Barbarian Nations in a Civilizing Empire:
Naturalizing the Nation within the British Empire
1770-1870
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Abstract

This thesis examines the emergence of the nation in the British Empire in the process of thinking about empire, economy and biology during the late-Enlightenment and the nineteenth century. A key aspect of this, Knapman argues, was concern over the dialectic of civilization and order as it related to the barbarian and the savage. The notion of the barbarian grounded the European nations in time and therefore constructing a sense of origin and particularism. Equally the savage and the barbarian placed non-European cultures in time. The thesis draws on a range of writers from eighteenth and nineteenth centuries such as Adam Smith, Edward Gibbon, David Hume, Thomas Malthus, John Stuart Mill, Charles Darwin, James Cowles Prichard, Robert Knox and many other lesser-known figures. This is related to an examination of the nation in British representations of Southeast Asia, including colonial officials such as Stamford Raffles, John Crawfurd, and James Brooke who produced encyclopaedic accounts of their experiences in Asia. The thesis argues that while the complex grammar of the British Empire divided the world into spheres of civilisation and barbarism, it retained a special place for barbarians within the core and thus allowed for the naturalisation of nations within the context of an empire of civilizing others.
Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and, any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged.

Gareth L. Knapman

1st September, 2007
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Part One: Dominant Discourse in Britain
Chapter 1 - The Nation as Natural: Naturalising the Nation in a World of Empires

The origin of nations is an ongoing debate in nationalism studies. Modernists point to the fact that the nation emerges in the context of the modern world (Anderson [1983] 1991, Gellner 1964, Hobsbawm and Ranger [1983] 2000). By comparison the primordialists point to clearly evident cultural origins that descend back into the mists of the ancient world (Hutchinson 1996, Smith 1986). One underlining point that these perspectives assume but do not directly analyse, is the question as to why the contemporary world assumes the nation to be natural? Primordialists tend to assume that naturalness evolved as a process of cultured evolution; whilst modernists tend to bypass this issue, assuming the necessity of nations and nationalism within the structure of modernism.

It was not always the case that the nation was assumed to be the rightful dominant association of peoples. At the end of the eighteenth century, and even the beginning of the nineteenth century, the nation was not assumed to be a natural form of identity. In the early modern world, empires and kingdoms were the dominant expressions of polity. Although these empires and kingdoms had names, this did not make them nations. Tom Nairn (1977), Linda Colley (1992), Krishan Kumar (2003), and others have focused on how these empires were transformed into nations. They argue that the pursuit of empire contributed to creating nationalism. Empires were the setting in which cultural groupings were transformed into nations. However, how did the nation become assumed as natural in this transition?

From the late-eighteenth century to the late-nineteenth century, the process of naturalising the nation occurred across the breadth of the British Empire, and this is the subject of this thesis. The thesis argues that the process of naturalising the nation occurred both in the centre or metropole and at the farthest reaches of the British
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Empire. The nation came to be seen as a natural structure. Its naturalising was expressed within the dominant ideologies of the time. The nation became the dominant expression of cultural and social identity within British thought. The nation became intertwined with ideologies of liberalism, materialism, race, state-building, and social evolution. This constituted a prism of comparison through which British politicians, intellectuals, travellers and colonists began to interpret the world around them. In doing so, the British began to actively imagine colonial spaces of occupation as nations.

The fact that the nation emerged within the context of empire is on the face of it surprising. Nations and empires are very different expressions of identity. Chapter Two examines how this naturalization occurred within political thought on Empire. Empires divide identity into order (civilization) and chaos (barbarism). In pre-modern thought, nations were tribes and located within the sphere of barbarism. This continued within Edward Gibbon’s ([1788] 1997) theory of empire. For Gibbon, empire ended the nation. Nations were a symptom of primitivism whilst empires were a symptom of civilization. Over the course of the nineteenth century this changed. Writers on empire increasingly projected empire as an expression of nationhood, whilst also seeing the divisions within empire as nations. Although the nineteenth century was characterized by empires, the argument of this thesis is that the idea of the nation came to colonize the idea of empire.

The nineteenth century saw the deliberate introduction of the nation into cultural-political thinking (Berlin 1991, Kedourie 1960). This was particularly the case in German romanticism (Berlin 2000). Yet it would be simplistic to assume that the nation was a manufactured creation of romantic intellectuals (Gellner 1964). By the mid-nineteenth century the nation was already a naturalized part of British political rhetoric. This was not the result of a deliberate introduction. Some argue that the nation became a natural part of British political discourse by the end of the seventeenth century. Liah Greenfeld (1993, 2003), for example, makes the claim that the nation was born in Britain, and that Britain introduced the world to nationalism. Chapter Three focuses on this sense of nationhood, examining how the nation was intertwined with the emergence of liberalism. The importance of the nation prior to the nineteenth century can easily be overstated, yet there is a connection between the rise of liberalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the naturalization of the nation. Liberalism developed a sense of society as separate and distinct from the state. This separate sphere was
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caseptualized as ‘civil society’, and in the eighteenth century this was entwined with ideas about the nation. In this sense, liberalism unintentionally opened an early means of conceiving that a nation exists.

The scientific revolutions of the nineteenth century transformed these early liberal ideas on the nation. The progress in understanding biology and race occurred in the context of deliberations on slavery (Carroll 2003, Desmond 1989, Moore and Desmond 2004). These deliberations resulted in the biological interpretation of race. Chapter Four examines how race became incorporated into the idea of the nation. The effect of this was to overwhelmingly naturalize the nation into peoples’ biology. Emerging in the mid-nineteenth century, racial writers such as Robert Knox ([1850] 1862) and Arthur Gobineau ([1856] 1984) argued that nations were biologically determined (Hawkins 1997: 184-215). Even internationalists such as John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx grounded the nation in biology. This acceptance of the racial nation saw the embedded naturalization of the nation, and in the nineteenth century this became increasingly overt.

The three chapters of Part One portray how the nation emerged within three dominant ideological discourses of empire, political economy and biology. In each of these, I argue that the nation was naturalized as a vision of cultural and political identity. The impact was that the nation became a universal expression of identity and difference. Traders, adventurers and colonists going to the far-flung ends of the empire used the concept of ‘nation’ to describe the peoples they encountered. As an expression of difference, the nation emerges only in the context of a society that was globally aware.

From India to Papua, local and indigenous societies were described as national groups. However, this discourse was a loaded discourse. Civil society had a powerful impact on the sense of national being. ‘The nation’ was not a mere descriptive term, but a powerful concept of social and political obligation. For many writers, the national society was attributed as having primordial origins that descended from the material relationship with the landscape. Each nation (sometimes translated as each ‘civil society’) had a duty to engage in technological and commercial progress and join other nations in commercial exchange. The second half of this thesis charts how the nation was used to imagine colonial Southeast Asia.
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Colonial travel narratives outlined the romantic primordial conditions of the colonial peoples. They also outlined the natives’ role in the modern global system of exchange and contextualized this within an ethical framework of obligation. By comparison, the colonial administrations legitimized their own existence though the ethnoification of colonial spaces. They claimed that good British governance was needed to maintain peace. Empire was legitimized through the prevention of native barbarism and in the creation of a commercial environment in which nations could flourish. The native barbarian stood in contrast to the barbarian in European culture. Far from distancing themselves from barbarism, Europeans internalized barbarian narratives and legitimized their actions through narratives of the barbarian. Barbarianism became, for some writers, a basic characteristic: the core being of the nation for European nations and the rest of the world. The particular character of this barbarian determined the destiny of the nation. The British Empire became the protector of nations rather than the suppressor of the uncivilized nations. This broke with the tradition of empire, which linked nations with tribes and barbarians.

Through this legitimization, the colonial administrations introduced two conceptions of the liberal nation: firstly, the direct concept of ‘primordial race-nations’ and secondly, the implied concept of the ‘multicultural nation-state’. Part Two of this thesis, Chapters Five, Six and Seven, examine three ways in which Southeast Asia was imagined through the nation. Chapter Five focuses on the nation as an expression of colonial governance, whilst Chapter Six focuses on the nation within popular travel writing. In both of these cases the nation was an expression that emerged from within the empire. The nation was used to describe the limits of inclusiveness. I have chosen to focus on Southeast Asia because it represents one of the far reaches of empire, a region less prominent in the British imagination than that of India or Africa. If we find that the nation is naturalized at the furthest reaches of empire, then my argument is more substantially demonstrated than through examining naturalization in a region more prominent in the British imagination. The British Empire in Asia increasingly justified itself in the name of liberal inclusiveness, producing a rhetorical cosmopolitanism. In doing so, liberalism was confronted with difference. National difference became a means of explaining the limits of liberal inclusiveness, and legitimising authoritarian
policies in the name of liberalism. The separateness of nations became a structural component that legitimized and maintained practices within the empire.

An empire of divisions and repressive practices was itself illiberal. It was on this basis that critics from within the metropole developed an anti-imperial critique. Chapter Seven, focuses on how the nation turned full circle. What had developed in the empire to describe the limits of liberalism became a source describing the natural rights of the colonized. Liberal critics of empire such as Richard Cobden and Joseph Hume made national rights a core part of their liberalism.

The nation thus became a means of imagining an empire and deconstructing it. The British Empire, like all modern European empires, emerged simultaneously with the consolidation of the nation-state.¹ As the following chapter outlines, nations have an uneasy relationship with empires, with nations providing an easy source of resistance to empires. This is not a retrospective analysis. Authors that were contemporary to the rise of the British Empire saw modern empires as a threat to the national community. In his essay Politics as Science, David Hume ([1742] 1998) cautioned against free states pursuing empire, arguing that it creates division not unity. Similarly an early critic of the British Empire, James Callender (1794) believed that “Britain” was a repressive

¹ This point can not be understated, but it can lead to confusion between the ideas of empire, imperialism, the nation and nation-state. In most instances this is not a problem, with authors discussing how empire fed into nationalism in the late-nineteenth century. As well as empires feeding into nationalism, the idea of nation emerged from a world of empires. This theme will be explored in Chapter Two. The central problem is the transition from pre-modern conceptions of empire to modern conceptions of empire. The word ‘imperialism’ is indicative of this tension and can be seen in Bruce McLeod (1999: 1) introduction to his book the Geography of Empire:

This book is about the production of space. More particularly, it explores the production of an empire, the creation of ‘Englands out of England’. The expansive multiplication of certain (extremely unstable) spatial and ideological formations was as much a question of imagination and myth as hard-nosed calculation and economic realities … In this project I hope to reinforce Edward Said’s contention that the ‘major … determining, political horizon of modern Western culture [is] imperialism’. I have, perhaps, taken the risky step of applying Said’s thesis to the very beginning of what became, though not inevitable, the British Empire. The 1580s is a time when imperialism clearly had more to do with far-fetched dreams than with far-flung territories. In light of this, I will follow the useful distinction … between “Imperial Britain” and the “British Empire”. The former “indicates the informing spirit” or “consciousness” that aids and abets sometimes precedes and often falsifies the territorial materiality of the latter.

McLeod’s argument is very similar to Linda Colley’s (1992) and Krishan Kumar’s (2003) arguments that Britain had a national identity which was imperialist. Framing imperialism in this way emphasizes the expansionist character of the nation and the nation’s fulfilment through empire. The problem is that imperialism is not quite the same as empire. McLeod acknowledges this and uses John Cramb’s distinction between ‘informing spirit’ and the structure of empire, but avoids addressing how the nation emerged out of pre-modern conceptions of empire. We need to examine how empires transform from the
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political force that would break down under the pressure of nations wanting their liberty. Another liberal critic John Wade (1831: 335) asked the rhetorical question:

A Great nation, possessing within herself the resources of wealth and civilization, what advantage can she derive from exhausting her energies in rearing to maturity and fostering ingratitude in the unfledged offspring of future empires?

It was not only critics of the empire that observed this tension. W.B. Cooke (1835: 26) was an advocate of imperial expansion, maintaining that it was a “glorious and philanthropic undertaking” and “that the conquest that is … open to us, over the desert wilds, by means of emigration” would produce “beneficial results to mankind”. At the same time, he openly recognized that “the mother country … ought to bear in mind that she is laying the foundation of future empires”, which need to be granted independence eventually (Coke 1835: 48). Likewise, John Stuart Mill saw that empire was ultimately inconsistent with the principle of nation (examined in Chapter Two). In short, the empire bore the critical brunt of an approach which increasingly accepted the nation as a natural entity in social political thought.

Theorising the Naturalized Nation

The naturalness of the nation presents a dilemma for nationalism theory. A key problem is that much of the theoretical work focuses on nationalism, with the nation being tagged-on as an also-ran. Volumes are churned out every year on the construction of nationalism, but little of this deliberation is on the construction of the nation. The theoretical writing that does so, is often trapped within the primordialist versus modernist argument. Theoretical approaches based around primordialism or modernism essentially frame the nation within the questions: ‘when did nations come into being?’ and ‘what is the nation’s relationship to the state and to modernity?’ (Hutchinson 1994: 2) There are a series of assumptions within these questions. The prime assumption is that, at a certain point in time, the nation became a reality. By this I mean there is an acceptance that the nation is a natural structure in society. The next assumption is that the nation is intrinsically bound to the state and to modernity. These assumptions frame the nation as a natural reality and mean that arguments focus on when the nation was expansionary absolutist states into nations and reinterprets expansion as imperialism in the formation of
formed socially, or whether or not the nation is reliant on invented tradition (Hobsbawm and Ranger [1983] 2000), but the overall assumption is that the nation is a natural reality.

One of the few theorists to move outside this framework is Paul James (1996), who argues that the nation is both primordial and modern at the same time. It is reborn every day in a series of integrated practices, in which the natural reality of the nation is reaffirmed. Modern theory, although separated from the nation, is still inherently bound up in the reproduction of the nation. This thesis follows in James’ wake, examining how an earlier generation of theorists naturalized nation whilst also observing its creation. As James (2006) observes, this process is ongoing. It is established in our daily practices. In accounting for the rise of nationalism, there is a theoretical space in which we need to address how people assumed the nation to be a natural reality.

Through the endeavours of Ernest Gellner, Tom Nairn and Benedict Anderson, the theoretical dissection of the nation was revolutionized in the second part of the twentieth century. Each of these writers carefully mapped the interrelationships between nation (as a cultural entity) and the material transformations occurring during the formation of national communities. The common argument inherent in these theoretical discussions is that collective identity underwent a radical transformation which coincided with modernization. In making this general claim, Gellner, Nairn and Anderson each addressed the role of empire in creating the structural preconditions for the emerging imagined nation.

The word ‘imagined’ is important to this theoretical approach. It is commonly linked to Benedict Anderson ([1983] 1991), but more broadly it is also indicative of Gellner’s and Nairn’s work. The notion of ‘imagined community’ needs to be placed in context. Many people over-interpret Anderson’s normative argument, focusing on his overall statement that nations are ‘imagined communities’ without giving due attention to his materialist arguments that establish why and how nations were imagined (James 1996: 6-7). Anderson’s use of ‘imagined communities’ is based in the belief that material relations create consciousness. Each of these writers outlines an argument for the nation
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as an imagined community that was framed by material and structural relationships. In doing so each of these writers maintains a double argument: wherein material relations creates the environment for nationalist ideologies; in turn nationalist ideologies then framed the structures of the new material order. This role for the imagined nation acknowledges a process in which the nation became natural. The next few pages examine how naturalization fits within Gellner’s, Nairn’s and Anderson’s arguments on the nation.

**Gellner: Culture and Industrialization**
Ernest Gellner is the doyen of nationalism theorists. From his pen flowed the basic themes of most subsequent nationalist theory. His basic argument was that nationalism was not the mere ideological product of nations, but rather the creator of nations. He argued that nationalism created nations where they did not exist. Gellner developed this point within a framework of epochal transformation, wherein he argued nations were a product of modernization (he called it industrialization). Gellner’s interpretation maintains that industrialization is a painful transition, and acts as the catalyst which created nationalism. With ironical shades of Marx, his argument maintains that history can be divided into three epochs: foraging (or pre-agrarian), agrarian, and the scientific/industrial society (Gellner 1983: 5).

Pre-agrarian society provided the first epoch; however, the hunter-gatherer society was too small to require political institutions — nationalism was not an issue for them (Gellner 1983). Developments in agricultural technology created a population boom and forged the second epoch: the agrarian age. Forms of organization in this period revolved around a stratified division of labour, linking control of food storage to status and rank (Gellner 1997: 18). In all agrarian societies, social organization fixed an individual’s occupation to their family’s historic occupation (Gellner 1964: 154-157). Society was hierarchical; and, as such, cultural differences were not important. People were more concerned with maintaining rank in society rather than culture (Gellner 1983: 12-13). With both the aristocratic and clerical classes adopting common cultural traits, that transcended political boundaries, culture came to symbolize rank not ethnicity (Gellner 1983: 11).
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The Enlightenment, and the subsequent industrial revolution, changed the world — creating the modern epoch. This transition, from agrarian society to modernity was central to Gellner’s view of history. He perceived that this process transformed the way people related to each other (Gellner 1964: 154-155).

In an industrial society every profession requires a high level of standardized education to accommodate social mobility; or, in Gellner’s words (1964: 160), the modern epoch created “every man a clerk”. With the destruction of the agrarian system, Gellner maintains that people could no longer relate to each other through a structured system of rank. The industrial modern age became egalitarian, with people relating to each other directly (Gellner 1997: 28). Gellner’s concept that industrial society is more egalitarian requires clarification. Gellner was making a distinction between social divisions and class divisions. He argued that class divisions in the modern epoch were not enshrined in the manner that social divisions were in the agrarian period. Access to capital and/or education, facilitated a reasonable amount of social and class fluidity.

Gellner saw empire as a mode of government suited to agrarian society. The hierarchical structure of agrarian society supported empire better than the mobility of industrial society. The agrarian empires and states that existed at the end of the agrarian age became the starting point for nationalism. These political formations attempted to adjust to the new industrial wave sweeping the socio-political landscape. Gellner’s (1964: 166) theory holds that transition to nationalism occurs because of the uneven progress of industrialization. Industrialization is subject to the availability of suitable natural resources and human expertise. The economic prowess of the first regions to industrialize enabled these regions to become major centres of modernity. The culture within these centres came to symbolize modernity, effectively making them the high cultures of their time. The people from these regions came to dominate, and their culture became dominant over other regions in the former agrarian empire or state.

The dominated areas also gained from pre-existing political connections. Traditional empires all had a political centre. Although empires downplay ethnicity, many have dominant ethnic groups that were geographically located around the political centre. In the agrarian epoch, dominant ethnic groups, became the symbol of cosmopolitanism. For example, in Ancient Rome, the Romans were originally an ethnic group. This
ethnicity was transformed into a cosmopolitan entity that anybody could become part of once they were named as a citizen. A more recent example was the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in which the Germans were the dominant ethnic group. German was the language of state, yet German-ness was presented as a cosmopolitan entity. The Germans could not emphasize their identity as ethnically narrow without destroying the empire. Being a Jewish-German from the Sudetenland, in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, probably meant that Gellner saw this empire as an example of what he had in mind.

In this model, the first region affected by modernization would probably be approaching a period of affluence whilst regions affected by modernization at a later date would be going through the growing pains and misery of early industrialization. Gellner maintained that ethnic and cultural differences became cultural chasms when the minority gravitated to regions of affluent modernity. Through lack of industrial skills, the minority would become a disadvantaged group; this caused economic and political inequality and emphasized cultural differences (Gellner 1964: 168). This economic and political inequality would give rise to the majority perceiving the minority as backward and rustic.

Under these conditions the rustic, backward, minority had two choices (Gellner 1964: 167). The first would be to integrate into the dominant high culture and lose their particular identity. The second option would be to transform their low culture into a high culture by leaving the centres of modernity and returning to the ethnically distinct provinces and seek national self-determination. This would enable the underdeveloped region to control its own destiny and devote resources to economic development. For Gellner, this is what nationalism was all about, the uneven spread of modernization.

Criticisms of Gellner’s theory are based on three basic elements to his argument. The first element is that the theory is totalizingly epochal. The second is that Gellner argues, without sufficient foundation, that nationalism existed before nations. The third criticism is that Gellner attributes nationalism to cultural change rather than political action.

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2 An extended discussion of this can be found in Ludwig von Mises ([1927] 2005, [1919] 2006) early works on the origins of World War One.
Although Miroslav Hroch (1999: 103) also believes in epochal change, he lays a foundation to undermine Gellner’s theory, arguing that it is historically inaccurate to believe that industrialization causes nationalism. Drawing on Eastern European history, Hroch (1996: 85) maintains that nationalist movements developed when the people were still living in an agrarian society.

Gellner’s (1997: 42-43) retort to Hroch was that nationalism in the Balkans was the result of two forces. The first was local political opportunists seeking to gain greater power for themselves at the expense of their Muslim overlords. The second was the impact of Christianity. Gellner maintained that Christianity acted as a conduit through which the ideas of Enlightenment and Romanticism were transfused. Subjected to these ideas, rebels became transformed into nationalists.

Although this qualification adequately defends Gellner’s position, it also undermines Gellner’s emphasis upon an epochal condition. The transfusion of ideas from industrial society to an agrarian society means that the ideas can transcend epochs. If an epoch is meant to divide history into neat blocks, Gellner’s retort undermines the concept of a demarcated epoch. This Balkan example, demonstrates that nationalism can develop in many different cultures and it is not reliant on industrialization. In turn, Gellner (1997: 15) admits that the few remaining tribal societies have often become nationalist in orientation.

In this modification, Gellner defends his theory but undermines his epochal superstructure. However, testament to Gellner’s intellect, a powerful point of theory is revealed in his defensive acknowledgment that ‘nation’ is above all else an idea — which can be sold as a modular process to oppressed groups on the periphery as the cure-all to their woes. This demonstrates that the idea of the nation re-frames the material changes brought about by modernization. As a material entity, the idea has gone through a process of becoming naturalized into a material structure, to the point where people unquestionably (or unreflexively) metamorphose their identity into a nation.
This extension of Gellner’s argument indicates that the nation is an idea that moves beyond the material transformations and relationships that formed it. This means that the idea of the nation could be transported to regions that were still relatively unaffected by modernization. The ideas of modernity travelled faster than the material transitions of modernization. In doing so, the ideas of modernity acted to break down the old structural order, which, at that point, was withstanding the mild pressure of material change. With the ideas of modernization bespeaking material change, the old order started to decline prior to the full onslaught of modernization. In prefiguring the material process of modernization, the ideas of Western European modernism framed the emergent material order in the new region. Gellner’s logic leads to a theory of naturalization wherein new material structures are framed by ideas which have prefigured material change. For this to be possible the idea of the nation needed to have been naturalized and communicated as a concept of nature, which people would not question.

Nairn: ‘Great Nationalism’

Both Tom Nairn and Benedict Anderson wrote in the wake of Ernest Gellner. These writers were also responding to the poverty of nationalist theory within Marxist orthodoxy, which held that the nation was a passing phase and that class was the true revolutionary agency (Anderson [1983] 1991: xi, Nairn 1977: 329). Although coming from the same perspective, Nairn and Anderson take differing approaches.

Nairn’s initial focus was to rework Gellner’s 1964 essay ‘Nationalism’, transforming Gellner’s arguments on industrialization into an analysis of capitalism and development. In doing so, Nairn (1977: 334-350) saw nationalism emerging out of the maladies facing the colonial periphery and the hubris of the metropolitan centre, all of which became linked through the enforced structural phenotype of the state. The trajectories of uneven development uncloaked modernity’s winner-loser kaleidoscope and spelt-out a global future of ethnic agitation and fracturing (Nairn 1977, Nairn 1997). In comparison to Nairn’s focus on internal resistance, Anderson ([1983] 1991, 2000)

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3 It is interesting to note that Gellner’s 1983 book Nations and Nationalism demonstrated an adoption of many of Nairn’s modifications.
focused on the framing of the national community through the agencies of print capitalism and bureaucratic systems. These systems all created a modulated sense of imagined community. Both of these writers moved away from Gellner’s epochal arguments, and, in doing so, provided further material indicating the ground for a process of naturalization.

Tom Nairn’s understanding of nation is made more complex by the fact that he has radically altered many of his core opinions on nations: moving from a modernist position, to what he now terms a ‘neo-primordialist approach’ (Nairn and James 2005: 7). In the following passages I will outline his original argument and his transition into a ‘neo-primordialist’. This transition is based on his inherent belief that humans are social creatures, and that society is the one constant in human history. In this capacity, the nation becomes a manifestation of society and, in doing so it is both primordial and modern at the same time.

In Gellner’s theory of the nation, the uneven spread of industrialization/modernization occurred within the prism of an empire-state, making nationalism the agency of breakdown in the empire-state. This limited the conceptual framework of Gellner. By comparison Tom Nairn modified Gellner’s theory, focusing on the spread of capital rather than the spread of culture and industrialization. Nairn saw that nationalism arose as a response to the impact of colonial capital, and in opposition to the false promise of metropolitan empire. He argued that: “in these less-developed lands the elites soon discovered that tranquil incorporation in the cosmopolitan technocracy was possible for only a few of them at a time” (Nairn 1977: 339). The essence of this argument is that the European empires were built on a contract between European colonist and the native elite. However as a contract between elites, it was a select few that had this opportunity:

The others, the majority, saw themselves excluded from the action, rather then muted politely to join in, trampled over rather then through the rules of the game; exploited rather then made partners. It was no consolation to be told that patience was in order, that things would even up in

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4 David Cannadine (2002) argues that the British Empire existed as a means of dividing the British elite from the British working class and therefore acted as a reconstituted ‘Ancient Regime’. Benedict Anderson ([1983] 1991) and Edward Said (1994) maintain that the colonial elites were not equal to
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the next generation, or the one after that ... Given the violence and rapidity of the changes in act, patience and time were no longer human possibilities anyway (Nairn 1977: 339).

In response to the unjust onslaught of capitalism, the excluded “prophetic elites” used popularism to gain the support of the majority and “take things into their own hands” — this created the beginnings of nationalism. This was ‘the Gellner aspect’ of Nairn’s theory, but he argued that this constituted an “anti-imperial theory” of nationalism, and that as a theory of nationalism, it was incomplete and overstated. This concept of nationalism was based on only one form of uneven spread, and ignored the internal uneven dilemma of capitalism. At the same time as nationalism arose in the periphery, it also arose in the centre as a means of stabilising the internal class struggle. Nationalism for the centre became the desire for empire over the periphery:

In this general sense, nationalism was obviously generated as a compensatory reaction on the periphery. Its ideal intensification corresponded to the absence of a material reality: the economic and social institutions of modernity, those developmental arms now being wielded with such effect by England, France and later on by the other territories that achieved them. It was the absence of these arms, and despair about getting them, which made the compensation ideological weapon of nationalism a necessity: the idealist motor of the forced march out of backwardness or dependency (Nairn 1977: 343).

In many respects, Tom Nairn’s early work on the nation constituted a theory of the ‘other’, with the ‘other’ becoming the entity that capitalism necessitated. At the same time, imperial nationalism unified its internal space by promoting a jingoistic ‘nationism’. This jingoism involved an obsessive coveting of territories for colonial occupation. Colonialism became a symbol of development and in part represented an anxiety of economic status. This anxiety swept the metropole, becoming acute amongst the late starters such as Germany and Italy. As a resistance to this ‘Great Nationism’ the oppressed that were subject to the tyrannies of ‘Great nationism’ developed their own resistance nationalism.

The crux of *Break-up of Britain* was that modern nationalism (nationalism post-1945) constituted a response to the new dilemmas of capitalism. This meant that nationalism,
be it the old jingoistic nationalism or the new ethnic nationalism, was a symptom of market forces. British history was the perfect model of this theory. This argument held that Britain had no meaning without the empire. As a nation, Britain had gained legitimacy through the capitalist contract, commonly called the ‘Act of Union’. This contract was the original ‘corporation merger’, its aim was similar to that of today’s corporate mergers: namely to increase shareholder wealth. Britannia’s path to mammon was achieved by a series of raider-type take-over bids and rent-seeker activities that divested the wealth of the periphery and enriched the incorporated metropolis. However, ‘market pressure’ (i.e. the ‘Atlantic Charter’) forced the divulgence of acquisitions, and the ‘great nationism’ of Britannia was reduced to a feeble relic cowering behind the then new Bretton-Woods global order. With empire gone, the reason for ‘great nationism’ was over. The new market environment made Britain’s purpose questionable, break-up seemed the logical next step. For Nairn, there was a direct correlation between the end of empire and the rise of internal separatism.

These arguments constitute Tom Nairn’s early theory on the formation of nations, or Tom Nairn Mark I. More recently he has argued that there is something missing from this analysis of nation as being a mere response to capitalism (Nairn 1997). Increasingly, as the Cold War ended, Nairn supported ethnic separatism as a path to the future. This controversial approach dated back to Break-up, wherein he argued that Ulster Unionists, with all their archaic ceremonies, were examples of the future. This was going beyond the modernist claims of Gellner. Gellner believed the age of nationalism was over and that humanity was entering into a new period of cosmopolitanism. However, for Nairn, the future constituted an endless fracturing of identity as people attempted to control the market. For Nairn, the orthodox interpretation of Marx was partly wrong; it was not class but the nation that was the great resister of capitalism.

Tom Nairn’s particular arguments on the nation emanated from his attempt to rectify his own internal dilemmas over socialism and the nation. This meant that Nairn walked the path of rationality by deconstructing the nation, but as a self-aware Scottish patriot he connected with the internal irrational beliefs of nationalism (Cocks 2005). This

5 The liberal current of Emanuel Kant ran strong in Gellner, but Nairn (2004) was much more optimistic about the role of nations in human history.
produced a dilemma in Nairn’s political thought. The acceptance of orthodox modernist rationality would mean that his beloved national identity was a mere product of capitalism. As a socialist, this would mean that his deep sense of belonging was in reality a capitalist ruse. Therefore his politics plus his own sense of national belonging lead to the conclusion that there had to be something more to the nation than a response to capitalism.

At this point, Nairn can refer back to Marx and Marx’s desire to understand ‘species being’. For Nairn, the nation must have been a deep social condition that extended into our DNA. Following this train of thought, Nairn’s modernist position slowly evolved into a neo-primodalistic view of the nation (Nairn and James 2005: 7). But this is not an ethnic primordial position, but rather belief that there is a deep internal structure in the human condition based on social belonging and locality. It is society and belonging that is transformed into the modern nation.

In making this argument Nairn rejected pure materialism as the total explanatory tool. Instead, his position that nation is innate in someway leaves more questions than answers. The primary question being: ‘what is the innate condition of the nation?’ This is a project that he is still working on and revolves around the human nature dilemma. What Nairn’s approach indicates is that the nation is the modern incarnation of early concepts of identity, locality and belonging, which over time were transformed into modern nations. Although materialism explains the necessity of the nation, it does not explain why the nation was accepted when other forms of social identity could have equally been accepted. Therefore, Nairn’s approach argues that a process of transformation occurs and that this transformation is framed by humanity’s earlier concepts of the social collective. In this respect the nation becomes the naturalized ideology of the collective, wherein the nation was morphed on top of early concepts of collective identity.

Anderson: Imagined Communities

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6 There is a parallel with Max Weber and Ernest Gellner here. The story goes that Weber was too much of a nationalist to fully understand nationalism, whilst Gellner was not nationalist enough to fully understand nationalism (McCrone 1998). It appears Tom Nairn has taken this issue by the horns.
Chapter 1 – The Nation as Natural

In the wake of Gellner and Nairn (Mark I), Benedict Anderson wrote his *Imagined Communities* (Anderson [1983] 1991). Like Gellner and Nairn, Anderson saw the nation as being a modern creation. *Imagined Communities* sparked a revolution in thinking, and the terminology “imagined communities” appeared to correspond to the post-modernist wave of thinking that dominated debate from the late 1970s to the mid-1990s. As previously argued this is a misunderstanding of Anderson’s terminology. Anderson comes out of the Marxist tradition; his approach was to ground culture into the general material aspects of life. His approach to cultural theory is very similar to his contemporaries, Raymond Williams and Terry Eagleton. This view examined culture as a production from different levels of material engagement. This cultural production reflected the general mode of production in society. *Imagined Communities* needs to be seen in these terms.

*Imagined Communities* consists of two dominant themes. The first being the origins of the nation, whilst the second is the global spread of nationalism. Together they create a spatial pattern of development in which the nation is developed, modularly copied and spread as nationalism. Rather than being a comprehensive theory, Anderson examines themes around the grammar of the nation and examples of how nationalism spread as a global phenomenon. This framework creates a disjuncture between the evolution of the nation and the spread of nationalism. This disjuncture can be summarized in the question: “Why did the ‘idea’ of nation spread?” Although similar and interconnected; the nation and nationalism are two different topics. Anderson’s argument jumps from explaining the development of the nation, as a material form, to examining the spatial spread of nationalism. Like Gellner and Nairn before him, there is a theoretical space. This theoretical space is a naturalized jump between the cultural origins of the nation and the spread of nationalism.

Anderson ([1983] 1991: 45) attributes the rise of nationalism to “unself-conscious processes resulting from the explosive interaction between capitalism, technology and human linguistic diversity”. Like Gellner, Anderson focused on the relationship between capitalism and linguistic culture. The key to nationalism for Gellner was the difference between official high-culture and low culture. Nationalism was the means of transforming a low culture into a high culture. This approach placed emphasis on the state in the choice of an official language. Anderson is more nuanced, focusing on the
competitive process of the market. This nuance placed distance between the state and the nation. Anderson showed that the nation was a symptom of wider social change and not just a result of the state’s interaction with capitalism as Gellner had portrayed.

Book and newspaper publishing was a capitalist enterprise that Anderson saw as fundamental to the emergence of a national consciousness. In the late Middle Ages, the relatively quick saturation of the elitist Latin market forced printers to look for new ‘vernacular’ markets, markets that were “potentially huge” (Anderson [1983] 1991: 38). Capitalist cost-saving as much as officialdom decided which ‘vernaculars’ would become standardized as official languages. The print-capitalists initially published in the biggest markets they could find. These large marketplaces were located in the political centres of Europe, such as London and Paris. The dialects from these areas became standard vernaculars. “Their disadvantaged cousins, still assimilable to the emerging print-language … above all because they were unsuccessful (or only relatively successful) in insisting on their own print-form” (Anderson [1983] 1991: 45). This standardization meant that:

speakers of the huge variety of Frenches, Englishes, or Spanishes, who might find it difficult or even impossible to understand one another in conversation, became capable of comprehending one another via print and paper. In the process, they gradually became aware of the hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people in their particular language-field, and at the same time that only those hundreds of thousands, or millions, so belonged. These fellow readers … [became] the embryo of the nationally imagined community (Anderson [1983] 1991: 44).

Anderson captures the subtlety of collective consciousness. With similar nuance he argued that the creoles in the Americas were the pioneers of nationalism. He argued that creole elites undertook a “pilgrimage” of career development as they moved from one official post to the next.

On his upward-spiralling road he encounters as eager fellow-pilgrims his functionary colleagues, from places and families he has scarcely heard of and surely hopes never to have to see. But in experiencing them as travelling-companions, a consciousness of connectedness emerges (Anderson [1983] 1991: 55-56).
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Like print-capitalism, the pilgrimage of the creole official created a community of national consciousness. In both of these instances, Anderson focuses on the collective experiences of material relationships as the source of national consciousness. Using these explanatory techniques, Anderson proposes two other models of national consciousness: the European ethnic state ([1983] 1991: ch 5), and official nationalism/imperialism ([1983] 1991: ch 6). These three modular forms constitute a nationalist market-place stocked with pre-packaged nationalisms formulated for every occasion to serve the impoverished and subjected.

There are a series of criticism that can be made against this modular approach. A common critique is that it is Eurocentric (Chatterjee 1999, Parekh 1995). Partha Chatterjee (1996: 216) asks the question: “If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain ‘modular forms already made available to them … what do they have left to imagine?’”. This critique of Anderson’s premise is important because it signifies that the postcolonial world is bound (by its historical lateness) to be a perpetual consumer of modernism rather than the inventor. Chatterjee focuses on Indian nationalism and found Indian nationalism to be contradictory. Indian nationalism established itself as being in opposition to British colonialism; however, British colonialism was perpetuated through British nationalism. Therefore, India’s anti-colonial nationalism was based in the same epistemological foundations as British imperialism, and British imperialism was in turn supported by British nationalism (Chatterjee 1996: 38). Although Chatterjee underlined problems with Anderson’s modular model, his own research found that the concept of nation did transfer from West to East.

The modular approach also smudges the difference between the nation and nationalism. Anderson outlines multiple ways in which an identity is realized. But why is this identity seen as pertaining to a nation? What framework of ideas informs the creole elites and readers of (the) vernacular novels that they are experiencing the nation? And finally, how does this consciousness become a politicized identity? To answer each of these questions, the proto-nationalist needs to realize that they exist in a world of nations. In realising their own consciousness they have to realize the consciousness of others. The nation had to be naturalized before, or rather as it came to be imagined.
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Putting it Together: The Place for the Natural Nation

Within each of the above critiques, the problem of transferring national consciousness to that of the nation emerges. Studies of nationalism have generally examined this transition from one particular angle — that of the internal creation of nationalism. This internal approach misses a key problem in the global transferral of the ideas of the ‘nation’. A nation cannot exist as a nation in isolation. The nation is a means of framing identity globally, yet the theorising of the nation has focused on models for the internal development of national consciousness. This consciousness could have been expressed in other formats, such as socialism, cosmopolitanism, republicanism and empire. This thesis examines empire as an alternative form of consciousness to the nation. In the early-nineteenth century, empire appeared to be the dominant form of identity. Yet the nation crept into the social understanding and undermined the imperial ideal. How did the nation supplant empire during a period in which empires dominated?

Ernest Gellner’s arguments are primarily concerned with the transition from empire and the absolutist state to nationalism. This transition he saw as a process of building nations through nationalism. His argument is that nations do not exist until the ideology of nationalism creates them. On a wider level, the ‘invention of tradition’ argument (Hobsbawm and Ranger [1983] 2000) also assumes the nationalist construction of the nation. This creates a clear problem of logic. If nationalism creates nations, how can it create what it doesn’t know exists? In simple terms, if nobody knows what a nation is, how can it be created by nationalism? For Gellner’s argument to work, the nation needs to be accepted as a system of understanding identity globally. In answering critics, his later work led down this path: viewing the nation as a transportable current of thought. Gellner’s points indicate that the nation was transported and naturalized as a means of understanding society before its politicisation as nationalism.

In Gellner, Nairn and Anderson, the nation emerges as a response to the pressures of modernity on the empire states of early modern Europe. What Tom Nairn refers to as ‘great nationalism’ has been the focus of past theorising. Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, Partha Chatterjee and others all made similar renditions of Nairn’s basic argument on ‘great nationalism’. In blunt terms the ‘great nationalism’ explanation of the relationship between empire and nation is a Hegelian framework of action and
reaction. The ‘great nation’ gains its identity from the acquisition of colonies (Nairn 1977). In reaction the colonized form an identity in opposition to the domineering ‘great nation’ (Chatterjee 1999). Chatterjee, Anderson and Nairn (2005) point to a basic problem in this framework: ‘who is imagining whom?’ Is the colonial state the source of the imagined nation (Anderson [1983] 1991, Anderson 2000)? Or do the colonized imagine their own nation independently of the imperialists (Chatterjee 1999)? The ‘great nationalism’ approach envisions the nation as an internal creation, that although responding to external stimuli, the nation is a block responding to material forces. The nation can only be formed, in this action/reaction motion, if the nation is already seen as a natural structure. Before the nation could be adopted, it needed to have already emerged within social and political thinking as a naturalized reality. The nation needed to have emerged as a mode of thought within the structure of empire.

The nation became embedded in multiple aspects of people’s lives. The result was that the nationalist assumed the nation to be natural. This naturalism made the nation appear both historically distant and then (as now) a current reality. This Janus effect of looking both backwards and forwards meant the nation was an aspect in everyday transactions. These everyday transactions continually emphasized the natural logic of the nation. Therefore the nation could emerge without necessitating any reflective processes.

This thesis argues that the elites in the metropole and the colonists on the periphery developed a global perspective of the nation in concurrence with the expansion of empire, and not just as an oppositional ideology. The nation became a common means of understanding cultural difference. The reasonably specific means of describing identity and politics in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries did not exist in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries. However, the modernization of political thought was occurring reflectively within the expansion of empire. Colonial officials and travel writers were engaging in the political thinking of the metropole. Modern social-political ideas of liberalism, materialism and biology came to be bound up with the nation and the expansion of empire. This thesis shows that these ideas were developed not just through the metropole responding to the periphery, but rather the periphery and the metropole were related in a two-way relationship in which the nation became the dominant means of understanding identity and difference. A world of nations came to be imagined in which individual nations had a naturalized space.
Nation as a Naturalized Ideology

Within Gellner’s, Nairn’s and Anderson’s theories there is an implicit theoretical space for a process of naturalization. This naturalization is a process of discursive transformation, wherein a social construct is transformed into a natural reality, to the point where the construct is not questioned and deemed a natural condition. As a naturalized fact, the social construct takes on the characteristics of a hard fact and becomes an agent framing future reality. In essence, naturalization is the unconscious creation of an entity. The fact that it is unconscious allows for the assumption that the entity is natural.

In a similar vein to the above definition, Chris Smaje (2000) has argued that race and caste have been misinterpreted by conventional social theory and need to be seen in terms of a process of naturalization. Conventional social theory views race and caste as a symptom of a particular social relationship, promoting an “implicitly egalitarian view that there is no inherent essence or substance which makes some kinds of people superior to others” (Smaje 2000: 3). However, in doing so, most social theory fails to understand the relationship in which hierarchy is accepted. From this, Smaje argues that “relations and essences are better seen as mutually entailed moments in ideologies of a particular kind — ideologies of natural hierarchy” (Smaje 2000: 3). Smaje’s argument is that race and caste become natural. And that sociology is based around destroying the belief that they are natural rather than understanding what forms naturalization.

Naturalization could be viewed as a process of ideology formation. Certainly this is the view that Smaje takes in relation to race and caste. In arguing that race and caste come to constitute a naturalized ideology, Smaje holds that these systems of identity serve powerful groups in society. This fits in with doctrinaire critiques of ideology. In terms of race and caste, the evidence for this is irrefutable; but it is not as easy to apply the logic of naturalized ideology to the nation. There are advantages for some groups in applying the term ‘nation’, such as populists seeking support or conservatives appealing to ideas of cultural tradition. These clear advantages existed at particular times; however, as a term, ‘nation’ continued to gain meaning through popular usage even
When it served no clear advantage to any group. At least, in the orthodox sense of tying ideas to particular authority forces, ideology is too harsh a term to describe nation.\(^7\)

This apparent harshness of ideology, as an explanation for naturalization, is ultimately dependent on what we consider an ideology to be. There are many problems with the term ‘ideology’ in social and political thought. Coined by Destutt de Tracy in 1796, ideology in its original sense was the scientific study of ideas, but it soon lost this meaning. Robert Eccleshall (1984: 24) observes that it changed to “assume a meaning opposite from its original usage;” meaning instead “erroneous knowledge that was contrary to scientific truth”. In one sense, Eccleshall is referring to the dogmatic everyday political usage of ideology; in which ideology is said to blind people to reason. This pejorative usage of ideology is one of the biggest problems for studies of ideology. Clifford Geertz (1964: 47) captured this pejorative dilemma in the study of ideology, with his dictum: “I have a social philosophy; you have political opinions; they have an ideology”. This pejorative usage results in unhelpfully grand claims based on narrow definitions, such as Daniel Bell’s (1962) *End of Ideology* or Francis Fukuyama’s (1992) *End of History*. These claims can paper-over the deeper grammar of politics and sociology, dismissing the key processes in which ideas are communicated.

Within pejorative ideology, there is the glimmer of a naturalization theory. Ideology as “erroneous knowledge” means that it is a claim to truth. As a pejorative accusation, ideology is what is purported to be true, but outsiders see it as false. In a similar vein, Martin Seliger (1977: 130) maintains that ideology is an unmasking process characterized by “scepticism about what others believe and the knowledge of what causes distortion in the beliefs of others”. Ideology creates a circular logic, in which practices are taken as natural and legitimized as being natural.

This circular definition of ideology is the traditional Marxist definition, in which ideology is a system of authority, that parades itself as neutrality, when in fact it is an orthodoxy which supports a system of authority (Seliger 1977). By comparison, Karl Mannheim ([1929] 1985) established a more liberal view of ideology. Although maintaining a similarity to the Marxist definition; by using the argument that ideology

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\(^7\) Although ideology doesn’t adequately apply to the nation, it does apply to nationalism which, as signified by the ‘ism’, is the ideology of the nation.
was a system of thought that defends a particular social order and that broadly express
the interests of its dominant or ruling group, Mannheim divided ideology into
‘particular’ and ‘total’ conceptions. ‘Particular’ ideology was the political ideology
possessed by individuals and groups, whilst ‘total’ ideology was the overwhelming
‘world-view’ or *Weltanschauung* of historically located society. In considering this
‘total’ view of ideology, which breaks away from the limited politicized definitions of
ideology and encompasses general views about society, we can start to see how the
nation could be naturalized as an ideology.

Similar to Mannheim’s ‘total’ view of ideology, a wider view of ideology emerged
within Marxist literary criticism. This approach is derived from Marx and Engels’
arguments that “consciousness does not determine life: life determines consciousness”
(Eagleton 2002: 4). This means that all forms of cultural product are connected to
material ways of being (Williams 1986: 217). Drawing on material consciousness, neo-
Marxist writing on ideology has focused on the ‘common sense’ element to ideology,
which essentially denotes ideology as everything (Althusser 1984, Larrain 1979,
Thompson 1990). This ‘common sense’ notion of ideology focuses on unquestioned
traditions and beliefs of society and its role in maintaining the dominant political order.
These interpretations of ideology are heavily indebted to Antonio Gramsci’s notion of
hegemony and Max Horkheimer’s and Theodor W. Adorno’s critical theory.

These approaches to ideology fall into two categories. The first is based on a narrow
concept linked to political dogma and a reasonably clear political message. The second
is based on a broad concept of ideology wherein ideology assumes a ‘common sense’
role in popular culture. It is implicit in everyday practices and action, all of which
continue to reinforce a sense of identity and order. The central difference between these
two notions of ideology is the concept of reflective purpose. In the first approach to
ideology, there is a mechanized organizational capacity for the deliberate construction
of dogma. This mechanism means that people recognize it as being ideological. By
comparison, the ‘common sense’ approach to ideology means that ideology is an
unintentional generation that is inherent in cultural products and symbolizes and
supports the dominant power relationships of the society in which it is generated
(Eagleton 2002). This ‘common sense’ approach is what Smaje (2000) draws on in
arguing that race and caste represents a naturalized ideology.
This ‘common sense’ approach to ideology has lead to arguments that ideology is everything. Two observations can be made on this. Firstly in becoming everything ideology loses some of its utility as a source of analysis (Kumar 2006a: 170). Secondly, ideology starts to resemble a discourse. Like ‘ideology’, ‘discourse’ is a term that is subject to over-use, being a general descriptive term used by most social theorists to describe general groups of ideas unified under a common theme of logic, whilst also having a more particular meaning with post-structuralist theory. Post-structuralism views discourse as something like an underlining message, therefore in its general usage (and more particular usage), discourse can appear as only marginally different to ideology (Kumar 2006a: 173). For Michel Foucault (2002), discourse was a form of power,\(^8\) as a form of power it places emphasis on the normative condition of society. This normative condition is the way in which signs are created and the labelling of people and things occur. This all informs a general social discourse. The post-structuralist approach downplays the material aspect of life.

Teun A. Van Dijk (2006) looked at the relationship between discourse and ideology. For Van Dijk there were clear differences between ideology and discourse. Van Dijk limited ideologies to belief systems shared by a group, as being the foundational beliefs and attitude of the group. The distinction between ideology and discourse falls within the distinction of “social groups, on the one hand, and cultural communities on the other” (Dijk 2006: 119). ‘Social groups’ he argued have ideologies because they have “goals and interests in relation to other groups” whilst ‘cultural communities’ “have other general beliefs, such as knowledge, norms and values” (Dijk 2006: 119-120). Within this distinction Van Dijk is clearly limiting ideology to the political, and discourse to the cultural. In terms of understanding where the nation fits within this distinction, some problems are evident. The nation is a ‘cultural community’ by all definitions, but it is also a social group that has attitudes to others. Using Van Dijk’s argument an ethnic group has a discourse, whilst a nation has an ideology, namely nationalism. However, is the nation itself, an ideology?

\(^8\) Although this is the way that Foucault describes this power, it could also be described as order.
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In explaining the nation as an ‘imagined community’, Benedict Anderson was focusing on these discursive/ideological themes, whilst also connecting them to the material transformations of the early modern period, such as the state and emergence of print capitalism. Anderson’s phrase the ‘imagined community’ has taken on a life of its own. The term ‘imagined community’ is an overlay describing the material effects on individuals that Gellner and Nairn had outlined. How does theoretical literature answer the question: ‘Is the nation an ideology?’

Firstly, as well as being a community of practice the nation is an idea. As an idea it has a major bearing on peoples’ lives. It defines their identity, thereby giving the perception of an absolute social identity. Secondly, all definitions of ideology link ideology to politics. Likewise, the nation is a political claim. A nation is a claim to social-political identity, which is made clearly when compared to ethnicity. Although ethnicity is also social identity, less regularly does ethnicity become the focus of rights, and when it does the ethnicity has often been re-branded as a nation. Therefore the nation involves an ideological claim to political purpose. Thirdly, the nation is a world-view. A nation cannot exist in isolation. The nation exists in relation to other nations. Although issues of dominance and subservience enter into the comparison (usually in relation to nationalist ideologies) the nation always exists in a world of nations thereby making the nation an ideological view by the global community.

Finally, ideology as opposed to discourse connects the nation to the material processes that were transforming society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. From Fredrich List to Karl Marx, from Ernest Gellner to Tom Nairn, and from Liah Greenfeld to Benedict Anderson, theorists of nations and nationalism have focused on connections between the nation and economic change. Each of these theoretical arguments has focused on how material changes have developed the modern nation. Likewise, the traditions on ideology outlined by Marx, Gramsi, Adorno, Horkheimer and Althusser, and others, all indicate that material changes are supported by ideological changes.

In each of these points the nation can be seen as an ideology that has similarities to nationalism, and at times runs concurrently, but it is different and distinct. Unlike chest-thumping nationalism, engaging with the nation involves living with a surreptitious ideology that became accepted as natural over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
Although it was accepted, the nation was not the only solution to modern material conditions. An ‘imagined community’ does not necessarily need to be a nation. Many other forms of society were tried, and these were often deliberate rational exercises in social creation. There are many such examples: cosmopolitan republicanism (that existed in the early days of the French Revolution), and socialist internationalism (an idea that was pursued with vigour by socialists and communists for 150 years), or even religion (which has regularly had revivals as social ways of being). The example that I look at in this thesis is empire and its quasi-cosmopolitanism. Each of these alternative social forms readily corresponds to an ideologue view of ideology, being actively produced by intellectuals and elites. Each of these failed largely because they depended on elitist support. They did not capture the popular imagination as being natural. By comparison the nation emerged in each one of these projects, in an assumed capacity as a natural feature.

Interpreting Ideology within Culture (Textual Methodology)

The broad definition of ideology outlined above, defines what we assume to be natural. Cultural theorists of ideology seek to understand ideology through cultural production. They examine the symptoms of ideology within cultural products. Therefore textural or cultural deconstruction, over time, can show the evolution and transformation of an ideology.

The orthodox notion of superstructure emphasized the economic base as the determining factor. Antonio Gramsci wanted to move beyond this primitive determinism by arguing that the inclusive role of law, culture and science existed within the material superstructure. This interpretation placed superstructures in the plural, meaning that superstructures were built on an economic base but constituted an historic block. The Gramscian notion of ‘common sense’ marks another divergence from orthodoxy. The orthodox notion held that the common sense of the masses was a ‘false consciousness’ that promoted an exploitative society. In comparison, Gramsci held that ‘common sense’ was a ‘contradictory consciousness’, an incoherent mix of beliefs.
containing the germ of the coherent, self-reflective ‘good senses’ that should guide a socialist and democratic society.

In making this argument, Gramsci places importance on intellectual advocacy in creating a hegemonic ideology. This move places ideas as a social force, the success of which is dependent on its projection of ‘common sense’, but in placing emphasis on advocacy, ideas are not totally determined by the economic base. Advocacy reintroduces the traditional sense of politics (as a system of undetermined negotiation) into a Marxist argument.

Equally concerned with the question of cultural meaning were the critical theorists Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno. Horkheimer and Adorno focused on connections between entertainment and politics. Their central argument was that a mass entertainment was constituted as ‘cultural industry’ and this had unwittingly enabled the creation of modern mass ideologies. The mass production of entertainment in the form of popular films, magazines, and books, allowed individuals to enter the world of imagination and escapism. This pathway to escapism reduced individuals’ abilities to think rationally and critically about their environment.

Horkheimer’s and Adorno’s notion of ‘cultural industries’ is dependent on the assumption that people were more critical prior to mass communication than they were after its consolidation. This is ultimately an impossible point to prove and, when contextualized, it becomes a little unconvincing, being dependent on the stereotype of the working class as being the ignorant ‘great unwashed’. The real success of Horkheimer and Adorno was the idea that ideology could be transmitted passively through popular culture. In Horkheimer’s and Adorno’s thesis, popular culture acted as a mechanism to transmit passive messages that appeared as ‘common sense’. This presents a strong logical connection with Gramsci’s work, whereby we can see hegemony occurring through the support of popular culture. It is through ideology that individuals gain a sense of who they are.

Although ideology defines who we are, Raymond Williams (1986: 29) argues that we need to approach the hegemonic aspect of ideology with caution:
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General ideologies, in their full depth and elaboration, have indeed to be seen as among the most remarkable forms of collective cultural production. But then it is precisely because all significant ideologies are indeed this deep and elaborated that the concept cannot be abstracted as some kind of ‘informing spirit’, at the roots of all cultural production.

Williams points to the nuance of ideology. Ideology is a product of material forces, but it is also an agent within those material forces. For Williams, this ability to be both a product and an agency give culture its own material value. Williams (1986: 29) goes on “but it is very different from describing all cultural production as ‘ideology’, or as ‘directed by ideology’, because what is then omitted, as in the idealist uses of ‘culture’, is the set of complex real processes by which a ‘culture’ or an ‘ideology’ is itself produced.” For Williams the difference is between the ideological and ideology. Culture can be ideological, and therefore reflect dominant ideologies but that does not mean that culture is itself an ideology. Williams emphasizes the nuance of ideology and culture, with culture being a reflection of ideological forms.

This thesis examines the nation within cultural production. This thesis looks for the nation within dominant ideological manifestations such as writings on empire, materialism and biology. These manifestations are overtly ideological, however, the thesis examines how, within these political arguments, ideas of the nation can be seen to change over time. This thesis also examines the nation within travel writings and popular culture, portraying the pervasiveness of the nation as a naturalized ideology. In doing so this thesis is following Raymond Williams’ argument that “to study ‘an ideology’ and what ‘it’ produces is a recognizable form of idealist philosophy.” This means that the cultural historian studies “the social practices and social relations which produce not only ‘a culture’ or ‘an ideology’ but, more significantly, those dynamic actual states and works within which there are not only continuities and persistent determinations but also tensions, conflicts, resolutions and irresolutions, innovations and actual changes” (Williams 1986: 29). In other words, the present thesis is developed as a history of ideas (ideologies), but one which attempts to understand the naturalising of these ideas in the dynamic of changing practices, writings and other expressions of empire in a particular period.
I am examining the naturalising of the nation during its emergence within the prism of modernist empires. As a history of ideas, this thesis covers the late-eighteenth century and early to mid-nineteenth century. In years, this thesis can be set within the 100 years from 1770 to 1870. Like all time-frames this 100 years did not exist in isolation, therefore Chapters Two, Three and Four draw on earlier ideas. Ideas such as Aristotle’s ideas on the human body and the ancient philosophic ideal of the ‘chain of being’; or Saint Augustine’s view of sovereignty from the fifth-century; or the way in which Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and other seventeenth-century writers reflect a transformation in thought from ancient and medieval world-views into modern political thinking. At times in these three chapters, extensive emphasis is placed on analysing the impact of these ideas. Such elaborations are necessary to place the emergence of the naturalized nation within an historical time-frame. My thesis focuses on the naturalization of the nation between the years 1770 and 1870, but this naturalization was a process that started much earlier, therefore those earlier events need to be examined to place those key 100 years into context.

This time-period covers global key milestones in the emergence of the modern nation. The American Revolution, the first of the modern revolutions, began in 1776 and the French Revolution beginning in 1789. Historians have long-argued that these revolutions were key points in the emergence of the modern nation. Yet they are not the only major transformations that were occurring. With the decline of Britain’s empire in the Americas, a new opportunity for empire emerged in Asia. India became the centre of this empire, but Southeast Asia became part of its farthest reaches. This second empire in Asia adopted elements of the old traditional forms of empire, but also had radically new themes connected to ideas on the nation. The nineteenth century saw the dramatic expansion of capital, global trade and communications technologies. It also saw dramatic transformation in ways of seeing the body, courtesy of developments in medicine and a general improvement in knowledge of biology and the natural world. These developments also fed into ideas on the nation, particularly ideas on the racial nation.

The nineteenth century also saw the rise of nationalism as a major source of state formation. Much of the racial theorising of the nation occurred simultaneously to the nationalist struggles within Europe. From the 1848 revolutions that swept through
Europe, nationalism became a key political ideology of the nineteenth century being used by both liberal reformers and conservative defenders of the old order. This was also a time of major ideological change. Liberalism, nationalism, socialism and communism all derive from the turbulent politics of the nineteenth century. The tensions between these new forces and the old order can be seen in the following 1891 passage by C.P. Lucus:

The world in past time tried both small and large communities, but the small states were usually too municipal to develop into great nations, and the large empire were usually too artificial and too regardless of natural limits to become one whole. So the town communities of ancient time and the Middle Ages, with the one exception of Rome, ended as they began, and the military empires usually broke up when individual rulers died. It is the difficult work of the latest phase of history to try, with the help of railways and telegraphs, to reap the advantages and to avoid the defects of both systems. It is for the good of the world to be divided into few areas, within each of which there may be uniformity of law and government. But such divisions can only be permanent, if they are mapped out, however imperfectly, according to geography and race (Lucus 1891: ix).

Lucus clearly saw the tension between the old order of empire and new logic of the racial nation. He went on to argue that the struggle of his age would be to “adopt a system”, that empire “which was born in a despotic age to a time of democratic equality” (Lucus 1891: ix). Lucus clearly saw the tension between geography, race, nation and empire. He placed his faith in the material transformations of his day, namely the ability to compress time and space through communications. He saw this as the solution to the weaknesses of empire. Lucus placed the idea of nations and races and empires in history as a constant, yet he also recognized their newness in his own tumultuous times. This period of turmoil and fluctuation is manifest in Lucus’s own narrative. He was an imperialist, who in 1891 wrote an introduction to a new edition of George C. Lewis’s 1841 anti-imperialist treaties on dependencies. Lucus commented that the events of the nineteenth century had relegated Lewis’s critique as a ‘little England’ oddity. Lucus saw nation and empire moving in unison. This difference in ideas and interpretation between Lewis and Lucus (60 years apart) is indicative in the changing ideas of empire and nation in the nineteenth century. Lewis understood the obsolescence of empire, but failed to understand the emergence of nation; Lucus understood the emergence of nation, but failed to understand the obsolescence of
empire. Therefore the period between 1770 and 1870 was a melting pot for the modern nation and it was linked to the plight of empire.

This period also saw an increasing awareness of what could be termed historiography. Intellectual thought in the Enlightenment and early-nineteenth century was as much about analysing the emergence of European innovation as it was of innovation itself (O'Brien 1997). Writers such as Edward Gibbon, Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson and David Hume wrote in a context of being historically aware (Pocock 1999). Their writings address the emergence of ideas (ideologies) in their time, out of their reflections on historical and material practices. Therefore, this thesis examines the emergence of the naturalised nation in the reflective process of thinking about empire, economy and biology during the Enlightenment and the nineteenth century. A key aspect of this was the ideas of the barbarian, the savage and barbarism. These ideas emerged out of European historiography, and in this capacity they were both old and new; being old concepts that gained new meaning through modernity and colonialism (Meek 1976, Pocock 2005). The barbarian grounded the European nations in time and therefore constructed a sense of origin and particularism. Equally the savage and the barbarian placed non-European cultures in time. These ideas emanating out of early historiography are key aspects of the naturalization of the nation between the years 1770 and 1870.

In examining the naturalization of the nation this thesis draws on a range of writers from eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Chapters Two, Three and Four draw on dominant writers from the imperial metropole, such as Adam Smith, Edward Gibbon, David Hume, Thomas Malthus, John Stuart Mill, Charles Darwin, James Cowles Prichard, Robert Knox and many other lesser-known figures. In these chapters I will be examining writings that reflect the dominant political discussions of the time. Some of these writings focus on the nation, nationality or empire; but many of them do not. Although some of these writings are not directly concerned with the nation or empire, and focus on other political or social issues, in each case the emergence of the nation as an ideology exists within them. In Part Two of this thesis I examine the nation in representations of Southeast Asia. This section draws on colonial officials such as, Stamford Raffles, John Crawfurd and James Brooke who produced encyclopaedic accounts of their experiences in Asia. Chapter Five further draws on the themes
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presented in Chapter Two of this thesis, and explores the structure of the British Empire in Southeast Asia, focusing on how empire was interpreted and how the structure of empire promoted the idea of the nation. Chapter Six reflects on the material in Chapters Three and Four, exploring the transformation of economic and material conceptions of the nation into racial conceptions of the nation in Southeast Asia. This argument if further examined in Chapter Seven, which focuses on the idea of primordialism and the idea of the tribe in naturalising the nation in Southeast Asia. Finally Chapter Eight explores how the naturalising of the nation created tensions between radical liberals over the rights of nation and the purpose of empire.

The vast focus of this thesis has meant that I have used dominant historical figures to illustrate the naturalization of the nation. However, I am also examining the writing of junior officials, ethnologists/naturalists and early travel writers who covered Southeast Asia and reflected more broadly on nations in Southeast Asia. Therefore this study does not claim to be an exhaustive account of the process of naturalization, but rather examines a range of literature that illustrates the naturalization of the nation in metropolitan political thought and also at the farthest reaches of the empire.

The contention of this thesis is that the nation was naturalized within the context of empire. The complex grammar of the modernist British Empire that divided the world into spheres of civilization and barbarism, yet retained a special place for barbarians within the core, allowed for the naturalization of nations within the context of empire.
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an Empire of Nations

Britain poses a problem in examining naturalization of the nation. As a nation, Britain is not a unified identity. By comparison, the French are the French, and although they have the historical remains of competing nations such as the Bretons or the Corsicans, these nations are on the periphery. If Corsica sought cessation, a French nation would still exist. Likewise Germany, a creation of the late-nineteenth century, is reasonably at ease in assuming that all German citizens are also German nationals. Although ethnic minorities exist, and Germany is a federation, none of these identities threaten to tear the German nation apart. This is not the case for Britain. The problem, as Krishan Kumar (2003: 1) points out, is evidenced in that common mistake: “English, I mean British”. That slip of the tongue, a perplexing oddity for foreigners, is an ongoing reminder of the multinational identity that is Britain. Officially Britain is a composite of four nations, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. To this list we can also add a few extra territorially and historically defined ethnicities such as the Cornish or Protestant loyalists and Catholic Irish — all of which leads to a complex case for national unity.

Unlike most other nations, there is no British ethnicity. The British nation is constructed from other groups which also claim to be nations. These nations compromise their own individual self-determinations to present ‘the unified’ British nation. Yet as Kumar maintains, this is a ruse; the “general rule … is to see all the major events and achievements of national life as English. Other ethnic groups are brought on in minor or supporting roles” (Kumar 2003: 2). Kumar’s thesis is that the Englishness emerged in the context of Britishness.

The English saw themselves in the mirror of the larger enterprises in which they were engaged for most of their history. They found their identity as constructors of Great Britain, Creator of the British Empire, pioneers of the world’s first industrial civilization (Kumar 2003: ix).
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Linda Colley (1992) makes a similar argument that the pursuit of empire forged the British national identity. In a series of wars, conflicts and general rivalry with its European neighbours, a British identity was born in opposition to external neighbours. These issues of external rivalry and the internal flow-on effects, lead Liah Greenfeld to argue that England was the world’s first nation (Greenfeld 1993). Greenfeld goes further, arguing that it was this rivalry that spored the birth of capitalism (Greenfeld 2003). Therefore Greenfeld boldly maintains the nation is the source of modernity. Despite their differences, collectively, Kumar, Colley and Greenfeld present a similar theme: that Britain emerged in response to external threats (Colley and Greenfeld), and that according to Kumar, these threats became the English project for the creation of Britain.

