PARADIGMS OF NATIONALISM

Anthony D. Smith: *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press/Historical Society of Israel, 2000. Pp. xiii, 106. $35.00. $14.95, paper.)

Anthony D. Smith: *The Antiquity of Nations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004. Pp. vii, 266. $64.95. $28.95, paper.)

DOI: 10.1017/S0034670507000642

Throughout his sizable and impressive output of books and articles on nationalism, Anthony D. Smith has been largely faithful to the approach to nationalism he began over two decades ago. Over time, he has clarified and refined his theoretical ideas—now referred to as "ethno-symbolic"—but has preserved the main tenets of his approach fairly intact, maintaining its close connection to the contemporary debates he has helped to shape.

The Nation in History and *The Antiquity of Nations* are both aimed, in different ways, at taking stock of this body of work. The first provides a tutorial of sorts on Smith's views about nationalism and the nationalism literature, while the second is largely a collection of articles originally published during the 1980s and 1990s. Some of the features of his more recent writing are not covered in detail in these volumes, such as his concept of "ethnoscape" or his analysis of globalization. Nonetheless, in combination, the two books provide a good introduction to Smith's ideas. This short review is not the place to attempt a general critique of the ethno-symbolic approach or of his reading of other authors. Instead, I will focus on his "map" of the literature, his identification of paradigms, and paradigmatic debates that are central to the organization of both volumes.

The Nation in History, prepared for the 1999 Menahem Stern Jerusalem Lectures, is an attempt to itemize systematically the main debates over the nature and causes of nationalism. The book is organized as an investigation of three "paradigm debates" (2) that he sees as defining the field: organicism versus voluntarism (on the nature and origins of nations), perennialism versus modernism (on the antiquity of nations), and social constructivism versus ethno-symbolism (on the role of nations and nationalism in social change). He also identifies four major competing paradigms that arise from these debates: primordialist, perennialist, modernist, and ethno-symbolic. In the process of explicating these categories, he locates and critiques the work of numerous prominent authors, as well as entertaining substantial discussions of organicist versus cultural primordialism, ethnic versus civic nationalism, continuous versus recurrent perennialism, and invented traditions and imagined communities. Throughout, he displays his trademark encyclopedic knowledge of the classical and contemporary literature.

This division of debates about nationalism into major components is quite useful in a number of ways, not least because it separates, in principle,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034670507000642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

causal questions about agency from outcome-related questions about timing. However, while the paradigmatic debates are each defined in terms of a single theoretical question, positions within each debate are identified with paradigms whose tenets not only address this question but also cross over into other debates. Consequently, analyses of the debates sometimes seem to blend together, which can cause confusion in the absence of further systematic explication. For instance, his ethno-symbolism approach is presented as the antithesis of social constructivism, which Smith associates with ideas such as Benedict Anderson's imagined communities and Hobsbawm and Ranger's invention of tradition. Yet his description of ethno-symbolism, along with his earlier writings on the approach, shows it to be a synthesis of perennialism and modernism, which he uses to define a different debate. Smith likewise states that social constructivism incorporates the modernity of nations as one of its tenets, but also emphasizes cultural representation and social engineering (53). But this would likely cause the reader to infer that the natural alternative to social constructivism would be "non-constructivist" modernism, not ethno-symbolism. In order to alleviate possible confusion, one would have liked to see more systematic discussion of how the three debates relate to each other, as well as to the paradigms used to represent them.

Somewhat different issues characterize his analysis of the organicism and voluntarism debate, which he defines by citing Kohl's distinction based upon whether nationhood is a matter of birth or choice. While Smith provides a detailed survey of authors who have argued that nationalism is, to various degrees, an organic phenomenon, similar attention is not paid to the voluntarist position. There is a discussion of the distinction between ethnic and civic nationalism, with the latter implicitly voluntarist, but this is cast in terms of a typology rather than positive theory, and civic nationalism is not explicitly linked to any of the four paradigms. A distinction is also made between organic and cultural primordialism, but even the latter comes across as, if anything, closer to organicism than voluntarism. One could reasonably infer that some other paradigm, particularly modernism or social constructivism, could be seen as voluntarist, but the point is not explicitly analyzed, nor is the question of whether there is such a thing as nonprimordial organicism.

