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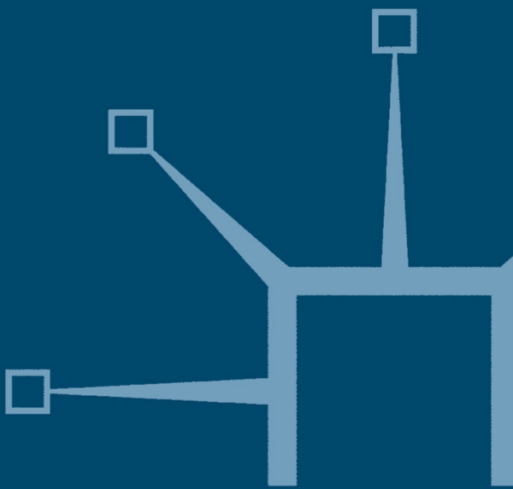
Writing the Nation

A Global Perspective

Edited by

Stefan Berger



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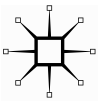

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2007 978-0-230-00802-1

First published 2007 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010
Companies and representatives throughout the world

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ISBN 978-1-349-28364-4 ISBN 978-0-230-22305-9 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/9780230223059

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
16 15 14 13 12 11 10 09 08 07

This book is dedicated to my colleagues and friends in the ESF-NHIST programme who have taught me so much

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Preface

As always during the course of editing a book one accumulates many debts. This present volume would not have seen the light of day without the decision of the International Committee of Historical Sciences to adopt our proposal for a key theme on national historiographies in global comparative perspective. In organising this key theme for the 2005 Sydney congress of the Committee I am particularly grateful to the ICHS's president, Professor Jürgen Kocka, and the ICHS's secretary general, Professor Jean-Claude Robert for all their support. The proposal was launched through the Swiss section of the ICHS, and my co-chair in the NHIST programme, Professor Guy Marchal, was instrumental in getting the Swiss national historical association interested in this theme.

Guy also launched the entire idea of a European Science Foundation (ESF) programme on national history writing with an exploratory workshop he organised at the University of Lucerne in 1999. Inspired by this meeting I subsequently wrote a first draft of the proposal for the programme 'Representations of the Past: the Writing of National Histories in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe' and, together with my co-chairs, Professor Guy Marchal and Professor Christoph Conrad, we assembled a team capable of leading the four teams which operate under the umbrella of the NHIST programme. Following two more workshops in Strasbourg and Leipzig, the programme proposal and the teams were confirmed and the ESF officially launched the programme in the spring of 2003. After two and a half years, it underwent a rigorous procedure of peer review, which strongly endorsed the programme.

This is not the place to report in depth on the many activities of the NHIST. Detailed information can be found on its website: www.uni-leipzig.de/zhsesf. But it is the place to thank my co-chairs and team leaders, Professor Ilaria Porciani, Professor Chris Lorenz, Professor Lluis Roura, Professor Matthias Middell, Professor Tibor Frank and Dr Frank Hadler, with whom I have been privileged to develop intellectual partnerships and friendships over the last years. Special thanks also go to Professor Jo Tollebeek and Professor Lutz Raphael for strongly supporting the NHIST as co-editors of crucial NHIST volumes. The harmony within the wider programme team has been vital to the communicative and organisational success of NHIST.

Furthermore I would like to thank the more than one hundred scholars from thirty European countries who continue to co-operate tirelessly with NHIST in its explorations of national history writing. A very big thank you also goes to the scientific secretary of the programme at the ESF, Dr Monique van Donzel, and to the administrative secretary of the programme at the ESF,

Ms Madelise Blumenroeder, whose patience and unstinting support for the programme have been invaluable throughout. Last but not least a heartfelt thank you also has to go to Dr Maurice Bric, NHIST's rapporteur on the ESF's Standing Committee for the Humanities. Right from the beginning he has given generously of his time to advise the programme chair and help him over many intellectual and bureaucratic hurdles. If the programme has been running smoothly and successfully and is on track it is in no small measure due to the combined efforts of all the people mentioned above. And if this volume could be put together, it is also due to the many things that I have learned from my colleagues in the NHIST. Therefore it seems appropriate to dedicate this book to them.

I would also like to thank the authors of the volume for their patience and perseverance with their editor who asked them many times to revise their pieces, to take note of each other's articles and to comment on the editor's lengthy introduction. They have been model contributors and I hope that they are happy with the end result of their endeavours. Last but not least I feel a particular debt to Michael Strang and Ruth Ireland from Palgrave Macmillan. I have been discussing the NHIST programme with Michael for many months now and am very grateful for his interest and his support. Next year we will be launching a major Palgrave Macmillan book series which brings together the research results of the NHIST in a six-volume book series entitled 'Writing the Nation'. Ruth has been wonderfully supportive throughout the gestation period of this present volume and, as general editor of the book series, I am hoping to have the pleasure of further dealings with her over the next couple of years.

Stefan Berger
Disley, 1 August 2006

Biographical Notes

Stefan Berger is Professor of Modern German and Comparative European History at the University of Manchester. He has published widely on the history of nationalism and national identity, on historiography and on labour history. Among his most recent books are *A Companion to Nineteenth Century Europe* (Blackwell, 2006), *The Other Germany: Perceptions and Influences in British–East German Relations, 1945–1990*, ed. with Norman LaPorte (ADEF vol. 52, Martin Wiessner Verlag, 2005), *Inventing the Nation: Germany* (Edward Arnold, 2004) and *The Search for Normality: National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Germany since 1800*, 2nd edn (Berghahn, 2003).