Despite this unity in theoretical narrative, Greenfeld breaks the mould. Her focus is on England rather than Britain. But, by focusing on England, rather than Britain, Greenfeld interconnects with Krishan Kumar’s argument on the relationship between England and Britain. Kumar’s (2006: 5) proposal maintains that, from its conception, “the English state” was “primarily an imperial state, and the English people, … an imperial people”. For Kumar, Britain was the identity of empire: an empire that the English created to hide their own imperial hegemony. This empire identity had utility beyond the English’s aspirations. In many ways, the Scottish were the greatest supporters of empire (Nairn 2004). The empire was “Britannia incorporated”, a joint stock enterprise in which the elite of England, Scotland and to lesser extent Wales and Ireland could prosper from the global enterprise of plunder (Schama 2001).

The subservient periphery nations placed as much emphasis on building this British identity as the English, if not more. This leads to problems in locating the empire’s identity. If the British Empire was a means of fulfilling other national agendas, is Britian a nation? Linda Colley (1992) and Tom Nairn (1977) both argue that it was a nation; but a nation that had a particular reason for being, only in the context of empire. But can an empire be a nation?

Pondering this same issue, Krishan Kumar (2003: 30) reworked Ernest Gellner’s (1983) claim that nationalism creates nations, arguing that the pursuit of an English empire created the British nation. This pursuit of empire was presented as a missionary task,
and thereby became a missionary nationalism. This nationalism “finds its principles not so much in equating state and nation as in extending the supposed benefits of a particular nation’s rule and civilization to other peoples” (Kumar 2003: 31). This is the exception for empires, rather than the rule. There is a basic tension between nation and empire; as Gellner argued, empires are multinational and consist of multiple cultural-linguistic groupings. A policy of nationalising the empire strikes at the heart of its being (Kumar 2003: 33). If the nation strikes at the heart of an empire’s being, this assumes that empire has an identity that is very different to that of the nation. Although we know that empires can create nations, we are still left with the question: ‘What is the identity of empire?’ This question is fundamental in understanding how the nation emerges in the context of empire.

This chapter examines the intersection between empire, civilization and the barbarian. This chapter argues that the idea of empire was linked to the act of creating civilization in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The creation of civilization was made complex by virtue of historiography of empire, which placed the barbarian at the centre of the imperial metropole. The complex relationship between empire and the barbarian meant that empire became the means of civilising the barbarian tribe into the modern nation. In exploring this interaction, this chapter also examines empire as an expression of cosmopolitanism and the fault-line that emerged between civilising cosmopolitanism and the barbarian tribal nation.

This chapter examines these ideas through the writings of Edward Gibbon and John Stuart Mill. Both of these men were intrinsically connected to the idea of empire. Edward Gibbon wrote his classic history: the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Gibbon [1788] 1997), in the late-eighteenth century. This account was a dominant force in nineteenth-century thinking on empire, with British imperialists casting themselves as cultural successors to the Roman Empire. Gibbon is still today treated by specialists across many fields as a “contemporary and equal who may be paid the compliment of criticism” (Pocock 1999: 1). Despite this Gibbon is a dominant historical figure in the Enlightenment, therefore Gibbon’s history is as much a reflection on Enlightenment thinking as it is Roman History (Pocock 1999: 1). Likewise, John Stuart Mill was a dominant force in nineteenth-century British intellectual life. He is also representative of the contradictions within nineteenth-century liberalism towards empire.
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(Mehta 2004, Parekh 1995) whilst also being a trail-blazing theorist in linking nationality to politics (Varouxakis 2002: 1). Therefore, these two men encapsulate ideas on empire and the nation between 1770 and 1870. The themes of this chapter frame the scope of ideas of this thesis, explaining the broad relationship between the civilising empire and the barbarian nations.

**Empire, the Other and the Nation**

Like Ernest Gellner, Tom Nairn and Benedict Anderson’s theories, there is an open space in Krishan Kumar’s theory on the relationship between an empire and a nation. This space is the problem ‘how did the idea of the nation get there in the first place?’, and this is the naturalization problem as is the question of otherness. All the theoretical writing on nations and nationalisms places importance on the ‘other’. It is an integral part of nations that they need other nations to gain their sense of nationhood. This is Linda Colley’s argument on Britain’s identity. By comparison, empires don’t have this framework. They see the world in terms of civilization and barbarism (Lal 2004: 4-9, Pocock 1999, Pocock 2005). A framework of civilization and barbarism is still an ‘us’ and ‘them’ division. However, unlike the national sense of identity, an empire’s identity emerges in the relationship between order and chaos. For example, beyond the Great Wall of China were the barbarians. Beyond Hadrian’s Wall were the barbarians. Within these walls was order and civilization, whilst outside these walls there was chaos.

This relationship between order and chaos was often represented in religious terms. The Ancient Egyptian Empire was ideologically sustained by a religion that framed the pharaoh’s role as the creator of order. This religious undercurrent to order and civilization was present in all the Ancient empires. It is the basic theme running throughout St. Augustine’s ([c.426] 1952) *City of God*, wherein he addressed the role of the state and religion in suppressing chaos. For Augustine ([c.426] 1952: 207), “the long duration of the Roman Empire” preserved society from barbarism and chaos, but this was a result of “the one true God”. Although a monotheist Christian, Augustine was maintaining the traditional approach of legitimising the state through religion. For St. Augustine ([c.426] 1952: 134) “every man” was basically barbarous at heart, for
“however laudable he lives”, he “yields in some points to the lust of the flesh”; therefore, it was the role of religion to provide an overlying civilization providing order. This belief in original sin, or inherent barbarism became a cornerstone of medieval Christian political philosophy (Brown 1978: 32-36, Rembaum 1982, Ullmann 1966). This distinction also survived into the transition to modern political philosophy. Although probably an atheist, Thomas Hobbes’s ([1651] 1985) belief in the leviathan to suppress humans’ destructive urge for self-interest was also a theory of order and chaos. In this, pre-national world-view the word ‘empire’ only meant state. All states

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9 Hobbes is usually seen as a major break from medieval and renaissance thought and was influenced by the scientific ideas of his time (Sorell 1986). In the confines of Renaissance thought, Hobbes clearly is a break from the past. However, Quentin Skinner argues that Hobbes’s arguments should be seen more as a critique of Renaissance Humanism emanating from Renaissance Humanism, rather than being based on new methodologies of knowledge (Skinner 2002: 38-39). My argument is that if we step back from this debate, and view Hobbes in a much broader context, he is concerned with similar issues to that of Augustine: those being order and chaos. Michael Oakeshott (1991: 278-279) expresses a vision of Hobbes in this context:

In the history of political philosophy there have been two opposed conceptions of the source of the predicament of man from which civil society springs as a deliverance: one conceived the predicament to arise out of the nature of man, the other conceived it to arise out of a defect in the nature of man. Plato, who went to what he believed to be the nature of man for the ground and structure of the polis, is an example of the first. And Spinoza, with his insistence on the principle that nothing in nature must be attributed to a defect of it … For Augustine, on the other hand, the predicament arises from a defect in human nature, from sin, Where does Hobbes stand in this respect? The widely-accepted interpretation of Hobbes’s view is that, for him, the predicament springs from the egotistical character of man and that therefore it is vice and depravity that create the chaos. But when we look closer, what was distinguished as egoism (a moral defect) turns out to be neither moral nor a defect … Man is, by nature, the victim of solipsism; he is an individua substantia distinguished by incommunicability. And when this is understood, we are in a position to accept Hobbes’s own denial of a doctrine of the natural depravity of man; and he appears to take his place, on this question, beside Plato and Spinoza.

Although Oakeshott maintains that Hobbes is not arguing the same point as Augustine, Oakeshott does demonstrate the similarity of themes between Augustine and Hobbes respective arguments. From this distance, the only, but substantial difference, between these schools of thought is whether the nature of man is a ‘defect’. With this perspective in mind, it is easy to argue that Hobbes was continuing an old debate from a slightly changed perspective.

10 This distinction is a legal one. The word ‘empire’ derives from imperium (the right to govern) and impelierre (the right to command). Therefore, until the modern period, empire was always connected to the existence of an emperor. This interpretation of imperium has been connected with sovereignty, although sovereignty did not emerge in Roman law. Sovereignty derives from Old French, meaning absolute or supreme authority. Writers such as Richard Koebner (1961) and more recently David Armatage (2000), have pointed to this connection. Armitage (1998: 104) states: From supreme authority, imperium became used to denote any power that recognized no superior and, by extension, a political community that was self-governing and acknowledged no higher allegiance, on the analogy of the universalist supremacy of the Roman Empire, and its Carolingian, Ottoman, and later successors. It was but a short step from this to the assertion that an empire was an absolute monarchy under a single head like the Spanish monarchy, an empire in form if not in name.

There is certainly an association of ideas. But although sovereignty has a strong similarity to imperium, it is not the same. There is a disjuncture between the legal principle of imperium and the political idea of empire. J.G.A. Pocock argues that there was a break from the tradition of translation imperii, which is the “notion of an unbroken continuity between past and present forms of universal human governance connected with Roman rule and its association with the Respublica Christiana” (Nederman 2005: 3). This break was followed by association of empire with state. Pocock states “there is before us a transformation
were empires, because the act of state or government created order and protected the people from chaos. Until the late-eighteenth century, the word ‘empire’ was used in the same way sovereignty is used today (Armitage 1998: 102-103, Miller 1994).

Edmund Burke’s *Reflections* is also presented in this binary framework of order and chaos. For Burke ([1790] 1968: 127) the French Revolution had created chaos rather than freedom, authorising “treasons, robberies, rapes, assassinations, slaughters, and burning throughout their harassed land”. Yet the revolutionaries believed this chaos was a “currency for the support of an empire” (Burke [1790] 1968: 126). Burke’s basic premise through his counter-revolutionary polemic was that revolution crossed that basic divide between order and chaos. The revolutionaries assumed that individual freedom would create natural order, in doing so they saw “the medicine of the state corrupted into its poison” (Burke [1790] 1968: 126). Burke’s arguments on tradition and organic society was a theoretic superstructure built on this binary base of order and chaos. However, the introduction of the notion of tradition does indicate a change. For tradition is culture. The essence of Burke’s approach to culture was that it was grounded in a geographical territory and established through history. This cultural view of politics became fundamental to forging a national identity.

The interrelationship between empire and nation within the framework of order and chaos, became a key dynamic in the nineteenth century. The process was said to require the transfer of a tribe-nation from chaos to order (Thom 1995). This occurred in the context of imperial expansion (Pocock 2005).

**Cosmopolitanism of Empire**

of our subject, in which *imperium* will be exercised by ‘extensive’ or ‘enormous’ monarchies — Spanish, French and Anglo-British —… lying west of the Italian German theatre in which the rivalries of translated empire had been played out. The ‘deline and fall of the Roman empire’ will be rewritten in the perspectives this states system supplies” (Pocock 2003: 239-240). Pocock’s argument is that the story of the Roman Empire was rewritten in the post-Renaissance period, therefore empire as the legal idea of *imperium* that linked empire to Rome, hence the Holy Roman Empire, was replaced with a structural notion of empire based on monarchy and territorial control of peoples.

11 A good example of this is Thomas Pownall’s (1752) *Principles of Polity, Being the Grounds and Reasons of Civil Empire*, in which Pownall uses the word empire to signify the union of a collection of independent communities into one body. An important point of Pownall’s empire is that it does not have a centre. There is no centre-periphery relationship.
By framing civilization against the ethnic barbarians on the periphery, empires define themselves as an orderly constant through time (Mehta 2004: 106-111). Despite this, internal ethnic-tribal identities have always existed within empires. By all definitions, empires are large and therefore encompass different cultural-linguistic groups. However, these cultural-linguistic identities are downplayed. Deepak Lal is blunt in his praise of empire’s ethnic inclusiveness, maintaining “empires are the best means for saving us from the disorder caused by nationalists” (Lal 2004: 178). For Lal, cultural politics is just the hunting ground for “predatory nationalist elites” who use nationalism as a means of stripping the wealth from the people (Lal 2004: 175). He argues that empires are a form of cosmopolitanism, (Lal 2004: 178-183) in which Rome, Ancient China and India are models. Lal views the identity of empire as cosmopolitanism, but this, I would suggest, is cosmopolitanism in retrospect. There is a problem in identifying traditional empires self-consciously as cosmopolitan. Deepak Lal’s argument ultimately rests upon a distinction between liberty and democracy: negative liberty, as in an individual’s right to property codified by rule of law. This is the foundations of liberty in an empire. By comparison, he argues that democracy is a problem, leading to populism and therefore nationalism. Economic liberty created individuality and therefore negates the need for populism. This individualism removes politics from culture, and thereby creates a multi-ethnic unity. The depoliticization of culture is a constant theme of empires, but this depoliticization of culture, is not the same as the removal of culture (Kumar 2003: 33). The description of empire can appear as cosmopolitan, but writers have been cautious about declaring it cosmopolitan until the twentieth-century. Even then there remains a lingering timidity.

This caution in connecting empires with cosmopolitanism has lead to an implicit discourse on empire, in which historians, and to a lesser extent political theorists, describe cosmopolitan practices within empires. One example of this practice of implicit cosmopolitanism is Edward Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* ([1788] 1997). Gibbon’s work emerged at a key moment in time, when the British Empire

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12 Barbarians can be internal. Ernest Gellner’s arguments about low culture indicate internal divisions of barbarian chaos existing within the ordered empire.

13 The early work of Ludwig Von Mises ([1927] 2005, [1919] 2006) focuses on the relationship between *laissez faire* economics and the nation. In many respects, Mises prefiguring Gellner, arguing that empires could not be maintained against the movement of nationalism. He could also see the danger in this, envisioning that it would lead to major conflict in Eastern Europe. He argued that *laissez faire* economics
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appeared to be in decline after the loss of American colonies. Yet Gibbon did not see the British Empire as being in decline, for he saw it as being a very different type of empire to the Roman Empire (Winks 1999: 3). Gibbon was also writing just before Britain was to engage in its great nineteenth-century imperial expansion. He also set the tone for the study of empire and the writing of grand histories (Winks 1999: 4). John Crawfurd (who is discussed in Part Two of this thesis) wrote *The History of the Indian Archipelago* (1820). Crawfurd was writing on a topic that had very little connection to Gibbon, yet he paid homage to Gibbon, peppering his work with quotes from Gibbon. Therefore Gibbon was an historical figure; and his work shaped nineteenth-century ideas on scholarship and empire.

Gibbon argued that empires created unity, and he was adamant that this unity was not at the expense of local culture. The empire was structured in such a way as to separate politics from ethnicity. The essence of this policy was the polytheist religion of the early Roman Empire, in which “The devout polytheist, though fondly attached to his national rites, admitted with implicit faith the different religions of the earth” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 53). Polytheism meant that the expression of ethnic identity could be global and local at the same time. As such, it was a unique structure that unified whilst also portraying divisions, Gibbon ([1788] 1997i: 54) commented on this:

> The deities of a thousand groves and a thousand streams possessed, in peace, their local and respective influence; nor could the Roman who deprecated the wrath of the Tiber, deride the Egyptian who presented his offering to the beneficent genius of the Nile. The visible powers of Nature, the planets, and the elements, were the same throughout the universe … Such was the mild spirit of antiquity that the nations were less attentive to the difference than to the resemblance of their religious worship.

Polytheism created a kind of cosmopolitanism, in which “Rome gradually became the common temple of her subjects; and the freedom of the city was bestowed on all the gods of mankind” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 57). All ethnic identities could practice their culture whilst also connecting with the imperial culture. Religion was separated from politics and therefore divided identity from politics. A key aspect of Gibbon’s argument was that Christianity broke this separation between religion and politics and undermined

was the answer because it separated the idea of nation and state, thereby allowing multiculturalism to flourish based on the market.
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the source of imperial-local unity. Drawing on Hume’s *Natural History of Religion* (1757) and Bossuet’s *Universal History* (1730), Gibbon ([1788] 1997i: 53) maintained that monotheist religions had an “intolerant spirit”, and when the Christians were eventually in power they proselytized and outlawed pagan rights. In doing so, they unleashed this ethnic tension becoming a milestone in the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.

Gibbon connected a healthy empire with universal tolerance and cosmopolitan mobility. Similarly Ernest Gellner maintained that pre-modern empires were “agro-literate societies” in which there is a great stress on cultural differentiation rather than on homogeneity” (Gellner 1983: 10). This basic observation was made by David Hume in the mid-eighteenth century: “When a monarch extends his dominions by conquest, he soon learns to consider his old and his new subjects as on the same footing; because, in reality, all his subjects are to him the same” (Hume [1742] 1998: 17). By the nineteenth century John Stuart Mill ([1861] 1998: 451) was also describing empires in implicit cosmopolitan terms claiming that “it is a step, as far as it goes, towards universal peace, and general friendly co-operation among nations”. In terms of social mobility between nations, Mill ([1861] 1998: 453) saw it as an imperative that:

> If we prevent the leading men of a community from standing forth to the world as its chiefs and representatives in the general councils of mankind, we owe it both to their legitimate ambition, and to the just pride of the community, to give them in return an equal chance of occupying the same prominent position in a nation of greater power and importance.

These previous accounts were all implicit accounts of cosmopolitanism. The move to more explicitly describing empire as cosmopolitan occurs in the early-twentieth century, with advocates of empire proclamationg that “to-day the words ‘Empire’ and ‘Imperialism’ fill the place in everyday speech that was once filled by “Nation’ and ‘Nationality” (Monypenny [1905] 1998: 5), and that empire was a move to “global cosmopolitanism” (Monypenny [1905] 1998: 17). With the decline of the modernist empires in the 1950s, John Plamenatz (1960) had committed to the term ‘cosmopolitanism’ to describe imperial unity. This was retrospective cosmopolitanism. The previous pages demonstrate that commentators on empire have gone to great
lengths to describe the identity structure of empire as cosmopolitan-like, but rarely calling it cosmopolitan.

The second problem with equating empire and cosmopolitanism is that cosmopolitanism emerged in the eighteenth-century as an antipathetic concept to both empire and the nation, tradition and belonging. As a response to nation and empire, there is a contradictory tension in representations that compare these three themes. An example of this tension is Mary Burges’s (1800) dialogue between ‘Mr Good-intent’ and ‘Mr Cosmopolitan’. The dialogue begins with “the stranger, whose name was Mr. Cosmopolitan” who “mocked at the words of Good-intent” and attempted to “convince” ‘Good-intent’ of “his folly in preferring his own country to the other regions of the world; seeing that it was formed but of earth and water, as they were, and was inferior to many among them in pleasantness and fertility” (Burges 1800: 161). ‘Mr Cosmopolitan’ attacks the idea of tradition and belonging, arguing “that attachment to the soil which gave” of a man’s birth “renders him contented with the lot which has fallen to him” (Burges 1800: 162). Although ‘Mr Cosmopolitan’ was attacking patriotism and nationalism as harbingers of tradition, Burges avoided making a direct connection between tradition and the nation.

When looking for a place to stay the night, ‘Good-intent’ informed ‘Mr Cosmopolitan’ “I have already determined where I shall lodge … where, my ancestors have been hospitably entertained before me; where I know that the Laws of my Prince are more respected than in any other quarter of the town; where his statutes are preserved in their greatest purity and where the most visible marks of his favour have for ages been bestowed” (Burges 1800: 161-162). Although framed by ancestors, the focus is on tradition and order (as manifest by the ‘Laws of my Prince’). As the dialogue goes on to demonstrate, the boundaries of the nation prove to be imprecise. ‘Good-intent’s’ nation resembles empire bounded by tradition more than a culturally specific nation. ‘Good-intent’ offers ‘Cosmopolitan’ a lodging exclaiming “if all places are as indifferent to you as you assert them to be, you will do better to accompany me to the lodging which I have chosen, than to wander idly about in search of another, without any preference to direct your choice”. The irony of ‘Good-intent’s’ actions is that it was a cosmopolitan act to offer ‘Mr Cosmopolitan’ a lodging. What ‘Good-intent’ shows is that the tradition-bound empire was highly cosmopolitan, even if it rejected the liberal
cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment. This is the cosmopolitanism of the Ancient Regime, Jerzy Lukowski (2003: 13) comments:

> It can be a misleading shorthand to pin nobles down in terms of ‘national’ categories during a century which only began to invent nationalism towards its end. For those in a position to make use of it, there was European-wide scope for geographical mobility… The ability to speak French, to a lesser extent German or Italian or Latin, virtually guaranteed those with such mastery entry into a cosmopolitan world.

In this Noblesse world the act of cosmopolitanism was tradition-bound custom-courtesy towards a social equal. This was the implicit cosmopolitan world that Mary Burges’s ‘Mr Good-intent’ was from, and trying to save, whilst living in the explicit cosmopolitanism of the French Revolution. Burges’s narrative is divided by the implicit and explicit expressions of cosmopolitanism, but Burges’s narrative concludes that both of these representations result in the solidification of the nation and the death of cosmopolitanism. After refusing ‘Good-intent’s offer, Burges (1800: 163) shows the follies of cosmopolitanism and the necessity for belonging:

> But as for Mr Cosmopolitan, he wandered about from one street to another, not occupying himself with any business, and meeting with none who cared to hold any converse with him; till at last the men of the fair, suspected that he had come among them with some mischievous design, had him taken up, and would have sent him to prison as a vagrant, had he not confessed that he belonged to French-row: so there they sent him, and there he was glad to remain.

The cosmopolitan was little more than an idealistic vagrant, and according to Burges even the idealist vagrant had to choose a nation — in ‘Cosmopolitan’s’ case it was the French. Although Burges didn’t want to admit it, however, Good-intent was a cosmopolitan. This tension between empire and cosmopolitanism can be found throughout all eighteenth and nineteenth-century representations of empire.\(^\text{14}\) Although

\(^{14}\) On face value this would appear to be a major claim, but it has been long recognized by historians that the Ancient Regime was a cosmopolitan entity based on “an international solidarity obtained in noble Europe, grounded on landed estates and cemented by marriage alliances” (Gershoy 1944: 26). Karen O’Brien (1997) had argued that the major Enlightenment histories were cosmopolitan in direction and emerged out of this elite cosmopolitan environment. This was a very narrow definition of cosmopolitanism, and to many writers is not cosmopolitanism at all. In a recent study on early modern cosmopolitanism, Margaret Jacob (2006: 3) argues that in the “seventeenth and eighteenth centuries … cosmopolitan idealism became thinkable, if not fashionable”. Cosmopolitanism emerged out of the social practices of the time, “both science and merchant life have long been associated with inculcating a cosmopolitan affect” but “both associations have merit, but need qualification… International commerce helped but … the potential of mercantile exchange to instil cosmopolitan mores rested on many variables.
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implicitly describing the cosmopolitanism of the Roman Empire, Edward Gibbon never referred to the empire as cosmopolitan.15

Outside of the order-chaos framework, the form that identity was proclaimed to take in communities was not pursued in relation to empires. Identity was irrelevant. Empires were an identity void. Linda Colley’s and Liah Greenfield’s argument is that the British nation filled this identity void. The dialogue between ‘Mr Good-intent’ and ‘Mr Cosmopolitan’ demonstrates this transition. Tradition became linked to an idea of nation, but despite the national framework, ‘Good-intent’ was still inclusively offering ‘Cosmopolitan’ a lodging. ‘Good-intent’ symbolizes the (cosmopolitan) goodness inherent within empire-nations, yet in the political grammar of the day empire-nations remained awkwardly distinct from direct philosophies of cosmopolitanism.

**Nations of Barbarians and Empires of Civilization**

The nineteenth century saw the solidification of the nation as the centre-point of collective political belonging within European politics. Whilst this process was occurring, a much older form of identity politics was also at play. The classic distinction between barbarians and civilization (which went back to Roman, Greek and classical

Science too contributed, but the most avowedly cosmopolitan voices in its early modern camp were often alchemical — not the first practitioner who come to mind when we think about the scientific” (Jacob 2006:3). Jacob concludes her argument by maintaining that these social practices created a solidified translational block of thinkers and activists “which spelt trouble for empires, monarchs, and their states or colonies throughout the Atlantic world” (Jacob 2006: 4). There is a difference in focus between Jacob’s argument and mine. Jacob focuses on the emergence of cosmopolitanism outside of the Ancient Regime’s centres of power, and that this became a major threat to the Ancient Regime. My argument is that, structurally defined, the Ancient Regime was cosmopolitan. However, as Jacob maintains there is a tension emerging between the new democratic forces that draw on cosmopolitan ideas and the particular cosmopolitanism of the Ancient Regime.

15 Although Gibbon never explicitly referred to the Roman Empire as cosmopolitan, Karen O’Brien (1997) and Jeremy Black (2002) have argued that Gibbon was a cosmopolitan. This debate revolves around differing letters he wrote to people over the course of his life which created contradictory accounts. For example in his youth he declared that “he preferred patriotism to hypocritical cosmopolitanism”, but as an older man he declared “As a Citizen of the World, a character to which I am every day rising or sinking, I must rejoice in every agreement that diminishes the separation between neighbouring countries, which softens their prejudices, unites their interests and industry, and renders their future hostilities less frequent and less implacable” (O’Brien 1997: 170). The problem with this analysis of Gibbon’s cosmopolitanism is that it confuses traditional noblesse with the modern meaning of cosmopolitanism. Gibbon was a cosmopolitan, being at home as much in France and Switzerland as he was in Britain. However, Gibbon was a classic example of the cosmopolitanism of the Ancient Regime and his writings reflect this. He saw Europe as a united entity, divided by the barbarian tribe-nations. Gibbon’s vision of empire is a cosmopolitan one, but it is a traditional noblesse interpretation of cosmopolitanism.
visions of political association) shaped much of the discourse on colonial policy and arguably internal policy (Salter 2002). Empire was used to describe the absolutist state and, as Linda Colley, Krishan Kumar and Tom Nairn have argued, the British Empire/State underwent a transformation from cosmopolitan identity into a nationalist identity. This occurred within a context of empire, an empire that preserved and built civilization in a relationship with barbarism. Many contemporary representations of the barbarians and the civilized have a tendency to present this discourse as a dichotomy (Gong 1984, Salter 2002), wherein the civilized differentiate themselves from the barbarian. Although this is a basic distinction, eighteenth and nineteenth-century liberal political theory also embraced the barbarian as the expression of freedom.\textsuperscript{16} This meant that the barbarian was needed in conjunction with order (empire) to drive civilization.

Within this ‘Faustian’ tango, nations were naturalized within the integral order of empire. Empire was seen through national divisions. A key element of this was a connection in ideas between the nation, freedom and barbarism. The changing nature of this relationship is visible in the similar, yet differing, concepts of the nation and empire expressed by Edward Gibbon and John Stuart Mill. Both of these men saw empire as the order of civilization over the chaos of barbarism. Conversely they both saw the barbarians as being the epitome of liberty. Despite their theories on empire being very similar, their idea of the nation was different. Gibbon held a pre-modern view of the nation that had pejorative medieval overtones. By comparison Mill was at the forefront of the modern view of the nation and self-determination. These two figures, similar in many ways, illustrate the transformation in the idea of the nation over a ‘100-year’ period in the context of the British Empire.

Gibbon clearly linked empire with civilization, maintaining that “the empire of Rome comprehended the fairest part of the earth, and the most civilized portion of mankind” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 31). Gibbon described the empire as the limits of civilization,

\textsuperscript{16} The connection between barbarism and freedom continued well into the twentieth-century Friedrich Hayek’s ‘Entrepreneurial Man’ which was at the heart of his theory of libertarianism was, for example, an extension on values he assumed existed in pre-civilization:

After abandoning hunting life, most of our direct ancestors, at the beginning of Neolithic culture, took to agriculture and soon to urban life perhaps less than three thousand years or one hundred generations ago. It is not surprising that in some respects man’s biological equipment has not kept pace with that rapid change, that the adoption of his non-rational part has lagged somewhat, and that many of his instincts and emotions are still more adapted to the life of a hunter than to life in civilization (Hayek [1960] 2006: 37).
which “Nature seemed to have placed as its permanent bulwarks and boundaries”, filled in the north “with a hardy race of barbarians” and to the south a climate that “soon repelled invaders”. Civilization was expressed as the fruits of empire, in which its “peaceful inhabitants enjoyed and abused the advantages of wealth and luxury” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 31).

Gibbon saw luxury as a key attribute of civilization. He maintained that “agriculture” was “the foundation of manufactures” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 73). “Under the Roman Empire, the labour of an industrious and ingenious people was variously, but incessantly employed, in the service of the rich” with the rich being land-owners (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 73). Gibbon drew on Adam Smith’s arguments on the origins of division of labour (Pocock 1999: 309-319), maintaining that “in the present imperfect condition of society, luxury, though it may proceed from vice or folly, seems to be the only means that can correct the unequal distribution of property” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 73).

This system of distribution sponsored “the diligent mechanic, and the skilful artist”. These obtained “no share in the division of the earth”, but “receive a voluntary tax from the possessors of land”, and the desire for more luxury drives landowners to “improve those estates” so “they may purchase additional pleasures”. This was a pump in which the “commerce of luxury … restored to the industrious subjects [of] the provinces sums which were exacted from them by the arms and authority of Rome” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 73).

In Gibbon’s eyes, civilization was the economy of luxury, yet he admitted that this existed in “every society” and as such, was not purely dependent on empire, but it “acted with much more diffusive energy in the Roman world” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 73). This difference was that empire was a closed system that produced civilization. Outside of the empire there was no luxury, only barbarism. This economy of luxury created an element of civil society for “as long as the circulation was confined within the bounds of the empire, it impressed the political machine with a new degree of activity, and its consequences, sometimes beneficial, could never become pernicious” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 73). Empire was a mega marketplace of luxury: fuelling an internal economy of distribution.
Whilst propagating the political order of empire, this particular economy of distribution was also dependent upon it. Empire represents the dichotomous difference that was “preceded by ages of violence and rapine” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 62). The basis of this order was military oppression: the “terror of the Roman arms added weight and dignity to the moderation of the emperors” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 37). Although military terror was the ultimate sanction — and the source of the centre’s exploitation of the provinces fuelling the economy of luxury — the terror was enamoured with the “image of a free constitution” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 31). This constitution “was preserved with decent reverence”, in which “the gentle but powerful influence of [the] laws and manners had gradually cemented the union of the provinces” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 31). This mixture of violence and moderation was the key to the empire’s success, but it introduces key political ideas of authority and freedom into the mix of empire and identity. The long-term survival of an empire depended on the delicate mix of freedom and authority. These were twin opposites, but for Gibbon the payoff was pure happiness:

If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 93).

Gibbon was aware that eighteenth-century Europe represented a different political situation to that of Rome, yet it was still a continuum: these “provinces once united under” the Romans are “at present, divided into some many independent and hostile states” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 44). His argument was not with the political structure of power, but rather the structure of civilization, the central difference being that Gibbon’s world was divided by multiple points of civilization. These multiple points were not a constant, they only existed “at present”; in time they could be a unity again (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 44, O'Brien 1997: 169-171). By comparison, he attributed Rome as the sole source of civilization during the period of the empire.17 Although the political order of Rome was repressive, it was dependent on legitimising itself as the sole provider of civilization: “as soon as the barbarians were reconciled to obedience, their minds were
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opened to any new impressions of knowledge and politeness” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 60).

There are two undercurrents to this particular order. The first was individual liberty and the second was the existence and natural liberty of nations. Gibbon viewed both of these characteristics (individual liberty and national liberty) as attributes of barbarism rather than civilization. Civilization was about the suppression or ordering of these characteristics, for example:

In the purer ages of the commonwealth, the use of arms was reserved for those ranks of citizens who had a country to love, a property to defend, and some share in enacting those laws, which it was [in] their interest, as well as duty, to maintain. (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 37).

This collective military action is dependent on an interest to preserve freedom. Gibbon ([1788] 1997i: 37) saw “patriotism” as deriving “from a strong sense of our own interest in the preservation and prosperity of the free government of which we are members”. This connection between freedom and patriotism was a positive aspect of barbarism. Examples included were the “morasses of Germany … filled with a hardy race of barbarians, who despised life when it was separated from freedom” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 32), or the “various tribes of Britons” who “possessed valour without conduct, and the love of freedom without the spirit of union” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 33).

Empire created luxury through the destruction of natural freedom. The result was that “vanquished nations, blended into one great people” and “resigned the hope” and “even the wish, of resuming their independence” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 65). The destruction of freedom was not limited to the provinces, but went to the heart of Rome itself: “The principles of a free constitution” were “irrecoverably lost, when the legislative power is nominated by the executive” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 79). In exchange for the loss of freedom, “the people of Rome … demanded only bread and public shows; and were supplied with both by the liberal hand of Augustus” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 78).

Gibbons ([1788] 1997i: 44) full statement was: “We shall now endeavour, with clearness and precision, to describe the provinces once united under their sway, but, at present, divided into so many independent and hostile states”.

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Although Gibbon saw the creation of the empire over the republic and the unification of the world under one system as a positive result, he also saw it as the point in which moral decline could fester (O'Brien 1997: 180). Gibbon’s ideas on the reasons for decline were influenced by the philosophical writing of his time. Gibbon saw freedom as a creative force that acted as a means of building the empire. He argued that “as the public freedom was lost” through conquest, “war was gradually improved into an art, and degraded into a trade” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 37). This was in line with Adam Ferguson’s (1767) ideas on barbarism and the militarist spirit, Gibbon saw the professionalism of war as a retrograde step (Pocock 1999: 343-344). For Gibbon and Ferguson, a professional was an ordered product of authority. As an ordered product of authority, the professional lost freedom and creativity. Professionalism maintained order at the expense of creativity.

This was the heart of Gibbon’s thesis on decline and fall. For him a strong society was a mix of order (empire) and freedom (barbarism). This mix created civilization. Hardship was a key aspect of this. Leadership was the condition of freedom, as opposed to luxury, the condition of empire. Gibbon maintained the decline began the moment the order of empire destroyed the creativity of freedom. Therefore once the empire was achieved “the authority of Plato and Aristotle, of Zeno and Epicurius, still reigned in the schools” but “their systems transmitted with blind deference from one generation of disciples to another” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 76). This produced “a cloud of critics, of compilers, of commentators,” which “darkened the face of learning, and the decline of genius was soon followed by the corruption of taste” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 76).

The result, was that the “Roman world was … peopled by a race of pygmies”. But with the destruction of the old was the birth of the new, for “when the fierce giants of the north broke in” they “mended the puny breed”, restoring “a manly spirit of freedom” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 76). This “manly spirit of freedom” was a “revolution of ten centuries” from which Gibbon’s own world emerged in which “freedom” was “the happy parent of taste and science” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 77).

Gibbon’s history spanned this revolution of ten centuries. The Decline and Fall ended with the fall of Constantinople in 1453, therefore Pocock maintains it is “a work of modern history” (2005: 230), in which Gibbon is presenting the birth of the modern
world. The “fierce giants of the north” became the agents of renewal. In doing so, the northerners (re)introduced the nation in European politics. The empire had destroyed the ‘nation’ with order and luxury. Equating nations with barbarians and the civilized with empires, Gibbon saw the modern nation-empire as the balance between order and barbarism.

Gibbon’s comments on the “war-like structure” of European politics gives reason to believe that he saw European divisions as continuing the reinvigorated process of barbarism. In fact the French revolution and his distain for the “dangerous multitudes” (Gibbon [1788] 1997i: 84) seemed to convince him that barbarism was still alive and well in Europe. Gibbon employs the same civilization logic that he used to chart the decline and fall of Rome to analyse the French Revolution. He saw the French Revolution as the epitome of inherent savagery and creativity, describing the revolutionary French as “Gallic cannibals” who were “lawless savages” that “fly before the enemy, hang their prisoners, and murder their officers” (Gibbon [1796] 1923: 278). It was the order of empire that prevented the spread of the internal savagery of revolution: “the firmness and vigour of government have crushed, at least for a time, the spirit of innovation; and I do not believe that the body of the people, especially the peasants, are disposed for a revolution” (Gibbon [1796] 1923: 279).

There are two important points here. The first is Gibbon’s reference to the “Gallic cannibals”. This is the ancient name for the inhabitants of Gaul; therefore the revolution was the unleashing of the ancient savagery of the Gallic nation. Hence, for Gibbon, the nation exists as a constant, but it is the primitive agent of barbarism. The second point is that he linked government with the “crushing … of innovation”. Innovation is the primitiveness of the nation, whilst government is about crushing of innovation and creation of order. Gibbon was not connecting nation with state. The nation was the creative force of barbaric inspiration, whilst the state was the force of order and luxury.

Gibbon’s use of the nation is indicative of eighteenth-century views of the nation which emphasise primitivism. Gibbon portrayed politics as a constant dichotomy between barbarism and civilization, with the nation being an expression of barbarism. However, there are markers to the emergence of the modern nation within his narrative. In connecting nation with freedom and barbarism, Gibbon was also developing the modern
interpretation of the nation. We can see where Gibbon’s arguments would lead. By the mid-nineteenth century the “fierce giants of the north” would be naturalized into biology, and become a superior racial bloodline. But that was for the future: Gibbon’s arguments on race were purely cultural. The discourse on barbarism and civilization was dependent on authority and freedom. What Gibbon’s arguments on civilization and barbarism illustrate is that the period in which he was writing was a period of transition. He exists in a world in which modern nationhood had not been fully formed, but his writings are a reflection of its emergence.

Between the late-eighteenth century and the second part of the nineteenth century, both Edward Gibbon and John Stuart Mill saw the nation as an opposite to empire, but in different ways.

As barbarian communities, nations carried an image of freedom from empire, and existed in opposition to the empire. Gibbon supported the liberal idea of freedom — taking from Ferguson, Gibbon saw that a mixture of freedom with prosperity created dynamic political forces and free legislatures. As Martin Thom (1995) maintains, the eighteenth-century was dominated by the republican conception of the city. The tribe-nation would not emerge until the nineteenth century. In Europe the success of the tribe-nation was a result of the failure of the republican idea of ‘Ancient Liberty’. Thom (1995) argues that the ‘Terror’ in the French Revolution tainted the idea of ‘Ancient Liberty’, which emphasized the public life and the role of the city. The ‘Terror’ made the republic of virtu a nightmare and signalled the end of the city. The tribe became the new means of conceiving popular democratic governance, rather than the public individual.

Like many of his English, Scottish and French contemporaries, Gibbon was clearly influenced by classic republicanism; but many of the ideas surrounding the tribe-nation that dominated nineteenth-century Roman historiography were already present in Gibbon’s Decline and Fall. Although clutching to traditional conceptions of the primitive nation, Gibbon’s Decline and Fall bespeaks the emergence of the modern ethic-nation.
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**Mill on the Barbarian**

Seventy years after Gibbon, John Stuart Mill illustrates the changing mixed response to the barbarian. The trajectory that is commonly seen as limiting Mill’s foresight was partially set by his father, James Mill who outlined a highly structural version of conjectural and utilitarian history in his *History of British India*. For James Mill, the barbarian was little more than an historical staging point from which civilized society develops rather than an ongoing agent of renewal as Gibbon envisioned. John Stuart Mill is generally accredited with adopting his father’s progressive/developmental approach to historiography (Mehta 2004: 97), a point he readily acknowledges in his *Autobiography* (Mill [1873] 1961). The utilitarian tradition presented the barbarian as a rude primitive being. The barbarian needed the cold reality of empire. The expanding modern world was deemed too harsh for the barbarian, who would be relegated to the pages of evolutionary history (Mehta 2004, Parekh 1995).

John Stuart Mill was writing during the height of the British Empire, when the Victorian Age had adopted the trappings of the ‘new Rome’. The British Empire was civilizing and proselytising to the barbarians, just as Gibbon had observed Rome civilizing and converting the Barbarians. In this imperial environment, the utilitarian tradition emphasized progress. The view that is generally presented is that by the mid-nineteenth century, the barbarian had lost much of its political meaning as the purveyor of freedom (Mehta 2004: 99-103). J.S Mill’s ([1859] 1998: 14) comment that the doctrine of liberty “is meant to apply only to human beings in the maturity of their faculties” and, as such, excludes “those backward states of society in which the race itself may be considered as in its nonage”, is a clear example of the powerlessness of the savage (Mehta 2004: 97-106). For the barbarian, “despotism” became “a legitimate mode of government … provided the end be their improvement, and the means justified by actually effecting that end” (Mill [1859] 1998: 15).

This caveat on education, transformed liberalism from a discourse on individuality and individual rights into a legitimization of authority. For Mill maintained that “liberty … has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind” became “capable of being improved by free and equal discussion” (Mill [1859] 1998: 15). Mill was maintaining liberty for an educated elite, a point that was aimed as much at the
working-class masses (Burns 1968) as it was at the barbarian. This elitism was not absolute: progress and education would equip the masses and the barbarian for rational discussion (Burns 1968, Jahn 2005: 608, Mill [1836] 1977). This authoritarian view of education outlined the basis for a cosmopolitan liberalism, in which individuality would be forged through education.

This view of the barbarian as being incapable of liberty was in stark contrast to Gibbon’s barbarian freedom. Although Mill’s view was different to Gibbon’s, the distinction was not absolute. Mill still maintained the eighteenth-century quiet adoration for the barbarian (Jahn 2005, Mehta 2004: 100). Like Gibbon’s belief that empire and order ended creativity, Mill believed that civilization rendered “mediocrity the ascendant power among mankind”. This mediocrity was civilization minus individuality. Individuality was not a product of the modern world, but rather a product of “ancient history” a product of barbarism which had diminished “through the long transition from feudality to the present time” (Mill [1859] 1998: 73). In this earlier time “the individual was a power in himself; and if he had either great talents or a high social position, he was a considerable power” (Mill [1859] 1998: 73). Similar to Gibbon, Mill maintained that barbarism was a creative force (Jahn 2005: 610), and in many respects paraphrased Gibbon stating:

Those nations must once have had originality; they did not start out of the ground populous, lettered, and versed in many of the arts of life; they made themselves all this, and were then the greatest and most powerful nations of the world. What are they now? The subjects or dependants of tribes whose forefathers wandered in the forests when theirs had magnificent palaces and gorgeous temples, but over whom custom exercised only a divided rule with liberty and progress. A people, it appears, may be progressive for a certain length of time, and then stop: when does it stop? When it ceases to possess individuality (Mill [1859] 1998: 78-79).

Mill raises a number of points. Primarily the evolution of civilization was a process of decline, fall and renewal. The ‘nations’ of the East reached civilization whilst the Europeans were barbarians wandering the forests. Like Gibbon’s belief that freedom was the source of creativity, Mill maintained that freedom created progress; therefore, similarly to Gibbon, Mill believed that a civilization without (barbarian) freedom resulted in stagnation. Although there is a strong similarity between freedom and barbarism in Gibbon and Mill, there is a difference in their perspectives on the nation.
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Gibbon projected the nation in its traditional form, relegating it to the barbarians. By comparison, Mill uses the nation in its modern sense, wherein the nations of the East succumb to the tribes of Europe. Mill had taken the same logical argument as Gibbon, but modernized it, so the tribes of the north had not just rejuvenated the peoples of the former Roman Empire, but they had tribalized the nation — thereby injecting individuality.

Possibly Mill adopted this argument from Gibbon, but more than likely he was influenced by Francois Guizot’s ([1861] 2001) *The History of the Origins of Representative Government in Europe*, which Mill reviewed favourably in the *Westminster Review* (Mill [1845] 1985).\(^{18}\) Summarising Guizot, Mill stated: “we are indebted” to “the northern invaders … for one of our greatest peculiarities — the spirit of liberty, in the peculiar sense attached to the term in modern times: the spirit of personal independence, which repels the interference of the state with the private concerns of the individual” (Mill [1845] 1985: 383). Guizot also made a distinction between barbarian freedom and the ancient liberty of the “ancient republics” which can “be characterized as the successive sacrifice of each to all”; or the republican idea of patriotism and active participation in the republic (Mill [1845] 1985: 384). This meant that “the imaginary being, the *civitas*, the πόλις, demanded the annihilation of every individuality. Every citizen was a perfect slave of the domineering principle, and of those who, for the time being, were its living representatives” (Mill [1845] 1985: 384) Guizot’s ideas meant that individuality (negative freedom) or the right to be left alone, was ethnically particular to the northern tribes.

Martin Thom (1995) maintains that Guizot’s view, on the tribalising of European politics, was a key movement of the nineteenth century and a response to the failures of neo-classical republicanism in the French Revolution. The feudal or the Gothic organic origins of liberty had been an ongoing theme in English political thought (Pocock 1987). Since the seventeenth century, British writers had romanticized democratic institutions, arguing that in the “old Gothic or German countries, parliament was responsible for watching over the liberties of the people” (Robbins [1987] 2004: 105).

\(^{18}\) Francois Guizot was just one of a number of French writers that Martin Thom (1995) argues tribalized republican politics in response to the aftermath of the French Revolution. Thom’s claim is that in the
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One example was Reverend Samuel Johnson (1693) who argued that parliament was an ancient right descending back to Saxon assemblies. Likewise Robert Molesworth (1694) published an *Account of Denmark*, which was a warning to his English brethren how a Gothic constitution could be destroyed by the emerging absolutist monarchies. John Milton had founded many of his claims to the tenure of kings on the “ancient memory of the people’s right” in which the king was sanctioned by tribal election (Milton [1648] 1999: 60). Edmund Burke’s idea of the organic state based on the ancient constitution was also derived from this seventeenth-century tradition of the tribal origins of English liberty (Pocock 1987). The tribal constitution had been an ongoing theme in British and European politics. Mill was drawing on a theme that had been an undercurrent for the previous 200 years: a theme that linked popular sovereignty in Europe to the tribe.

Mill’s ideas on the nation demonstrate a difference to that of Gibbon’s. This difference meant that for Gibbon, the nation was a primal barbarian identity that ended with empire and order; whilst for Mill all people belong to nations, however only some maintained the barbarian quality of freedom. In making these claims, Mill was anticipating the modern views of nation appearing in the mid-nineteenth century. By examining nations through a pattern of rise and decline, powered by individuality and freedom, Mill saw the nation as travelling through time. The nation became a primordial entity that changed over time, but remained an entity.

*Mill on Empire:*

Over the last twenty years, a lot of scholarship has been generated on the relationship between John Stuart Mill and nineteenth-century British imperialism. This recent scholarship portrayed Mill as the defender of empire (Jahn 2005, Mehta 2004, Parekh 1995, Said 1994, Varouxakis 2005). Uday Singh Mehta observes “as a general matter, it is liberal and progressive thinkers such as Bentham, both the Mills, and Macaulay, who, notwithstanding—indeed, on account of—their reforming schemes, endorse the empire as a legitimate form of political and commercial governance” and “who justify and accept its largely undemocratic and non-representative structure” (Mehta 2004: 2).

nineteenth century, the politics of the city became replaced by the politics of the tribe-nation and that this was a paradigm shift in thinking.
Substantial passages from John Stuart Mill are readily found to support this view. Mill’s *On Liberty* provides one such un-libertarian example of his defence of empire: “the most obvious case” for the denial of representative government, he says, is when

the people have still to learn their first lesson of civilization, that of obedience. A race who have been trained in energy and courage by struggles with Nature and their neighbours, but who have not yet settled down into permanent obedience to any common superior, would be little likely to acquire this habit under the collective government of their own body (Mill [1861] 1998: 260).

In these situations, Mill maintained that despotism was the only solution to enact progress. It is this paternalistic idea of progress that has led to the criticism that Mill favoured imperialism: an act that goes against the logic of liberalism (Mehta 2004: 97-106). This legitimization of empire has propelled criticism further, with writers maintaining that Mill was a ‘racist’ (Justman 1991). Georgios Varouxakis (2005: 139) argues this is ironical, for: “as much as it may surprise some of his late-twentieth (and early-twenty-first) century critics, who see him as a ‘racist’, Mill stood accused exactly of the opposite charge in his own time”. Mill lived in a time when race was a common explanation for all sorts of social traits. As Chapter Four demonstrates, race was a complex idea that was still forming, and at that time did not possess the absolute biological meaning that it gained after the Second World War. Mill was routinely attacked by advocates of the biological absolutist’s views of race in nineteenth-century journals (Varouxakis 2005: 139). Therefore, Mill is unfairly criticized for not complying with late-twentieth century ideas. Like this misinterpretation of Mill’s position on race, critics have also too readily written Mill off as defender of imperialism and empire. For example Edward Said (1994: 96) uses Mill to portray liberalism in support of imperialism:

If there was cultural resistance to the notion of an imperial mission, there was not much support of that resistance in the main departments of cultural thought. Liberal though he was, John Stuart Mill — as a telling case in point — could still say, ‘The sacred duties which civilized nations owe to the independence and nationality of each other, are not binding towards those to whom nationality and independence are certain evil, or at best a questionable good’.

At the heart of Said’s critique is a misinterpretation of Mill’s perception of universalism and culture. Within Mill’s writing there is a subtle realization that the nation was
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becoming a cornerstone of the modern world. Unlike Edward Gibbon, who saw empire and cosmopolitanism as possibilities, Mill’s writing on empire is consumed by caveats. These caveats map Mill’s attempt to come to terms with the contradiction between authoritarian empire and representative government. The result of this was a lack of confidence in the potential of empire and cosmopolitanism. Instead, Mill saw a move towards nation-based government and internationalism.

The clearest example of this ambivalence towards empire is Mill’s examination of imperial federalism and prospects of the self-governed European colonies. Mill saw the British Empire as a “free state” that held “dependencies” (Mill [1861] 1998: 447). This meant that the “dependencies” were “subject … to acts of sovereign power on the part of the paramount country, without being equally represented (if represented at all) in its legislature”. Within that brief passage emerges a sharp distinction between the classical empire and the British Empire. As Gibbon outlined, the classical empires’ political borders had collapsed, and in doing so produced the cosmopolitan world. Mill’s empire was one of dependency relations, wherein distinct divisions emerge between the centre and the periphery. The periphery has an identity as a dependent. This means it is a subservient entity to the centre, but still an entity. It is this relationship of separateness and dependency that, Benedict Anderson ([1983] 1991) argued, led to creole nationalism. Therefore, within this framework of empire, identity differences emerged. Mill acknowledges this by commenting:

Outlining territories … may be divided into two classes. Some are composed of people of similar civilization to the ruling country; capable of, and ripe for, representative government: such as the British possessions in America and Australia. Others, like India, are still at a great distance from that state (Mill [1861] 1998: 447).

Mill identified identity through civilization and geography (Jahn 2005: 609-610). He did not say that the Australian colonies had the same civilization as Britain, but rather they had a “similar civilization”. Mill used civilization to mean development, but in his framework culture is dependent on the level of development (Mehta 2004: 99-103, 19 John Stuart Mill would concur with Ernest Gellner’s idea that the “modern modular man” (modular because of their labour mobility) “is a nationalist” (Gellner 1994: 103-108). Gellner believed that modern rationality required linguistic and political boundaries. These boundaries were forged through nationalism. Although Mill’s thought on this topic is not as directed as Gellner’s, his overall direction on culture and political boundaries is very similar.
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Varouxakis 2002: 60-62). Although Mill was highly exclusionary in determining who had rights to representative government, he saw empire as a framework of cultural-political blocks that were dependent on a centre. Uday Sing Mehta (2004: 116) comments on this: “in retrospect one can say that the absence of self-consciousness regarding the empire’s one locality foretold its fated terminus in the face of nationalism”. Mehta underestimates Mill’s self-consciousness on this point. Rather than failing to see the rise of nationalism, Mill was consciously aware that the tide was turning against empire in the modern world.

Mill saw arguments for and against empire; but overall, he had a general ambivalence to empire in comparison to his belief in the nation. His opposition to empire can be found in statements such as: “countries separated by half the globe do not present the natural conditions for being under one government, or even members of one federation” (Mill [1861] 1998: 450). Mill maintained that political societies needed to have “sufficiently the same interests” to exist as a unified body. The geographical distance meant that these countries, although stemming from the “same civilization”, did “not, and never [could] have” sufficiently similar interest to “take counsel together”.

They are not part of the same public; they do not discuss and deliberate in the same arena, but apart, and have only a most imperfect knowledge of what passes in the minds of one another. They neither know each other’s objects, nor have confidence in each other’s principles of conduct. (Mill [1861] 1998: 450)

Mill explains this as public interest, that countries can not have the same interest. But the same argument can be made of any large state which encompasses diverse communities. In maintaining that “they are not part of the same public”, Mill was implicitly drawing on the circular claim of the nation: that two countries cannot be united under the same government because they are not the same nation. This was in reference to the settler colonies in which Mill ([1861] 1998: 451) claimed that:

Though Great Britain could do perfectly well without her colonies, and though on every principle of morality and time come when, after full trial of the best form of union, they deliberately desire to be dismembered; there are strong reasons for maintaining the present slight bond of connexion, so long as not disagreeable to the feelings of either party.
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Although Mill opposed empire, he also saw benefits such as: “universal peace”, a free-trade zone and moral influence throughout the world. However, this is not a relationship of empire, but rather one of nations in a dependency relationship. Mill was ambivalent towards empire. Empire had its uses, but these uses had a used-by date. The underlying theme was that the nation held deeper claims than the empire.

If the white colonial settlers’ lands were nations and allowed to go their separate ways, what about Mill’s second category of dependency: those “incapable of representative government”? This ability to subdue, exclude and then deny liberal rights to the non-white colonial peoples is an astounding act. This action legitimizes perpetual authoritarian dictatorship and represents the limits of liberalism. Homi Bhabha (2004: 137) maintains that “in asserting the natural rights of empire, Mill’s proposal implicitly erases all that is taken as ‘second nature’ within Western civility”. Mill ([1861] 1998: 453) argued that a despotic empire was “as legitimate as any other” form of government as long as empire “facilitated” the “transition to a higher state of improvement” for the colonized from that of “the existing state of civilization”. This meant that “there are … conditions of society in which a vigorous despotism is in itself the best mode of government for training the people in what is specifically wanting to render them capable of a higher civilization” (Mill [1861] 1998: 453). For “under a native despotism, a good despot is a rare and transitory accident: but when the dominion they are under is that of a more civilized people, that people ought to be able to supply it constantly” (Mill [1861] 1998: 454). It was both the separateness and superior civility (and therefore supposed disinterest) that enabled the more civilized people to raise the colonized.

The theory of history, or the equation between barbarism and civilization that equalled progress, empowered British liberal thinkers to adopt a god-like persona: whereby they believed they had the rational knowledge to enact tough love and develop the colonized for modernity (Bhabha 2004, Mehta 2004, Parekh 1995, Said 1994, Said 1995). This liberal hubris justified dictatorship and the usurpation of liberal rights. 20 The problem

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20 In making this critique, post-colonial critique moves into awkward common ground with the neo-liberal critics of John Stuart Mill, such as Friedrich Hayek ([1960] 2006, [1944] 2001). Although a classical liberal, Mill was also founder of social liberalism that dominated twentieth century political thought. Friedrich Hayek ([1960] 2006, [1944] 2001), Milton Friedman (1980) and many others criticized the underlying assumptions of positive liberty, which social liberalism was based upon. Mill and the social
with this argument is that it focuses on one aspect of Mill’s thought. It locks the experience of nineteenth-century imperialism into a world of opposites, whereby ‘you are with us or against us’. It is a discourse in which we take the shears to long dead ‘tall poppies’, showing the hypocrisy of their work whilst also demonstrating the pervasiveness of imperialist ideology. Although this approach has revealed the culture of imperialism that pervaded nineteenth-century thought — and arguably continued into twentieth-century thought (and probably twenty-first century as well) — this approach misses the nuances of change. For within the pervasiveness of empire, the nation crept forward. The nation became the liberal response to difference; nation became the limits of liberalism.

The slow creep of the nation is epitomized in Mill’s legitimization of empire. Mill’s defence of empire is surrounded by caveats. For every absolutist statement supporting empire, there is concurrent qualification that when added together is not an endorsement of empire. When discussing his vision of empire, Mill ([1861] 1998: 454) refers to it as “ideal” and of the “highest moral trust”. From that point onwards, Mill burdens the “ideal” empire with the problems of reality: the problems of governing a group deemed as foreign. If this “ideal” was not the prime goal of the imperialists, Mill maintained, they were little more than “selfish usurpers, on a par in criminality with any of those whose ambition and rapacity have sported from age to age with the destiny of masses of mankind” (Mill [1861] 1998: 454).

The fact that a particular group is deemed on a different civilizational level rules out cosmopolitanism. Unlike the white colonials, whom Mill ([1861] 1998: 453) said were entitled to “an equal chance” at “occupying” a “prominent position in a nation of greater power and importance”, the subservient civilizations were deemed not capable of this equality. This meant that Mill’s empire was an empire of nations; an empire separated into blocks. This structure of empire differed substantially from that outlined by Edward Gibbon. As an empire of nations, it became an empire of foreigners.

_liberals that followed him favoured the strong guiding power of the state to alleviate disadvantage and create opportunities. Mill and the other social liberals can be critiqued from many angles for being authoritarian. The end-point of similarity for both post-colonialism and neo-liberalism is a strange union, whereby both groups directly oppose each other but have a strong similarity in critique._
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By basing the empire on nations, Mill saw that the empire was beset by national problems. He maintained that “it is always under great difficulties, and very imperfectly, that a country can be governed by foreigners; even when there is no extreme disparity, in habits and ideas, between the rulers and the ruled” (Mill [1861] 1998: 455). The act of government became intertwined with the nation. This was a basic reality for Mill, he realized that “foreigners” did “not feel with the people”. The reason for this was that they could not “judge, by the light in which a thing appears to their own minds, or the manner in which it affects their feelings, how it will affect the feelings or appear to the minds of the subject population” (Mill [1861] 1998: 455). On one level, Mill is adopting the basic liberal assumption on representative government — that government needs to be close to the people — but Mill goes beyond this, focussing on feelings and thought, leading to an almost mystical dimension to his views on governance. His suggestion of a bond between nation and government is an irrational circular argument that was contrary to the teachings of utilitarianism. Yet despite this irrationality, Mill saw that the nation had very rational consequences for the workings of government. Mill believed in self-government based on nationality. This became one of the most controversial themes in Representative Government.22

Mill saw two detrimental consequences when the government and the nation were not in unison. On the part of the government the “danger is of despising the natives” and conversely “the natives” could “disbelieve … anything [that] the strangers do” could “be … for their good” (Mill [1861] 1998: 456). Mill spells out the unworkability of government, proclaiming that “the government of a people by itself has a meaning, and a reality; but such a thing as government of one people by another, does not and cannot exist” (Mill [1861] 1998: 456). John Stuart Mill was extending the logic of self-government, or nation-based government beyond the limits of Europe and the white colonies to the victims of colonialism.

21 It is bizarre that Mill adopted the nation as a core aspect of representative government, although a close read will reveal the nation emerging in the writings of all utilitarians. They promoted the idea of cosmopolitan unity. Jeremy Bentham’s idea of empire was that of an expanding cosmopolitan entity. By comparison John Stuart Mill saw that the nation placed serious limits to the expansion of the state. Mill scholars attribute this to the influence of Samuel Coleridge (Turk 1988), however Mill’s support for the nation also reflects the general political, social and intellectual climate of late-nineteenth century Europe, in which the nation became a key social concept.

22 Both Lord Acton ([1862] 1996) and James Fitzjames Stevens (1874) criticized Mill on this point.
Despite all the rhetoric on empire as a tool of civilization, Mill had very little confidence that the officials and colonists in charge of the colonies were capable of, or even desired to achieve this:

 Armed with the prestige and filled with the scornful overbearingness of the conquering nation, they have the feelings inspired by absolute power, without its sense of responsibility. Among a people like that of India, the utmost efforts of the public authorities are not enough for the effectual protection of the weak against the strong: and of all the strong, the European settlers are the strongest. [The settlers] … think the people of the country mere dirt under their feet: it seems to them monstrous that any rights of the natives should stand in the way of their smallest pretensions: the simplest act of protection to the inhabitants against any act of power on their part which they may consider useful to their commercial objects, they denounce, and sincerely regard, as an injury (Mill [1861] 1998: 458).

This passage demonstrates the problem of two racial-nations bound together in a hierarchical colonial environment. Both sides become entrenched in their national differences, resulting in an abuse of power by the European colonists. These same sentiments, he argued, regularly infected the government, for although he maintained that “the Government is itself free from this spirit”, it was “never able sufficiently to keep it down in the young and raw” of “its own civil and military officers, over whom it has so much more control than over the independent residents” (Mill [1861] 1998: 459). In effect, Mill was stating that, although the government was not corrupt, most of the staff serving it were. Under these circumstances he argued that “while responsibility to the governed is the greatest of all securities for good government, responsibility to somebody else not only has no such tendency, but is as likely to produce evil as good” (Mill [1861] 1998: 460). This was not an endorsement of empire. Even if empire did succeed, Mill argued that it only had a “chance of tolerable success” (Mill [1861] 1998: 461). Rather than being a supporter of empire, Mill was very apprehensive of the idea. Cosmopolitan empire was not a future to Mill. Instead the future was with the nation. Writing during the height of the British Empire, Mill is anticipating the decline and fall of empire courtesy of the nation.

These two men, Gibbon and Mill, were both indicative of their respective time periods. Their ideas were different, yet demonstrated a continuum. Both of them had similar visions of history. Both of them saw that European history represented a break from
what they saw as a default rhythm of empires that rise and fall. These empires created order out of chaos, yet at the expense of suppressing freedom. Freedom was the creative force that drove change, establishing new empires. Yet once these empires were established change was suppressed: order and servitude were the defining characteristics of empire. Both of them subscribed to the belief that the decline of the Roman Empire provided a break from this pattern. They saw barbarian freedom emerging with the fall of Rome. As a consequence, both of them saw that the pattern of order and civilization was transformed. Rather than being formed by empire, civilization developed in the barbarian tribal states. These states maintained aspects of their barbarian past.

This historiography placed the barbarian tribe at the centre of social political development. Yet both men saw different consequences emerging from the barbarian tribe. These consequences were indicative of the changing ideas of empire and the nation. For Gibbon, empire created cosmopolitanism. An empire unified people, removing the tribal barbarian nations. This meant that Gibbon saw empire as an expansive entity that could continue unifying people in a cosmopolitan world. It also meant that Gibbon saw the nation as a primal association that disappeared with social advancement. This was indicative of the medieval and early-modern conceptions of the nation.

Gibbon was writing at the end of the eighteenth-century, when political beliefs that we would now subscribe to as being nationalism were gaining importance. His writing on the barbarian tribes reflected these new ideas. In Gibbon we see him placing importance on the idea of the tribe, yet at the same time Gibbon was also reflecting the medieval and early modern idea of the nation that the nation was a symptom of primitivism. Therefore, Gibbon saw the cosmopolitanism of empire as a future. By comparison, Mill was writing post-1848, in the time-period that Eric Hobsbawm (Hobsbawm 1995: 9-28) calls the “springtime of peoples” in which the nation became a calling cry in political revolutions of the time. The nation became a paramount political association in the mid to late-nineteenth century. Therefore Mill did not see cosmopolitan empire as having a future. For him the nation was a primal entity. Mill recognized that empires create cosmopolitanism, but in no way did Mill see this as a solution. For him the national divisions were inherently entrenched. Although Mill was criticized for being an imperialist, he saw empires as having limited potential, and that they usually caused
more harm than good. Mill could see that the trajectories of the modern world were leading to an interconnected global society, yet he did not see this as a cosmopolitan entity. Rather, global society was to be based on the nation.

Between Gibbon (1780s) and Mill (1860s) there was a transformation in perspectives on empire, cosmopolitanism and the nation. Ideas on the role of the nation were transformed. The nation had moved from being a primitive social formation, to being a primal social formation. The change in the idea of the nation meant that the trajectory of empire also changed. Gibbon’s late eighteenth-century account of empire projected empire as a civilising entity; with empire consuming nations, and in so doing empire created an overarching cosmopolitan unity at the expense of the nation. By the 1860s Mill was pessimistic about the cosmopolitan potential in the modern world. He saw empire as being the victim of nations. Nations were the future, but at the same time he saw nations as reflecting primal formations. Against these primal formations, Mill saw empires as mere transitory entities that reduced to guiding the emergent nations that would shape the future.

