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In Search of the Authentic Nation: Landscape and National Identity in Canada and Switzerland[1]

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Attempts at establishing meaningful links between 'nature' and culture communities are not confined to the modern era. Ever since Antiquity, various groups or 'peoples' have turned to 'their' natural environment as a source of inspiration and collective identification. So when Tacitus, in the first century AD, described the Germanic tribes as rude and primitive, he mentioned how closely tied they were to the Teutonic woods as evidence of his claim (Schama 1995: 83-84). Yet it is only in the sixteenth century, that is, during a period marked by both territorial consolidation and the rise of national consciousness in some parts of Europe that we witness a fairly widespread change in perception from 'nature' as a more general idea to the more specific notion of a 'landscape'.[2]

As the foregoing indicates, the philosophical and moral interest in the natural environment was not constant over time.[3] It commonly gained in intensity at times of crisis, when profound changes in the broad cognitive and moral frameworks of orientation provided fertile ground for the emergence of new conceptualizations of the relationship between nature and culture. This is true of the Hellenistic era, whose authors create the notion of an idyllic place while they were exposed to the phenomenon of urbanisation in the metropoles they inhabited (Wozniakowski 1987: 17). It also applies to the Renaissance period, when a more critical view of religious affairs and the emergence of new modes of scientific and moral thinking provoked a reconsideration of humanity's position vis à vis its natural environment. And it surely holds true for the eighteenth century, when authors like Montesquieu (1689-1755), Rousseau (1712-1778), and Herder (1744-1803) made systematic efforts to illuminate the link between particular natural environments and alleged national characteristics.

In a world in which traditional forms of religious attachment and social solidarity were declining at a disquieting speed, geography and the natural environment at least

seemed to offer some degree of stability, calm and purity. It was in this context that landscape once again became critical as a source of social orientation and collective identity. Commenting on the significant rise of landscape art at the end of the eighteenth century, the German painter Philip Otto Runge exhorted: 'we stand at the brink of all the religions which sprang up out of the Catholic one, the abstractions perish, everything is lighter and more insubstantial than before, everything presses toward landscape art, looks for something certain in this uncertainty and does not know how to begin.'[4] Furthermore, as politicised nature, particular landscapes evolved into integral parts of historicism's search for national pedigrees, that other powerful movement which by the turn of the eighteenth century had come to form the centrepiece of most European nationalisms and national identities.[5]

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LANDSCAPE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

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Landscape and the Study of National Identity

Given the importance that from the eighteenth century onwards the natural environment has occupied in definitions of national identity, it is somewhat surprising that little attention has been paid to date to the interplay of landscape and collective identity in the major works on nationalism.[6] On the other hand, scholars working in fields such as human geography, art history or environmental history have recently made use of existing theoretical approaches to nationalism.[7] Yet these theories have served these researchers as signposts for orientation rather than as springboards for the construction of new theories that deal with the question of how landscapes are valued in different historical and political contexts. Lowenthal expressed this marked and apparently widespread reluctance to draw even tentative theoretical conclusions when he accused '[t]hose predisposed toward particular explanations of landscape attachments' of misreading 'ambiguous material' (Lowenthal 1978: 383).

Despite the absence of appropriate theoretical tools for studying the ways in which landscapes are put to use in national discourse, three broad positions are discernible. Adherents of a 'primordialist' perspective view people's attachments to their natural surroundings as a phenomenon that is both universal and historically persistent.[8] Those

taking this position are, however, at a loss to explain why people's interest in landscape can vary significantly over time. Applying an explicitly descriptive approach, a second group of researchers are concerned mainly with the way depictions of landscape are regarded as reflective of national virtues, such as freedom, liberty, independence, or honesty.[9] In contrast to the first two approaches, a third group of scholars identify the way in which the public role of landscape-symbolism is contingent on particular cultural and political contexts.[10]

Landscape and the Creation of National Authenticity

To move from description to explanation, we shall begin by defining the 'nation' as a cultural order composed of certain values, symbols and ethno-historical myths. It is this cultural order, the nation, that lends meaning and legitimation to the political order that is commonly referred to as the 'state', which is rooted in a set of legal, political and economic institutions. From such an ideal-typical perspective, modern nations (or rather, 'nation-states') can be seen as resting upon a synthesis of these two kinds of social order: 'nation' and 'state'.[11] But nations, thus understood, are not static entities, for, as Fernand Braudel has reminded us: any nation 'can have its being only at the price of being forever in search of itself' (Braudel 1989: 23). It is thus first and foremost to such recurrent projects of national reconstruction – as the processes whereby nations are fostered and redefined in the course of history – that we are referring when we use the term 'national identity'.

The key concept with regard to national identity is authenticity (Smith 1995: 65-67). From a formal point of view, the authentication of a national culture entails two processes: the construction of continuity with a nation's alleged ethno-historical past (historicism) on the one hand, and the creation of a sense of naturalness (naturalization) on the other. The two processes, while analytically separate, are in practice mutually intertwined and typically reinforce each other. Whereas references to significant features of the natural environment serve to buttress a cultural community's continuity-claims, the historicist curiosity for the collective past inevitably directs attention to significant features of the national 'homeland'. Broadly speaking therefore, the fundamental role of

both historicism and naturalization has to do, in large part, with their preventing the historical and cultural contingency of modern nations from entering into the picture.[12]

In addition, what is assumed here is that modern nations go through 'settled' and 'unsettled' periods. During settled periods the values, symbols and myths that make up the nation as a cultural order are more or less taken for granted so that they form, as it were, a cultural tradition or common sense. During unsettled historical phases, on the other hand, national authenticity is put into question, engendering endeavours at redefining national identity. Such efforts to reconstruct the 'nation' are both pathdependent and contingent. They are contingent insofar as they present symbolic 'responses' to specific conditions and events which can be both domestic and international in geopolitical in nature. Yet at the same time, such projects of national reconstruction are path dependent. That is to say, their mostly intellectual protagonists are bound to draw - to some degree at least - upon existing cultural resources (consisting of certain idioms, symbols, values and myths) that are deeply entrenched in a given society. The impact of such cultural resources on the process of national reconstruction is conditioning rather than determining. By furnishing the cognitive and expressive frameworks for those involved in the project of national reconstruction, these resources reduce the likelihood of pure 'invention'. And yet, it needs stressing that the contextual aspect is key for any explanation of the respective outcome of such national projects.[13]

The Dialectic of Landscape and Nation: Two Typical Scenarios

As historicized and politicized nature, selected landscapes evolved into an integral part of historicism's search for national pedigrees. The latter proved a powerful movement which in the latter half of the eighteenth century came to form the centrepiece of most European nationalisms and national identities (Smith 1995: chapter 3). This not only applied to nations like Switzerland or England, where references to a rich set of geographically embedded historical experiences and ethno-cultural myths helped to buttress a sense of national identity. It held equally for the younger 'settler nations'.[14] In addition, in the latter cases, particular landscapes became inextricably linked with distinct national histories. This process was frequently embodied in concerted efforts to glorify recent experiences of settlement and frontier expansion.

Nationalizing Nature

From an ideal-typical point of view, symbolic analogies between 'landscape' and 'nation' can take either of two forms. The first can be termed *the nationalization of nature*. What is characteristic here is that popular historical myths, memories and supposed national virtues are projected onto a significant landscape in an attempt to lend more continuity and distinctiveness to it. In this way, an image of national authenticity is developed in which a nation's distinctiveness is seen to be reflected in a particular landscape. As a way of incorporating a particular landscape into the fabric of national identity, this ideological pattern acquired intellectual prominence immediately after the advent of the first nation-states in the mid-eighteenth century. From there, it quickly spread to the educated public as a whole.