Eliana de Freitas Dutra is Professor of History at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, MG. She is currently co-ordinating a research project entitled 'Brasiliana: Writings and Lectures of the Nation'. Among her publications are *Rebeldes Literários da República: História e Identidade Nacional no Almanaque Brasileiro Garnier* (University of Minas Gerais Press, 2005), *O Ardil Totalitário: Imaginário Político no Brasil dos anos 30* (University of Rio de Janeiro Press, 1997), *Caminhos Operários nas Minas Gerais* (Hucitec/INL, 1988) and *Politica, Nação e Edição* (Anablume, 2006).

Mark Hearn is Associate Lecturer in Australian History at Macquarie University, New South Wales. He has published widely in the field of Australian history, including scholarly articles in journals such as *Gender and History*, *Rethinking History* and *Australian Historical Studies*, and he is the co-editor of *Rethinking Work: Time Space Discourse* (Cambridge University Press, 2006). He was awarded the C. H. Currey Memorial Fellowship from the State Library of New South Wales for 2006 to research the *Fin de Siècle Imagination in Australia, 1890–1914*.

Birgit Schaebler is Professor of History and Chair of West Asian History at the University of Erfurt, Germany. She held research fellowships and taught at the universities of Duke, Harvard and in Georgia, USA. She has published widely on the colonial and post-colonial histories of the Middle East and her book *Rebellions in the Druze Mountain from Ottoman Times to Independence: a Historical-Anthropological Study* has been translated into Arabic (Dar an-Nahar, Beirut, 2003). She is currently working on a book on the entangled histories of Europe and the Middle East, especially with respect to the question of a global modernity. Among her most recent publications is *Globalization and*

the Muslim World. Culture: Religion and Modernity, ed. with Leif Stenberg (Syracuse University Press, 2004).

Radhika Seshan is a Lecturer in the Department of History at the University of Pune in India. She is a specialist in medieval Indian economic history and is developing an interest in gender studies. Her publications include many articles on medieval economic and gender history as well as three edited collections: *Fractured Identity? The Indian Diaspora in Canada* (Rawat Publications, 2003), *Visiblising Women: Facets of History through a Gender Lens* (jointly with K. K. Shah, Kalpaz Publications, 2005) and *Medieval India: Problems and Possibilities* (Rawat Publications, 2006).

Allan Smith teaches history at the University of British Columbia. Widely published in the fields of Canadian, Canadian-American, and comparative North American history, he is the author of *Canada – an American Nation? Essays on Continentalism, Identity, and the Canadian Frame of Mind* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994, 2000), recently issued in French as *Le Canada: une nation américaine? Réflexions sur le continentalisme, l'identité, et la mentalité canadienne,* Trad. Sophie Coupal (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2005). A member of the Advisory Board of Canadian-American Public Policy and of the Comité Consultatif of Mens: Revue d'histoire intellectuelle et culturelle de l'Amérique française, he is currently at work on a study of transnationalism in late twentieth-century Canadian-American affairs.

Ibrahima Thioub is Chair of the History Department of the Faculty of Humanities of the Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, Senegal. He is president of the Association for West African Studies and vice-president of the executive committee of the Association of African Historians. He also edits the scholarly journals *Afrika Zamani* and *Afrique et Histoire*. He has worked extensively on questions of social marginality in Africa from the colonial period to the present day. His numerous publications focus on the history of the Senegalese prisons and on the African historiography about slavery and colonialism.

Q. Edward Wang is Professor and Chair of the History Department at Rowan University, USA. Born and raised in Shanghai, he received his education partly in China and partly in the United States. His publications include: *Mirroring the Past: the Writing and Use of History in Imperial China* (co-authored with On-cho Ng, 2005), *Turning Points in Historiography: a Cross-Cultural Perspective* (co-edited with Georg G. Iggers, 2002), *Inventing China through History: the May Fourth Approach to Historiography* (2001) and *Postmodernism and Historiography: a Chinese-Western Comparison* (co-authored with Ku Wei-ying, 2000; in Chinese).

1

Introduction: Towards a Global History of National Historiographies[1]

Stefan Berger

History was a crucial element with which to construct nations and national identity. Nation-builders everywhere agreed: their nation had to have a history – the longer and the prouder the better. Creating national historical consciousness was widely seen as the most important precondition for engendering true national feeling in the wider population, as both the ethnicisation of the nation and its sacralisation only took shape against the background of history and heritage. But how, when, under which conditions and by whom was history used to create national identity? Was it used differently in different parts of the world? Was there a European master narrative of national history and were all other narratives of the nation derived from this master copy? The current volume explores these questions in global perspective with contributions ranging over all five continents.

