Lutherans, Catholics, Mennonites, and Presbyterians jostled each other, and slaves from Africa brought animist as well as Islamic beliefs. Where Africans formed the majority of a society, as in the Caribbean, or where large numbers of First Peoples survived, as in parts of South America, new mixed peoples emerged in processes of ethnogenesis. When Europeans divided themselves into nations, the new peoples of the Americas struggled for and—with some exceptions—achieved independence from Europe's colonizer states and they, too, began to construct nations. The United States, in addition to immigrants from Europe, comprised a large African-origin population, the Spanish-Native American cultures of the Southwest, and migrants from China and other Asian societies. British North America, after 1867 the Dominion of Canada, was culturally divided into English-speaking immigrants and the early settlements of French-speakers. In the context of the British Empire, a free African community had settled in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Immigrants from many of Europe's cultures were joined by Chinese merchants and laborers, and Sikhs from Punjab, who came first as auxiliaries of the British crown, then as immigrants.

Since the late eighteenth century, scholars in Europe began losing their trans-European connectedness, and increasingly withdrew into national discourses. In the late nineteenth century, scholars in the social, economic, and political sciences pursued nationalist ideologies disguised as research results. (In the German language these disciplines were called the "state sciences.") In North America, historians published national versions of the past and sociologists studied the "assimilation" of new immigrants. While in the United States the Chicago School of Sociology remained convinced of the assimilation paradigm, sociologists at Montreal's McGill University, observing the English-French dichotomy and thus a dual "nation," in the 1940s began asking questions about cultural cooperation and conflict as well as about negotiating between cultural groups. A combination of three factors—the continuing English-French dichotomy; the self-organization of immigrants from Europe, especially of the Ukrainian-Canadians; and arrival of increasing numbers of immigrants from the Caribbean and Asia—led to a reconceptualization of Canadian society from bicultural to multicultural. Scholarly research spearheaded the development of the new concept and took up the challenge of recasting the constraining historical framework of Canada from national British with a French enclave to multicultural. This involved a deconstruction of "British" into the ethnic components: English, Scottish, Welsh, Cornish, Protestant Irish, and Catholic Irish. Canadian historiography, long on a mission to propagate British-Canadian and Quebec-Canadian culture as national, became a truly empirical discipline again and reconsidered all peoples who created Canadian societies.

Such recasting of history has only begun in most European states. Sweden and the Netherlands, like Canada, have linked immigration from the

1950s on—"guestworkers" or labor migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers—to their own sixteenth- to eighteenth-century immigrant past. Britain and France have become multicultural as a consequence of: decolonization and the arrival of descendants of emigrants, families of mixed origin, and colonial auxiliaries, who would have faced prosecution or persecution in the newly independent states. Other countries moved slower or tried to avoid facing the new realities. Scholars' nationalist versions of their societies' pasts have been increasingly questioned since the late 1970s by research dealing with immigration and transcultural interaction. In May 2000, scholars from Canada and several European countries, including some of African and Indian backgrounds, joined in a conference, "Recasting European and Canadian History: National Consciousness, Migration, Multicultural Lives," at the University of Bremen, Germany.¹ This volume presents some of the results of the conference augmented by subsequently commissioned essays. A companion volume will deal with the late twentieth century and perspectives for the twenty-first century.²

The research presented here aims at a recasting of European and Canadian history, in a broad comparative framework, from the nation-centered paradigm developed in the nineteenth century to a long-range global perspective, a paradigm of cultural interaction and changes across centuries, up to the 1960s. Starting from the Islamic-Christian-Jewish Mediterranean world of the medieval and early modern periods, this research explores the empires of many peoples of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries as well as the worldwide European core-colonial interactions, the diaspora formation and the "Black Atlantic." The essays in the third section question assumptions about national citizenship and underlying homogeneous "received" cultures by analyzing changes in political and cultural belonging.

The transcultural past followed multiple models: hierarchized religious coexistence in the Ottoman Empire, hierarchized ethno-national coexistence in the Habsburg Empire, and lower-class intermingling and intercultural scholarship in the Iberian world. Colonialist and imperialist outreach changed the world of the colonized peoples by way of imposed power relationships, but like "the worlds the slaves made" in the Americas, the worlds the colonized made changed the cores, especially in Great Britain. Nineteenth-century Europe experienced a construction of dynastic-bureaucratic state nations out of empires which, after 1918, were turned into nation-states with little change of civil service personnel. People became citizens; folk culture as constructed by middle-class intellectuals became national consciousness. Regional diversity was homogenized into national unity; immigrants were no longer granted special status but were expected to assimilate. In Canada, the development began later and regional consciousness remained stronger. While the governmental institutions of the federal state and the provinces followed a British or, in the case of Quebec, a French model, local societies remained culturally diverse. All of these assumedly integrative or even assimilationist nations excluded many by gender, class, and territoriality. For example, women and workers were

excluded and people without a state such as Jews, traveling groups, and laboring diasporas. Concepts of membership in the polity (subject status, membership without political rights, citizenship, denizen status) and in its educated culture (literature and the arts) changed constantly and reflected the interaction with multiple other cultures.³

In the opening essay, Dirk Hoerder questions the received discourse about historical identity in the Euro-Atlantic world and critically examines identity formation through language and its connotations. Hegemonic national historiography is confronted with the complex empirical findings about cultural diversity and cultural interaction. The structures of societies, economies, and states, which provide the frames for cultural conflict and interactions, are conceptualized by intellectuals, operationalized by civil servants, and defended by gatekeepers. A historical-sociological approach casts light on the distinct interests of “civil servants” and questions the once paramount concept of the neutrality of state structures embodied in a belief in equality before the law. Multiple identities of people result in transcultural life-courses. A human-rights perspective, regardless of either national, religious, ethnic, or social status, or issues of belonging, is beginning to replace the state-centered approaches.