This pattern - the 'nationalization of nature' - formed an important ingredient in the national narratives of Canada and Switzerland, but it was by no means confined to these two cases. We encounter it in the English discourse on landscape which ever since the nineteenth century – at least in its dominant version of rural paternalism – showed a preference for the tamed as opposed to the savage lands. Here the former was equated with stability, permanence and harmony, while the latter was associated with an anarchic order, exemplified by French and American republicanism.[15] Similarly, in France, where Vidal de la Blache invented 'human geography' as a scientific discipline at the end of the nineteenth century, landscape, for a time at least, was crucial as a means of defining national identity. As in England, if out of different motives, French geographers and historians depicted humans as having the upper hand over Nature rather than being determined by it. This neo-classical ideal of *homo sapiens'* capacity for creating a rational social order by transforming Nature was most cogently expressed in 1833 by Jules Michelet in his *Histoire de France*: 'Society, freedom have mastered nature, history has rubbed out geography. In this marvelous transformation, spirit has won over matter, the general over the particular, and idea over contingencies.' (Claval 1994: 44).

Naturalizing the Nation

This leads us to the second formal possibility of establishing a symbolic link between nations and their natural environment, which can be designated the *naturalization of the nation*. Resting upon a notion of geographical determinism, this perspective views the natural environment as doing more than expressing certain national virtues and characteristics. Instead, nature in general, and specific landscapes in particular, are depicted as forces of moral and spiritual regeneration capable of determining the nation and giving it a compact, homogeneous, unified form. Here the nation's characteristics appear to be shaped by physical rather than social factors - the result being no less than a sense of *ideological ethnogenesis*. If anything gives the discourse about national identity in Canada and Switzerland its specific outlook, it is the fundamental role played by this second pattern – the 'naturalization of the nation'.

To be sure, in neither of these cases did this second mechanism come to replace the other, historicist-expressionist pattern – the 'nationalization of nature'. There is ample evidence, however, that in both cases, for reasons that will concern us below, the 'naturalization of the nation' began to dominate the discourse on national identity in the course of the nineteenth century. Of course, the concrete manifestations of the 'naturalization of the nation' were slightly different in each of the cases under consideration. So were the conditions that made the pattern become prevalent. But what remains significant – and what tells us much about the problems of nation-formation faced by these societies – is that the different currents belong to a common argumentative framework, much like variations on a single theme. To be more specific, it was a particular section of the national environment, in these cases, the Alps and the North, that was believed to transform the nation into an authentic, homogeneous whole. How can this be explained?

GEOGRAPHY AND ROMANTICISM

A first reason why the 'naturalization of the nation' came to dominate in these two cases is related to the affinity between an ideological factor – the spread of a romantic style of thought in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and a material factor, geography. Needless to say, Romanticism, in terms of both its ideological trajectory and its socio-political roots, presents us with too multi-faceted a phenomenon to allow for

sweeping generalization. Yet whatever the differences between the various romantic currents, there nevertheless existed a commonality with respect to their socio-political origins and ideological orientations.[16]

To begin with, Romanticism, as a doctrine and movement, was fundamentally a reaction to the Enlightenment (particularly in its French version). Where romantics of various provenance found common ground was in their opposition to the belief that society should be organized and structured according to general rational laws. The result was an alternative ethic and blueprint for the future which privileged creative individualism and the growth of one's 'own' community or 'national character' above the neo-classical ideals of universalism and regularity.[17] In Rousseau's words: 'The first rule which we have to follow is that of national character: every people has, or must have, a character; if it lacks one, we must start by endowing it with one.' (Smith 1991: 75). The Rousseauan concept of 'national character' had more than philosophical implications. It was embraced by early nationalists all over Europe, as well as on the North American continent. What is of particular relevance to our analysis, however, is that two developments emerged from the romantic style of thought:

(1) a search for natural analogies and natural determination, and

(2) a preference for 'primitive' nature.

To be sure, hardly any country in the Western World remained unaffected by the new romantic narrative (Porter and Teich 1988). Almost everywhere the educated strata became familiar with its most basic premises; and even if some embraced it with more fervour than others, few rejected its tenets altogether. Hence many began to perceive the world around them through a romanticized lens. And yet, the degree to which the ideal of 'primitive' nature was accommodated differed from country to country. One (and only one!) factor that determined this ideal's appeal was geography. So while it is surely true that 'What men see in Nature is a result of what they have been taught to see' (Hope-Nicolson 1959: 3), the potential for the reception of particular mental constructs varies

from case to case. Those societies which disposed over a rugged and relentless nature like the Swiss Alps, or which possessed large tracts of harsh, inaccessible wilderness like the Canadian North, embraced the naturalisation of nation with special fervour. Let us demonstrate this proposition for each case.

The Discovery of an Alpine Republic

The Swiss Confederation has always been a small political entity by European standards; smaller, for example, than some of the bigger German princely states of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, of its overall territory, more than 60% is covered by mountains, many of its peaks rising above 4,000 metres.[18] Furthermore, the Alps were of considerable importance in economic and political terms. According to Perry Anderson, the mountains of central Switzerland, along with the military success of the Confederate peasant armies in the battles against the Habsburgs at Morgarten (1315) and Sempach (1386), helped prevent feudalism and allowed the Swiss Confederation to emerge as 'a unique independent republic in Europe' (Anderson 1979: 301).

In addition, gaining control over the mountain passes, especially the Gotthard and the Simplon in the South (hence securing the exchange of goods and capital with the prosperous Italian city-states), proved vital to the economic and cultural development of the Swiss Confederation as a whole (Marchal 1986: 152-53; Peyer 1988). From an objective viewpoint, therefore there can be no doubt that the Alps have been a significant feature of Swiss history ever since the Confederation took shape as a state-like entity in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. On the ideological level, the 'nationalization of nature' dominated until the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the 'naturalization of the nation' came to prevail.

The Humanists

Even so, it took a while until the Alps were first embraced with much enthusiasm by the pre-Romantics, who subsequently turned them into the ultimate symbol of the

sublime and virtuous in the late eighteenth century. To be sure, as early as the sixteenth century, the Swiss Alps were 'nationalized', that is to say, they were depicted as an expression of Swiss cultural characteristics. In particular, the interest in Alpine nature was intensified by a humanist concern for natural history. Hence Swiss humanists like Conrad Gessner were among the first to create a more positive picture of the mountains which hitherto had been seen as 'horrid, misshapen locales to be shunned' (Lowenthal 1978: 382). In 1555, Gessner climbed Mount Pilatus and summed up his experience in emotive tones, singling out, among other things, 'the clarity of the mountain water, the fragrance of wild flowers, ... the purity of the air, the richness of the milk' (Schama 1995: 430).

Learned men like Gessner and Johannes Stumpf, along with a tiny number of mountain enthusiasts from all over Europe, no doubt set some important precedents for future Alpine discourse. Yet the breakthrough came only in the eighteenth century, when the mountains 'had ceased to be monstrosities and had become an integral part of varied and diversified Nature' (Hope-Nicolson 1959: 345), and when – towards the end of the century – a cult-like enthusiasm was formed around the Swiss Alps.

Various Enlightenment scientists and poets, foreign (particularly English) and Swiss alike, contributed to this development. The English scientist Thomas Robinson, in his *Natural History* (published at the turn of the seventeenth century), described the Alps as an 'integral and necessary part of nature's harmony'. The Swiss Johann Jakob Scheuchzer, after two decades of travelling the Alps, published in the 1720's his *Itinera Alpina*, containing a topographical description of the Alps. Also of considerable influence was the poem *Die Alpen* by the Bernese physician, biologist, and botanist, Albrecht von Haller. His poem, first published in 1732 and subsequently translated into most European languages, became an eighteenth-century best-seller and an inspiration for successive generations of Alpine travellers (Bernard 1978: 9-13).