This chapter has reflected on the overall change in ideas, which is the key focus of this thesis. This change is the emergence of the nation as a pre-eminent social formation within the context of empire. The barbarian became a pathway in which this change emerged. The subsequent chapters reflect different aspects of how the nation emerged within the context of empire through changing ideas about the barbarian.
Chapter 3 - Communities of Capital: Materialism and the Naturalization of the Nation

During that period of pre-First World War euphoria — before the carnage and mud of trench-warfare sullied the charade of European civility — Leonard T. Hobhouse in a mass-produced Home University Library text on liberalism, proclaimed that:

The modern State is the distinctive product of a unique civilization. But it is a product which is still in the making, and a part of the process is a struggle between new and old principles of social order. To understand the new, which is our main purpose, we must first cast a glance at the old … which — under the inspiration of liberal ideas — is slowly but surely giving place to the new fabric of the civic state. (Hobhouse [1911] 1927: 7),

Hobhouse’s reflections reiterate a common belief (of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) that liberalism transformed Western civilization. The acceptance of this belief is demonstrated by Karl Marx’s own theories of society, in which he stood back from liberalism and portrayed it as an epochal movement in history. In Marx’s hands, liberalism was the revelation of bourgeois class-politics, representing bourgeois interests in transforming politics to match the economy’s transformation. Across the political spectrum there was an acceptance that liberalism was intimately connected to the dramatic social, industrial and political changes that had occurred over the previous one-hundred-and-fifty years.

Hobhouse’s words ‘the liberal ideal’ are indicative of the particular path that liberalism had taken by the late-nineteenth century. Liberalism had become little more than a series of principles, based around a theory of rights. In the twentieth-century, liberalism became predominately a legalist approach to politics, but the origins of liberalism lay in the broad extent of Enlightenment thought. The modern demarcation of academic disciplines had not emerged by the time of the European Enlightenment (Foucault 2002, Porter 2001, Porter 2004, Rothschild 2001: 1-6), and, as such, liberal philosophy
emerged out of a broad materialist theory on nature, covering psychology and the methodology of science, all of which contributed into a notion of politics (Porter 2004: 3-27). Within this liberal philosophy a transformation in the understanding of the nation occurred.

Many people have commented on the role of liberalism in forming the nation. Liah Greenfeld is one of the sternest advocates of this approach. For Greenfield the nation is the “source of individual identity within a ‘people,’ which is seen as the bearer of sovereignty, the central object of loyalty, and the basis of collective solidarity” (Greenfeld 1993: 8). The basic sense of sovereignty means that a “national consciousness is inherently democratic: egalitarianism represents the essential principle of the social organisation it implies, and popular sovereignty its essential political principle” (Greenfeld 2003: 2). For Greenfeld the nation emerged first within England and then Britain, from which point the idea became modular and adopted by other peoples. Greenfeld takes this point further to argue that nationalism is the spirit behind capitalism (Greenfeld 2003). This argument is highly contentious, for it goes against mainstream economic theory which places action squarely within the domain of individuality and self-interest. Greenfeld’s argument is not one of action, but rather that of nationalist pride that was the imperative stimulating the desire for growth.

The problem with Greenfeld’s argument is that traditional economic arguments maintain that she has the proverbial ‘cart and horse’ all wrong. Orthodoxy maintains that it was capitalism that created the nation not the other way round. Greenfeld raises important questions about the relationship between liberalism, the nation and capitalism; in particular that capitalism had to be based on pre-existing ideals. As it stands her argument has a reductionist thesis that argues that the modern nation emerged fully formed at a relatively early point in time, namely the sixteenth-century, just before the commercial and industrial revolutions. As Chapter Two demonstrates, a consciousness of the nation gradually emerged from the sixteenth-century up to the late-nineteenth century (Kumar 2003). We can also see elements of a national consciousness as early as the ninth-century (Kumar 2003: 62-66), but this does not mean that nations existed as such in the modern sense of horizontal communities as we understand them today.
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Like many writers on nations and nationalism, Greenfeld overcomes this by defining different forms of the nation: individualistic-civic, collectivist-civic and collectivistic-ethnic. These labels are ‘ideal types’, and despite the fact that everybody engages in this defensive structuralism, they are of little use; because historical observations demonstrate that one can never find a pure example of any ‘ideal type’ — without a very selective view of history.23

Despite this, Liah Greenfeld does identify a major transition in thought that contributed to the formation of modern capitalism. Her argument is that “civic nationality … is equated with citizenship, that is, with the in-principle, conscious acceptance of certain rights and obligations” (Greenfeld 2003: 2). In this capacity “the will” in individualistic-civic nations is the “will of the majority of their citizens” and their “governments are representative in fact as well as in principle” (Greenfeld 2003: 2). In addition, these nations “cherish individual, human, rights and foster institutions which safeguard them” (Greenfeld 2003: 2). In this description of the nation, Greenfeld is outlining the precepts of classic liberalism.24

Part of Greenfeld’s argument is that liberalism transformed the state from an alien entity into an entity for popular sovereignty, and this created the impetus for capitalism. Put in this way, the position comes close to orthodoxy. In Conditions of Liberty (1994), Ernest Gellner makes a parallel claim; and likewise Benedict Anderson argues that liberalism contributed to transforming the state (Anderson [1983] 1991: 67-82). This means that the emphasis is not on the nation creating capitalism, but rather on the relationship between liberalism and the state. The nation falls somewhere within this relationship.

23 For example, Liah Greenfeld (1993, 2003) presents the United States of America as the manifestation of an individualist-civic nation. Detractors would point to the racial inequalities and come to a different conclusion. Other ideal-type theories can be found across the literature on nationalism. Each of the so-called ‘civic’ nations often engage in reflective debates about the problems of multiculturalism and, in turn, power resides in the hands of a particular cultural and class grouping.

24 Greenfeld makes this claim courtesy of her narrow definition of the nation. But there is a long tradition of mistaking liberalism for the nation. Elisaha Mulford ([1887] 1971) made a similar argument. Mulford took the liberal institutions of the American State and washed them the in logic of German romanticism and came up with The Nation: The Foundations of Civil Order and Political Life in the United States. The problem with these arguments is that they are esoteric. They group a serries of ideas together under an organic banner, which says more about contemporary desires for a collective past than about how these ideas emerged.
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Liberal theory, itself an ideology with material effects, seeks to examine politics and society through a rational examination of material practices. Post-structuralists have lambasted liberalism for this contradiction. It is not my focus to add to this literature, but rather to examine how liberal theory necessitated the naturalization of the nation as part of an interaction between two material entities: the state and liberal theory’s own material effects. In the early modern period, the state was transformed from its feudalist origins, through the doorway of absolutism into its modern sovereign shape (Anderson 1974, Fowler and Bunck 1995, Hardt and Negri 2000, Philpott 1997, Puchala 1989). This transformation included the move to popular sovereignty. It has long been seen that the nation was an integral component of this transition (Breuilly 1994, Gellner 1983, Giddens 1981: 182-203, Greenfeld 1993, Thom 1995). The claim to national sovereignty was a key issue that contributed to transforming the state. At the time it was seen differently, with few revolutionaries such as Tom Paine presenting the nation as the central issue on their agenda. The goal for these liberal revolutionaries was the transformation of the state, however, in making this case they made a space for the nation.

The nation was an overcoat that united (as one entity) a range of liberal agendas to transform the state. These agendas primarily revolved around individual liberty (Robbins [1987] 2004: 1-2). An integral component of this liberal agenda was political theory. The eighteenth century saw the development of sophisticated liberal ideas on society that were grounded in a materialist conception of human existence (Porter 2004). Liberal political and social theory both explained reality and attempted to change it. Figures such as Adam Smith and David Hume were not just reflecting on the operation of the marketplace and human nature, they were attempting to radically change government policy.

There were two ‘material’ entities at work: the material expansion of the state, and the material practices of political theory. These two material entities were closely connected, yet they were different. Liberal theory was ultimately based on individuality, and individuality was universal. As a universal individualist theory, liberalism knew no

25 In the introduction, drawing on Raymond Williams (2005), I argued that theory has a material aspect. Liberalism was an expansive and revolutionary idea that abstracted reality into the relationship between
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boundaries: it was an expanding materialist entity. By comparison the state was defined by boundaries. The nation became materially naturalized within this spatial tension. The nation fulfilled a void, giving a sense of belonging in a material world. The nation legitimized state boundaries, whilst providing legitimate boundaries on individuality. The nation was not created by the state or political theory, but rather the nation was the naturalized result of the dialogue between these two forces.

This chapter examines the evolution of the nation within materialist debates on the economy and the state between the 1770s and the 1840s. I examine how major figures in the British Enlightenment reflect, in their writings, the material tension between state, economy and political theory. Within this tension a space emerged; this space was filled by the nation.

These figures include the economists Adam Smith and Thomas Malthus, who in their respective ways developed liberal (Smith) and conservative (Malthus) arms of liberal political economy. Both of these men wrote against the nation in differing ways. We can see however, that within their respective works the logic of the nation was apparent. Adam Smith and his friend, and mentor, David Hume both actively reflected on the emergence of the nation. Hume wrote one of the first dedicated accounts on understanding the nation, entitled: ‘On National Characters’. Hume, like Smith and Malthus, reflects the materialist logic of his time. His approach to examining the national character was to conceive of it through material processes of the state and the effects of the natural economy. In doing so, Hume was conceiving the nation within the space defined by the tension between the state and the economy. A key aspect to liberalism’s handling of the tension between the state and the economy in the Enlightenment was the theoretical role of the savage and the barbarian. The savage and the barbarian were both products of the Enlightenment imagination. The savage and the barbarian emerged as an historical pathway. This pathway was a mechanism which explained the tension of the state and the economy to the then contemporary theorists. In doing so, these theorists linked the nation to the tribal condition.

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the individual and society under the condition of reason; it was actively shaping materialism as much as it was a product of it.
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This subtle emergence of the nation within liberal discourse curtailed the materialist logic of liberalism. This was the naturalization of the nation, the affects of which would become apparent when liberal political economy was faced with Fredrich List’s nationalist challenge. List’s nationalist critique of liberal political economy, and the subsequent nationalist indignation of British liberal economists, reveals the extent to which liberalism naturalized the nation. As the subsequent chapters portray this process was occurring from the metropole to the farthest reaches of the empire.

**Conjecturing a Material Basis to the National Character**

A society in liberal theory is a collection of individuals that have a reciprocal and interdependent relationship. By comparison, a nation is a community of bonding and collective identity that, in Burke’s terms, was a “partnership” though time (Burke [1790] 1968: 195). The nation gained meaning through the idea of the ‘national character’. It is this vague concept of a ‘collective character’ that places the nation on a psychological matrix beyond that of a society.

The early liberal tradition demonstrated strong currents of environmental materialism, wherein liberals argued that a harsh environment bred harsh characters; however, rational intervention and the propagation of civility could mitigate this natural response to an environment. This was the purpose of polite liberal society to moderate and civilize harsh characters (Buchan 2004, Porter 2004: 113-48). This early environmentalist view of materialism derived from discourses on aesthetics, which attributed a person’s psychology and physical characteristics to climatic conditions (Bindman 2002: 58-70). For example, it was believed that people who lived in tropical climates would become lazy from the heat, and if a person were exposed to too much sun, they would develop Negro characteristics. These climatic environmental materialists also held that a cold climate would promote brutish barbaric characteristics in a person. Living in a cold climate and conscious of being labelled barbaric, the Scottish materialists took exception to the climatic theory (Bindman 2002: 69). David Hume ([1742] 1998: 113-125), a leading advocate of polite society, devoted an essay to the dissection of “national characters” as a means of disproving the climatic theory of social character. Hume argued that the collective character was a result of moral conditions, which derived from two forces: the first was government leadership whilst
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the second was the labour conditions that forged a particular mentality. Therefore a particular type of vocation created particular mindsets. As an example, Hume argues that soldiers, in all forms of society, shared a similar character because of the precariousness of their lifestyles (Hume [1742] 1998: 114). Above all, Hume believed that a “national character” could be nurtured and that the propagation of a polite “national character” was an imperative (Hume [1742] 1998: 125).

Hume’s belief in the propagation of polite society was a common attribute of eighteenth-century Scottish intelligentsia who were trying to escape English-imposed stigmas that all Scots were uncivilized highlanders (Buchan 2004). The focus on profession, as a builder of character, was a change from early-eighteenth century approaches which held that character was formed through education alone. The emphasis was placed on the act of labour itself, therefore work was considered an educational character-building process. This meant that Hume was entrenching the “national character” within the material process of production.

By the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries character was attributed to material conditions of labour. Material conditions created a particular style of labour. Thomas Malthus exemplifies this school of thought. His *Principle of Population* ([1798] 1998) was a critique of the liberal idea of nurture and human perfectibility. Malthus maintained that nature was a miserable affair and that no amount of optimism could overcome this fact. For Malthus everything was linked to material subsistence: the economy of food production was the basis of life — he also included social characteristics in this viewpoint. He argued that “savage nations” (tribal society) propagated domestic slavery as a survival mechanism. The harsh treatment of women

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26 Hume was writing in response to Italian and French writers that attributed national character to climatic conditions. Environmental theories of materialism were common, but Hume’s counter argument that labour was character-building made materialism a psychological theory. (Hume 1998: 113-126)

27 Although Hume saw the division of labour as forming character, he was following in the footsteps of Joseph Addison ([1713] 2005) who believed that rational intervention could shape the national character. Addison effectively used his paper the *Spectator* to create personas and introduce refinement (Porter 2004: 129). For Addison ([1713] 2005: 133), “reason” and “virtue” corrected humans from their state of “barbarity” and that this could only occur from a “suitable Education”. For Addison ([1713] 2005: 134), “Discourse of Morality, and Reflections upon human Nature, are the best Means we can make use of to improve our Minds, and gain a true Knowledge of our selves, and consequently to recover our Souls out of the Vice, Ignorance and Prejudice which naturally cleave to them”. Although Addison was important in developing ideas about moulding the collective character through education, thereby projecting Locke’s ([1690] 2004) psychology on a grand scale, David Hume ([1742] 1998) broke from this tradition by examining the collective character through material processes.
rendered them relatively infertile, thereby maintaining a low population; fewer mouths to feed meant more resources for the tribe. This principal produced a more equitable distribution of resources (Malthus [1798] 1998: 41-44). In turn “nomadic nations”, such as Central Asian peoples of the Eurasian Steps, were brutal warlike people because of their nomadic-herding-pastoral lifestyle (Malthus [1798] 1998: 42-52). Even modern democratic national characteristics, such as the American love of individual liberty, Malthus attributed to material conditions (Malthus [1798] 1998: 101-112). The Americans had liberty because of their small population and an ever-increasing frontier producing the availability of new land for agriculture, thereby creating more resources (Malthus [1798] 1998: 104-108). Ultimately his main argument was that a universal principle of political equality was untenable in Britain because there was not enough food to maintain such a system. An examination of ‘the nation’ was not a principle concern of Malthus, but his arguments demonstrate that liberal thinking was attributing the construction of national identity to modes of production.

In relating character to modes of production, Malthus’s aim was to present the human condition as being an unchanging material law. For him, inequality was a basic part of nature. In presenting character as being based on production, Malthus actually demonstrated that people could progress, and progress occurred through the agency of over-production. Industry produced an excess of resources; this enabled equality through a greater distribution of resources, as was the case in America. The emphasis was that nature allowed for evolution through material industry. Although Malthus was arguing against the claims of John Locke and the liberal-Whig tradition, Malthus was using the materialist framework outlined by the Scottish Whigs, the most prominent of whom were David Hume, Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson.

28 Although Malthus believed progression through changes in modes of production was possible, he was not a modern advocate of perpetual growth. Malthus clearly believed that there was a limit to growth and when this point was reached misery would take over.

29 The essence of this material framework derives from the liberal idea of sensation. Thomas Hobbes ([1651] 1985) had argued that individual character was built through the sensation of the material environment. At the same time, Hobbes also believed in the innate condition of desire. It was this innate interest to fulfil our desires that was the basis of the Hobbesian character; therefore, in being innate, character was not totally a material construction for Hobbes. In comparison Locke did not believe in an innate condition, instead seeing people as blank pages, on which “sensation” and “reflection” created the individual character (Locke 2004: 109). Sensation was the material affect of nature, whilst reflection was the rational intervention of nurturing. The art of reflection constituted reflexivity to the sensations of nature. Character could be a nurtured reflection, but character was also the result of a basic material experience. This logic of material stimulus became anthropomorphized through the collective experience.
Liberal political economy was increasingly attributing social development to the division of labour. Adam Smith saw the division of labour as an important driving force behind social change (Smith [1776] 1981i: 15-19). Similarly, as we have seen, David Hume attributed the division of labour to the construction of character and saw it as a positive response to desires for luxury. Likewise, Adam Ferguson saw the division of labour as a key development in the construction of civil society. Smith, Hume and Ferguson all believed that liberty was dependent on the separate sphere of power that was generated by the division of labour (Gellner 1994). These materialist views led them to see national identity as a result of the material conditions.

These arguments on the division of labour show that liberal theorists were reflecting on the emergence of the nation. They were clearly observing the emergence of national sentiments and were trying to understand these sentiments within their materialist framework. This response demonstrates that as the nation was emerging, liberal theory was accommodating the nation within its overall materialist structure.

**Conjectural History**

Hume, Smith, Ferguson, and others, developed a theory of history that became known as conjectural history. This was a system of history in which there was scant surviving evidence to produce a factual narrative. Although full evidence had not survived the tyranny of time, conjectural historians believed a history of the past could be deduced from the evidence remaining. The word ‘conjectural’ means supposition or guess. That is exactly what the Edinburgh school did — they guessed history.

Conjectural history was a staggered or ‘stadiial’ theory of social development, in which society progressed from savage society to civil society through an engagement with modes of production (Meek 1976). The essence of conjectural history can be found in Lockean ideas of development, which profess a ‘stages’ approach to individual and social development. This had become a central plank of social contract theory in both Britain and France. In the *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* ([1754] 1761) and the *Social Contract* ([1762] 1791), Rousseau reasoned that history was a series of
developmental social stages in which the social contract was an enduring principle. However, unlike Rousseau’s gloomy view of human development, conjectural historians were positive and focussed on the creation of civil society rather than on the creation of government.

Focus on ‘civil society’ rather than ‘state’ was derived from Scotland’s particular history (Buchan 2004: 54, 234-237). By the end of the eighteenth century, Scotland was a nation without a state after its sovereignty was ceded to the United Kingdom in the Act of Union. As James Buchan (2006: 14) maintains, “Union with England had been the last throw of a delinquent Scots nobility which saw no future for itself in a world being carved up into trading cartels”. Adam Smith argued that all the British colonies should be included in the Union, but in each case for a different reason (Buchan 2006: 14). The fact that economic improvement could be seen to have occurred without the existence of a state mercantilism, led conjectural historians to question the necessity of the state in relation to economic growth (Buchan 2006, Buchan 2004). In the lifetimes of the conjectural historians, economic improvements had accompanied improvements in civility; therefore civil society was based upon the material pursuit of affluence.

Understood in terms of the material pursuit of affluence, the study of civil society became focused on economic transformations. Society developed along a stage-by-stage historical framework starting at savage society, which was the hunter-gatherer society; moving to pastoral society, which was a nomadic herding society; developing into agricultural society, and becoming perfected as civilized society with a developed commercial economy. The Scottish focus on civil society was not totally accepted in England. The English materialist tradition (deriving from Hobbes and Locke) places emphasis on a democratic civil society focusing on the state. The influence of Edmund Burke and the resistance to the French Revolution solidified this concept of state. 30

Prior to Burke, Samuel Johnson had already laid the foundations to the conservative view of the state. His arguments on patriotism and civil liberty were diametrically apposed to any concept of populism “for it tends the subversion of order, and lets wickedness loose upon the land, by destroying the reverence due to sovereign authority” (Johnson 1693: 150) and his defence of taxation squarely placed the state as the defender of liberty. Johnson’s essay on patriotism reflects the naturalization of the nation in liberal theory. Johnson was arguing against liberalism, projecting an earlier vision of patriotism based on the idea of a disinterested elite. In doing so, he was trying to maintain a separation between politics and the masses. If we read this against the grain, Johnson is arguing that liberals were appealing to the masses’ concerns and in doing so they were transforming the elitist conception of patriotism into a new form of populism that claimed a democratic ethos. Johnson was witnessing the way liberal politics was adopting a sense of nationalism.
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Rather than civil society negating the role of state (as the Scots argued) the state was seen to be the protector of economic liberty and therefore the protector of civil society.

If economic growth was seen as a product of either civil society or the mercantilist state, what was the role of the nation in this process? In the grammar of politics, the nation and civil society have a tangled historical relationship with each other. As we have seen, writers used the terms interchangeably (as will be seen in the second part of this thesis, this tradition was continued in the writings on Southeast Asia). The conjectural historians were no exception. Adam Smith, David Hume, Adam Ferguson and William Robertson all used these terms interchangeably. Yet they also show a distinct separation between the idea of civil society and the nation.

Hume’s ([1742] 1998: 49-56) essay on Civil Liberty is a case example of the connections between civil society and the nation. Hume ([1742] 1998: 50) opened his account with a discussion on civil liberty as the productive source of the arts and science, arguing:

It had been observed by the ancients, that all the arts and sciences arose among free nations … It had also been observed, that when the Greeks lost their liberty, though they increased mightily in riches by means of the conquests of Alexander, yet the arts, from that moment, declined among them, and have never since been able to raise their head in that climate. Learning was transplanted to Rome, the only free nation at that time in the universe; and having met with so favourable a soil, it made prodigious shoots for above a century; till the decay of liberty produced also the decay of letters, and spread a total barbarism over the world.

Hume uses the nation, in the generic sense of the tribe or the group. The Greeks were a nation, but in other places he refers to particular city-states as also being nations. Hume’s use of the word ‘nation’ is reflective of the general ambiguity around the word ‘nation’ in the eighteenth century. However, within this passage, the nation is clearly connected to a free state. Hume’s point is almost a paraphrase of Edward Gibbon’s arguments on liberty as a creative force which produced the arts, science and governance. Yet, Hume ([1742] 1998: 52) steps away from this point observing that:

The elegance and propriety of style have been very much neglected among us. We have no dictionary of our language, and scarcely a tolerable grammar. The first polite prose we have was
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writ by a man who is still alive … Men, in this country, have been so much occupied in the great disputes of Religion, Politics, and Philosophy, that they had no relish for the seemingly minute observations of grammar and criticism.

Hume believed that Britain was a free country. He wrote a six-volume history documenting how free institutions had emerged from the barbarian customs of the Anglo-Saxons to the Glorious Revolution of 1688. The real success of freedom was not represented as art but rather commerce: “It has become an established opinion, that commerce can never flourish but in a free government; and this opinion seems to be founded on a longer and larger experience than … the arts and sciences” (Hume [1742] 1998: 52). Hume ([1742] 1998: 53) argued that this was because:

There is something hurtful to commerce inherent in the very nature of absolute government … commerce … is apt to decay in absolute governments, not because it is less secure, but because it is less honourable. A subordination of rank is absolutely necessary to the support of monarchy. Birth, titles, and place, must be honoured above industry and riches; and while these notions prevail, all the considerable traders will be tempted to throw up their commerce, in order to purchase some of those employments, to which privileges and honours are annexed.

This was an interlinked system, whereby freedom necessitated risk therefore development; by comparison, absolutism created certainty and therefore style and stagnation. What did this mean for the nation? As commented above, Hume used the word ‘nation’ to symbolize group, but also (as we have seen above) Hume was a pioneering theorist on the characteristics of nationality. The connection between civil liberty in civil society and the nation can be found in his History of England (Hume [1778] 1983).

Hume’s History of England, was a philosophic history that outlined an historical argument for the evolution of free institutions and civil society in England. As well as being a philosophic history, it was also a national history (Gillingham 2001, O'Brien 1997: 56). There is evidence to indicate that Hume was reflectively conscious of the role of written history in constructing the nation. The first published volume (which eventually became volume five) was originally entitled the History of Great Britain (Hume 1754); however, Hume moved away from an interconnected history of Britain, favouring instead a national history of England. This change in title reflects Hume’s
focus on the nation. The ‘nation’ became a key underlining aspect within his arguments on the foundation of liberty and property. The first volume, which was the last volume published, portrays the essence of his arguments on the nation, freedom and property.

Similar to Gibbon, Hume argues that the barbarian was the historical source of freedom. This freedom was founded on the political economy of barbarism: “the Britons were divided into many small nations or tribes; and being a military people, whose sole property was their arms and their cattle, it was impossible, after they had acquired a relish of liberty, for their princes or chieftains to establish any despotic authority over them” (Hume [1778] 1983i: 5). Likewise, “of all the Barbarous nations, known either in ancient or modern times, the Germans seem to have been the most distinguished both by their manners and political institutions” they “carried the highest … virtues of valour and love of liberty” (Hume [1778] 1983i: 15). Their economy was based on “bare subsistence,” and a “superior rank” was only acquired through “superior dangers and fatigues” (Hume [1778] 1983i: 15). Hume ([1778] 1983i: 16) exulted in the fact that:

All the refined arts of life were unknown among the Germans: Tillage itself was almost wholly neglected: They even seem to have been anxious to prevent any improvements of that nature; and the leaders, by annually distributing anew all the land among the inhabitants of each village, kept them from attaching themselves to particular possessions, or making such progress as might divert their attention from military expeditions, the chief occupation of the community.

Hume ([1778] 1983i: 16) revelled in his belief that the Ancient Germans saw their existence as being based in freedom, a virtue deriving from rapine: “to die for the honour of their band was their chief ambition” whilst “to survive its disgrace”. These beliefs were based on the political economy of plunder. Yet he also presented the German barbarians within the prism of the nation: “kingly government, when established among the Germans (for it was not universal), possessed a very limited authority; and though the sovereign was usually chosen from among the royal family, he was directed in every measure by the common consent of the nation” (my emphasis). In his discussion of the barbarians, Hume was linking the economy to social values; these were contained within a conception of the tribe-nation.
This conjectural theory of the barbarian was outlined in the first volume of his history of England, which was the last to be published. Therefore, although it is his introduction, it also represents Hume’s conclusion to a grand tour of the origins of English freedoms. Within the first thirty pages, Hume uses the barbarians to destroy the unity of pre-Roman Britain. Out of this rubble he creates the British nations (England, Scotland and Wales) as separate and distinct entities. Originally the Britons had freedom, and were subdivided into “nations or tribes” (Hume [1778] 1983i: 5). The Romans used violence to destroy this freedom, thereby introducing empire and civility. “The natives, disarmed, dispirited, and submissive, had left all desire and even idea of their former liberty and independence” (Hume [1778] 1983i: 10). The few Britons who “had fiercer and more intractable spirits who deemed war and death itself less intolerable than servitude under the victors” were pushed into “Caledonia”. These Britons became the Picts. “They were defeated … in a decisive action, and having fixed a chain of garrisons, between the firths of Clyde and Forth,” the Romans “cut off the ruder and more barren parts of the island, and secured the Roman province from the incursions of the barbarous inhabitants” (Hume [1778] 1983i: 10). Using the Romans, Hume creates a scenario whereby the tribe-nations of the Britons become separated into the national blocks. This took on real meaning with the withdrawal of Rome.

For Hume, the Britons had become used to luxury, as opposed to liberty; therefore, with the Roman withdrawal, “the abject Britons regard this present of liberty as fatal to them … Unaccustomed both to the perils of war, and to the cares of civil government, they found themselves incapable of forming or executing any measures for resisting the incursions of the barbarians” (Hume [1778] 1983i: 13). He paints a picture whereby the Britons had everything done for them, they had become totally domesticated by the Romans. Hume ([1778] 1983i: 13) argued that the national division of the Roman and non-Roman Britons (which by this stage in the story he refers to as “Picts and Scots”) became apparent with the withdrawal of Rome: “The Picts and Scots, finding that the Romans had finally relinquished Britain, now regarded the whole as their prey, and attacked the northern wall with redoubled forces”. Hume still refers to the Britons as being a collection of territorial tribes, but they are no longer the same as the Picts. Therefore Hume is moulding the nation of Scotland out of this tumult.
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Into this mix come the German barbarians, in the form of the Saxons. They defeat the Britons who were then “shut up in the barren counties of Cornwall and Wales” (Hume [1778] 1983i: 24). This simple narrative creates the three nations of Britain: England, Scotland and Wales. These nations are further created through Hume’s discussion of historiography, whereby he criticizes the Britons accounts “by the Welsh authors” who invented stories to “palliate the weak resistance made at first by their countrymen”. Hume criticizes the Welsh accounts at every stage in his argument, in doing so he firmly links the Welsh to the British and makes them distinct, from the Scots and the Saxons.

Hume’s historical construction of the separateness and distinctness of the three nations creates the setting for his grand argument on the evolution of English liberty from Saxon tribal customs. In framing his argument in this way, Hume nationalizes liberty. Liberty becomes a condition of the English at the expense of the Welsh (who had been corrupted by the Romans) and Scots. His historical reasoning forges these nations out of material processes that produce particular national characteristics. There is no clear connection between the nation and economic thought, yet as this examination of Hume shows, the nation was being connected to material ways of being.

The central point that can be garnered from this discussion is that British political discourse started to ground the rhetoric of the nation to material forces. Within these discussions on conjectural history the aim of the nation was material development, and this became the purpose of politics. The then contemporary political aim of conjectural history in the late-eighteenth century was to provide a goal for political advancement.

31 This narrative was not new. Hume was heavily reliant on medieval sources. John Gillingham (2001) argues that Hume’s basic argument in regards to the Dark Ages and Early Medieval period was a development on William of Malmesbury. Gillingham (1992) also maintains that the economic reasoning can be found in William of Malmesbury’s ([c.1135] 1911) History of English Kings. The story can be taken even further, for much of this narrative is reliant on the Venerable Bede who was writing his account of the Dark Ages in c.731. These medieval histories that create stark differences between the nations of Britain lead Gillingham (1992) to argue that it was a source of English imperialism, and that you can date the emergence of the English nation to the twelfth century. Outside of these Early and High Medieval sources, there is little evidence for this narrative to be a real event. Much of the archaeological and linguistic work on Dark Age Britain has led a body of experts to question this narrative and the whole invasion thesis. For a discussion of this see Francis Pryor (2005). If this evidence is correct, the Saxon invasion never occurred. The emergence of the Saxon culture is seen as an adoption of a new continental culture, not an invasion of a continental people. However, for our purposes in examining the eighteenth century this new discovery that Britain is one people is irrelevant. By the eighteenth century, three separate ethnic groups were in existence and as Gillingham argues, the process of separation was a process being constructed by intellectuals since the Early Medieval period.
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All societies were presented as being the same in respect of material development. Therefore it was reasoned that the purpose of government was the same anywhere in the world. As a universal truth, civil society (as society governed by law, intriguingly separate from the state) became a useful criterion legitimising British commercial society and explaining Britain’s frustration with foreign nations that were unco-operative to this commercial world. Effectively, civil society naturalized capitalist market relations. Nations that did not comply with civil society, in the sense that they had not progressed beyond a particular stage or worse, showed signs that they had degenerated, which meant that these nations were challenging the natural material order.

This belief in the material naturalness of civil society was united with a belief in the naturalness of the national character. The effect of this was to create a discourse of intervention to support civil society by educating recalcitrant national characters. In linking politics (as material advancement) to the national character an on tological connection was made between material progress and the right to independence. A nation only had a right to independence if it observed its obligations to nature, which was material progress.

The Savage and the Barbarian

Conjectural history revolutionized social thought. Ronald Meek (1976) argues that this theory emerged during the Enlightenment, as philosophers were connecting social groups across time and space. These groups were connected by a common productive relationship. As William Robertson conjectured in 1759,

> ‘the Germans and Americans must be the same people.’ But a philosopher will satisfy himself with observing, ‘That the characters of nations depend on the state of society in which they live, and on the political institutions established among them; and that the human mind, whenever it is placed in the same situation, will, in ages the most distant, and countries the most remote, assume the same form, and be distinguished by the same manners’ (Meek 1976: 139).

Meek’s argument was that the Enlightenment writers saw a similarity between the Germanic tribes and the indigenous Americans. This similarity underpinned conjectural theory and was based on the common premise of the savage as a primal social
condition. Meek (1976: 7) argued that although eighteenth-century advocates claimed a classical pedigree, the evidence for this “is much less than we might have expected, and …is not very easy to find unless we know what we are looking for and are fairly adept at reading between the lines”. Stadial theory of social development had a “sudden emergence” and that “its widespread acceptance and popularisation” in the Enlightenment “can hardly have been some accident” (1976: 35-36). Meek’s theory is that this “sudden emergence” was related to the dramatic social transformation occurring in the eighteenth century.

Meek raises a key point of historiography: how ancient is ‘the savage’? And what is the importance of the savage? J.G.A Pocock (2005: 3) argues that the savage, “meaning the hunter or hunter-gatherer … was paradoxically a figure of modern history”. The savage became a theoretical point of conjecture for the historically questioning ‘moderns’. It was a point of retrospection, wherein the philosopher could deduce the original tabula rasa, or social form, from which complex society originated. Meek (1976: 14-15) attributes Hugo Grotius ([1738] 2005) as an originator of stadial theory, more so than the classical philosophers of the ancient world. Therefore, the savage emerges concurrently with the rise of natural law and contractual reasoning. Pocock (2005: 4) argues that this legalist idea of the “natural man” was clouded by the idea of the “sub-human”. This was a result of a crisis of historiography:

As Europeans, who believed they had no prehistory but that of patriarchal shepherd clans, took to the sea and mastered every arm of the global ocean, they everywhere encountered peoples who might be thought hunter-gatherers, or who practised those blends of village horticulture and fishing or hunting we now have in mind when we use the term ‘indigenous’ …. There ensued a complicated and disastrous history in which the will to describe such peoples as ‘savage’ (and so sub-human) was reinforced by stadial theory, for the reason that … progress … did not seem to have occurred outside Eurasia. (Pocock 2005: 3-4)

Pocock raises the important point that the European perception of the past was formulated around the medieval idea of patriarchy, rather than modern ideas of history.32 The introduction of history to explain the past created the savage as a duality.

32 Cary J. Nederman (2005) criticizes Pocock on this point arguing that Pocock’s distinction between the modern/medieval divide is too absolute.

Pocock has returned to the postulation of historical and historiographical discontinuity… Pocock’s principal historiographical project in volume [3] is the demonstration that the “Decline
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In historical intellectual thought the idea of the savage fed into a hypothesis of contractual and social theory, whilst in culture (namely art and literature) the savage became a derogatory mark of primitivism feeding into ideas of race (Bindman 2002: 42-46, Pocock 2005: 3-4). Therefore the savage was a duality. It was both economic model and the source of cultural identity. For historians and philosophers the savage was an economic model of conjectural theory. This meant that the condition of the savage was a universal tabula rasa, but the ‘savage’ condition varied from region to region. As Hume maintained, the German Barbarians were in league of their own. The condition of the savage and values this condition reflected was therefore determined by the mode of production. As an expression of values, the savage was a cultural expression. Ronald Meek (1976) Ter Ellingson (2001), David Bindman (2002) and J.G.A Pocock (2005) argue that by the intertwining of the savage as an economic model, and with the savage as a cultural expression, the savage became an ideology that was superimposed on indigenous societies. The result was disastrous. These societies were both idealized and derided. Together Meek, Ellingson, Bindman and Pocock indicate that the savage was an expression of modernity and culture. In both respects the savage symbolized what it meant to be modern. Therefore, the savage became a cultural opposite of modernity that was defined by modernity.

If the savage was a creation of modernity, was the barbarian also a creation of modernity? Was the barbarian the same as the savage, and as such, suffer the same problems of modernity that Pocock saw the savage occupying? These questions reflect the fact that the barbarian has been a neglected part of social theory. For example, there is no topic of ‘barbarian’ listed in Meek’s (1976) index. Most modern writers, focusing on the eighteenth-century savage, and view the barbarian and savage as being interchangeable. Pocock argues that the barbarian is distinctly different to the savage. Unlike the savage, “the barbarian inhabited both ancient and modern history” (Pocock 2005: 3). For Pocock (2005: 3) the barbarian “linked antiquity to modernity”. The barbarian had been an “agent in replacing the ancient world”, and the “processes of his [the barbarian’s] civilising had been crucial to the replacement of the” ancient “world and Fall” trope highlighted by Gibbon reflects a clear-cut Renaissance invention arising from the innovations (or perhaps renovations) of the Florentine civic humanist circle. Pocock himself repeatedly invokes this claim … in order to identity “decline and fall” as a standard for delineating “medieval political thought” from succeeding modes of engaging in the enterprise of political theory. (Nederman 2005: 3)
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by civil society and commerce”. In answer to the question: “Who were the barbarians?”, Pocock (2005: 13) argues that “they are ourselves”. In the personification of the barbarian “primeval liberty came to be confronted and reconciled with Roman law” (Pocock 2005: 13). Pocock’s argument is that the barbarian brought the ancient world into the modern. Although the barbarian was similar to the savage, there was a distinct difference. The barbarian brought forward ancient liberty, therefore the barbarian provided a connection to ancient culture. Unlike the savage, who was primarily an economic model, the barbarian could be located in history and a source of cultural heritage.

One aspect of this cultural distinction was the difference between the barbarian and barbarism. Barbarism is the culture of the barbarian. As a cultural expression ‘barbarism’ was more widely used than ‘the barbarian’ in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries. Any word-search of eighteenth-century political/historical text will reveal more hits for the word ‘barbarism’ and ‘barbarity’ than ‘the barbarian’.33 Unlike the condition of barbarism, ‘the barbarian’ was close to, if not being, a proper name.34 Stemming from the ancient Greek interpretation of the word barbarian, ‘the barbarians’ became a generic term for non-Greek speakers; but it also had a particular European meaning. The name ‘barbarian’ was more often used in reference to the northern tribes of Europe as we have already seen in relation to David Hume’s ([1778] 1983) History of England.

Most of the writing on the barbarian occurred within philosophic histories. As a result, the use of narrative clouds the conception of the ‘barbarian’. Adam Ferguson’s (1767) Essay of the History of Civil Society is an exception to this trend. Ferguson’s (1767) Civil Society was a social theory rather a philosophic history. His conception of Civil Society was based in the culture that emerged from the barbarian. Ferguson became a point of reference for most other Enlightenment philosophers commenting on the barbarian. To Ferguson, the barbarian epitomized freedom, but he also saw the barbarian as being distinct from the savage. The distinction between the savage and the

33 The two comprehensive full text databases I used were Thomson-Gales’ Eighteenth Century Collections Online and The Making of the Modern World. For further information on these databases see www.gale.com.
34 Edward Gibbon or his printer almost always accorded the ‘Barbarian’ with a capital initial (Pocock 2005: 11) underlining the tendency to see the barbarian as a proper name.
barbarian was based on the evolution of property. The savage was “not yet acquainted with property”, whilst the barbarian had “possessed themselves of herds” and “although not ascertained by laws” property had become “a principal object of care and desire” (Ferguson 1767: 123-124). Without the law controlling the barbarian desire for property, the barbarian was free to steal. Ferguson argued this knowledge of “poor and rich … must create a material difference of character”. Likewise, Ferguson saw this distinction as the source of the tribal nation, arguing that tribal patriotism was a basic human characteristic: “we love individuals on account of personal qualities; but we love our country, as it is a party in the division of mankind; and our zeal for its interest, is a predilection in behalf of the side we maintain” (Ferguson 1767: 31).

There is something macabre about Ferguson’s distinction between love of individuals and love of a country. Ferguson’s argument is that love of country is based on our desire to dislike others. He saw “every nation” as a “band of robbers” that “prey without restraint or remorse on their neighbours” (Ferguson 1767: 150). The core characteristic of the nation was that of the thief. Therefore, the nation continued the barbarian desire for property through plunder of foreigners, but it also connected the nation to the pursuit of empire.

Ferguson saw barbarism as a universal social form. This form was based on a particular mode of production. This mode of production created a particular culture.

[This culture] actuated by great passions, the love of glory, and desire of victory; roused by the menaces of an enemy, or stung with revenge; in suspense between the prospects of ruin or conquest, the barbarian spends every moment of relaxation in the indulgence of sloth (Ferguson 1767: 154).

For Ferguson, the origins of the nation and civil society were with the barbarian. This barbarian was not quite universal. Ferguson’s (1767: 123,150) descriptions of barbarous societies are global, for he says “a similar spirit reigned, without exception, in all the barbarous nation of Europe, Asia and Africa”. However, this was the “barbarous spirit”, and not the barbarian. This goes back to the previously discussed distinction between barbarism and the barbarian. His descriptions of the barbarian are based on the
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European tribes. The barbarian was a European identity. The “barbarous spirits” that occupied other parts of the globe were not quite the real thing.

This tradition continued into the nineteenth century. Richard Cobden often used the terms ‘barbarism’ and ‘barbarity’ in his political pamphlets and speeches, yet in his collected works he only once used the term ‘barbarian’. This was in relation to the Polish nation which he maintained was based on the original barbarian tribes of northern Europe (Cobden 1867i: 219). In its eighteenth and nineteenth-century usage, ‘the barbarian’ inevitably reflected the primordial tribal origins of European nations.

For Pocock (2005: 13) the distinction between the European barbarian and barbarism outside of Europe was that “‘oriental’ extension of ‘barbarism’ encountered an image of ‘despotism’ ” whilst the “the northward extension of the term encountered the more problematic concept of ‘liberty’ ”. Pocock (2005: 10) argues that “Gibbon painted the Goths and the Persians as ‘barbarian’. “The latter peoples are ‘barbarian’ in the sense that they are not civilized, whereas the Persians, though ‘barbarians’, are not merely civilized, but ‘civilized and corrupted’ ”. Both of these interpretations of barbarism, Pocock argues, were drawn from antiquity. The first being barbarism of language; the second being Aristotle’s idea of the barbarian, who was a ‘slave by nature’. The non-Europeans were therefore barbarians “because they do not live in free cities” (Pocock 2005: 12).

Yet there is another aspect of this extension of barbarism. In each of the above examples, barbarism exists as the primal culture of Europe. Travellers observed similar cultural forms in other parts of the world and examined non-European cultures through the ideas of the barbarian and barbarism. Therefore the Enlightenment’s conception of the barbarian underwent a global expansion. The barbarian became a state of mind, an expression of freedom that could be observed across time and space in all societies. The barbarian takes on the role of ethnicity, being an early expression of ethnicity before the modern concept of ethnicity emerged.35 This ‘barbarian ethnicity’ was European particularism; but in identifying ‘barbarism’ outside of Europe, the Europeans were

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35 It is interesting to note the word ethnicity supports this. A 1799 dictionary lists the word ‘ethnic’ as: “ethnic, a. heathenish — a heathen, a pagan” (Hamilton 1799: 78). Therefore the word ‘ethnic’ has its origins in the pagan barbarian.
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seeing the same foundation blocks to the nation in the non-European world. Barbarism was an expansionary ethnocentric vision of the world. The only difference was that Europeans were pure barbarians, whilst the others were barbarian-like.

The Emperor’s New Clothes

The first part of this chapter examined how the concept of the ‘nation’ crept into economic language as a means of describing civil society and explaining social differences. This described an increased use of the nation to explain identity, but it doesn’t explain why the process of naturalising the nation occurred. An underlying question remains: why did liberal theory, which is based on individuality, give a role to the nation? As a theory of individuality, there is no logical necessity for the nation within liberal theory. Yet we see the nation being naturalized within liberal theory throughout the nineteenth century, and eventually expressed as a central part of liberal theory. This question is rarely addressed by liberal theorists. This is partly because liberalism mutated in the nineteenth-century and thereby avoided the bearing of this question. Since the mid-nineteenth century, liberalism has assumed the naturalness of

36 Yael Tamir’s (1995: 14) work on liberal nationalism is, in her own words “an attempt to bridge the gap between the liberal and communitarian approaches to the question of human nature”. However, Tamir’s work is symptomatic of the liberal approach to the nation. The basic premise that Tamir works with is to assume the naturalness of the individual and the naturalness of the nation. From these two points she looks for areas of commonality. In assuming the naturalness of both the nation and the individual, Tamir avoids examining the historical construction of the idea of the nation within liberal theory. The two ideologies are examined as separate entities, rather than historically interlinked processes that evolved together. This process occurred by virtue of the fact that liberal intellectuals rhetorically espoused the nation whilst also basing their programmatic policies on the primacy of the individual. This political discourse assumed the naturalness of both the nation and the individual. In developing their arguments, these advocates added to the meaning of the nation and the individual, thereby constructing the modern nation and ideas about individuality. It was this process that allowed liberalism to naturalize the nation, without examining the contradictions between the cultural community of the nation and individuality.

37 One liberal writer that did realize the problematic baring of this question in relation to self-determination was Ludwig von Mises. Mises ([1919] 2006: 7) recognized the historical relationship between liberalism and the nation arguing that:

Only since the second half of the eighteenth century did it gradually take on the significance that it has for us today, and not until the nineteenth century did this usage of the word become general. Its political significance developed step-by-step with the concept; national became a central point of political thought. The word and concept nation belong completely to the modern sphere of ideas of political and philosophical individualism; they win importance for real life only in modern democracy.

However, his argument avoided the communitarian traps around the nation that would contradict his liberal theory, by the fact that he separated nationalism from patriotism claiming the “national aspect can be neither where he lives nor his attachment to the state” (Mises [1919] 2006: 7). Mises’s argument relies
the nation, and, therefore, the direction of global liberalism moved towards the proliferation of nations through self-determination. In doing so, the practice of liberalism has avoided the theoretical problem of the nation as a point of difference to cosmopolitanism.

Eighteenth and nineteenth-century liberalism expressed universal cosmopolitanism as a basic premise. For example, Tom Paine wrote of the rights of man, not the rights of nations; whilst Adam Smith was scathing of national sentiments, believing they lead to pointless deaths and misery (Smith [1790] 2002: 269); and finally the French revolutionaries originally saw themselves as liberating humanity, rather than the French nation. In turn, when writing in the 1840s, the cosmopolitan credentials of liberalism was a point of criticism for the nationalist economist Fredrich List, who commented “Quesnay (from whom the idea of universal free trade originated) was the first who extended his investigations to the whole human race, without taking into consideration the idea of the nation” (List [1841] 1909: 97). Throughout the eighteenth-century and well into the nineteenth-century, liberalism was synonymous with cosmopolitanism.

on a narrow definition of the nation that defined it as a “speech community” which is different to the idea of the equally “modern” idea of race:

It was introduced into politics in deliberate opposition to the concept of nation. The individualistic idea of the national community was to be displaced by the collectivist idea of the racial community (Mises [1919] 2006: 8).

Therefore liberalism and the nation co-inside to the extent that a language shapes the discourse of a political society. Therefore nationalism becomes the promotion of a language by the use of the state and nothing else. Mises’ arguments exclude any contradiction by his rejection of a connection between community and the nation. His arguments create further problems in relation to multi-cultural societies that speak multiple languages, in such instances his argument is the total minimisation of the state away from anything to do with language and distribution of goods (Mises [1927] 2005: 76-87).

38 List’s criticism of Smith’s cosmopolitanism has consistently led to the criticism that List misunderstood Smith. Nicholson, who wrote the introductory essay to the 1885 English edition, speculated that “one would almost suppose that List had never read Adam Smith himself, but had taken for granted the Smithianismus bandied about in popular pamphlets” (Nicholson 1909). As this chapter demonstrates these criticisms of List are overstated and reflect the tension between liberal cosmopolitan theory and the nationalist reality of the time. A more recent critic of List is Liah Greenfeld. However, Greenfeld’s (2003) argument is essentially the same as List’s, with Greenfeld maintaining that nationalism is the stimulus behind economic growth. Contrary to List, Greenfeld maintains that “nationality was not a corrective or an addition to Smith’s vision of society, or even its central element; it was the very framework of this vision. The reasoning in both The Theory of Moral Sentiments and The Wealth of Nations reflected the eighteenth-century English national consciousness” (Greenfeld 2003: 32). Like the nineteenth century laissez-faire critics of List, Greenfeld overstates the argument. The way that she has presented her argument is that the nation and nationality was born in the late-seventeenth century in Britain. As we have already seen, it is not that clear cut. In terms of her argument about Smith, outside of the title Wealth of Nations, Smith is very critical of national sentiments; therefore Smith was actively writing against nationality. Although Greenfeld overstates the argument, Smith reflects the emergence of the nation within his writing. Greenfeld states:

Smith presumed a uniformity in the most significant cultural element of societies—the way in which they defined their identities—and for that reason was able to analyse social and economic
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For liberals of the Enlightenment, the state was a transitionary stage that was proving very hard to get over. Rousseau ([1756] 1917) and Kant (1796) both examined ways in which federation could overcome the jealous differences between states. By comparison the French \textit{physiocrats} and the figures of the British Enlightenment all looked to a transcendent civil society. This civil society existed above and beyond the state, and as such would be a means of transcending the emerging nation-states. These strains all lead to the theoretical logic of liberalism: that politics was based around the individual and the natural cosmopolitanism of individuality. In such a theory, nation had no logical reason for existence. All theoretical attempts to explain the nation, as seen so far in the chapter, focused on presenting the nation as an accident of locality. The true state of humans was believed to be cosmopolitanism and universal.

Despite the commitment of liberal theorists, cosmopolitanism was their biggest failure. Regardless of the predictions by liberal soothsayers that trade would unite the world, cosmopolitanism never reached the heights that were proclaimed for it. Liberalism was and still is a complex materialist theory preaching globalization.\(^39\) Yet the high priests of liberal theory apparently appeared never to notice this failure. With gusto, liberals made the transition from cosmopolitanists to nationalists. For example, John Stuart Mill was a Benthamite preacher of cosmopolitanism, but Mill is also remembered as a founder of liberal nationalism and one of the first advocates of self-determination.\(^40\) The transition occurred within Mill’s lifespan, with the naturalization of the nation being so subtle that nobody noticed.

\(^39\) The materialist advocates of liberalism such as Ohmae (1990) and Friedman (2005) are still preaching that economic integration will transform our political structures.

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One group of breakaway ‘liberals’ maintained the cosmopolitan ethos. Karl Marx, schooled in the Hegelian logic of state, became a convert to the laissez-faire use of political economy. Marx consciously adopted the expansionist logic of capitalist cosmopolitan society, proclaiming that ‘all that is solid melts into air’ and that all political and social institutions were mere by-products of the means of production. Yet despite his materialist commitment, Marx still accepted the nation as a basic social institution. Marxists have been very aware of this contradiction and the overall problem of nation to their universality. Nevertheless, the fact that Marx could maintain this contradiction, without attending to its consequences is testament to how well the nation was accepted as a natural reality in the nineteenth-century.

This section of the chapter examines how the nation undermined liberal theories of cosmopolitan capitalist expansion. In doing so it looks at why these theories, which were based on individualism, still expressed the concept of the nation. The origin of this global-national duality lies within the particular transition from the mercantilist theory of commercial expansion to the capitalist theory of commercial expansion. Political economy did not emerge in a pure form, by this I mean that it did not emerge as a theory in isolation that was built from the ground up. But rather developed as a practical guide to action; as a means of draining the polluted swamp of mercantilism. This left the indelible stain of the nation in the genealogy of liberal political economy.

41 Marx’s origins as a radical liberal are widely documented see David McLellan (1976: 7, 1972) and Gareth Stedman-Jones (2002: 53). Even many of the programmatic ideas within the Communist Manifesto (Marx and Engels [1848] 2002: 243-244) such as “a heavy progressive or graduated income tax”, “free education for all children in public schools” or even “extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State”; “the bringing into cultivation of wastelands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan” fall under the category of radical democratic liberalism, many of his points became common policies in the twentieth century.

42 Marx proclaimed that Prometheus was the first communist. If this is the case, the ravens that relentlessly tore Prometheus body by day, are an appropriate analogy for the relationship between Marxism and nationalism. The nation has continually undermined the Marxist vision of a cosmopolitan utopia (Connor 1984). Communism’s twentieth-century history has been continually at odds with the nation — events and struggles from the socialist and communist attempt to prevent World War One led by Jean Jaures and Rosa Luxemburg; to the struggle between Stalin and Trotsky over Stalin’s desire for country first approach to communism against Trotsky’s internationalism; to the struggles of socialists and communists against nationalists and fascists throughout 1930s Europe; to the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union under pressure from nationalist movements. Marxist materialist theories were continually challenged internally and externally by competing ideas of nationalist identity.
The Mercantilist Lineage

Mercantilism has long been seen as a source of nationalist identity (Anderson 1974: 36, Greenfeld 2003: 43-50, Woo-Curnings 1999). The nationalist economist, Fredrich List (1789-1846), readily connected his nationalist political economy to mercantilism by claiming that before the economists emerged “there existed only a practice of political economy which was exercised by the State officials, administrators, and authors who wrote about matters of administration, occupied themselves exclusively with the agriculture, manufactures, commerce, and navigation of those countries to which they belonged” (List [1841] 1909: 97). Mercantilism was a theory of economic exchange that presented the state as the primary unit of the economy. In doing so, Perry Anderson maintains that “mercantilism was precisely a theory of the coherent intervention of the political state into the workings of the economy, in the joint interests of the prosperity of the one and the power of the other” (Anderson 1974: 36). The lineage of mercantilism emerged from the fact that the state was the private property of the monarch (Hardt and Negri 2000: 90-105). Therefore, in intervening in the market-place and offering mercantilist monopolies, the monarch was rationally protecting their own assets.

By the late-eighteenth century, mercantilism had been transformed from a structure based around the enrichment of the monarch, to an organized system of trade that was meant to benefit the subjects of the state as a whole. Adam Smith concluded that the “ultimate objective” of mercantilism was “to enrich the country by an advantageous balance of trade”. In doing so he maintained, “it discourages the exportation of the materials of manufacture” thereby giving an advantage to domestic “workmen … enabling them to undersell” all “other nations in all foreign markets”. By restraining the export of primary produce, “commodities of no great price”, mercantilism proposes “to occasion a much greater and more valuable exportation of others” (Smith [1776] 1981ii: 137). The state intervenes in the market-place to protect domestic industry. The problem with this, for Smith and his laissez faire followers, was that protectionism did not favour the majority of the population. Smith claimed that:

It cannot be very difficult to determine who have been the contrivers of this whole mercantile system; not the consumers, we may believe, whose interest has been entirely neglected; but the producers, whose interest had been so carefully attended to; and among this latter class our
Smith’s and the physiocrats’ concerns were with the welfare of the people, rather than the profits of the merchants and the producers (Rothschild 2001). This is an important point that is often missed by commentators on Smith (Fleischacker 2005: 4-11, 72-80, Greenfeld 2003: 6). Smith’s concern was with the ordinary people, their poverty, their fears of famine, and their general plight (Rothschild 2001: 81-86). Therefore his theories were not directly concerned with national wealth, but rather individual security through affluence. He did not generally have a high opinion of merchants. The oft-quoted passage of the ‘invisible hand’ is testament to this:

He intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention... By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good. It is an affectation, indeed, not very common among merchants, and very few words need be employed in dissuading them from it (Smith [1776] 1981 i: 400).

Smith’s invisible hand was the hand of last resort existing as a means of stopping political corruption (Fleischacker 2005: 148-153, Rothschild 2001: 128, 146). It was the hand that transformed profiteering into cheap prices, wherein the merchant was forced to lower their prices in the name of self-interest. This competition would counteract any attempt at price-fixing. In doing so, the cheapest price was offered to the consumer, thereby giving the people access to luxury goods that would make their lives easier. This was the theory of individualism. The nation and the state are not important within Smith’s theory of economic development. Their only purpose in the Wealth of Nations was that Smith argued against their historic role. Smith’s concern was not with nations, but rather the people within nations. It was this concern with individuals that Fredrich List ([1841] 1909: 99-100) criticized.

Adam Smith treats his doctrine … by making it his task to indicate the cosmopolitical idea of the absolute freedom of the commerce of the whole world … Adam Smith concerned himself as little as Quesney did with true political economy, i.e. that policy which each separate nation had to obey in order to make progress in its economical conditions … He speaks of the various systems of political economy in a separate part of his work solely for the purpose of
demonstrating their non-efficiency, and of providing that ‘political’ or national economy must be replaced by ‘cosmopolitical or world-wide economy.’

The essence of List’s criticism of Smith was that Smith’s theory was based on an idealized materialism of individualist exchange. List’s criticisms of this individualist exchange were principally expressed through rhetorical arguments that presumed the naturalness of the nation, such as:

Thus the popular school, which … ignores the principles of nationality and national interests, … leaving individuals to defend them as they may solely by their own individual powers. How? Is the wisdom of private economy, also wisdom in national economy? Is it in the nature of individuals to take into consideration the wants of future centuries, as those concern the nature of the nation and the State? (List [1841] 1909: 133)

“Lasting national prosperity” could only occur when “the interest of individuals” had “been subordinated to those of the nation and where successive generations” had “striven for one and the same object” (List [1841] 1909: 132). List presented this point in the romantic language of nation, but his argument was essentially the same as Jean Jacques Rousseau’s ([1756] 1917) argument on the possibility of world peace; namely that free trade was impossible because of the sovereign political structure of states. List’s argument was that trade occurred in an environment of intense rivalry between states. Free trade was linked to political unity and argued that federalism was the only way to create free trade.

Fredrich List was very influential in the English speaking world for developing a coherent economic argument for protectionism. By 1815 List was a senior Civil Servant in the state of Wurtemberg. He was given the task by his superiors to develop a reform agenda. From this point he became Professor of Practical Administration at the University of Tubingen and was elected to the National Assembly of Wurtemberg twice. List’s agitation for commercial reforms occurred in the aftermath of the Napoleonic War (1815-1822). This was a period of conservatism. List’s arguments were too revolutionary for the King’s liking and his fall from favour was quick. List was expelled from the Assembly, and condemned to ten months hard labour and forced to renounce his nationality. Therefore, a key nineteenth-century writer on the link between the economy and the nation became nationless. However, his argument was that
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Wurtenberg was not a nation. Even though Germany did not exist in the 1820s, List saw himself as a German national,

Faced with being a stateless refugee, List took refuge in the United States of America. He became a journalist and agitator for protective tariffs against British manufactures. The aim of these tariffs was to protect American industrial development. During this period he published a series of lectures and pamphlets on political economy, which were very influential in the United States (List 1827). When he returned to Europe in the 1830s, List was protected by his United States citizenship. In 1841 he published his influential *National System of Political Economy* ([1841] 1909). List’s *National System* was released in the wake of the repeal of the British Corn Laws. In this environment, British liberal economists assumed that German states would likewise drop their tariffs. List’s *National System* directly challenged the economic logic to this assumption and had global appeal in the 1840s. The liberal reaction in Britain was aggressive, *The Edinburg Review* (Anonymous 1847, Austin 1842) and *Westminster Review* (Anonymous 1845) published a number of articles savagely critiquing List’s arguments, accusing List of unleashing the barbarism of the nation into the practice of political economy. However the response was not all negative the protectionists within Britain and the wider British Empire saw List as an ally, and readily deferred to his ideas (Cole 1860, Forbes 1847).

List’s was essentially a political argument: namely that the state distorted trade, and that this should be encouraged. The problem with federalism was that it required the construction of a state. List did not see the state as an expansionist entity. For him there were clear limits to the state, for the state was an expression of the nation:

> Between each individual and entire humanity, however, stands THE NATION, with its special language and literature, with its peculiar origin and history, with its special manners and customs, laws and institutions, with the claims of all these for existence, independence, perfection, and continuance for the future, and with its separate territory; a society which, united by a thousand ties of mind and of interests, combines itself into one independent whole, which recognises the law of right for and within itself, and in its united character is still opposed to other societies of a similar kind in their national liberty, and consequently can only under the existing conditions of the world maintain self-existence and independence by its own power and resources. As the individual chiefly obtain by means of the nation and in the nation mental culture, power of production, security, and
Prosperity, so is the civilisation of the human race only conceivable and possible by means of the civilisation and development of the individual nations (List [1841] 1909: 141).

List blends the nation and sovereignty together, producing an ethnocentric state. At the same time, List’s idea of the nation has strong comparisons to the eighteenth-century idea of civil society. Previously in this chapter, we looked at how civil society emerged out of materialist arguments to explain the existence of societies. List uses the concept of ‘nation’ in the same way. Like a civil society, List’s nation exists as a transcending entity to that of the state: with the nation structuring the state in some way. However, there are big differences as well. The eighteenth-century idea of civil society was effectively used to legitimise revolution. As a materialist entity, liberal civil society was based on a contract that could be broken — with new civil societies being the result of this breach of contract. It was the fluid nature of liberal civil society that led Edmund Burke to make his critique of individuality: “I must deny to be among the direct original rights of man in civil society; for I have in my contemplation the civil social man, and no other” (Burke [1790] 1968: 150). As for social being, Burke argued, “If civil society be made for the advantage of man, all the advantages for which it is made become his rights. It is an institution of beneficence” (Burke [1790] 1968: 149). Yet “in this partnership all men have equal rights; but not to equal things” (Burke [1790] 1968: 150). For Burke ([1790] 1968: 150), this lack of equality to things was to be “settled by convention”. Civil society was an amalgam of institutions built up over time, producing a contract, leading to the following often quoted argument:

The state ought not to be considered as nothing better than a partnership agreement in a trade of pepper and coffee, calico or tobacco, or some other such low concern, to be taken up for a little temporary interest, and to be dissolved by the fancy of the parties. It is to be looked on with other reverence; because it is not a partnership in things subservient only to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science a partnership in all art; a partnership in every venture, and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born. (Burke [1790] 1968: 194-5)
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List’s adoption of the ‘nation’ parallels the adoption of the Burkean view of civil society and state.\(^{43}\) Therefore, although List uses the concept of the ‘nation’ in the same way as liberals used ‘civil society’, List’s ‘nation’ became an unbreakable contract that travelled through time, and therefore existed above materialism. It was this transcendence that allowed List to claim that materialism could be harnessed by government for the benefit of the nation.

Although it was only originally published in German (and not published in English until 1856), List’s *National System of Political Economy* created a stir within Britain when it was first published in 1841.\(^ {44}\) Advocates of free trade saw List’s publication as a major threat to their dominance of political economy. John Stuart Mill commented that “the state of public feeling to which such a book recommends itself is a very serious consideration” (Mill [1842] 1963: 528). Since the Enlightenment, political economy had been the preferred battleground of reformist liberals. In the eighteenth century, conservatives had riled against the emerging theories of political economy as being revolutionary. Much of Edmund Burke’s *Reflections* were aimed directly at advocates of political economy. However, in the early-nineteenth century conservatives were encroaching on political economy, separating economic freedom from political freedom: a distinction that didn’t exist before the French Revolution (Rothschild 2001: 57-61). With the future of the corn laws the hot political topic of the 1830s and 1840s,

\(^{43}\) List does give reference to Burke. However, it was not a substantial reference. List ([1841] 1909: 319) used Burke’s critique of Adam Smith: “it was that Burke declared in confidence to Adam Smith ‘that a nation must not be governed according to cosmopolitical systems, but according to knowledge of their special national interests acquired by deep research.’”

\(^{44}\) The 1856 edition of List was published in the United States, and a condensed version was published in Melbourne Australia in 1860. List was not published in Britain until 1885. The publication of List in Melbourne and United States 25 years before its publication in London is not surprising. Both Australia and the United States were developing economies based largely on agricultural exports. George Cole, the Melbourne editor of List argued that:

> Victoria can never prosper until, by a judicious and careful revision of the tariff, every encouragement would be given to manufacturing industry; and I can only hope that whatever may have been ‘said’ or ‘written’ that the subject will be now taken up in a proper spirit, and that a tariff will be formed so as to ensure to manufacturing enterprize security that it will not be swamped by importations from abroad (Cole 1860: iv).

The tone of these periphery editions is very different to that of the 1885 London edition. Both the American and the Melbourne editions advocate List as a real alternative economic system, in comparison the London edition which presents List as economic oddity. The Melbourne edition is particularly interesting, because the edition appears not to grasp List’s overall argument. List argued that free trade unified nations, and needed to be supported by a unified political system. Hence List maintained that free trade was an agent in the federation of Germanic states. Cole doesn’t seem grasp this same conclusion in relation to Australia. His argument is based totally around the development of a Victorian nation not an Australian nation. The fact that Cole doesn’t comment on this is testament to the fact that an Australian nation was not a forgone conclusion.
British political debate centred on the debate between free trade and protectionism. The free traders held a monopoly on grand theory, Mill’s previously quoted concern was that List could potentially change this balance. List had already been instrumental in pushing protectionism in the United States of America (Austin 1842: 519). The fear for liberals was that the protectionists would lock on to List’s nationalist arguments.