The Iberian Peninsula’s mix of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian culture, the Ottoman’s ethnoreligious coexistence in the Balkans and Asia Minor, and the Habsburg state of many peoples exemplify distinct types of culturally interactive societal organization. “Spain’s” position as a place of cultural encounter from 711 to 1492 (expulsion of the Jews) or 1611 (expulsion of the *moros*) respectively, derives from the singularity of the *convivencia*, the living together—and fighting—of the three religions that produced a treasure of cultural achievements and multicultural experiences. Al-Andalus, the Islamic dominated part, was the occidental branch of oriental wisdom and the cradle of the renaissance of ancient Greek culture. After the decline of the caliphate of Córdoba, the capital of early Christian “Spain,” Toledo, inherited the tradition of Al-Andalus, and Alphons X, the king of three religions, promoted multicultural translation groups. These texts crossed the Pyrenees and became deeply rooted in Western culture. The period is legendary because of distortions by later generations of historians (not only from Spain) and average Western intellectuals who lacked knowledge of this unique chapter in history. The essay by Norbert Rehrmann, “A Legendary Place of Encounter: The *Convivencia* of Moors, Jews and Christians in Medieval Spain,” reviews the main political and cultural aspects of this first “multicultural state” of Europe.

Both the Habsburg and Ottoman realms were composite polities linked to a central power by indirect rule. In respect to nation-state building, a significant difference separated the two: the existence of feudal institutions in the Habsburg Empire and their absence in the Ottoman case. Before 1848 the Habsburg Empire was a conglomerate of historical territories, acquired in war or by hereditary title, each with its own distinct constitutional structures. In Hungary and Bohemia, for example, national

diets and provincial assemblies survived into the nineteenth century. By contrast, southeastern Europe under Ottoman rule did not know any representation of estates at a provincial assembly, nor did the pre-Ottoman Balkan kingdoms have such institutions.

Fikret Adanir, in his essay, "Religious Communities and Ethnic Groups under Imperial Sway: Ottoman and Habsburg Lands in Comparison," analyzes the Ottoman Empire's *millet* system with its peculiar mechanisms of political representation through basically ecclesiastical prerogative. The profound transformation these structures underwent in the course of the eighteenth century resulted in the ascent of local notables on the one hand and accelerated social mobility in the countryside on the other. Consequently, Christian communal leaders began to play a more active role and their Muslim counterparts openly challenged the central authority. However, such "decentralization"—some interpret it as imperial decay—lacked a constitutional basis. Processes of elite formation and the imperial policies of elite integration differ, too. The feeble civil societal potential within the Ottoman sphere, which was related to the traditional practice of communal autonomy along confessional lines, resulted in vertical segmentation rather than the horizontal overlapping of social structures. The different imperial response to elite nationalism in the Austrian case led to the emergence of the Dual Monarchy.

Michael John, in his essay, "National Movements and Imperial Ethnic Hegemonies in Austria, 1867–1918," approaches the Austro-Hungarian "empire of many peoples" as the arena of different national movements. The idea of ethnically and linguistically homogeneous nation-states contradicted the conceptual thinking of the Habsburg dynasty. Resulting conflicts ultimately contributed to the dissolution of the empire. The success of the Hungarian nationalist movement, as manifested by the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, terminated the concept of an overall, unitary multiethnic monarchy—a realm, however, that was dominated by German-speaking elites. From the 1880s, a political-cultural axis of the imperial capital, Vienna, and the alpine provinces and Austrian regions directly adjacent began a series of maneuvers to increase the hegemony of the "German-Austrian" lands of the Habsburg Monarchy. This process, played out on the municipal political and cultural levels, intensified Austrian-German national self-definition and identity formation, but relied, above all, on the exclusion of "Others." Primarily the "Slavs" and the Jews—and, in the Tyrol, the Italians—were drawn in as negative symbols, as contrasting antitheses. In Vienna, a massive immigration of ethnoculturally "alien" groups constituted the background of this process. Austro-German nationalist groups began to force their version of state culture onto resident and immigrant Others, excluding and racializing German-aculturated Jewish Austrians in the process.

Parallel to the traditional empires and new nation-states, colonial empires and (mainly labor) migrants' diasporas occurred. The "Black Atlantic" had emerged from free African and massive slave migrations. Though

Canada hardly knew slavery, it became part of this cultural region as a segment of the British Empire and as a destination of slaves who rebelled in Jamaica or fled the United States. Black men and women understood the moral duplicity of their owners as well as the economic aspects of the system: they called escape from slavery “stealing oneself” (U.S. term) and in the process they reappropriated the surplus they produced as well as agency in their own lives. French planters, too, understood the double-think of the system. When a slave purchased his or her own freedom, they called it “vendre un nègre à lui-même.” A second labor diaspora occurred from indigenous traditions as well as from British rule in Asia and the Pacific. From the 1830s to the 1920s, Chinese and Indian contract laborers, often accompanied by free “passenger” migrants, created communities in the Americas. Sailors and small business families settled in some European cities. After the 1860s, a proletarian mass migration from European societies created ethnic enclaves or far-flung diasporas. Of the latter those of Polish, Italian, and Jewish working men, women, and children were the most important.