The Early Romantics and Their Followers

The works of Scheuchzer and von Haller, coupled with an increasing body of foreign travel literature, helped 'nationalize' the Alps, which in turn became an important aspect of Swiss patriotism in the last third of the eighteenth century (Walter 1990: 57).

The intellectual focal point of this rapidly-progressing movement, the Helvetic Society (founded in 1761), presented the Alps as the seat of the country's national virtues. In 1763 one of its founding fathers, Franz Urs Balthasar, expressed the significance of this connection, saying that the character of the Swiss nation found its complete expression in its untamed, Alpine landscape (Marchal 1992b: 45).

But the decisive step on the way to incorporating the Alps into the fabric of Swiss national identity was made by the early Romantics and those who followed them. While the neo-classicists still revealed a certain uneasiness at the irregularity and relentlessness of untamed landscapes, those adhering to the Romantic ideal adored just this aspect (Hope-Nicolson 1959: 382). In 1790 Wordsworth wrote to his sister, singling out the overpowering physical presence of the Alps and describing his encounter with them as a transcendental experience: 'Among the more awful scenes of the Alps I had not a thought of a man, or a single created being, my whole soul was turned to him who produced the terrible majesty before us.' (Hope-Nicolson 1959: 382).

Notwithstanding Wordsworth's contributions, there is no doubt that the primary contribution to the spread of the Swiss belief that an Alpine environment had given birth to republican liberty and simplicity came from Jean Jacques Rousseau and Friedrich Schiller. Both saw in the Alpine peasants of central Switzerland the incarnation of simplicity, honesty and liberty, and regarded the peculiar political gatherings at the so-called *Landsgemeinde* (the popular assemblies where political decisions were taken) as the realization of their own ideal of popular democracy. In an age of enlightened criticism of aristocratic politics and opulence, Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* was bound to make an instant impact. Along with the works of Haller and Scheuchzer before him, it was at the root of a rapidly increasing body of foreign travel literature on Switzerland, and it inspired a great many educated Europeans (among them Wordsworth, Salisbury, Coleridge, Wieland, Goethe, and Hölderlin, to name but the most prominent ones) to travel the Swiss Alps (Bernard 1978: 19-26).

Consequent upon these developments came the *popularization* of the Alpine landscape in Swiss national mythology, largely the result of the publication of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* in 1804. Like Haller before him, Schiller presented the Alps as a natural habitat that was conducive to the emergence of a pure, simple, honest and liberty-loving character. Tell's heroic deeds in defence of freedom and the Oath of the three

Confederates on the Rütli formed the centrepiece of Schiller's play. Despite receiving mixed reviews when first staged in Weimar in March 1804, the play was to become an immense popular success. It was read and performed throughout the nineteenth century and became part of the literary canon of Swiss primary schools.

Although by no means single-handedly, Schiller's drama contributed much to the spread of the late medieval myths of foundation and liberation to ever wider sections of the public, shaping the national consciousness of successive generations of Swiss. Bernard convincingly accounts for the popularity of the drama, arguing that it managed to produce 'on a level not, apparently, understood by the contemporary critics, but clearly felt by the public, an eventual dramatic resolution of the ancient dualism of man and Nature.'[19]

Swiss Landscape Art

In the visual arts, as in the literary and dramaturgical fields, considerable attention was devoted to the Alpine theme. The idea that mountains had a purifying effect on the Swiss, expressed so vividly by some contemporaries of the late eighteenth century, experienced a renaissance at the turn of the twentieth century. This development manifested itself in the field of artistic expression, especially in painting. Already during the nineteenth century, with Alexandre Calame and Francois Diday, mountain painting 'had come to represent the very embodiment of national art' in Switzerland (Nasgaard 1984: 134).

But the peak of Swiss landscape painting was only attained at the end of the nineteenth century - in the work of Ferdinand Hodler. In paintings such as *Dialogue with Nature* and *Communion with the Infinite*, Hodler revived 'the Romantic belief in the spiritual replenishment and uplifting experience to be derived from oneness with the grandeur of nature' (Nasgaard 1984: 125). Hodler's principal landscape subjects were Lake Geneva and, after 1900, the Alps. Thus the great popularity that Hodler's landscape art enjoyed had much to do with the fact that his paintings were widely perceived as a powerful expression of what made Switzerland distinct as a nation. The art critic Hermann Ganz, for instance, praised Hodler's naturalistic paintings for adding 'an overpowering force and magnitude to the Swiss landscape [and] enabling Switzerland to

stand out as an independent entity against the countries which surround it.' (Jost 1988: 18).

Landscape and Romantic Nationalism in Canada

The narrative of Canadian identity has long been dominated by English-Canadian writers for the simple reason that French-Canadians, since the early nineteenth century, have tended to focus on their own ethno-linguistic survival and group narrative (Kaufmann 1997: 2).[20] Since the first sizeable English-speaking Canadian community was of American Tory origin, their conceptions of landscape reflected those of the Revolutionary United States. For instance, the Loyalists viewed Canada as a Garden, a land promised to them by God and the British for their fealty to the Crown (Duffy 1982: 4, 93).

There was also an overriding fear of the wilderness - a harsher, more omnipresent force in Canadian than American life. This was best expressed by early explorers like David Thompson, Samuel Hearne or Alexander Mackenzie. The latter, for instance, spoke of the barbarity and 'convulsions' of the Canadian wilderness he encountered (New 1989: 43-5). This sentiment may also be found in novels like Susanna Moodie's *Roughing it in the Bush* (1852) and Catherine Parr Traill's *Canadian Crusoes* (1852), which come across as encounters between Victorian civilization and a foreboding Canadian nature and celebrate the transformation of that nature into a more orderly agrarian pattern (New 1989: 54-7, 70-71).

The traditionalist *zeitgeist* of these two works correctly expressed the attitudes of the Canadian majority, but by the 1850's romantic thought had established a beachhead among Canada's literary classes. Perhaps the most famous exponent of the new ideas was Major John Richardson, a Loyalist veteran of the war of 1812. Richardson was influenced by both Sir Walter Scott and James Fenimore Cooper and his answer to Cooper's *Leatherstocking* was *Wacousta* (1832) (New 1989: 78). The lead character in this best-selling work was a British soldier who enmeshed himself in Indian life and the ways of the woods. Richardson's *Tecumseh* (1828), *Wacousta* (1832) and *The Canadian Brothers* (1840), all wilderness adventures, thereby established a naturalistic narrative of

northern-ness along the same lines as Leatherstocking's western-ness in the United States (Smith 1994: 54).

Somewhat later, the idea of naturalism began to enter into Canadian *nationalist* discourse. Of course, since Canada did not become a united colony until 1867 and arguably did not achieve a sense of 'independence' until the post-World War II period[21], it is difficult to speak of a 'naturalized' Canadian identity at this point. However, there did exist a sense of Canadian-ness (albeit within the fold of Empire) that began to make use of Canada's landscape for the purpose of elevating Canadians to the status of superior Britons - whose contact with nature would rejuvenate the Imperial blood (Berger 1966: 17; Smith 1994: 34).

Moreover, some argued along the same lines as the American literary journals, that the breadth of Canadian nature would bring forth cultural greatness. One of the first to do so was Thomas D'Arcy McGee, a Lower Canadian statesman and ardent Canadian patriot. 'We have the materials -', McGee insisted in 1858, 'our position is favourable- northern latitudes like ours have been famed for the strength, variety and beauty of their literature' (Staines 1977: 8).

