

FROM NATIONS TO NETWORKS

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Prologue by Josu Jon Imaz

Prologue

Technological change has left its mark on civilisations and political and social structures. The concepts of nation and sovereignty seem to have always existed. However, they were born within a specific context that was determined by two technological advances that took place in the 16th and 17th centuries: the press and the steam engine.

The standardisation of linguistic and cultural spaces generated by the press spread the perception of belonging in broader spaces than those which human beings had previously been used to. In turn, the steam engine and the industrial revolution joined the latter phenomenon to form economic domains that merged with constituted cultural spaces, giving rise to the nation-State, the dominant political structure for two centuries. The response by the cultural and linguistic spaces which were not articulated by that economic and political reality was to promote 19th- and 20th-century European nationalisms, which finally constituted statal entities in some cases (Italy, Germany, Norway, Finland, Czech Republic, etc.), whereas other ones were left as cultural or national spaces lacking a state structure, or in some cases as unstable or unsolved problems.

Another great technological revolution which had taken place thousands of years before, the Neolithic revolution that gave rise to agriculture and cattle farming, had made human beings, until then nomadic hunters and gatherers, sedentary. Thus the first classes that were not directly productive were created, as well as increasingly complex social structures, such as cities. Cities or *polis* in some cases grew, constituting the ancient empires, a phenomenon which started in ancient Mesopotamia. The Roman Empire is perhaps the most sophisticated structure from this time.

Globalisation is not a new phenomenon. As analysed by Thomas Friedman in *The World Is Not Flat*, in the 16th and 17th centuries empires became global, whereas in the 20th century it was companies that became global, and the differential factor is that since the end of the millennium, ten years ago, it is people who are becoming global. And again it is a third technological revolution that is promoting

the transformation: the revolution promoted by new information and communication technologies, of which the internet is the most transformative expression.

In *From Nations to Networks* de Ugarte, Quintana, Gómez, and Fuentes analyse what is going on in this new world that is being currently created. The seed of the internet fell on fertile ground, as the crisis or transformation of the concept of nation had already started decades ago. Three European wars in less than a century, which culminated in the 1945 debacle, led to a reconsideration of the classical model of nation-State and absolute sovereignty. The European Union project is perhaps the most innovative model to give answers to the failings of a reality that is still based on the state system, but it innovates by creating new spaces and interactions that surpass the traditional concept of frontier. New open spaces are also created to approach new realities: environmental problems, global food problems, trade regulating organisations, supra-state justice and security domains are structures and domains created to approach problems that find no answer within the limits of the classical state.

Kenichi Ohmae had already analysed in *The End of the Nation-State: the Rise of Regional Economies* the rise of the new economic realities, constituted by more homogeneous hinterlands which in some cases turned regions into more dynamic spaces and in others created areas that dissolved frontiers like sugar lumps, creating new relational domains. Also in the nineties, in *Jihad vs McWorld*, Benjamin R. Barber superimposed Ohmae's economic analysis to the rise of identity reaffirmation movements, in some cases defensive, as a response to the new realities created by globalisation.

The Club of Rome, in a survey published in 1992 under the title *The First Global Revolution*, analysed these two trends, one centripetal, the other centrifugal, which are taking place in the world, and concluded saying: *The apparent conflict arises from the difficulty of reconciling them within the existing political system which is rigidly based on the model of the nation state. What is needed is a reformulation of*

the appropriate levels of decision-making so as to bring the points of decision-making as near as possible to those who enjoy or suffer their consequences.

Therefore, when the internet emerged and spread in the nineties, the debate was already presented in those terms. However, the speed of the transformation process of social links, from territory-based forms to network-based forms, has increased geometrically in the last decade. This is the phenomenon that is analysed with an extraordinary precision in the pages of *From Nations to Networks*. Territorial links become more flexible, and networks and communities are created in which geographical connections are sometimes replaced by affinities, common interests and shared aims. The concept of belonging does not disappear, but is extended to spaces with higher degrees of freedom. It is as if until now we had been flat figures living in a two-dimensional space divided by black lines, with domains painted in different colours, and suddenly we had become three-dimensional: now we are larger geometrical bodies, with more complex shapes. We still interact with the plane that intersects with us, as we are still ascribed classical national identities, but we acquire further nuances and dimensions. And we even discover links that bind us beyond belonging or not to the same colour of the plane in which we had previously lived, and which now is one more among the infinity of planes which we can regard as part of ourselves.

The network is the mechanism that strengthens the power of a research group, the market ranking of a company's products, someone's schedule or his or her degrees of relationship. I have recently spent half a year in a university in the United States, during which time a large part of my personal and even professional relationships became virtual. The network was part of my life, the created network had become part of my own identity and I myself was undergoing a certain de-territorialising experience. Due to academic and professional reasons, in the eighties and nineties I lived six years abroad. But I was only able to experience the phenomenon of network participation referred to in this book this past year. Why? Because of the development of a technology that enables full articulation of a network, a technology that fifteen years ago was still in its early stages.