Whereas traditional scholarship has often perceived the evolution of North America as an extension of “white” European colonization and culture, recent scholarship has begun to examine the impact of Africans on the emergence of the “Western” world. A “Black Atlantic” perspective concentrates on a Caribbean-United States-British world; others suggest an “Afrocentric diaspora” approach. North African influences on early modern Europe were numerous and African writers in today’s Atlantic world contribute to the emergence of postcolonial literatures. In Paul E. Lovejoy’s essay, “The Black Atlantic in the Construction of the ‘Western’ World: Alternative Approaches to the ‘Europeanization’ of the Americas,” he provides a new perspective on the racialized evolution of modern transatlantic societies. Biographies of various African men and women who chose Canada as a destination of their journey from slavery to freedom reveal complex patterns of cultural interaction and change. Africans and their descendants, whether slave or free, emerge as historical figures whose patterns of migration and dispersal share similarities with the adjustments of European immigrant populations, despite the experience of slavery. The African diaspora in the Americas was based on continuities in ethnic and religious affiliations that were shaped by slavery, and the “Black Atlantic” struggle to end slavery played an integral part in the formation of the modern world by challenging the hegemony of “European” culture.

Another aspect of the racialization of the internationally mobile working classes is exemplified by the several Asian diasporas worldwide and in particular in North America. In “Chinese Diaspora in Occidental Societies: Canada and Europe,” Peter S. Li traces the emergence of the global Chinese diaspora to the Ming dynasty, which curtailed overseas trade in the mid-fifteenth century. In response, Chinese merchants, craftsmen, and laborers formed permanent communities in Malacca, Manila, and Batavia, and subsequently in much of the Southeast Asian world, *Nanyang* in Chinese.

Older scholarship, as well as an ethnocultural groups' own lore, often viewed primordial culture as the driving force that provides members of a diaspora with the capacity, endurance, and tenacity to adapt to harsh conditions in receiving societies. While cultural factors may serve as bases of resource mobilization and mobility, especially in situations of deprivation, the case of the Chinese diaspora in Canada and in Europe suggests that the mode of incorporation of "racial" minorities in host states plays a key role in shaping the structure of diaspora communities. The policy of inclusion and exclusion, opportunities available to diaspora members, and the normative construction of diaspora members by the receiving society set the structural parameters under which minorities develop their communities. The case of the Chinese also shows that diaspora communities often change in accordance with the conditions of immigration policies, citizenship boundaries, and labor market opportunities.

In processes of exclusion and othering, the Chinese have been called the Jews of the East. Jews in the West have been excluded as resembling Chinese; and Italians, constructed as "olive" rather than "white," have been linked to "dark" Slavic peoples. Adam Walaszek compares Polish working-class migrants with the experience of the diaspora of Italian proletarians in his essay, "Labor Diasporas in Comparative Perspective: Polish and Italian Migrant Workers in the Atlantic World between the 1870s and the 1920s." Polish and Italian peasants migrated as unskilled laborers to industrial centers in the United States, Germany, France, and elsewhere. In the case of Poles this mass migration was followed—in some cases preceded—by migrants from the Polish intelligentsia, *déclassé* nobles, and others, who became interpreters, leaders, and mentors of the ethnic communities. In the case of Italian workers, radical artisans and intellectuals, but also conservative entrepreneurs and notables, assumed similar positions.

As regards cultural or national identities, Poles, Italians, and Hungarians—more so than Slovaks, Ruthenians, and other peoples from imperial peripheries—brought some elements of a national identity from their homeland, but it was generally abroad where they consolidated and developed a national consciousness. Poles had been deprived of independence by the three neighboring empires and Italy became a united state only in the 1870s. Among Poles, the Catholic clergy played an important role in this process, conflating religious and national belonging. Class and national identities interacted in the two diasporic communities—neither Italians nor Poles became an international working class severed from national belonging. Polish workers both in the United States and Germany were active in reestablishing an independent Polish state after 1918. Though Italian and Polish working-class men and women migrated to the same destinations, they hardly interacted because they occupied different occupational niches of the receiving societies' labor market segments. When, after World War I, the two "old" diasporic proletariats began to enter the mainstream of the respective societies, new clusters of diasporic Poles appeared across the world, in France in particular.