With Confederation in 1867, a more pronounced sense of Canadian unity swept over the British North American colonies, creating a sea change in the English-Canadian mind and orienting it toward the Canadian subject as a whole (New 1989: 24). One of the outgrowths of this new mood was the new dominion's first nationalist movement, Canada First, which sought to cultivate a sense of Canadian identity, albeit still within the confines of Empire (Berger 1970: 53).

Formed in 1868 by William Alexander Foster, the movement, from its inception, looked north for inspiration. Thus in 1869, Canada First associate Robert Grant Haliburton asserted that Canadians were 'the Northmen of the New World', a people tempered by the cold climate and forbidding terrain of their northern land (Berger 1966: 6). In 1871, Foster followed up on this theme during Canada First's inaugural address, vividly describing a new consciousness vastly different from that to the south: 'The old Norse mythology, with its Thor hammers…appeals to us,-for we are a Northern people,- as the true out-crop of human nature, more manly, more real, than the weak marrow- bones superstition of an effeminate South' (Foster 1888: 25). Here we can see that northern imagery was useful precisely because it allowed Canadians to distinguish

themselves from the supposedly 'easier' western model provided by the United States (Harris 1966: 40).

This also explains the subsequent development of northern themes in the arts. Prior to Confederation, for example, most Canadian artists and poets regarded the Canadian landscape as 'a vast, hostile, dimly seen, unpoetical mass'. They therefore attempted to portray tamer, more agrarian aspects of the Canadian landscape (like the lower St. Lawrence valley) and attempted to impose British stylistic conventions on their new subject matter (Woodcock 1977: 73; Fulford 1991: 3).[22] This amounted to no less than an imperialistic version of the 'nationalization' of nature.

Against this backdrop, the work of the Confederation School of poets proved a radical departure. The School, which included Archibald Lampman, W.W. Campbell, Bliss Carman, Charles G.D. Roberts and D.C. Scott, encouraged Canadian writers to look to the 'cleanly' north for inspiration instead of heading to a decadent Europe (Stacey 1991: 52-3). Influenced by American Transcendentalism and Victorian Romanticism, some members of the Confederation School later branched into other literary realms (notably outdoors and animal adventures) and helped inspire a younger generation of artists and writers (Woodcock 1987: 11). The link between nature and nation was especially strong in Roberts, who simultaneously lauded the 'old kinship of earth' in his animal stories while writing many patriotic Canadian verses. The turn-of-the-century works of Ralph Connor, which sold in the millions, as well as that of Robert Service and William Fraser, may also be considered part of this growing Canadian wilderness genre (Berger 1966: 20-21; New 1989: 113, 116, 120).

In the visual arts, meanwhile, conventions were slower to change, with the principal institution, the Royal Canadian Academy of Art, taking its stylistic cue from a conservative British tradition. Yet, inspired by the spirit of the Confederation Poets, the younger painters of the Toronto Art Students League (1886-1904) followed another path, depicting northern landscapes and folk life in their annual calendars and exhibitions of 1893-1904. In fact, the rise of northern consciousness in English Canadian art, literature and political oratory proved strong enough by 1906 to influence the first English-language Canadian national anthem, *O Canada*, which described Canada as 'the true north strong and free' (Tooby 1991: 15).

The Cultural Nationalism of the 1920's

The efforts of the Confederation School, Canada First and others did make a significant impact on Canadian life prior to World War I. However, there were two barriers to the increased penetration of northern naturalism into Canadian identity. The first was the traditionalist, 'nationalization' mindset of Canada's agricultural majority and the second was the entrenched Britannic-Loyalist culture complex, which shunned New World influence and retarded expressions of Canadian particularism (Hardy 1906: 10; Berger 1966: 20).

To a great degree, World War I changed all this. The carnage of war, which had claimed over 60,000 Canadian lives and divided the country, cast a shadow upon the old pillars of Canadian identity: Imperial unity and British brotherhood (Kennedy 1977: 91-2; Francis 1986: 83, 93; Vipond 1980: 43). In the wake of this disillusionment, there emerged a new Canadian cultural nationalism rooted in the soil of home and richly embedded in northern nature. The new Canadian nationalism took its strongest hold among English-Canadian intellectuals, who were linked by four major associations: the Canadian League, the Association of Canadian Clubs, the C.I.I.A and the League of Nations Society in Canada. With memberships running into the tens of thousands, these associations housed a cogent body of elite nationalist opinion. As a participant in the cultural turmoil of the 1920's later expressed it, there existed a spirit of 'Canada First' among the young, university-educated participants in these circles (Vipond 1980: 33).

At the forefront of the new nationalism was literary critic William A. Deacon of the Toronto Globe and Mail, who, like his American counterparts of the 1830's and 40's, led the chorus for a native Canadian culture. 'Our struggle for nationhood', declared Deacon, 'needs writers and national magazines with native force behind them' (Vipond 1980: 44). Popular and highbrow magazines joined in the move, which was popular enough to lead one internationalist commentator in 1926 to complain that the 'inflated rhetoric' of politicians had become 'the language of literature, and one learns on all sides that Canada is taking its permanent seat in the literary league of nations' (New 1989: 138-9).

Without question the most important group of individuals to take up Deacon's call for a 'native' culture was the Group of Seven. The Group, composed largely of Ontario painters, formed gradually during 1910-20 as they were introduced to each other at the Society of Arts and Letters in Toronto. During this period, some of the first work in the Group style appeared, notably A.Y. Jackson's *Terre Sauvage* (1913), Tom Thomson's *Sketch for Northern River* (1912) and J.E.H. MacDonald's *March Evening, Northland* (1914). Stressing themes of northern solitude and portraying the Canadian wilds in vivid colours, the Group members' work represented a major break from the artistic conventions of the Royal Academy, against which they were consciously rebelling.

Of similar importance was the Group's nationalism. As early as 1911, for instance, A.Y. Jackson's *Edge of the Maple Wood* (1910) had impressed several members of the future Group as 'native' in flavour and uniquely 'Canadian'. By 1914, statements like this one from Jackson were becoming the standard: 'The Canadian who does not love keen bracing air, sunlight making shadows that vie with the sky, the wooden hills and the frozen lakes. Well, he must be a poor patriot' (Nasgaard 162, 166). The Group's formation in 1920 can thus be explained partly as a political move that played upon the prevailing nationalist sentiment of the period. This is confirmed by the strong links between the Group, the nationalistic intellectual associations and their journals like *Canadian Forum* and the *Canadian Nation* (Vipond 1980: 41-2, New 1989: 137-9).

It is also confirmed by the activism through which the Group publicized its work and its Canadian nationalism (Woodcock 1977: 73). An analysis of some of the Group members' remarks during the 1920's brings forth the sense that they saw themselves as heralds of a new naturalistic nationalism based on the north: '[Canada is] a long strip of civilization on the southern fringe of a vast expanse of immensely varied, virgin land reaching into the remote north', Lawren Harris announced, 'Our whole country is cleansed by the pristine and replenishing air which sweeps out of that great hinterland. It was the discovery of this great northern area as a field of art which enticed and inspired these [Group] painters' (Berger 1966: 21). The Group's success proved overwhelming and they were soon elevated to the status of cultural heroes by F.A. Housser's popular history, *A Canadian Art Movement: the Story of the Group of Seven* (1926). The work portrayed the group as native Canadian nationalists, struggling to overcome the Old World barriers of the Canadian art establishment (Tooby 1991: 19).