John Austin was one of the leading liberal attack dogs. He was charged with discrediting List.45 In a series of lectures and articles, Austin proclaimed that List’s theories are “not a system of political economy, but a system or theory of international trade”, and condemned List’s arguments even further: “as a system of international trade, his treaties is unworthy of notice” (Austin 1842: 521). Austin was scathing of List, calling him Zealot and referred to List’s theory as “his pretended system” (Austin 1842: 519,520). Austin’s defence of laissez faire was predictable and doctrinaire and does not concern us, what is interesting is his response to the idea of the nation.

Austin concluded his attack on List by stating “Dr List … labours to diffuse a spirit of exclusive and barbarous nationality in the country of Liebnitz, Kant, and Lessing” (Austin 1842: 556). Clearly Austin felt that List was a dangerous nationalist, and we should also note that, relevant to our discussion on the relation between nations and barbarism, Austin connects the words ‘barbarous’ and ‘nationality’.

Although Austin was connecting nationality to barbarism, he also objected to the label cosmopolitan. He mockingly stated that List was proud to discover “that the theories of political economy, which embrace the principle of free international trade, are properly theories of cosmopolitical economy”, Austin (1842: 520) writes that it is a “discovery which was reserved for his (List’s) own sagacity”. Unfortunately for our purposes, Austin (1842: 520) brushes the cosmopolitan claim aside stating: “his poor misconception of the doctrines which he tries to brand with the nickname of cosmopolitical economy, we cannot examine in the present place”. There is no lasting record of Austin addressing this issue; but from his defensive high-handed dismissals of

45 John Stuart Mill ([1842] 1963: 506) commented to Sarah Austin (John Austin’s wife) “I was very glad to hear from [James] Stephen the other day that an article is in preparation for the Edin. Rev. on a book the nature of which I well remember though I have forgotten the author. Stephen took credit to himself for having instigated Mr. Austin to write and publish the things which he had already spoken to him (Stephen) on the subject and of which he appeared to have the most genuinely sentie admiration”.

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List, he clearly felt that political economy had nothing to do with cosmopolitanism, and saw List’s comments as an insult.

Notwithstanding the debate, the nation was as important a sense of belonging for Austin as much as it was for List. In fact, much of Austin’s rejection of List was based on nationalist arguments. List was a zealot that regarded “the manufacturing and commercial greatness of England with envious and bitter hostility … he misrepresents her commercial policy, and appeals to vulgar and malignant prejudices” (Austin 1842: 522). Austin clearly felt that List was spreading propaganda about British/English commercial practices, and accuses List of being an “unscrupulous advocate” for the “decay” of British industry. In doing so, Austin argued that List was “not” following the path of a “dispassionate enquirer seeking to promote the improvement of a science or an art” (Austin 1842: 522). The ferocity of Austin’s attack was equally not made as a “dispassionate enquirer” but rather as an aggrieved nationalist. Austin’s response was not just based in political theory of the time, but equally in emotive nationalist language. Therefore Fredrich List was not only challenging laissez-faire, he was attacking the interests and identity of Britain.

For all his esoteric acceptance of the nation, List was able to partially look through the fog around the nation. He saw that the key issue was cosmopolitanism — that liberal theory of political economy bespeaks cosmopolitan identity. List objected to this; yet he was too much engrossed in the nineteenth-century to see the created newness of his own identity — an identity that would not be formalized as German for another thirty years.46 Rather than develop a theory of the nation, List fell into accepting the presence of the nation like many social theorists of the nineteenth-century.47

46 Germany wasn’t unified until 1871, and then in a way that List probably would not have favoured: being unified by the conservative and militaristic Prussian State.
47 Roman Szporluk (1988: 12) argues that “like Marx, List believed that the economy remained in a close connection with politics, especially in the modern industrial era. List was an economist who not only saw a reciprocal connection between politics and economics but, like Marx, also linked economics to a broader intellectual structure, a Weltanschauung or an ideology, a view of history and society, and a program for the future. Unlike Marx, however, he constructed his Weltanschauung to reflect a national, not class orientated, point of view.” Szporluk (1988: 8) maintains that “those who limit themselves to identifying liberal, conservative, and socialist positions do not always remember that these classifications tacitly presuppose the existence of an established polity”. This was the political conundrum that faced liberal thinkers in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries, that although their philosophy transcended the logic of borders, they had to operate in a bordered world. This was a point that List understood better than his British contemporaries; however, he was too close to the nation to see the constructed nature of nationalism.
Austin’s response to the cosmopolitan charge is indicative of how much liberalism had changed since Adam Smith published his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* ([1790] 2002) and *Wealth of Nations* ([1776] 1981). Austin refuted the cosmopolitan label and adopted the internationalist position; a position that was being adopted by liberals and socialists across Europe. Free trade would become the agent of internationalism:

> If the interest of nations were thoroughly interlaced by perfect freedom of trade, disturbances of their mutual commerce would be followed by intolerable evils; and, as being the most pernicious of all the disturbing causes, war would be feared and detested by the productive population of the world (Austin 1842: 544).

This is essentially the liberal theory of interdependency, although Austin and his contemporaries don’t use that terminology. This theory papered over a gap in *laissez faire* theory. Interdependency presented an argument that theorized actions between nations, which essentially humanized them. Hence, Austin (1842: 544) could complain that: “these misconceptions of nations … inflame the hatred with which they regard one another” the “consequence” of which is “their childish longings for military conquest and glory” all of which “aggravate the stupid antipathies” springing “from differences of races”. But what it didn’t explain was why nations existed in the first place. By the 1840s, liberalism had transformed from a cosmopolitan theory of individuality to an internationalist theory of individuality without reflectively realising, and therefore explaining, the jump.

**The Geography of Capital**

The previous chapter has already examined how the nation was naturalized and accepted as a cultural concept, but that does not explain why the political economists overlooked such a basic theoretical disjuncture. This disjuncture was a result of cultural acceptance of the nation combined with shortcomings of Enlightenment theory. As we have seen, the foundations of this disjuncture were with early liberal theorists, who used ‘society’ theoretically as the mediation point between individuality and governance. This theoretical disjuncture was continued by Adam Smith and the liberal economists of
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the nineteenth-century. The theoretical disjuncture is not with Adam Smith or any of his follower’s *per se*, but rather in the interaction between culture and political theory — they were too close to transcend this interaction.

There are two threads within Adam Smith’s theory that create the space for the nation. Smith’s theory comprised twin components: one paradigm being social; the other being economic. These two theoretical paradigms were interlinked for Smith, and both paradigms provided a space for the nation through political expediency. Although liberals saw a universal world, the practical implementation of their political beliefs was a transformation of the state through popular sovereignty. Smith was advocating a universal theory of trade; but the practical method was to change state policy. The second paradigm relates to Smith’s basic argument against mercantilist protection.

Smith argued that protectionism was unnecessary: that the market-place provided natural mechanisms of protection. This argument revolved around the geography of capitalism. It was within the spatiality of capitalist risk that the nation emerged in Smith’s theory of trade. Smith argued that the “wholesale merchant naturally prefers the home trade to the foreign trade of consumption, and the foreign trade of consumption to the carrying trade” (Smith [1776] 1981i: 398). Risk was the essential reason for this preference. The essence of Smith’s argument on capitalism was that human action was dictated by mercantile self-interest. Capitalism, Smith argued, depends on risk; but merchants try to minimize risk, and therefore, opt for protectionist measures to secure their profits over the risks inherent in the marketplace (Rothschild 2001: 138-146). As an individual hedging against risk, Smith argued that the merchant will always prefer the “home trade” because “his capital is never so long out of his sight as it frequently is in the foreign trade of consumption” (Smith [1776] 1981i: 398).

The difference in levels of risk between “home trade” and “foreign trade” was based on the merchant’s knowledge of the market. The merchant will “know better the character and situation of the persons whom he trusts, and if he should happen to be deceived, he knows better the laws of the country from which he must seek redress” (Smith [1776] 1981i: 398). Therefore the knowledge of the merchant relies on two basic elements. One, a knowledge of who he/she can trust, which is a matter of cultural familiarity; and two, knowledge of the law, which is a recognition of state. Therefore, Smith implicitly
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outlines a space for the nation-state as a cultural and political entity within a theory of trade.

In addition to the problems of risk, there was the problem of cartage. Cartage was both costly and risky for “in the carrying trade, the capital of the merchant is, as it were, divided between two foreign countries, and no part of it is ever necessarily brought home, or placed under his own immediate view and command” (Smith [1776] 1981i: 398). This created increased risks of cost and also reduced the merchants’ control over his/her capital. From this Smith argued that:

Upon equal, or only nearly equal profits, therefore, every individual naturally inclines to employ his capital in the manner in which it is likely to afford the greatest support to domestic industry, and to give revenue and employment to the greatest number of people of his own country (Smith [1776] 1981i: 399).

The sheer risk and cost of global trade automatically meant the domestic or national market would always be favoured over foreign markets. However, this goes against Smith’s basic argument on cartage. At the beginning of this chapter, we saw how Smith argued that trade first emerged along coastal regions and rivers, being originally long-distance and across water, and then moving inland. Smith argued that the first large abstract communities emerged along these maritime trade routes. At this point it becomes evident that a spatial problem within Smith’s theory exists.

The distinction between foreign and domestic trade within the merchant’s equation of risk becomes problematic at this point. The problem is the geographic extent of the state. For example, a trader in Dover would have greater knowledge of people and events in Calais than he would of people and events in York. In turn, the cost of transportation would be less between Dover and Calais. The only knowledge incentive to trade between Dover and York is the merchant’s familiarity with the law. In two out of three key respects the risk involved in trading with Calais over York favours Calais, which is foreign territory for an English trader. By comparison, if the trader from Dover was only trading within Kent, the risk calculation would be different, for the trader would have local knowledge and familiarity with the law. The risk calculation would then be relatively even, or more in favour of the trade within Kent.
This example raises the question, what did Smith mean by the terms ‘home’ and ‘foreign’? His argument is based on personal knowledge, therefore, he is assuming face-to-face connections or, to use modern terminology, Smith is using ‘street knowledge’. Smith’s spatial argument is the extent of a merchant’s knowledge of a particular marketplace. This being the case, Smith’s distinction is between local and distant rather than domestic and foreign. He is using the language of state borders, giving the impression of nation, when in fact Smith was not talking about the nation-state at all.

This is a subtle point that Smith was probably not even bothered about. Although his theory of trade had no place for the nation, the state was already in existence. The use of the terms ‘home trade’ and ‘foreign’ reflected the political environment of the time. This issue pales into insignificance when compared with Smith’s principal objective in writing *The Wealth of Nations*. Smith was attacking the close relationship between merchants and government, which saw merchants pursuing political rents rather than the risk of trade. Large merchants pursued monopolies which guaranteed a limited supply of produce, which increased the cost for consumers and thereby limited the benefits of the marketplace.

Whilst the structures of state and political controls shaped eighteenth-century trade, Smith outlined the potential for a radically different world, based purely on the materialism of the marketplace. If we took his argument further, free trade would dramatically change the national landscape. New communities would be formed that were in line with costs of cartage and other risks, but he knew that this was not an issue. Smith knew that it was not going to happen; political controls and rents had already distorted the marketplace and were shaping national communities. Although the underlining theory was radical, Smith’s aims were not so grandiose. His object was to change state policy, rather than create a manifesto for the radical transformation of political boundaries.

What a discussion of Smith’s position demonstrates is the fundamental problem for the liberal perception of identity: the materialism of theory and the materialism of reality were out of sync. This reveals two forms of material expansionism in liberal theory: the expansive market versus the expansionist state. For liberal political economy is about
the expansion of the market. This expanding market drives social development, and in terms of this process, liberalism was promoting a theory of individualism and cosmopolitanism. However, this was in conflict with the pre-existing idea of mercantilism. Although mercantilism was imperial by its definition of trade, it was limited by the structure of state. By comparison, the market-place had no boundaries. It could keep expanding by virtue of its cosmopolitanism.

This is the logical reality of liberal political economy; however, Smith avoided this logical outcome, for it was utopian. His arguments were an attempt to curtail the materialism of state, which was manifest as mercantilism; which Smith maintained was against the best interests of the people. Smith’s approach to political economy became a juggling act wherein he expressed the naturalness of expanding markets, whilst also responding to the material reality of the mercantilist state. The nation became a way of overcoming the problem of ‘materialist theory’ versus ‘materialist reality’, without admitting that the theory was utopian.

This approach by Smith and his contemporaries allowed for the naturalising of the nation within a framework of globalized markets. This naturalization was subtle, and certainly not planned. John Austin’s and Fredrich List’s conflicting position over whether or not liberalism was based in cosmopolitanism is a symptomatic example of the naturalized nation within a theory of individualized globalized markets. Although liberal political economy was logically cosmopolitan in its expression of expanding markets, the materialism of state meant that cosmopolitan capitalism was inappropriate. The result of this was that liberalism sidestepped the issue by expressing the logic of global markets through internationalism rather than cosmopolitanism.

This chapter has argued that, by the end of the eighteenth century, the nation was a key aspect within economic and material discourses. The effect of this was that by the nineteenth-century, the nation was seen as a natural structure within economic thought. Early theoretical literature on the nation intensified this naturalization process. An example of this early theorising of the nation can be seen in writings of David Hume. Hume saw the nation as evolving out of the material conditions of the environment. Yet whilst Hume conceived the material grounding of nations, his friend Adam Smith was imagining a condition of individuality that transcended the nation. Both of these figures
were instrumental thinkers in the development of modern liberalism. Their works draw on each other, yet they also reveal a discrepancy in liberal material understandings of the nation. Both of these writers saw the nation as being historically constructed. However, their works also assume the naturalness of the nation.

This discrepancy was not apparent in the eighteenth-century, although by the mid-nineteenth-century the discrepancy was apparent. Fredrich List’s national system of economics unveiled the nation. List moved the nation from being a subtle passive structure, within economic thought, to being the dominant aspect of economic thought. This transformation threatened the integrity of laissez faire, with the British liberal champions of laissez faire quick to pounce on List for bringing the barbarism of the nationality into economic thought.

Although List was accused of introducing barbarism and nationality into economic thought, the idea of the barbarian was a central aspect of conjectural and laissez faire theory. The nation was formed as a structure and connected to ancient history through the idea of the barbarian. The link between the barbarian and the nation meant that the nation was both historically constructed whilst being spiritually linked to freedom and a pre-material existence. Therefore the barbarian origins of nations presented the nation as a natural entity. The barbarian nation meant that liberal theory could see the nation as natural and constructed at the same time. These ideas are further explored in Chapters Five to Seven, which examine the role the barbarian nation played within colonial discourse and the idea of the empire.
Chapter 4 - Biology, Race and the Nation as Nature

One of the most intriguing, disturbing, and influential figures of nineteenth-century anthropology was Robert Knox. Although too radical for many of his contemporaries, Knox’s work became a centre-point of the London Anthropological Society and was highly influential at the time (Desmond 1989: 425). This alone would make Knox of key significance, but Knox is also important chronologically, as Knox’s polemic, the *Races of Men* ([1850] 1862) was published at a point in time when the British Empire (and European politics more broadly) was undergoing a directional change. Philosophically Knox’s work represents a transformation in thought (Desmond 1989: 388-389) where the debate on race moved from a discussion on human variation and slavery to a discourse on race as the agent of history. Prior to Knox, race had already been politicized by the abolitionists and the pro-slavery lobby. Knox’s revolutionary contribution was that he was one of the first people to racialize politics: making race the prime agent of politics.

Knox’s claim was that “race in human affairs is everything: …literature, science, art — in a word, civilization, depends on it” (Knox [1850] 1862: v). In this capacity, race became the rhythm of history. As a rhythm, race adopts a divine quality in which a race’s destiny was preordained at the moment of creation. Knox argued that the “fait of nations cannot always be regulated by chance” (Knox [1850] 1862: 5). Although Knox’s references to creation lead towards the scriptural interpretation, Knox avoids the discussion of creation. He was generally very critical of religion, believing that religion had a desire to control natural racial desires. In this endeavour he believed religion was largely impotent, with nature prevailing; and despite Knox’s atheist overtones, there is an inherent religiousness to his claims. For Knox, race was the true religion; with all religions being reduced to façades that fulfil natural racial desires.

Despite Knox’s ([1850] 1862: 7) belief in the crucial role of race, he does admit that race was a radically new idea and was being used “in a new sense”. He recognized the
controversial nature of his theory stating that it “runs counter to nearly all the chronicles or events called histories: it overturns the theories of statesmen, of theologians, of philanthropists of all shades” (Knox [1850] 1862: v). Although a racial theorist, Knox does show insight foreseeing the primordialist dilemma that plagues the philosophy of ethno-nationalism. The ethno-nationalist is plagued with the logically awkward belief of nation being the rhythm of history, but historical evidence fails to support this claim. Knox can be seen as one of the first modern ethno-nationalists.

Racial beliefs became a paramount force in social thought during the period covered by the second half of this thesis (1830-1870). The paramountcy of race occurred in a particular historical context. It emerged out of political turmoil; but it drew on the positive enlightenment theories of the eighteenth-century. Knox’s *Races of Men* personifies the totality of racial thought and enlightenment traditions. The *Races of Men* was first published in 1850. Two years after the nationalist revolutions of 1848, when the political turmoil was still rippling throughout Europe. These revolutions drew on the same Enlightenment ideas that inspired the American and French Revolutions. However they were also a response to the turbulent economic transformation that was occurring. Nation and race became ways of conceiving and politicising the changing times.

In Britain issues of national ferment were beginning to plague the Union. The troubles in Ireland were being fuelled by economic hardships, brought about by Ireland being peripheral to the growth in the industrial revolution. This was coupled with occupation-like laws on tenancy and other aspects of civil life that separated the English from the Irish. This all conspired to create a widespread feeling of alienation and disenchantment with British rule in Ireland. Nationalist politics presented an alluring sentiment of opposition to the tyrannies of the then contemporary times throughout Europe. For Knox, the logic was simple: the conflicts in Europe and Ireland were examples of racial war brought about by the intermixing of races.

Knox was expressing the feeling of his times, with the 1840s and 1850s being seen as the birth of the modern nationalist era (Gildea 1988). Knox was part of a wave of theorising that emerged in the 1850s to explain these events, with Marxism, conservatism, and radical liberalism being the other notable examples. Each of the aforementioned theories sought to contextualize the events of 1848. They became the
key ideologies powering the modern world. Knox’s arguments on race were no different. His ideas, and similar contemporary sentiments, feed into late-nineteenth century Social Darwinism (Desmond 1989: 5-7, Hawkins 1997, Williams 2005: 92-99). For Knox the lesson of 1848 was the relation between one government and one race. The year 1848 represented the uprising of the “Celtic race of France”. The Celts were accompanied by the “Italian races” all rising “against the barbarous savage Tedeschi, who under the assumed name of Germans, to which they have not the most distant claim, lorded it over Italy”, whilst the “Saxon element of the German race … demanded freedom, and a division from the barbarous Slavonian” (Knox [1850] 1862: 22). Knox’s world view was a vision of racial self-determination, within a prism of continual racial conflict. Knox was also maintaining the eighteenth-century theme of linking the nation to the barbarian. In turn Knox presented the barbarian as the personification of self-determined freedom and the source of the nation.

Knox’s ideas on race were extreme and unpalatable by his own admission, but they were also indicative of a trend that interpreted the nation as a biological entity. This trend in biological thinking was manifest in the ethnocentric conceptions of nation that dominated the late-nineteenth century (Fredrickson 2003, Hawkins 1997, Williams 2005, Young 1997). This biological view presented the nation as a homogeneous structure bound by a primordial origin in nature. This homogeneous structure was suspended in a landscape of continuous struggle with other primordial nations. This nineteenth-century vision was a radical break from the ideas of the nation that dominated the eighteenth-century. In this break, ‘society’ was transformed from a relatively inclusive structure to an uncompromising structure based on a belief in the givenness of nature.

Race justified continuous occupation. With the emphasis on biologically defined beings separated into different groups, universal humanity ceased to exist. This meant that people lost the moral grounds to aspire to universal equality. Through biological arguments, people could be effectively reduced to a perpetual state of childhood, incapable of self-governance (this will be examined further in the second half of the thesis). This conception had a dual function of maintaining a liberal persona of dutiful

48 The word ethnic was already starting to come into use by 1870, replacing the word race in some anthropological quarters. (Dunn 1875)
Chapter 4 – Biology, Race and the Nation as Nature

governance, whilst allowing occupation and exploitation. This justification of exploitation became the intellectual ‘saving grace’ that justified the continued existence of empire.

How did this dramatic change occur? And how does it relate to the naturalizing of the nation? These are the questions that this chapter addresses. These questions address the construction of biological primordialism within the nation. Biological conceptions of the nation did not supplant the earlier eighteenth-century conceptions of the nation that had focused on cultural change and education. Instead, they became an overlaying conception of the nation, being simultaneously imprinted on (and conceived by) the early conception of the nation.

This chapter argues that biological theory fed into modern conceptions of the nation and was linked to empire. Culture and biology became interlocked, with biological theory developing from liberal understandings of culture with the emergence of biological race-nations being testament to this interlocked relationship. The eighteenth-century concept of nurture and culture was the nucleus of biological theory, and as such, biological racial theory was based on cultural ideas of nurtured change. The early materialist arguments of Erasmus Darwin,49 Lord Monbodo, Jean Baptist Lamark, Robert Boyle and many others, were all based on the ideas of a liberal education and reflective rationalism in creating meaningful progressive change. Nature was seen as a natural form of liberal education, where an individual’s characteristics were nurtured by their environment. The early biological interpretations of race derived from this pillar of liberal thought, with the nation being seen as a result of environmental conditions.

For the naturalization of the racial-ethnic nation to be possible a new form of history was constructed. This history was the offspring of an interaction between the Enlightenment ideas of political tradition, natural history and the classical idea of the ‘Great Chain of Being’. This transformed humanity’s understanding of the past. It moved from being seen through dynastic history or religious history, to an understanding of a biological racial heritage. This heritage was inherently collective and

49 Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802) was Charles Darwin’s grandfather and developed a theory of evolution based on Lamarckian principles of reflexive social change.
primordial. More particularly it removed the nation from the political sphere of the social contract, transforming nation into a natural object of ‘blood and belonging’.

This collectivist biological form of history occurred in concurrence with the ‘particular institution’ of slavery. It was the moral and political conundrum of African-American slavery that transformed racial theory from a vague study of anatomy and aesthetic physiology into a broad theory of social difference. The project of racially separating Africans resulted in the racialization of everybody. Slavery was a driving force that contributed to creating early anthropology/ethnography (Moore and Desmond 2004). Leading British writers on anthropology and biology took an active part in abolition politics, both ‘for’ and ‘against’. Through this process a tradition emerged that connected race to political community (Porter 2004: 211-217). This association became a kernel aspect of the racial and social Darwinist writers of the 1860s and 1870s (Hawkins 1997).

Although seeing nation as biologically driven, this process continually drew on the liberal beliefs of culture. Erroneously, cultural practices and beliefs (which unlike the static concept of race, are continually changing) were naturalized through this biological historicism as primordial biological facts. The effect of this was to naturalize the nation (which is a social entity) as a biological primordial structure. This naturalization was an overlay that drew on (and reinterpreted) earlier liberal notions of the nation. This biological overlay provided the basis for legitimising perpetual colonial governance.

**The Chain of Being**

The origins of the biological conception of the nation resided in the scientific/philosophical concept of the ‘chain of being’. This was a theory that had its origins in classical Greek thought (Lovejoy 1957: 24-66), but during the Enlightenment it became a hot topic of debate feeding into the materialist views that were powering the revolutions in scientific and social thinking (Lovejoy 1957, Porter 2001, Porter 2004, 50 Slavery was a moral issue, but morality depended on the definition of human. For example if it was acceptable to kick a dog or whip a horse, donkey or ox, why not kick and whip a subhuman? All of the early ethnologists were also moral philosophers (Desmond 1989: 2-8). Therefore justifications and critiques of the vexatious issue of slavery mushroomed into biological theory and the science of race.)
‘The chain of being’ transformed the way that people conceived of connections between living creatures. There were multiple aspects of this tradition. It was a means of understanding order through relationships. Therefore, as well as being a means of questioning a human’s place in nature, the ‘chain of being’ could be used to legitimize both vertical (traditional hierarchies) and horizontal (egalitarian by virtue of universal connections) relations. Vertical hierarchies were legitimized through the ‘chain of being’ that listed subservience before God or gods, all of which were interconnected and had to maintain this order of subservience to prevent disaster. By comparison, the horizontal ‘chain of being’ was much more egalitarian, by expressing universal material connections of biological inter-relatedness. This horizontal interpretation suggests that all living creatures were connected materially in a direct chain of matter. This was distinctly different from the theological vertical tradition which saw God (as the creator) as being the central link between all entities. Being a vision of unity, the ‘chain of being’ should have been a unifying system of cosmopolitan thought that accepted diversity through an interconnected structure. Instead, the ‘chain of being’ set in motion a train of thought that would accentuate

51 For Roy Porter (2004) the root of the problem can be seen in the Greek foundations of western medicine. Greek medicine was inherently atheist and materialist. Rather than being based in spiritual logic, like most ancient systems of medicine, Greek medicine attributed illness to conditions in the natural world. The body was like nature, a law governed entity wherein disease was a systemic irregularity (Porter 2004: 45). Health depended on the balance of humours or key fluids in the body. It was believed an analysis of these fluids would provide an explanation for all manner of conditions, be it sexual, racial or psychological (Porter 2004: 46). These substances were found in all animals, constituting natural material substances. Herein lies the classical logic of the ‘chain of being’. Nature was made of matter: humans, plants and animals were all made of these substances and in decay returned to basic matter. Therefore, matter was the base substance connecting the ‘chain of being’. The difference between objects was in their form. Matter could be constructed into all sorts of different forms, in the same way as a carpenter transforms the form of a tree into the form of a table (Porter 2004: 49). This connection between plants, animals and humans created a blasphemous problem for theologians and philosophers alike. In comparison Arthur Lovejoy (1957) takes a deeper approach and a broader perspective of what constituted the ‘chain of being’. For him the ‘chain of being’ goes to the nature of being itself. It is the ongoing interrelationship between the ‘otherworldliness and the this-worldliness’:

*It is the theory of ideas culminating in a frank mysticism. His [Plato’s] deepest and “most serious” conviction ... is, “by reason of the weakness inherent in language,” incapable of adequate expression in words; and he therefore never has attempted, and never will attempt, really to convey it by mere writing or speech to other men. It can be gained only by a sudden illumination, in a soul prepared for it by austerity of life and discipline of the intellect. Nevertheless, “there is a certain true argument” which both leads towards it and makes clear why, in itself, it must remain ineffable. What that argument shows is that the true objects of ration knowledge, the only genuine realities, are the immutable essences of things — of circles and all figures, of all bodies, of all living creatures, of all affections of the soul, of the good and the fair and the just (Lovejoy 1957: 34).*

The essence of this argument is that rationality leads to mysticism and that all are connected within the ‘chain of being’.

52 Although these chains are not always material, the Hindu and Buddhist conception of reincarnation is also a ‘chain of being’ that can be both vertical and horizontal.
difference, feeding into the discourse of the nation and making it a biological condition that was conceived both vertically and horizontally.

As a discipline, biology emerged out of natural history, which from the classical era to the eighteenth-century was little more than a system of classification. The hierarchical system of classifying plants and animals outlined by Aristotle was transformed by Carl Linnaeus into taxonomy: the system that underpins the modern biological method. Linnaeus’s system was a downward progression from classes to orders, genera, species, and varieties; this made it a filing-cabinet method of recognising individual flora and fauna. In doing so, Linnaeus outlined a system that placed flora and fauna within a context of coherently related groups. But Linnaeus did not stop with plants and animals. In the revised edition of Systema Naturae, he attempted to apply his method to the classification of humans, placing humans in the order of primates and creating four varieties that corresponded to the four continents (Bindman 2002: 61). This had dramatic theological ramifications: placing humans and animals within the same system. Although it was seen as a challenge to the traditional hierarchy, Linnaeus’s system was constructed on theological themes that expressed the vertical ‘chain of being’, namely that lower orders were subservient to higher orders.53

This system was a secularising extension of the ‘great chain of being’. By implication a ‘chain’ meant connection, indicating that humans were part of a wider system of interrelated relationships that were dependent on the same substances. The hierarchical connotations underpinning the ‘chain of being’ insinuated evolution but at the same time suggested subservience, by virtue of hierarchy. This hierarchical evolution that implied subservience of lower orders to higher orders was a key aspect of the later Social Darwinists (Hawkins 1997). As we saw in Chapter Two, evolutionary ideas permeated the logic of rationality. Rationality was seen as an agent of change, and ideas such as this had atheist overtones. If rationality could create an evolutionary concept of culture and character, the same logical connection could insert evolutionary ideas into biology.

53 Linnaeus constructed his own theology that was a mixture of natural history and traditional Christianity. The theology faculty at Uppsala University criticized Linnaeus for conflating God and nature (Koerner 1999: 88-90).
These materialist questions focused on the constitution of the mind. If the ‘chain of being’ was correct, rationality became a biological issue. However, theology had consistently maintained that the mind was what differentiated humans from animals (Hazard 1965). It is in this discussion on the role of the mind that the ‘chain of being’ is established as part of biological history.

Descartes’s dualism provided the escape clause to this rationalist biological dilemma, sanctifying the material world and ethereal world as two distinct spheres (Hazard 1965, Porter 2004). The material world was the world of instinct and biology, whilst the ethereal world of the soul was the sphere of rationality and intelligence. This became a theological tightrope expressed by a founder of modern biological theory Count de Buffon ([1749-67] 1812: 96):

The first and most difficult step, in arriving at a proper knowledge of ourselves, is to acquire distinct ideas of the two substances of which we are composed. Simply to affirm, that the one is immaterial, unextended, and immortal, and that the other is material, extended, and mortal, is only denying those qualities to the one, which we know the other possesses.

Buffon spoke from the prescribed orthodoxy. For him, duality was logical common sense. The defence depended on the logical notion of thought generated from sensation, of which Buffon maintained: “there is no resemblance between sensations and the objects which produce them, is not this a sufficient proof that the nature of the soul is different from that of matter” (Buffon [1749-67] 1812: 98). The evidence that Buffon ([1749-67] 1812: 99) cites for the distinction between mind and matter is the mind’s different modes of existence:

The mind has one mode of perception when we sleep, and another when we are awake; after death, she will perceive in a manner still more different; and the objects of sensation, or matter in general, may then have no more existence with regard to her, than our bodies, with which we have no further connexion.

For Buffon, the fact that the mind could exist in multiple states meant that the mind had multiple forms whilst “bodies, as well as all external objects, have many forms, each of which is compounded, divisible, and destructible” (Buffon [1749-67] 1812: 100). In comparison he argued, the mind was indestructible, because even a person who was
deprived of all “three instruments of sensation” would still be able to think. Therefore “the mind would still exist” (Buffon [1749-67] 1812: 100).

Buffon’s urge to resist the materialist onslaught was admirable, but within this defence we can see a revolution in thought occurring; a revolution which would transform the way people would conceive of their collective past. Buffon took an indignant stance; being perplexed at the unfolding debate, believing that it was insulting to humanity. The problem, Buffon ([1749-67] 1812: 102) believed, was people’s obsession with form:

Man, it is true, resembles the other animals in the material part of his being; and, in the enumeration of natural existences, we are obliged to rank him in the class of animals. But, in nature, there are neither classes nor genera; all are mere independent individuals. Classes and genera are only the arbitrary operations of our own fancy: and, though we place man in one of these classes, we change not his nature; we derogate not from his dignity; we alter not his real condition; we only assign him the first rank among being which resemble him solely in the material part of his existence.

The obsession with the biology of humanity, rather than holistic duality which was the cornerstone of Cartesian philosophy, had meant that biology was taking on a life of its own. For Buffon, biology was a very different concept to the direction which practitioners were taking it. The essence of this difference is ‘classification’ versus ‘explanation’. Buffon’s mammoth text (all eleven volumes) was not written for the purpose of explanation, but rather to document and list the different objects in the natural world. This was the classic positivist interpretation of Aristotle, wherein the philosopher is a mere collector.

The method of education dictated that students followed Aristotle religiously. When Buffon, Linnaeus and others were creating the Enlightenment revolution in biology, they did so within the basic mindset of the collector. They saw the collection itself as the end point.

54 Buffon ([1749-67] 1812: 102) exclaimed: “Why thus preposterously debase him, by considering him merely as an animal, while his nature is so different, and so superior to that of the brutes, that nothing but the most brutal ignorance could ever dream of confounding them?”
In the history of thought, the Enlightenment was an intersection between pre-modern and modern thought. In materialist terms it was an intersection at the moment of industrial change. This materialist intersection is reflected in the purpose of early biology. The ancient tradition of positivist collection was partly spurred by the need to find herbal remedies for the myriad of pathogens that plagued humanity.\(^{55}\) This was the practical edge of biology, whereby the naturalist was part of the wider tradition of knowing the landscape.\(^{56}\)

The essence of this was that in pursuing knowledge of the landscape, naturalists developed a framework for a philosophy of nature. This philosophy emerged in the form of the natural sciences, and would provide a new avenue for imagining the historical abstract. In the realms of biology, the narrative of social organization moved beyond the study of individuals and events to the study of the deep social condition — that the key to understanding humanity could be found in its material construction. The transformation of early modern natural history into biology was made possible by early philosophies of political theory and psychology.

Natural history moved from being a system of classification — a collection of butterflies in a gentleman’s study — to a system of time and a vertical form of ordering. In doing so it became a modern theory of history, a new way of understanding time and incorporating new ways of conceiving of a hierarchal order. However one element was missing: agency. Linnaeus’s system of classification indicated time and the logic of change, but another component was necessary to give biological theory a sense of change over time. This was evolution, and it had its origins in social theory.

**Rationalism and Biological Change**

\(^{55}\) According to Lisbet Koerner (1999), it was this industrial imperative that drove Carl Linnaeus to develop his system of taxonomy. Linnaeus’s central research was a program to bring the spices of the orient to Sweden and devising the means to propagate them in the northern climes. This industrial desire for agricultural innovation spurred Linnaeus to develop his early notions of taxonomy into the *binomial nomenclature*. It was only late in life that Linnaeus realized the deeper implications of his system (Koerner 1999).

\(^{56}\) The essence of this basic practice of positivism descends back to hunter-gather’s dependence on knowing their landscape (Brody 2002, Diamond 1998).
The idea that biology was a system of change — bound by time — fundamentally transformed the study of the human condition. The human condition was no longer tied to iron laws, but, rather, was seen as a mutable entity that was potentially capable of improvement. This was a paradigm shift, a transformation in ways of seeing nature. Nature had been interpreted as a constant. The scientific discoveries of seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, although disputing esoteric and theocentric views of nature, generally supported the idea that nature was a constant. From Galileo to Newton, the dominant scientific trajectories focused on understanding the patterns of nature. By the late-eighteenth century, science was increasingly being viewed as an historical process (Rudwick 2005). National differences between people had been rationalized according to scripture or differences in religion. Now biology alone could explain social differences between societies. It became conceivable that the nation was biological.

This growing directional shift owed a great deal to the seventeenth-century social theory of John Locke. The scientific arguments on mutable progression were substantially drawing on Locke’s arguments on experience (as the basis of rationality) in stimulating change (Porter 2001, Porter 2004). Events became collections of experience. These were historical processes that could be mapped as a changing dynamic. It was this psychological/philosophic logic that transformed early-modern natural history/biology.

James Burnett (who became Lord Monboddo) is an example of the indebtedness early biology had to John Locke’s social ideas. Monboddo was one of the first people to devise a comprehensive theory of evolution. It was not a theory based on genetics or biology; rather, it was a theory based on language and the power of language. Language transformed biology. Monboddo argued “that language [was] not natural to man”. This was “proved, first, from the origin and nature of the Ideas expressed by Language; and, secondly, from the nature of articulation” (Monboddo 1773: 2). Language was an acquired habit that humans had learnt as part of their association with each other, and “that the political state was necessary for the invention of Language.” But a political state “is not natural to man, any more than language, to which it gave birth” (Monboddo 1773: 4).
Chapter 4 – Biology, Race and the Nation as Nature

Monboddo uses the concept of the ‘primitive’ in a very different way from that of many of his contemporaries. Monboddo’s argument is a development upon Locke, and he devotes two chapters to discussing Locke. In Lockeian fashion, Monboddo holds that people are progressive beings that have been forced to evolve by their environment.

Monboddo stressed that his argument did not contradict divine involvement in human origins, but the implication of Monboddo’s logic was clearly materialist. In volume one of *Origin of Language*, Monboddo argued that humans existed in the same capacity as other animals. All animals were divided into two forms: solitary or gregarious. Humans were somewhere between the two. This was in contrast to the Hobbesian position on human nature, and moves away from social contract positions on social theory. Monboddo rejected Hobbes’ solitary argument on the grounds that Hobbes “did not know what man was by nature”. Claiming that Hobbes’s argument was based on “all the habits and opinions that he acquire[d] in civil life” and “supposed, that, previous to the institution of society, he had all the desires and passions that he now has” (Monboddo 1773: 203). This critique of Hobbes revealed a different notion of what constituted nature.

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57 Primitivism was a common theme at the time and a belief in the ‘state of nature’ was a common aspect of eighteenth-century thought, usually existing as an image of Arcadia. The natural nobility of this environment was depicted as heroic in scale and the source of epic poetry (Buchan 2004, Kersey 2005, Pearce 1945). The idea of a ‘natural man’ who lived in a state of eternal bliss had powered the discourse of natural law and had become a central dichotomous component of political theory, being used skilfully by Rousseau to demonstrate the corruption of modern society. This theory of natural man is often wrongly termed ‘the noble savage’ and that Rousseau was the originator of the ‘noble savage’. Ter Ellingson (2001: xv) argues that Rousseau never used the term ‘noble savage’ and that the ‘noble savage’ originated much earlier, and was first coined by Marc Lescarbot in 1609. Ellingson’s argument is that contrary to popular perception, the ‘noble savage’ did not play a major role in eighteenth-century thought. He argues that it was reintroduced by John Crawford for racist purposes. Ellingson’s argument is sound, very few of the eighteenth-century writers use the term ‘noble savage’, however, the name ‘noble savage’ is a term that encompasses a set of ideas, beliefs and practices about interpretations on tribal society. These ideas, beliefs and practices are rife in eighteenth and nineteenth-century thought. Therefore although the ‘noble savage’ as a term does not emerge as a common term until the second half of the nineteenth century, it is a modern term reflectively applied to an ideology that was commonplace.

58 Coming from Monboddo, this argument is rather bizarre, for he did not believe that modern society could ever match the achievements of the classical Greek world (Daiches, et al. 1986: 19). Despite his general pessimism towards the moderns (which was based on ascetics and philosophic principles rather than technological), Monboddo developed an evolutionary theory of society based on rationality.

59 This is not an evolutionary theory holding that all creatures descended from a common ancestor, but rather all species transform and mutate, thereby developing into divergent varieties of the same genus.

60 Logically the social contract is an erroneous theory for human development, because it presupposes a fully developed social system (Gellner 1995). Monboddo’s achievement was to present rationality as an evolutionary development. Showing how interest can be mutated into rationality and therefore into a social system.
Hobbes was only concerned with ‘nature’ as human nature. When Hobbes referred to nature he was not referring to the natural world. By comparison Monboddo’s notion of ‘nature’ was a deeper concept that was representative in the natural world at large. For Monboddo, the Enlightenment represented not just the dualistic laws of humanity and nature, but instead a unitary argument: humanity within nature, which was more representative of the social Darwinist logic of the late-nineteenth century.\(^{61}\) The sum total of this difference was necessity as a process driving social change. Hobbes saw the world through eternal dialectic forces. By comparison, Monboddo placed his theory of nature firmly in the realm of necessitated change. For Monboddo, this meant that human nature was a construct of the solitary and gregarious natural world:

Man participates so much of the gregarious animal as to have no aversion to the society of his fellow-creatures, for less to be the natural enemy of his own species, as certain species are of others; and that he also has so much of the nature of the solitary wild beast, that he has no natural propensity to enter into society, but was urged to it by motives (Monboddo 1773: 204).

Monboddo’s evidence is reflective of the general transformation of natural history into modern biological theory. Social theory is not presented as being based on a contract that relies on innate rationality; instead Monboddo placed social theory on a biological plain that is forever changing and adapting. This argument naturalizes all human social behaviour, placing it in the same context as an animal’s instinctive behaviour. To Monboddo the physical characteristics of humans are evidence that humans are a blend of solitary and gregarious characteristics of the natural world.

What induces me to think that he [man] is of this mixed kind, is the formation of his teeth and intestines. He has teeth for tearing, and others for grinding; whereas the solitary beast of prey has only teeth for tearing; and the frugivorous animals (so I call those who feed only on grain and or herbage) have only grinders, such as the ox and sheep; or if they have teeth which serve sometimes for tearing, such as those of the horse, they are not nearly so much incisive as those of man, which, by one nation that has been discovered upon the coast of New Guinea, are used as an offensive weapon; for we are told, they bite those they attack, like dogs. As to the intestines, the animals of prey have short guts, the frugivorous have them long; but man has them of a middle length betwixt the two. And conformity to this structure of his body, it is well known that man can live, wither upon the fruits of the earth, or upon the flesh of other animals. His nails, too, seem to place him in a

\(^{61}\) But even the social Darwinist logic is conservative when compared to Monboddo’s use of nature, which in some ways is more in keeping with the ‘age of Aquarius’ than the ‘age of Enlightenment’
middle state betwixt those two kinds of animals. The frugivorous have no nails at all; the
carnivorous have crooked nails or talons (Monboddo 1773: 204-5).

This use of anatomical evidence is symptomatic of the break from the tradition of
natural law philosophy, which assumed natural rights without any explanation of their
origins. The emergence of the positivist theory of scientific research increasingly
focused on the changing structure of the natural world. Therefore, Monboddo was
absorbing the scientific methodology to demonstrate the constructed nature of social
institutions. In doing so, the human condition was grounded in the natural animal world.

Monboddo achieves this grounding, not by any Hobbesian debasement of human
activity to that of the animal, but instead by attributing the natural world with virtues of
a liberal education, wherein nature works according to the Lockeian principles of
stimulus, with stimulus evolving into rationality. Monboddo’s argument solidly embeds
the human condition within the wider framework of nature. As part of this argument,
Monboddo enshrines the human condition within the human anatomy. There is no
duality for Monboddo. Therefore human anatomy became the agent for social change.

In making these claims, Monboddo reduces the notions of rationality, language and
politics that were held as being distinctly human, into characteristics that are derived
from necessity, which other animals had to greater or lesser extents. On one level, this
removed divisions with the natural world, but on the human level it accentuates
difference. Social differences become a physiological issue rather than a cultural issue.

Nature became the agent of liberalism. Monboddo’s theory was not a break from the
social contract, but rather he naturalized liberalism within nature. On one level, this
provides a necessary legitimization of contract theory; but on another level it causes
problems for the interpretation of diversity, thereby counteracting the liberal tenet of
tolerance. Universal approaches to individualism break down. Biological differences
create potential caveats on universalism. These created biological barriers between
people. One lineage of the nation as a primordial racial entity directly descends from
this naturalization of liberal theory.


**Structuralism: Doctors and Racialization of Social Theory**

Monboddo’s approach, of seeing nature through the lens of liberal theory became a common attribute of British biological theory. Each of the evolutionary theories emerging out of the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries were connected to artefacts of liberal thought. Monboddo was not the only Enlightenment figure to combine the social theory of rationality and civil society with natural history, but he was the first to publish a theory of human evolution. Later Jean Baptiste Lamarck ([1809] 2003) and Erasmus Darwin (1794) (Charles Darwin’s Grandfather) also formulated theories of biological evolution. Both of these theories followed in Monboddo’s wake, connecting evolution with rationality and nurtured change. As theories of evolution, Lamarck and Darwin both maintain that evolution was a biological process that was shaped by habit. Rational action therefore would shape future evolutionary changes. Central to this theory of evolution was a belief in reflexivity, that an organism would reflexively change its habits to suit its environment. These habits affected the physiology of the organism and, in turn, these changes were then passed on to the next generation. Therefore, this approach saw reflexive education as passing through the hereditary barrier. The Monboddo/Lamarck/Darwin approach to evolution, which gave organisms control over their destiny, would be superseded by Charles Darwin’s concept of natural selection, which removed the evolutionary agency from the hands of the organism, and, instead, giving agency to freak mutations that suited environmental pressure.

The significance of Monboddo, Lamarck and Erasmus Darwin was that they transformed natural history and anatomy into a concept of biological theory. They collected diverse observations on the natural and social world, which had been collected by travellers and naturalists. Each of them united these observations into reasonable coherent theories. These theories provided materialist explanations of social and biological change over time. This approach transformed natural history into biological theory.

They presented the human condition in a new historical understanding. From the late-eighteenth century onwards, humanity had a biological history as well as a political and
religious history. This created a new concept of the collective. Political unification ceased to be the only form of social cohesion. The increasing awareness of biological connections and divisions created a whole new conditioning for understanding social cohesion. It was increasingly possible to conceive a cohesive national society as a biologically unified society. Any form of social difference or political dissent could be considered as a symptom of biological difference.

In the nineteenth-century, biology and medicine became growth areas within the British academe. There were practical reasons for this. Medicine held the promise of relieving pain and suffering, but the physician’s services did not come free. In the class-based society of nineteenth-century Britain — that also held some remaining legacies of Aristocratic feudalism which dictated what was an honourable profession (Hirschman 1877, Hirschman 1977, Wiener 1981) — medicine became a desirable profession that was profitable whilst also being honourable (Desmond 1989: 10-12). In this capacity, medicine became a tried and trusted path to social advancement.

As the empire was growing, doctors became the essential support-team that maintained the health of the governors, diplomats, merchants, and soldiers abroad. However, the principal universities of Cambridge and Oxford were generally disinterested in providing patronage to the experimental sciences (Rose and Rose 1970: 19). Science was predominantly the domain of wealthy amateurs, with very few institutions supporting professional scientists (Rose and Rose 1970: 16-36). The medical profession was predominately represented in this amateur class of scientists (Cardwell 1957). The nature of the profession was a probable reason for this. Their profession gave them access to chemistry, their surgeries provided a primitive laboratory, they were well educated, and most importantly of all was their industry’s relationship between time and production. They had the freedom to research because their type of work was not tied to

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There was a realization that a biological history existed, and that was distinctly different from religious or political history. This biological history was part of the wider geological understanding of history that was emerging, of which Martin Rudwick (2005: 6) comments that:

> What was involved in the reconstruction of geohistory, far more importantly than any occasional and local conflict with religious beliefs, was a new and surprising conception of the natural world. Rather than being essentially stable and bound by unchanging “laws of nature”—ever since an initial act of creation, or else from uncreated eternity— one major part of nature, the earth itself came to be seen as a product of nature’s own history.

Science transformed perceptions of the past and what constituted the role of history. Human history was no longer a series of events, but rather a story within a greater story in which the ability to conceive of history, beginning was seen as descending further and further.
factory orientated time production. These conditions favoured medicine over other professions for the patronage of scientific enquiry. This materialist pedagogy was informed by liberal ideas on the construction of society, but the relationship between liberalism and biology would go full-circle and transform perceptions of society and the nation.

Location was a key attribute to this process. Medicine was not a university subject in England in the early-nineteenth century, instead it was an articled trade that was taught in hospitals (Lawrence 1991). However, in Scotland it was the prime attraction of Edinburgh University (Buchan 2004, Desmond 1989: 12). Most of the leading early-nineteenth century British ethnologists and biologists had attended Edinburgh University. Throughout Europe, Edinburgh was seen as one of the centres of the Enlightenment and was a hotbed of both social and political thought (Buchan 2004). As a centre of medical training, Edinburgh became a point of intersection between social theory and biological theory. It was in environments like this that synergies between social theory and biology occurred (Desmond 1989).

Many of these graduates were trained in biology and were politically and intellectually active in broader social issues (Desmond 1989). Class issues played a role in this. Although medicine was an honourable trade in hierarchical nineteenth-century Britain, increasingly, the medical profession’s leanings were predominantly towards the emerging middle class. Adrian Desmond (1989: 12) comments:

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63 Richard Cull summarized this when explaining the racial/ethnological theorist James Cowles Prichard’s motivation for becoming a doctor, stating: “The young ethnologist chose Medicine as his profession, not from any special liking for it, but because he deemed it to be more favourable than commerce for the pursuit of that knowledge to which he was now devoted” (Cull 1855: xxii).

64 Other than Edinburgh University, medicine was not a university subject. “Apprenticeship was the time-honoured route to the apothecary’s trade and the surgeon’s craft and survived well into the nineteenth century” (Lawrence 1991: 48). The practice of apprenticeship was seen as perpetuating conservative hierarchies, the University of London was founded to change this (Desmond 1989: 25-30). Adrian Desmond (1989: 32) comments:

The medical elite in 1820 comprised the knightly physicians and surgeons attending a few wealthy or noble patients. The physician, in particular, was still judged more by his breeding and “moral” education than his medical expertise. His initial Oxford or Cambridge studies were in classics, these being more important than medical knowledge to place him on a cultural par with his noble patrons.

65 Charles Darwin, James Cowles Prichard and Thomas Hodgkin were all students at Edinburgh, whilst Robert Knox was a student and leading lecturer at Edinburgh University.

66 Prichard is probably the clearest example of this. His Researches in the Physical History of Mankind (1848) was an elaborated version of his Masters thesis at Edinburgh University (Moore and Desmond 2004: 708).
Chapter 4 – Biology, Race and the Nation as Nature

By the mid-1820s a tartan army of “Scotch” graduates was marching south (to some alarm), armed with the new French doctrines and a new set of grievances, to staff the secular London University (f. 1826) and start up a second front against the medical corporations.

The Birmingham Lunar Society is a good example of this association between industry and medicine, with the membership drawn from these two groups (Uglow 2002). Doctors were often directly faced with the social ills of society. In many case this further instilled a politicization of their work.  

The materialist-biological training of these intellectuals meant that the biological mode of history was carried forward into wider debates on political and social change. Social issues were seen through a primordial biological lens, leading to racial interpretation of social issues. Robert Knox is a classic example of this phenomenon. Knox was professor of Anatomy at Edinburgh University, but was also a radical advocate of democracy and republicanism. Knox saw these social issues as having racial and biological meaning. Political attitudes were not universal, but rather they were related to particular racial groups. In the eighteenth-century There are many other examples of politicized doctors, such as Erasmus Darwin, David Hartley, and Joseph Priestly; whilst in the nineteenth-century, figures such as John Crawfurd, William Lawrence, James Cowles Prichard, John Hodgkin, Charles Darwin, and Thomas Huxley were all doctors with a political bent. Biological interpretations of social issues became totalising material solutions.

These solutions placed insurmountable divisions between people, such as the racial arguments of Robert Knox and the other early anthropologists. By comparison, the earlier beliefs and discourses on differences all allowed for change (Foucault 1975). An individual could change their practices to conform to social norms.  

67 An analogy to post-colonial politics in the post-World War Two era is revealing on this point. Many anti-imperial activists and post-colonial leaders were doctors by training. This was often the only profession which was open to educated individuals. In many instances their profession, which often involved working with the poor, promoted militant activism. The case of Che Guevara is a classic example of this. Adrian Desmond argues that this association with the dispossessed has structural class explanation. “An increase in poverty depressed the GP’s pay”, and therefore the radicalism of doctors “served quite distinct middle-class professional ends” (Desmond 1989: 31, 32).

68 A good example was the Spanish Inquisition, which although brutal, aimed at coercive education to make people change their heretical ways and conform to orthodoxy.
theories increased the caveats on an individual’s ability to change. The biological nature of these caveats meant that it was impossible for people to conform: conformity required people to change their biology. By using nature as a concept in social theories, social cohesion was naturalized and solidified within the racial nation, but between groups the natural divisions became insurmountable chasms, and tradition had gone full circle. What had started as a rational theory of social change, which liberated people from nature, became a theory of totalising division; and divisions between people had been absolutely naturalized through biology.

Evolution and Abolition

The slow creep and transformation of humanist thinking into biological thinking took a dramatic leap in the public imagination. Slavery contextualized the debate on race in the English-speaking world. The religious debates surrounding the ‘great chain of being’ were swept from centre stage as the abolitionist and pro-slavery camps moved their arguments from theology to science. The racial unity of humanity moved from the cultural position of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment to the biological battlefield of nineteenth-century science.

Slavery brought forth deep moral and political issues around fundamental ethical divisions between humans and animals. By using science to answer this vexatious question, scientific theories of human diversity became constructed within the politics of slavery; with the protagonists using science to bolster the claims for their respective sides. Each side could wield a formidable array of experts. The net result was that the natural history of humans was tied to the political debate of slavery. Although the debate would be ‘lost and won’, the conduct of the debate formed a mode of thought in which national identity became considered to be biological. Biological conceptions of the nation were framed around the issue of exploitation and domination. This meant that the biology of nations became a key issue in the ideological debates of the British

Yet these experts were shown at the time to be little more than ideologues promoting scientific theories based on political beliefs. A good example was the Miscegenation theory that was a deliberate hoax conceived by three journalists to show the poverty behind the scientific arguments. The theory held that a new copper colour race would emerge in America out of the mixing of the different races. The theory was designed to create a political bombshell between the pro-slavery democrats and the anti-slavery republicans. Many of the racial theorists believed it was a serious theory (Ellingson 2001: 324-330).
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Empire. This point will be examined in the later chapters, but the emergence throughout the empire of anthropological and orientalist societies that studied the racial “origins of oriental nations” (Y 1830) demonstrates the importance of biological racial thought to the empire.

The abolition movement emerged from radical Christian scriptural teachings. Since the sixteenth-century, when Bartolome de Las Casas argued that the native Americans could not be enslaved because they were not known in the biblical world, religion had been the prime legitimization and critique of slavery (Davis 1970, Fredrickson 2003, Thomas 1997). Slavery had been a norm in Western civilization since its origins in the ancient Middle East (Davis 1970: 50). There were clear historical roots that gave a cultural legitimization to servitude; but, during the renaissance, theologians and legal scholars focused attention on legitimising slavery (Ward and Lott 2002). The desire to legitimize an institution, which was already a customary tradition, demonstrates that slavery had ceased to be a ‘cultural given’ by the nineteenth-century and had become a contested area of social discourse (Smaje 2000).

The institution of slavery had traditionally been legally constrained to the subjugation of the losers of a just war and the sale of oneself or one’s child into bondage (Davis 1970). This meant that slavery was directed to neighbouring societies or marginalized social groups within the same society. The Atlantic Slave Trade was a radical break from this, with Africans being used as slaves: They were not involved in a conflict with European societies. In response to changes in the practice of slavery, a religious and legal justifications developed to re-naturalize the contradictions that were emerging (Davis 1970).

Biologically defining people also has origins in the eighteenth-century study of aesthetics. Aesthetics is the study of beauty, but in the eighteenth-century it played an important role in political discourse. Social divisions became manifest through aesthetic theory, with aesthetics becoming the symbol of a healthy civil society (Bindman 2002).

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70 Arguably the move to legitimize slavery is an example of the paradigm change within the ideology. Slavery’s naturalism was no-longer an unquestioned given, because of the structural transformation of what was a traditional institution. Slavery was transformed from a traditional practice of servitude to global trade and a key component in the capitalist global economy. This transformation of a traditional practice changed people’s perception of the practice leading to its naturalism being questioned.
Chapter 4 – Biology, Race and the Nation as Nature

Since classical times, nobility was signified as naturally beautiful; henceforth, in the eighteenth century the noble savage became a symbol of beauty. This beauty was more than skin deep. It became an esoteric beauty, a beauty that extended to the soul. The noble savage became a symbol of the uncorrupted.  

The study of aesthetics became a key component of eighteenth-century natural history. It was the initial basis on which difference was assessed and occurred through physiognomy and phrenology. Physiognomy was the study of facial expressions. This was popularized as a scientific study by John Caspar Lavater ([1772] c.1785). Lavater argued that facial expressions and physique were representative of an individual’s mental character. As the nineteenth-century progressed, physiognomy descended into quackery, but it had a legacy. The techniques of examining physical markers and the principles that character was revealed through physical characteristics, was absorbed by anatomists and ethnologists in the early study of race (Bindman 2002). Physiognomy grounded the human character in observable physical characteristics. These arguments became absorbed in the politics of slavery.  

Lord Kames (Henry Home) was a key link between racial biology and slavery. In his *Sketches of the History of Man* (1774), Kames argued that human variety must have been a result of multiple creations of God. However, Kames moved from religion to

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71 The noble savage was an individual in the ‘state of nature’ that had not been corrupted by society. Rousseau’s (1761) *Discourse on Inequality* was symptomatic of this aesthetic belief, although Rousseau never actually used the phrase ‘noble savage’ (Ellingson 2001). It was a belief that spurred many movements. Rousseau’s Arcadian state of nature, became both the source of revolutionary modernism and also conservative romanticism. This eighteenth-century move to the aesthetic also spurred the early discourse on race. Writers such as Anthony Ashley Cooper the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury ([1714] 2001), Joseph Addison ([1713] 2005), Francis Hutchenson ([1726] 2004) and Edmund Burke ([1759] 1998) had all argued that beauty was a symptom of virtue, as part of their project of cultivating social civility. This was individual aesthetics, but would become the groundwork for collective aesthetics that originated in artistic movements. Drawing on the eighteenth-century obsession that drew a connection between aesthetics and virtue, David Bindman (2002) has argued that the origins of human taxonomy emerged from these Enlightenment ideals. Bindman’s argument is that collective human taxonomy originated in art textbooks; practical manuals that facilitated the drawing of human anatomy. Works such as Johann Winckelmann’s *Reflections on the imitation of Greek works in painting and sculpture* (1765), were the foundation-stones that connected character to human form. Bindman maintains it was through the work of John Caspar Lavater’s aesthetics that art was driven into biology. In Lavater’s work we see the connection between individual aesthetics and collective aesthetics. Lavater’s main works were *Physiognomy* ([1772] c.1785) and *Essays on Physiognomy* ([1775-8] 1789). In his *Essays*, Lavater focuses on revealing an individuals character through facial expressions, this was four volumes of in-depth detail on faces and what they reveal. In comparison his earlier work, Physiognomy, was much briefer, focusing on how physiognomy related to collective character.

72 Works such as Robert Knox’s *Great Artists and Great Anatomists* (1852), is an example of the crossover between aesthetic theory and early racial theory.
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biology, speculating in Monboddo-fashion that African negro’s were related to orang-utans. This point will become important to later discussion on the nation and race in Southeast Asia in Chapter Seven of this thesis. This was selective evolutionary theory that was derogatory in its purpose and structure, and resulted in the biological legitimization of servitude. Evolution was for degenerates, in comparison Europeans were as God intended them. In biological terms, Kames’s theory meant that Africans and Asians were mentally inferior, but biologically superior in tropical climates. This biological/psychological connection legitimized the servitude of Africans on biological grounds rather than religious grounds. It was a clear break from the past. The new sciences presented the African Negros as ‘beasts of burden’ which were impervious to questions of morality.73

Kames’s biological arguments did not stand alone. They were supported by arguments on the creation of property, commerce and development of art. Biological arguments on race occurred in a wider discussion on the creation of political societies. Kames’s arguments prefigured Robert Knox’s ethnocentric arguments (Knox’s argument would occur some seventy years later). Kames’s represented one of the first attempts to primordialize political society’s biologically homogeneous entities. In doing so, Kames was connecting into the traditional hierarchical view of the ‘chain of being’, albeit in a modernist form. In effect, Kames was one of the first writers to use biology to remove the nation from its liberal origins in cosmopolitism and education.

Kames sparked an uproar, becoming the apologist for slavery (Porter 2004: 249) and was soon challenged by the abolition movement.74 Kames had highlighted a method of side-stepping the abolitionists’ arguments on religious moralism. Thomas Clarkson’s influential Essay on Slavery and Commerce in Humans (1786), which was a summary of the abolitionists arguments, depended on the recognition of Africans as humans with equal natural-law rights to Europeans. Kames, and the pro-slavery lobby, used the new science of biology as a means of politically defending exploitation through a process of biological naturalization. This act transformed the study of race in Europe, for it

73 The irony with Kame’s derogatory view of Negros was that he was one of the great ethicists of the eighteenth-century. However, for Kame, Negros were clearly not real humans.
74 One such text was Samuel Smith’s An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species (1778), that used the climatic theory to explain diversity and was scathing of Kames.
revealed the political utility of biological arguments within politics. It was the structure of slavery that drove the links between biology, race and nation.\textsuperscript{75}

Although race was initially used to support slavery, the founders of British Anthropology seized the emerging science as a potent tool in the abolitionist movement. The politicization of race marks a shift in the discourse. Prior to its politicization, the study of race was a relatively impotent science and its advocates were quick to argue that it had very little bearing on political events (Bindman 2002: 12, 16-17). Race was like all forms of natural history, an occupation for gentlemen who liked categorising living creatures and placing specimens on their walls. Practitioners saw no difference between racks of butterflies adorning a study, to that of a collection of human skulls.\textsuperscript{76} When race became a political tool it became connected with the wider discourse of mass politics and political emancipation. Race became a primordial naturalising concept in the wider discourse of collective political emancipation which, from the American Revolution onwards, moved from individual emancipation to national emancipation. From the early-nineteenth century onwards, biological conceptions of race and nation became a surrogate for mass democracy.\textsuperscript{77}

Two such writers that encapsulate the shift in thought were James Cowles Prichard and William Lawrence. Both of these men adopted a firm abolitionist stance, holding to the monogenesis theory of human diversity; and argued that ethnology had inherent political bearing. In taking this stance, these men demonstrated the political utility of

\textsuperscript{75} The striking thing about the eighteenth-century debate surrounding the natural history of humans was its continental European persona (Bindman 2002). Besides for Rousseau, European writers hadn’t made strong political claims on the back of natural history. In comparison, the pervasiveness of slavery in the Anglo-American economy dictated that the debate was political from the mid-eighteenth century in both Britain and America. The central reason for this was structural. Excluding Spain and Portugal, the issue of Atlantic slavery was of little concern to continental European powers. The Germanic states had no colonial territories and were not part of the Atlantic slave trade. By the end of the eighteenth-century, the Dutch had a minimal involvement in the Atlantic slave trade; however, the issue of slavery also plagued their colony in Java, but this slave trade was predominantly sustained by indigenous Asian demands and was very different to the Atlantic slave trade. In a similar vein, the Revolution in Haiti and the Louisiana-land purchase meant that the French were also removed from the Atlantic slave trade. The main continental writers on race had little pecuniary involvement in race; their main point of ideological conflict was religious. Therefore, although in many cases they took a polygenes approach to race, most of them were cosmopolitans and had argued that their work had no political ramifications.

\textsuperscript{76} It is worth noting that this was not limited to Africans, Native Americans, or Asians; samples of Europeans were also collected for comparisons.

\textsuperscript{77} This point has been made many times, particularly in relation in twentieth-century phenomenon of ethno-nationalism (Anderson 1991, Kedourie 1960, Mann 2005, Nairn 1997, Nairn 1996). The concept of race was just the first incarnation of this false democracy.
racial arguments. In using science to liberate, they created a precedent in which the reverse could also occur: science would also be used to legitimize hierarchies and practices of racial servitude.

If anybody can be attributed as the founder of modern Anglo-American anthropology it is James Cowles Prichard.\textsuperscript{78} Well into the 1870s, British ethnologists and racial writers maintained a mantra of gratitude to Prichard. Today, Prichard’s only main historical relevance is that he proved the unity of the human race through the concept of hybridity.

Cutting through the kaleidoscope of descriptive diatribes about race, Prichard saw the kernel question as a definitional problem. He aimed to provide clear definitions of species, genus, tribe and race. The words “genus”, “species” and “kind” had all originated with similar meanings. He argued that “these terms came at length to be applied, by unscientific observers, to particular assortments of organized beings”. This flippancy moved into popular language and intensified the problem (Prichard 1848: 106-107). Prichard realized that biological thinking was inadvertently transforming people’s conceptions of race. False conceptions naturalized divisions as real, when in fact they were non-existent. By linking the word ‘race’ to ‘species’ a biological division was being created between peoples that removed any issues of morality.