The spread of British colonial administrators, military officers, planters, and educators across the reach of the empire created an overlay of power and alleged cultural superiority over resident but less powerful societies including the subaltern proletarian and racialized diasporas. In “Dialectics of Empire and Complexities of Culture: British Men in India, Indian experiences of Britain,” Bernd-Peter Lange and Mala Pandurang discuss the kinds of transcultural contacts and constructions, including the gender implications, that emerged in colonial India. During the Orientalist phase in the late Enlightenment period some officials interacted with a part of the indigenous Indian elites to legitimize and regularize colonial hegemony. A contradiction emerged between liberal radicalism in England and the buttressing of colonial power by creating subservient groups. Anglicist attempts to produce an indigenous class of brown sahibs, *compradors*, or “mimic men” as a political force that would govern India on behalf of the British found expression in Macaulay’s *Minutes on Education*. In the high imperialist period after 1880, a few men wavered between racist supremacy and an identification with India, but most segregated themselves from India’s many societies. Indian elites, in contrast, had to imitate the colonizers in order to gain access to Western learning and positions in the colonial administration. The two elites moved in two constructs, an ideal of Britain as a land of philosophers and poets and an ideal Hindu culture of the past reflected in Sanskrit writings. They also interacted as colonizers-colonials in a power hierarchy, in which the British appeared as anything but fair and in which the Indians appeared as superstitious and caste-conscious. Neither elite mingled with the vast majority of the two societies, the British laboring classes or the lower castes in India. A historical-critical overview of the cultural exchange also reveals that sons of the growing anglicized privileged class in India set sail for England to attain the “invaluable” British education but returned as nationalist leaders, literary personae, or renowned scientists. These early nationalist leaders, poets, and reformers used the colonizer’s language as a tool for organizing themselves into an anticolonial front. In the societies of the subcontinent with a multiplicity of languages, religions, and subcultures, English as *lingua franca* played a crucial role in the emergence of an imagined Indian nation-state. Out of the alleged homogeneity of the empire and European orientalism, the multicentered postcolonial world as well as postcolonial scholarship emerged. When Indian labor and educational migrants established a diaspora in Britain in the 1960s, the white gatekeepers constructed “Black Britons”—a phrase that in contrast to the “Afro-Black Atlantic” is assumed to incorporate Asian, African, and Caribbean men and women, that is, all immigrants of colors other than (the many shades of) white.

Europe’s global empires, nation-states, and decolonized North American states—British-connected Canada and the newly imperialist United States—had to come to terms with the incorporation into “the nation” of women from the hegemonic culture, of immigrant enclaves and diasporas, of visiting colonized students, of descendants of slaves and contract

laborers, and of working class families as citizens or as persons of minor status and rights. Under the single-track concept of *nation-state*, citizenship was considered to involve cultural belonging including adherence to the Christian religion. As in the multilayered empires, a many-cornered struggle for inclusion or distinctiveness developed in the states of Europe and North America.

As a first step toward an understanding of the many cultures in Europe, it is necessary to recognize that Muslims were always present in Europe and, through slavery, reached North America. The image of a Christian Occident propagandized by the churches, in addition to marginalization of Jewishness, hid those of Islamic faith. For centuries after the expulsion of Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula in southwestern Europe, Islam remained the hegemonic faith in southeastern Ottoman Europe and was a practiced, everyday faith among Bosnian Muslims. Islam lost its regional impact after the 1880s with emigration and flight during the contraction of Ottoman rule, but reinserted itself with migration from French West Africa into France in the 1930s. After decolonization, in the 1950s and 1960s, migration to the cores of colonial powers—Great Britain, France, the Netherlands—increased Muslim presence as did recruitment of laborers from Turkey, Morocco, and other Mediterranean societies into the cultures of western and northern Europe. As a result, new Islamic communities have emerged in many European countries. European societies once again become multifaith societies ranging from agnostic through the variants of Christian faith to Islamic and Jewish.⁴

While citizenship is the legal-constitutional aspect of belonging, literature and the arts both ponder and mirror society or the thought of particular social segments. In “The Diversification of Canadian Literature in English,” Tamara Palmer Seiler explains how Canadian literature, especially writings in the English language, evolved in the twentieth century. Placed in the historical, political, social, and cultural milieus in which it is written and read, literary production has become contested as well as cooperative ground among many cultures. It occurs in interrelated discourses surrounding such issues as immigration, diversity, and nation-building. Focusing primarily on highly significant historical “moments” of major social transformations, Seiler highlights ways in which, first, the dominant discourses worked to construct non-Anglo-Celtic immigrants as the ethnic Others and placed the literature they produced as outside the boundaries of English-Canadian literature. In a second phase, literature became a site of struggle; texts produced by minority writers worked to subvert dominant discursive structures. In a third phase, strikingly diverse and polyphonic “Canadian literatures in English” emerged.

Similar developments now occur in European societies; in Britain, “the empire writes back”; an Algerian-French literature emerges, as does a Turkish-German one.⁵ While literature is subjective and readers have a choice in what to select, citizenship laws provide formalized, binding texts. Yet they are neither objective, nor immutable, nor applied equally to

all. After Confederation, Canadian ideas about liberty, equality and solidarity—that is, about citizenship—emanated from many strands, as Jane Jenson argues in her essay, “Place-Sensitive Citizenship: The Canadian Citizenship Regime until 1945.” Conservative politicians used the state for nation-building and economic accumulation. The response to the “social question” associated with the dislocation created by massive immigration, urbanization, and industrialization also illustrates a commitment to the traditions of social solidarity of Social Democracy. In his nation-state level comparison of Canada and the United States, S.M. Lipset has isolated the absence of a “revolutionary moment” in the Canadian experience to account for this country’s greater commitment to collectivism than is found in the United States. Such simplistic views ignore the contribution of French-Canadian political thought to the substance of political culture in the nineteenth century.

Conservative Catholicism buttressed the Tory ideas of Loyalists and, as George Grant has argued, French-Canadian Catholicism fit well with the Calvinist Protestantism of English-speaking Canada. Both inhibited the move toward the liberalism of self-realization characteristic of U.S.-style liberalism. The fundamental concern with national development assigned to the state the role of uniting the disparate social, linguistic, and religious regions of the country and of guaranteeing fairness to all. This concept of citizenship was place-sensitive, and the political discourse from about 1900 to the 1930s was dominated by disputes over the factors contributing to regional inequalities.

