

It is therefore somewhat perplexing that Renan's strong move away from material historical discourses and toward a sentimental/spiritual version of civic nationalism can provide the intellectual basis from which to envision a European confederation. Nations, Renan believed, are not eternal; and, although he emphatically stated that "a Union of Customs" is not a nation, in a premonition of today's European Union he continued: "They [nations] have had beginnings and will have ends; and will probably be replaced by a confederation of Europe" (154).

Nations are indeed perishable units. So are empires and nation-states, for that matter. Almost fifty years after Renan's speech, and born out of the postmodern paradigm shift signaling a new global economy and the dominance of a new empire (that of the United States), the European Union became a reality. Founded mostly or solely on economic needs and principles and following up on Renan's arguments, we could concur with him in stating that because the social fabric of the economically united Europe does not seem as of yet to have generated a fully new and coherent "European" sentimental side, the European Union is not a nation.

And yet, as an unsentimental organism, Renan's appeal to the sentimental seems to also apply to the European Union. It is emerging as a site of contention and desire. Its economic configuration steadily continues to attract a considerable number of continental and non-continental nations (Turkey, for example) who want to become members. It is becoming a powerful contender of the United States, as Susan George has recently pointed out.² It also functions as a

symbolic recipient, as a wishing well for many of those historical nationalities of Europe without states of their own. A sentimental side of the nation is often conveyed in many nationalist discourses intent on achieving cultural and/or linguistic visibility. Small historical nations in Europe understand that claims for recognition of difference cannot survive without achieving hegemony. For them, the European Union is perceived as a possibility for political articulation and economic growth. That would explain why 1) the postindustrial, postmodern homogenizing paradigm that has made the European Union possible in the first place has indeed seen an incremental surge in what has been called local nationalist agendas; 2) that these very same local or minority nationalist claims are wrapped in discourses of identity that wish to overcome the nation-state model (as in the case of the Basque, Catalan and Galician nationalist claims); and 3) that the identitarian political claim is continuously made more difficult and its cultural/historical/linguistic coherence undermined as the various European nations become more and more diverse with the arrival and settling of huge numbers of immigrants of non-European, non-Christian backgrounds.

The spiritual, sentimental side that Renan was pointing to as the soul of the nation (for him, of the nation-state) could perhaps be put forward as the work of good will. But by the same token, one could also argue that the sentimental side of the nation (or of the nation-state, or of the empire) cannot be associated with a soul. As narrative and genre, the sentimental can be articulated and manipulated, usually bringing patriotism into align-

ment with sentiment. In the past, patriotic sentiment has been used as a sinister tool for hegemony and even total dominance, as Nazi Germany amply demonstrated right after 1939, or as the imperial religious empire set up in Spain's Franco regime also showed.

In the present, the sentimental works within the postmodern mode, but continues to engrain itself within the patriotic. In the midst of a huge paradigmatic shift in which the global economy has entered a third stage of capital development under the wings of the U.S. empire, all geographical areas within its zone of influence and all nationalist narratives associated with them are, willingly or unwillingly, subject to competition and trade, or even to conquest. Claims of nationalist coherence by the many small historical European nations and regions can therefore be a very powerful political and/or economic tool. If we accept that alongside something like the sentimental at the core of all communal articulation lays a wish for hegemony with a political objective, we should then acknowledge that the sentimental, as a populist narrative, is most effectively constructed according to specific cultural, historical, and economic parameters: sometimes as a joyful enterprise, sometimes as pure melodrama, sometimes as extreme tragedy, and some other times as a sinister, ominous, totalizing artifact.

Any nationalist claim today is unavoidably entangled within the postmodern paradigm pushed forward by global financial capital.³ However, current postmodern appeals to the sentimental side of the nation often use, paradoxically, a seemingly modern mode mostly recycled from a nineteenth-century romantic ide-

ology of essentialist roots. Continuously intertwined with postmodern politics and economics, the seemingly modern sentimental nationalist claims spur a narrative of apparent antagonism. The oppositional sites built around different intellectual positions on what is a nation can be clearly seen in the different essays in this issue. The essays show wide discrepancies in their understanding of what the state of nationalism is today. Some of them, like those authored by Jacques Lezra and Cristina Moreiras, clearly understand the postindustrial and postmodern mode to be the grounding force within which nationalisms become postnationalisms. Others, like those of Brad Epps and Elena Delgado, are strongly against a postnationalist proposition. And others, like Joseba Gabilondo's, Angel Loureiro's, or Annabel Martín's, simultaneously negotiate the modern and the postmodern—Loureiro to conclude with a non-negotiable stand, Martín to recall the sentimental side of the nation within a modern mode, and Gabilondo to challenge modern territories as postcolonial.

The essays, however diverse and located in different ideological sites, have nevertheless been compiled in order to promote dialogue and discussion. As a collection, they are representative of different schools of thought. But as an organic body, together they become a subject of discussion on the effects and affects of the gradual economic and political disarticulation of the nation-state upon the arrival of Empire.

Some of the essays on nationalism collected in this issue of the *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* focus on the material and maintain a careful distance from Renan's spiritual notion of the

nation. They acknowledge the role of the symbolic as an important, even indispensable part of the construction of nationalism. But for them, nations and nationalism(s) are understood not only as material and symbolic constructs (a point that would not essentially differ from Renan's). They take nationalism, and specifically Spanish nationalism, as new, postmodern material artifacts generated by and/or circulating in a globalized financial network. Other essays do something quite different and would strongly agree with Renan in that the symbolic soul of the nation is embedded within a modern mode of thought, one that, in spite of its claims against materiality, understands the nation as an integral part of modern industrialization. For many of the essays here, however, today's nationalism is understood, in a greater or lesser intensity, as a process or a construct circulating within the layout of our current postmodern economic and symbolic systems.