The words ‘race’ and ‘tribe’ were used for people, animals and plants. When people refer to race, Prichard argued, they meant species (Prichard 1848: 105-9). As synonyms, ‘race’ and ‘species’ became defined through whether or not human physical differences could be considered primordial (which meant god-given).\textsuperscript{79} In this capacity, race and species were also different from variety, of which there could be many within a species. Prichard used the example of dogs and domestic cats; both of which had varieties within species, therefore varieties within a species were mere tribes (Prichard 1848: 107). By framing the debate around the question ‘were races tribes or species?’, Prichard removed dubious biological/political connections over slavery. In doing so he naturalized the concept of tribes into biological entities (which since the time of John

\textsuperscript{78} Prichard himself was quick to acknowledge his own importance, giving himself the following footnote in 1836: “The comparative physiology and psychology of different races of men had never been made expressly the subject of inquiry, until the publication of my work” (Prichard 1848: vi). This meant that Prichard took a very traditional stance towards the ‘chain of being’, seeing it in religious terms only.
Locke ([1698] 2004) and Robert Filmler (1680) tribes had been seen as basic social structures). This was a no-win situation for cosmopolitanism; the nation, as a biological entity, was being naturalized as a fact through each angle of biology’s politicization.

Prichard’s battlefield of choice was definitions. These distinctions established a logical base from which he could undermine the advocates of polygenesis (the separate creation of races). Prichard’s definitional work meant that the polygenesis advocates were arguing that race meant species. Early-nineteenth century perspectives on anatomical difference meant the polygenesis advocates appeared to be on strong ground. There were clear physical differences between Negros, Europeans and Asians. This system, Prichard argued, was imprecise; with the real definition of species being whether or not two animals could reproduce effectively. This raised the question of hybridity. For thousands of years people had been breeding hybrid animals such as mules, wherein two species from the same genus could reproduce, but the offspring were infertile. This meant the clear distinction over whether or not the different races were separate species, gravitated around whether interracial offspring were fertile or infertile.80

As a founder of British anthropology, Prichard established the discipline with a political purpose in mind. The older he became, the more certain he became that anthropology was political. In 1848 he published a popular and accessible account of his life’s research, but it had a greater purpose. The introductory chapter was a polemic advocacy, wherein Prichard (1855: 6-7) raged against moral tyrannies of the polygenesis camp:

They maintain that the ultimate lot of the ruder tribes is a state of perpetual servitude; and that, if in some instances they should continue to repel the attempts of the civilised nations to subdue them, they will at length be rooted out and exterminated in every country on the shores of which Europeans shall have set their feet. These half-men, half-brutes … were made to be the domestic slaves of the lordly caste, under whose protection they are susceptible of some small improvement, comparable to that which is attained by our horses and dogs … If the Negro and the Australian are not our fellow-creatures and of one family with ourselves, but beings of an inferior order, and if duties towards them were not contemplated, as we may in that case presume them not to have been, in any of the positive commands on which the morality of the

79 Prichard was never in favour of evolution, hence for him, primordialism meant characteristics that were existent at the moment of God’s act of creation (Prichard 1848: 109).
Christian world is founded, our relations to these tribes will appear to be not very different from those which might be imagined to subsist between us and a race of oranges … We thus come near to an apology for the practice of kidnapping, at which our forefathers connived, though it did not occur to them to defend it on so reasonable a ground … Those who hold that the Negro is of a distinct species from our own, and of a different and inferior grade in the scale of organised beings … observe that it cannot be much more criminal to destroy such creatures when they annoy us than to extirpate wolves or bears; nor do they strongly reprobate the conduct of some white people in our Australian colony, who are said to have shot occasionally the poor miserable savages of that country as food for their dogs. I shall not pretend that in my own mind I regard the question now to be discussed as one of which the decision is a matter of indifference either to religion or humanity.

For Prichard, anthropology was a tool of morality in the defence of the vulnerable. Prichard conceived anthropology as an emancipatory discipline. He wrote the above passage after the successful abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire in 1833. Yet Prichard, like many of the abolitionists, was moving beyond slavery, casting a critical eye over European colonialism and imperialism generally and its brutal impact on indigenous societies. He died in 1848, four years after this anti-colonial critique, making it hard to tell where Prichard would have taken the issue further. The nature of this introduction indicates that colonial imperialism was weighing heavily on his mind.

It is not surprising that Prichard was moving towards an anti-colonial critique. His approach to race was based on principles of a liberal education that focused on individual achievement, and the opportunities for all to improve. As it was being practiced, colonialism was the antipathy of these ideals. It had produced slavery in America, and, as Prichard’s argument made clear, in Australia colonialism was producing the genocide of the Aboriginal population.

Prichard’s approach was part of a wider approach in ethnology/anthropology in favour of imperial protection. Thomas Hodgkin, who had also been heavily involved in the Abolitionist struggle, was a follower of Prichard and implemented many of Prichard’s political objectives, founding both the Aborigines Protection Society (1837) and the Ethnological Society of London (1844). Hodgkin’s idea was to reform imperialism by

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80 This was a conclusive argument that should have buried the polygenesis argument, but amazingly polygenesis arguments continued until long after Charles Darwin published *Origin of the Species* ([1859] 2003).
giving it a higher purpose. In this capacity the Aborigines Protection Society influenced policy in Africa, arguing that parts of Africa should be colonized on humanitarian grounds (Porter 1999: 209).

Prichard saw race as a cultural condition, wherein people responded to their local environment, producing cultural and physical traits. He argued that:

There is nothing more probable than the supposition, that the average degree of perfection in the development of the brain as of other parts of the system, differs in different nations with the diversities of climate and other elements of the external condition, and with the degrees of social culture. It is probable that the condition of men in civilized society produces some modification in the intellectual capabilities of the race (Prichard 1848: 216).

This was the classic liberal notion of stimulus and education. It could have been taken directly from Locke, Adderson or Hume. More importantly, this idea of race did not infer inferiority, with Prichard stating “it will be quite sufficient for my present argument, if it is allowed, that there are some Negroes whose mental faculties fully attain the standard of European intellect” (Prichard 1848: 216).  

In arguing against race as species, Prichard was defending and advancing liberal cosmopolitanism. By demonstrating the unity of the human species, Prichard proved cosmopolitanism, whilst attributing national differences to five basic tribal groups that were a construction of cultural and environmental conditioning. Prichard’s work is an attempt to navigate liberalism through the dilemmas of nation and race. However, the particular way this occurred meant that the nation and liberalism became tied to a biological way of being.

Although Prichard understood the political and moral imperative of race and nation, he saw humans as biologically equal. Prichard was an anti-racial theorist. Staying true to eighteenth-century principles, Prichard swum against the tide of racial materialist ideas which pervaded his time. William Lawrence was a contemporary of Prichard, but in him we can see the move to racial theory. Lawrence attributed human inferiorities to the hereditary biological condition. Eric Hobsbawm (1995: 288) argued that Lawrence

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81 Prichard’s liberal belief in cosmopolitan individualism was not surprising. It can be read into his family background. He grew up in a Quaker family (hence his aversion to slavery) which was involved in mercantile foreign trading. His farther was an autodidactic self-made man who had, through his own efforts, rapidly moved up the social ladder (Cull 1855). The family’s pathway to success was through the liberal pillars of individual effort and education.
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bespoke Darwinism. Lawrence followed in the footsteps of Prichard, publishing his arguments in 1819. There is very little overall difference in their respective political stances, with both being opponents of polygenesis and slavery. In his younger days, Lawrence was an active liberal radical who regularly denounced the government in his anatomy lectures (Desmond 1989, Ellingson 2001, Mudford 1968).\(^{82}\)

Although Lawrence favoured monogenesis and was opposed to slavery, he did not share Prichard’s view that all people were naturally equal. Lawrence marks a break from the eighteenth-century. It is his derogatory fusion between politics, cultural observation and anatomical/physiological science that sets the tone for the racial extremists such as Robert Knox and the Social Darwinists of the late-nineteenth century. In connecting cultural observations with politics and biology, Lawrence synthesized race as a hereditary structure that determined the future.

Lawrence’s ([1819] 1848: 83) purpose was to “present occasion, to consider man as an object of zoology;—to describe him as a subject of the animal kingdom”. But in considering Man an animal, Lawrence was not making a Proto-Darwinian view of the ‘chain of being’.\(^{83}\) He castigated Monboddo (1773), Rousseau (1761) and White (1799) for connecting humans with apes. To Lawrence, these arguments legitimized slavery and oppression. They linked Negros with monkeys and created degenerative versions of humanity, commenting: “I do not hesitate to assert that the notion of specific identity between the African and orang-outang … is as false philosophically, as the moral and political consequences, to which it would lead are shocking and detestable” (Lawrence [1819] 1848: 87). Lawrence could clearly see that the evolutionary association, which

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\(^{82}\) Lawrence was well-known for his radical political views. After its first publication, Lawrence’s *Lectures on Comparative Anatomy* became the centre of controversy, in which Lawrence was projected as “an enemy of church and state and a corrupter of the youth” (Mudford 1968: 433). His *Lectures* became subject to a civil-court case over copyright, in which he was accused of “denied Christianity and Revelation, which was contrary to public policy and morality” In 1817-18 Lawrence was professor of anatomy and surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons, on publishing his *Lectures* he was threatened with dismissal. He subsequently withdrew his *Lecturers* from sale. However, a series of pirated copies came out shortly after. Lawrence took the pirate publisher to court, suing for infringement of copyright. The publishers defence was that Lawrence’s arguments “denied Christianity and Revelation, which was contrary to public policy and morality” and, as such, Lawrence was not entitled to copyright. The court upheld the defence and the book was published, along with a re-release of Lawrence’s own editions.

\(^{83}\) Although Lawrence castigates evolutionary theories, he developed a natural selection type theory of biological and social change. He came to this theory though studying mental illness and its hereditary nature. Some authors have argued that this constituted an evolutionary theory (Darlington 1959, Hobsbawm 1995: 288). It is clear Lawrence had evolutionary ideas, but he continually attacks evolution,
placed Africans on a lesser rung than the Europeans, legitimising servitude. This stance politically tied Lawrence to the idea of creation. Despite this Lawrence ([1819] 1848: 342) also saw Negros as being lesser beings:

The retreating forehead and the depressed vertex of the dark varieties of man make me strongly doubt whether they are susceptible of these high destinies; — whether they are capable of fathoming the depths of science; of understanding and appreciating the doctrines and the mysteries of our religion. These obstacles will, I fear, be too powerful for missionaries and Bible societies … To expect that the Americans or Africans can be raised by any culture to an equal height in moral sentiments and intellectual energy with Europeans, appears to me quite as unreasonable as it would be to hope that the bull-dog may equal the greyhound in speed.

Lawrence saw the races as biologically unequal. Lawrence agreed with the view Prichard held that the human races were one species, and that this was proved by the principle of hybridity; but whilst Prichard just saw race as neutral variation, Lawrence followed Rousseau in believing that change was degeneration. Lawrence maintained the eighteenth-century liberal-materialist position, that human variation was dependent on social conditions. Nevertheless, he saw that the social condition could degenerate as well as improve. Lawrence broke from the past by arguing that social degeneration became biological and, as a result, that degeneration became entrenched. It is at this point that Lawrence can be seen as a proto-Darwinist. He believed this degeneration could cross the generational barrier, biologically enshrining the degeneration.

Lawrence argued that domestication was the key to human variety. He attributed “the differences” in “physical organisation … moral and intellectual qualities” between human beings as “analogous in kind and degree … to breeds … of domestic animals” (Lawrence [1819] 1848: 375). From this Lawrence concluded that race can be “accounted for” by “the same principles”. It was the servile condition of domestic animals that enabled breading for variation. Excluding the breading of slaves, it was culture that determined human diversity. Lawrence substantially quoted Alexander von Humboldt ([1811] 1822) ⁸⁴ to make his point:

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therefore, although he developed an explanation of biological change, he didn’t place it in a evolutionary context. ⁸⁴ Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1835) was a German naturalist and geographer that explored South America between the years 1799-1804. His resulting book *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain* ([1811] 1822) was influential in the early-nineteenth century, being a comprehensive account on the
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Intellectual cultivation is what contributes most to diversify the features. In barbarous nations there is rather a physiognomy peculiar to the tribe or horde than to any individual. When we compare our domestic animals with those which inhabit our forests, we make the same observation ([1819] 1848:368).

Similar to Edward Gibbon’s theory of the relationship between empire and barbarism that facilitated progress discussed in the previous chapters, Lawrence emphasized the inherent barbarism of people and the importance of individualism in the differentiation of races. Lawrence ([1819] 1848: 360) argued that barbarism was not a biologically inferior condition, maintaining that “most of the modern European nations existed in a more or less complete state of barbarism within times of which we have the most authentic records”. Lawrence saw that the barbarian of Europe and the barbarian of Africa existed in similar social conditions. Yet he commented that the Europeans had maintained a “permanence” of character and complexion despite becoming a “progressive civilization” that to “this day [they] resemble the portraits of their ancestors, drawn by Caesar and Tacitus”. Lawrence ([1819] 1848: 360) argued that the barbarism of Europe had a global reach, and that this supported racial unity:

These tribes owe their origin to the Mongols, and retain in the north those marks of their descent, which we find so strongly expressed in the Chinese, under the widely different latitudes of the south. At the same time, the parent tribes live in the middle of Asia, equally removed from the former and the latter.

In connecting Europe with Asia, Lawrence was not claiming that Europeans were superior because they were not barbarians, but rather because they were barbarians. Lawrence was making similar claims to the historians and political economists we examined in the previous two chapters. Lawrence tribalizes European identity. The progress, results and effects of colonialism in Spanish America. James Mill ([1817] 1820), Stamford Raffles (1835, [1817] 1965), John Crawfurd (1820) and Charles Darwin ([1879] 2004) both regularly deferred to Humboldt to make comparative arguments about the affects of colonialism on all parties involved. Humboldt’s work crossed between geography, history, ethnology and political economy. This gave the work a theoretical potency that was attractive to comparative theorists. It was also very useful in racial theory. John Stuart Mill gave the following backhanded complement to Humboldt:

Of late years moral geography has been permitted to fall a little into oblivion; the world even seemed disposed to believe that the essence of principle is its universality; that virtue and vice depend neither upon parallels nor meridians; and that Humboldt’s isothermal lines mark temperature only, and do not convey the slightest information respecting a nation’s capacity for justice and freedom (Mill 1963 xxxi: 360-361).
Europeans are descendents of rampaging Mongol hordes and Celtic aborigines. They are as much Asian as they are European, but they possessed a superior barbarian culture that enabled progress. Lawrence linked this barbarian culture to the nation. The Germans were the Mongols, the French the Franks and Celts, and the British were the Celts. Lawrence’s theories rest on a belief in the primordial nation. This primordial nation was a root barbarian culture (Lawrence [1819] 1848: 361-363). This culture to a large degree pre-determined the future.

Culture shaped the “state of domestication” and climate (acting by “accident”) in shaping variations. Lawrence saw that these forces shaped the appearance and character of races: determining their future. Therefore he concluded “that the human … like that of the cow, sheep, horse, and pig, and others,” are shaped by breeding (Lawrence [1819] 1848: 375).

These arguments were a progression on the liberal notions of individuality, materialism, nurturing of culture. Liberal ideas of the cultivated identity were adopted within racial writing. Once this approach was transformed into biology, it became totalising and lost the nuance of change. Lawrence is a transition figure. His thought is essentially eighteenth-century, focusing on domestication/socialization as a force for degeneracy and improvement. However, rather than maintaining the optimism of eighteenth-century writers, Lawrence sees socialization permeating the hereditary barrier. This destroyed equality of ability. In making this argument, Lawrence destroys the polygenesis position and creates racism — Robert Knox and Arthur Gobineau were the next step.

**Primordial Bloodlust**

Robert Knox was in clear opposition to the ideas of Prichard and Lawrence. Politically, the study of race became divided into two opposing camps in the 1850s. The Ethnological Society founded by Thomas Hodgkin, after the death of Prichard, maintained the humanitarian/protectionist stance that Prichard had championed. This changed in the late 1850s and early 1860s, when John Crawfurd (who was instrumental in the colonization of Southeast Asia and is discussed in the following chapters) and
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James Hunt mounted a coup within the organization; moving it away from its humanitarian and Quaker roots, towards a more ‘scientific’ approach to race — this could be termed racism, justified by pseudoscience (Ellingson 2001: 235-271). This was still too moderate for James Hunt, who founded the breakaway London Anthropological Society, which was dedicated to following Knox’s approach to race (Hunt 1868: 433).

Knox’s ideas were a break from previous conceptions of race. Race had been a physiological concept, whilst in Knox’s hands race was a psychological concept. Psychological arguments had been made before, but usually in a derogatory sense that legitimized persecution. By comparison, as I began to discuss earlier, Knox presented race as a universal theory of psychology. This psychology (which was never explained, in a fashion beyond the polemic) had, in Knox’s mind, a psychic relationship with territorial landscapes. Races had particular homelands and the health of a race (both moral and physical) was dependent on staying within this homeland. This theory, which was influential, had profound implications for the direction of the British Empire.

Knox’s arguments about indignity and the rejection of foreign governance was a xenophobe’s theory of anti-imperialism. Knox presented frightening scenarios that predicted the physical and moral degeneration of colonists.

>The inordinate self-esteem of the Saxon will be especially shocked thereby, nor will he listen with composure to a theory which tells him, proves to him, that his race cannot domineer over the earth — cannot even exist permanently on any continent to which he is not indigenous — cannot ever become native, true-born Americans — can-not hold in permanency any portion of any continent but the one on which he first originated.”(Knox [1850] 1862: vi)

Knox’s criticisms questioned the premise of civil governance, which (as discussed in Chapters Two and Three) was a cornerstone of the early-nineteenth century British Empire.

>To admit the full importance of race, militating as it does against the thousand-and-one prejudices of the so-called civilized state of man; opposed as it is to the Utopian views based on education, religion and government (Knox [1850] 1862: 24).
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His theory of race, which saw self-determination as the natural desire of race — no matter how brutal this process would be — undermined the liberal traditions behind the British Empire. The liberal traditions of education and good governance, which were the foundation of domestic unity within Britain, were being exported throughout the world. According to Knox, these were erroneous fantasies. These anti-imperialist sentiments have led to arguments on views such as Knox’s and the similar sentiments held by the Frenchman, Arthur de Gobineau, although racist, constitutes an anti-imperialist theory (Adas 1989, Hawkins 1997: 185). Knox was not an anti-imperialist; he glorified conquest and invasion, stating: “I offer the English invasion of Hindostan [sic] in proof—the invasion of Scinde and Affghan, the Plunder of China. A profitable war is a pleasant thing for a Saxon nation; and a crusade against the heathen has always been declared praiseworthy” (Knox [1850] 1862: 4). This indicates no anti-imperialist theory, making empire natural to Knox. Therefore empire serves no other purpose than the gratification of sadistic racial desires.85

Like Lawrence, Knox tribalized the racial nation through the barbarian. Knox took the naturalising of the barbarian to another level. In Gibbon and Mill, barbarism was cultural and could be lost through luxury. Similarly, in Lawrence, the barbarian was primal, being the essence of every nation. Lawrence saw the barbarian as the root of culture. By comparison, Knox saw barbarism as biologically locked inside the racial character, and unlike Gibbon, Lawrence and Mill, Knox saw barbarism as specific to the Europeans. It was this innate racial barbarism of the European nations that enabled them to plunder the nations of the world.

Knox represents the sum-total of liberal radicalism. He was a construct of radical liberal individualism and racial bigotry. He preached the virtues of inter-racial war and genocide, whilst arguing the futility of colonialism and imperialism: purely because he believed that no race could be successfully transported. Although disturbing, Knox’s arguments reek of liberal notions on governance, individuality and education. Knox

85 Adrian Desmond (1989: 388-389) implies that Knox’s extreme racial views did not develop until after the young liberal Knox came up against the Edinburgh medical and intellectual establishment and was rejected for his outspoken atheism. This slight was compounded by his involvement with Burke and Hare scandal, whereby Knox paid Burke and Hare to supply him corpses for his anatomy classes. Unable to fulfil Knox’s insatiable demand, Burke and Hare became serial killers to provide Knox with the supply of bodies. Knox’s career did not recover. It was after this that Knox “expunged the last vestiges of
takes culture and transforms it into biology. He creates primordial groups, which have their own psychology that underpins their political destiny. But it is through primordialism that Knox pursues liberal objectives. Race becomes a condition of governmentality. Knox transformed race into a theory of human agency. For him, governance needed to be based on race. Race was linked to territory, and races could not change territory. For Knox races could not blend and produce a hybrid race because the hybrid is infertile and degenerate. Knox integrated national stereotypes with race/nation to create a primordial condition that was uncompromising. This demonstrates the tribalising of identity beliefs that held sway as the nineteenth-century progressed. For Knox and his followers, empire ceased to be defined as order and civilization. Instead empire became an act of racial bloodlust.

**Social Darwinism**

Charles Darwin emerged as a cultural and scientific phenomenon at a key historical moment in time, when nationalism had become a dominant force in politics. Robert Knox published his racial polemic nine years earlier, and in 1862 Lord Acton predicted that the future of European politics was dependent on the ideologies of nationality and popularism. In 1859, the same year as the start of the Italian wars of unification, when the age of nationalism was engulfing Europe, Charles Darwin published *Origin of the Species*. Darwin knew that the notion of evolution was a powder-keg if related to the human condition. Previously, evolutionary theorists had faced social isolation. Conscious of his social status, Darwin followed the cautious path, outlining natural selection without reference to humans (Moore and Desmond 2004). Despite this, Darwin, like Prichard and Lawrence before him, was consumed by the immorality of slavery. Moore and Desmond (2004) have argued that this was the fundamental imperative behind Darwin’s writing of *Origin*. The fact that Darwin did not discuss race and human evolution in *Origin*, didn’t fool anybody. As soon as it was published, supporters and protagonists related it to humans. In the ten years following *Origin*,

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progressivism and environmentalism from his ethnology” (Desmond 1989: 388). Therefore Knox’s racial determinism emerges out of his personal resentments and bitterness.

Moore and Desmond (2004) argue that his was as much a family legacy as Charles Darwin’s own convictions. Both the Darwins and the Wedgwoods (which Charles Darwin married into) were leading abolitionist families.
human evolution was championed by Darwin’s friends with Darwin maintaining an awkward silence. Darwin decided that he needed to make his stance clear and published the *Descent of Man* in 1871, the same year that Germany was united.\(^87\)

In outlining human evolution, *Descent* was a social theory that reflected the nationalist beliefs of the time. Social Darwinism was already an intellectual industry, with Herbert Spencer publishing *Principles of Biology* in 1864.\(^88\) Darwin’s own use of ‘nation’, ‘race’ and ‘human evolution’ reflected the uneasy nexus between nation as a cultural community and nation as a biological construct. Although Darwin used the phrase ‘survival of the fittest’, he was uncomfortable with the term.\(^89\) *The Descent of Man* was a tug of war, with Darwin reflecting the naturalness of nations whilst simultaneously arguing the socially constructed nature of the nation. The paradoxical nature of this argument extends even further, with Darwin arguing that social construction is also a process of natural selection.

A key thread in Darwin’s naturalization of the nation and nationalism was his use of natural selection as a means of behavioural analysis. In *Origin*, natural selection was primarily related to biological variation in form, with the behaviour of animals marginally touched-on and usually in relation to sex. By comparison, when tackling human diversity, Darwin focused on the social aspect of humans.

Darwin took it ‘as a given’ that humans were communal beings and that this communal demeanour evolved through natural selection. Community and intellect were the evolutionary advantages of humans that made up for their “small strength and speed” and “want of natural weapons”. Community was the basic evolutionary resource: “man’s … social qualities” enabled “him to give and receive aid from his fellow-men”

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\(^87\) The first edition was published in 1871. I am using the second edition ([1879] 2004).

\(^88\) The first edition appeared as successive instalments between January 1863 and October 1864. I am using the revised edition ([1874] 1884).

\(^89\) The phrase “survival of the fittest” was first coined in 1864 by Herbert Spencer in his *Principles of Biology* ([1874] 1884). Darwin adopted the term in his fifth edition of *Origin* in 1869. Therefore “survival of the fittest” was as a late edition, which Darwin had some reservations in using for good reason. Joseph Carroll (2003: 34) comments:

Darwin adopted Spencer’s phrase only on the tacit understanding that it would serve as a shorthand term implying all the content in his own concept of natural selection, but if one takes Spencer’s phrase at face value, it strips out the elements of heritable variations and differential reproductive success. In order to avoid giving occasion for confusion, it is probably a good idea simply to avoid using the phrase.
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(Darwin [1879] 2004: 84). The condition of the barbarian was not ‘solitary brutish and short’. Darwin saw humans as inherently social, “though still remaining in a barbarous state”. This was a major break from the individualist arguments of the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries. People were not atoms, but biologically hard-wired to work collectively. Darwin argued that group psychology was an integral part of human natural selection, maintaining that early humans:

Would have felt uneasy when separated from their comrades, for whom they would have felt some degree of love; they would have warned each other of danger, and have given mutual aid in attack or defense. All this implies some degree of sympathy, fidelity, and courage. Such social qualities, the paramount importance of which to the lower animals is disputed by no one, were no doubt acquired by the progenitors of man in a similar manner, namely, through natural selection, aided by inherited habit.

Group cohesion became a natural facet. Political theorists from Hobbes and Locke to Hume, Bentham and the Mills, had attributed collective social identity to being a mixture of environmental conditions and as being a by-product of power. Power produced governance, which through a mixture of historical accident and ‘force of will’ forged a common social identity. To the philosophers community had been rational: a creation of self-interest. In rejecting the idea of the solitary barbarian in ‘war against all’, Darwin argued that natural selection was a deeper form of rationality that existed beyond reflective reasoning. Community was only rational to the extent that it was an evolutionary construction. Natural selection meant that social identity was a natural animal instinct with which humans had evolved.

A tribe including many members who, from possessing in a high degree the spirit of patriotism, fidelity, obedience, courage, and sympathy, were always ready to aid one another, and to sacrifice themselves for the common good, would be victorious over most other tribes; and this would be natural selection (Darwin 2004 [1879]: 157).

Natural selection favoured patriotism. Patriotism was social value that emphasized self-sacrifice in the name of the group. Humans had evolved to place the group as more important than the individual. Darwin was attributing the key aspects of nationalism (individual devotion to the collective) as a natural biological fact. This presents patriotism as the underlining component in the ‘rhythm of history’, of which he states:
All that we know about savages... show that from the remotest times successful tribes have supplanted other tribes. Relics of extinct or forgotten tribes have been discovered throughout the regions of the earth... At the present day civilised nations are everywhere supplanting barbarous nations (Darwin 2004 [1879]: 153).

Darwin combined the ancient savage and civilized nations and tribes to make a general statement about the role of patriotism in social change. The fact that Darwin’s theory was monogenesis theory gave it an even greater descriptive force. It meant that all tribes were connected in a ‘chain of being’ and that patriotism was the common denominator from the most ‘savage’ tribe to the most ‘civilized’ nation. The historical role of patriotism meant that nationalism was the natural force that drove natural selection. Far from being a construction of power and tradition, Darwin saw the nation as a fundamental structure in the human condition.

Through the logic of natural selection, the nation became a natural biological fact underpinning social change. As previously stated, Darwin’s notion of natural selection within Descent is an uneasy negotiation between what Darwin attributes to ‘art’ (social construction) and what he attributes to biology (natural selection). This uneasy negotiation was the continuation of the liberal themes of nurture and culture in the construction of the nation, which was present in all the racial writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries.

In Origin, natural selection was a force of instinct, which was not rational. This is the Malthusian/laissez-faire element in Darwin’s thought; the Meta rationality in which order is created without conscious rationality. Nature rewards a suitable structure by the fact that structure survives on to the next generation, whilst an unsuitable structure will face extinction. In Origin, the world worked according to this laissez-faire mechanism. It is this theory that marks Origin as being distinctly different to the Lamarckian theories of evolution that placed importance on rational intervention. In comparison to Origin, Descent presents a more Lamarckian vision of human evolution. Conflict between the tribes was as much about the mastery of ‘art’ as much as it was about instinct (Darwin 2004 [1879]: 153). Darwin saw that the distinct difference between ‘savage’ nations and
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‘civilized’ nations was art. Art, Darwin (2004 [1879]: 167) argued, was not transferred through hereditary mechanisms:

The western nations of Europe, who now so immeasurably surpass their former savage progenitors, and stand at the summit of civilisation, owe little or none of their superiority to direct inheritance from old Greeks, though they own much to the written works of that wonderful people.

Darwin calls forth the perpetual theme of barbarism. The Greeks were cultural ancestors of Western Europe, but European superiority was not dependent on them. The Europeans became the copiers and perfectors of Greek culture, but it was ‘savage heritage of early Western Europe that spurred progress. Darwin was reiterating Gibbon. Progress required savagery and education. Education was a means of circumventing nature. It changed the natural pattern of natural selection. Darwin termed this process ‘art’, yet he didn’t elaborate any further on art as a social theory.

Most of the arguments on the evolutionary role of art are mere observational sentences that are lost in the continual mantra of natural selection. Darwin creates a confusing situation. He never develops a theory of social change, yet believes it to exist and proclaims that ‘art’ was an integral part of natural selection. Culture becomes subsumed within biology. This leaves a legacy wherein the nation becomes an overarching primordial concept driving social change. The nation becomes natural and beyond the process of reflection.

Biological theories of race changed perceptions on social identity, naturalising pre-existing hierarchies in a revolutionary way. For example, the ancient concept of the ‘chain of being’ legitimized hierarchical divisions through esoteric beliefs in divine order, yet once the ‘chain’ became biologically defined, hierarchy became secularized and modern. The body became the prison that held people within the hierarchical ‘chain’. This biological conception of hierarchy became a legitimising force in the projection of empire. Chapters Six, Seven and Eight of this thesis examine how this biological conception of identity became a way of seeing Southeast Asia. However, although this was a new way of seeing empire, these chapters argue that it was based on
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traditional cultural markers of order and civilization (which were outlined in Chapter Two). These markers became racialized. Therefore the barbarian lost its cultural conditionality, and became a pre-ordained perpetual racial condition.

The nation became intertwined with these racial beliefs. The nation became a natural quality that was hardwired into people’s biology. This transition in thought was a transformation of earlier ideas about nation and culture. Racial ideas of identity were radical interpretations of eighteenth-century liberalism. Racial theory absorbed the liberal approach to the nation, yet lost its nuances. Racial theory reduced change to biological agents. Racial theory eventually accepted the biological unity of humanity, yet at the same time it enshrined inequality through the primordial barbarian.

The barbarian came to be seen as the universal and primal condition, yet it also became an exclusive condition with different races having a different barbarian character. The barbarian became the primal aspect of the nation: the nation its pure racial condition. This barbarian became the eternal condition that continually shaped a nation’s destiny. Racial theory legitimized barbarity; in doing so the barbarities within empire-building became legitimate transactions.
Part Two: Southeast Asian Imaginings
Chapter 5 - Dreaming Liberalism, Colonialism and the Governance of Nations

The second section of this thesis examines the impact of the nation in the process of colonising Southeast Asia. The process of naturalising the nation within Britain ran simultaneously with the colonising of Southeast Asia. This naturalization of the British nation was inseparably linked to the expansion of English-speaking society across the globe (Cannadine 2002: xvii, Ferguson 2004). This made the nineteenth-century ideologies of ‘nation’ and ‘empire’ concurrent political manifestations. In making this argument, I am not just reiterating a well-developed argument that the construction of the British nation occurred in an imperial context. This argument has been observed many times before, notably by J.A. Hobson in Imperialism: A Study ([1902] 1968: 269) but was also understood by David Hume ([1742] 1998: 21-22) in the eighteenth century. Instead, this chapter maintains that empire spread a fundamental British belief in the nation as the expression of society. As the empire was expanding, the British were interpreting the societies they encountered as nations. This had political ramifications for the construction of empire. In particular the nation became a basic aspect of international political life.

The nation became a key component in expressing a global system of power, and the idea of the nation became a conjunction between two forms of empire that were contradictory in nature. The first was the age-old geo-political structure of empire: the empire of the expansionary state. The second was a much more ambiguous notion of empire: it focused on empire as a civic entity. This view portrayed empire as having a liberal purpose which was progressive, and fundamentally based on trade (Ferguson 2004: xx-xxi). These two interpretations of empire were run concurrently in eighteenth and nineteenth-century debates on empire. This concurrence created a tension over direction, but the nation became the point of commonality between these two threads. Through the nation geo-politics could be legitimized. The British saw that they could
intervene with the purpose of fulfilling a foreign nation’s destiny. Empire could exist whilst also preserving local identity. This clothed empire in a cloak of benevolence that fulfilled its geo-political needs, whilst also doing good deeds.

These two threads of empire were played out in Southeast Asia. Jointly, exploitation and liberal governance were key components to the colonial experience in Southeast Asia. This entailed a nation-building project in which a nation was identified, unified, and forged into a colonial state. It was belief in the nation as a fundamental social institution that shaped the political geography of British colonial Southeast Asia.

This chapter builds on the themes explored in Chapter Two of this thesis. In particular this chapter examines how the nation emerged within the structure of empire. In arguing this point, this chapter examines three aspects to the structure of empire. The first aspect was the *laissez faire* critique of mercantilism. The central claim of this critique was that the evils of mercantilism introduced the competitiveness of the nation into Asia. This critique also became one of the first critiques of empire, which accentuated the nation as a resistance to the creation of an empire. The second aspect of this chapter is to examine how the nation emerged within the geopolitics of the corporate empire that was the East India Company. The third aspect of this chapter was the ethnocentric construction of the East India Company that projected the empire as a series of nations.

**Mercantilism, Colonials and Construction of the Nation**

British involvement in Southeast Asia originated in a strategic defence of its Indian interests. It is the structure of this involvement that created a role for the nation within the system of empire. In the mid-eighteenth century, the British Empire was focused on North America. The empire’s involvement in Asia was a sideshow consisting of a few trading outposts in India, to which the British Government paid little attention. British interests in India were managed by the East India Company, a private company that had a monopoly charter to manage British trade in Asia. Long-distance trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was not easy. It required massive logistical planning and practice to transport goods over long distances. The journey and the transporting of goods, was made more precarious by treacherous waters, the slowness of
vessels, and continual threat of piracy. The India trade required the establishment of outposts that were self-sufficient to cover the long periods between trading voyages. This meant that the East India Company had to become an organization which had a military capacity as a means of defence and an overarching system of governance to arrange the logistics and military support, “investing the company with a portion of sovereign authority” (Crawfurd 1820iii: 218).

British involvement in Asia took a dramatic turn in the mid-eighteenth century, courtesy of rapturous company officials. East India Company officials, pursuing their own path to wealth, moved the company’s direction from trade to governance. Taxation rents were a much easier form of income than the perils of trade. But behind these blatant acts of plunder lay the geo-political games of Anglo-French rivalry (Frost 2003, Marshall 1998, Schama 2001: 492-496). Britain and France both used local Indian politics as a means of trying to exclude each other from the lucrative Indian trade. By the end of the Seven Years War, Britain had gained territorial control of Bengal, creating new strategic problems. Without a clear intentional policy, Britain had gained a territorial empire (thousands of miles away from Europe) that was surrounded by hostile forces. In response to this security threat, Britain embarked on a policy of strategic defence by building a series of naval bases and ports, to defend their Indian empire, in case of another war with France (Frost 2003). It was this search for bases that brought Britain’s presence into Southeast Asia.

The strategic ports were isolated territorial strongholds and, for John Crawfurd (1820iii: 232), these strongholds challenged native independence, being an attempt “to raise an independent authority within … [a] kingdom”. As independent authorities, these strongholds occurred in a matrix of other territorial-political entities. Although they were fortified, the security of the stronghold was not just dependent on defences. More importantly their security was maintained by the company’s relationship with surrounding native polities. These machinations lead Crawfurd (1820iii: 229) to comment that “the animosity of the European nations against each other, and their machinations against the native… [was] impossible to read without disgust”. Crawfurd’s annoyance was aimed at the damage these conflicts inflicted on the native states, which were forced to take sides; as a result, many suffered internal civil wars. Crawfurd (1820iii: 229-232) attributed Aceh’s fall from regional hegemony to this
internal pressure. Crawfurd was a colonial official, his concern with welfare of the native states demonstrates the impact that European national differences were having in Asia. It also demonstrates that colonial actors were considering the idea of the nation as an important aspect in understanding Asia. For the European traders, not only were they fighting European wars on foreign soil, they were also playing for high returns. These destabilising wars were beneficial for market share. By virtue of the mercantilist structure of trade (as outlined in Chapter Three), the relationship between the competing European trading companies was nationalist in nature. This resulted in the recognition of competing entities (Asian as well as European), all vying for security and increased trade. This meant that the Europeans saw each other as nations, and by virtue of association, the Asian polities adopted similar characteristics to British strategies for supremacy.

This need for security necessitated in negotiations over sovereign jurisdictions. The fact that the Europeans were engaged in local politics as a means of protecting their strongholds from the prying eyes of other European trading companies, extended the distinctions of sovereignty even further.

Crawfurd was scathing in his critique of this mercantilist involvement in local politics. In his arguments against mercantilism, Crawfurd developed a sophisticated theory on the evolution of colonialism. His thesis was a materialist study of the inter-relationship between sovereign power, economics and nationalism. Crawfurd (1820iii: 220) argued that “the treaties which” European companies “entered into with these governments had for their object to exclude all rivalry or competition, to obtain the staple products of industry at their own prices, and to possess the exclusive monopoly of the native market for their own imagined advantage”. These mercantilist treaties were commercial in their nature, but the economic and political environment meant that these treaties were also political. These treaties were not negotiated on equal terms, being “violently or surreptitiously obtained” (Crawfurd 1820iii: 220), the result of which, was that native states attempted to “evade the flagrant injustices, as well as absurdity, which an adherence to” these treaties “implied” (Crawfurd 1820iii: 220). But being a political treaty, the European traders “exercised sovereign authority” to defend the “perfidious violation of their rights,” punishing “to the utmost of their power” (Crawfurd 1820iii: 220).
The sin of mercantilism was the linking of sovereignty to economics. This led to ridiculous clauses, which undermined the natural rights of people in Southeast Asia to sell to whoever they chose. Crawfurd recognized the natural independence of Southeast Asian states, by virtue that these people saw themselves as being independent. His claim was that treaties on trading relations, which did not stipulate free trade, effectively removed the independence of native states, giving sovereign rights to the European companies with whom these Asian states made treaties. As pseudo-states, the companies enforced their rights with military power. Crawfurd interpreted the native states as pursuing a nationalist struggle for independence as a response, commenting “in the struggle which ensued, the independence of most of the natives of the Archipelago was subdued, and their commerce and industry subjected to the will of the monopolists” (Crawfurd 1820iii: 220)

Crawfurd argues that mercantilism led to the territorial occupation of Southeast Asia, and the subjugation of Southeast Asian nations. In pursuing this policy, the mercantilists destroyed the vibrant economy of Southeast Asia. With “the country depopulated and exhausted by wars” the “incentives to industry and production” were “removed” (Crawfurd 1820iii: 221). Independence “spontaneously” created “incentive to industry and production”. But faced with territorial control of wasteland, “the monopolist” responded by “converting the population of each particular country into predial slaves … to cultivate the most favoured products of their soil, and deliver these exclusively to the monopolist, at such prices as the latter might be pleased to grant” (Crawfurd 1820iii: 221).

Crawfurd saw mercantilism as the ruthless pursuit of profit that creates an empire out of state. This structure resulted in the destruction of the economy and resulted in the creation of an exploitative empire. Crawfurd saw this as a disaster for all parties involved. For the economy to thrive, Crawfurd believed nations needed their independence. However, Crawfurd saw the issue was more complex than mere withdrawal. Crawfurd’s economic arguments are disjointed. This political theory is

90 Crawfurd is an explosion of ideas. Arguably a good editor could have given a bit more organization to Crawfurd’s often contradictory ideas. Ironically Crawfurd is a case of “physician heal thyself” for he
often separated by large tracts of historical narrative. As a result, Crawfurd is often interpreted as an exploitative imperialist arguing for the subjugation of Southeast Asia (Quilty 1998) or as a calculating racist (Ellingson 2001). Crawfurd does make these claims, but he also castigates colonialism and recognizes the inherent independence of Southeast Asian societies. Crawfurd’s arguments need to be seen in a wider context. As Emma Rothschild maintains “our sense of the familiarity of eighteenth-century thought is an illusion” for we “know how the story ends” (Rothschild 2001: 44).

Rothschild’s point is that in the early-nineteenth century, the distinction between right and left did not exist as we understand it today. The model of Adam Smith as the father of conservative economics is a twentieth-century interpretation of enlightenment economics — a distinction that wasn’t apparent at the time. Crawfurd published History of the Indian Archipelago in 1820, four years after William Owen published a New View of Society; when William Cobbett had only just made the transition from radical conservative to a socialist; and, nearly thirty years before Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels would write the Communist Manifesto. Crawfurd was writing during a period when political rhetoric was still in a state of flux.

Crawfurd was a radical liberal writing about issues that had no immediate connection to domestic issues of a redistributive political economy. He was inherently concerned with the plight of people in Southeast Asia. His solution to this predicament was global trade. Although he believed that “no control ought to be attempted over … independent governments” in Asia and that a “friendly and equal correspondence [be] maintained with them”, he was well aware that Southeast Asia was politically devastated (Crawfurd 1820iii: 270). For Crawfurd, nearly 200 years of colonial mercantilism had devastated Asia’s political structures. This, in turn, had impeded the development of civilization in Southeast Asia. Therefore civilization and independence needed to be encouraged.

Both Crawfurd’s ideas were following in Stamford Raffles’s footsteps. Likewise, Raffles believed that Southeast Asia could not cope with independence. He advocated a guided independence modelled on the ancient empire of Majpaht, in which “Malay chiefs, though possessing the titles of Sultan, or Rajah, and in full possession of criticized Raffles ([1817] 1965) History of Java for being “hastily written, and not very well arranged” with the “style being … diffuse and frequently careless” (Crawfurd 1819: 413).
authority within their own domains, yet all held of a superior, or Suzerain, who was 
King of the ancient and powerful state of Majopahit ... who had the title of Bitara” 
(Raffles 1835i: 79). He argued that the British could reintroduce the legal structures of 
this empire, giving the Governor General of India the title Bitara, which “would give a 
general right of superintendence over, and interference with, all the Malay states” 
(Raffles 1835i: 80). Raffles and Crawfurd both argued that benign colonialism would 
 improve systems of governance and strengthen the state structures and national 
characters of Southeast Asian nations.

Both Raffles and Crawfurd maintained that mercantilism had damaged the pre-
European trading systems and led to the territorial acquisition of Southeast Asia. Raffles 
and Crawfurd proposed a reversion back to the entrepôt system of trade, in which “no 
control ought to be attempted over ... independent governments ...[in] the 
neighbourhood, but a friendly and equal correspondence maintained with them”. In 
forming these entrepôts, the principle of free trade needed to be paramount. In support 
of this argument, Crawfurd maintained “above all things, the imposition of treaties 
requiring exclusive privileges, or exemption from duties, ought to be avoided” 
(Crawfurd 1820iii: 270).

Mercantilism shaped the colonial structures of empire in Southeast Asia. There was no 
increasing frontier in Asia, but rather a speckled political landscape. This landscape led 
to the recognition of independent political entities. The economic doctrine of 
mercantilism increasingly transformed the political structures of Asian societies to that 
of colonial servitude. Colonialism led advocates of free trade, such as Raffles and 
Crawfurd, to place importance on the nation as an inherent structure within the 
marketplace.91 This created an economic logic for the independence of nations in

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91 Crawfurd’s belief in the nation as a natural entity in the market place was a step beyond many of his 
free marketeer contemporaries. But like many of the free marketeers, Crawfurd was Scottish. The Scottish 
connection is very important for understanding the evolution of laissez faire (Buchan 2004: 54-55). Key 
to this was the Jacobite rebellion (Buchan 2004: 300-301). With the failure of the rebellion, Scotland 
became committed to unionism. The post-1745 generation became the central force pushing for laissez 
faire approaches to government. In Crawfurd we see the recognition of laissez faire 
government and recognition of the potentials for a nationalist revolution.

The Crawfurd family history reflects this thought process. He was born on the island of Islay in the Inner 
Hebrides and was raised in the town of Bowmore, therefore Crawfurd was a highlander “still able to 
speak and think in Gaelic” (Keith 1917: 17). However, his relationship to the Hebrides was more 
complex. His paternal family heritage was that of a Lowland Southerner from Ayrshire (Editorial 1868).
Southeast Asia. But these nations existed in the imaginations of people like Raffles and Crawfurd. Both men realized these were theoretical nations: the structures were not there to make them independent entities; therefore a dose of educational colonialism was Dr Crawfurd’s advice. Through colonialism, theoretical nations would be transformed into real nations.

**The Geography of Empire**

The search for naval bases was the prime imperative of the British Government and the East India Company (Frost 2003), but this was coupled with a transformation in the

Crawfurd’s highland heritage was from his maternal side, with his mother being a Campbell from Islay. His father (Samuel Crawfurd) moved from the South to the Highlands after “visiting Islay, married Margret Campbell, daughter of James Campbell, of Ballinaby, the proprietor of a small estate which had been for several generations in the family” (therefore John Crawfurd could be called a Creole). Samuel Crawfurd was a doctor and moved into an underdeveloped landscape, which under the Laird of Islay, Daniel Campbell, was being rapidly modernized. Laird Campbell, like all the Campbells in Islay were not traditional Lairds. They purchased the island in 1614 from the MacDonalds, but were seen by the locals as landlords rather than Clan leaders, and failed to command the allegiance of the islanders during the civil wars of the 1640s (Caldwell 29/6/2007). Daniel Campbell of Shawfield purchased Islay from the Campbells of Cowdor in 1726 for 10,000£ (Caldwell 29/6/2007, Teignmouth 1836ii: 304). Therefore it is fair to say that by the late-eighteenth century the ruling elite of the island were Lowlanders or Highlanders from other areas that were not bound by tradition to the landscape and the people. In comparison Baron Teignmouth (1836ii: 308) commented “the farmers in Islay are chiefly natives of the island, or from the adjacent countries: there are among them few Lowlanders”. Of these natives Teignmouth (1836ii: 309) commented “I visited some other poor hovels, and found among the inmates only two who could speak English: they had a singularly wild appearance, and stared at me like savages”. Therefore although the Campbells were immersed in Highland culture, they were actively promoting the internal colonization of the Highlands, with the Highlanders themselves being considered ethnically different and considered as savages.

Daniel Campbell embraced the capitalist transformation of landownership in the Highlands, reducing all the retainers to the rank of mere tenants. He also built the town of Bowmore in 1768 as a commercial fishing port. It was the only town in Islay in the eighteenth-century, with a contemporary source commenting: “the only town in the island which deserve the name is Bowmore; well-furnished with shops and a pier” (Teignmouth 1836ii: 311). Samuel Crawfurd went to Islay as part of the internal colonization of the time, practicing as a doctor as well as purchasing land. He was noted by James MacDonald (1811: 67) (who conducted a survey of agricultural improvements for the Board of Agriculture) for “caring on [land] improvements with vigour and success”. Therefore, John Crawfurd grew-up in the remnants of a tribal-feudal society in which capitalist farming and commercial practices were being introduced, radically changing social relations and increasingly creating ethnic divisions that were being seen vertically in terms of the civilized and savage.

Therefore, John Crawfurd’s family heritage and childhood reflected the colonising of the highlands post-1745. Crawfurd’s own family is indicative of the ethno-political divisions that divided Scotland in the eighteenth century. Crawfurd’s childhood experiences of internal colonialism and his ability to become a native highlander, who could associate with the dispossessed, combined with his only family history of ethno-political struggles that just preceded his childhood, would have meant that Crawfurd was aware of the loss of ones nation through the expansion of empire. Did he draw on this experience to imagine the effect of mercantilism in Southeast Asia? This theme is certainly common amongst the Scottish
nature of trade in Southeast Asia which led the British to a re-engagement with Southeast Asian politics. In the 1770s Britain had one trading factory in Southeast Asia at Bencoolen, a small port on the west coast of Sumatra. Bencoolen was a seventeenth-century legacy, when British traders had access to the spice trade in the Indonesian archipelago. This trade effectively ended in 1682 when the Dutch forced the East India Company out of the Archipelago. Although the Company was excluded from the main game in the Archipelago, Bencoolen had become a profitable factory for ‘country traders’, who were British traders that were not part of the East India Company (Tarling 1999).

The growing role of ‘country traders’ was symptomatic of the change in British economic policy, from mercantilism to free trade. The East India Company was a mercantilist enterprize, which meant it was granted exclusive rights to British trade in Asia. This mercantilist logic was a driving force behind the conflicts between European traders in Asia, wherein each trader used the mercantilist logic of trade as a race to the bottom (which was total saturation to the point that the foreign market took on the structure of a domestic market) rather than the capitalist logic of forever expanding markets. The European trading companies saw themselves as being in a fight to the death, hence leading to the security dilemmas that were driving the need for bases. Although Mercantilism was nationalist in its trading structure, it inhibited the civil society aspect of the nation. The fact that the company had exclusive rights meant that other British traders were excluded from trading in Asia.

The company’s monopoly, which covered all trade from the Cape of Good Hope to the Cape Horn, was curtailed under the administration of William Pitt (the younger) (Frost 2003). Pitt and his cabinet were converts to Adams Smith’s ideas of free trade. Jointly they pushed for a curtailing of the company’s monopoly over British trade, and in relation to foreign trade they maintained that “nothing can be greater insanity than our being jealous of or averse to other Nations trading to our Asiatic Possessions” (Frost 2003: 176). After being elected into government 1784, Pitt made his objective clear,
however he was limited in what he could do until the company’s charter came up for renewal in 1793.

In 1791 Pitt finally succeeded in giving greater freedoms to British traders independent of the East India Company. The growth in ‘country traders’ was spurred in relation to the growing China trade. The ‘country traders’ developed a trading system between Britain, Southeast Asia and China, that traded British goods into Southeast Asia and Burma in return for goods that they could sell in China, such as opium, tin, pepper, birds’-nests and trepang (sea-cucumbers) (Kathirithamby-Wells 1999: 258). These measures were necessitated by the fact that early British industrial revolution manufactures were not wanted in China, and Chinese governments demanded that Chinese goods should be paid for in Silver. This transformation in trade made Southeast Asia an important staging post in the global trade system, necessitating a convergence with the security concerns of the East India Company and the British navy.

Prior to the liberalization of British trade, the practicalities of over-reach meant that the East India Company had already engaged in partnerships with ‘country traders’ in Southeast Asia. The strategic reality that the Company had few bases in Southeast Asia meant that British commodities needed to be traded in local ports, a task that was easy to delegate to ‘country traders’, who developed patronage relationships with local rulers (Kathirithamby-Wells 1999: 259). The East India Company’s trading post of Bencoolen and the locally-controlled Sumatran trading ports of Natal and Tapanuli became thriving hubs in the trade of opium and pepper, wherein ‘country traders’ acted as agents of the Company in the greater China trade (Kathirithamby-Wells 1999: 259).

The security demands of the East India Company were a similar concern for the ‘country traders’. Like the East India Company, the ‘country traders’ needed secure bases from which they could venture. The local ports were hazardous, with the traders being dependent on the security provided by local rulers. These ports lacked dry-dock facilities and secure storage for commodities such as opium. There were three key strategic problems for the British in Southeast Asia: one, Bencoolen was not on a direct route for the China trade; two, its port couldn’t protect shipping during the monsoon; and three, it was strategically out of the way and its inadequate port facilities meant that Bencoolen was useless in curtailing French power in the region (Stockwell 1999: 372).
The acquisition of Penang in 1786 was seen as a solution to these problems. The following account of the strategic case for colonising Penang was made by Sir Home Popham (1805: 35-36).93

Under a consideration of the advantages that Prince of Wales Island [Penang] already appears to possess, I cannot but think it the best situation for a Marine Establishment, and a Military Post. Moreover, if the French, combined with the Tippoo, were to acquire great power on the Malabar Coast, Bombay, so detached [is Penang] from the principal force of Britain the East Indies, might in that event fall … They would thus command the Straights of Malacca, consequently annoy our present Trade with China and the Eastern parts of India, and prevent a much greater increase of Commerce, which we have now the means of securing. … As the Enemy is already in possession of Batavia, which is an excellent station to command the Straights of Sunda, it becomes an additional and a very cogent reason, why we should do all in our power to make Prince of Wales Island impregnable; for if they get that Island, it will enable them also to command the Straights of Malacca, and oblige our China Trade from Europe and India to go through the Eastern Passage, which is a very Circuitous, and in some respects a dangerous route.

Its acquisition was testament to the growing role of the ‘country traders’. It being founded by Francis Light, a ‘country trader’ engaged in trade with Sumatra, the northern Malay states and Siam; Popham was also a ‘country trader’ for a brief period of time, whilst serving as a naval officer: a glaring conflict of interest even in his day.94 Crawfurd saw Penang as “the first European settlement ever made in the Indian Archipelago on principles of true wisdom and liberality” (Crawfurd 1820iii: 242). The acquisition was also a repetitive example of the strategic problems that faced the East India Company with all their bases, in the sense that it necessitated the recognition of nations within the colonial framework. Trade with Malay states was a precarious enterprise, for the Sultans were the dominant traders; therefore, liberal laissez faire trade in the absence of government did not exist. The Malay states were active agents in commerce and therefore the ‘country traders’ became pulled into the problems of local political pressures. It was in this context that Francis Light acquired Penang. The Sultan

93 Popham’s own identity is tantamount to the emerging importance of the nation. Although he was a hero of the Royal Navy, he belonged to the Knights of the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem which was the remnants of medieval international order of Crusaders, whilst also being a Fellow of the Royal Society (Popham 1805). Popham’s affiliations were a blend of the traditional and the modern, he was an active parliamentarian (Popham 2004), yet was part of an order that venerated tradition and took a strong line against any form of mass politics (Seward [1972] 1995).

94 One of Popham’s ships was the L’Etrusco, which he purchased with two partners (one Swiss and one French) the ship was seized by an English frigate as prize of war for contravention of the East India Company’s charter (Popham 2004).
of Kedah offered Penang to Light on the pretext that he would gain protection from the expansionist policies of the Bugis of Selangor (from the south), and Thai aggression from the north (Kathirithamby-Wells 1999: 259-260). Penang had been offered earlier to the British in 1771, but the Company refused to give political and military support to the Sultans of Kedah. When the same demands were made after 1786, the Company merely refused to honour defensive clauses in the agreement to cede Penang. Being an island, isolated from mainland politics, the company was practically able to dishonour Light’s agreements.

The ‘country traders’ traded across a political patchwork of competing jurisdictions. These competing native states all combined the sovereign authority of force to strengthen their commercial position. By its very nature, this atmosphere was inherently unstable. The British traders wanted to exist in a civil society framework in which they could trade freely without political considerations. This environment did not exist, hence their involvement in this patchwork political landscape. Their interventions were not as individuals, but rather as British nationals; therefore the context of the patchwork was changing from rival sultans to rival structures defined by national groupings.

**Nation in the Structure of the East India Company State**

British interests in Asia were not state interests, but rather private capitalist interests run by the East India Company. This was the common approach to colonial expansion in Asia, but represented a new form of empire that differed substantially to earlier forms of empire. Krishan Kumar (2005) argues that, since its conception, the British State was an empire. It conquered neighbouring kingdoms and integrated them within a system of royal unity. Britain was the empire of state, wherein the state took direct control of territory. The system of empire in North America, although it had private capitalist aspects, conformed to this classic model of empire that was effectively a very large state, with the colonies being governed by the state. In comparison the growth of Empire in Asia was initiated by private endeavours.
The distinction between the empire of the state and the empire of private capital is an important one. These two systems of power approach subjected peoples very differently. In the empire-state model, all subjects are the same. In comparison the corporate colonial state created distinct spheres of difference, thereby creating an empire of separate components that were seen as such. A subject of the East India Company ‘state’ was not a subject of the British State but rather their relationship was indirect, being subjects of subjects. The Asian subjects of the Company owed adherence to the company’s laws, but the company was subservient to the British State. This created the basic system of difference that marked the colonial state in Southeast Asia (Chatterjee 1999). This indirect system of governance between the British State and the Asian colonies created a particular relationship that created a space for the nation and made the nation a fundamental structure in the empire.

This space for the ‘nation’, which was created by the particular structure of the East India Company, was created around the corporate system of governance. In an empire-state, governance is essentially a class or caste structure. The governing class that administers the empire-state is marked as being different to that of the normal subjects. But the fact that they are a class or caste means that the governing class is part of the same kinship structure as the rest of the people (Smaje 2000). In comparison, the company state had no kinship structure. There is an inherently different sociology to an empire-state than there is to that of a corporate empire.

This sociological difference has a deep grounding in the identity of the company official. The officials were not unified through a particular class or caste group. Many of them came from the impoverished elements of aristocratic families, but not in every case. The term ‘nabob’ was symptomatic of the company official. The nabob was the particular derogatory British term used to describe company officials who had gained enormous wealth and then returned to Britain. The nabob then used their wealth to establish themselves as figures of social standing (Ahmed 2002). The key stigma facing the nabob was that they did not have an aristocratic lineage — they were self-made men that used capital and plunder to climb the social-ladder. The fact that they were not a unified class group in Britain meant that their only unity as a group was that they were British.
In Asia, the sociology of the Company official was more complex. In India and Southeast Asia a caste system was in existence. The company effectively placed itself within that caste structure, with company officials being at the apex of the system (Dirks 2001). But in doing so, the Company injected a concept of the nation into the caste system. The Company officials were marked by the fact that they were the top of the caste system and were not part of the kinship group that underwrote the caste system. The Company official was not making a home in India or Asia, therefore he was not becoming part of the local kinship community on an individual basis. The official’s legitimacy within the caste system was on a collective basis that had very little individual meaning. In addition the lack of class unity within the East India Company created further problems for integration into the caste system. The Company official was labelled a nabob in Britain for their lack of ‘breeding’, which in a sociological sense meant a lack of unifying rituals and hereditary claims that placed the official in the aristocracy. The lack of kinship markers defining the Company official meant that the official’s legitimacy within the caste system was reduced to the common denominator: they were flying the British flag. As officials, the Company’s agents governed on the bases of their national grouping rather than a caste grouping.

The particular social structure of the Company official in India made empire possible. The mix of divisions within India emphasized ethnic distinctions. Crawfurd commented that “it is singular, indeed, to remark how completely such distinctions are kept up”. He argued that it was “only among[st] the very lowest classes that there is much intermixture” (Crawfurd 1829: 73). Crawfurd saw these divisions as a “complete obstacle, for ages, to the establishment of any thing like a national government” and as such, enshrined the position of the British. Crawfurd understood that the idea of the nation was a threat to the principles of empire. He saw that if the differing nations, castes and classes could unite the empire would suffer a blow, with the Eurasians or creoles being the potential source of an Indian nation (Crawfurd 1829: 73). Yet he commented with a touch of pathos: “This is the formidable body that is to wrest the dominion of a hundred millions of people from us!” This group he argued were the most disenchanted: not being entitled to the rights of Europeans whilst also not being entitled to the rights of the natives. Unlike Benedict Anderson’s argument on creole nationalism, it was not the creoles semi-inclusion into the structure of empire, but rather their total exclusion that Crawfurd saw as the source of any potential nationalist struggle.
(Crawfurd 1829: 75). In 1829 he believed this group was too few in number to be any real threat:

They cannot … overthrow our dominion, however we may maltreat them, but the presence of a mass of discontented persons, as they must necessarily be, cannot but contribute, more or less, to its insecurity (Crawfurd 1829: 75)

Crawfurd could see the changing dynamics of politics. The Creole nation was a threat to empire. The Creole was a threat because this group had the ability to mediate between groups — they represented the future.95 Crawfurd’s discussion of the nation, caste and class within India demonstrates that the Company was emphasising divisions between groups. In doing so they were creating the space for the nation in the superstructure of the British Empire. This structure would remain for the duration of the empire, with the same structure continuing after the British state took over the East India Company. There were a number of spin-offs from this nation-based superstructure. One such spin-off was the logic of Social Darwinism. The fact that the nation was placed within a hierarchal caste system meant that the British nation had already assumed the future role allocated to it in Social Darwinist logic. Ethnocentrism was built into the architecture of British Imperialism. The empire was seen as a construction of different nations. This left a central question: What was Britain’s role in this empire of nations.

This chapter has examined how the nation emerged within the economic, geographical and political construction of the British Empire in Asia. Although the empire did not explicitly attempt to create and recognize the nation, its particular construction created logical spaces that were filled by the idea of the nation. This space created tensions, which John Crawfurd and others realized could form nationalist tensions within the structure of empire. This structure also introduced the idea of a hierarchy of nations, which (as we see in the following chapters) evolved into a biological conception of the hierarchy of racial-nations. The following two chapters examine the creation of this hierarchy of racial-nations.

95 Crawfurd was essentially bespeaking the modern perspective of hybridity that is a common point of analysis in multicultural societies. This is another example of Crawfurd’s sociological abilities.
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Southeast Asia

The empire-builders in Southeast Asia, such as Captain Lightfoot, William Marsden, Stamford Raffles, John Crawfurd and Charles Brooke were increasingly driven by a belief in the nation as an expression of civil society. This chapter explores the transition from the nation as a concept of civil society (that was mutable and provided a global recognition of individual equality through the nation), to a concept of the nation as a hierarchal system of biology that legitimized the imposition of imperial servitude.

This chapter develops the themes explored in Chapter Three, as applied to Southeast Asia. In Chapter Three we explored how the nation became interlined to the theoretical conceptions of material processes in forming human experience/development. This theoretical model generally went by the name conjectural history. This chapter begins by examining how conjectural history was used to understand the formation of nations in Asia. As was the case in Chapter Three, the barbarian played a key role in projecting the nation on to Southeast Asia. However, similar to the competing ideas of the barbarian (explored in Chapters Two and Three), the barbarian was a duality. This chapter develops these earlier competing themes of the barbarian to explore the transition from economic thought to racial thought.

This transition can be seen in the writings of William Marsden, Stamford Raffles, John Crawfurd, John Anderson, Charles Brooke, and George Windsor Earl. Some of these men, such as Marsden, Raffles, Crawfurd and Brooke, were leading colonial officials. William Marsden was the principal secretary of the East India Company’s station at Bencoolen on the west coast of Sumatra from 1771 to 1779. He was effectively the governor, although he didn’t possess that titular rank. Stamford Raffles had also been a governor in the British colony of Bencoolen, but would go on to become colonial governor of Java during the Napoleonic Wars and the founder of Singapore. Both of
these men engaged in the wider *literati* culture of the time and were seen as authorities
on Southeast Asian culture. Their inability to influence colonial policy in London was
the prime mover in driving them to publish on Asian culture. Crawfurd was the protégé
of Marsden and Raffles, but had been exposed to a wider education prior to holding
colonial office. Crawfurd was educated at Edinburgh University as a doctor during the
university’s heyday as a leading centre or biological and racial thought. Crawfurd would
later become the President of the London Ethnological Society. He also attempted to re-
establish the reputation of Robert Knox after the Burke and Hare scandal (Ellingson
2001: 279, 286). As such, Crawfurd represents a transition figure between the
‘inclusive’ vision of a liberal empire outlined by Marsden and Raffles and the (later)
hierarchical Empire of the late Victorian age that emphasized Social Darwinism.

John Anderson was also part of this early tradition; however, he was a low-level official
given the task of formulating policy on Sumatra and the Malay peninsular in relation to
Siamese power in the region. Anderson maintained that Britain should champion the
cause of Malay independence from both Dutch imperialism and Siamese imperialism.
Anderson, unlike Marsden, Raffles and Crawfurd, was too junior to implement his
ideas, and his writing was an extension of his official duties rather than an attempt to
objectively study Southeast Asia (Reid 1971: v). In this capacity, Anderson’s work is a
reflection of early official work on Southeast Asia.

The liberal ideals of Marsden, Raffles and Crawfurd continued into the 1830s and 1840s
in the imperial dreams of James Brooke. Brooke was a mixture of adventurer and
reformer, who established an independent regime in Sarawak based on a mixture of
British and traditional laws (Tarling 1992). In doing so, Brooke maintained the general
liberal objectives of Marsden, Raffles and Crawfurd in an attempt to enact a benign
imperialism that would educate the native inhabitants.

For the above historical figures, the problem in Southeast Asia was that the Asian
nations were degenerate. These nations were divided and had lost individual initiative,
courtesy of their corrupt political structure. This loss of initiative and piratical political
structure was part of a wider belief in social ‘decline and fall’. Therefore, Malay nations
would engage in criminal acts such as piracy rather than legitimate commerce. This
creative role of empire was a dominant theme in the colonial processes established by
Raffles and Brooke, but it led to a problem: what is the purpose of empire once the native has learnt the lessons of liberal governance? This question had the power to destroy the legitimacy of the British Empire and, by the 1840s, was raised as a critique of colonialism in Southeast Asia by Joseph Hume and Richard Cobden. This critique will be addressed in Chapter Seven, but the response to this critique was already being established prior to problems arising from the critique. Race became the legitimising factor for the British Empire’s presence in Southeast Asia.