Citizenship in Europe is complex. In the postcolonial period, Britain adopted a “race relations” paradigm for understanding and regulating difference and “otherness.” The republican tradition in France, on the other hand, is based on assimilation (or integration) of others into the polity and refuses to recognize difference in the public sphere. Around 1900, German intellectual and political gatekeepers, in a third variant, invented a bloodline construction of national belonging. Christiane Harzig discusses these and other European states’ constructions of citizenship and nation in “From State Constructions to Individual Opportunities: The Historical Development of Citizenship in Europe.” She demonstrates that the seemingly coherent concept of access to citizenship through birth in a territory or into a nation is but a postulate, a simplification of several ways of inclusion. Governments pursued utilitarian goals in creating, for example, mobile labor forces during industrialization, reservoirs of soldiers in expansionist phases, or imperial subjects. States choose their citizenry from the resident populations of their respective territory while relegating segments of “the People” to a lesser status. Thus nation-states, rather than being based on all people of one (hegemonic) culture, were, in fact, political-ideological structures with hierarchized layers of people not equal before the law. Rather than being a founding principle of republican states, citizenship in the nationalist phase of European and North American history appears as a set of utilitarian relationships regulating the liaison

between individuals and the state. Harzig carries the analysis of belonging onto a new level by examining individual strategies of newcomers to achieve inclusion. Migrants decide to apply for citizenship according to personal preferences often unrelated to a concept of one body politic. Nation-states admit newcomers into the labor force and into social security systems (“denizen”-status) while refusing or delaying admission to the political system. Migrants counter such discrimination by also relegating citizenship to utilitarian goals. For example, passports are acquired to facilitate border crossings or labor market access, or to confer citizenship on newborn children. At the turn to the twenty-first century, people use citizenship in ways as utilitarian as states did in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

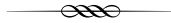
Since the 1960s, various concepts and understandings of multiculturalism guide the analytical understanding of political-cultural belonging and social developments. Christiane Harzig and Danielle Juteau, in a companion volume, note that diversity, rather than merely being permitted, needs to be culturally developed and constitutionally secured. Open societies have paid particular attention to educational systems in which the next generation of citizens is being socialized. Conservative segments of societies, on the other hand, impose on newcomers concepts of family life and moral norms no longer accepted by a receiving society. Detailed studies show how diversity affects the personal lives of individuals; how it shapes and changes private, national, and international economic encounters; and how institutions and legal systems are confronted with changing demands from a more culturally diverse clientele. A new theoretical and political understanding of the impact of diversity on national self-understanding and national dispositions may draw on Chinese entrepreneurs in Europe, on the Iranian diaspora, and on Spain as a recent, yet historically rooted multicultural state. In this study diversity is analyzed and theorized as an integral part of peoples’ lives around the world rather than as the exceptional experience. Diversity is a processual concept, a category in construction, its meaning emerging in personal as well as institutional, societal, and economic interactions, closely related to power relations, hierarchies, and the unequal distribution of resources. Incorporation of diversity into entwined narratives has recast the master narrative, which—rather than being a comprehensive view—was a *pars pro toto* construction that turned a particular hegemonic class, ethnic, and gender culture into an allegedly national one.

Notes

1. The organizing committee consisted of Christiane Harzig and Dirk Hoerder, both from the University of Bremen; Danielle Juteau, Université de Montréal; and Adrian Shubert, York University, Toronto. The symposium was supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, the three universities involved, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Canadian embassy in Berlin, the state of Bremen, and the sponsoring organizations, the Association for Canadian Studies in German-Speaking Countries and the European Network for Canadian Studies. The conference activities were coordinated by Annika McPherson and Irina Schmitt. Annika McPherson was also responsible for preparing this volume for publication. The editors are deeply grateful to her for her efficient and knowledgeable contribution.
2. Christiane Harzig and Danielle Juteau, with Irina Schmitt, eds., *The Social Construction of Diversity: Recasting the Master Narrative of Industrial Nations* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003).
3. Essays from the conference, edited by Christiane Harzig, Dirk Hoerder, and Adrian Shubert, appeared as the special issue "Negotiating Nations: Exclusions, Networks, Inclusions" of *Histoire sociale/Social History* 33, no. 66 (November 2000).
4. Bernard Lewis and Dominique Schnapper, eds., *Muslims in Europe* (London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1994); W.A.R. Shadid and P.S. van Koningsveld, eds., *Political Participation and Identities of Muslims in Non-Muslim States* (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos Publishing House, [1996]).
5. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989).

— One —

TRANSCULTURAL STATES, NATIONS, AND PEOPLE



Dirk Hoerder

Identities and Languages

Received discourse informs us about what is meant by European and by Canadian historical identity. We know who we are and what we talk about. Or do we?