The final cornerstone in the process of naturalizing the Canadian nation, which resonated well with the atmosphere created by the cultural nationalism of the twenties, was the Laurentian Thesis. First proposed by Harold Innis, a professor at the University of Toronto, in his popular *The Fur Trade in Canada* (1930), the thesis argued that Canada owed its existence to a northern, rather than western frontier. This northern frontier, which proved rather more permanent than its American counterpart, was located in the Laurentian Shield. The Shield, (coincidentally?) the principal subject matter of the Group of Seven, covered nearly half the country and was noticeably absent in the United States. Moreover, Canada, asserted Innis, 'remained British [and hence free of American domination] because of the importance of fur as a staple product' and its structure was established not by the east-to-west National Policy and its C.P. railroad of 1867-85, but by the Northwest Company of fur-traders in 1821 (Innis 1930: 265, 396).

The deliberate contrast between the southern/western interpretation (focused on the National Policy) and the northern/northwestern focus of the Laurentian Thesis served to underscore Canada's distinct geographical, historical and political heritage. Hence Innis did for Canada what Turner did for the United States: he translated a pre-existent naturalistic nationalism into historical narrative (Smith 1994: 58, Harris 1966: 27-8). This account achieved an immediate resonance with Canadians, and later ran through popular Canadian narrative histories like Donald Creighton's *Commercial Empire of the St.Lawrence* (1937) or William Morton's *The Canadian Identity* (1961) (Berger 1986: 241-2).[23] Overall, then, the naturalistic emphasis of the Laurentian Theorists in historiography, the Group of Seven in art, the Confederation Poets in literature and Canada First in politics gave the nation's identity a strongly northern/wilderness component which is still powerful today (Fulford 1991: 11, Mitcham 1983: 9, Woodcock 1987: 16).

POLYETHNIC ENVIRONMENTS AND NATIONALISM

A second reason why the definition of national identity in Canada and Switzerland showed a strong propensity towards geographic determinism – what we have termed the

'naturalization of the nation' – must again be attributed, we believe, to the coincidence of a material and an ideal factor. In this case, the *divergence* between the nationalist ideal of ethno-cultural unity and the polyethnic composition of the two societies provided the impetus behind 'naturalization'. As noted, there is no single variety of nationalism but rather different currents ranging from civic-territorial to ethnic-genealogical conceptions, all of which have furnished efforts to define national identity ever since the late eighteenth century. Yet in a very fundamental sense, all these different brands of nationalism focus upon what Smith has designated a 'pattern of similarity-cum-dissimilarity' (Smith 1991: 75).

In other words, unity, not only in a territorial but in a cultural or even ethnic sense, is very high on the nationalist agenda. It is at the heart, for example, of the notion of 'national character', first expressed by Rousseau and subsequently adopted by successive generations of nationalist intellectuals. Furthermore, historical evidence shows that polyethnic societies have participated in this thinking, despite ideological proclamations to the contrary. They too have aspired to the nationalist ideal of homogeneity in terms of culture or ethnic composition, even if these aspirations have had to be realized in a pluralistic environment (Smith 1991: 149).

Hence while such societies could not do justice to the ideal of ethnic homogeneity and often took pride in their polyethnic composition and civic values, their intellectual strata quite frequently embarked upon projects of *ideological ethnogenesis* in order to fortify the national identities of their respective populations. Therefore, as a mechanism of ideological ethnogenesis, the naturalization of the nation is most likely to play an important role in formally polyethnic states. These have typically taken one of two forms:

1. States that have applied a nation-formation approach which combines the formal recognition of polyethnicity with efforts to forge a common national identity along civic lines (i.e. Switzerland and Canada);

2. Polyethnic settler societies which lack a distinct ethno-historical past (Canada, the United States, Australia).

The Naturalization of the Swiss Nation: The Alps as a Unifying Force

The challenge of ethno-linguistic nationalism

It has long been acknowledged by scholars of nationalism that the development of national identities is causally related to international factors, such as geopolitics, warfare or ideological competition.[24] For instance, nationalism established itself as the dominant cultural and political force in nineteenth century Europe, stirring competition between different conceptions of nationality and serving as a major catalyst of national self-assertion. In the Swiss case, what posed a serious challenge to its conception of nationality was the fact that 'ethno-linguistic' nationalism became dominant in much of Europe from the last third of the nineteenth century until the end of World War II. Originating in Italy and Germany, this form of nationalism rapidly gained force around 1870 when it came to be seen as somewhat of a normative prerequisite of national legitimacy and served as a fertile ground for the emergence of irredentist movements in both countries.[25] When Nazism rose to power in 1933, its völkisch nationalism, with its markedly racial overtones, proved tantamount to a denial of the legitimacy of Switzerland's civic conception of nationality.[26] It is therefore chiefly from the 1870's onwards that the 'naturalization of the nation' came to predominate in Switzerland.

The realization of the discrepancy between the Swiss conception of nationality and that of its neighbours quickly set in. In fact, as early as 1884, the eminent Swiss historian Karl Dändliker alluded to the challenge posed by ethnic nationalism when he declared that 'the Swiss people did not enjoy the advantage of their neighbours: being a nation in the true and literal sense of the word, that is to say, being an entity uniform in terms of linguistic and ethnic composition' (de Capitani 1987: 25. Translation: O.Z.). Dändliker's statement does not represent a marginal view but forms part of a concern that was apparently widespread at the time, at least among liberal intellectuals and the political establishment, the two groups that had traditionally been in charge of the definition and legitimation of Swiss nationhood. When, in December 1914, German- and French-speaking Swiss had clashed over conflicting sympathies towards the parties involved in the First World War, the writer Carl Spitteler – in an emphatic call for national unity –

argued that in the present European climate Switzerland's dual lack of ethno-cultural homogeneity and a strong centralist state were 'elements of political weakness' (Spitteler 1914: 5. Translation: O.Z.).

Statements like these bear testimony to the normative force of ethno-linguistic nationalism at the time. But ethnic homogeneity was simply not an option open to those trying to create a distinct national identity for Switzerland, at least not for those willing to preserve the country's polyethnic character. Faced with the challenge of ethnic nationalism, liberal intellectuals and parts of the state intelligentsia thus endeavoured to create a distinct national identity for Switzerland. And it was in this context that Alpine landscape once again came to play a crucial part in the definition of Swiss national identity.

Yet given that ethnic and *völkisch* conceptions of nationhood emphasized ethnic or racial homogeneity, the 'nationalization of nature' (the conception that puts the thrust on national originality and distinctiveness) would have been somewhat deficient as an ideological response. In view of the challenge at hand, therefore, the 'naturalization of the nation', which can best be understood as a kind of ideological ethnogenesis, seemed the more appropriate response. But to arrive at a better understanding of why this particular reaction came to predominate, let us reconstruct the different stages of the overall response to ethnic nationalism.

The civic response

At first glance at least, the forging of a civic nationalism (the brand of nationalism that, by and large, had been dominant in Switzerland ever since the late eighteenth century) seemed to provide an appropriate antidote against the threat of völkisch nationalism. The most outspoken supporter of this ideological response in the 1870's was the Bernese professor of law, Carl Hilty. In 1875, he maintained that Switzerland was the perfect nation, and that it was her destiny to uphold a truly republican, voluntarist conception of nationality, based upon citizenship rights and political values:

Not race or ethnic community, nor common language and customs, nor nature and history have founded the state of the Swiss Confederation. ... What holds Switzerland together vis à vis her [linguistically more homogeneous] neighbours is an ideal, namely the consciousness of being part of a state that in many ways represents a more civilised community; to constitute a nationality which stands head and shoulders above mere affiliations of blood or language. (Hilty 1875: 29. Translation: O.Z.)