Its origins lie in a five-year European Science Foundation (ESF) programme entitled 'Representations of the Past: the Writing of National Histories in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe' that I had the pleasure to chair between 2003 and 2008.[2] Exploring in detail the master narratives of about thirty European nation-states, the programme almost inevitably raised questions concerning the framing of national historical narratives outside of Europe and the cross-currents between European and non-European national histories. The principle of the nation-state was so obviously one of the most powerful transnational foci for spatial identities in modern history that it seemed worthwhile to explore the role of history writing in constituting the nation in different parts of the world.[3] I was lucky enough to gain the support of the World Historical Congress, which decided to make this one of its 'major themes' at its Sydney meeting in 2005, where many of the chapters in this volume got their first airing as conference papers. Having presented the authors with the structural framework pursued by the ESF project, they had the task of applying it to their respective parts of the globe, so as to allow comparisons between the diverse ways in which national historical narratives were framed. They were specifically asked, first, to outline the institutionalisation and professionalisation of national historical writing,

secondly, to analyse the national master narratives in relation to narratives of ethnicity/race, class, religion and gender, thirdly, to pay due attention to the interrelationship between national and sub- as well as transnational narratives (i.e. local, regional, continental and global histories), and fourthly, to look at territorial overlaps between national histories in their respective parts of the world (i.e. the role of contested territories on constructions of national histories). Finally, they were asked to augment the comparative perspective by looking at the emergence and development of transnational networks and contacts within the community of historians.[4]

Starting from the ESF project and therewith making Europe the benchmark for all other parts of the globe makes this project prone to accusations of Eurocentrism. It is true that subsequent chapters deal mostly with the kind of 'scientific' history writing which was invented in Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century. It is also true that other ways of looking at history, including national history, that existed in other parts of the world, often far earlier than the eighteenth century, do not come into view much in this volume.[5] The book starts from the assumption that it was such European 'scientific' history which powerfully underpinned European forms of modern nationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. With colonialism and imperialism, both ideas, that of the modern nation and that of 'scientific' history, spread to all other parts of the globe. Hence, it seems justified to compare the ways in which such European 'scientific' histories underwrote national projects in diverse corners of the world. This does not mean that the book is opposed to the post-colonial project of 'provincialising' Europe, i.e. problematising essentially European/Western benchmarks for universal history.[6] But Dipesh Chakrabarty himself has pointed out that any notions of authentically Indian representations of the past are problematic, as the very definition of history, at least in academic discourse, derives from a European model.[7]

Professional, university- or academy-based historians struggled hard in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both inside and outside of Europe, to be able to define what is and what is not history. In the non-European world many pre-modern forms of historical imagination existed and inspired alternative and rival interpretations of the national past – interpretations which often stood in marked contrast to European 'scientific' ways of looking at national history. If we take India as an example, Kumkum Chatterjee has pointed to interesting parallels and important differences between Indian conceptions of national history and European ones.[8] Tamil nationalism created the region as nation just as Czech and Romanian nationalism did in nineteenth-century Europe. In fact, the region could and did become a crucial component of the nation in many parts of the world. For Europe this has frequently been emphasised for the German example,[9] but Prasenjit Duara has pointed out similar processes for China.[10] Although Duara explicitly rejected the European Enlightenment 'linear model' of history writing

for the colonial world, his insistence that nation emerged at the interface of conflicting local, regional, national and transnational narratives is also something that rings true for many European national histories.

To return to our Indian example, the parallels between Indian and European conceptions of national history do not end with the impact of regional history. 'Scientific history' promising 'authenticity' and 'hard evidence' also, according to Kumkum Chatterjee, won the day among India's professional historians. Hence Indian debates about what constituted history were debates where oral traditions and memories were pitted against scientific history, as was the case in the debates surrounding the kulagranthas that Chatterjee specifically examined. Those in favour of incorporating oral tradition and storytelling into notions of history tended to ignore an indigenous Indian scientific tradition which had developed independently from the European one. Nativism was so bound up with critiques of Western understandings of history that it was also constantly in danger of constructing the ordinary people as 'uncorrupted soul of the nation'. As in Europe, therefore, we often find in the colonial world the central paradox that rural communities and the people are championed by urban and educated scholars.

Alternative non-scientific understandings of history remained popular in many parts of the world, including Europe, but 'scientific' history managed to establish itself as the only 'proper' form of history everywhere. In official discourse, only 'scientific' history was authoritative history. Given the victory of 'scientific history' everywhere, are modern national histories outside Europe purely derivative, as Benedict Anderson famously claimed?[11] Are they spread by anti-colonial nationalisms in Asia and Africa in the twentieth century? Or are anti-colonial nationalisms, as Partha Chatterjee has maintained, distinctive and authentic forms of nationalism?[12] The chapters in this volume seem to support Anderson in as much as they all emphasise the importance of European models, even if these models were invariably adapted and modified. One might also add that, of course, the very search for distinctiveness and authenticity is derived from the European model of nationalism. Nevertheless, one should perhaps not underestimate authentic forms of non-European national histories which precede the modern age. Thus, for example, several studies on the Chinese historian Sima Qian have emphasised that his understanding of national history and his methodological approach to historical studies is fundamentally different from that of Western historiography. Especially his preference for multiple and competing stories is often juxtaposed to the Western model of linear and homogeneous narratives.[13] In China, in fact, we encounter ideas of nation and national enemies as early as the Han period and again in the Song period. And 'national history', at least in name, existed in East Asia from the seventh century, as shown in Japan's *Six National Histories* which were compiled between the eighth and the tenth centuries.