Europe? The Western Europe of the Cold War? The fifteenth-century southwestern Iberian Europe? Or could Europe be the seventeenth-century southeast under Ottoman rule, with its wooded mountains, “Balkan” in Turkish? The Ottoman system of ethnoreligious self-administration freed lowly serfs from feudal exploitation. But in the words of those who felt that their Latin Christian religio-culture, their feudal states, their whole self-styled superiority was threatened by the Muslim Eastern Mediterranean model of sociopolitical organization of interfaith societies, the region was ruled by a monolithic despot—“the Turk.” Central- and Atlantic-European intellectual gatekeepers of the two Euro-Christian faiths constructed a unity that came to be called the Christian Occident out of a diversity of societies that were frequently at war with each other. These gatekeepers were certain that European identity and achievements were not derived from an Egyptian Black Athena or the cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean, but from the Roman Empire and Greek culture to which masculine warrior tribes, the Teutons and Anglo-Saxons, added their robust bodies. Empire and culture and strong men! Cultural imperialism? Multiple cultures? Transcultural interaction?

Canadian history—we know what we talk about: the history of the regions, the population, and the state add up to Canadian identity. But

this was not what a girl experienced whose last name was Petrone. She received her education in 1930s Port Arthur, “memorized the British money system and ... linear measures ... the achievements of the British around the world.” Did she stomp grapes with her bare feet, as her classmates sneeringly noted? Probably not, since she was busy trying “to erase” her Italianness. She renamed herself “Penny” because her founding-nation British-minded teacher could not remember her real name, “Serafina.” Was she Canadian or Italian, or British, or British-Canadian, or Canadian-Italian? The self-celebrating British, in fact, had barely finished constructing themselves out of Scots and Orkney-men, English, Welsh, and Cornish. They were still busy debating whether Irish were human or Catholic, whether they were a culture, if a deprived one, or a laboring underclass, and where the Protestant Irish fit in. Empire and culture and superior men! Cultural imperialism? The power to define! Serafina decided to define herself—individual agency, discourses, and social structures are inseparably linked.¹

Neither Serafina nor her teachers took note of the other founding nation, to repeat this self-designation of the powerful: the St. Lawrence Valley French defined by cultural practice, the Quebec Act of 1774, and modern bicultural legislation as distinct in language, legal system, culture and, at least formerly, by religion. Gatekeepers of this culture emphasize that they were the first to arrive and were deprived of their claim to pre-eminence on the Plains of Abraham in 1759. *Je me souviens*, their past-oriented memory slogan—in these postmodern times displayed on every Quebec car license plate²—is incomplete: Acadians, Ontario French, St. Boniface’s Catholics, Belgian, French, French-Swiss settlers in the prairies, Quebec-French contractors in the West, a Société Française in 1860s Victoria—French-speakers settled in all of Canada. Within the context of one, imperially created polity—British North America and the Dominion of Canada—British identity has been expansive, Quebec identity contractive. People may be born equal, but as children they are socialized into unequal constructs, which they designate as “knowledge” and then hand down to their children as self-evident.

Identity, rather than easily defined, was and is contested ground and only certain identity constructs provide access to a society’s resources and power. Identities emerge when subjectivity of individuals intersects with narratives of history and culture in relationships which are constantly modified by individual men’s and women’s agency, by their interests, life-course projects, and everyday dealings. The polyphonic and hybrid identities constructed by gatekeepers and lived by common peoples are reproduced/modified with each new generation raised in the memory-keeping institutions of families and schools.

Reduction of multiple identities to one identity, whether personal and local or societal and national, involves a simplification of the complex, the multiple, the many-cultured, to a generic construct in accordance with socially accepted discourse and group-specific interests of the reductionists.

I will illustrate such cultural simplifications with one example from everyday language. “Mathematics,” a term considered to refer to a value-free exact and universal science, is as multi-cultured as all other aspects of our lives and knowledges. Originating in the South Asian cultures it migrated westward, merged Arab numerals to replace the cumbersome Roman ones, was adapted to accounting by Venetian merchants and to new theoretical levels in twelfth-century tricultural Córdoba and Toledo. From there scholars transported it to the court of Plantagenet kings of England. Cultural content of language is more complex than we, who live it and live in it, who transmit and redefine it, know.

Transmission of cultural identities occurs to a large degree through language, and language loss is said to mean loss of culture. But language, like all of everyday life, incorporates many cultural particulars into a whole and in the process particles of Others, of diversity, integrate into one Self. Thus our very language misleads us about the world we describe, about the identity of the politics in which we live, about the societies in which we are embedded. It alienates us from our surroundings, from the world we inhabit. *Je me souviens* may be liberating or fettering. Historical memory hurts or excludes some and incorporates or helps others. It is selective.

Literary authors and scholars in the humanities may explore alternative forms of memory, experiment with multiple truths, play with parts of the mosaic of memory. Common people, engaged in the personal historiography of writing a life story or autobiography, also play with memory. They try to form a coherent story out of complex, perhaps complicated lives. In the process, writers come to terms with the multiplicity of cultural identities and the “duplicity” of language. Without an awareness of multiple meanings of words and other patterns of everyday life, knowledge of cultural origins recedes beyond memory to misty times immemorial: incorporation beyond recognition rather than acceptance of many-cultured origins and transcultural coexistence. Such parochial, unimaginative mind-settings close doors—doors whose opening would permit choice and flexibility.