Brooke and Earl represent the last gasp of benign liberal imperialism. The tango-like duality: governing in the name of an enlightened vision, whilst also adapting local customs to British institutions. This maintained the integrity of practical native independence; whilst the reality was the imposition of imperial governance. This liberal dream ended in failure, but in this failure, the logic of the nation would adopt new meanings relating to biology.

Biological conceptions of the nation legitimized perpetual servitude. These racial arguments were already being established by John Crawfurd and others who argued that the biology of the natives in Southeast Asia meant that the nations there were in a perpetual state of childhood or, in some cases, degeneracy. The naturalization and use of the nation became a key component of the colonial process.

**National Characterization and Conjectural History in Southeast Asia**

Beyond the practice of trade and diplomacy, separate political states were theorized as civil societies (as outlined in Chapters Two and Three). This tradition had emerged from a myriad of seventeenth-century writers, and used as a theoretical starting point to understand political systems in Asia. James Mill had made civil society a key theme in his *History of India* (1820), and Marsden (1811) and Raffles (1817) had likewise based much of their analysis on civil society. Civil society was part of a wider movement in theorising called conjectural history (expanded in Chapter Three). Conjectural history was a pivotal point of meaning in William Marsden’s *History of Sumatra* (1811). Using the evolutionary idea of civil society,

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96 Marsden (1811: 204) doesn’t use the term conjectural history, instead he refers to the development of civil society. I am using the term conjectural to refer to a type of social theory that was pervasive in the late-eighteenth century British Enlightenment.
Marsden ([1811] 1966: 204) examined the peoples of Sumatra in relation to other nations in the world, placing them on a five-staged system of development.

Though far distant from that point to which the polished states of Europe have aspired, they yet look down, with an interval almost as great, on the savage tribes of Africa and America. Perhaps if we distinguish mankind summarily into five classes; but of which each would admit of numberless subdivisions; we might assign a third place, to the more civilized Sumatrian, and a fourth, to the remainder.

The Sumatrans were representative of a particular stage in human development, and could be “considered as a people occupying a certain rank in the scale of civil society” (Marsden [1811] 1966: 204). Movement on this scale was based on material progress; and Marsden alludes to this, stating:

As mankind are by nature so prone to imitation, it may seem surprising that these people have not derived a greater share of improvement, in manners and arts, from their long connection with Europeans…. Some probable cause of this backwardness may be suggested. We carry on few or no species of manufacture at our settlements; every thing is imported ready wrought to its highest perfection; and the natives, therefore, have no opportunity of examining the first process, or the progress of the work (Marsden [1811] 1966: 205).

Art and manners are placed as subservient too — and as side effects of — technological advancement in Marsden’s thinking. The connection between art and manners to material development corresponds to the materialistic nature of conjectural history. Raffles makes a similar acknowledgement when comparing the Javanese, Malays and Bugis nations, stating:

The comparative advancement of these three nations in the arts of civilized life, seems to be directly as the fertility of the soil they occupied, or the inducements they held out to foreign intercourse; and inversely, as the indulgence of their own roving, adventurous spirit, and piratical habits. The arts never fix their roots but in a crowded population, and a crowded population is generally created only on a fertile territory (Raffles [1817] 1965: 58).

Like Marsden, Raffles places emphasis on productivity and technological development. The view of Marsden and Raffles was in contrast to that of the racial theorists, including Darwin who saw art and manners as being either instruments of, or, reflections of,
biological conditions determining the progress of the racial nation. John Crawfurd, the understudy of Marsden and Raffles is indicative of this change, representing both at different stages of his life. Explicit in the arguments of Marsden and Raffles is a belief that the nation is materially developed, and as such the nation was dependent on materials for the production of character, but the nation’s character limits the nation’s capacity to develop further on the scale of civil society. Based on the raw materials of wealth (agriculture and resources), this reasoning provided an explanation why the Javanese (who farmed on very fertile soil) appeared more civilized than the Battecks of Sumatra (Quilty 1998).

Conjectural history began with the barbarian, with the barbarian being the theoretical base. Yet unlike the earlier ‘state of nature’ arguments, conjectural history carried the barbarian through. As explained in Chapter Three, the barbarian (like the savage) was a product of modern thought. Yet unlike the savage, the barbarian did have a history that preceded the Enlightenment. The barbarian was a product of the ancient world, and was a cultural idea that represented an opposition to empire. Schooled in Enlightenment philosophies of Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith and David Hume, John Crawfurd maintained that through linguistics “we can trace the progress of the savage state to semi-barbarism”. That is the transformation of the savage into the barbarian. Crawfurd (1820ii: 96) saw the barbarian was the basis of linguistic culture. This position is common across British theoretical writing in the early-nineteenth century. This basic barbarian culture is improved as “the numerous dialects of the first savages unite to form one more copious and improved tongue” (Crawfurd 1820ii: 96). Therefore, Crawfurd maintained that “in the infancy of society, in every part of the world, men are broken into small communities”. These communities were “numerous in proportion to their barbarism, and, as they improve[d], tribes and hordes become nations, extensive according to the degree of their civilization” (Crawfurd 1820ii: 79). The nation was based on the barbarian core. This core was brought forward with development, with the barbarian risk-taker and lover of freedom continuing. This was a blessing and a curse.

Metropolitan thought during the early-nineteenth century focused on the northern barbarian as the nucleus of freedom and capitalism (Chapters Two and Three). But in Southeast Asia, traders and colonists were confronted with the barbarian. The Southeast Asian barbarian was not a pure barbarian but rather a “degenerate” barbarian. Marsden
([1811] 1966: 207) aptly makes this claim: “the Malay inhabitants have an appearance of degeneracy, and this renders their character totally different from that which we conceive of a savage, however, justly their ferocious spirit of plunder on the eastern coast, may have drawn upon them that name”. Like Marsden, Raffles and Crawfurd are clear that Southeast Asian nations were degenerates. Their savagery was not a pure savagery but rather a depravity.

The need for order was the key, if the barbarian was to progress. The problem for Southeast Asia, according to Raffles, Marsden and Crawfurd, was that there had been too many empires. There were too many ‘decline and falls’ leading to barbarism as an endemic way of life. Crawfurd moved down the racial path, arguing there was a particularism to Southeast Asian barbarism commenting:

The feebleness, unskilfulness, and barbarism even of the most improved of the nation of the Indian islands, have always prevented them from establishing permanent empire, and the most considerable states have been but of momentary duration. (Crawfurd 1820iii: 25)

Crawfurd saw the Southeast Asian inhabitants as having weak character. Their problem was a lack of order to their character. As a result they were unable to create long-term empires and states. Crawfurd saw empire as the opposite of barbarism, but like Gibbon, Crawfurd saw the success of an empire as being based on the barbarian culture. When combined with order, barbarian culture created civil society.

Civil society in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries was a parallel concept to nation; being in many respects the pathway to developing a conception of the nation beyond the pejorative. John Crawfurd’s History of the Indian Archipelago (1820) is an example of the parallel relationship between civil society and the nation. Unlike his mentors, Marsden and Raffles, Crawfurd rarely uses the term civil society, preferring instead to use the term ‘nation’. Although strong similarities exist, Crawfurd’s use of the nation is slightly different to the civil society model, with Crawfurd also using the term ‘polity’. He uses ‘social polity’ to distinguish a politicized society, but this is broken into conjectural levels of social development (Crawfurd 1820iii: 5). A wandering tribe is the most basic level of polity (Crawfurd 1820iii: 5-6). It is
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transformed into a nation on the “formation of permanent residences,” at which point “a village and a nation were synonymous terms” (Crawfurd 1820iii: 6).

The village or nation thus formed would necessarily require a form of polity for the maintenance of internal order, for attack, and for defence; and for this purpose would elect an elder for their government, — officer to assist him, — and, perhaps, a priest or astrologer to make their peace with Heaven (Crawfurd 1820iii: 7).

Crawfurd distinguishes the emergence of governance as being distinctly different to the emergence of the nation, with the nation preceding the establishment of governance. The nation being the barbarian core needs order to thrive. This is the parallel between civil society and the nation. Crawfurd consistently takes the position that nation existed as a separate entity to the state. This position is most notable in Crawfurd’s critique of mercantilism. His critique argued that it is trade which is based on sovereign power and mercantilism inhibits the general wealth of the nation by limiting individual freedoms. In comparison free trade increases the wealth of the nation by increasing individual wealth. These arguments are consistent throughout volume three of his History of the Indian Archipelago (1820). Crawfurd used the nation in the same way as many of his contemporaries used civil society. In doing so, the nation became a structure that transcended the mere whims of government.

This view of the materialist theory of civil society meant that Southeast Asian nations were characterized as exemplifying a lower form of social development. The British stereotyping of the Malays as warlike pirates, who had a particular fascination with individual honour and who were governed by despotic Sultans, was a depiction envisioning a barbarian core to Malay society. This barbarian core was an early conception of Malay ethnicity. In his classification of the Sumatrans, Marsden ([1811] 1966: 204) didn’t make an analogy of the Sumatrans to the feudal societies of Europe, arguing instead that the developed Sumatran states “should rank [with] the nations on the northern coast of Africa, and the more polished Arabs”.

The aristocratic pretensions of the Malays are promoted in British representations of the Malays. Raffles, Marsden and Crawfurd do refer to the Malay elite as an aristocracy that
practiced savage rights. However, for British writers, the Malays exist in a pre-feudal condition reminiscent of the barbarian hordes.

Their generally wandering and predatory life induces them to follow the fortune of a favourite Chief, and to form themselves into a variety of separate clans. They may not be inaptly compared, as far as their habits and notions go, to some of the borderers in North Britain, not many centuries ago. (Raffles 1835i: 258)

Pierre Poivre was a French traveller. His book, *Travels of a Philosopher* (1770) reached three editions in Britain by 1770. Sections were published in the leading British political journal *The Annual Register* and these argued that Malays were possessed by a feudal condition:

Travellers, who make observations on the Malais, are astonished to find, in the centre of Asia, under the scorching climate of the line, the laws, the manners, the customs, and the prejudices of the ancient inhabitants of the north of Europe. The Malais are governed by feudal laws, that capricious system, conceived for the defence of the liberty of a few against the tyranny of one, whilst the multitude is subjected to slavery and oppression (Poivre 1770: 1).

Poivre was a former missionary in Into-China who became enticed by the opportunities of mercantile trade but, like all enlightened individuals of the eighteenth-century, he also considered himself as philosopher. Poivre believed that civilization was dependent on agriculture; however, in a rather circular argument, he deemed that the progressive force of agriculture languishes in the hands of those “still too much slaves to the prejudices of their ancient barbarity” (Poivre 1770: 2). In a similar vain, John Crawfurd also saw agriculture as the key to social development (Crawfurd 1820i: 15). But agriculture also created problems. On one level it was the basis of all servitude, with Crawfurd taking a stance very close to Jean Jacques Rousseau97 and Edward Gibbon:

In that portion of the globe … man … no sooner acquires a little industry and a little property, than he is made a slave on account of them, just as he himself enslaves the docile and laborious animals, while the useless savages of the desert or forest enjoy their freedom (Crawfurd 1820iii: 4).

97 There is an irony to this, for Crawfurd was very critical of Rousseau latter in life for being simplistic in this universal connection between property and evolution. Ter Ellingson (2001: 290-303) argues that it was Crawfurd who created the myth that Rousseau wrote about the ‘noble savage’, when in fact, Rousseau never actually wrote about the noble savage.
Crawfurd was at one with his contemporaries in romanticising the freedom of the barbarian; but in making this argument, there is a marked difference from Rousseau’s concept of servitude in the *Origins of Inequality* (1761) and the *Social Contract* (1791). Both Rousseau and Gibbon saw servitude as a condition of industry. Crawfurd was geographically locating the social development of Asia, and, in so doing, was marking it as separate to other regions of the globe. According to Crawfurd, Asia had a particular mode of economic development that differed from conventional economic theory. Therefore, Crawfurd was carefully deploying material arguments to present a case for Asian exceptionalism.

There are multiple layers to Crawfurd’s Asiatic particularism. On one level, Crawfurd makes a racial distinction, arguing that this is a particular trait of the Asiatic race. This concept of race is complex, and will be fully examined later in the chapter. Crawfurd’s primary distinction is material. That the particularism of the Indian Archipelago is courtesy of “the softness and fruitfulness of the climate,” which, in Malthusian-style, he argued was “the consequent facility of living with little exertion; in a word, to the absence of that wholesome discipline by which man, in severer regions, is bread to habits of hardihood, enterprize, and independence” (Crawfurd 1820iii: 4). Crawfurd believed environment had a powerful impact on the creation of the barbarian. This environment forged the basic barbarian character.

Crawfurd praised the fertile environment of the tropics, in which crops grew easily. Unlike many of his contemporaries who saw the tropics as alien (Savage 1984), Crawfurd appeared at ease and comfortable with the tropical climate. He saw the tropics as a health environment, that which would alleviate the diseases of old age (such as rheumatism) and good living (gout) (Crawfurd 1820iii). Despite his praise for the overall conditions, Crawfurd believed this was too much of a good thing, with “the possession of wealth, the necessary consequence of a soil of great fertility, encouraged in Java the progress of absolute power, by strengthening the hands of those in authority”

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98 There is a strong correlation to Karl Marx’s idea of Asiatic mode of production. There is no evidence that Marx read Crawfurd in his footnotes. The connection is probably James Mill. Marx does refer to Mill’s ([1817] 1820) *History of India*, and Crawfurd likewise defers to Mill. Mill was the first to put forward this idea of a particular Asian mode of development, that somehow Asia followed the wrong pathway.
Crawfurd’s theory of authority was grounded in material economics. He maintained that the productive nature of the land created a system of exploitation that was particular to Southeast Asia.

The legitimate impost exacted as the reward of superintending the water of irrigation, increases in the progress of arbitrary power, and, accordingly, among every tribe where the right of property in the land is established, that is, among the whole of the civilized tribes, the sovereign, in one shape or another, comes at length to be considered as the sole proprietor, and the people as labouring it for his benefit (Crawfurd 1820iii: 47).

The management of the land created systems of sovereignty. This was sovereignty of ownership. Crawfurd believed that the collective good, which had initiated with systems of agriculture, had disappeared in Asia. The peasantry in the ‘civilized tribes’ were transformed into virtual slaves working for the raja. Crawfurd believed that this was a conjectural level of social development, stating: “the agriculture of the Indian islands cannot be deemed to be in a more favourable situation than that of Europe in the middle ages, when the soil was cultivated by wretched bondmen, or tenants at will, whose condition was little better” (Crawfurd 1820iii: 61). He was adamant that Southeast Asia took a wrong turn, resulting in this detrimental system of authority being perpetuated rather than broken. However, Crawfurd was ambiguous when it came to explaining why this particularism emerged. He regularly defers to environmental explanations, such as the climate, and follows Adam Ferguson (1767) in speculating that it is the fault of a society based on rice production rather than grain production (Crawfurd 1820i: 15). These were all material rationalist reasons that did not stipulate any difference between the Asians and Europeans, but Crawfurd also regularly referred to race as a reason for the particularism of Asia: a perception which he became more ardent in advocating later in life. These possibilities are not united in an overall argument, which makes racial explanations the explanation of last resort. He argued the perpetuation of this system of authority stifled innovation and negated any entrepreneurial spirit that the peasants held.

The proportion exacted as tax depends on the fertility of the soil, the extent of improvement, and the amount of the population. The encroachments of the sovereign advance with the improvement of the society, and the peasant is ultimately left with no more than a bare subsistence (Crawfurd 1820iii: 47).

One suspects Crawfurd was thinking of his own highland origins in this statement, see footnote 91.
Using *laissez faire* theory, Crawfurd reveals the problem of sovereignty in the archipelago. Sovereignty had become a synonym for ‘ownership’ rather than governance in the public interest. Taxation (a principle Crawfurd was generally against) had been reduced to rent, wherein it was “spent, in short, upon the court, its officers, or agents, and not a farthing returns to be added to agricultural capital and to the improvement of the land” (Crawfurd 1820iii: 62). Quoting Adam Smith’s ideas on national wealth, Crawfurd maintains “Java, and every other country of the Archipelago, are really poor countries, and must, in spite of a soil the most eminently gifted, always continue so while a land-tax … is persevered” (Crawfurd 1820iii: 63). This system of land tax destroyed any real notion of private property (Crawfurd 1820iii: 54-67). And for the advancement of the archipelago, it would be necessary “to establish a right of private property” (Crawfurd 1820iii: 63), transform the notion of government and create a general environment that favours free trade (Crawfurd 1829).

As a keen admirer of Adam Smith, Raffles also believed that free trade promoted civilization (Raffles [1817] 1965i: 230-32). As governor of Java, Raffles undertook a radical transformation of the taxation and land-rent system as a means of crippling and destroying the Javanese aristocracy, which he believed was hindering Javanese development (Bastin 1957). The similarities in Raffles’ and Crawfurd’s thought reflects the wider imperial project of free trade. During the early part of the nineteenth-century a struggle occurred within Britain over the benefits of free trade versus protectionism. The empire became one aspect in this wider debate. Focus is often placed on the Corn Laws as the central struggle in this debate, but imperial governance was equally divided between protectionism and free trade. Britain’s relationships with the United States of America, Europe, India and the Southeast Asian states were all aspects of this wider debate. Debate raged in India between advocates of free trade, who wanted to maintain British involvement as a trading empire, and followers of Robert Clive, Warren Hastings, and more importantly Richard Wellesley, who had shaped British policy in India as a policy of extraction through taxation (James 1997: 187-206). Clive and Hastings had begun the territorial conquest of India, but it was Wellesley that had radically transformed the East India Company’s direction from aggressive trading to colonial governance.
The free traders gained a dominance progressively, as the free trade reformers gained dominance throughout Britain. The project of free trade was much wider than the modern concept of free trade. Central to this project was the end of slavery and bondage, this was not limited to the African-American slave trade, but included forms of bondage in India and Southeast Asia. Colonial Office officials in Whitehall, such as James Stephen, actively worked to end the slave trade by promoting colonial governors on their zeal to end the bondage in native societies as well as the British Empire (Porter 1999: 205). The free trade reforms became linked with the wider utilitarian movement. For the utilitarians all people were theoretically the same, free trade was the focal point of this policy, which allowing people to pursue their material interests.

This policy of universal free trade became a justification for empire. Edmund Burke had castigated the British East India Company in his campaign to impeach Warren Hastings. In doing so he aimed to create the “Magna Charta of Hindostan” (Porter 1999: 199). Burke’s emphasis was on restraining British interests in India and maintaining support for traditional Indian customs. Liberal reformers saw many of these customs as regressive and harmful to the individualism that utilitarianism held so dear. Between 1815 and the Indian Mutiny of 1857 there was an official policy of modernising Indian society along utilitarian lines (Burroughs 1999: 174, Chatterjee 1999, Mehta 2004, Stokes 1959). Tradition was seen as a problem to free trade. Tradition created social divisions that prevented people pursuing their own incentives. This directly affected the viability of free trade. For trade to occur without military might forcing commodity transfers, local customs (that impeded trade) needed to be transformed. This meant that imperialism became an essential tool in transforming native social attitudes to make free trade possible.

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100 A good primary account of slavery in the British Empire is anonymously written *Slavery and the Slave Trade in British India: with notices of the existence of these evils in Ceylon, Malacca, and Penang: drawn from official documents* (1841).

101 Uday Sing Mehta argues that it was Burke rather than the Utilitarians that saw grounds for rights outside of Empire, arguing:

Despite the weighty ballast of the nation, Burke knew and understood that it was not assured a guarantee of permanence… The simple reason for Burke’s sympathy for India and his deep worries regarding the British colonial extension in it was because he recognized in India the ingredients of nationhood and sensed in Britain a disregard for the conditions of its own nationhood (Mehta 2004: 189).
The conjectural levels of social development were dependent on the maintenance of liberal ideas of individualism drawn from the barbarian core. This became the true path of civilization (Meek 1976). It also meant that the racial divisions of the late-nineteenth century, which created the biological duality that separated the European from the native, were in opposition to the laissez-faire belief of the early-eighteenth century. The liberal reformers generally maintained the universal equality of humans, with their opposition to slavery being their utmost example, but they also argued that social customs meant that most native societies were incapable of reaching their equality. The native was equal before god, but as a human-equal (to Europeans) the native’s equality was potentially dependent on the natives’ realization of their own individuality and willingness to participate in free trade. In this form of universalism, equality was reduced from a natural right to a theoretical framework of social development. The liberal logic of empire gave the native two choices: recognize free trade and partake in the system, or be taught how to partake in the system (Mehta 2004).

Marsden, Raffles and Crawfurd reflect an approach to studying identity that revolved around a belief in an acquired cultured identity. Central to this idea was a belief in the barbarian character and its transformation through different forms of conditioning and authority. The barbarian core to a culture was carried forward through this transition. The success of this transition was dependent on the material conditions and governance structures. Humans are presented as being universally the same. All human social structures are derived from the barbarian. These material transformations of the barbarian were seen as conjectural levels of social development. This conjectural framework, within the greater logic of free trade, was a basic conception of the nation, wherein the nation was the developed version of the barbarian. This barbarian was transformed successfully through strong government, supported by civil society and a free trade system. This free trade system was the developed freedom of the barbarian.

**National Character and Piracy**

Central to the British discourse on national identity in Southeast Asia was the idea of the Malays. From the early to mid-nineteenth century, British colonial policy supported the independence of the Malay states (Tarling 1969: 53). By the late-nineteenth century
this independence had become subjugation, with the British establishing the Federation of Malay States as a ‘colonial state’ encompassing the Malay peninsular (1895). This eventual colonization of the Malays occurred under the pretext of protecting the Malays: protection from Siamese aggression (Tarling 1969), and protection from the economic threat of immigrant labour (Abraham 2004: 177-195, Sundaram 1986), and finally in the name of protecting the Malays in the new modernized economy (Abraham 2004: 40-62, Alatas 1977, Cannadine 2002: 59, Hirschman 1986: 332). British imperialism in Southeast Asia was presented as a project of modernising and protecting Malay sovereignty. A central component in this project was the characterization of the Malay identity.

In the early-nineteenth century, the Malays were viewed as the dominant national group in Southeast Asia and extended far beyond the Malay peninsular, with early travel accounts placing the Malays across the entire archipelago. Invariably, whenever the Malays are discussed, they are characterized as lazy, leading to the cliché: ‘the lazy Malay’ (Alatas 1977). The other common trait attributed to the Malays was ‘running amok’; in which the Malay became engulfed in a fanatically crazed trance that transformed a placid individual into a mindless killer that destroyed everything in its wake. This irrationality was part of a dual stereotype, in which the Malay was also seen as a weak character that was incapable of work. This dual stereotype presented an image of the Malay being lazy and mentally unhinged. This was also a symbol of the barbarian. Raffles ([1817] 1965i: 298) connects this phenomenon mainly to military attacks:

The phrenzy generally known by the term muck or amok, is only another form of that fit to desperation which bears the same name among the military, and under the influence of which they rush upon the enemy, or attack a battery, in the manner of a forlorn hope.

Quoting others, Raffles maintains that amok can also occur as a result of “any slight offence” in which the Malay “will run amok to be revenged; and even if they are run through and through with a lance, they will advance until they close with their adversary” (Raffles [1817] 1965i: xxv). Raffles argued that amok was an act of honour. Later writers present amok as a bizarre curiosity, and a symptom of the barbaric depravity, such as the following:
The people of Java indulge to excess in the use of this drug [opium]. Upon such of them, as well natives as slaves, as have been rendered desperate by the pressure of misfortune or disappointment, it operates in a frightful manner, giving them an artificial courage, and rendering them frantic, in which state they sally fourth in all the horrors of despair, to attack the object of their hatred, crying amok! Amok! Which signifies Kill! Kill! Thus infuriated they indiscriminately stab every person they meet, till self-preservation at length renders it necessary to destroy them. (Morewood 1824: 95)

Rather than a true barbarian trait of freedom and honour, amok becomes a drug-induced depravity: a coward’s form of barbarism. By mid-century, amok was almost a tourist attraction, with every writer on Southeast Asia feeling the need to comment on amok. John Turnbull Thomson (1865: 48-49) commented on this fascination with amok arguing that there were two forms of amok:

The Amok of the battle-field, and the Amok of the peaceful city or village. In the descriptions of battles, the Malay historians make their greatest heroes terrible amokers; and by do doing, they ascribe to them desperate bravery… This is the Malay “amok” of the battle-field… The “amok” of the peaceful city or village has other features. It has not the brilliancy of bravery, but the darkness of insanity, as its instigator. Thus, if the maniac were to slay father or mother, wife or children (and this sometimes happens in happy England)… The peculiar feature of this species of “amok” is in the indiscriminate slaughter of all persons encountered by the maniac, and the cause of this is not to be ascribed to the maniac, but to the crowded state of native villages, and the gregarious mode of life of some of their inhabitants. In England, people dwell in walled and secure houses and rooms; a dangerous maniac’s career is confined to these; but, as the Malay may be said to live in the open air, the maniac Malay is more widely dangerous.

Thomson argued that any form of amok was very rare, only occurring, to his knowledge, three times during his numerous years in Malaya in the 1840s. Thomson focuses on the second type of amok rather than the first type, thereby linking amok to insanity rather than honour. He also claims that amok should be seen as a primordial character trait because “their histories prove that the Malays amoked when their religion was idolatrous” (Thomson 1865: 50). This meant that the killing of Europeans during an amok became an act of insanity not anti-colonial resistance. The domestic nature of empire meant that barbarism was excluded as a means of resistance from
within the boundaries of the empire. Therefore, amok became an historical tradition that was separated from contemporary reality. The then contemporary amoks did not occur on the battlefield, but in the village, therefore rather than being acts of honour, they became acts of insanity. The transformation of amok is indicative of the transformation of the Malay from the barbarian to the degenerate barbarian.

These depictions of the Malays go to the heart of the liberal dilemma of nature and nurture, the role of custom and the capacity of the native to have independence. Characterization of the Malays highlighted their irrationality. This lack of rational control was not presented as an innate ‘natural’ condition, but rather a cultural condition. This meant the Malays were capable of being transformed into rational beings capable of self-government.

The Malays were seen as coastal people, living off fishing, trade and piracy. Despite Malay being the language of commerce in the region and the structure of political power in Malay society was dependent on control of ports (Reid 1975), the Malays were not considered a maritime trading community, with John Anderson commenting: “The maritime Malays are, in short, neither a useful or industrious people, and upon the whole, contribute more to harass and obstruct commerce, than to facilitate its operations” (Anderson [1840] 1971: 71). Anderson was limiting commerce to British perceptions of trade. In doing so, native trade was de-legitimized, whilst British systems of trade were placed as the central aspect of social development.

As the nineteenth-century progressed the reference to piracy became a necessity. But Marsden ([1811] 1966) didn’t consider piracy a major issue, mentioning it only twice (and in each instance briefly) throughout the 479 pages of his book on Sumatra. Anderson however saw piracy as an endemic problem, whilst Raffles sighted piracy as an endogenous cause of the degradation the Malay character.

The prevalence of piracy on the Malayan Coasts, and the light in which it was viewed as an honourable occupation, worthy of being followed by young princes and nobles, is an evil of ancient date, and intimately connected with the Malayan habits (Raffles [1817] 1965: 232).

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102 Empire transcends our concepts of international and domestic politics. For it transforms aspects of international politics into domestic politics.
Clearly Raffles didn’t agree that piracy was an honourable occupation. This reference to piracy summarizes Raffles’s concerns with the Malays as a commercial nation. Piracy was against the culture of civility. Unlike European piracy which was a fringe activity, Malay piracy was a central part of society derived from the nobility itself. This official sanctioning meant that piracy went to the heart of the Malay character, being romanticized in “old Malayan romances” and in “fragments of their traditional history” which “constantly refer with pride to piratical cruises” (Raffles [1817] 1965: 232). Implicit within Raffles’s words is a belief that the Malays do not understand the concept of honest work, preferring the opportunities of plunder to that of the grind of industry.

The suppression of piracy and more general notion of ‘outrage’ became a constant policy of the Straits’ government (Tarling 1969: 53). The strategic structure of this policy was marked by the rejection of territorial control, instead the British favoured maintaining influence over the Malay states. In doing so, the British policy maintained the independence of the Malay states through an attempt to redefine Malay independence within the confines of British hegemonic policing. In suppressing piracy and inter-state disputes, the British were actively transforming the nature of Southeast Asian commerce and statehood.

In the 1960s and 1970s there was a change in the historiography of Southeast Asia. Many new studies of early-nineteenth century Southeast Asia became highly critical of the British and Dutch use of the word ‘piracy’ to legitimize imperialism in Southeast Asia (Tarling 1999: 410). By crushing what they defined as piracy, the British destroyed roving sea gypsy populations and the long tradition of roving armed maritime populations that were considered a challenge to British trade. This literature demonstrated that the word ‘pirate’ was a politicized tool of imperialism which was used to destroy native power bases (Tarling 1999). Local traders that did not trade within the security confines of free trade presented a potential challenge, demonstrating that free trade was dependent on British naval hegemony. Liberalism had to be enforced through imperialism to create a universal system, which demonstrates the limits of liberalism. Liberalism produced cultural divisions, but these cultural divisions needed to conform to the liberal norms of an atomistic individual.
James Brooke’s creation of a private state in the guise of a ‘traditional’ Malay kingdom was one of the more glowing examples of this policy, wherein Brooke claimed to be creating a polity protecting indigenous customs, destroying piracy, whilst at the same time creating an environment for commerce to flourish (Mundy 1848, Templer 1853i: 4-13). These were enlightened liberal dreams, that existed to serve indigenous society; but indigenous society had to be transformed so that it would not threaten Brooke’s broader commercial objectives. This meant that liberalism promoted indigenous rights, but within the confines of what liberalism dictated. Native rejection of liberal policies was not tolerated and any opposition was defined as piracy and ‘justly’ crushed (Rubin 1998: 241-265).

References to piracy corresponded to the discussion of Malay barbarism, which progressively acted as a means of characterising the Malays’ basic character. In doing so, the Malays became an objective for the creation of the ‘benign’ nurturing governance of empire. Marsden states: “The Malay may … be compared to the buffalo and the tiger. In his domestic state, he is indolent, stubborn, and voluptuous as the former, and in his adventurous life, he is insidious, blood-thirsty, and rapacious as the latter” (Marsden [1811] 1966: 208). Marsden links this bloodthirsty nature to a desire for honour:

They retain a strong share of pride, but not of that laudable kind which restrains men from the commission of mean and fraudulent actions. They possess much low cunning and plausible duplicity, and know how to dissemble the strongest passions and most inveterate antipathy, beneath the utmost composure of features, till the opportunity of gratifying their resentment offers (Marsden [1811] 1966: 207).

Marsden’s focus on honour presents the Malays as degenerate barbarians who love freedom but lack any aspect of civilization and the creativity of the original barbarians. In a similar vein, Crawfurd (1820i: 72) links this piratical urge to lack of progress in Malay civilization, stating: “those acts of piracy, and other lawless attacks on the property of strangers, insidiously perpetrated in accordance with the spirit of the aggressions of all people in such a state of society, are the results”. The characterization of the Malays demonstrates that character was not seen as being innate, but was attributed to material conditions. These material conditions were made worse by
inefficient, corrupt and brutal leadership structures. Marsden, Raffles, Crawfurd and Anderson are clear that the primary reason for the Malay’s bad habits was a lack of free trade and bad leadership from the Malay aristocracy. These habits were regressive, marking a degeneracy of civilization into barbarism.

**Free Trade, the Barbarian and the Need for Empire**

In 1817 Raffles was disappointed. His colony of Java had been given back to the Dutch, who, according to Raffles ([1817] 1965i: 230), would continue to pursue “a policy in the Eastern Isle …to exclude … all foreign trade… [which] led to the vigilant suppression of all attempts at competition and independence on the part of the inferior state”. Raffles (1835i: 87) maintained this had been “contrary to all principles of natural justice, and unworthy of any enlightened and civilized nation” and a barrier to the promotion of Southeast Asian nations, even acting as a means of degenerating nations further.

Raffles argued that the British Empire had a higher purpose “to uphold the weak, to put down lawless force, to lighten the chain of the slave, to sustain the honour of the British arms and British good faith; to promote the arts, sciences, and literature, to establish humane institutions” (Raffles [1817] 1965: vi). He acknowledged that British policy did not always uphold these high ideals: “our intercourse with them had been carried on almost exclusively through the medium of adventurers, little acquainted with either the country or people, who have been frequently more remarkable for boldness than principle” (Raffles [1817] 1965: 231). Raffles was promoting a new vision of the empire. The essence of which was the introduction of free commerce as a means of recreating the former grandeur of Java.

John Anderson’s central works *Acheen and the Ports of the North and East coasts of Sumatra* ([1840] 1971), and *Political and Commercial Considerations Relative to the Malayan Peninsula and the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca* (1824), are both focused on the protection of Malay sovereignty. Like Raffles, Crawfurd and Brooke, Anderson believed that free trade would improve the national character of these

Central to all these arguments was a belief in free trade. However, advocates were faced with the dilemma that free trade could not operate in Southeast Asia without the protection of the British Empire. Crawfurd epitomizes this free trade dilemma. He held that nations were a natural aspect of the marketplace. If the independence of a nation was taken away, the economic dynamism of that nation would diminish: therefore nations were natural. Mercantilism was designed to exploit and subjugate foreign nations. Hence, free-trade political economists were recognizing the natural logic of nationhood and self-determination as they were expanding the principle of free trade into Asia.

Like all free trade liberalism, Crawfurd’s arguments were theoretical models. A point which he was well aware of, for although he believed free trade would slowly transform Southeast Asia, Crawfurd recognized it was dependant on security of property rights:

With the poor, scattered, and semibarbarous nations of the Archipelago, naturally too unobservant of the principle of international law, it cannot be expected that the distant and inexperienced trader of Europe should be able to conduct directly a commerce either very extensive, secure, or agreeable. It will be necessary, both to his convenience and security, as well as to those of the native trader, that the intercourse between them should be conducted by an intermediate class in whom both can repose confidence. A colonial establishment becomes the only means of effecting this object (Crawfurd 1820iii: 263).

The barbarian needed empire to be creative. Crawfurd’s view of global trade was very modern. For him international law, rather than domestic law, should govern the trading relations between states. This structure meant that nations would be recognized and independence maintained, therefore free commerce would continue without political interference. The problem as Crawfurd articulates is that the nations of Southeast Asia were not at a developed-enough stage to recognize international law. Crawfurd

103 Crawfurd’s notion of international law is different to the modern notion of international law. Essentially, international law was the reciprocal recognition of individual rights within the ‘comity of nations’, coupled with freedom of the seas. This meant that individuals, as foreign citizens, were entitled to protection in foreign countries. In turn they were entitled to unimpeded access to foreign countries through international waters.
encapsulates the general feeling of free trade advocates in Southeast Asia, that (to create free trade) colonialism needs to be established to provide the rule of law and modernize the nations of Southeast Asia so that they could be independent.

**Racial Determinism and the Nation as a Tool of Imperialism**

The wheels to the liberal empire progressively fell off during the 1860s. The decisive moment of change was the Indian revolt of 1857. Prior to that, the Utilitarian movement had held considerable sway on Indian and Asian policy (Mehta 2004, Stokes 1959). After 1857, a new mood swept across colonial policy. The Indian Revolt was blamed on the Utilitarians’ reforming measures and on Free Traders (Chatterjee 1999, Ferguson 2004). From this point on, British policy focused on reinforcing the traditions of India and Asia, and, in doing so, they reshaped traditions (such as caste and ethnicity) and entrenching them in a way that never existed in the pre-colonial period (Abraham 2004, Cannadine 2002, Chakrabarty 2002, Chatterjee 1999, Dirks 2001).

In Southeast Asia, the nature of imperial rule also changed. Although Raffles, Marsden, Crawfurd, Anderson and Brooke all held the vision to transform the Malay Archipelago, the East India Company had starved liberal colonialists’ dreams of funds and had maintained a non-interventionist policy (McIntyre 1967). With the end of the East India Company (in 1867) the Colonial Office took over responsibility for the three settlements of Singapore, Penang and Province Wellesley. Over the following ten years Britain practically annexed the Malay States through treaty relationships wherein the Colonial office appointed British officers to reside as advisors to the Malay states (Stockwell 1999). These advisors increasingly took over the role of governing the states, with the Sultans being pensioned-off and reduced to traditional figureheads. This period was marked by a very different colonial belief.

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104 Interestingly for our purposes, Crawfurd (1859) blamed the revolt on the creation of a multicultural empire in India, he argued that rather than having an Indian army, the British Empire in India should create smaller armies based on the nations of India. His reasoning was that the revolt occurred because there was a failure to recognized the ethnic-national differences within India.

105 Raffles ([1817] 1965), Crawfurd (1828, 1820, 1829) and Anderson ([1840] 1971) all make clear that their publications on Southeast Asia were partly an attempt to change the companies policy and increase the available to capital to colonize Southeast Asia.
Chapter 6 – National Character from Political Economy to Race in Southeast Asia

The non-European peoples of the archipelago were no longer seen as barbarians that needed a firm liberal education, instead the characterizations of the lazy native had become an entrenched ideology (Abraham 2004, Alatas 1977). Ideologies about racial inferiority justified colonial expansion. By comparison to the early-nineteenth century, these beliefs were based on Social Darwinist premises in which the native could not progress. No longer was the prospect of independent modernized Asian nations on the agenda. The colonial ideology of the late-nineteenth century used the principle of the race-nation to legitimize perpetual servitude. The race-nation created a disjuncture, wherein the barbarian was relegated to biology. No longer was it a social condition, but rather a racial inferiority.

Although 1857 was a defining moment, it was not an epochal transition. The movement to a racialized empire was an outgrowth of the same liberal attitudes that had sought to modernize Southeast Asia. The problematic nature of liberal imperialism is played out throughout the writings of John Crawfurd. As previously stated, Crawfurd’s work reads as a contradiction. In one voice, he is the universal atomist, whilst also having the nucleus of being a racial supremacist. Crawfurd saw that colonialism had the potential to create multi-racial societies, in which their diversity would give them a dynamic commercial quality.

They would naturally become great emporia. The native trader would find them the best and safest market to repair to, and the scattered productions of the Archipelago would be accumulated and stored at them in quality for the convenience of the distant and inexperienced trader of Europe. The European voyager would find them also the best market for his goods (Crawfurd 1820iii: 271).

Arguably this is a racial division of labour but being a follower of Adam Smith, Crawfurd saw a division of labour as being a positive exercise.106 Division of labour

106 Marry Quilty (1998: 103) paints Crawfurd as wanting to create a racial apartheid system of labour in Southeast Asia. Quilty’s argument is based on Crawfurd’s regular accusations that natives are inferior. The problem with this is that he also says the opposite as well, for example: “we have to legislate for Europeans, for Chinese, and for a mixed mass of native inhabitants. The law should make no distinction between them” (Crawfurd 1820iii: 63). Later in life, Crawfurd’s work with the London Anthropological society indicates that he did lose his belief in the universality of humans; but in 1820 he clearly saw Southeast Asian’s as equal. An illustration of the change in Crawfurd is his reference to slavery. In the 1820s he was a strong opponent of slavery; however, by the 1860s his views had totally changed. Commenting on the potential of a slave revolt disrupting Britain’s cotton supply Crawfurd commented: “the masters are, in this case, of a superior race to the slaves; they are more numerous, in the proportion

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was not seen as exploitation. Labour was a pathway to civilization and a means of increasing the wealth and sophistication of the population:

By means of them (colonies) the arts, institutions, morals, and integrity of Europe, might in time be communicated to the natives of these distant regions, while they might contribute still earlier to give occupation to the population of those parts of the European world (Crawfurd 1820iii: 272).

In this colonial context, Crawfurd (1820iii: 67) was adamant that citizens of the colony should be equal, stating:

Differences of colour and language are the great obstacles to the happiness, improvement, and civilization of mankind.... We have the fatal example of the Spanish colonies of America to warn us against the danger and impolicy of laws, the tendency of which is to create castes. No Specific regulation should, therefore, exist for the peculiar protection of any one class... Every class of the two to one; they are armed, while the slaves are unarmed; they are in possession of power, and they are organised” (Crawfurd 1861: 400). In the same article he went on to speculate that if the cotton supply dried up, plantations could be created in Australia using Indian labour. These are the arguments of a pragmatist only interested in the availability of the resource. By this time Crawfurd was 78 years old, whilst he was only 37 when he published his History of the Indian Archipelago. By that time the whole notion of race had changed, as seen in Chapter Four. Crawfurd’s own political transformations are indicative of the transformations in attitudes to race and resource acquisition over time in the British Empire. In 1820 the ideas about the division of labour were very different to that of the 1860s.

It has to be remembered that the ‘division of labour’ had a Janus twist in early liberal theory. Adam Smith’s famous analogy of pin production demonstrated its utility as a means of increasing production and wealth. Smith saw divisions of labour as symbol of national productivity, as seen in Chapter Three. He argued that global trade created divisions of labour, thereby creating social development. Smith maintained that “by opening a new and inexhaustible market to all the commodities of Europe, it gave occasion to new divisions of labour and improvements of art, which, in the narrow circle of the ancient commerce, could never have taken place for want of a market to take off the greater part of their produce” (Smith 1981i: 392). For Smith, the opening of the American market through colonization created stimulus in Europe that drove new manufactures and therefore an increased division of labour. Crawfurd was arguing that a similar event would occur in Asia, but in reverse. Crawfurd was arguing that Asia had improved access to the European market; therefore, this would stimulate an increased division of labour in Asia.

The division of labour also had a dark side. Smith acknowledged that the division of labour retarded an individual’s place in society. William Playfair was even more critical, stating “ ‘when a person’s whole attention is bestowed on the 17th part of a pin’ he says, it is hardly surprising that peoples are ‘exceedingly stupid,’ ” (Rothschild 2001: 97). For both Playfair and Smith, education was the pathway out of the ‘division of labour’. This was not the rationalist pathway of skill advancement, but rather education providing the mechanism of mental escape. Smith saw this education as being “a consequence of economic advancement”; therefore, the division of labour provided the mechanism to escape its own discomforting pains (Rothschild 2001: 98).  The free traders’ aim was to increase the real wages of labouring classes. As Rothschild (2001: 11) maintains “the high price of labour, for Smith, increases the industriousness and the ‘good spirits’ of the labourer; it inspires “the comfortable hope of bettering his condition, and of ending his days perhaps in ease and plenty’”.  Crawfurd’s arguments are consistent with, his attacks on mercantilism for creating exploitation and his promoting of the idea of education in Southeast Asia. Therefore he did not see the division of labour as being an oppressive force in 1820.
should be permitted to enter freely into contracts with another; and the dark-coloured races should not be looked upon as minors under the guardianship of the state, or their imbecility will be increased and perpetuated [my emphasis].

In addition to this, Crawfurd argued that his model colony should be democratically governed, based on a limited suffrage in which only naturalized citizens can vote (Crawfurd 1820iii: 269). In terms of race relations this is an ambiguous area for Crawfurd. He argued that the only reason why a “free government” (based on the “representative system”) could not be created was due to the impracticality of language; of which, he states, “at Penang, it is reckoned that there are twenty-two languages spoke, and at Batavia there are many more” (Crawfurd 1820iii: 269). Despite the problem of language, Crawfurd still maintained that a “representative body” was necessary for the “right of imposing taxes” and that “representatives” should be “chosen alike from all the classes of inhabitants” (Crawfurd 1820iii: 269). From these comments it is clear that Crawfurd held to the belief of individual equality. Despite this, Crawfurd also argued that race explains the inferiority of Southeast Asian peoples, with sweeping statements such as the following:

> With respect to their intellectual faculties, the Indian islanders may be pronounced slow of comprehension, but of sound, though narrow judgment. In quickness, acuteness, and comprehensiveness of understanding, they are far short of the civilized nations of Europe, and in subtlety they are not less inferior to the Hindus and Chinese (Crawfurd 1820: 44-46).

Statements such as the above, which dominate the first volume of Crawfurd’s *History of the Indian Archipelago* (1820), are symptomatic of the hierarchical racial concepts that dominated the late-nineteenth century, yet they were written in 1820. Later in his life, Crawfurd adopted this hierarchical position. He became a leading ethnologist, was president of the London Ethnological Society and was aligned to Robert Knox’s faction of anthropology (Ellingson 2001). He followed the polygenesis position that “mankind consists of many originally created species” (Crawfurd 1861: 354) and adopted Knox’s position on race, arguing that the races had naturally differing “physical and intellectual characters” in which “we may safely believe that each race was created by Divine power to suit the climate in which it was located” (Crawfurd 1861: 154, 156). This argument is a continuity with his earlier statements made in the 1820s, such as “it will
be found that the physical constitution of every race is best adapted for the climate it inhabits” (Crawfurd 1820i: 5).

Although there is continuity in Crawfurd’s concept of race, there was also a total transformation in his ideas. The following passage demonstrates Crawfurd’s ideas on race and climate held by him in the 1820s.

The cause of this phenomenon is in the softness and fruitfulness of the climate… in a word, to the absence of that wholesome discipline by which man, in severer regions, is bred to habits of hardihood, enterprise, and independence, and certainly not in any imagined innate feebleness of frame, for, on examination, it will be bound that the physical constitution of every race is best adapted for the climate it inhabits (Crawfurd 1820iii: 4-5).

In the 1820s, Crawfurd did not refer to any ‘Divine plan’ tailoring races to a particular environment, but instead to an environment that shapes the physical and mental capacity of those that live in it. In 1820, Crawfurd was critical of Creole Europeans in Java, stating that “Creole and mixed races partake at least as much of the native character as of that of the genuine Hollander”. However he attributed this not to race, but rather lack of “a liberal education” and “living under a suspicious and perverse order of government, as a privileged caste, exercising a tyranny over the great body of the population, and entirely served by slaves” (Crawfurd 1820i: 140). The emphasis was not on racial biology, but on social conditioning.

In comparison, he argued in 1863 that, “when the union is between races of equal quality, there is no ascertainable difference in the character of the offspring… But should it be between races of unequal quality, the higher race undergoes deterioration, and the lower improvement” (Crawfurd 1863: 202). The central difference is that the early Crawfurd maintained that the social environment of education and governance was responsible for improvement or degeneracy regardless of whether the races were mixed or not; in comparison, the latter Crawfurd held that biology determined the outcome of inter-racial mixing. This transformation in Crawfurd’s ideas corresponds to

107 There are strong similarities between his 1820s writing and the later Darwinian ideas of natural selection, but by the time Origin of the Species was written, Crawfurd had changed his mind. By that time he maintained that creatures could not adapt to their environment, but were divinely created or bred for a particular environment (Crawfurd 1865, Crawfurd 1869).
the overall transformation of imperial ideology from a liberal vision of creating modern nations to a racial vision of inherent inferiority of non-European nations.

Crawfurd’s transition from a colonial official championing free trade in Southeast Asia and India to becoming one of Britain’s leading ethnologists was not uncommon; George Windsor Earl made a similar transition. Between 1836 and 1846 Earl published three books on the economic prospects of Southeast Asia and Northern Australia. By the late 1840s he became consumed with ethnology, publishing a number of articles in J. F. Logan's *Journal of the Indian Archipelago* and publishing *Native Races of the Indian Archipelago: the Papuans* in 1853. He was also elected as a corresponding member of the Ethnological Society (Reece 2004). Earl progressively moved away from the universal attitudes of political economy to the study of ethnology.

Why does Earl make this transition? He argued that ethnography was one of the most “important sciences to be invented”, and that increasingly “statesmen consider… it necessary to refer to the pages of the ethnographer” so that they “may learn how [the] collisions with the native races of distance possessions … may be best avoided” (Earl 1853: iii-iv). For these conflicts he argues “too often lead to desolating and expensive wars” (Earl 1853: iv). Earl was not just concerned with the cost of the wars, Earl was also a follower of Prichard’s philanthropic approach to ethnology and didn’t want to see massacres of indigenous peoples. For Earl, a landmark example of co-existence was the colony of Port Essington. Financially Port Essington was a disaster, but to Earl its success was measured in other respects. The achievement of this colony was that it developed a “system which enabled a party of civilized men to dwell for so long a period in daily intercourse with savages, without a single collision having occurred” (Earl 1853: 237). Earl maintained that this example was of “great ethnographical value” and that it was a “result to which history does not furnish a parallel” (Earl 1853: 237).

Essington represents two liberal currents for Earl, both of which would converge in his writing. Colonialism was about political economy, but at the same time he believed it needed to recognize the sanctity of human life. This could only occur by recognising and understanding human divisions. Therefore ethnology was about creating an ethical

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colonialism. Earl’s final book *A Handbook for Colonists in Tropical Australia* (1865) unifies these two streams of thought, providing a guide book outlining how colonialism should occur, in Earl’s mind, creating win-win situations for all involved.

Earl’s studies of the relationship between ethnology and colonialism are a result of the limits of liberalism. He saw race and nation emerging in the space at the end of civilization. For Earl, the cultural universalism of liberalism broke down at the point of cultural difference. At this point an imperial government needed to be formed to overcome this difference. Although he believed in the unity of imperial governance, he saw that the model of his time was not working. Ethnology would provide the integral means of understanding the differences between nations, and make imperial governance work. Like Crawfurd, Earl was developing an understanding of the nation on the boundaries of materialism.

This liberal notion of identity formed nations at points where opposition emerged to civilising liberalism, therefore the barbarian became the limits of inclusiveness. Whenever there was a perceived cultural disjunction with the assumed universalism of liberalism, a nation emerged. Therefore these writers were territorialising difference. This territorialization reached new levels under Alfred Russel Wallace. Wallace is remembered for his independent discovery of natural selection to that of Charles Darwin. Wallace also theorized the biological disjuncture between Asia and Australasia, known as the ‘Wallace Line’. This line marks a relatively clear separation between the ecology of Asia and Australia. However, Wallace also believed it related to humans. This line divided the islands of Timor and Papua, along with Australia, from the rest of Asia. The people on these islands were distinctly different from the others in the Malay Archipelago. In making this argument, Wallace was following in the footsteps of Earl and Crawfurd, who both discussed the dark negro peoples of Southeast Asia. But where Wallace was so different to Earl and Crawfurd was his use of materialist and biological theory. Earl and Crawfurd saw a connection between the various marginalized indigenous communities throughout Southeast Asia, which they termed ‘negroes’. Many ethnologists believed there was a universal connection between all negroes, which Wallace ([1869] 1962: 454-455) refuted in the following manner:
The resemblance both in physical and mental characteristics had often struck myself, but the difficulties in the way of accepting it as probable or possible have hitherto prevented me from giving full weight to those resemblances. Geographical, zoological, and ethnological considerations render it almost certain that, if these two races ever had a common origin, it could only have been at a period far more remote than any which has yet been assigned to the antiquity of the human race. And even if their unity could be proved, it would in no way affect my argument for the close affinity of the Papuan and Polynesian races, and the radical distinctness of both from the Malay.

Wallace approached race through testing theories of human migration against zoological migration all of which were governed through natural selection. In doing so, he territorialized the races of Southeast Asia and linked them to the biological landscape:

The Malays proper inhabit the Malay peninsula, and almost all the coastal regions of Borneo and Sumatra. They all speak the Malay language, or dialects of it... The Javanese inhabit Java, part of Sumatra, Madura, Bali, and part of Lombock. They speak the Javanese and Kawi languages... The Bugis are the inhabitants of the greater parts of Celebes, and there seems to be an allied people in Sumbawa... The fourth great race is that of the Tagalas in the Philippine Islands (Wallace [1869] 1962: 446-447).

This description was not new, with similar variants being made by Crawfurd and Earl. Crawfurd and Earl based their arguments primarily on languages and some physical observations; but Wallace (by adding the theory of natural selection to account for hybrid peoples, and adding accompanying zoological evidence) presented these people as territorially and racially bound into distinct cultural blocks. Wallace went further than mere ethnographic distinctions. In his conclusion to *The Malay Archipelago*, Wallace ([1869] 1962: 455) equipped these cultural-biological groupings with political claims of disenfranchizement:

If the past history of these varied races is obscure and uncertain, the future is no less so. The more numerous Malay race seems well adapted to survive... even when his country and government have passed into the hands of Europeans. If the tide of colonization should be turned to New Guinea, there can be little doubt of the early extinction of the Papuan race. A warlike and energetic people, who will not submit to national slavery or to domestic servitude, must disappear before the white man.
The free barbarian could not survive in the modern world as a slave. Although Wallace envisages the servitude of the Malays and the extinction of the Papuans, he was also outlining the grounds to their claims of independence. Even as the subjugation is becoming total, Wallace envisages the cultural-biological grounds for independence. Wallace takes this claim even further and undermines the whole architecture for the civilising mission of empire. Wallace was a socialist. As a socialist he questioned the success of the “vast manufacturing system, our gigantic commerce, our crowded towns and cities” all of which “support and continually renew a mass of human misery and crime absolutely greater than has ever existed before” (Wallace [1869] 1962: 457).

This material advancement was a degeneration on the social condition of “uncivilized man”. In a few pages, Wallace embraces the cultural logic of separate nations, outlines their political claim to independence and reveals the ugly face of civilization. These lines all speak the natural logic of nations without a reflective identification.

John Crawfurd’s *History of the Indian Archipelago* (1820) was indicative of a crossroad. Although there is a unity to his conception of race and nation in 1820, it represented two potential futures. The first potential future that Crawfurd favoured in 1820, was one of cosmopolitan liberalism. In this cosmopolitan liberal empire the races were allowed to mix. Degenerate barbarism was reformed with the market-based civil society. Civil society allowed the inherent freedom of the barbarian to flourish, whilst being guided by the order of empire. This created new nations and improved old ones. The second vision of a potential future was one of racial hierarchy, in which European colonialism created an apartheid system of control in which non-European peoples existed to service the needs of Europeans. In this context nation was bound in race and biology. In the 1820s, Crawfurd argued against this system on the grounds of political economy and rational unity of humans; but, interestingly, by the 1860s his writings (like his contemporaries) were devoid of political economy. Crawfurd, Earl and many others became focused on race and the divine biological divisions between races. In both

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109 Excluding the Bugis of the Celebes, the modern political nations of Southeast Asia correspond to Wallace’s outline. And the few exceptions that exist are subject to separatist movements wanting independence.
periods, Crawfurd was symptomatic of his times and reflected the dominant ideas of the nation on to Southeast Asia.
Race and biology dramatically altered the way Europeans saw the peoples of Southeast Asia. The cosmopolitan concepts of the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries were transformed into racial chasms that defined nations as biological objects. A symptom of this transformation was the traveller’s perception of the orang-utan. As seen in Chapter Four, the orang-utan had long been a point of discussion for evolutionary theories: be they biological or social. By the 1830s, few ethnologists believed the orang-utan was a degenerate or primitive human as Lord Monboddo believed (see Chapter Four). That is not to say that people did not wonder about a missing link, and that a connection was made between Negros and orang-utans. Travellers continually reflected on this point and, by association, linked the hunter-gatherer tribes that lived in the Jungles of Asia with this perceived missing link (Boon 1990: 19-27).

The travel writer in the nineteenth-century gave a general commentary on culture and environment, as Roy Bridges argues the travel writer had to “describe and interpret for [their] readers a geographical area together with its natural attributes and its human society and culture” (Bridges 2002: 53). Therefore ethnology was immersed within a discussion on the environment (Savage 1984). This corresponded to the wider ethnological and racial debates on national character being a product of the environment (discussed in chapter four). The result is that travel writers speculated about the impact of the environment on the identity of the people the travel writer was observing. James Boon characterizes this as the theme of ‘man’ and ‘nature’, in which natural history
encompasses humans as part of nature. For Boon an example of this tradition was Alfred Russel Wallace (discussed in the previous chapter). Wallace was a naturalist and travel writer who was also a leading scientific theorist. For our purposes, what is interesting about Wallace is that he gave detailed ethnographic discussions of the people he saw in Southeast Asia, whilst he also gave the first detailed study of the Orang-utan. Boon (1990: 16) comments on Wallace that:

The theme of man and nature in Wallace extends beyond issues of natural selection and vagaries in distribution and diffusion. He depicts more than simple contradictions (or discourtesies) between natural regions and the dispersal of cultures. In special moments we shall savour, Wallace suggests an affinity between human and animal groups, but at the point where the latter transforms into nature’s most wondrous extremes.

Boon’s argument is that this affinity is not presented in explicit form, like that made by Monboddo in the eighteenth-century, but rather as an implicit connection. In this regard Boon’s argument focuses on post-modern ideas of discourse; that there was a discourse that connected native peoples with apes. Discourse, in the post-modern sense, focuses on assumptions surrounding a particular issue. These assumptions, sometimes called norms, frame the issue and dictate the conclusions before the issue is analysed. Therefore Boon’s argument is that, although Wallace and his contemporaries dismissed the orang-utan as an exact missing link, their discourse of analysis presents tribal societies as being affiliated with the orang-utan. Therefore, Wallace and his contemporaries could explicitly dismiss a connection between tribal society and the orang-utan, but implicitly make such an argument through discourse. Boon (1990: 24-25) goes on to argue:

Neither Indonesian peoples themselves nor the history of their documentation cooperated very well with this negative quest. Earlier “missing link” formulations tended to usher the famous orang-utan (orang hutan = forest dweller or wild man) toward the human as much as to push human groups down. Reputed cannibalism cropped up in the literate Battak of Sumatra; headhunting was hard to isolate. And notorious amok-running and ritual suicide (as in the courts of Bali and Java) occurred at every level of civilization and “savagery”.

The ‘missing-link’, cannibalism, headhunting and the amok, were all favourite topics of Europeans projecting Southeast Asia in the nineteenth-century. As Boon argues’ they
presented an image of degeneracy whereby the Asian was a degenerate. This degeneracy was an affront and therefore necessitated paternalistic colonialism. Boon (1990: 25) continues:

No two criteria of degeneracy — physiological, psychological, cultural—pointed precisely in the same direction. No nonliterate people perfectly filled the bill of the Renaissance’s “diabolical”, the Enlightenment’s taxonomic “missing link”, or the social evolutionist’s “beastliest and oldest”. Over the centuries Indonesian cultures refracted changes of degeneracy whose symptoms proved difficult to “fix”, because their symbols kept dispersing.

Although written in a post-modern style, Boon’s arguments are a reflection of what is now accepted as orthodoxy. Syed Alatas’s (1977) *Myth of the Lazy Native*, Edward Said’s ([1978] 1995) *Orientalism*, Homi Bhabha’s ([1994] 2004) *The Location of Culture* and from an earlier generation Frantz Fanon’s ([1952] 1970) *Black Skin White Masks*, are all classic post-colonial works that identify how European culture presented the native as degenerate. There are many other classic works I could have mentioned; however the point I am making is that this argument has become mainstream. Even the conservative historian Niall Ferguson’s (2004: 113) readily comments that:

The Victorians … dreamt not just of ruling the world, but of redeeming it. It was no longer enough for them to exploit other races; now the aim became to improve them. Native people themselves would cease to be exploited, but their cultures — superstitious, backward, heathen — would have to go.

It is clear that the culture of the British Empire depicted tribal and non-European peoples as inferior. This was the distinction between civilization and barbarism, which in contemporary cultural analysis of empires, nations and ethnicity is commonly referred to as the ‘other’. These arguments focus on the ‘other’ as the binary opposite to the civilized. Therefore the ‘other’ is opposed to civilization and is therefore degenerate. I am not disputing that the other is presented as different to the civilized, but it has been the argument of this thesis that the British Empire was not framed as a traditional empire. The distinction between civilization and barbarism was made more complex because of the emergence of the nation.
The nation emerged as a process of naturalization. Within this naturalization was the barbarian and the savage. They were theoretical conjectures, but both the barbarian and the savage could be seen as an historical phenomenon and, then as a, a contemporary reality. Above all, the barbarian was not just the ‘other’, it was also the primordial ‘self’. Therefore, the nation raised issues of the limits of what was human. This chapter examines two streams of naturalization of the nation in Southeast Asia. These streams are observed by exploring nineteenth-century ethnology and natural history in Southeast Asia. The first of these streams was the process by which nineteenth-century observers assumed the naturalness of nations within the landscape, this stream has been covered in the previous chapters. This first stream embedded the nation within the tribe, in doing so the nation was seen as the common-sense form of the social-political community. The second stream, which will be the key focus of this chapter, is the obverse side of the first stream. By tribalising the nation, culture became bound within a ‘chain of being’ to primordialism. This was distinctly different to earlier conceptions of civilization verses barbarism. As we have already seen in this thesis, the nation became linked to the barbarian; with barbarism being drawn within the nation, rather than excluded from the nation.

By naturalising culture through primordialism, new questions emerge; for example, what are the natural limits of the nation? If the nation is a tribal condition that descends back to the mythical mists of time, the nation becomes linked to the ‘chain of being’. Therefore questions emerged about how primordial was the nation? This chapter begins by focusing on attempts to theorize ethnology in Southeast Asia in the 1830s and 1840s. These attempts to theorize ethnology naturalized the nation within these two streams. This chapter then proceeds to examine the extreme limits of primordialism by examining nineteenth-century accounts of the orang-utan.

It was this ambiguousness around the status of the orang-utan that presents it as an interesting example of the nineteenth-century intersection between the nation, race, civilization and barbarism. The orang-utan was an object of science and popular culture, primarily because of its closeness to humans. It was observed in conjunction with the theory of race. In this capacity, the orang-utan became connected to a view of the natural order. The orang-utan became a transcendent bridge between the natural world and the human world; in doing so, the orang-utan legitimized the dehumanising of tribal
society, yet it also connected civilized society to primordial society. In this process the orang-utan was humanized, and taught table manners whilst attributed with a form of politics in its relations with the indigenous peoples. The orang-utan was presented as a tribe, or as an animal with the same qualities as a tribe. Therefore the orang-utan was imagined as the limits of a tribal-nation, how far human groups can descend into barbarism and still be considered civilized.

**Theorising Ethnology in Southeast Asia: Primordialising Culture and the Nation**

On the 16th January 1830, the first article of three subsequent instalments appeared in the *Government Gazette for Prince of Wales Island, Singapore and Malacca*. The article was written under the *Nom de plume* of ‘Y’, it was entitled *Floreat Scientia et Literatera* (Y 1830), however in the subsequent instalments the editor, or the author, decided to be a little more explicit in the title and renamed the series *Sketch for a Literary Society at Penang* (Y 1830, Y 1830). Yet, the title still didn’t embrace exactly what the author was trying to convey. ‘Y’ (1830) introduced his them as follows:

> The Asiatic Society of Calcutta affords a brilliant example of what may be achieved by talent and perseverance [sic], directed by judgment, and aided by an intimate acquaintance with the languages manners, and feelings of the people amongst whom inquires are to be made … Madras and Bombay have given birth to Literary Societies, which, if we are to Judge from their progress hitherto, offer promise of increasing excellence; and lastly, the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain has opened a bright prospect to the Orientalist, to the general Scholar and the Philosopher.

The focus of this society would be broad; covering “Geography, Statistics, History, Laws, Literature,” and to the productions of the various countries embraced under the general titles “Indo-Chinese and Malayan” and “to the languages, manners, arts and sciences existing amongst the Nation inhabiting so wide a range” (Y 1830). This is the broad orientalist project covering every aspect of Southeast Asian landscape and society. However, the author steps back from this broad project and instead limited his focus on what we would now refer to as the ethnology of Southeast Asia stating:
Led by the lights derived from language, and philosophical investigation, we may be enabled in
time to arrive at rational conclusions regarding the origin and affiliation of the many interesting
nations and tribes around us (Y 1830).

The nation and the tribe are the key themes running throughout the author’s prose.
Therefore the purpose of this proposed society was the examination of oriental nations:
their origins and connections to each other. The author goes on to argue that the purpose
of the society should be to gain “fair pictures of a national mind”. For the author,
“Geography, Statistics, History, Laws, and Literature” were all pieces in the jigsaw-
puzzle of the “national mind”. These could be pieced together to reclaim nations from
being “a blank in the History of the world”. The author was proposing the use of
conjectural history to fill in these blanks.