Professor Daniel Innerarity, described by *Le Nouvel Observateur* as one of the 25 most important 21st-century European thinkers, says in his essay *The Invisible Society* that new spaces tend towards the disappearance of centres and the creation of networks. They are no longer configured following the model of old clusters, but rather start to look like an extensive mesh. Let us take the example of road networks. We have always known a low-density, radial net, always tending towards a centre – and we should not think only of the Spanish radial figure which converged on Kilometre Zero at the Puerta del Sol in Madrid, or of the star-shaped centre that frames the Arc du Triomphe in Paris. Let us move further away in time and space and think of the Roman Empire, with its radial network of roads converging on Rome. The civilisation process, points out Innerarity, is probably nothing but the creation of denser meshes and networks which that up radially and weave something much more multipolar, in which the incorporation of new nodes (new realities) and the creation of much larger connections of all kinds generate globalisation. What are known as the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China, all Latin America, in addition to Indonesia, the Persian Gulf countries and new actors) are those new nodes, and the enmeshment of all kind of networks (information and communication technologies, cultural networks, trade, academic collaboration, corporations, news, etc.) grows thicker, decreasing central roles.

This is the world we live in. I would like to now bring up a chemical example, in honour of my own education. The energy for system activation, that is, the force required for a new agent to leap over the competitive entry barrier to a sector or market, is growing increasingly smaller. As Thomas Friedman puts it, the world is starting to become flat. That is, there is more network enmeshment and less "slopes" and "gradients" for countries and environments that wish to enter the system. And for those of us who work towards a fairer society, this means new opportunities for the 80% of mankind which has been displaced from development spaces in the last century.

The authors are right in that this is probably only the beginning, and it will be the confluence and interaction of the new trans-national conversational spaces and

economic spaces with a similar domain that will make new identities fully emerge. Also, the linguistic communication space will play a crucial role in these identities, as this book also stresses. We cannot yet fully apprehend what political structures will emerge from these network realities, but it seems likely that they may contribute to a lesser dependence on the territory and revalorise spaces of personal and political freedom.

It won't be easy. There are issues which I worry a priori will not be adequately solved by these new environments. For example, solidarity with those who are weakest, those who have endured hardship, those who are protected by a space of solidarity within classical national structures, with its communitarianism, and may be the losers in the new Freedonias, or in the spaces and networks with greater freedom and free adhesion for people, but which lack mechanisms for social cohesion. This is an aspect which must be elaborated, built, and articulated.

There is also the risk of fundamentalism, of change-averse forces which can, moreover, take advantage of the reticular structure of a network world to strike blows at freedom from the safety of these new realities. But there are also great opportunities. Classical minority identities, small linguistic and cultural spaces, can profit from this world which is being created if they choose networks as opposed to walls, and if they choose to be one more node, with its own internal connections to those who share that experience, and in turn open to other nodes.

In classical nations, it was very easy to run the risk of building by opposition to the other, the other identity. Reaffirmation *as opposed to...* could strengthen, for some, one's own identity. However, networks require openness. I am worth more the more connections I have, the more identities I belong to, the greater my presence in fora and realities is... In the end, the network, which surpasses the classical conception of nation, enables me to build myself *with the other*, rather than *as opposed to the other*. And if I build myself with many others, I become a strong node in a net that surrounds me, and my own identity grows stronger. Sharing makes me stronger, isolation makes me weaker.

From Nations to Networks sets challenges and makes reflections, and starts painting a picture that is left unfinished, as there are still no answers to many of the questions posed. That remains to be seen. But it seems likely that the reticular horizon, which will perhaps be post-national, in which the identity and interrelation planes will be multiple and complex, is emerging now. Trying to staunch the flow is useless. Let us consider the opportunities, the degrees of freedom we will gain and the richness of the new realities that we will turn into a part of ourselves. Let us analyse the problems, anticipate the failings and weaknesses of the new reality and try to find solutions to them. But the game may be worth it. The religious wars in the West ended a long time ago, but nobody had to give up religion because of that. Will a network world be able to contribute to the overcoming of national conflicts with nobody having to give up an identity, and nobody having to impose one? *Not to impose - not to prevent* can be a slogan for a network world. It's quite a challenge.

Josu Jon Imaz

FROM NATIONS TO NETWORKS

What Is This Book About?

Hundreds of thousands of people (according to some calculations, up to a million) nowadays live as voluntary neo-nomads, travelling between countries and having no fixed residence, connected to each other by means of various virtual networks through which they make a living and ensure their personal and economic independence.

This is no doubt an eccentric phenomenon, but not a unique one. More and more people are focussing their economic and social lives on online communities. The political and deliberative processes they give rise to have increasingly less to do with States and their bother. They group millions of people all over the world, and are the breeding ground for all kinds of new identities: from al-Qaeda to eco-villagers and digital Zionists, heirs to the first cyberpunk cultures and the digital underground.

At the same time, more and more trans-national companies are creating circles of communication and political decision and influence which have an indubitable impact on all aspects of their members' lives. The old multinational system, whose centre and original identity derived from a national company which had become internationalised, starts to be left behind. Nowadays, new *corporate Venices* are springing up all over the place - companies that treat States as equals, think in terms of foreign diplomacy, and provide their employees with identities and even new forms of citizenship.