Nations: Simple Stories and Complex Pasts

Since the nineteenth century, scholars and ideologues have attempted to mold the history of the two genders, of the very young and the very old, of several classes and of more cultural groups into one coherent story of a nation. If the present is the bridge between origins, the world into which we are born, the potentiality of the future, and the worlds we create—then scholarly homogenization, and confusion of meanings of everyday speech can lead us astray, perhaps into a maze without exit. Then comes the time of the great simplifiers, the strong men, who with incisive one-way logic or a bold stroke of their sword cut the Gordian knot. Suddenly everything falls into order—neat ethnic categories with “us” at the top and Chinese,

or women, or Black people at the bottom. The powerful simplification or master narrative of “national identity” and “nation-state history,” in *longue durée* perspective, hides a complex interactive past, hides in particular the worlds the slaves made, the migrants built, the women created.

A few discerning glances into the past reveal the interactive worlds. The late-medieval Mediterranean world of three faiths and many denominations comprised the littorals of three continents and peoples of many colors of skin. It connected to gold-providing trans-Saharan African states, to the enticing Indian Ocean trade emporia and Chinese luxuries, as well as to marginal transalpine Europe. Al-Andalus on the Iberian Peninsula was Muslim-Arab; the Central European Hohenstaufen Empire (much later constructed as “of German nation”) extended to Sicily; the Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jewish diasporas spread; crusaders of many ethnic origins, labeled “Franks,” destroyed parts of the highly developed interfaith cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean, then settled and shed their uncouth ways quickly; Flemish and Saxon men and women as well as an itinerant many-cultured military order from Palestine settled the Slavic lands that came to be called “German”; Norsemen roamed the Atlantic coasts, built states from England to Sicily, and married local women to gain access to their networks and resources; Mediterranean slaves were Christian or Muslim, were of many shades of white or black, were Circassian, English, Arab, or sub-Saharan African; merchants crisscrossed Europe and so did multitudes of pilgrims; free and enserfed peasant families moved and few could be traced in the same location for more than three generations. All consorted, conceived children, gave birth, and raised children in hybrid cultures. Late-medieval peoples, imagined as sedentary, were characterized by high mobility and multiple faiths, and were ruled by a trans-European aristocracy and clerics from many backgrounds. Even though different groups were often armed and in conflict, the coexisted and interacted.³

Seventeenth-century urban societies composed and recomposed themselves. In 1600, Frankfurt am Main drew much of its business and craft production from several thousand migrating journeymen artisans, 3,000 middle-class Dutch Protestant refugees, and 2,500 Jews—who jointly accounted for more than 40 percent of the population. In addition, immigrating women from the neighboring countryside did much of the service work. In Kraków, Poland, Italian scholars taught at the university, Italian architects built the main church, Scottish merchants and peddlers traded.⁴ In Hamburg, northern Germany, clothmakers, merchants, and stockbrokers spoke Flemish; Portuguese Jews from Amsterdam established the port’s commercial connections to Latin America; and a few manumitted Danish-Caribbean slaves were baptized and intermarried with local women.⁵

From its capital in Istanbul, the Ottoman Empire had institutionalized multireligious hierarchical coexistence in the *millet* system. To avoid cultural and military hegemony of the Turkish group, its administrators used

a *lingua nullius*, the artificial Ottomanlica. To the highest ranks, officials were levied from among children of the realm's Christian peoples; wives for the elites came from among Caucasian and Central Asian slave women and rose to high rank. Istanbul accommodated Jewish refugees from Catholic Iberia and Balkan peasants liberated from feudal regimes. From the multifaith cities of Al-Andalus, on the other hand, the victorious but mind-numbing Latin Church expelled the religious Others, Jewish and Muslim intellectuals, long-distance traders, skilled agriculturalists, urban artisans, and simple laborers. Politics renounced good governance in favor of otherizing and of generating refugees. The formerly trans-Mediterranean Iberian societies were reduced from diversity to monoreligious doctrine, from the center of the Euro-Atlantic world to the periphery. They cut themselves off from innovative interconnectedness.⁶

Enlightened nineteenth-century middle-class reformers nurtured and cherished national culture and economic achievement. But villagers and working-class urbanites from the many regions of Europe moved between internationalized—globalized—labor markets and transcontinental family economies. From Bugiarno, one single village near Milan, Italy, young girls migrated to silk factories of the microregion (short-distance labor migration of women before marriage and mobilization of a female labor force), and young men went to France for seasonal or multiannual work (medium-distance labor migration). Once skilled female silkworkers—accompanied by a male foreman—even went to Japan (long-distance expert migration). Others, often married men, traveled to Missouri iron mines (long-distance temporary labor migration of the unskilled) and wives followed “to do the washing and cooking” for husbands and boarders (migration into unpaid service work). Rosa, one of these women, although remaining a villager and Lombardo in mentality, worked in a boardinghouse in a Missouri mining village, divorced an abusive husband under American law, migrated to the metropolis of Chicago, briefly returned to her home village, where she dared to talk back to local authorities, and then returned to the United States and worked as a cleaning woman in her Chicago neighborhood. Villagers from Zaborów, Poland, or Scania, Sweden, shared such trans-European and transatlantic experiences and transcultural life-worlds.⁷ The “White Atlantic” and its industrial capital flows and proletarian mass migrations supplemented and replaced the “Black Atlantic,” the involuntary slave migrations which, to the 1830s, had brought more Africans to the Americas than Europeans. Their transcultural worlds had been as complex as Rosa's but were characterized by violence, racism, and power relationships.⁸

The Bugiarno migrants' cultural identities remained both local and regional. They were not Italian. Only in the receiving societies did people from the Veneto to Calabria interact, for example in Mile End village on the fringes of Montreal, in hamlets along the railway lines to Winnipeg, or in the Rocky Mountains' Crow's Nest Pass mining towns. They became more similar, made themselves into Italians. Since neither Montreal's

French-Canadians nor British-origin Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) officials were able to tell the difference between a Lombardo, a Tuscan, or even a Sicilian, they, too, labeled these immigrants “Italians.” Such processes cut the Gordian knot of complexity and arrived at a single ethnic group. Cognitive differentiation is, indeed, limited, needs categorizations, but easily turns into ethnic ascription and racist labeling: in structuring the complex, language helps and alienates at the same time.