And what about the forms of creole nationalisms in Latin America which are accompanied by constructions of national histories as early as the eighteenth

century, at a time when many parts of Europe were still struggling to come to terms with the modern concept of nation? In some parts of Latin America we also encounter an intriguing mixture of scientific European history and native oral traditions.[14] Benedict Anderson's thesis linking the early forms of creole nationalisms with the absence of language differences to the European motherlands and to the weakness of indigenous middle classes at the moment of national independence has come in for considerable criticism by scholars of Latin American nationalism.[15] But so far it is unclear what will replace it.

When and where then do modern national histories first appear? My own chapter on European histories emphasises the longevity of historical narratives about the nation ranging back, in some cases, to the middle ages.[16] European humanism and the Reformation were crucial in establishing many of the key tropes that informed national narratives throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Yet it was only in the European bridge period between 1750 and 1850 that the national principle gained dominance over its rivals, such as religion, the dynastic principle and feudalism. The coming of modernity was accompanied by the victory of the nation-state over all rival forms of territorial and non-territorial allegiance. In the century between 1850 and 1950 it dominated identity constructions and it also dominated historical writing. Only during the second half of the twentieth century did the national principle undergo a series of profound challenges and crisis points, mostly in Western Europe and also in the Muslim world, as shown in the rise of pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism. And yet the national paradigm frequently showed a persistence and ability to maintain the primary allegiance of European citizens that makes it rather doubtful whether national histories and the national principle belong firmly to the past at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Many historians in Europe today seek to explore issues of Europeanisation and localisation of historical writing in the hope of overcoming the many limits of the national paradigm, but almost everywhere in Europe, national paradigms are still among the most powerful structuring devices of historical narratives.

In North America, white settler societies imported the concept of national history from Europe and employed it with great effect from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards. Processes of professionalisation and institutionalisation, which gathered momentum in the last third of the nineteenth century, often started from the assumption of a transfer of historist ideas from Germany and Europe, although they were frequently based on a crude misunderstanding of Ranke and Co.[17] After 1900 things moved rapidly and many historians from around the globe already came to the top American universities rather than the top European ones to learn and study (national) history. Notions of a unified national history in North America were challenged in the 1970s as sub-groups in society discovered history as a powerful tool to legitimate their own aims and gain recognition within the nation. Historians began to celebrate diversity rather than insist on unity – most markedly in

Canada and least noticeably in Quebec, which always had been far less an immigrant society than either the USA or Canada as a whole.

The Spanish and Portuguese colonists in Latin America were also importing concepts of nation and national history from Europe. The process of institutionalisation and professionalisation of history writing began earlier than in North America. Chile is widely regarded as pioneering the institutionalisation of history writing,[18] but other countries, for example Brazil, were also creating an infrastructure for 'scientific' historical writing by the 1830s and 1840s. Latin American historical institutions, publications and narratives were modelled closely on European foundations. They played an influential role in legitimating the struggle for independence and in constructing post-independence identities. The attempts of national historians to use history to create homogeneity and coherence in what often were ethnically diverse societies only gave way to a greater recognition of diversity and multiculturalism in the context of the 1990s, when black and indigenous groups began using history to protest against centuries of discrimination.

In Australia the first stirrings of a separate national narrative underpinning separate national identity constructions have been traced back to the First World War. Like in Europe and the Americas the pathfinders were self-taught amateurs. In Australia professional historians at the universities only began teaching and researching Australian history in the inter-war period. The construction of a unified and glorious national past was relatively short-lived and from the 1950s onwards, critical voices could be heard loud and clear in the Australian historical profession fracturing the national storylines. Hence the period of time in which Australian historians wrote a glorifying and nationalist form of history was, certainly by comparison with Europe and the Americas, relatively short. But as in Europe and the Americas the story is not a teleological one of declining power of national narratives after the Second World War. The 1990s saw a conservative backlash with significant attempts to stop what some saw as the self-deprecating agenda of critical historians and to develop a new patriotism in historical writing.[19]

In comparison with Europe, new nations or white-settler nations have more of a problem with historical time, in that they have greater difficulties in locating the origins of their nations in the dim and distant past. Most European nation-states were built on assumptions of the longevity of the nation-state: the older, the better, the more authentic. If there was no continuity of state traditions, ethnicity came to the fore to claim a long tradition of proud opposition of 'the people' to foreign state oppression. By contrast, new nations, according to Gerard Bouchard's pathbreaking comparative work on new nation nationalisms, were faced with the dilemma that they either had to borrow the past of their mother country (a strategy followed by nation-states such as Uruguay, Argentina, New Zealand and Australia) or they had to borrow the past of the indigenous population (a strategy employed by Mexico and Peru). A third option was to decide that they did not need a long history and to

reset historical time along the lines of Benjamin Franklin's famous words according to which the United States of America was a nation without ancestors. But many new nations, such as Brazil, the Caribbean island nations and Quebec, failed to resolve the problem of historical time satisfactorily and ended up with uneasy constructions of métissage and hybridity.[20]