But Hilty's presentist conception of nationality, though widespread among liberal-minded intellectuals, did not reflect the dominant line of thought.[27] Instead, a more popular brand of nationalism traced Switzerland's civic present back to its pre-modern past. This rested on two pillars: first, upon the myths of liberation and foundation (in particular the legends of Wilhelm Tell and the Oath of the Rütli), as well as on memories of allegedly glorious events (especially the victorious battles against the Habsburgs in 1315 and 1386); and second, upon the values and institutions of the modern Swiss nation-state, founded in 1848.[28] These two ideological dimensions, one inspired by legalist rationality and liberal-democratic ethics, the other by the emotive power of an ideological myth of descent, were at the heart of Swiss national identity in its most widespread form.[29] And on the whole, this synthesis proved to be highly effective. From the era of the Helvetic Republic (1798-1803) to at least the end of the Second World War, this was the officially propagated version of national identity, and it was popular in all parts of the country (Im Hof 1991; Marchal 1990; Kreis 1987).

The Alpine response

Nonetheless, to some contemporaries, neither the purely civic conception of national identity nor its more popular historicist counterpart seemed sufficient as the sole basis of Swiss nationality. For instance, Johann-Kaspar Bluntschli (1808-1881), a moderately conservative intellectual and professional colleague of Hilty's, maintained around 1870 that, in view of current debates on nationality in Europe, and given that 'the belief in the existence of a particular [Swiss] nation vis à vis the German, French and Italian nationalities' had recently been severely contested, it had become necessary to draw the boundaries of Switzerland's national identity more firmly. To achieve this, Bluntschli argued, a notion of nationality that was grounded on voluntarism and the

institutions of the modern state, as Hilty had proposed, would not suffice (Bluntschli 1875: 14). But neither, he maintained, would the reference back to the mythical past *per se*, even if it fostered the reproduction of historical memories of wars fought for independence and liberty in the 14th and 15th centuries. Instead, to buttress the claim for a distinct national identity that could stand up to the force of ethnic nationalism, a further element was needed. It is here that Bluntschli brings the Alpine landscape into play:

> I am surprised that Hilty did not, besides referring to the influence of the political idea, seek assistance from the country's nature to make the notion of Swiss nationality acceptable. For Switzerland's landscape is indeed of a peculiar character. If the Swiss possess a particular nationality, then this feeling derives above all from the existence of their beautiful homeland.... There may well be Alps, mountains, seas and rivers outside Switzerland; and yet, the Swiss homeland constitutes such a coherent and richly structured natural whole, one that enables a peculiar feeling of a common homeland to evolve on its soil which unites its inhabitants as sons of the same fatherland, even though they live in different valleys and speak different languages. (Bluntschli 1875: 11. Translation: O.Z.).

Other contemporaries, after 1900, argued along similar lines. For example, the French-speaking intellectual Ernest Bovet, professor of French literature at the University of Zurich, in a 1909 article with the noteworthy title *Refléxions d'un Homo Alpinus*, maintained that not ethnic homogeneity but the Alps were responsible for the creation of the Swiss character (Bovet 1909a: 289). And just a few months later, in an essay entitled *Nationalité*, Bovet played upon the same theme, stressing the providential function of the Alps in Swiss history: 'A mysterious force has kept us together for 600 years and has given to us our democratic institutions. ... A spirit that fills our souls, directs our actions and creates a hymn on the one ideal out of our different languages. It is the spirit that blows from the summits, the genius of the Alps and glaciers.' (Bovet 1909b: 441. Translation: O.Z.).

Some thirty years later, the geographer Charles Burky, in a brochure that was on display at the National Exhibition of 1939 (an immense popular success), put forward the notion of geographical determinism in its purest mode: 'The physical milieu, the natural environment determines a people. This is an axiom, and apparently Switzerland cannot escape from it. ... This savage and haughty nature remained untamed. Only the mountain dweller can cope with it.' (Lasserre 1992: 198. Translation O.Z.).

The popular bases of the Alpine myth

The idea that the Alps were capable of fusing different linguistic groups into a single and authentic nation was not, however, confined to the realm of scholarly and intellectual discourse, nor was it limited to certain linguistic regions or particular political creeds. To begin with, references to Alpine symbolism were popular among the major political forces of the time (Wigger 1996: 86-0; Widmer 1992: 619-38). Furthermore, public education was a vehicle of considerable importance for promoting and disseminating the Alpine myth. Recent analyses of history books and other texts used in secondary education in all parts of the country have revealed that the Alps served as a major motif fostering national identity within the education system (Helbling 1994; Rutschmann 1994; Im Hof 1991: 158-9).

In addition, the popularity of the Alpine myth was greatly furthered by various national festivals and rituals which were deliberately staged in an Alpine environment. Crucial among these were historical plays, which experienced a remarkable boom after 1885 and military training courses, to which the great majority of the male population had had to contribute ever since the beginning of the nineteenth century (Santschi 1991; Kreis 1988). Of no less importance was a folk-song movement that had witnessed a rapid expansion since the latter half of the nineteenth century, thus helping to embed the Alpine myth in the hearts and minds of many Swiss (Braun 1965). Finally, in an age in which popular travel and mass communications were rapidly expanding, tourist propaganda and newspapers were important vehicles for the dissemination of the Alpine narrative. Thus in an advertisement launched by the Federal Swiss Railway Company during the inter-war period, the beauty of the country's rivers, its countryside and forests were well-described, but the Alps were singled out for their national significance. For, as the text pointed out, it was the Alps that 'encircle the country and thus delimit its space, that defend and erect it, and that elevate it' (Walter 1992: 14. Translation: O.Z.). In newspapers and pamphlets, too, the Alps figured prominently as one of the most frequently evoked symbols of national identity and unity, especially at times of social uncertainty.[30] An article in the *Neue Schweiz*, a Zurich-based newspaper read widely by

the middle-class, captured the strong role that Alpine imagery played in popular conceptions of Swiss identity:

> We understand by Swissness a certain inheritance of spiritual and physical features which we find among the people as a whole between the Alps and the Jura throughout the centuries of our history to the present day. ... We are the only typically alpine state in Europe. ... The Alps are our actual strength, for it is in the alpine human being that we find our common ground. (11.10.1935. Zimmer 1996: 100. Translation: O.Z.).

The 'Northern' Transcendence of Canadian Pluralism

The principal problem for the English-Canadian intellectuals who narrated Canadian identity was the French-English divide, geographically located just east of the Great Lakes. Since the English-speaking population was insignificant until the 1790's, the period prior to this date has little bearing on the problematic of this paper. The early nineteenth century, though, presents a different picture: by the 1820's, English-speakers formed a majority and believed themselves capable of assimilating the French. The work of Lower Canadian historians like William Smith and John Fleming bears testimony to this prevalent notion, which also influenced the Durham Report of 1839. This report, by a visiting British official, divided French-speaking territory into East and West in 1841, in an attempt to break the political unity of the *Canadiens* (Taylor 1989: 93-4, 99, 139).

Notwithstanding the efforts of Durham and his English-Canadian supporters, British immigration bypassed the lower St. Lawrence, where most French-speakers lived, and hence failed to assimilate the socially cohesive French Canadians. The British North America Act, which recognized this new reality in Canada's first constitution of 1867, only served to confirm the fact that Canadian pluralism was here to stay.

The English-Canadian response to this development took two main forms, both of which invoked the idea of a 'northern people.' The Imperialist response was to conceive

of Canada as a melting pot of French and British peoples (as was England herself after 1066) in which a 'new northern Britain…might…replace the old Britain at the centre of the empire' (Smith 1994: 131). The nationalist response of Canada First sprang from a similar vision, but foresaw the coming of a new ethnic group: 'Are we forever to be jabbering about our respective merits as Englishmen, Scotchmen, Welshmen, French and Germans; as Irish Catholic and Irish Orangemen' thundered a London, Ontario paper, 'We have heard a great deal too much of this stuff talked. It is time that all classes of our population, whether born here or elsewhere, whatever their creed or country, should consider themselves, above all, Canadians.' William Foster, who quoted the above paragraph during Canada First's inaugural address, gave it a northern twist by claiming that should danger threaten the nation, 'we know that the thoughts of many [a Canadian] …would turn towards his Northern home…' (Foster 1888: 46, 50-51).