The Antiquity of Nations includes a number of already published articles that have presented major developments in Smith's ideas. The book is divided into two parts. The first, "Theory," contains a number of his critiques of the modernist approach, which he characterizes as maintaining that nations and nationalism are recent and novel phenomena that are the products of modernization and modernity (14). These critiques are summarized in "The Myth of the 'Modern Nation'" (1988), with additional chapters featuring detailed discussions of Gellner, Anderson, Hobsbawm and Ranger, and the classical social theorists. In these chapters, he critiques modernist theories as, among other things, being myopic in terms of both space and time, over-generalizing from Western cases, and ignoring the role of the past in shaping the present.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034670507000642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Part 2, "History," covers a more diverse range of topics. It includes "The Origins of Nations" (1989), which outlines his own theoretical approach, with its emphasis on both the modernity of nationalism and most nations and the origins of nations in pre-existing *ethnie* that share historical myths and cultural traits. (This article also contains a slightly different list of the three paradigmatic debates; see 182.) It also includes a previously unpublished essay on the question of whether nations existed in antiquity, examining both empirical and definitional issues, as well as articles that study in depth the topics of war and ethnicity, golden ages, and romanticism.

The book's introduction, "The Paradigms of Nationalism," provides a walk-through of the four major paradigms mentioned in the first book. In keeping with their overlaps, he defines each of the paradigms in terms of positions on multiple theoretical questions. For instance, the ethnosymbolic approach, by positing that nations arise from existing myths and symbols, appears to incorporate certain aspects of cultural primordialism in addition to synthesizing perennialist and modernist perspectives. (19–22). Both perennialism and modernism are identified with the periodization of nations, hence both are said to reject primordialism (4). There are good reasons to posit these kinds of multifaceted paradigms, since schools of thought rarely differ cleanly along single issues. However, this calls out for more systematic mapping of the position of each paradigm on specific theoretical questions so that the reader can sort out the areas of agreement and disagreement more readily.

The specification of paradigms also raises the question of how one would go about testing the relative predictive and explanatory power of each. Smith notes that the four paradigms differ in terms of the definitions that they use for key terms, including nationalism itself (15, 133), as well as in the empirical hypotheses that they generate. Without systematic "translations" of their hypotheses into a common language, it is difficult to entertain a definitive comparison of their adequacy as the basis for positive theory.

Likewise, while Smith is careful to provide a detailed definition for both "ethnie" and "nation" (18), the former in particular may need further concrete specification in order to be operational. "Ethnieness," like nationhood, can be seen in some ways as a continuum rather than an all-or-nothing proposition. One could presumably find some minimal level of shared memories and culture among any group that has common ascriptive attributes, and as long as the group is of sufficient size, there is likely to be a noticeable subgroup of elites advocating solidarity within the group. Yet one would presumably not like to refer to all sizable groups sharing ascriptive attributes as "ethnies," which would make the ethnic preconditions for nationhood easier to fulfill than he implies. If conclusive testing is to take place, some kind of scale and minimum threshold needs to be specified. Of course, this is of concern only if one espouses a level of positivism that may seem excessively hard-core to most historians. However, it would allow the nationalism

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034670507000642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

literature to communicate in a much more robust way with the substantial positivist literature on ethnic mobilization and conflict, no doubt to the benefit of both.

–Sun-Ki Chai

THE RED AND THE BLACK

Joseph F. Byrnes: *Catholic and French Forever: Religious and National Identity in Modern France* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005. Pp. xxiii, 278. $50.00.)

DOI: 10.1017/S0034670507000654

The battle between Church and State is a central theme in the political history of modern France. The confrontation between the revolutionary regime inaugurated in 1789 and the Catholic Church, which degenerated for a time into murderous antagonism, is the starting point that many scholars have used to set up the long-standing "*guerre franco-française*" that echoed well into the twentieth century, manifested in the serious flirtation between the Church and the Vichy regime. Joseph Byrnes's new book acknowledges this context and makes no effort to add to the basic outline of church-state relations that is familiar to students of French history. But he makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of this struggle by refocusing attention on a number of particular individuals and issues, adding depth and texture that allow us to see more clearly the stakes involved and the personal beliefs and sentiments that drove the conflict.

Byrnes breaks his case studies into three broad categories that trace the chronology of church-state conflict from the French Revolution through World War I: divorce, defense, and détente. In recounting the divorce that split Catholicism from the French nation, Byrnes looks particularly at the clergy who broke with the Church, identifying themselves with the civic mission of the republic. Byrnes shows us the variety of attitudes that individual priests adopted, using their own words, published in newspapers or contained in retractions written to reestablish themselves as Catholics after the failure of the revolution.

Beyond such nuances, however, a fundamental choice was being made between a secular republic that disavowed what it regarded as a superstitious and authoritarian religion, and a Catholic Church that was the only possible spiritual base for both domestic stability and international grandeur. This division of opinion was deepened and hardened through the controversy over the failed substitution of republican for Catholic ritual in the 1790s. Most French refused to go along with the artificial efforts to force them into celebrations on the *décadi*, the day of rest in the new ten-day week, and stayed faithful to Sunday. As Brynes notes, however, this failure did not narrow the distance

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034670507000642 Published online by Cambridge University Press