If historical time in white-settler societies was problematic for national historiographies, historians in East Asia, the Middle East, India and Africa could point, like their European counterparts, to constructions of national pasts which long preceded the modern age. In East Asia proto-nationalism was often linked with the spread of neo-Confucianism from China to Korea and Japan, which was met by both enthusiastic endorsement and rejection. Yet it was the encounter with Western imperialism which gave national history a new relevance and urgency in the colonial world. To develop national history which would contribute to nation formation was perceived as a necessary step on the road to modernisation and Westernisation. Japanese historians were earliest off the mark and replaced the traditional Sino-centric with a new nation-centred view of history.[21] European historians, such as Gustav Zerffi or Ludwig Rieß, were invited to write introductions to historical studies or, as in Rieß's case, to teach at Japanese universities. Although historians have argued that their influence should not be overestimated, their interactions with Japanese historiography are testimony to Japan's efforts to learn from 'the West'.[22] But by the end of the nineteenth century Japanese historians already began to turn away from the Westernisation paradigm, stressing instead indigenous Japanese values which justified the nation's beginning imperial expansion in East Asia.

Japanese imperialism in turn spurred on national history writing in Korea and China, where historians emphasised their respective nations' claim to autonomy, if not superiority. Historiographies in all three countries had for centuries been focused on dynastic principles, which were now challenged by the national principle. Dynastic narratives had to fit and be accommodated to the national narratives, if they were to survive in the Westernised historiographies of East Asia. The transfer of European ideas of historism, and of Ranke in particular, was, however, not unlike the case in the US, restricted to notions of empiricism and source criticism.[23] In Korea, Sino-centric understandings of history were based on relating time to legitimating dynasties; this was difficult to square with Western scientific ideas of history which linked time to concepts of 'progress'.[24] Western 'scientific' standards were frequently employed to demonstrate the longevity and proud history of the nations of Korea and China. The ebb and flow of the New Text Confucianism and its relations with the development of modern Chinese historiography and the Korean debates surrounding the rejection of the idea of a significant Chinese influence on Korea's high antiquity are examples explored by Edward Wang in his chapter. The strong ties between nationalism and history writing in East Asia seem to continue almost unabated to the present day and have

survived the communist experiments in China and North Korea virtually unharmed.

Modern Indian national history was first written by the British colonists in an attempt to justify the British colonisation of the Indian sub-continent. When nationalist Indian historians responded to this imperial historiography they often felt the need to operate in the same scientific framework that their imperialist rivals championed. Adopting 'scientific' standards was one way of legitimating their rival nationalist narratives. Operating within the modernist framework of European historians, Indian historians often concentrated on demonstrating that India had everything that Europe had and more. It was, as Radhika Seshan argues in her chapter, the 'me too' syndrome of Indian historiography – a syndrome which can also be seen in a range of other colonial and post-colonial historiographies. Indigenous challenges to the Western historical framework existed. They emphasised that India had a much older and very different sense of history, located, above all, in familial chronicles. But at the Indian universities it was the Western frame of history which prevailed and which guaranteed that Marxist approaches to Indian history became by far the most popular ones in post-independence India from the 1950s onwards. Out of such academic Marxism the 'subaltern school' developed from the 1970s onwards. It was to create one of the most powerful critiques of Western and Europe-centred conceptual frameworks which inform many of today's writings on post-colonial historiographies.

Like Asia, the Arab-speaking world and sub-Saharan Africa had to contend with European/Western interpretations of their spatial identities. During the second half of the nineteenth century Arab historians upheld notions of a greater Arab nation which were based on the cultural rediscovery of Arab language and literature and were meant to counter the colonialist and imperialist narratives written by European historians of the Middle East. By the inter-war period many of the prominent Arab historians were trained at colonial schools and universities in Europe and North America. The American University of Beirut also played an important role in providing an institutional home for narratives of Arab nationalism. But the audience of Arab national historians was, as Birgit Schaebler outlines in her chapter, first and foremost European. It was about 'writing the Arab nation into the minds of the Europeans'. This only began to change in the 1940s and 1950s when a new generation of Arab historians addressed an Arab audience and combined an emphasis on Arab language, history and community with an explicit anti-European bias. In Egypt, for example, the founding figure of the academic school of history, Muhammad Shafiq Ghurbal, studied with Arnold Toynbee at the University of London, but when he became head of the history department at Fu'ad University in 1936, he was keen that Egypt's history should be written by Arabs in Arabic.[25] In many Arab nation-states, such as Syria, Arab nationalism overwrote a nation-state centred nationalism.[26] In the Arab-speaking world it was not so much multiculturalism which challenged the

idea of the nation at the end of the twentieth century, but Islamism. Its representatives argued that Arabism found expression not in the concept of the nation but in religion.