Commentators of both nationalist and imperialist stripe continued to invoke the idea of a northern melting pot as the nineteenth century progressed. For instance, F.B. Cumberland of the National Club of Toronto, postulated in 1890-91 that Canada's geography 'assists by creating a Unity of Race. Living throughout in a region wherein winter is everywhere a distinct season of the year.' Other intellectuals also embraced the theme of northern unity: 'There is no real or vital difference in the origin of these two [French and English] races' asserted the Reverend F.A. Wightman in 1909, 'back beyond the foreground of history they were one'. Meanwhile, historian William Wood claimed that 'many of the French-Canadians are descended from the Norman-Franks, who conquered England…however diverse they are now, the French and British peoples both have some Norman stock in common' (Berger 1966: 12-14).

During the 1920's, the idea of northern ethnogenesis continued to blossom, and may be found in writings of cultural nationalists like Group of Seven painter Lawren Harris, who, upon returning from the Arctic with A.Y. Jackson, declared that 'it is only through the deep and vital experience of its total environment that a people identifies itself with its land...To us there was also the strange brooding sense of another *nature* fostering a *new race* and a new age' (Berger 1966: 21, emphasis added). The Native Sons, a cultural organization which boasted 120,000 members coast to coast in 1929, lent added weight to the idea of northern trans-ethnicity. Thus the group's strong Quebec contingent and anti-British rationale gave it a pronounced Canadian flavour and led it to

celebrate the 'very air' of the new northern land, which it hoped would 'mold all peoples within her borders into one great virile race-CANADIANS' (Vipond 1982: 83-4).

The notion that Canada's geography might overcome its ethno-linguistic duality also made its appearance in the writings of the Laurentian historians. Harold Innis, for instance, stressed that Canada remained an independent entity because of the cooperation between British interests and the French-Indian fur trading economy of the northwest. Moreover, his portrayal of the Laurentian Shield (which spans the homelands of French and English Canadians) as the central factor in Canadian history, helped unite the histories and destinies of the two groups (Innis 1930: 388). Donald Creighton deepened this linkage in his *Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence* (1937) when he described the fur-traders of the Northwest Company, whether French or English, as the first authentic 'Canadians' (Creighton 1937: 67-73).

This logic continued to prevail in the post-World War II period. Governor General Vincent Massey, for instance, wrote of Canada's 'northern' ethnic heritage (explicitly including the 'Northern' French) in 1948, while prime minister John Diefenbaker used the vision of Canada's 'northern destiny' to great effect in the 1958 election (Berger 1966: 23). And for William Morton, president of the Canadian Historical Association, the northern idea was of paramount importance to national unity. 'The Canadian or Precambrian Shield is as central to Canadian history as it is to Canadian geography, and to all understanding of Canada', declared Morton in 1961, and 'the transmutation [of French and English] can be wrought when the two cultures are seen as variations on a common experience of the land and history of Canada…' (Morton 1961: 5, 112). Clearly then, the desire to transcend the French-English division has continually provided an added motivation for Canadian artists, politicians and historians to embrace the northern 'naturalization' of their nation.[31]

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to show that there are two distinct variants of geographic national identity. The first, which we have called the 'nationalization' of nature, refers to a pattern, well-established by the eighteenth century, whereby a group writes a landscape

into its communal narrative, thereby transforming it into a 'homeland'. This is very much a 'civilizing' process whereby the nation imprints its culture onto a particular landscape, rendering it familiar. The second variant, labeled the 'naturalization of the nation', describes a later development, whereby the unsettled[32] natural landscape of the national territory is viewed as a source of primeval energy and organic distinctiveness. This conception thereby reversed the direction of causation from culture◊ nature to nature◊ culture.

The two cases considered, Switzerland and Canada, manifested a tendency towards the 'naturalization of the nation' from the nineteenth century onwards. This is attributed to two main factors, present in both cases: 1) the existence of significant tracts of wilderness and 2) a high degree of ethno-linguistic pluralism. The first factor became significant when Romantic ideas about Nature came into currency in each nation. The second, ethno-linguistic pluralism, became significant because the intellectuals and leaders of these nation-states, confronted with the task of securing ontological holism for themselves and political legitimacy for their state, had to resort to factors other than putative ethnic homogeneity as a basis for national identity. This thereby provided another strong motive to invoke nature, which cut across ethnic lines, as opposed to culture, which divided the nation along such lines.

This is not to say that the two factors operated with equal force in both cases. Canada, for example, was not surrounded by a continent rife with ethno-nationalism that threatened to tear it apart. Switzerland, by contrast, as a multi-ethnic entity in a region of linguistically homogeneous states, was extremely conscious of the threat to its political legitimacy posed by ethno-nationalism and, in consequence, of the efficacy of the 'naturalization' solution. On the other hand, the Swiss, with a well-entrenched national history, did not face the same ontological imperatives as the Canadians, who had few mytho-symbolic guideposts (beyond their distinct wilderness environment) to root them in their territory.

Finally, the interplay between the two forms of geographic national identity outlined above differed in each case. In Switzerland, the presence of a long pre-modern past meant that the Alpine landscape had become 'nationalized' long before the nation began to be 'naturalized'. Thus we find that the 'naturalization of the nation' did not displace the earlier conception of nationalized nature, but seamlessly joined it. This

added to the Swiss' symbolic repertoire, even as there occurred a clear shift in emphasis from one mode to another. By contrast, in the Canadian case, the 'naturalization of the nation' and the 'nationalization of nature' occurred simultaneously. This meant that 'naturalization' and 'nationalization' modes often competed in the form of a 'Civilization versus Nature' conflict which found expression in art, literature and even the politics of land-use. In summary, the importance of natural landscape in Canadian and Swiss narratives of national identity since the Romantic period may be attributed to the extensive tracts of wild nature and the high degree of ethnic pluralism characteristic of both countries.

ENDNOTES

[1] The inspiration behind this intellectual joint venture emerged from discussions in the Ethnicity and Nationalism Workshop at the European Institute, LSE. The authors are particularly indebted to Anthony D. Smith, Eric Garcetti, Gaetano Romano and Erich Wigger for their helpful comments on earlier drafts.

[2] Schama (1995: 10). The extent to which Renaissance thinkers held climatological factors responsible for alleged national differences is discussed in Hale (1994: 55).

[3] For an excellent history of ideas on the relationship between nature and culture from Antiquity to the end of the eighteenth century, see Glacken (1967).

[4] Rosen and Zerner (1984: 52).

[5] On the part played by ethnic historicism in the emergence of nationalism and the fostering of national identities, see, for instance, Smith (1995: chapter 3). For an account of the Herderian conception of cultural community, see Berlin (1976).

[6] For an exception, see Smith's typology (1986: 183-90).

[7] Good recent examples include *Geography and National Identity* edited by David Hooson (1994), and Daniels (1993). See also Simon Schama's (1995) path-breaking historical account.

[8] See, for example, Hooson (1994: introduction). For a primordialist account that operates with the more general term 'territoriality', see Grosby (1995).

[9] This approach is characteristic of most contributions in Hooson (1994).

[10] A point made by both Lowenthal (1978: 401) and Schama (1995: 15). Both authors, however, fail to pay systematic attention to this relationship.

[11] The 'ethnic' and 'civic' dimensions of modern national states, and the dynamic interplay between these two conceptions in the process of nation-formation is extensively discussed in Smith (1995: chapter 4).