The articles were predominantly concerned with the idea of nations in Southeast Asia,
yet the title does not embrace this; the title’s focus was on literature, when their focus is
in fact ethnology and anthropology. The reason for this becomes apparent when we
consider the date this society was proposed: 1830. In 1830 there was no comparable
society for the study of ethnology and anthropology; for example, the Aborigines
Protection Society was not formed until 1837 and Thomas Hodgkin didn’t form the
Ethnological Society of London until 1844. Therefore our anonymous author, who was
actively naturalising the nation from the island of Penang, was in front of developments
in the imperial metropole by fourteen years. Therefore the author’s choice of title
“literary society” was a reflection of the fact that the words ethnology and anthropology
were still in their infancy, and did not substantially reflect the study of race, nation and
culture.

The society that the author desired, would not emerge until 1847 with the founding of
the Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia by James Logan. The Journal
lasted until 1863 and in 1877 a new journal emerged the Journal of the Straits Branch
of the Royal Asiatic Society. These journals reflected the leading role Southeast Asia
was playing in the study of ethnology; for example even though the Ethnological
Society of London was founded in 1844, it did not publish a Journal until 1848,
therefore the study of ethnology was being driven just has hard, if not harder in the
Straits’ colonies (the imperial periphery) than in London (the imperial centre). In
addition, the newspapers for Prince of Wales Island (Penang), Malacca and Singapore all carried ethnographic articles on the surrounding peoples and places.\footnote{The newspapers were: The Government Gazette, Prince of Wales Island, Singapore, and Malacca; Pinang Gazette and Straits Chronicle; Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser; Singapore Chronicle and Commercial Register; Straits Times.}

The anonymous author of *Floreat Scientia et Literatera* (Y 1830) had high hopes. He did not see his proposed society as being an appendage to India,\footnote{The author got his wish. The *Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia* was independent of India, and the subsequent Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society was indeed an “Auxiliary only to the Royal Asiatic Society”.} but rather considered that this society should be an “Auxiliary only to the Royal Asiatic Society at home” (original emphasis) (Y 1830). This assertion for independence from India, also speaks of a burgeoning cultural identity in the Straits Settlements; with the author viewing this identity as being distinct from India. The fact that the author comments that similar societies have been formed in Madras and Bombay is indicative of the fact that the imperial periphery were actively naturalising the nation as part of the imperial project. The author openly states this commenting: “the British occupation of that territory [Burma] will no doubt be the means of eliciting whatever of interest its moral and physical condition are capable of affording” (Y 1830). Ethnology was emerging on the imperial periphery as part of the imperial project. This meant that the nation was being naturalized as a natural and commonsense condition of humans from the metropole to the farthest reaches.

We cannot dismiss this process of naturalising the nation in Southeast Asia as a projection of the ‘other’. Our author (Y 1830, Y 1830, Y 1830) was more nuanced and holistic than simple projections of the civilized and the barbaric, stating:

*Led by the lights derived from language, and philosophical investigation, we may be enabled in time to arrive at rational conclusions regarding the origin and affiliation of the many interesting nations and tribes around us. They will claim our regard as notions of our species which in many instances have attended to that peculiar stage of civilization where the traits of the savage, though not orientated entirely, are yet blended and softened by way of the conventional obligations and refinements existing in a more advanced stage of Society, and where the half grown mind reveals on a literature of its own — one though which may be caught glimpses of the science and literary acquisitions of the remaining ages (Y 1830).*
Our author (Y) outlines two methodologies for understanding the nation and its connection to the tribe. The first methodology was to employ language and philosophy to develop scientific “rational conclusions regarding the origin and affiliation of the many interesting nations and tribes around us”. He gives an example of the potentials of this methodology stating: “The language of one of these tribes, which has in process of time grown up into a nation (the Siamese) has been found to prevail in the Khamti country lately discovered, or visited by Lieut. Wilcox” (Y 1830). Therefore language and philosophy, or the theory of social development (that has been examined in chapters three and four), became the objective mechanism by which the “origin and affiliations of … nations and tribes” and the “national mind” could be deduced.

The dominant post-modern influenced analysis of nineteenth-century anthropology would hold that the employment of language and philosophy was a symptom of distance, whereby the colonizer knew the oriental better than the oriental knew themselves; this was because the colonizer had rationality and was therefore removed from the oriental. However this was not the reasoning our author used. ‘Y’ argued that showing interest in other peoples was a “notion of our species” and that “traits of the savage” still existed with the imperial culture despite being “blended and softened by way of the conventional obligations and refinements existing in a more advanced stage of Society”. Therefore it was not just rational science, but the belief that the

112 Edward Said ([1978] 1995: 42) comments on the use of language and theory:

In Europe there was a vast literature about the Orient inherited from the European past. What is distinctive about the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, which is where this study assumes modern Orientalism to have begun, is that an Oriental renaissance took place… Suddenly it seemed to a wide variety of thinkers, politicians, and artists that a new awareness of the Orient, which extended from China to the Mediterranean, had arisen. This awareness was partly the result of newly discovered and translated Oriental texts in languages like Sanskrit, Zend, and Arabic; it was also the result of a newly perceived relationship between the Orient and the West. For my purposes here, the keynote of the relationship was set for the Near East and Europe by the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in 1789, an invasion which was in many ways the very model of a truly scientific appropriation of one culture by another, apparently stronger one. Said’s influence and the concept of the ‘other’ has played an important role in understanding the construction of ethnicity in Southeast Asia (Legge: 44-45), with many studies written over the previous thirty years examining the colonial ‘invention’ of ethnicity as a construction of opposites (Abraham 2004, Alatas 1977, Anderson 1991, Anderson 2000, Boon 1982, Boon 1990, Quilty 1998). This is certainly one aspect; however by looking at opposites we overlook aspects of the construction of ethnicity. This analysis of the ‘other’ actually views ethnicity as construction of traditional empires not the mercantile capitalist empires of the nineteenth century. As discussed in Chapter Two, a traditional empire views identity as a distinction between the civilized and the barbaric. In comparison, as this thesis has been arguing, the empires of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did not exclude the barbarian. They saw the barbarian as existing within them, rather than the barbarian being expunged from them. Therefore although there are distinctions of the ‘other’ being created, it is rarely absolute, and was only possible

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savage still existed within civilized society that allowed civilized society to enquire in to the nation and the tribe.

The connection between the savage and the civilized, between the tribe and the nation, was the second methodology that our author (‘Y’) outlined. In comparison to the scientific methodology, the second methodology was very unscientific; it was a romantic approach of which ‘Y’ (1830) commented:

> We shall here find an imagination fruitful in metaphor and soaring to heights to which our colder rules forbid our ascending, yet in this very redundancy we shall discover matter of interest, since flights of fancy offer pretty fair pictures of a national mind.

The romantic imagination emanating from the internal barbarian allowed the ethnologist to understand the comparative construction of the tribe and the nation. As the writer states, this methodology was against the ‘cold rules’ of science. The validity of such a methodology is not our concern. What the author demonstrates is that the nation is being naturalized as a primal tribal condition that is universal. In naturalising the nation as common sense, our anonymous author is grounding the naturalising process to the primordial condition. For example in describing political subjugation (of a nation he doesn’t actually name) ‘Y’ (1830) states: “such is the effect of slavery, that like the domesticated tenant of the forest, the human animal under it loses in a few generations the spirit which animated his free career”. The author links the nation to the tribe and freedom, but above all to the animal condition. Therefore in naturalising the nation to the tribe, humanity becomes interlinked in the ‘chain of being’ creating questions about how primordial is the human? For example:

> On the Malayan Peninsula the history and institutions of many petty states afford subjects for investigation, and it need scarcely be mentioned that the existence of woolly headed and negro featured tribes in the forests in our vicinity, and in the Islands of the Indian Archipelago, is a problem in the history of our Species which remains to be solved. The other aboriginal inhabitants too of these regions claim regard —those tribes which although differing little from the Malays in feature and external conformation yet speak a different language, and preserve a wild independence (Y 1830).

because the nation and the tribe were seen as universal characteristics which created a common ‘chain of
This is the classic passage that implicitly links Southeast Asian societies to the orang-utan. The author discusses the ‘petty’ Malay societies, then the “woolly headed … negro … tribes of the forests” and finally the “aboriginal inhabitants” with their “wild independence”. In discussing these as a block, the author is creating a ‘chain of being’ connecting these nations and tribes to a primordial core. However, in stating “is a problem in the history of our Species which remains to be solved” he is also connecting himself to this ‘chain of being’. Therefore the savage and barbarian were not the totally distinctive ‘other’. The savage, the barbarian and the civilized were all connected by the ‘chain of being’ that was the primordialism of the nation. However, this raised questions on the extent to which the nation could be primordially naturalized. Or, in other words, ‘how primitive was the nation?’ It is at this point that debate on the orang-utan enters into perceptions of the nation, and will be the focus of the rest of this chapter.

**Humanising the Orang-utan**

The physical similarity between the humans and the orang-utan was always the first point of comparison, and reason why the orang-utan had captivated the public imagination. In 1834 Richard Harlan and Dr M. Burrough believed they found a new species of orang-utan along the India-Burma border (Harlan and Burrough 1834: 53). Today we know this species as the Hoolock a type of gibbon, but in 1834 it was seen as a humanoid ape, and as such an orang-utan. The word ‘orang-utan’ had a different meaning in the early-nineteenth century to its modern-day usage. Throughout the eighteenth-century the word ‘orang-outang’ referred to any large ape that was humanoid in appearance (Schwartz 2005: 17) and this tradition continued into the nineteenth-century. In 1818 the English satirist Thomas Love Peacock published *Melincourt; or, being*.

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113 Thomas Newbold’s *Statistical Account of the Straits Settlement* addressed this tendency to refer to all large apes as Orang-utan, with Newbold (1839i: 432) commenting:

Beginning with the Mammalia, the order Quadrumana ranks first. It has been stated that the great Orang Utan is found there, but I much question whether this has been ascertained by naturalists. It is far from improbable that the Pongo Wormbii, a variety of Simia, has been mistaken for it. Of the genus Hylusates are the Siamang, or the Simia Syndactyla of Raffles; the Black Unka, or Simia Lar, of Vigors; the White Unka, or Hylobates agilis of F. Cuvier; the Chimpanse, or Simia Troglodytes, of Linnsus. Of the genus Semnopithecus are the Chingkou, or Simia cristata, of F. Cuvier; the Kra, or Simia fascicularis; and of the genus Macacus, the Broh, or Simia carpolegus. Of the genus Loris are two species, the Kukang, or Lemur turdigradus, and the Nycticebus Javanicus, the latter of which, however, I have not seen. The former of these animals is termed by the Malays Kamalasan, from its
sir Oran Haut-ton, in which Oran Haut-ton was an orang-outang that was captured in Angola and integrated into High Society, and was elected a Member of Parliament for the rotten borough of Onevote. Peacock’s satire was a jibe at the pomposity of the aristocracy with Haut-ton being the French word for high mannered, but Peacock was also a follower of Lord Monboddo (Joukovsky 1980). It shows the extent to which the orang-utan was a broad social symbol, signifying the ambiguity between humans and apes.

In 1819, a year after Peacock published his satirical account of Haut-ton, Peacock’s musings were parodied by reality. John McLeod was a ships surgeon and shared a return voyage to England with an orang-utan and believed that the orang-utan was “remarkable” for its “possession in many respects” of “a strong resemblance to man” (McLeod 1819: 314). McLeod seriously considered he was sharing a voyage with the orang-utan, which had been introduced “into genteel society” and had been “indulging in a high style of living” (McLeod 1819: 316). This extended to “grog” and “spirits”, which the orang-outang had taken a particular liking to and “repeatedly… helped himself” leading to the orang-outang being “turned out of the boatswain’s mess, for taking more than his allowance” (McLeod 1819: 317). McLeod totally integrated the orang-utan into the ships’ society, holding that “his usual conduct was … rather a grave and sedate character, and is much inclined to be social, and on good terms, with everybody” (McLeod 1819: 317). McLeod went further, stating “he would often rifle and examine the pockets of his friends in quest of nuts and biscuits, which they sometimes carried for him” (McLeod 1819: 318). McLeod indicates that he maintained his ‘friendship’ with the orang-outang, giving further details of its integration into British society being “taught to sip his tea or coffee” and had “discovered a taste for a pot of porter” (McLeod 1819: 317).

Although Newbold is rigorous in defining the different forms of ape and separating them out, some of these apes, such as the ‘Chimpanse’ (which does not exist in the Malayan Peninsula) demonstrate that there was still ambiguity around the taxonomy of large apes.

114 Rotten Borough’s were electoral districts that had very few voters (as suggested by the name Onevote), and were used to guarantee favoured individuals getting into parliament. For example, Edmund Burke spent the latter part of his career representing a rotten borough. To be elected to a rotten borough was a statement of social standing.
Early descriptions of the Orang-utan were always fixated with their human characteristics. Harlan’s and Burrough’s orang-outang (Gibbon) is likened to a human through its walking techniques, which they state that the Gibbon would “walk erect” and that when running they “still keep… the body … nearly erect”. They also indicate that this is extremely difficult for the creature to do, stating: “they … balance themselves very prettily, by raising their hands over their head and slightly bending the arm at the wrist and elbow, and then run tolerably fast, rocking from side to side” (Harlan and Burrough 1834: 57). The emphasis is on accentuating the Gibbon’s ability to walk bipedal, despite the fact that in its natural habitat it would rarely descend to the ground and walk in such a manner. In this first scientific paper outlying the Hoolock’s existence, the focus is not the Hoolock but rather the Hoolock’s closeness to humans. Even in death, the Hoolock was attributed of dying from a human disease: “It had been attacked with scurvy on board ship, and on arriving at the cape was so feeble as to die at the end of twenty-four hours” (Harlan and Burrough 1834: 53).

Like Harlan and Burrough, McLeod also focuses on how human the orang-utan was. For these writers, the orang-outang was a potential human. Both of these writers were writing at a time when the ideas of Lord Monboddo were still current; with these ideas being further popularized in literature by Peacock and Shelly. In addition, the evolutionary and philosophical arguments still focused on the Orang-outang, although by this time the evolutionary arguments were becoming more complex, and the ethnologists and biologists were distancing themselves from claiming the orang-outang was a human.¹¹⁵ Science was moving beyond simplistic connections between the orang-utan and humans. The accounts from the mid 1830s onwards present a different perspective of the orang-outang: one that become, more focused on the orang-utan and made connections without speculating whether orang-utans were humans.

On seeing a baby orang-utan, George Winsor Earl (Earl [1837] 1971: 230) observed that “from a distance of a few yards, it was really difficult to distinguish him from a negro

¹¹⁵ As seen in Chapter Four, the close of the nineteenth century saw a raft of scientific and philosophical discussion around the orang-outang and evolutionary theory with writers such as Rousseau (1761) Monboddo (1773) Kames (1774) and White (1799) advocating an orang-outang connection. In comparison, Lawrence ([1819] 1848) and Blumenbach ([1865] 1969) were very critical of this approach. This debate had an afterlife. Once that it was accepted that Orang-utans were not human, the orang-utan became used as a point of comparison to between Negros and Europeans (Tiedemann 1836), thereby being a tool of science to denigrate non-Europeans (Boon 1990).
child, particularly when his nurse had tied a napkin before him, and was feeding him with a spoon” and that it was “nearly as helpless as an infant of the same age”. Although acknowledging the possibility of a connection, as we will see, Earl was generally very ambivalent to theories of a missing link. Earl’s observations are casual, but in this casual demeanour Earl was appealing to preconceived beliefs. Although critical of ‘missing link’ theories, Earl, through his casual comments, was appealing to the same basic desires.

Like Earl, the naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace ([1869] 1962: 35) also commented on how infant orang-utans looked like babies:

> The Mias (orang-utan) [was] like a very young baby, lying on its back quite helpless, rolling lazily from side to side, stretching out all four hands into the air, wishing to grasp something, but hardly able to guide its fingers to any definite object; and when dissatisfied, opening wide its almost toothless mouth, and expressing its wants by a most infantine scream.

Wallace commented that compared to monkeys “the baby Mias looked more baby-like by the comparison” (Wallace [1869] 1962: 35). Not only did Wallace perceive a similarity in action to a human baby, but he also started to treat the infant Mias (orang-utan) as he would a baby, building it a cradle “with a soft mat for it to lie upon which was changed and washed everyday”. This also led to the daily washing of the baby Mias. Wallace comments that it “enjoyed the wiping and rubbing dry amazingly, and when I brushed its hair seemed to be perfectly happy, lying quite still with its arms and legs stretched out while I thoroughly brushed the long hair of its back and arms” (Wallace [1869] 1962: 33). Arguably, Wallace’s actions are no different to those of doting owner towards their pet, however, the regular references to its human characteristics makes a different connection: that of a father and adopted child connection. Wallace was not just caring for his pet, but was actively looking for its humanity.

McLeod saw humanity even in the orang-utan’s psychology:

> When teased … he would display in a very strong manner the human passions, following the person whining and crying, throwing himself on his back, and rolling about apparently in a great rage, attempting to bite those near him, and frequently lowering himself by a rope over the ship’s
side, as if pretending to drown himself; but, when he came near the water’s edge, he always re-
considered the matter, and came on board again (McLeod 1819: 318).

This physical and psychological similarity between humans and orang-utans created moral dilemmas. The common method of studying the orang-utan was to shoot it, observe its physical similarity to humans and then sell its skeleton to a European museum; thereby the naturalist was able to recoup the cost of the expedition. The morality of this became hard for some naturalists, Horace St. John stated:

> I never saw but one full-grown orang-utan in the jungle, and he kept himself well sheltered by a large branch as he peered at us. He might have shown himself with perfect safety, as I never could bring myself to shoot at a monkey (St. John 1862: 23).

St. John, had no problems with shooting animals, but it was monkeys and the orang-utan in particular that he felt uneasy about shooting. A similar dilemma was expressed by the American traveller Walter Murray Gibson: “The sailor had raised the carbine, and was about to fire, when I bid him stop; it seemed like murder to shoot at that human face, for I had heard something of wild and hairy races, roaming in the forests not far from the waters of Palembang” (Gibson 1855: 117). The implied premise was that they were too close to humans to treat as animals.

Although Thomas Peacock’s Sir Oran Haut-ton was a satirical tale, the integration of orang-utans with European colonial society did occur as McLeod demonstrates. More broadly, it was common-place for orang-utans to be maintained as pets, with the human owners dressing them in clothes. St. John observed such an occurrence:

> When I lived in Brunei, a very young male was given me. Not knowing what to do with it, I handed it over to a family where there were many children. They were delighted with it, and made it a suit of clothes. To the trousers it never took kindly; but I have often seen him put on his own jacket in damp weather, though he was not particular about having it upside down or not. It was quite gentle and use to be fondled by the very smallest children. (St. John 1862: 23)
In a similar vein to St. John’s clothed orang-utan, McLeod commented that his orang-utan friend “made no difficulty … when cold, or inclined to sleep, in supplying himself with any jacket he found hanging about, or in stealing a pillow from a hammock, in order to lie more soft and comfortably” (McLeod 1819: 317). McLeod regularly refers to the orang-utans requisitioning of objects as ‘theft’. McLeod indicates that the Orang-utan naturally adopted a human lifestyle. Burrough makes similar inclinations: After observing that “she voluntarily covered herself with pieces of sail-clothe” Burrough tried to get the Hoolock to wear clothes: but it was a humanization that she refused to endure (Harlan and Burrough 1834: 53). Intriguingly, the Hoolock also learnt how to defecate on ship: “when answering to the calls of nature on board of ship, she would hold on to a rope and evacuate into the sea” (Harlan and Burrough 1834: 54). In another instance the Hoolock became so “tame and manageable … that he would take hold of” Burrough’s “hand and walk with” Burrough “helping himself along at the same time with the other hand applied to the ground as described above”. Burrough even taught, or, as Burrough implies, the Hoolock automatically adopted table manners:

He would come at my call and seat himself in a chair by my side at the breakfast table, and help himself to an egg, or the wing of a chicken from my plate, without endangering any of my table furniture — he would partake of coffee, chocolate, milk, tea, &c., and although his usual mode of taking liquids was by dipping his knuckles into the cup and licking his fingers, still, when apparently more thirsty, he would take up the vessel from which I fed him with both hands, and drink like a man from a spring (Harlan and Burrough 1834: 57-58)

Burrough never states that he taught the Hoolock these mannerisms. The inference is that the Hoolock adopted them automatically. The insinuations are indicative of the humanising of the orang-outang. This humanising of the orang-utan had implications to the local population. Burrough saw a connection to the local population in the Hoolock’s dietary habits. After it refused meat, rather than concluding that the Hoolock was a herbivore, Burrough maintained that it was “an antipathy to an indiscriminate use of animal food” and that this corresponded to “the different religious casts of this country” (Harlan and Burrough 1834: 58). Burrough’s attempt to connect the Hoolock’s dietary habits to the local population’s religious practices was a bold variant of the general social trend to humanize the large apes. Even observers that were sceptical of the human link, still made dietary connections between humans and orang-utans. St. John believed that “orang-utans die in captivity from eating too much raw fruit”. His
conclusion from this was that they needed to be “fed principally on cooked rice” (St. John 1862: 23). How he came to the conclusion that cooked rice was available in the Borneo canopy is not clear. However, this connects with the beliefs of the time that domesticity transformed biology and that the orang-utan was subjected to civilization. This had been the eighteenth-century argument of Monboddo and the Satirist Peacock, but was also the civilising mission attitude of colonialists such as Raffles, Brooke and Crawfurd. The second, reasoning was that St. John was locked into the humanising discourse.

This humanising discourse came at a cost. As Burrough’s observations of the Hoolock’s diet demonstrates, the Hoolock was humanized at the expense of the local population. The religious practices of the locals became a biological condition of primitivism linked to the local apes. As Orang-utans were humanized, connections through implication were made with the indigenous populations that lived in the same territory as the great apes. These connections presented the indigenous community as being little more than evolved apes. Discussions on the similarities between the orang-utan and humans continued the hierarchical ‘chain of being’. However in making these connections, these writers were tackling the issue of how primordial was the tribe.

**Absorbing the Indigenous Traditions**

The use of orang-utans in dehumanising the local populations of Southeast Asia, interlinked with the primordialising stream of naturalization that occurred in the nineteenth-century. This hierarchical vision of colonial society has been criticized for its blatant racism many times before (Ashcroft, et al. 1989, Bhabha 2004, Boon 1990, Said 1995, Spivak 1988). It is fair to say that racial hierarchy (as a modern version of the ‘chain of being’) was both a deliberate policy of the British and other European empires, whilst also being a naturalized ideology of the period. These hierarchical mechanisms, served to legitimize and maintain power in the colonial world through the ‘chain of being’ (Abraham 2004, Alatas 1977, Boon 1990, Fanon 1970, Hirschman 1986, Ooi 2003, Said 1995). These mechanisms were not solely external, but were rooted in pre-existing endogenous prejudices that were transformed by the process of colonization (Cannadine 2002). The symbolism surrounding the orang-utan was also
part of this process. The image of the orang-utan developed by travel writers, naturalists and philosophers was largely based on local stories. The accounts of the orang-utan left by Wallace, St. John, Brooke and others would have been limited to boring anatomical details of the orang-utan’s physical structure if it wasn’t for the zest of local stories. This local knowledge portrayed the orang-utan as being deeply intertwined with local society as an interconnection between the human and the natural world. Like the ethnologist’s ‘chain of being’, the orang-utan was also a hierarchal symbol for the indigenous peoples of Borneo and Malaya.

Three basic stories constituted the travel-writers’ repertoire on the orang-utan’s role in indigenous society; each of which accompanied the ubiquitous acknowledgement that this was a “Dayak story”, and therefore unreliable. This acknowledgement creates an important dynamic that will be discussed later. The first and most detailed of the stories, were tails of orang-utans attempting to form sexual relations with humans. The second was derogatory stories that spoke of wild tribes, with tails, that lived in the distant hills. The final narrative was one of alliance, wherein the orang-utans aided humans in different ways. These three narratives will all have had meaning to the Dayak and other indigenous tribes of Borneo. This meaning would have reflected the deep roots that a hunter-gather society has with the landscape, and these stories and legends would have been a reflection of the hunter-gatherer’s closeness to the natural world. This was diametrically different to that expressed in post-enlightenment modes of thought (Brody 2002, Stewart-Harawira 2005). By comparison, the regurgitated travellers’ account’s transform these stories. Rather than reflecting the continuation of nature (under European ideas of the separation between humans and the environment) these stories reflect hierarchy and ‘difference’.

This connection between the natural world and human society is exampled by stories that link tribal origins to the orang-utan. These stories came in a variety of different forms. Usually they indicate some form of alliance that protected the tribe in the mythic past. St. John noted that in some Dayak communities it was “forbidden to kill …an orang-utan”. In one community he visited, the people maintained it was related to the

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116 Although the ‘Dayak stories’ were questioned for their reliability, the European accounts are equally unreliable, for travel writer/explorer/ethnologist reiterate each others gossip and accounts to boost their
time when the community was “first settled at the hill on Banting, the orang-utan abounded there. Their enemies once came to attack the place, but were repulsed by the assistance of the orang-utans, who crowded to the edge of the fruit groves to glare on the strangers, and were probably mistaken for men.” (St. John 1862: 73) Similar beliefs can be found on the Malayan peninsular in relation to the orang-asli, which were sometimes referred to as orang-utan by the Malays (Bourien 1865: 73, Favre 1865: 14, Thomson 1875). One tradition that the orang-asli held of their origins was that:

They were all descended from two white apes — from two “ounka puteh.” The two ounka puteh, having reared their young ones, sent them into the plains, and there they perfected so well, that they and their descendents became men; but others, on the contrary, who returned to the mountains, still remained apes (Bourien 1865: 73).117

This observation was made by a French ethnologist in a paper to the London Ethnological Society, and he didn’t fail to make the obvious connection to evolutionary theory:

M. Bemailt, consul for France and Egypt, says that men have descended from fishes; it is astonishing, then, that my savages should say they are descended from two white apes—two ounka puteh, the most beautiful species known, and that which approaches most close to the human race? I have however seen other savages contradict the former, and say that the ape is nothing else than a degenerate man. The author of the Philosophy of Nature and of the Changes of Natural History makes fish the descendants of man. Let us admit it, then, that our philosophic savages are, in the particular, quite as wise and logical as our pretended philosophers (Bourien 1865: 73).

In the Dayak or Orang-asli world-view, these stories were symbols of human society’s closeness to the natural world. However, when recounted by Europeans they were transformed and interpreted by dominant ideas of evolution and the ‘chain of being’. This meant their meaning was transformed from humans’ interrelationship to the natural world, to a notion of biological hierarchy wherein the orang-utans primal condition reflected on the various indigenous communities.

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117 The tradition was recorded by another French traveller-ethnologist Pierre E’tienne Lazare Favre (1865: 84-85) (also known as Paul Abbe’ Favre) who went under the pseudonym of R. Favre, and as such the library records vary somewhat.
Inherent to the discourse on race is an undercurrent of sex. Sex was used to define the limits of what it meant to be human. The ability to procreate was the core issue around the debates on race and hybridity (as discussed in Chapter Four). It was this argument on hybridity that gave the scientific tick to the biological unity of the human races. This same question pervaded the literature on the orang-utan. St. John informs us that “The Dayaks tell many stories of the male orang-utans in old times carrying off their young girls, and of the latter becoming pregnant by them” (St. John 1862: 22). He qualifies this by stating “but they are, perhaps, merely traditions”, therefore the Dayaks are merely reiterating a good yarn. However, he also notes the case of a huge male orang-utan “carrying off a Dutch girl, who was, however, immediately rescued by her father and a party of Javanese soldiers, before any injury beyond fright had occurred to her” (St. John 1862: 22).

Dayak traditions in travel writers’ narratives occupy a mythic reality, being fanciful tails: this is the rational St. John speaking. Although rejecting these stories, St. John supports them with a grain of European knowledge represented by the Dutch girl. St. John wants it both ways, but in doing so he was reaffirming a racial hierarchy. By pronouncing the native stories as illogical, the Dayaks are condemned to being natives devoid of higher reasoning capacity; but at the same time, by giving some legitimacy to

118 This point can be taken further. Franz Fanon (1970) writes about desire, and use of sex to distinguish primordial difference between white and black. This argument holds that desire for sex was used to project animalistic qualities on to Negro people.

119 The stories of offspring my not be as ridiculous as they sound. Recent research into the DNA relationship between humans and chimpanzees have found that for 1.2 million years early humans and chimpanzees interbred, a point that is shown in the fossil remains that show both human and chimpanzee characteristics (Patterson, et al. 2006). Likewise there is fossil evidence that for a considerable period of time Humans and Neanderthals interbred (Trinkaus and Shipman 1993: 415). In a newspaper article commenting on the find, Colin Groves from ANU was quoted as stating “that even today it could be possible for humans and chimps to have sex and produce offspring, although there would be ethical problems” (Cauchi 2006). Although this relates to chimpanzees, Schwartz (2005), argues that the bone structure of orang-utans is closer to humans than the chimpanzees and that therefore, it is arguable whether or not, orang-utans are closer to humans than chimpanzees. It is not the focus of this thesis to discuss the scientific merits of these points; however, what they do indicate is the possibility that humans did carry orang-utan offspring. Interestingly this debate is essentially the same as the one over race and hybridity in the nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century the question was whether or not a racial hybrid was fertile as the means of deciding the unity of the human race. This debate raises similar questions: are these other branches of the humanoid family entitled to be considered human? (Goodin, et al. 1997, Leakey and Lewin 2003, Marks 2002).

120 This story may come from a story that Walter Murray Gibson heard whilst he was imprisoned in Java (Gibson 1855: 423-426). St.John makes no reference to this. However, his brother Horace S.John Reviewed Gibson’s Prison of Weltevreden (St. John 1856). Much of Horace’s writings on Southeast Asia were sourced on materials that his brother Spencer provided (Spilsbury 2004).
the stories, St. John was also enshrining their primitiveness. St. John was holding out
the prospect that the Dayaks were the hybrid offspring of orang-utans and humans,
although he would never formally subscribe to this belief.

Stories of abduction and sex focus on primal desires and present divisions between
civilization and primitivism. It is important to note who is the active sexual partner in
these stories. It is neither the Dayak nor the Europeans, but rather the orang-utan. Most
of these accounts refer to women being abducted, with the implication being that
primordial desire of the beast was being transferred to human civilization. As St. John
observed, “it is seldom that we hear of the female orang-utan running off with a man”
(St. John 1862: 156). The dynamic of such a narrative is very different. The raw
primitiveness of male sexual desire has a long cultural history, in comparison women
have rarely been presented in this light. St. John gave a detailed recollection of the only
account he heard of a female orang-utan abducting a male human, in which she used her
raw strength to subdue the Murut human. “There he remained some months jealously
watched by his strange companion, fed by her on fruits and the cabbage of the palm, and
rarely permitted to touch the earth with his feet, but compelled to move from tree to
tree” (St. John 1862: 157). St. John believed that this was most likely a true story,
having been told the location of village in which this individual now lived. The
narrative of primordialism is still compelling throughout this account. In the end, it was

121 There are many interesting connections between gender, tribalism, savagery/barbarism and the orang-
utan. Ulla Wagner (1972: 132) gives the following account of an old Sakaran legend:
Which says that the daughter of their great ancestor, who resides in heaven, near the Evening
Star, refused to marry until her betrothed brought her a present worth her acceptance. The man
went into the jungle and killed a deer, which he presented to her; but the fair lady turned away in
disdain. He went again, and returned with a mias, the great monkey (sic) who haunts the forest;
but this present was not more to her taste. Then, in a fit of despair, the lover went abroad, and
killed the first man that he met, and throwing his victim's head at the maidens feet, he exclaimed
at the cruelty she had made him guilty of; but to his surprise, she smiled, and said, that now he
had discovered the only gift worthy of herself.

Wagner argues that head-hunting was emerging on a sliding scale of men proving their manhood, with
women demanding the practice of head-hunting before consenting to marry. Wagner (1972: 133)
rationally attributes this to women wanting protection, commenting:
An Iban woman would no doubt be well aware that a very beneficial side-effect of the warlike
exploits of her kinsmen and co-villagers would be increased safety and greater chances of
survival.

For our purposes the rationality behind head-hunting is not an issue, however, the Iban Dayaks and the
colonials were connecting it on a sliding scale of barbarism from hunting to murder, via the orang-utan.
This practice was interlinking with the procreation of the tribe, with head-hunting becoming a marker of
ethnicity. Therefore there are many interesting connections between gender, barbarism and the orang-
utan, with the orang-utan representing the limits of the human and the tribe.
the human’s whit that led to his escape and the orang-utan being killed by his technological weaponry.

St. John depicts a very close relationship between orang-utans and humans in these stories. The previous stories show that humans could live within the orang-utan world, and his accounts of orang-utan ‘pets’ showed this interaction can go both ways. Although depicted as being able to live in the same community, there is always a difference. The Murat did not want to live with the orang-utan and conversely the orang-utans refuse to become human. These stories show an ambiguity between civilization and primordialism. The implication for the barbarian was that civilization became biologically absolute. Education could no longer remove barbarism. Barbarism became an inherent animal trait

Associating humans with Orang-utans was not just a European phenomenon. This same association was a derogatory symbol throughout Southeast Asia and became a mechanism to define extreme ethnic differences. Settled farming and maritime communities related stories of wild tribes, in the interior of their respective countries, that lived like the orang-utan and still had tails. Thomas Newbold’s (1839ii: 416) summary of some of these accounts show that these stories were common throughout the archipelago:

There are many idle tales current among Malays of the existence in the woods and mountains of malignant races, half men, half monkeys, endowed with supernatural powers; such for instance are the Pikats of Java, who are said to dwell on the summits of hills, and to intermarry with the Siamangs; the Pangans and the cannibal Bennangs, who, like beasts, cohabit with their nearest

122 James Boon (1990: 29-48) insinuates that this is a European concern being forced into native accounts. The implicit claim is that the Europeans are the racists and the peoples of Southeast Asia are not. A century and a half later, it is very hard to account for this; however, it is a common theme throughout nineteenth-century accounts, therefore there must be some reality to these claims.

123 St.John recounted the following account:
It is singular how the story of the men with tails has spread. I have heard of it in every part I have visited, but their country is always a few days’ journey farther off. The most circumstantial account I ever had was from a man who had traded much on the north-east coast of Borneo. He said he had seen and felt the tails, they were four inches long, and were very stiff, so that all the people sat on seats in which there was a hole made for this remarkable appendage to fit in. (St.John 1862: 40)

John Thomson recounted a similar tradition from Malaya:
As to these hill tribes—Orang Bukit,'Orang Outan,'Orang Anto,' mountain men, men of the wilds, spirit men-such people, the Malays solemnly assure us, carry tails, whose tufted ends they
relatives; the malignant Mawa that mocks the laugh of a human being, with its iron arm and body covered with shaggy hair; and the treacherous Biliong that watches over the tigers, and which is supposed on rainy nights to visit the abodes of men, and under the pretext of asking for fire, to seize and tear them into pieces with its enormous claws.

These stories were so common that they were rarely taken seriously. George Windsor Earl commented on this:

In the year 1834 … I was informed by several of the more intelligent among the natives, that a wild, woolly-haired, people existed in the interior; but information was mixed up with so many incredible details respecting their habits, that I was led to consider the whole as fabulous; and the subject is treated in this light in the narrative of my voyages (Earl 1853: 144-145).

By the 1830s, most of the travel writers rarely believed the accounts of wild tribes living in the interior and possessing tails. 124 These reflected the reality that the interior dip in damar oil and ignite, and thereupon rushing all ablaze into the Malayan campongs, spread fire and destruction around. (Thomson 1875: 35)

124 An exception to this was Walter Murray Gibson (1855) who became obsessed with these stories and said that he had actually seen one:

I spoke to the Panyorang about them. He stepped out of the room, making sign to me to follow… I heard some one cry lakass, quick and harsh, as though urging a beast; yuh! a grunt from a gruff voice in reply. An orang kubu, said the Panyorang; and I saw a dark brown form, tall as a middle-sized person, covered with hair, that looked soft and flowing; the arms, hands, legs and feet, seemed well formed like the Malays; the body was straight; and easily bore, on the right shoulder, the yoke of two heavy panniers, filled with material for the building that was going on. The Panyorang gave me some of the same particulars about the orang kubu, that were told to me by the Dutch officer on the Soonsang, to which he added some of the fable, that surrounds every eastern, and especially Malay account of any thing. These were tai orang, the refuse of men: they were the descendants of some slaves of Alexander, who had fled from their master. They could tell nothing of their forefathers; they could only speak some short grunting words; and one syllable only of Malay words they could repeat: nassee, rice, being nass with them; and yan for orang. They were brutes, they had no worship, no marriage, no law, no clothing, no idea of its use; they were the accursed of Allah, companions of djins on earth; fit only to be beasts of burden; and the Malays hunted them and caught them in pits and tree tops; and made slaves of them, as of right, said the Panyorang, all beings ought to be, who are inferior to men. The eyes of this Kubu were clearer, the nose fuller, and the lips were thinner than those of the common Malay, but the mouth was wide, lips protruding, and chin formed no part of the hairy face; yet it was pleasantly human in its expression; more so than the dirty, mottle-skinned lascars and coolies I had seen at Minto and Palembang. Was this then some lower grade of human being, some connecting link, between man and beast, more human than orang utan, or chimpanze; and less so than Papuan or Hottentot? I could not say so from what I saw, nor from all the strange stories I heard. But that beings of well made human form, covered with hair, almost without speech, and living on raw food, dwell in the caves and tree tops of the forests of Sumatra, are facts that are well established. The Panyorang said that the Sultan of Jambee had a great many Kubu slaves. (Gibson 1855: 181-182)

Gibson’s accounts are extremely interesting. There has been a long tradition of sighting what has become know as the orang-pendek, which is Sumatra’s version of the Yeti (Cribb 2005). The problem with taking Gibson’s account seriously was that his accounts of his time in Southeast Asia is political manifesto of how he believed colonialism should occur. These arguments are made using symbolism; therefore, references to these mythical beings could be more symbolic than anything else. Horace St.John put it this
of Borneo and Sumatra were wild places, in which the tribes were savage barbarians, and like Africa were dangerous places for European explorers. These claims by the travel writers reflected the indigenous social divisions that existed: for the coastal communities had very little to do with those of the interior. With a hint of pathos, one travel writer commented on this trend: “In answer to my inquiry, the person in question said that the people on the other side of Kinibalu were very bad men, and killed everyone who approached them. I said I had heard the same account of his fellow-countryman, and he shook his head in deprecation of such a wicked report” (Crespigny 1858: 347). In total these stories reflected pre-existing practices of power and persecution. Earl noted:

On approaching the boat, a Papua or New Guinea-negro, one of my boat’s – crew, was perceived cutting wood for thole pins; and the Javanese soldiers, by way of alarming him, and amusing themselves, rushed towards the spot shouting “Orant-outan!” on which the poor man, who had no notion of being shot for a monkey, jumped behind a tree and roared out, that he was not an orang-outan but an orang Papua (Earl [1837] 1971: 228).

Earl’s story demonstrates that distinctions relating to civilization were being made prior to the European involvement in Southeast Asia; therefore, British travel writers were building on pre-existing prejudices. In reiterating these stories and prejudices, the travel writers were reforming them into a new discourse of civilization and power, one based on biology, race and nation. This discourse transforms the early colonial society from its mercantile multiculturalism into a racial hierarchy, bound by a vertical ‘chain of being’.

**Reconciling the Limits of the Primordial Tribal-Nation**

The ‘chain of being’ that linked nations and tribes to a primordial core is an implicit idea that was woven through nineteenth-century narratives of Southeast Asia. The orang-utan emerged at the limits of the ‘chain of being’. The naturalising of the nation meant that the nation was primordialized into the natural landscape, this process way: “During this same visit he also saw one of the Orang Kubu, a hairy man, of Sumatra, of whose existence, we believe, the ethnologists doubt; but Mr. Gibson cannot, without disputing his own eyesight” (St. John 1856). By the 1870s comical stories were being published in popular pamphlets such as: *Account of a race of human beings with tails : discovered by Mr. Jones, the traveller, in the interior of New Guinea* (c1873), indicating the extent to which it had become popular trope. The irony behind these stories is that none of the great apes have a tail, therefore why would the missing link have a tail?
generated the orang-utan as the ultimate primordial being linking the barbarian tribe-nation back to the savage condition of nature. This chapter has examined how the tribe was embedded in nature through the orang-utan. However, the civilized nation was not disconnected from the tribe and nature. The journalist, ethnologist and founder of the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago*, James Logan (1847: 180) commented on this phenomenon:

> When we look upon some half or wholly naked people as dark in the minds as in their persons, to judge from the absence of all arts, we are ready to conclude that they are in every respect at an infinite distance from ourselves, and in fact are as near the orang-utan as they are remote from us. But these people have a possession … they have a language, which is an image of our own, and is the same great record of sensation, though and feeling.

Living in Singapore in 1847, Logan could see the popular tendency to place tribal society as the ‘other’ that is “dark in mind” and in “person” lives in the jungle and is devoid of the “arts”. Logan’s criticism of the popular tendency is reminiscent of James Cowles Prichard’s 1847 claim that “our relations to these tribes will appear to be not very different from those which might be imagined to subsist between us and a race of orangs” (quoted in chapter four). For both Logan and Prichard the primordial ‘chain of being’ was the legitimization of barbarism by the civilized towards the savage, Logan (1847: 181) continues:

> The contradiction, however, lies in our own ignorance and prejudice, and the fact, when considered with all that it implies, literally speaks volumes against the habit, in which we too often indulge, of viewing such races, not from the basis of a common humanity, but from the pinnacle of our own advantages.

Both Logan and Prichard present their ethnology within a Christian cosmology, with Logan (1847: 173) commenting “It is because Man is essentially, even in his lowest or normal state, a shadow of the Divinity, and a mirror of all nature, capable of an infinite perception and reflection of the sensible, that he creates a language as spontaneously, variously and luxuriantly as the earth arrays itself of vegetation”. Rather than linking humans and nature within the ‘chain of being’ Logan saw two chains existing as a duality. Humans were shadows of God and therefore mirrors of nature not part of
nature. Therefore culture (language and art) were the products of humans, these were distinctly different from nature but existed as a mirror to the diversity of nature.

Logan saw problems in linking humans to nature; therefore he clearly demarked two separate entities: culture and nature. Although Logan separated culture from nature, he was still primordially naturalising the nation; however, by separating the two, Logan was trying to place limits on the extent of primordialism, limiting human primordialism to culture.

It is in this field, where necessity and reason have released man from their inflexible bonds, and given him over to the capricious and protean power of accident, fancy, and taste, that we must find the evidence which tradition has lost. All that lies without it belongs to the common history of man. It is here that we shall find the particular history of races (Logan 1847: 172-173).

The tribes and nations were united by a common history of man, but this history was the history of the races. Logan saw that “necessity and reason” had created the need for language, with language being a common “possession” of all humans. Language was the common connection linking the tribe and the nation, with Logan explaining that “the person of the savage, and the mind of the civilized man must first wander far into new realms of action or thought, before he can loosen the ties of a language once produced” (Logan 1847: 174). Language therefore was the key to the nation’s past. Logan (1847: 174) saw that “every language contains within itself the evidence of its own immediate origin and progress”. Therefore the nation could be traced back to the tribal barbarian. This meant that all savages and barbarians were linked back to an original tribe. Yet for Logan, language was merely a traceable symptom of the nation, not the key aspect of the nation itself. He argued:

A nation portrays its existing condition better in its manners, habits and customs than in its language. The expression which were once a literal reflex of the former may remain, but, with reference to the present, they may have become entirely figurative. It is true that habits also lose much of their primitive significance, but it cannot be so generally and entirely forgotten as that of words so often is (Logan 1847: 175).

Logan was linking culture in the shape of manners, habits, customs and language to primordialism. Therefore the nation descends to the tribe and, for Logan, this marks the
limits of primordialism. Yet in limiting primordialism to culture, Logan was still naturalising the nation. He saw that “in communities there is a general social prototype on which every person is formed” (Logan 1847: 175). However, at the same time, Logan could not totally expunge all aspects of the ‘chain of being’ having traces of primordialism beyond culture, commenting that “this great fixed life-mould, imprints its shape on every fresh member born into the community, and gives a sameness of direction to the wild and luxuriant growth in which nature indulges when free from such restraint” (Logan 1847: 175). Culture, in both the tribe and the nation civilized raw nature. Even though Logan is aware of the problems with primordializing the tribal-nation into nature, with it leading to dehumanization, Logan was finding it hard to overcome the naturalising tendency to link the nation and the tribe to nature.

This chapter has examined how the naturalising of the nation led to the primordializing of the nation. As the nation was naturalized as common sense, a second process of naturalization occurred in which the nation became primordialized. In presenting the nation as primordial, the nation was connected to the tribe, but this raised questions on the limits of primordialism. In naturalising the nation as common sense, with the tribe acting as a primordial pathway, the nation became part of nature. Therefore the orang-utan and the missing link emerged as a conjunctural point; potentially explaining the birth of the tribe. These arguments can be seen as a projection of degeneracy of tribal society, but as this chapter has argued, this is problematic. By primordializing the nation, the nation made the barbarian and tribal savage the cultural source of identity in the civilized empire. Therefore it was not a simple process of degeneracy. Despite this, liberal-minded Christian intellectuals who were committed to humanity’s unity, were conscious that missing link theories did project tribal society in a negative light. However, even figures such as James Logan and James Cowles Prichard (discussed in Chapter Four), who recognized the problems in connecting the nation to nature, still assumed a link between the nation and nature in assuming the nation as common sense.
Chapter 8 - Distinguishing the Nation from Empire and the Barbarian

As this thesis has argued, rather than being an empire of state, the British Empire was a tangled geographical structure — with overlapping spaces for governance and order; civil society and commerce — whilst all were sustained by theories that were founded on barbarian renewal. As an origin of national culture, the barbarian was carried forward. The barbarian became both a founder of nations and an object of opposition to empire. The British Empire was founded by barbarians, yet it had the objective of ending barbarism and creating order. The barbarian was both a positive and a negative factor, making the British Empire a contradictory cultural phenomenon. This all occurred within a system of territorially defined colonial jurisdictions. These were ambiguous spaces within the modern structure of empire, and it is in these ambiguous spaces that the naturalization of the nation occurred as the empire dealt with the barbarian legacy.

This naturalization of the nation occurred in many forms. Chapter Six examined the naturalization of nation through the process of governance, wherein the empire was justified on grounds of developing the barbarians and reinvigorating nations. It became the role of British imperialism to introduce societies to modern capitalism, and thereby liberate people from the tyranny of traditional ways of life. This transformed the barbarian lover-of-freedom into the risk-taking capitalist. A key component in this was the introduction of the nation. The nation and capitalism become allied structures on the road to liberation.

This chapter explores the emergence of the nation as a central aspect of the critique of empire from within the metropole. This critique emerges out of liberal discourse on civilization; however, this focus on civilization became a vexatious issue as liberals
became divided over the role of empire and civilization. Many anti-slavery campaigners such as Joseph Hume and Richard Cobden went on to challenge colonialism in Asia; whilst others such as James Brooke, used aboriginal protection as a means to justify further imperialism. This chapter explores the awkward way in which liberalism adopts nation-formation globally. This adoption of the nation as a central aspect of social and political organization became a divisive fissure within liberal politics. This chapter explores the split between the liberal radicals in Southeast Asia and the liberal radicals within the imperial metropole. This split was over competing ideas of the role of the nation and the empire.

The empire’s structure of geographical disjunction and system of social hierarchy all created space for the nation. But the nation, as a system of improvement, ultimately meant self-determination, and therefore independence. This contradiction between extraction and liberation was not a problem during the early-nineteenth century, with colonists and officials maintaining the blinkered belief that they were doing good deeds. Although there was initial resistance to imperialism, once it became absorbed, local rulers were then pensioned off and the British were able to freely pursue their governance schemes of transformation. This contradiction between self-determination and exploitative servitude marked the first half of the nineteenth-century. A series of mid-century events and confrontations showed these contradictions in relief. In doing so, new movements emerged that naturalized the nation in different ways. These confrontations did not deliberately reinterpret the nation from is ambiguous eighteenth-century terminology, but instead were part of a wider mid-century reconfiguring of the nation. The nation lost its connection to the barbarian. Liberal internationalists saw the nation as distinct from empire and the barbarian. Ideas of the nation were ‘in the air’, and the nation became a universalized term of analysis. Without engaging in a reflective process, conservatives, liberal imperialists and radical liberal internationalists were seeing the world as a construct of nations. To the liberal internationalists these nations all had rights as nations.

The 1850s marked a major transition, with the nation becoming a common form of political expression and analysis. The intellectual climate was changing and events on the periphery and in the centre of the empire challenged the exploitive nature of imperialism. In the centre a new wave of radical liberal politicians emerged. Some of
Chapter 8 – Distinguishing the Nation from Empire and Barbarian

these radicals, such as John Buxton, had emerged from the anti-slavery debates of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Others such as Richard Cobden and John Bright cut their political teeth fighting the Corn Laws, and some, such as Joseph Hume, participated in both debates. Practical challenges to slavery and imperial expansion were being launched in parliament and the popular press; but many of these activists were also buoyed by philosophical transformations.

The Humanitarian Movement and Anti-colonialism

The idea of self-determination (for the nation) had emerged during the French Revolution, partly under the banner of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, with fraternity meaning brotherhood and the expansion of the revolution. However the French deputies were reluctant to spread the revolution beyond of Europe. This lead Jeremy Bentham (1830: 8) to proclaim in a 1793 speech to the French National Convention that: “Martinique and Guadalupe have already pronounced their separation. Has that Satisfied you? I am afraid rather it has irritated you. They have shaken off the yoke; and you have decreed an armament to fasten it on again”. Although Bentham’s speech was in 1793, it was not published as a pamphlet until 1830. A strong anti-colonial trend emerged within the utilitarianism movement during the 1820s and lasted through to the 1840s. This movement had two broad directions: the anti-colonial imperialists that emerged on the periphery; and the anti-imperialists, who emerged in the metropole.

This trend in critcising the expansion of empire has been called the period of Little-England, as opposed the period of Big-England that emerged in the late-nineteenth century when imperial expansion became a nationalist drive.125

Anti-colonialism was influential with the parliamentary liberal radicals (Turner 2004: 176). This anti-colonialism was not in any way comparable to the comprehensive belief in self-determination that emerged in the twentieth century.126 Nevertheless, the idea of

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125 This term was originally coined by John Steerly (1890)
126 Writing in the mid-twentieth century, John S. Galbraith (1961) argued that the anti-colonial movement or ‘little Englanders’ were more myth than reality during the mid-nineteenth century. Although the ‘little-Englanders’ were un-developed proselytizers of self-determination the naturalization of self-determination (as applied to the nation) had its genesis during this period.
the nation and the rights of non-European peoples was present,\textsuperscript{127} but primarily the focus was on the corruption of the political system. Anti-colonial essays focused on dependency as a political system and argued that dependency was a corruption of good governance. John Stuart Mill’s critique of empire (which was examined in Chapter Two) falls into this category. One of the most aggressive attacks on empire during this period was George Cornwall Lewis’s (1841) \textit{Essay on the Government of Dependencies}. One of the key arguments of the utilitarians was that decolonization was a means of preventing war between the European states (Turner 2004: 176). The utilitarian movement was generally in favour of empire, as a means of pursuing their rationalistic ends of forced human improvement (Mehta 2004). Liberalism reflected the contradictions between the nation and the empire, yet this contradiction meant that both ideas were undergoing change.

These debates produced critiques of the British Empire. These critiques all presumed the nation to be a natural structure in different ways. The anti-slavery debates initiated these critiques. They constituted a humanitarian critique of empire for some; whilst, for others, abolition represented a purpose for empire (Hochschild 2005). These anti-slavery debates ended in the late 1830s. Although they introduced a critique of empire, these debates were framed within the parameters of civilization. Slavery was a moral issue that questioned notions of civility. In this arena, the use of the nation was limited to claims such as ‘we the nation stand ashamed’.

The first challenge to imperialism was the Abolition Movement. The British Empire of the eighteenth century was based around America. This was very different to the nineteenth-century empire in Asia. It was an empire of colonial migration that totally displaced (to the point of destroying) native populations. In comparison the empire in Southeast Asia was based on the maintenance of native populations for the purposes of economic extraction. Despite this difference, the role of slavery in Britain’s American empire had some structural similarities to the later Asian empire. Slavery was about the management of non-European peoples for economic gain. Rather than extracting rents, as was the case in India, American slavery was about moving people for the purposes of

\textsuperscript{127} These ideas can be explored in James Macqueen’s (1825) \textit{Colonial Controversy}. Macqueen is actually a conservative writing against the “anti-colonialists”, however his critiques portray the ideas of the time for both sides of the debate.
Chapter 8 – Distinguishing the Nation from Empire and Barbarian

labour-intensive production. From the mid-eighteenth century onwards, abolitionists focused on the economics of slavery as well as the moral issues of servitude. An early example of the political economic critique of slavery was Thomas Clarkson’s *Essay on Slavery* (1786). The essay originated as the winner of the Latin Prize at Cambridge University in 1785. In its first edition Clarkson’s essay presented a moralistic case, however in later editions Clarkson focused more on the practical economy of slavery (Hochschild 2005: 127). Increasingly the abolitionists focused on fighting the economic interests of slavery.

Slavery was extremely profitable. The abolitionists had to challenge the profitability of slavery through political economy. To expose the abysmal practices of slavery and create a moral argument to end the process, the abolitionists needed to establish that slavery was inefficient. In *An essay on the Impolicy of the African Slave Trade*, Clarkson (1788) outlined the total economic cost of the slave trade. Arguing that *in toto* the slave trade was inefficient and denied Britain access to a greater source of real trade in other commodities from Africa. The abolitionists argued the liberal notions of liberty to pursue commerce, therefore, although slavery was profitable to some, the abolitionists made the argument that slavery was a net economic drain on society. The focus on protection of the rights of non-European peoples was framed within the concept of social rationality. In effect, the argument held that slavery was in the worst interests of British and African society. This logic meant that the abolitionist movement had a paternalistic premise, wherein the interests of the indigenous people were best understood by British liberals (Blackburn 1988: 295). This paternalist logic would limit

128 In conception, Clarkson’s argument was very similar to modern-day environmentalists who argue the total cost of consumerism, expressed as environmental degradation, is not recognized by conventional economics.

129 Economic rationality has long been a focus of critique. Marxist historiography has argued that slavery was not abolished until it had lost its competitive edge (Genovese 1969). There are two main points to this argument: one, that under capitalism, morality can only occur when immorality provides a lesser economic gain; and two, all moral decisions are based a material reality. The problem with this argument is that slavery was still very profitable, with demand for products increasing (Schama 2002: 108). It is also notable that, after the abolition of slavery, slave-like working conditions continued in the American South and was introduced into parts of the British Empire; particularly in Queensland, wherein Torres Strait Islanders and the Aboriginal population were forced to work without pay. The claim that slavery ended only when it became economically inefficient is testament to the success of the abolitionists’ arguments. Their argument was that free labour was ultimately more profitable than forced labour. Therefore this argument was based on eventual gains of a complex division of labour and not immediate gains of extraction. The abolitionists did not prove that slavery was inefficient, but rather presented abolition as having economic benefits (Porter 1999: 204).
the first wave of anti-imperial critique. Rather than challenging empire, liberalism channelled empire.

With the ending of slavery throughout the British Empire, many of the abolitionists moved to critiquing the system of colonialism itself. Thomas Fowell Buxton had led the parliamentary charge for abolition from the 1820s onwards. Buxton attempted to redirect the humanitarian energies of the abolitionist movement. He argued that the focus should be on reparations for past wrong-doings. These wrong-doings Buxton (1837: 5) summarized as:

Too often, their territory has been usurped; their property seized; their numbers diminished; their character debased; the spread of religion impeded. European vices and diseases have been introduced amongst them, and they have been familiarized with the use of our most potent instruments for the subtle or the violent destruction of human life viz. Brandy and gunpowder.

Despite the crimes of Europeans, Buxton argued in *The African Slave Trade and its Remedy* (1840) that a key aspect of slavery was the nature of trade in non-European societies. Non-European societies were intrinsically built around slavery as a mode of production. Buxton argued that a key aspect of slavery was the nature of the trade in non-European societies. Non-European societies were intrinsically built around slavery as a mode of production. Buxton’s argument was that Europeans had fallen into the trap of slavery. Therefore Buxton effectively blamed the victims for seducing the perpetrators. This argument was quite common. Officials in Prince of Wales Island (Penang) bemoaned the fact that slavery existed in Penang, and, like Buxton, blamed it on the natives. The Judge and magistrate of Penang commented:

I was not ignorant, that slavery, limited and unlimited, has been here tolerated. I know that emigrants, both from the Malays, Peninsula, and from the Eastern Islands, who had become inhabitants of Prince of Wales Island, have been permitted to retain in slavery those whom they had brought as slaves to this place. But all this passed sub silento; for after careful search, I have not found any regulation of the local government, or any order from the Governor General in council, authorizing the establishment of slavery (Dickens 1828[1/1/1802]: 429).

Therefore, it was the natives that were corrupting civilization, bringing slaves to new colony for slavery was “universally prevalent in all the adjacent countries over which
the British government … [had] no control” (Counter, et al. 1828[29/9/1809]: 441). These sentiments of corruption were resolutely expressed in 1807 by the acting Governor for Prince of Wales Island, W. E Philips (1828[25/12/1807]: 436), who commented: “slavery in its mildest forms is degrading to the minds of Britons and only tolerated as a means of drawing population to an infant colony, which from the now flourishing state of this island is no longer necessary, therefore derogatory to our national character”. Clearly, Governor Philips saw it as a central issue and believed it his duty to end the practice on Prince of Wales Island. What is interesting for our purposes was that Philips linked abolition to the nation and the national character, bearing in mind that by 1807, abolition had only just been achieved throughout the British Empire after a bitter twenty-year struggle. Yet at the same time, Governor Philips (1828[25/12/1807]: 439) said he didn’t want to “too suddenly interfere with ancient and authorized usages”, by this Philips meant caution should be shown in “interfering in the domestic arrangements and customs of the various native inhabitants” (1828[4/2/1809]: 439). Therefore within these debates over implementing abolition, officials in the farthest reaches of the empire were viewing a policy that was based on property rights and individuality through the prism of national culture and the independent rights of Southeast Asian culture.

Faced with these problems, rather than disengagement, Buxton urged the introduction of “legitimate commerce”, which “might be the precursor, or the attendant, of civilization, peace and Christianity, the unenlightened, warlike, and heathen tribes who now so fearfully prey on each other, to supply the slave markets of the New World” (Buxton 1840: 306). Buxton appears to suggest that the barbarity of Africa created slavery. This barbarity needed to be civilized if slavery was to end. Buxton saw this transformation emanating from commerce. The barbarian needed to be transformed from barbarism to capitalism. In this transformation Buxton argued, “the merchant, the philanthropist, the patriot, and the Christian, may unite” (Buxton 1840: 306). Although critically scathing of imperial practices, Buxton ultimately blamed indigenous societies for imperialism. It was their barbarity that entrapped and forced Europeans to commit the sin of slavery. This exonerated Britain from its own crimes, but at the same time gave Britain an imperial burden to fulfil its Christian duty and reform these corrupt practices. In this plea for reform, the contradiction at the heart of nineteenth-century British imperialism
was not revealed and contested, but rather Buxton and his followers provided new layers of complexity to the contradiction.

The onus of barbarism was moved from an internal condition to an external condition. The British were no longer barbarians. The empire became defined against the barbarians. This reaffirmed the basic structure of empire, removing the barbarians from within the empire. Yet the contradiction of the nation was still there. The barbarians were now outside the gates, but the gates existed in the name of the nation. The empire was still the tool of the nation.

**Barbarism, Civilization and Tribal Rights**

The transition is also seen in James Cowles Prichard’s ethnological publications. As noted in Chapter Four of this thesis, Prichard had built a political argument about racial equality into his research. The publication of the *Natural History of Man* ([1843] 1855) was the truncated and accessible version of Prichard’s work. Its publication coincided with the success of the abolition movement. In his introduction, Prichard outlined a humanitarian critique of colonialism (discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis). He argued that colonialism had meant that non-Europeans had become the “domestic slaves of the lordly caste, under whose protection they are susceptible of some small improvement” (Prichard [1843] 1855: 6). In portraying the moral shame of colonialism, Prichard argued that his critique was “near to an apology” for past practices (Prichard [1843] 1855: 7). Like Buxton, Prichard was redirecting the abolition movement into an anti-imperial movement.

Prichard demonstrates some of the problems with this critique. Prichard’s arguments were based on the scientific arguments for equality or basic rights. By framing this debate through science, the focus was on rights within empire. Although critiquing empire (similar to Raffles) Prichard and Buxton were arguing for a change of practice in expressing the empire. The debate was on equality of humanity and became framed in the context of race. The focus was on changing key practices of power within the empire, rather than the system of power in itself. The system of power was never questioned. The humanitarians spoke from within the system that created slavery, and
believed the system itself could be maintained and transformed. Therefore, the humanitarians pursued civil society within the imperial framework as a means of improving the lot of aboriginal peoples.

Buxton’s and Prichard’s calls for the protection of indigenous societies became manifest in a series of Protection Societies, all formed in the late 1830s. Most of these protection societies were focused on transforming the social condition of Africa, such as Buxton’s ‘African Civilization Society’ (formed in July 1839), or in the case of Joseph Sturge’s ‘British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society’ (formed in April 1839) aimed at eradicating slavery internationally. These were dedicated protection societies that followed in the footsteps of the anti-slavery campaign.

A broader campaign emerged from the politicized quarter of the ethnologists. Following Prichard’s example, Thomas Hodgkin formed two societies that had mutually supporting interests. The first was the Aborigines’ Protection Society (APS) formed in 1837. The APS was a response to the finding of the 1837 Select Committee on Aborigines (Buxton 1837). The committee recommended that ‘whatever may be the legislative system of any Colony, we … advise that, as far as possible, the Aborigines be withdrawn from its control’, and placed in the ‘more impartial hands’ of Imperial executive officials (Porter 1999: 208). They also maintained that indigenous labour should be regulated to protect their freedom, and that land sales should be controlled to guarantee just returns and provide opportunities for ‘religious instruction and education’ to the native inhabitants (Porter 1999: 208). The APS was the pressure-group that sought to implement these recommendations and, in contrast to the other protection societies, its focus was empire-wide. It was supported by Hodgkin’s other project the Ethnological society, who’s aim was to “distinguishing the characteristics … of the varieties of Mankind” ("Regulations" 1848: 3), in doing so, the Ethnological society provided the means of understanding the Aboriginal populations of the world. Science, which had been skilfully used in the anti-slavery campaign (see Chapter Four), was now part of the humanist campaign for benign imperialism.

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130 The political direction of the Ethnological society was made clear with the Blackballing of Robert Knox. Knox’s London Anthropological society certainly interpreted the Ethnological Society as being a Quaker project, with Anthological Review stating in 1868 “Prior to Mr. Crawfurd’s occupying the presidential chair, his views on certain scientific subjects had been far from popular with a faction of
The humanitarian projects of the 1840s were failures. Buxton had campaigned for an expedition up the African Niger River. It resulted in forty of the 145 Europeans on the expedition dying of fever, and the expedition being aborted. The APS had pushed for Aboriginal Protectors to be appointed in the Australian colonies in 1838, but ten years later these measures showed little effect in mitigating the effects of white settlement on the Aboriginal population in the Australian colonies. In this climate of imperial protection, James Brooke championed the idea of Aboriginal protection in Asia. Brooke was very critical of the methods pursued by all the protection associations.

Whilst we admire the torrent of devotional and philosophical exertions, we cannot help deploring, that the zeal and attention of the leaders of these charitable crusades have never been directed to the countries under consideration. These unhappy countries have failed to rouse attention or excite commiseration, and as they sink lower and lower, they afford a striking proof how civilization may be crushed, and how the fairest and richest lands under the sun may become degraded by continuous course of oppression and misrule (Brooke 1853i: 20).

For Brooke, Aboriginal protection was little more than a talk-fest and that the focus of the protection societies and anti-slavery societies was misguided, stating:

The Indian Archipelago has fully shared this neglect, for even the tender philanthropy of the present day, which originates such multifarious schemes for the amelioration of doubtful evils, and which shudders at the prolongation of apprenticeship in the West for a single year,\footnote{This is in reference to the fact that slave owners had a short term reprieve, with slavery being commuted to an apprenticeship, meaning that the slave owners had three extra years of free labour before the total abolition of slavery.} is blind to the existence of slavery in its worst and most exaggerated form, in the East (Brooke 1853i: 19).