In sub-Saharan Africa national history was instrumental in the anti-colonial struggle of the twentieth century.[27] Francophone African historiographies were arguably less anti-Western than their Anglophone counterparts.[28] As Ibrahima Thioub argues in connection with the Dakar School of Senegalese historians, it was the scientificity of national history writing which made it appear to anti-colonialists, such as Léopold Séngar Senghor, as the perfect tool with which to establish an authentic African identity whilst at the same time continuing a developmentalist project celebrating Senegal's contribution to the wider Francophonie. Establishing indigenous cultural credentials vis-à-vis the West went hand in hand with the continuing idea that one had to catch up with the West not only in Senegal. Emphasising African cultural heritage did not mean challenging European notions of progress. Already pioneers of African history, such as W. E. B. Du Bois sought to counter Hegel's famous dictum that Africa had no history by describing ancient African kingdoms in a way that made them look comparable to European civilisations.[29] The institutionalisation of African national history as an academic discipline took place after the Second World War, but it could build on the work of local amateur historians who had written African history as early as the late nineteenth century.[30] It brought with it the effective separation of African from African-American historiography which had been a prominent feature of writings on Africa ever since the pioneering work of Du Bois. In many contemporary African nation-states one of the central tasks is to come to terms with multiethnic states which are the legacy of colonialism. How national history should be written for such entities remains hotly debated among historians of Africa.[31] For a minority of historians African history is the starting point for decentring Europe's and North America's place in world history,[32] but for many historians in Africa the contemporary demands of the nation-state make such a perspective seem illusory.

As the case of the Dakar School demonstrates, the concern for the independent African nation could lead historians to the pursuit of transnational agendas. Both the search for an authentically African civilisation in antiquity and the concern with the transatlantic slave trade are powerful examples of the ways in which concern for the African nation drove historians to look beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. In contemporary Africa, nationalist history still provides a powerful tool of those in political power with which they mobilise particular sets of collective memoirs. This is not just the case in Senegal. Zimbabwe, as Terence Ranger explains, provides perhaps the most saddening example of a kind of 'patriotic history' which currently legitimates political dictatorship and attempts to brainwash an entire generation.[33] Ranger himself can be viewed as a historian who travelled a long way from using national history for the purpose of liberation and emancipation to

become a vociferous critic of the xenophobic and dogmatic national history as propagated by the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe.

Liberation and emancipation had also been keywords in the arsenal of European Enlightenment historiography during the second half of the eighteenth century. Many Enlightenment historians developed a keen interest in national history and sought to explore national characters, but they did so with the ultimate aim of establishing common and universal characteristics of the *conditio humana*. The specificity of national characters and national histories began moving to the fore only with the onset of Romantic historiography in the early nineteenth century. A direct response to the universalist aspirations of Enlightenment historiography and the French Revolution, Romantic narratives employed history to establish the unique character of nations, legitimate their existence in history and justify their alleged superiority over other nations. Vernacular languages, literatures and cultures were given the stamp of authenticity. As my own chapter outlines, time frameworks for the nation were developed which operated routinely with models of rise and decline, golden ages, lost homelands and national revivals.

Much of nineteenth-century national historiography in North America was, like its European counterpart, framed in a Romantic mode. Dramatic stories of heroism formed the basis of the construction of 'national characters'. Canadian 'northernness' with its emphasis on location and climate was similar to the idea of the 'frontier' in US historiography, as both implied that the nation was forged in the process of a mastery of vast territorial spaces. Quebec's 'Gallic spirit' by contrast tended to emphasise more idealistic and spiritual dimensions of the national storyline.

In Australia Romanticism in historical writing took the form of endorsing the traditions of British liberalism and the heritage of British racial origin. The myths of 'mateship' and egalitarianism made Australia a better Britain – without the negative effects of the English social class distinctions and improving on the considerable positive legacies that the British homeland had bequeathed on Australia. In some Latin American states, such as Mexico, nineteenth-century historians were also widely engaged on projects which were to demonstrate that the colonial society had in important ways improved on the motherland.[34] This could take the form of defending Spanish colonisation or it could end in calls for an independent Mexico. In Argentina Romantic national narratives, like in North America, started from the importance of vast open spaces to be settled and civilised. Celebrating the rustic individuality of a new people, white historians who tended to be part of the white colonising elite, set themselves the task of 'whitening' their respective nations. On the one hand, white-settler societies such as those of the USA, Canada, Latin America and Australia tended to construct histories which celebrated the struggles of ordinary citizens and their success in forging egalitarian and free societies. On the other hand, omissions abounded in these narratives: violence against the indigenous peoples, sectarian struggles between

the Protestant British and the Catholic Irish, the role of women in society, the emergence of new class distinctions and social differentiations – all of this was absent from the Romantic national narratives in white-settler societies. Their national storylines tended to rely on narratives of conquering an inhospitable and wild country that they civilised and cultivated. That these lands had been inhabited by other peoples which were often treated with the utmost contempt was widely ignored in the heroic national histories.

Do we find parallels to Romantic national narratives outside of Europe and European white-settler societies? Neo-Confucianism in China can perhaps be seen as a parallel to Romanticism in Europe in that both seem to have been preoccupied with metaphysical and moralising concerns about the national past. Under the influence of Western Romantic paradigms of history writing Chinese historians began to search in China's high antiquity for the sources of the Chinese cultural revival. Like in Europe it became of paramount importance to trace the origins of the Chinese as far back as possible to 'prove' the authenticity and superiority of Chinese culture over everything else. The early generations of Indian national historians were also following a European Romantic paradigm in their quest to restore a long-lost past and thereby recapture a sense of pride and self-respect. In the Arab-speaking world and in sub-Saharan Africa one equally encounters notions of cultural rediscovery and revival which have been at the very heart of the Romantic national history movement in Europe. The 'Arab renaissance' during the second half of the nineteenth century and Cheik Anta Diop's twentieth-century efforts to prove the authenticity and superiority of a genuinely African civilisation are prominent examples of such Romantic narrative constructions in the Middle East and in Africa.