The “Canada” the migrants reached was a composite of First Peoples’ and European-settled areas. In so-called *British-Columbia*, the several First Peoples had integrated a fragment of the First Founding Nation’s private sector, the Scots of the Hudson’s Bay Company. When the many self-ruling cultural groups along the Pacific coast became a province, the first elites were Métis (Scottish Métis). The specific cultural input of the other half, Okanagan people for example and many others, is not part of memory-defining language. As English-speakers these Métis could redefine themselves as British. Other designations, like Similkameen-Scottish or Métis-Columbia, in terms of the elites in Ottawa, Dominion, and Empire, would have undercut the negotiating position. The Métis of the Red River Valley, on the other hand, spoke French. They could not redefine themselves as British and their self-government was destroyed by an alliance of speculators, army, and nationalists in government—all of them men. Their region and the prairies in general were later settled by “men in sheepskin coats”—as the ten-second sound bite of national memory has it. The Secretary of the Interior, Clifford Sifton, had called for men with “sturdy wives and a goodly number of children.” He wanted family labor. Ukrainians came, a strong group that assimilated others into its linguistic fold, kind of a third founding nation. The novels of Vera Lysenko and Illia Kiriak evoke the complexity of the period.⁹

At about 1900, a period styled by gatekeepers as the height of the “age of nationalism,” the Atlantic world consisted of peoples with growing national consciousnesses and hopes for self-determination; of empires in which hegemonic peoples oppressed smaller ones; and of a few states, like the Netherlands or Sweden that had admitted immigrants for centuries, but had coalesced into increasingly homogeneous cultures. In the two alleged model nations, France and Britain, French villagers could not understand each other’s regional dialects and English men and women from the laboring classes left en masse for places where they could feed themselves and their children; they chose between states and nations. Again, the duplicity of language changed historical memory; dynastic, multiethnic and multidialect states developed homogenizing bureaucracies that used the state apparatus to form nations. Language turned such state-nations into nation-states—as if there had always been merely one cultural group, the nation.

People’s experiences did not reflect the idea of monocultural nations. In September 1910, a Transylvanian woman with her two teenage daughters, left from an Adriatic port for New York. She was a descendant of the

German migrants who had lived interspersed with, if hierarchically above, Magyars and Rumanians for eight centuries. She and her husband had departed from the Habsburg Dual Monarchy of many peoples, whose core did not invest in the periphery. For several years the couple had lived in America, having left their daughters in Transylvania under the care of an aunt. When the mother returned to bring the two girls to America, she wore the traditional Transylvania Saxon dress, probably never used in America, to indicate to her kin that she had not become alien to them. But for her daughters she had bought skirts, stylish in urban America, to spare them from being ridiculed in the new society for wearing Old World garb. She spoke the Transylvanian German dialect intermixed with many American words; the daughters, schooled under Magyarization policies, spoke Hungarian among themselves. This family, one among the 50 to 60 million men, women, and children who left Europe between the 1820s and the 1930s, was neither dislocated (Chicago School) nor uprooted (Handlin), nor even hyphenated (1970s ethnic studies). They moved transculturally in multiple socioeconomic contexts: Transylvanian, Magyar, and American; rural and urban; intergenerationally tradition-bound and future-oriented. Migrants have multiple identities.¹⁰

Four years later, in August 1914, the imperial polities' hold over the cultures and economies of peripheral "subaltern nations" and the manipulation of cultural identities by self-interested elites, among other reasons, caused all-out war. Allegedly manly and superior "white" Germanic Europeans fought "dark" Slavic "races" and were, in turn, subdued by valiant Anglo-Saxon soldiers. Twenty million dead later, new nation-states were established. Another war, racial extermination, and 60 million dead later, untold millions of Europeans became refugees, and many headed for the United States and Canada. The Occident, self-constructed pinnacle of civilization, had engaged in a half-century of self-destruction.

In this period, the Atlantic migration system stagnated and, in the 1950s, came to an end. Since the 1960s, peoples of other cultures reestablished the Pacific migration system. On both continents of the Atlantic world, labor migrations brought people north from the Mediterranean and Caribbean basins. Even though new forms of racist exclusion followed, multicultural interactions also emerged. Refugee generation shifted from Europe to Africa and other parts of the Southern Hemisphere. Just as colonized peoples had to come to terms with the alien colonizers, now wealthy European and North American societies have to come to terms with refugees from poverty. In contrast to labor migrants, refugees often arrive with wounds in their identities, wounds of colonialism, of economic exploitation and unequal terms of trade, mutilations imposed by modern states ruled by clans, kleptocracies, or multinational conglomerates. The universally accepted type of political organization, the state, and the global capitalist economy often turn into "refugee-generating apparatuses" and many of those involuntarily on the move arrive at borders closed by "refugee-refusing" administrators of democratic states.