These critiques were part of Brooke’s 1839 statement of purpose for a geographical expedition to Borneo. This was a scientific expedition, but it was made in a well-armed yacht, and Brooke’s tone betrays his political ambitions. One constant that Brooke maintained was his belief in protecting the indigenous inhabitants (Tarling 1992). Brooke’s departure for Borneo in 1839 is historically important. It placed Brooke’s expedition at the crescendo of the anti-slavery movement; at the point in which the

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Quakers, who headed by Dr. Hodgkin, were then dominant in the Society; and neither friendly nor respectful were the terms in which Mr. Crawfurd and his opinions were spoken of” (Hunt 1868: 432).
movement was looking for new directions. Like Buxton, Brooke saw more imperialism as the only means of protecting the indigenous population. Aboriginal inhabitants needed to be improved to be saved and this was to be done through good governance and the freeing of commerce. To achieve this, Brook (1853i: 11) argued:

It would seem, that territorial possession is the best, if not the only means, by which to acquire a direct and powerful influence in the Archipelago, but any government instituted for the purpose must be directed to the advancement of the native interests and the development of native resources, rather than by a flood of European colonization, to aim at possession only, without reference to the indefeasible rights of the Aborigines (my emphasis).

Brooke naturalized the continuing contradictions of British imperialism. He believed in the rights of the indigenous population. Yet these indigenous rights only existed in subservience to empire. They were seen through a paternalistic lens of what was in their best interest; with Brooke deeming that economic development was the native’s future. Fulfilling indigenous interests was Brooke’s constant defence of his private campaign to colonize Sarawak. In liberating the indigenous population from the tyrannies of slavery and piracy, Brooke forcefully imposed his will throughout Sarawak, suppressing indigenous and native objections. Barbarism had to submit to order. Brook and his followers regularly outlined the barbaric practices of the Dyaks. The barbaric practices of head hunting and violent inhuman warfare went to the core of their character. Hugh Low (1848: 188) was on Brooke’s staff, he argued that “the passion for head-hunting, which now characterizes these people, was … probably as ancient as their existence as a nation”. Barbarism was the core of their national character, however Low (1848: 188) believed that the practice had been radically transformed in what was then living memory “it was not formerly so deeply rooted in their characters as it is at present, and many of the inhabitants of Sarawak have assured me that they well recollect the tribes first visiting the sea with that ostensible and avowed object”. Low (1848: 189) argued it was a response to encroachment with the Malays being “instrumental in encouraging this barbarous practice”. Their barbarism had become “a corruption of its first institution” (Low 1848: 188). “The practice of preserving the heads of their enemies, anciently instituted that they might be kept as memorials of triumph, has degenerated, from its originally sufficiently barbarous intention, into a passion for the possession of these horrid trophies, no matter how obtained” (Low 1848: 165-166). Low (1848: 188)
speculated that it had been transformed as a defence mechanism that “preserve[d] their country from invasion” through “inspire[ing] terror wherever they carried their arms”.

The Dyak was a barbarian and their barbarism was their core national character, but rather than civilising the Dyak, the nation had become more barbarous. This barbarism was degeneracy; that could be, and needed to be, tamed. Their barbarism had degraded from its original condition as a result of colonising Malays. Low argued the key to taming the barbarian was empire. Empire provided security, order and commerce:

It can easily be imagined after this account of their sufferings, which might easily be swelled by an enumeration of horrors common to civilised, and may peculiar to barbarian warfare, with what pleasure they hailed the return of peace, which Mr. Brooke’s arrival promised them; and the gratitude they now feel, and the affection with which they regard the man who saved their residue from starvation, slavery, and death, is equal to the sufferings from which his humanity delivered them; and the only fear which has hitherto, since the establishment of his government, alloyed their happiness is, that any accident should interrupt the protection they have hitherto received. (Low 1848: 190)

Responding to the issues of slavery and barbarism the humanitarians blamed the victim. This action sanctioned empire as the logical solution to the barbarian. This meant that the humanitarian critique led to colonialism and imperialism. This critique was constrained by the contradictions inherent in British imperialism. The critique never addressed the problem of the nation to British imperialism which was emerging under the radar. These inconsistencies would lead to a real humanitarian critique of empire that was based on the nation.

In aiding the nation, an anti-colonialist critique that was also anti-imperial emerged. This critique imagined a new global world of independent nations. The earlier anti-slavery/anti-colonialist critique was too bound to the logic of empire as the protector of civilization from barbarism. As a nation, Britain was an expansionist identity. As Nairn (1977) and Kumar (2006, 2003) argue, Britain was always an empire. This expansionist idea of Britain papered over the contradictions within British political discourse. This made Brooke’s vision of the protective empire in Sarawak consistent with the idea of Britain.
This discourse of control insinuates a process of naturalization wherein the inhabitants of Sarawak are absorbed for their own progressive benefit into the greater identity of Britain. Brooke’s own discourse on nation and governance does not allow for naturalization. He presents himself as being distinct and separate from the inhabitants of Borneo, stating: “the Chinese are a check upon the Malay, and both parties eager to have somebody who can stand between them” (Brooke 1853i: 65), thereby placing himself as the external disinterested governor. In this external capacity, Brooke saw himself as a voice for the Dyak’s, but in doing so he engaged in the systems of oppression against those he saw as enemies of the Dyaks and anybody that resisted his liberal visions of ending slavery, piracy and introducing capitalist development. Even the Dyaks who practised piracy were subject to Brooke’s wrath, with Brooke deeming them degenerate Dyaks.

**British Liberalism and Nationalist Movements**

From the mid-1820s, national liberation became a popular theme amongst the British middle class and elite. For a variety of different reasons, in a variety of different circumstances, the liberals, the radicals and the conservatives all gave their moral weight to struggles for national liberation. By mid-century the nation was a symbol of liberation and reform. It was a focal point for neo-classical imagery, a point of historical belonging in the yearning for the ancient regime, whilst also being a focal point for great power rivalry. National liberation became a blank canvas on which political visions could be drawn, and internal British political foes found unity in nebulous calls for the liberation of ethnic-national groups.

The case example of the liberals and conservatives finding common ground was the cause for Greek liberation. Support amongst the elite occurred for a variety of reasons, a core issue was classical education which bred romantic ideals on Greek independence (Taylor 1969: 40). In the mind of liberal Benthamite followers, an independent Greece would be like India: a model society. The British Parliament’s Greek Committee originally held great utilitarian hopes for Greece, with wide sweeping visions of social reform. But as the practical problems of state-creation emerged, many of these ideals were left by the wayside (Turner 2004: 96). The neo-classical and romantic beliefs of
Lord Byron were another arm of the liberation cause. Many of the liberal radicals who had preached social reform in India were also heavily involved in the cause of Greek independence: Joseph Hume examples this phenomenon. Hume served in India as a surgeon and returned to Britain, becoming a parliamentary radical (J.A.H 1917, Turner 2004). Hume, like many of his radical contemporaries, was intrinsically concerned with the plight of India and the inherent sovereignty of Asian societies. Many of the radicals expressed a belief in national liberation for European ethnic groups. The idea of the nation as a cultural political group was becoming widely accepted as a natural reality. This acceptance was not limited to Europe. The national liberation cause was extended to Asian societies. It represented an emerging belief in the natural sanctity of the nation.

In the 1830s, the East India Company extended its territorial control over India. One such acquisition was the principality of Sattara. Sattara had been an independent ally of the East India Company, and had signed a formal treaty of alliance in 1819. But in 1832 a jurisdictional dispute occurred over who controlled some lucrative jagheers. The British Empire in India had been substantially built on controlling the land taxes. Robert Clive had set the trajectory in motion by stripping the principality of Murshidabad of an army, in doing so the Company took the rights to collect revenue for the Murshidabad principality: thereby effectively eliminating Murshidabad sovereignty. The story was continued in Sattara, wherein the Bombay government took jurisdiction over six Jagheers. Purtaub Singh, the raja of Sattara launched a staunch campaign of objection which resulted in his forceful removal as raja of Sattara, he was replaced by his brother Appa Saib (Hume 1848a, Hume 1848b).

Joseph Hume saw this as an illegal attack on Sattaran sovereignty. In response he launched a publicity campaign in parliament and in The Times newspaper demanding that Britain honour its treaties. The changes in Hume’s arguments throughout this campaign, was a symptomatic representation of the naturalization of nation. Hume’s early arguments are solely based on the transfer of sovereignty. The issue was whether or not Sattara was a sovereign state or subject to British suzerainty. Hume presented

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132 The modern spelling of Sattara is Sāṭāra. I have chosen to use the nineteenth century spelling as a means of maintaining the originality of quotations as much as possible.

133 The modern spelling of jagheer is jagir. A Jagir was an administrative region where public taxation is collected privately.
sovereignty as a property issue, focusing on the illegal use of power in deposing the raja and the raja’s rights of ownership. But by the end of 1848, he admits that:

I am not ignorant, however, that rights of sovereigns are little regarded either by Christians or heathens when they have might sufficient to disregard them; and consequently, when the fainéant Rajah fell into our hands, and his territories into our power, and the dread of a general Mahratta war had passed over, I am well aware that the Rajah became de facto something different from what he was de jure (Hume 1848b).

For Hume imperialism by treaty created a de facto transfer of sovereignty, although not legal it became the practical reality. The states in India, although formally equal to Britain, were in practice in a relationship of suzerainty to the British Empire. Hume was scathing of this practice, but he recognized its realpolitik logic. This Realpolitik approach had its own problems. Hume saw the extinction of the Raja’s sovereignty over Sattara as a direct affront to a Mahrattan desire for national liberation. Although the legality of the sovereign transfer was a principle issue, Hume maintained that sovereignty was just the expression of national liberation. The subjugation of the Mahratta nation (and by inference Asian nations more generally) was the real problem for the British Empire. To illuminate this point, Hume places the realpolitik of British imperialism in historic context by stating:

The avowed objects for which the Sattara principality was originally constituted in 1819 … are described by Grant Duff to have been the comfort and dignity of the imprisoned Rajah of Sattara, the raising up of a counterpoise to the remaining influence of the Brahmins, the conciliation of the Mahratta nation, and the opening for the employment of many persons, whom it would have been expensive to suit, and who could not obtain a livelihood under the English administration” (Hume 1848b).

Hume appealed to the 1819 policy of realpolitik of Grant Duff. The British administration saw that a stable independent Sattara bordering on British India was more practical than direct control. On the surface, this had nothing to do with nationalist imagery. This was a rational decision of realpolitik. Yet the nation is emerging. Statements such as ‘influence of the Brahmins’ or ‘conciliation of the Mahratta nation’ raise the threat of nationalist populism. However, the nation was subservient in Duff’s
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explanation to the needs of the Raja and the administrative elite. Duff focuses on appeasing the Mahratta elite. Hume criticized a core admission of Duff’s, stating:

Now, among this list of avowed objects there is a remarkable omission. Viz., that of the nationality of the Mahrattas, and the necessity for our then purposes and welfare of enlisting their national feelings on our aide in the person of their political suzerain (Hume 1848b).

Hume attributes the nation and the desire for national liberation as being an underlying political force. Hume argued that Britain had previously used this force in strengthening British power. For Hume, national considerations were of prime importance in developing British policy. In listing national considerations as an omission, Hume’s argument is an example of the naturalization of the nation and its acceptance, by mid-century, as a basic political force in all societies. Hume’s criticism of Duff’s omission is testament to the quick pace in which the nation gained political importance. To substantiate his argument, Hume frames the relations between the Raja and the British within a nationalist narrative of Mahratta history. The historical location of this nationalist narrative was the Mahratta war of 1817-18, in which Hume accredited the Raja as being a key element in preventing a war of national liberation, stating:

When it is remembered that Bajee Rao, isolated from all other Mahratta chiefs, and proclaimed a rebel by the head of his nation then in our camp, nevertheless for several months defied the whole power of the British Government … if the influence of the Rajah’s name could have been brought to bear against us, and if Bajee Rao, instead of being discountenanced and denounced as a rebel by the Rajah, had by him been encouraged, or only suffered, to gather to his standard the powerful Mahratta tribes then already in arms; indeed, I feel confident that there is no such officer who will take upon him to say, if such a general rising of the Mahrattas had openly been countenanced by the Rajah, that we should at this time have been holders of one single square mile of the whole Mahratta country (Hume 1848b).

Insightfully, Hume saw that nationalistic sentiments were a powerful source of resistance. On this note his sentiments are mixed. Hume saw Mahratta nationalism as a threat to British interests, but he also maintained that British power needed to work in conjunction with nationalistic forces. For Hume, Asian nations were a natural reality and, as such, Britain ignored Asian national aspirations at their peril.

134 Grant Duff was the Resident to Sattara immediately after the treaty of 1819, and on retiring from the Indian civil service he wrote History of the Mahrattas (1912), (The Banffshire Journal 1858: 10)
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As evidence of British consideration of national interest in India, Hume quoted the official correspondence of Mr. Elphinstone to the Governor-General of India from 18th of June, 1818:

I will simply refer to the original letter from Mr. Elphinstone to the Governor-General … “The name of the Mahratta country shows us that we have more to apprehend from it. The whole population are Mahrattas, and all have some attachment to their nation, and feel some interest in its greatness;” to which he afterwards adds “at the time when I had to decide, the Mahrattas showed not disposition whatever to quit the Pelshwa’s standard; and it appeared not improbable that the dread of the complete extinction of their national independence, and still more that of the entire loss of their means of subsistence, from the want of Government likely to employ them, would induce them to adhere to Bajee Rao with an obstinacy that could never have been produced by affection for his person or interest in his cause. It, therefore, seemed expedient to remove their grounds of alarm by establishment of a separate Government” (Hume 1848b).

Elphinstone claimed to have used the imagery of the nation of as a means of dividing a rebellion. In so doing Elphinstone saw its potential as a force against imperialism whilst the British Empire was still being formed. Hume placed great importance on this letter. For him, Elphinstone’s letter represented the real reason why Sattaran sovereignty needed to be upheld. Primarily it represented a nation and was a symbol of independence in an environment of de facto British sovereignty. But beyond the nation was also an issue of property rights. He argued that Sattaran sovereignty was sanctified in a treaty:

It is of the essence of all treaties to establish conditions and obligations; and if the fact of the stronger imposing conditions on the weaker abrogated the title of the latter to independent sovereignty, not only should we be obliged to deny … every … native Prince; but also we should be obliged to maintain that France in 1814 and 1815 become the vassal of the allies of the time, or, in language analogous to your correspondent’s, “a fief as it were of the allied Empire in Europe” — a position too preposterous to require further comment (Hume 1848b).

According to Hume an Asian treaty should be of equal status to a European treaty. Hume considered Sattaran sovereignty as being based on the nation. This nation-based sovereignty meant that it should be considered equal to any European sovereignty.
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Hume had taken the emerging idea of the nation from European politics and transplanted it as a social political belief into an Asian context. In doing so, he saw colonial wars as struggles of national liberation, in the same vein as the 1848 struggles within Europe. Hume’s campaign lasted for most of 1848, but the tone of his arguments gained increased nationalistic tones after the revolutions of 1848. Hume may have been making links of association between the revolutions in continental Europe and the colonial wars in Asia. At the very least, Hume’s focus on national liberation was indicative of the extent to which the nation had been naturalized within British political thinking as a concept in its own right.

The nation was being accepted as a natural cultural fact. In Joseph Hume’s political arguments, the nation was no longer dependent on pre-modern imagery of the barbarian. The nation stood as a cultural-political entity in its own right. It was distinctly different to ideas of order and civilization. Those earlier cultural ideas of civilization and barbarism are missing in Hume’s arguments. Hume saw nations and sovereignty as the dominant theme. However, the image of savagery and barbarism had not totally disappeared from Hume’s campaigns. Hume reintroduced the themes of civilization and barbarism as a critique of Empire and James Brooks campaigns in Sarawak.

Independent Tribal Nations in the Thoughts of the Anti-Colonial, Liberal Imperialists

Hume assumed the naturalness of the nation and excluded barbarism from the nation. In doing so, Hume was also assumed that nations had rights; and that these rights were universally applied to Europe and Asia. In defending the rights of Sattara against European aggression and colonization, Hume was linking into a general reflective criticism on the course of British colonialism. Hume’s arguments were not dissimilar to those made by John Crawfurd or by James Brooke.

Brooke was scathing of the methods and effects of European colonialism, asking the provocative question: “have any people ever been so civilized, especially where the difference of colour stamps a mark of inextinguishable distinction between the

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135 Mountstuart Elphinstone was the Resident of Poonah at the beginning of the Mahratta wars (The
governing and the governed?” (Brooke 1848i: 66) Brooke firmly rooted rights to self-
government within the nation, claiming that “National independence is essential to the
first dawn of political institutions” (Brooke 1848i: 67). National independence was tried
to political institutions, but Brooke was particular in his discussion of political
institutions, limiting them to institutions that show the “glimmer of elective
government, the acknowledged rights of citizenship, and the liberal spirit” (Brooke
1848i: 66). In tying political institutions to “elective government” and “rights” Brooke
was linking into the themes of British historiography on the nation, independence and
the empire that were outlined in Chapter Two of this thesis. The trope that marked
Enlightenment history saw the “nations of the East” as barbaric and despotic, and
distinctly different from the nations of Europe that were formed by individuals. Both
groups were the decedents of barbarians, but Asia produced despotism, in comparison
Europe produced individuality and self-government. The uneasy logic of this trope was
that all nations were products of barbarians, but only European exceptionalism had
produced modern liberal-democratic nations. By comparison, Asia was engulfed in the
unchanging, ahistorical and circular pattern of ancient despotic nations. Brooke spoke to
this belief and based his theory of the nation and self-determination on it.

Brooke made the distinction between a nation and state, commenting that “Is it not as
necessary for states, as for individuals, to form a distinctive character?” For “The
vassalage of the mass, like the dependence of a single mind, may form a yielding,
pliant, and even able character; but, like wax, it retains one impression only, to be
succeeded by the next which shall be given” (Brooke 1848i: 67). This was the circular
argument that encompassed liberal ideas of the nation (that were explored in Chapter
Two and Three). A national character defined the existence of a nation, however a
despotic state could not be considered a nation for the population was suppressed, and
not independent of the Government, “depriving them of all that stimulus which leads to
the independence of communities” (Brooke 1848i: 67). Brooke spoke to a liberal belief
that connected the nation to civil society and liberalism, which (as explored in Chapter
Three), was a dominant theme in British political thought.

Banffshire Journal 1858: 10).
Like Edward Gibbon and John Stuart Mill, Brooke looked to ancient Rome to explain this idea of the nation: “Has any European nation ever been civilized by this process? I know of none. The downfall of Rome was the first dawn of liberty to her conquered provinces; and what struggles, what bloodshed, what civil wars, what alternate advancement and retrogression, have marked the strife of liberty in our own country!” (Brooke 1848i: 67) The nation is being defined in opposition to empire; with empire being despotism, which nations need to resist in constant struggle of bloodshed. The logic of the barbarian freedom weaves through Brooke’s reasoning; and the downfall of Rome, bloodshed and civil war all speak of resistance to authority. This barbarian resistance was “absolutely necessary to the development of freedom” and therefore the nation (Brooke 1848i: 67). Brooke continued his dialogue maintaining that “any other mode, any patent means, is but reducing a people from a bad state to a worse, and, whilst offering protection and food, depriving them of all that stimulus which leads to the independence of communities” (Brooke 1848i: 67). Brooke was adamant, the nation could not be forged through the state; it had to develop in resistance to the state and as an expression of collective individuality.

Brooke argued that empire and European colonialism were the twin evils of the world. The history of European engagement with the world was “but a record of horrors from which the human mind revolts”. Brooke (1848i: 67-68) continues:

We have the picture of innocent, and of comparatively happy, nations — nations prosperous and hospitable, confiding in the honour and integrity of Europeans. We seek them and they are no more. These nations have been extirpated; their arts, their very language, lost in the march of this monster colonisation which is to confer every benefit.

Brooke saw the pattern as being the same in every continent, with engagement in Southeast Asia being no exception:

The first voyagers from the West found the natives rich and powerful, with strong established governments, and a thriving trade with all parts of the world. The rapacious European has reduced them to their present condition. Their governments have been broken up; the old states decomposed by treachery, by bribery, and intrigue; their possessions wrested from them under flimsy pretences; their trade restricted, their vices encouraged, their virtues repressed, and their
Based on outlining these crimes of colonization, Brooke peppered his journals (1848) and his latter published letters (1853) with calls for native independence and a general resistance to empire. He argued that “national independence … can only be effected in two ways: first, by the amalgamation of two races, the governing and the governed; or, secondly, by the expulsion of the former”. Brooke was grounding the logic of the nation to race, but he was also naturalising the modern themes of one race one government. Although Brooke allowed for the prospect of hierarchically multicultural society with the “amalgamation of two races, the governing and the governed”, Brooke concluded this was not possible with modern European colonization, commenting: “In the case of the dark races, the latter is the only alternative; and anybody who may not like this philosophy, must go to the Penny Cyclopaedia, and look for one suited to his taste” (Brooke 1848i: 67-68).

Brooke (1848i: 71) concluded his attack on European colonialism by stating:

I think that, however strong the present prepossessions they will shake the belief in the advantages to be gained by European ascendancy as it has heretofore been conducted, and will convince the most sceptical of the miseries immediately and prospectively flowing from European rule, as generally Constituted

Brooke talked the talk of an anti-imperialist. Throughout his works he expunges his liberal credentials, outlining policies to end slavery, end piracy and headhunting, limit the effects of European colonialism and introduce liberal institutions. In this regard, Brooke was following in the long line of liberal radicals who wrote on Southeast Asia; these includ William Marsden, Stamford Raffles, John Crawfurd, and John Anderson. Each of these radicals had proclaimed the evils of European colonialism in Southeast Asia, yet each of them was a colonial official and all actively propagated the empire.

Critically reflecting on this tradition of scholarship and anti-colonial rhetoric by the ‘Great Men’ of colonial Southeast Asia, John Turnbull Thomson (1865: xiii) commented:
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It is dangerous to oppose the judgment of such a man; yet, on a very material point I am constrained to differ from him. Crawfurd, like most covenanted servants of the late East India Company, dilated much on the “intemperance”, “avarice”, “rapacity”, “violence”, and “injustice” of Europeans in India, — these Europeans in India being no other than his own countrymen. Forty years ago it was considered to be true policy on the part of the monopolizing East India Company to vilify their country-men, and exclude them. This subject is so closely connected with my present theme, that, in mentioning Crawfurd, I could not avoid noticing it. During my longs residence in the East, I observed many and long-continued examples of the above artificial prejudices, practically carried out.

Thomson was writing after the East India Company had been disbanded and its territory and assets transferred to the crown. Thomson ([1864] 1984, 1865) was overwhelmingly in favour of this, he wanted a real cosmopolitan empire devoted to improving the lives of everybody involved. His critique of the ‘Great Men’ was that they were part of “a ‘closed civil service’” that represented a “pampered aristocracy of employés”. According to Thomson, the fact that each of these writers favoured limited engagement between the Asian peoples and Europeans was merely a mechanism to defend their pecuniary interests.

Thomson was arguing that company protectionism was defended by structuring the empire around nations and as a defence of nations. Each of these ‘Great Men’ commented on the disastrous effect of integrated hierarchical colonization for the subjected. Each of these writers was also engaged with ethnology and readily mused about the possibility of strengthening Asian nations. Therefore (as argued in Chapter Five), the geography and structure of the East India Company necessitated a focus on the nation, however Thomson’s critique can be taken further. John Stuart Mill (as explored in Chapter Two) was also an East India Company official. Mill, like the ‘Great Men’ of Southeast Asia was also critical of the practices of colonialism and favoured a disengaged empire. If this empire existed at all, Mill ([1861] 1998: 461) argued that it needed to be “govern[ed] through a delegated body, of a comparatively permanent character; allowing only a right of inspection, and a negative voice, to the changeable Administration of the State”. Mill ([1861] 1998: 461) argued that the East India Company was “such a body” and that “England and India will pay a severe penalty” for disbanding the company. Mill believed in a body of orientalist experts that understood the society they were governing. Rather than propagating philosopher kings, Mill
believed in propagating philosopher civil servants that were removed from democratic scrutiny and could structure their governance of Asia around the notion of native independence. Raffles, Crawfurd and Brooke all express similar sentiments. Therefore, although they were proselytizing the language of self-determination, their meaning was a very limited self-determination within a technocratic laissez-fair empire.

Mill, Raffles, Crawfurd and Brooke appear to subscribe to the same political values as Hume and the Cobdenite radicals, and were expressing similar sentiments. On his return from Asia and pursing a platform of liberal radicalism, Crawfurd ran for the House of Common twice; he failed both times. Despite this similarity in views there were major differences between the British radicals from Southeast Asia and the parliamentary radicals in Britain. This distinction would emerge around the accountability of empire, and was manifest as opposition to Brooke’s private anti-colonial imperial campaign in Sarawak.

**Empire as the Source of Barbarism and the Naturalness of Nations**

James Brooke’s zeal in suppressing resistance in the name of the British Empire was subject to a mixed response back in the imperial centre. Popular opinion was overwhelmingly behind Brooke. Brooke and his officers published a steady stream of volumes accounting for their escapades in bringing order to Borneo. This was a publicity blitz, and initially it served Brooke well. He gained a knighthood and access to state support for his private campaigns. These accounts also revealed a dark side to empire-building in Borneo. Captain Rodney Mundy’s edited version of Brooke’s journals gave accounts of battles between James Brooke’s forces and the Pirates and Dyak head-hunters. To Joseph Hume and other liberal radicals these campaigns were more like massacres.

The incident that sparked the challenge to Brooke’s civilizational crusade was when “500 Dyaks of Sarabes and Sakarrans” were “put to death on the night of the 31st of July, 1849, by the ships of war under the command of Captain Farquhar, R.N., and by the natives of Sarawak, under command of Sir J. Brooke”. Hume argued that these Dyaks were “not sea pirates” as Brooke maintained and therefore “ought not to have
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been massacred under the vague allegation that they were so” (Hume 1852: 6). Hume raised questions about what civilization and order represented under an empire. Reminiscent of Edmund Burke’s campaign to bring Warren Hastings to account in India, Joseph Hume used parliament to question the validity of Brooke’s claims to bring civilization to Borneo. Brooke’s allies responded in the popular Press, attacking Hume’s humanity for questioning the civilising role of empire and also questioned his patriotism. Hume (1852: 8) responded in kind with blunt questioning of Brooke’s humanity:

The charges against Sir James Brooke are, that he instigated a powerful naval force to destroy with grape shot, rockets, and paddle wheels, many hundred pitiful and helpless Dyaks, described by himself as destitute of fire-arms, and running off and disappearing at the sound of a single musket-shot, he himself being the first person that ever charged the Dyaks with or suspected them of piracy in the source of more than three centuries; that he pursued the Dyaks in question into their rivers for many miles—the very rivers in which he had himself been by his own showing most kindly and hospitably received not very long before, and that subsequently the force under his directions burnt and destroyed their villages, their fishing boats, their provisions, fruit trees, and their cultivation; and, finally, that he has perseveringly attempted to confound these unhappy Dyaks with Llanuns, Soolos, and other notorious pirates of the Eastern seas, consisting of tribes differing from the Dyaks in language, manners, and state of civilization.

Brooke had unleashed a “mournful catastrophe” in “Borneo” for “political advantage”. Brooke’s arguments on civilization were “a system of mystification” that muddied the reality of “affairs in Borneo” (Hume 1852: 8). Hume argued that these were not barbarian pirates, but “weak savages” that had been “slaughtered under the allegation that they were pirates” (Hume 1852: 8). Hume charged Brooke with giving contradictory descriptions of the “Borneans”; always in terms convenient to his wider political needs. Those against him were “pirates” whilst those in favour of Brooke were a “free people” who chose Brooke as their “own form of Government” (Hume 1852: 3). Hume questioned this “free people” argument on multiple grounds: “it may be worth while to remark, that the free people who are thus represented as choosing their own form of Government, and Sir James Brooke, an alien in colour, language, manners, and religion, for their ruler, are thus depicted in his printed diary as: … ‘children of a larger growth… [whose] rulers are perfectly unacquainted with Europeans, being educated, or rather brought up, in a way which renders it a matter of astonishment that they should
be some of them so good as they are”. Hume showed the poverty of imperial language which moved easily from the ‘free barbarian’ to the ‘savage’ and finally to the ‘irrational child’. Hume showed the political convenience, meaninglessness and ultimate inhumanity of such arguments.

Rather than the Dyaks being the pirates, Hume argued that charges of criminality could be levelled at Brooke. For Brooke “obtained possession of … Sarawak by an unmistakeable threat of violence” (Hume 1852: 4). And Brooke “guided Her Majesty’s squadron to attack the capital of the chief native Prince in Borneo, at whose Court he was Her Majesty’s Representative, and drove the Prince in question into the jungle”. In doing so, Hume argued, Brooke broke British and “International law”, for as an ambassador he was coordinating in hostile actions. “Sir James Brooke seized the opportunity of the Sultan’s distress, to wrest from him a new grant of the territory of Sarawak, absolving himself from the payment of a previously stipulated annual tribute of 2000 dollars” (Hume 1852: 22). Hume was challenging the imperial conception of civilization and humanity. Hume argued that Brooke, as a “public official”, could be held to account on the grounds of irresponsible governance. Throughout his attack on Brooke, Hume has a subtle dependence on the principle of nationality and the sovereignty of the nation. To Hume, the Dyak ‘pirates’ needed to be seen as patriots:

I believe the Dyaks are men who boldly defended their native soil against the lawless ambition of Sir James Brooke, until they were overpowered and destroyed by the superior force of Her Majesty’s and the East India Company’s naval forces (Hume 1852: 50).

By 1853, Hume was in ill-health and died of heart failure on 20 February 1855. But his defence of non-European nations did not die with him. Richard Cobden and John Bright also championed the rights of nations as part of their free market liberal internationalism. In a letter to John Bright, Richard Cobden gave a scathing commentary on Brooke’s escapades in Borneo, stating:

You must get Captain Mundy’s edition of ‘Brooke’s Diary’ … There are details of bloodshed and executions which, if they had appeared in the first volume, would have checked the sentimental mania which gave Brooke all his powers of evil … It shocks me to think what fiendish atrocities may be committed by English arms without rousing any conscientious
Cobden saw empire as the corruptor, but he was also well aware of the emergence of imperial nationalism. As a result, Cobden argued that “we as a nation have an awful retribution in store for us if Heaven strikes a just reckoning, as I believe it does, for wicked deeds even in this world” (Cobden 1881ii: 56). Like Hume, Cobden was critical of what he saw as fake humanitarianism. Brooke’s arguments of empire, as protection, which justified overwhelming retribution against indigenous resistance was hypocrisy. Cobden stated: “There must be a public and solemn protest against the wholesale massacre. The Peace Society and the Aborigines Society are shams if such deeds go unrebuked” (Cobden 1881ii: 56). Both Cobden and Brooke claimed the anti-colonial moral-high-ground, but both saw it from a very different perspective. Cobden’s accusation that the ‘Peace Society and the Aborigines Society are shams’ was testament to a new form of anti-colonial critique. In this critique (unlike the civilizational critique that legitimized people like Brooke) Hume, Cobden and Bright recognized the indelible need for independent nations. In doing so they stripped away the contradictions of the British Empire, unveiling it as an inefficient mechanism of power, patronage and exploitation. More than this, they revealed the future of liberal internationalism. From Cobden onwards the nation became a key plank in British liberalism and British internationalism. This liberal internationalist approach had no place for the barbarian. The nation would stand as a cultural entity in its own right.

**Naturalising the Nation within British Internationalism**

A key aspect of the Cobdenite critique of empire was the fiscal irresponsibility of empire. Cobden’s above-criticisms of Brooke’s massacres in Borneo were private remarks. His private correspondence often focused on morality issues. In comparison, Cobden’s public arguments were rarely devoted to moralistic claims. His public arguments cocooned morality issues within charges of overriding fiscal ineptitude and complacency. Therefore, unlike Hume, Cobden would rarely make arguments based solely on nationhood, sovereignty or international law. Instead nationhood, sovereignty
and international law became necessary structures disseminating from Cobden’s (1881: 501) arguments to fiscally constrain empire. His reasoning for this was clear:

It is … my firm belief, that nothing will awaken the people of this country to a proper sense of their responsibility and peril in the East, but a due appreciation of the state and prospects of the revenue of that country.

Statements such as these portray Cobden’s pessimistic view of human sympathy; believing that the cost of imperialism would need to materially affect the British public before they would do anything about it. However, Cobden (1881: 500) placed great faith in the power of British public opinion, arguing:

With an enlightened public opinion brought to bear more directly on the affairs of India, there will be a better chance of avoiding that source of all fiscal embarrassment, constant wars, and constant annexation of territory.

The debate over foreign policy was dependent on the convergence of two visions: public opinion and fiscal self-interest. Cobden’s use of ‘we the nation’ centred on the fiscal common dominator of the British public. Cobden bluntly summarized the logic of empire as: was it in the taxpayer’s interest to take over Asia. For Cobden, fixed borders that separated nations were a means of limiting the cost of expansion. In comparison to his belief in the fiscal logic of borders, Cobden stated “there can be no doubt that in India the extension of our territories is popular among the servants of the company”. These company servants reflected a wider “insatiable love of territorial aggrandisement”, the cost of which Cobden (1867ii: 102) argued “we shall probably be wilfully blind, until awakened from a great national illusion by some rude shock to the fabric of our Indian finance”. Cobden had continually argued that the fundamental nature of the English/British nation was that of the ‘shop keeper’ (Cobden 1867i: 125). This placed Cobden’s cost-benefit approach as the natural logic of English/British character. Although the nation disseminates as a logical consequence of Cobden’s thought, it is indicative of the extent of the nation’s naturalization that Cobden felt a need to justify his economic logic as a nationalist approach. In attempting to capture the nationalist high-ground, Cobden (1881: 502) presented his opponents as being emotional, jingoistic and fiscally irresponsible:
In one of the most influential organs of the Indian Government it is stated,— ‘Every one out of England is now ready to acknowledge that the whole of Asia, from the Indus to the Sea of Ochotzk, is destined to become the patrimony of that race which the Normans thought, six centuries ago, they had finally crushed, but which now stands at the head of European civilisation. We are placed, it is said, but the mysterious but unmistakable designs of Providence, in command of Asia; and the people of England must not lay the flattering unction to their shoulder, that they can escape from the responsibility of this lofty and important position, by simply denouncing the means by which England has attained it.’

It is an interesting point that Cobden chose this ethnocentric statement as a testament to the fiscal irresponsibility of East India Company officials. This quote could have been at home in Robert Knox’s polemic prose. Instead, Cobden took it from the East India Company’s journal. The blatant overtones of racial superiority and the theme of conquest in English history are not what Cobden infers when he questions the responsibility of the Company. In the same speech on India, Cobden (1881: 507) himself makes racial claims stating: “the English race can never become indigenous in India”. Cobden’s wider writings also assumed racial connections with the landscape. His own travel writings on America and Europe demonstrate a connection between the race-nation and the landscape (Hinde 1987). In choosing an ethnocentric passage to represent the attitudes of the Company, Cobden showed the dangers of arguments dependent on national destiny. Cobden’s problem with claims about destiny can be seen in his quoting of Lord Dalhousie (1867ii: 103), who stated: “‘let us fulfill our destiny, which there, as elsewhere, will have compelled us forward in spite of our wishes’: or, in plain English, let us take the whole of Burmah, even if it should prove ruinous to our finances, because it is our destiny”. The irrationality lay in connecting the nation to a destiny of conquest: an objective that Cobden believed was fraught with long-term dangers and problems.

Cobden’s critique of empire in India existed on two levels: responsible governance and a belief in indigenous rule. Cobden’s criticisms of Company officials’ desires to expand the borders of empire was the fulcrum of these twin critiques. For Cobden (1881: 502), the continued expansion of empire in India and Asia had the flow-on effect of underdevelopment and misuse of funds intended for India’s economic development:
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The Court of Directors are often attacked for not making railways and works of irrigation; and I think they deserve the charges brought against them.... How can they be expected to make railways and other public works, when they cannot prevent the President of the Board of Control, or the Governor-General, at any time wasting the substance in war which should be applied to these improvements? (Cobden 1881: 502)

War became the excuse for administrative incompetence. The funds that had been allocated for the technological transformation of India, had been used in extending the Company’s control of Burma as well as occupying additional principalities within India. The occupation of Burma itself became a focus of Cobden’s criticism. In his pamphlet *How Wars are Got up in India* (1867), Cobden reviled the integral problems of double government in India. India was essentially governed by two forces: the British Government, who controlled by the overarching Board of Control, which was secret and hidden behind the Court of Directors; whilst the agents of control were the company, who governed through the allocation of patronage. These multiple levels of government were used as a feeble excuse by officers to selectively disobey orders (Cobden 1867: 99-102). In the case of Burma, it resulted in war: “Commodore Lambert, whilst owning no allegiance to the Government of India, made war upon the Burmese with the Queen’s ships without having had any orders from the British Admiralty to enter upon hostilities” (Cobden 1867: 100).

This created a culture of expansion in Asia that was in direct contravention of a “resolution ... that forbad the extension of ... territories in tropical countries” (Cobden 1881: 500). For Cobden, this was a total misappropriation of British funds, but more particularly Indian funds, for the cost of the war was born “not to us, but to the unhappy ryots of Hindostan” (Cobden 1867: 101). These funds should have been spent on “irrigation, or the facilities of communication in India”, but instead “All this money has been wasted, and is gone, and the people have no compensation for it” (Cobden 1881: 506). This was an attack on the extraction of taxes from India, without serving Indian interests.

The patronage of India ... is another evil arising from the system of ... government. Now, it is one of the evils of this system, that the patronage is in a great many instances given to Europeans, where it ought to be given to natives. ... I want to see a large number of natives brought into the employment of the Government. (Cobden 1881: 503)
This attack on patronage (taxation) was a classic liberal claim to accountable government. Patronage in Cobden’s mind is not a wrong in itself, but his claim is that the practice of patronage verged on extraction. Cobden maintained that the East India Company’s patronage was public money, and should be spent in the public good. He saw the core problems of liberal imperialism. As an agent of empire, the East India Company was fulfilling its mandate of extraction. This was against the liberal principle of government: that government served a public purpose. A liberal empire meant that the empire served the interests of those who were conquered. By attacking the Company’s patronage, Cobden was asked the question ‘if India’s taxation was not spent on India, how was it serving India’s interests?’ This question attacks the fundamental being of empire, for Cobden was maintaining the government of India should be accountable to India’s interests and not to British perceptions of India’s interests (which was the position of Mill, Raffles, Crawfurd and Brooke).

Cobden’s argument meant that the East India Company — by virtue of spending the money on its own aggrandizement and not spending money on public works — was forming a logical space for an Indian nation with self-governance. Governments became tied to patrons/constituents, a liberal attitude to governance dictated the government needed to represent these patrons/constituents. Therefore, even through banal issues such as employment in public office, Cobden was projecting nation as a necessary consequence of accountable administration.

In projecting the view of accountable administration, Cobden (1881: 507) was presenting India as a burden on the English/British nation stating: “I am under the impression that, so far as the future is concerned, we cannot leave a more perilous possession to our children than that which we shall leave them in the constantly increasing territory of India.” By presenting the empire as an irresponsible burden on future English/British generations, Cobden presents an independent Indian nation as a direct consequence.

The English race can never become indigenous in India; we must govern it, if we govern it at all, by means of a succession of transient visits; and I do not think it is for the interest of the English
people, any more than of the people of India, that we should govern permanently 100,000,000 people, 12,000 miles off (Cobden 1881: 507).

This vision of an independent India becomes framed within an overarching vision of global trade. Empire, he argued, was not a real pathway to wealth:

I see no benefit which can arise to the mass of the English people from their connection with India, except that which may arise from honest trade; I do not see how the millions of this country are to share in the patronage of India, or to derive any advantage from it, except through the medium of trade; and therefore, I say emphatically, that if you can show me that the East India Company is the reality which many persons suppose it to be, I shall not be the party to wish to withdraw their responsible trust and place it again in the hands of a Minister of the British Crown (Cobden 1881: 507-508).

Richard Cobden’s critique of colonialism systematically developed over the course of the 1850s. It had developed in response to the acts of imperial aggrandizement within India and Southeast Asia. In the case of Borneo and Burma the advocates of colonialism had used free trade and the nation as an excuse for occupation. Throughout these debates, Cobden, who was seen as the premier advocate of free trade, challenged the connection between imperialism and free trade. In doing so he was revealing the contradiction between liberalism and empire. Rather than bring an end to nations, Cobden saw independent nations as the only mechanism to pursue real ‘free trade’. Cobden argued that the territorial conquest of nations makes everybody worse off. It destroys the wealth of the conquered nation, thereby rendering it useless as a trading partner:

Nowhere can you find such vast quantities of produce in the hands of native capitalists ready to meet the most sudden and extraordinary demands. Last year the silk crop failed in Europe, and you sent for 30,000 or 40,000 bales extra from China, and got it. How long would the native opulence last if we had possession of China? Look at poverty-stricken India! Compare Delhi with Nankin (Cobden 1857).

Cobden was limiting free trade as an expansive entity, free trade could only exist through the independence of nations. Capital and individuality were not universal expansive forces, but rather forces that were locally developed and tied to local identities and conditions. For Cobden, free trade and empire were oxymorons to each
other. Their unification was purely for venal reasons, such as domestic political convenience or for the advancement of the careers of those on the periphery, as was expressed in his writings on Burma. In short it was unified for nationalist purposes, but it resulted in the total distortion of free trade. As Cobden was imagining a global economy based on civil society, he was doing so through the framework of national communities. These communities were an expression of local culture and local capitalism. Cobden’s identity was the future of liberal internationalism. He saw the nation as a natural cultural entity that supported capitalism, yet at the same time he saw nationalism as a dangerous aberration of the nation.

This chapter has examined how, with the end of the slave trade and the rise of liberal radicalism, many radicals developed their critiques to question the economic and moral logic of empire. Empire became seen as a waste of money and an aberration of humanism, with Richard Cobden being the foremost advocate of this school of thought. This transition created divisions between the radical liberals on the edges of the empire (who could be termed anti-colonial imperialists) and the radical liberals within the metropole. For the radical liberals on the edges of empire, such as John Crawfurd and James Brooke, empire was the mechanism by which barbarians could be developed into nations, indigenous societies protected and liberalism could be achieved. By comparison, the anti-imperialism radicals from the metropole, saw the previous argument as an evil contradiction. For Joseph Hume, Richard Cobden and many other radicals, empire was the destroyer of liberalism.

Richard Cobden maintained a stanch opposition to romantic nationalist causes, arguing that they just lead to war and conflict. Cobden’s and Hume’s opposition to Brooke’s romantic desires to build a modern tribal-nation in Borneo is consistent with their overall hostility to imperial nationalism. Cobden mounted a consistent attack on colonialism on the grounds that it abused the rights on non-European nations and was a waste of money. Joseph Hume, Richard Cobden, John Bright and a number of other radicals spoke-up for the rights of Asian nations against empire.

These debates were indicative of the naturalization of nation that had occurred by mid-century and how nation was challenging the course of imperialism. On both sides there was a recognition of the nation within political discourse. Both sides appealed to the
ideal of the nation. The liberals from the Asian periphery saw a need for an anti-colonial empire run by civil servants schooled in ethnology. For these liberal radicals the empire needed to manage nations. By comparison, the radical liberals from the metropole saw this as an imperial adventure that would not protect nations, it would destroy them. These debates both portray how the nation became a central aspect of social thought in both the metropole and periphery of the empire by the mid-nineteenth century.
Nations are both natural and created. They are natural because they are seen to be natural. It is currently impossible to imagine a nationless world without conceiving it through the prism of the nation. That was the problem that cosmopolitanism began to face in the early part of the nineteenth-century. The nation emerged within every sentence describing a cosmopolitan world of empires. Despite this subtle pervasiveness, the nation emerged during a period in which few people could conceive the totality of the nation. The nation emerged in a world of empires. The cosmopolitanism of empire would have appeared as the logical future of identity. The British identity was a creation of empire. As Tom Nairn (1977), Linda Colley (1992) and Krishan Kumar (2006, 2003) have all maintained, the national identity crisis within Britain only emerged when the formal colonial empire had lost its dominance. Empires are expansionary entities that assimilate peoples within the expanding cosmopolitanism of empire. Logically the cosmopolitanism of empire was suited to the expansions of modernity. Yet the reality was different. As the British Empire expanded, the idea of nation followed in its wake. This thesis has asked the question: ‘How did this occur?’

This question has been asked many times before. There is an exhaustive theoretical literature explaining how the nation was a result of the modern world. However, in each case the theoretical literature focuses on the creation of a social-political identity. The literature tends to skim over the question of ‘why this social-political identity was seen as a nation?’ In doing so, the theoretical literature focuses on the internal creation of identity in relation to external stimulus. Therefore, the British nation emerged out of struggles against external identities, namely the French and Spanish; but also internal identities such as the English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish. These struggles of community occur in the context of changing material conditions and the emergence of capitalism. These material forces form identities against the other. This theoretical view of the nation presents the nation as an emergence of internal identity. What this view doesn’t
answer is: ‘why was this identity considered a nation in the first place?’ In Chapter Two, I examined the arguments of Ernest Gellner (1964, 1983), Tom Nairn (1977, 1997) and Benedict Anderson ([1983] 1991). Each of these theorists examined how the nation emerged as a cultural response to the pressures of the modern world. The work of each of these theorists implies an unstated question: ‘why were these cultural responses to modernity nations?’ Gellner, Nairn and Anderson focused on how nations were created, but in not asking the above question, they also assumed that the nation was ‘natural’ — or rather, that the social-political identities hammered out on the anvil of modernity were naturally nations.

This unexplored assumption that nations are ‘natural’ is not limited to Gellner, Nairn and Anderson. It is present across the theoretical and historical literature on nations and nationalism studies. This creates problems. How can the nation be ‘natural’ when the literature maintains that nations are modern constructs? The argument in this thesis was that the nation underwent a process of naturalization. It is this process of naturalization that has given the nation its contradictory character: being a primordial identity that was a modern construction. It is this naturalization that allows the nation to encompass ancient traditions that were reconceived as modern inventions. Naturalization allows for the time and space contradictions within the nation.

For the nation to be assumed to be natural, it had to be global. By this I mean that the nation was, and is, seen as a global phenomenon and that the world was/is divided into nations. Or to put it another way: for one nation to exist, many nations have to exist. For the nation to be naturalized as an internal sense of identity, it also had to be seen as a global sense of identity.

I have argued that this naturalization can be seen as an ideological process, with ideology being the mechanism by which we assume an idea to be natural common sense; and therefore unquestioned. The natural reality that nations exist emerged largely without being questioned. Theorists and historians of ideas have often been perplexed by the fact that nineteenth-century theorists didn’t fathom the constructedness of the nation. A classic example is Karl Marx, who could develop a theory that, at least in one rendition, reduced everything to the means and mode of production, yet who unquestionably used the nation as a basic social structure. Although Marx is a graphic
example, liberal and conservative writers all showed signs of both transcending and collapsing into the nation.

The failure of early social theorists to understand the constructedness of the nation is a testament to the processes by which the nation became naturalized. The nation emerged in every aspect of social thought. This is not to say that the emergence of nations was not reflected upon. Chapters Two, Three, and Four expand on how in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries’ social theorists often reflected upon the construction of nations. These writers were actively engaged in responding to, whilst also developing, the modern nation. This occurred in multiple areas of social thought. Liah Greenfeld (1993, 2003) had argued that it was a key component of early modern political thought. Her argument is that the nation emanated out of struggle for popular sovereignty in seventeenth-century Britain. This is a strong and provocative argument, but it blurs the distinction between liberalism and nationalism. Certainly the issue of Protestant Britain verses Catholic Europe was instrumental in defining the British as a separate identity to Europe. In addition, the struggles between king and parliament established an idea of popular sovereignty. However, although these issues feed into the nation, it is hard to argue that the nation is the key aspect of these struggles. And we are still left with the question ‘why was this a nation?’ These struggles show that key themes in the nation were emerging, but these were not distinct from other political and ideological movements.

Within these transformations was an overlaying discourse between civilization and barbarism. One of the earliest forms of political theory was that of order and chaos (expanded in Chapter Two). The ancient and medieval ideas of society and politics were based in this binary logic. Order emerged with empire, and empire was expansionary. Chaos existed outside of empire; and in terms of identity politics, this distinction between order and chaos was often manifested in the barbarian. The empire encompassed civilization and stability. The barbarian existed on the periphery and lacked civilization. Although different nuances existed, this was a core distinction in most empires. There, the ‘other’ was a very simplistic term that related to whether or not an individual accepted and was included in the civilization of the expanding empire. Empires were relatively inclusive. People became Roman if they adopted Roman attire and a Roman way of life. By comparison, the barbarian remained on the outside,
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speaking an incomprehensible language and worshiping strange gods. Above all, the barbarian did not have order. In the nineteenth-century understanding of Roman terms, the barbarian had freedom without civilization.

It was this distinction between the barbarian and civilization that fed into early conceptions of the nation. As J. G. A. Pocock (1999) maintains, the birth of historiography in Europe faced problems. How can the past fit within the narrative of, the then, contemporary politics? Europe was expanding and meeting the savage. Ronald Meek has maintained that the idea of the savage was crucial in the development of modern social thought. In basic terms, Europe emerged with the destruction of the Roman Empire. Their own medieval histories pointed to the social origins of European states emerging from the barbarian hoards that overran the Roman Empire. European historiography became quite distinct from its Ancient counterparts. In most instances, ancient empires linked their past to a mythical law-giver. Therefore in historiographical terms, ancient empires were born out of order. By comparison, Europe was born out of the chaos of the barbarian.

Chapters Two and Three examined how early modern historians began writing the histories of Europe back to the barbarian tribes. European history had an affinity with the savage that Europeans were encountering in other parts of the world. In Britain the affinity was even closer. Eighteenth-century Scottish philosophers knew that tribal (clan) society had ended in the highlands of Scotland only a few generations earlier, and remnants could still be found in the late-eighteenth century.

However, as Chapter Three demonstrated, the savage was distinctly different from the barbarian. The savage was a creation of modern social thought (Pocock 2005: 2-3). In comparison to the savage, the barbarian descended back in the tomes of the ancient authors, and therefore, the barbarian was a link from the ancient world to the modern world. The barbarian was a cultural link back to a mythical time. Although British history had mythical law-givers, such as King Arthur (who fought the barbarian invaders); in practice, British historical narrative went back to the barbarian invasions
that ‘wiped out’ the Romano-Celts — and therefore Arthur’s legacy. The political revolutions of the time began to base political claims on the ‘Ancient’ or ‘Gothic Constitution’ of the barbarians. Lacking order, the barbarian had freedom. The barbarian origins of British intuitions inferred traditional rights. Early liberalism began harking back to the primordial tradition.

The idea, that the barbarian founded institutions meant that the barbarian did not die. Instead the barbarian moved through history. Rather than being defined against barbarians, eighteenth and nineteenth-century Britain became the product of the barbarian. This created a unique trajectory to the past, in which tribalism was brought forward into modern political discourse. In historical narrative these barbarian institutions were the foundations of European nations. The barbarian provided a means of conceiving ethnicity within social theory.

A key aspect of this social theory was the market (expanded in Chapter Three). Markets transformed the barbarian from the unordered lover of freedom to the risk-taking capitalist. The key aspect of this was civil society. Barbarian freedom created civil society; and in doing so, society became distinctly different to the state. As a founding force in civil society, the barbarian brought forward ancient traditions into the modern commercial world. The barbarian became drawn into a theory of renewal. Nineteenth-century ideas on liberty saw the barbarian as bringing renewal to tired systems of empire. Nations, being products of barbarians, maintained an internal system of renewal.

This early economic writing was not limited to the inherent barbarian who had been culturally brought forward. Chapter Three examined arguments on the role of markets in shaping a national character. Character became a response to material conditions. Material conditions were a product of the landscape; therefore the landscape shaped the national character. This type of reasoning within political economy grounded the nation within particular territories. But it also created another sense of renewal. For capitalist political economy could act as a new mechanism of renewal, avoiding the long-

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136 This narrative has dominated British historiography since the end of the Dark Ages. Ironically archaeologists are now disputing the concept of the barbarian invasion, arguing there is no archaeological evidence for it (Pryor 2005).
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extended process of barbarian destruction and renewal. Free markets allowed the internal barbarian to flourish. At face value, free markets held the promise of global cosmopolitanism and would wipe away the idea of the nation. Individualism could reign supreme. Logically mercantilism was the propagator of the nation, by connecting the state to economy and therefore society; mercantilism did feed into economic nationalism, yet free-market liberalism also strengthened the role of nations. Structurally there was no necessity for the nation within free-market liberalism. Yet the language of free-market liberalism reaffirmed the nation. It is a demonstration of the extent to which laissez-faire liberalism naturalized the nation. Therefore, liberal political economists preached the expansiveness of markets and argued that these open markets supported nations.

Whilst advocates of laissez-faire were imagining the barbarian nation within the marketplace, the biological idea of race was also emerging from the logic of liberalism and the barbarian, as explained in Chapter Four. Racial theory was heavily dependent on liberal ideas of education and political economy. Early ideas of biological change depended on material characteristics of the landscape. Lifestyle and mechanisms of survival in a landscape shaped a person’s biology. Changes in landscape and work practices were woven, over time, into peoples’ biology. These ideas were streamlined into early evolutionary theory. These initial evolutionary ideas followed the Lockean idea of education, wherein the body and mind responded to external stimulus. These early ideas of biological change conceived of new ways in understanding time and history. Biology was fed into the historical narrative. In feeding biology into history, heritage became inherently collective and primordial. This had major political ramifications. If communities were biologically connected, ideas of a social contract appeared misplaced. Blood and biology defined a society and not laws.

From the 1870s, racial science was closely connected to the politics of slavery. Racial science legitimized and emphasized human differences. These differences were either ordained by God or descended into the mist of time. The connections between race and nation were obvious. Beyond the focus of white and black, race was used to describe national differences. During the late-eighteenth, and for most of the nineteenth-century, the words ‘race’ and ‘nation’ were used interchangeably. Yet race grounded identity firmly in biology in a way that the nation could never do. By the 1840s, advocates of
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racial science began moving beyond the politics of slavery, and focused on biological explanations of social issues. By 1850, Robert Knox proclaimed that “race in human affairs is everything”. Most social theorists employed race, in varying degrees, as a means of understanding politics: John Stuart Mill is a classic example, using race to explain the European revolutions of 1848 (Varouxakis 1998). In this capacity he was only marginally different to Robert Knox who also explained these nationalist revolutions as racial wars of liberation.

For Knox and other racial theorists (examined in Chapter Four), inter-racial war was a primal instinct. His account of the European races was based on historical beliefs about the barbarian hordes from Northern Europe. Knox made suppositions about their barbarian characteristics and superimposed them on to the cultural nation. Therefore the cultural nation became the racial barbarian. For Knox, democracy and political ideologies were pre-ordained by race. Therefore, Anglo-Saxons had a democracy because their barbarian psyche demanded freedom. In comparison the Celts required the despotic brutal authority of a tribal warlord. Extreme racial theory saw the racial barbarian as being at the heart of the nation. The racial-barbarian was the source of national unity. In fulfilling innate racial desires, Knox and other racial theorists brushed aside arguments about civilization and ethics. This legitimized all actions of imperialism as the fulfilment of the barbarian character.

Although influential, Robert Knox was an outsider and on the extreme end of racial science. But his ideas reflected the changing beliefs of the time. Charles Darwin ([1879] 2004, [1859] 2003) represents the other side of the racial science spectrum. Unlike many of his followers, such as Herbert Spencer ([1874] 1884), Darwin did not attribute everything to biology. The ‘survival of the fittest’ mantra didn’t sit easily with Darwin. In the Decent of Man ([1879] 2004), he saw that nations were more cultural (he referred to culture as art) than biological. Knox made no attempt to understand the difference between culture and biology. He effectively made culture biological, and, therefore, innate. Darwin on the other hand understood there were clear differences. He saw nations as being historical constructions, yet he also argued they were still subject to the laws of natural selection. He argued that humans had evolved culture as a survival mechanism. Therefore, culture was subject to the pressures of materialism. Darwin also argued that the barbarian was brought forward through time. He saw patriotism as the
core of group cohesion. Successful patriotism moved from the savage barbarian to the civilized nation. Patriotism was moulded by the processes of art in natural selection. Darwin continually goes back to the nation, and struggles to develop a biological understanding of change outside of the nation.

Race gave the barbarian a new lease of life. It reintroduced beliefs about a primordial core at the heart of the nation. However, by the mid-ninetieth century the nation had become a natural reality in people’s lives. It had become integrated into multiple aspects of social thought. It became impossible to conceive of society without responding to the nation. Between the late-eighteenth century and mid-nineteenth century the nation became the accepted means of understanding European societies. Through political economy and racial science, the nation had gained a greater meaning. The nation had absorbed the barbarian pre-history of Europe. Through the barbarian, the nation gained a primordial past. Although the barbarian nation was a link to the past, it also became a focus of modern exceptionalism. Modern nations were imagined as dramatically different to the ancient empires and civilizations of the past. The barbarian tribalism of the modern nation created a greater sense of an ethnic core and exclusivity. This meant that the nation had a primordial past, whilst also being a conjunctional brake with the past. The nation was modern, yet it had a history.

Part Two of this thesis examined how the modern primordial and racial nation emerged in a global context. The nation was not just a matter of self-realization; it was expressed globally within the expansion of empire. This global expansion of nations allowed for the internal expression of the nation. Southeast Asia is a case example of how the nation became naturalized within the grammar of empire. The nation was imagined on multiple levels. Chapter Five examined how national identity emerged structurally as the legitimization of British rule. The British transplanted their nationality into indigenous hierarchies of order. British officials were distinguished by their nationality not their social status. This expansion of empire initially occurred as a mercantilist enterprise. A key aspect of this expansion was the idea of sovereignty and ownership of territory and trading rights. This was a brutal system of imperialism that directly attacked Southeast Asian societies and systems of power. Chapters Five and Six examined how a British free-trade critique of mercantilism emerged in the early-nineteenth century. These arguments drew on Adam Smith’s ([1776] 1981) criticism of mercantilism in the
Chapter 9 – Conclusion

Wealth of Nations. In critiquing mercantilism, a new form of empire was proposed. One based on civilization rather than criminal extraction. These arguments were advanced by colonial officials such as Stamford Raffles (1835, [1817] 1965), William Marsden ([1811] 1966), John Crawfurd (1828, 1820, 1829) and James Brooke (Brooke 1853, Mundy 1848). These arguments were also promoted in popular travel-writing on Southeast Asia from the early to mid-nineteenth century. They advocated that a real empire, based on civilization, be established. But this claim to civilization occurred in the name of the nation.

There were three aspects to this proposed British Empire in Southeast Asia: native rights, commerce and a form of imperial cosmopolitanism that recognized ethnological differences. These three issues were based around the question of legitimacy. Raffles and Crawfurd both imagined an empire that was legitimized on the grounds of liberal ideology. Implicit within their arguments was a belief that empire needed to improve peoples’ lives. Both Raffles and Crawfurd wrote about Southeast Asian nations; however they both discounted the legitimacy of these nations. According to these colonial intellectuals, these nations had been corrupted by their own native elites. Chapter Six examined how these nations were seen as having become barbaric and had fallen from their previous status of civilization. This fall from grace was analysed through political economy. The mode of production in Southeast Asia had corrupted the elite, and had recreated a sense of barbarism, with piracy and slave-like labour conditions replacing real commerce. This barbarism destroyed freedom. It was not the destructively invigorating barbarism, similar to that at end of the Roman Empire; rather, it was merely a destructive form of barbarism.

The barbarian was increasingly seen as a European. Southeast Asia had savages that lived in a state of barbarism, or degenerate nations that had reverted to barbarism; but rarely were these people directly called barbarians. Barbarism was the universal condition. Therefore the Malays, in practicing piracy and running amok, were exercising the barbaric love of freedom but were excluded from the privileges of being barbarians. Running amok was the ultimate act of individuality against the collective, that last throw of the dice before inevitable destruction. Although the Malay was barbarian-like, his barbarism was portrayed as somehow different. By the 1860s, Crawfurd’s (1863, 1861) racial writing emphasized the Teutonic aspect of the barbarian. This was a subtle
distinction that marked the European as different to other peoples of the world. Yet, at
the same time, the same meanings about the barbarian were carried forward. The
barbaric character of the Malays and the Dayak savages of Borneo were discussed as
core characteristics of these nations. This distinction emphasized European difference,
but at the same time transplanted the idea of ethnicity. Equally, Chapter Seven
explained how barbarism was a deep-rooted primordial sense of cultural conditioning;
that, in trying to reform it, empire faced an uphill battle.

Raffles, Marsden, Crawfurd and Brooke all argued that empire should be the means of
reforming these divergent characteristics. Although this argument legitimized empire,
by transcending the nation, it did so by justifying the transcendence in the name of
correcting the divergent barbarian nations of Southeast Asia. Therefore in developing an
empire (based on civilization versus barbarism) the nation was naturalized within
civilization and barbarism.

Early advocates of an empire, based on civilization in Southeast Asia, projected entrepôt
cosmopolitanism. The proposed mechanism of reform in Southeast Asian was an open
commercial system based on a series of entrepôts. These entrepôts would allow an
empire of trade to emerge, whilst also preventing the mercantilist slide to territorial
control that would harm nations. These entrepôts would become focal points of
commercial success. Their open free status would mean that native traders would flock
to these ports. In flocking to these ports, the natives would experience a higher culture,
and civilization would permeate throughout the archipelago. Singapore became the
centre-point of this cosmopolitan project of reform. Once established, practical
problems emerged. The barbarian actions of Malay pirates, recalcitrant Malay
aristocrats, and perceived native laziness, as well as inter-European rivalry, and ancient
imperial nationalism, all curtailed the success of the entrepôt vision. To fulfil this vision
of liberal civilization, advocates such as James Brooke focused on direct territorial
control and (repressive measures against any resistance), this is explained in Chapter
Eight. Brooke represented the practical imperium to the early vision of Raffles and
Crawfurd.

Brooke’s actions showed the limits of cosmopolitanism. Barbarism was named and
identified at the limits of inclusiveness. But in doing so, the nation was being projected
on to the outsiders. This distinction was noted by the emerging liberal internationalists. Joseph Hume and Richard Cobden argued that what Brooke described as ‘pirates’ could also be seen as legitimate patriots defending their homelands. Hume, Cobden and other liberal radicals revealed the problems with a liberal empire. Proponents of empire had established the primacy of liberal civilization. The liberal parliamentary radicals were revealing the hypocrisy of this position. If liberal empire was established on the grounds of developing nations through individualism, the nation and individual patriotism became core values. When people expressed these values by resisting the liberal empire, a crisis in legitimacy emerged that reduced the empire to nothing more than a venal institution for extraction. Although the liberal radicals were in no position to end the empire, and many of them were far from realising that conclusion themselves, they were expressing the nation as a global natural reality. They were moving from cosmopolitanism to internationalism.

Richard Cobden certainly made this transition. For him free trade could not be supported by military strength. Cobden’s criticism of the Burma campaign aimed at the cost of such escapades versus the returns. Although he publicly focused on the cost-benefits of imperialism, his private letters reveal a humanitarian impost. Cobden was recognising nations in Asia as being culturally significant in their own right, and that empire was a destructive force against the nation. By the 1860s the nation stood as a cultural entity in its own right. John Stuart Mill published his chapter on nationality as the basis of self-government in 1861. His chapter was future-oriented. Many of the examples he cited, like the Italian nationality, were a work in progress. Nationality was the future condition of representative government. Mill ([1861] 1998: 432) argued that representative free institutions needed to be based on nationality. Yet at the same time, as he preached the rise of nationality, Mill lamented the fall of the barbarian. Although his work on the nation was future-orientated, Mill’s writings on barbarian freedoms were in the past tense. He saw public opinion and the expression of nationality as being a threat to the freedom derived from the barbarian.

The 1860s saw the nation emerge in its full ideological strength in the British imagination. This occurred through a long process of naturalization. This naturalization occurred through the nation being used across multiple aspects of social thought. In doing so, the nation gained a meaning beyond its early ambiguous use. The nation
became the means of understanding popular sovereignty that transcended time, and carried the barbarian into a changing world. But above all, the nation was global. All societies were divided into nations. The way in which the nation was used in early social theory placed the nation as a basic social structure in all societies. The nation was thus imagined as a natural primordially-modern reality.
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