A prominent characteristic of Romantic historiography, albeit older and more persistent than Romanticism, was the strong gendering of national narratives. It became standard narratological practice in Europe to feminise national enemies, bemoan the rape of one's own nation by others and celebrate the nation as family. One of the central categories of early Australian national narratives was that of 'mateship' – a clearly gendered category stressing the importance of male bonding in the outback and of male solidarities in hostile and difficult surroundings more generally. White-settler societies, including the Americas and South Africa, which defined themselves through a frontier which had to be pushed backward in order to expand the reach of the nation tended to have a strong male bias, as it was male characteristics, such as courage, physical strength, endurance, perseverance and struggle which were the most important ingredients in stories about how a nation came fully into its own by appropriating vast expanses of land. In South America historians have recently stressed the importance of the idea of 'honour' in gendering national discourses in this part of the world.[35] Colonialist discourse often feminised the indigenous population in an attempt to justify the paternalist authority of the coloniser over the colonised. For India Mrinilina Sinha

has demonstrated how such discursive construction of Indian males as feminine has worked.[36]

During the second half of the nineteenth century Romantic history writing was challenged by what one might term positivist history writing in Europe. Through an even more rigorous application of the arsenal of 'scientific' methods these positivist historians began to debunk what they saw as the myths of Romantic national history. Not all of them subscribed to the rigorous Comtean version of positivism, according to which one could verify or empirically measure discrete historical phenomena. And few actually believed in the possibility of discovering firm laws of human activity in the past. But most believed in the progressive historical evolution of knowledge and in the crucial importance of basing history on empirical facts. Using the word 'positivist' here as a blanket term for what has been described as an important move away from Romanticism, can be confusing, but for lack of a better term I am still using it in what follows. Those 'positivists' were often sceptical of attempts to ground national history in concepts of 'the people' and instead paid greater attention to the role of states and governing elites. Maintaining the self-image as pedagogues of the nation, they set out to provide an even more scientific and truthful mirror in which the nation would be able to see itself in its full glory. Scientific nationalism in history writing, whether in Romantic or positivist mode, emerged at different times in different places in Europe – in some places, such as Germany and France, it was already well developed by the middle of the nineteenth century. Elsewhere, for example in Ukraine and Latvia, it was only after the First World War that the ideas of nationalism and 'scientificity' merged fully.

Once again, the Americas provide the closest parallels to the European scenario in that the second half of the nineteenth century witnessed a positivist challenge to Romantic forms of history writing. Stressing the factual orientation of historical sciences, historians made good use of the alleged 'scientificity' of their subject area to emphasise in particular stories of impressive material growth in the US and Canada. In Latin America, historians began to chart the failure of their societies to produce an equally impressive economic performance, thereby occasionally producing national histories which were critical of aspects of post-independence national politics. And yet, the orientation towards empiricism and source criticism in both North and South America continued to produce histories which sought to foster and strengthen national feeling.

Whereas in Europe and the Americas the new positivism often re-enforced the traditional nationalism by means of emphasising the latter's more 'scientific' basis, in Australia, a more rigorous application of scientific method went hand in hand with more critical perspectives on the national storyline. This might have something to do with the relative belatedness of the emergence of scientific nationalism in Australian historiography. If notions of a separate Australianness only began to enter academic discussions about

national history in the inter-war period, it was not long before Keith Hancock formulated the first critique of the Australian nation-building project, arguing that isolationism and an overdependence on the state had produced a 'monochrome culture of mediocrity'. Manning Clark continued the self-critical re-evaluation of Australia's past after the Second World War, calling on his fellow historians to abandon the old comforting myths and face the more problematic aspects of Australia's past. As Mark Hearn argues in his chapter, this was taken up with a vengeance by the New Left in the 1960s and 1970s.

In China a positivist challenge to neo-Confucian historiography resulted in calls to base history on more factual evidence well before the European influence made itself felt. China can thus be seen to have developed its own variant of historism which preceded and paralleled the movement of European historism. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it would be easier for Chinese historians to adapt Ranke and European historism because they could relate their calls for 'scientificity' to indigenous traditions. The New Text school of the nineteenth century critically reinterpreted China's past so as to bring it into line with Western conceptions and ideas. In Japan, positivism, like Romantic national history and historism itself, were more clear-cut Western imports, but the positivist challenge contributed to critiquing the mythologies of the Meiji state. Taguchi Ukichi, who wrote a multivolume national history of Japan between 1877 and 1882, was informed by the desire to show the workings of laws in Japanese society – an idea which he clearly owed to his European predecessors Spencer and Buckle. Overall, the state remained very much the focus of Japanese historical narratives. A Historiography Office was founded to glorify Meiji rule and justify the overthrow of the Tokugawa shogunate by the Meiji who were ascribed divine origins.

Scientific positivism was also crucial to the self-understanding of the founding fathers of the Dakar School of historians. They used its tools as a benchmark for their diverse attempts to discuss the impact of colonial domination on African societies. As Ibrahima Thioub demonstrates, the outcome could be extremely different and range from straightforward nationalism, which depicted Africans as innocent victims of the colonial powers, to more complex and self-critical narratives, asking uncomfortable questions about the collusion of African elites in projects of colonialism.