In our postindustrial age, former Western nationalisms have both symbolic and material value. In part constructed with financial value in mind, and something imagined by corporations, in the postindustrial age, nationalisms become postnationalisms: organic systems and processes in which the symbolic and the material cannot be easily differentiated—if they can be differentiated at all. This is not to say that the national landscape has disappeared. On the contrary, postmodern nationalisms (or postnation-alisms) maintain the nation not as *de facto* deterritorialized economic and symbolic landscape but, rather, as a recycled product growing from the original modern version. Fueled not by the state, but by

the state of capital in its third stage of development, nationalisms of the late twentieth century seem to have severed their ties with their original functions as fully postmodern simulacra.

Having lost the modern original, postnationalist processes can be understood as a kind of symbolic simulacrum. We can see the mode of postnationalist virtual simulacra in Jacques Lezra's piece on Franco's hand gestures, an eerie and fascinating example of a postmodern symbolic de/construction already at work during the Francoist period. It is also at work as the symbolic fragile presented in Cristina Moreiras's essay. The loss of the original, however, is understood by other articles as making the way clear for mapping and grounding. Whether mapped within intellectual history (as is Elena Delgado's nationalist mapping), postcolonial history (Joseba Gabilondo's article), or within cultural history (Brad Epps's and Annabel Martín's essays), these articles reject the postmodern in favor of a construction of the nation.

The conceptualization of a sentimental approach to the nation is in some essays disposed of in favor of the conceptualization of a "third space," as is done in Cristina Moreiras's suggestive proposition of the *arraiano*, or of Angel Loureiro's ethical take on nationalisms, both essays partly following up on Alberto Moreiras's conceptualization of critical regionalism.⁴ But while according to Loureiro the ghost of the nation still maintains a modern hold, in Cristina Moreiras's piece the specter of the national is broken up and taken to the verge of the limits of history to inhabit a no-man's-land, that of the *raya*. The figure of the specter is a recur-

rent motif in many essays. It is there in Franco's mummified hand of Lezra's essay, in Gabilondo's account of global postcolonial/postnational history, in the encrypted historical memory noted by Delgado. It is there also in Brad Epps's essay, even as it vouches for a real form of national activism and against what Epps sees as the paralyzing virtuality of postnationalism.

But whether conceptualized as encrypted or in full form, held accountable ethically (Loureiro) or culturally (Epps), praised (Martín, Epps), dismissed (Loureiro), pathologized (Delgado), territorialized (Epps), mapped (Delgado, Vilarós), or uncharted (Moreiras, Gabilondo) in all forms and variants, and with the postmodern scene after September 11, 2001, already performing at full force furthering the paradigm of imperial United States advancement, a study of the different processes and discourses of nationalisms in postmodern Spain can say a lot about Renan's modern, sentimental concept of the nation when set in opposition to the neo-imperial mode.

The essays in this collection confront many interconnected issues. Among them: that nationalisms and their sentiment are historical modern constructs which, functioning now within a postmodern system, can be and indeed already have been turned into commodities; that they are part and parcel of an economic system that in the last quarter of the twentieth century turned their former modern spirituality into postmodern sentiment no matter how comedic, melodramatic, or tragic; that they are immersed both in an economics of home as well as in trade; and that ultimately both symbolic and material, both proper and improper, postna-

tionalisms can be and certainly are broken into the world system characteristic of our time. The purpose of the volume is not to achieve a unified voice, but to foster discussion. Hopefully it will achieve its goal, since for or against these propositions—symbolically, economically, virtually or otherwise—the essays take a much-needed look at the Spanish postnationalist paradigm.

Notes

¹ I wish to thank Duke University and the Department of Romance Studies for its generous support in sponsoring the Annual Iberian 2002 International Seminar Series through the Duke in Madrid Program. "Brokering Spanish Postnationalist Culture" has the honor of having been the first seminar of the series. Held in November of 1999 at Duke University, the conversations and presentations given at the seminar later became this special section of the *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies*. I wish to thank Malcolm Compitello, the *AJHCS* Executive Editor, for the support given to the project; and Susan Larson, Managing Editor, for her stupendous editing.

² French-American activist Susan George recently lead a discussion at Duke University during which she explicitly stated that the United States government is seemingly undergoing a symbolic construction of Europe as a potential enemy.

³ I am referring to Michel Hardt and Toni Negri's proposition of empire.

⁴ Alberto Moreiras's conceptualization of critical regionalism radicalizes Hardt and Negri's political claim that "the passage to Empire and its processes of globalization offer new possibilities to the forces of liberation" (xv). To Hardt and Negri's positive system, Moreiras introduces the figure of its negativity. He reminds us that within Empire "what is consumed is not necessarily only objects: identities are consumable as well" (39). Critical regionalism, therefore, "as a thinking of cultural consumption from regional perspectives, is the thinking of the singular resistance to consumption from within consumption" (75). For Moreiras

the theoretical foundation of a radicalized critical regionalism:

is not constituted by a posited heterogeneity between any world area and hegemonic globalization. It is constituted by the very impossibility of thinking heterogeneity beyond the processes of globalization that always determine it as heterogeneity for consumption. (75)

Works Cited

- Hardt, Michael, and Toni Negri. *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2000.
- Moreiras, Alberto. *The Exhaustion of Difference. The Politics of Latin American Cultural Studies*. Durham: Duke UP, 2001.
- Renan, Ernest. "What is a Nation?" *The Nationalism Reader*. Ed. Omar Dahbour and Micheline R. Ishay. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1995. 42-55.