[12] The naturalization of social classifications as a measure to reduce uncertainty is discussed most interestingly in Douglas (1987: 48). Benedict Anderson, in his *Imagined Communities* (1991: 12), has made a related point in arguing that 'it is the magic of nationalism to turn chance into destiny'.

[13] The way we conceptualise the reproduction and change of national identity for the purpose of this analysis draws heavily on the illuminating theoretical essays of Swidler (1986) and Sewell (1996).

[14] This term refers to societies of recent vintage like Canada, Argentina or Australia that were primarily settled by overseas immigrants. The lands in question were usually expropriated from aboriginal inhabitants, but from the perspective of the settlers, such lands appeared as *terra nulliae*, ripe for settlement by 'superior' civilizations. The term, as used here, does not apply to older-settled lands like Anatolia or lands historically associated with a particular group(s), like Palestine. It does, however, include 'Old World' societies like Singapore, Taiwan and Northern Ireland.

[15] To quote Lowenthal (1994: 22): '… the English landscape is not natural but crafted….Englishmen tame and adorn nature….' For the symbolic significance of English landscape during the inter-war period, see Potts (1989).

[16] The literature on Romanticism is vast. Detailed treatments of the different national currents can be found in the excellent reader by Porter and Teich (1988). On Romanticism and the Arts, see Rosen and Zerner (1984).

[17] On Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment, see Berlin (1981). On Herder's conception of a cultural community, see Barnard (1969). For differences and similarities between early Romantic and neo-classical thought, see Smith (1976). On romantic nationalism's search for poetic spaces and golden ages, see Smith (1986: 179-200).

[18] This is a considerably higher proportion than that of either France, Italy, or Austria, the other three major Alpine countries. Even so, at 12%, Switzerland's overall share of the European Alps is lower than that of Austria (28%), Italy (27%), and France (22%). The figures are taken from Wachter (1995: 39).

[19] Bernard (1978: 24). According to its foundation myth, the Swiss Confederation was established at the beginning of the fourteenth century by an oath between the three valley-communities, Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden. At the centre of the liberation myth is William Tell, who is said to have freed the Confederation from Habsburg oppression. For a detailed account of these myths, see Im Hof (1991: chapter 1)

[20] Despite the general preponderance of anglophone voices, French-Canadian federal politicians like George-Etienne Cartier, Henri Bourassa, Wilfrid Laurier or Pierre Trudeau have made important contributions to the discourse of Canadian identity. For more on their views, see Cook (1986: 216) and Smith (1994: 149-50).

[21] The process of Canadian independence has been decidedly Tory in character: it evolved slowly. Key markers on the road to greater independence include: self-governing status - 1848, Confederation - 1867, Statute of Westminster - 1931 which made Canada a sovereign nation, Citizenship Act - 1947, prior to which all British citizens could automatically become Canadians, 1967 - Canada no longer dependent on Britain for changes to the federal structure, and 1982 - Repatriation of the Constitution from London to Ottawa. Even with these developments, Canada remains a constitutional monarchy.

[22] One noteworthy exception was the painter Paul Kane, a Canadian resident whose Indian portraits of the 1840's echoed those of Catlin in the United States. (New 1983: 112)

[23] Berger notes, however, that nationalistic history-writing experienced a decline in the 1960's. (Berger 1986: 259-61)

[24] Two outstanding contributions to the study of national identity that make systematic use of this assumption are Greenfeld (1992), and Colley (1992).

[25] On the impact of Italian and German irredentism on the reconstruction of Swiss national identity, see Frei (1967).

[26] While Bismarckian Germany rested on a statist rather than ethnic conception of nationhood, it has to be borne in mind that many Germans saw in the so-called *kleindeutsche Loesung* an incomplete nation-state. The Pan-German League certainly presented the most radical but by no means the only current within German ethnic nationalism prior to 1900. The *völkisch* movement that rapidly gained ground in Wilhelmine Germany and reached its peak under the Nazis could thereby capitalize on earlier ideological precedents. On German 'homeland nationalism' and its institutional manifestations, see Brubaker (1992: especially chapters 3 and 6) and (1996: especially 114-17). On the emergence and

spread of *völkisch* nationalism in Germany, see Mosse (1964), and Greenfeld (1992: chapter 4). On European ethno-linguistic nationalism more broadly, see also Alter (1985: 112), Hobsbawm (1990: chapter 4), Winkler (1984: introduction), Woolf (1995: 16-25). On Italy, see Alter (1985), and Schieder (1991: 329-46).

[27] Frei (1964: 213). This civic conception of national identity again came to dominate liberal and left-of-centre discourse during the 1930's. See Zimmer (1996).

[28] For other prominent representatives of this view, see the much-noticed speeches of the Federal Council in Numa Droz (1895), and of Max Huber (1916 and 1934), prominent intellectual and long-standing Swiss envoy at the International Court of Justice in the Hague.

[29] The important distinction between 'ideological' and 'genealogical' myths of descent is examined in Smith (1984).

[30] A very recent study of newspaper-articles from August 1st (August 1st being Switzerland's national holiday since 1891) in the period from 1891 to 1935 reveals that the Alpine myth (both as the 'nationalization of nature' and as the 'naturalization of the nation') occupied a crucial place in liberal and conservative papers all over the country. See Merki (1995: 67-71). For the time of World War I, see Wigger (1996).

[31] In recent decades, the nature-nation discourse in both Canada and Switzerland has become attenuated, though it still retains the "naturalized" form that has developed since the Romantic period. While further research is needed to satisfactorily understand the reasons for such changes, a tentative answer may lie with processes of reflexive modernization.

However, it first must be stated that, in the Swiss case, on the level of "everyday life", there is every reason to believe that the Alps have retained much of their traditional importance as a symbol of Swiss nationhood up to the present day. This trend has been further reinforced by a rapidly expanding travel industry, which helped turn the Swiss Alps into one of the most popular tourist destinations in Europe. Where the Alps may have lost a degree of symbolic significance, however, is at the discursive level of national ideology. This is especially true with regard to the 'naturalization of the nation'. The belief that landscape in general, and the Alps in particular, are capable of determining national character may thereby
be less sustainable under conditions of 'reflexive modernization'. On the implications of 'reflexive modernization', see Giddens (1991).

In Canada, the disenchanting forces associated with reflexivity have been augmented by the rise of multiculturalist and post-modernist narratives. Thus the northern theme has received considerably less treatment in Canada's political and academic national discourse. Nevertheless, in the popular imagination, in literature and in the media, the idea of the North persists. One example of this is the success of a recent traveling exhibition of Group of Seven (and other landscape artists') work in 1996. Another comes from the pen of Alison Mitcham, who proclaimed in 1983 that: 'Perhaps the most exciting creative force in contemporary Canadian fiction… is the Northern Imagination. Increasingly, our most perceptive novelists have shown that the Canadian imagination in many of its most original flights

is inspired by the North' (Mitcham 1983: 9). Some years later, George Woodcock remarked: 'An especially interesting trend (it is not organized enough to be called a movement) among the younger poets has been toward a return to the landscape, though in much less conventional ways than the confederation poets a century ago. The writers representing this trend - among them some of the best of younger Canadian poets - include Patrick Lane, Dale Zieroth, Sid Marty, Tom Wayman and Susan Musgrave.' (Woodcock 1987: 16)

The upshot of contemporary developments, therefore, is that in both Canada and Switzerland, naturalistic nationalism remains part of the collective imagination even as it has lost favour at the level of ideological discourse.
[32] Canada's territory was, of course, settled by Native Indian and Inuit aboriginal people, but from the viewpoint of the settlers, the landscape presented itself as a *tabula rasa* upon which European civilization could be inscribed.