Twentieth-century Marxism, both inside and outside of Europe, often took the mantle of positivism and was not averse to matching it to a nationalist outfit. Prominent cases include Stalinist Russia as well as Maoist and North Korean historiographical endeavours. In the Arab world Marxism provided the incentive to merge the concept of nation with the idea of revolution in attempts to provide social justice within the framework of a continuous and proud Arab culture. In parts of Latin America and Africa, Marxism was the ideology which seemed best suited to explain underdevelopment and exploitation by international capital while at the same time holding out the vision of international workers' solidarity and the continuation of the modernist,

progressive project. Especially in the 1960s and 1970s, arguably the global highpoint of Marxist influence at institutions of higher education, it was a common reference frame for historians from different continents. Marxist approaches to historical writing could also underpin powerful critiques of national master narratives. In India, Marxist history writing from the 1950s onwards broke away from dynastic history. The Marxists' concerns with analysing Indian 'feudalism' and discussing the hindrances to the development of capitalism in India did not lead them to transcend national history but they did manage to give national history a more self-critical edge. And in a range of Western European countries as well as in North America, Marxist historians in a range of countries were in the forefront of formulating more self-reflexive national narratives from the 1960s onwards.

Scientific nationalism, in its Romantic, positivist and Marxist guises, existed alongside the internationalist commitment of historians to the universal applicability of the tools of historical science everywhere. Like other sciences, the historical sciences underwent a thorough internationalisation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with diverse attempts in Europe, Asia and the Americas to form transnational associations and networks. Yet, scientific nationalism proved to be much stronger than any internationalist professional ethos, and the cultural demobilisation after the First World War was fraught with difficulties, as most historians all too willingly served their respective nations and governments in the pursuit of political aims and ambitions.[37] In the Second World War such political functionalisation of historiography found its apogee in the justification of German historians for the racial state of the National Socialists, ethnic cleansing and the holocaust.

It was the Second World War and the holocaust which marked the most fundamental rupture of national paradigms in most parts of Europe. But this was a delayed rupture, as the immediate post-war years saw, above all else, attempts to restabilise and reconnect to the traditional national narratives which had dominated the pre-war years. Only from the late 1950s onwards do we see attempts to engage more critically with the national master narratives and either replace them with other national master narratives, or, in a few cases, to move beyond the national paradigm altogether. Political projects, such as the one of the European Union in Western Europe or the building of really existing socialism in Eastern Europe, once again sought to engage historians and functionalise their craft to provide identitarian narratives which could underpin these transnational political projects. In a global perspective the transnational ambitions of European historiography should be compared more often with transnational endeavours elsewhere. Pan-Arabism, and pan-Africanism are two prominent examples of political transnational projects underpinned by a good deal of historical writing. From the 1930s onwards Arab historians constructed a pan-Arab nation on ideas of race, civilisation and material unity. They pointed to Arab achievements, stressing that they were greater than the achievements of classical Rome and Greece,

which were perceived as the foundations on which European civilisation rested. And the search for black Athene as well as the description of an African antiquity which rested on the Pharaonic civilisation of Egypt served a very similar purpose of giving to Africans a long and proud history – something that had been routinely denied by the European imperialist project. The latter, by creating a Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone African space, also contributed in important ways to forms of transnational identities which led to transnational histories being constructed. It was difficult to contain African history in the nation-state.

In Asia and in the Americas, attempts to initiate either political or historiographical projects with transnational ambitions were burdened with greater difficulties. In East Asia, Japan's failure to acknowledge publicly the atrocities committed in the Second World War continue to stand in the way of producing transnational historical narratives. Historians such as Saburo Ienaga have fought for many decades to include discussions on Japanese guilt in school curricula and other public media, but nationalist colleagues, such as Kanji Nishio, perceive such attempts as national 'masochism' and continue to peddle old nationalist myths in their publications on national history.[38] On the Indian sub-continent the communalist orientation of history writing, which stemmed from British colonialist discourses constructing Hindu and Muslim as mutually exclusive identities, fed directly into the nationalisation (along ethno-religious lines) of India and it still contributes to the destruction of transnational spaces and ambitions. Australia's long-time refusal to accept its geographical position in Asia and its continued attachment to the European and Western mindframe isolated it in Asia. In North America, Canada is struggling to keep its mighty southern neighbour from swallowing Canada and in Latin America the national paradigm also continues to be used as a defence against the all-pervasive influence of the USA.

If transnational projects have a different scope and differing ambitions in diverse parts of the world, the belief in stable and homogeneous national narratives is undermined in the present almost everywhere by the methodological challenges of the new cultural history, memory history, post-structuralist and post-colonial history. Yet national histories are far from being a spent force in the wider world. Many of the post-Soviet nation-states in Eurasia are good examples of the importance of national historical consciousness to nation-building projects in the contemporary period.[39] After the dissolution of Yugoslavia the new successor states perceived it as crucial to construct their own separate national histories.[40] In Palestine the construction of national history is widely thought to be a crucial part of the forging of a Palestinian identity.[41] And minority nationalisms in Western Europe, from Scotland to Catalonia, are also busy constructing their own national pasts against the national narratives of Britain and Spain. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, most professional historians are looking for more open, more playful national identities, which can accept fracture, hybridity