The central thesis of this book is that the passage from a society with a decentralised economy and communications - the world of nations - to the world of distributed networks which arose from the internet and globalisation, makes it increasingly difficult for people to define their identities in national terms. That's why new identities and new values are appearing, which in the long run will surpass and subsume the national and statist view of the world.

Identity springs from the need to materialise or at least imagine the community in which our life is developed and produced. Nations appeared and spread precisely because the old local collective identities linked to religion and agrarian and artisan production no longer adequately represented the social network that produced the bulk of the economic, social and political activity which determined people's environment.

In the same way, for a growing number of people, national markets are becoming an increasingly inadequate expression of all the social relationships that shape their daily lives. The products they consume are not national, nor are the

news contexts which determined the great collective movements, or, necessarily, most of those with whom they discuss the news and whose opinions interest them.

National identities are becoming both too small and too large. They are becoming alien.

It's not a rapid collapse. We must not forget that nations arose from real need, and, despite that, their universalisation took almost two centuries and was quite difficult to say the least, as it met with all kinds of resistances. The abandonment of real communities where everyone knew everyone else's faces and names in order to embrace a homeland, an abstract community where the others were not personally known, was a costly and difficult process.

And in fact it's quite likely that the national State and nationalities will stay with us for a long time, in the same way as Christianity still exists and some royal houses still reign, even though nowadays national identities are politically dominant and determining, and the world is politically organised into national States, not on the basis of dynastic relationships or faith communities.

Many historians, politologists and sociologists nowadays foresee and even advocate a *privatisation* of national identity, a process which would be similar to the passage of religion into the personal and private domain that characterised the rise of the national State. But the issue is that such a privatisation, such a surpassing, can only take place from a set of alternative collective identities.

And what's really interesting is that identitarian communities and virtual networks that seem capable of bringing about such a process are not only defined by their being trans-national, but they also display a nature that is very different from the respective natures of the great imagined identities of Modernity, such as nation, race, or the Marxist historical class. Their members know each other even if they have never physically met. They are in a certain sense real communities, or, more precisely, imagined communities that fall into reality.

In the first part of this book, we will try to understand nations, as well as the tools and symbols from which they were imagined and experienced.

In the second part, we will follow the experiences of 19th- and 20th-century segregationists, those who did not accept the passage to a world that resembled a jigsaw with hundreds of coloured pieces, and tried to split away from the inevitable internal homogenisation which it generated.

PART I: A WORLD OF NATIONS

Let Us Imagine a Nation

When reading Anderson, it's fascinating to discover the origin of so-called national languages in what he calls "printed capitalism":

In pre-print Europe, and, of course, elsewhere in the world, the diversity of spoken languages, those languages that for their speakers were (and are) the warp and woof of their lives, was immense; so immense, indeed, that had print-capitalism sought to exploit each oral vernacular market, it would have remained a capitalism of petty

proportions. But these varied idiolects were capable of being assembled, within definite limits, into print-languages far fewer in number. The very arbitrariness of any system of signs for sounds facilitated the assembling process. [...] Nothing served to "assemble" related vernaculars more than capitalism, which, within the limits imposed by grammars and syntaxes, created mechanically reproduced print-languages capable of dissemination through the market.¹

The question is really not just the question of what lies "behind print stand printers and publishing firms", as Anderson says. It's not just that the need to incur in scale economies led publishers to promote the creation of normalised literary languages – the point is that readers also took part in it because in so doing they benefitted from obvious network effects. The emergence of national languages in Europe, the first great linguistic normalisation, was the product not only of offer, but also of demand. And what's more interesting, it worked only in geographic and social spaces in which there was a potential or early national market.

Thus German emerged as a printed language, gobbling up dozens of Central European dialects, but in the midterm it wasn't able to absorb Dutch, because this latter language coincided with a marketing space which was directed not inland, but towards the sea.

Symmetrically, the Mediterranean Latin languages were *normalised* as printed languages in spaces which had been characterised by early common markets for almost three hundred years, but did not result in a contemporary Latin simply because there was nothing like a common market. Asturian and Aragonese were eclipsed by the powerful printed Spanish; Occitan and Gascon, by French; and almost two hundred years later, the dozens of dialects all over the Italic Peninsula, by Italian. All of them fused into one under the hegemony of the dominant language-of-power in their respective political and market spaces (Castilian, Parisian French and Piemontese), but were incapable of doing so among themselves

¹ Benedict Arnold, *Imagined Communities*.

despite the fact that the proximity between their respective grammars and syntaxes was much greater than that between, for instance, German dialects.

The map of the European printed languages was the map of the emerging national markets in the 16th and 17th centuries, when a second wave, by then consciously nationalistic, definitely closed linguistic spaces and gave the dignity of print to languages such as Czech, Catalan, or Hungarian, which had been basically left out of the first printing revolution.

These print-languages laid the bases for national consciousnesses in three distinct ways. First and foremost, they created unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars. Speakers of the huge variety of Frenches, Englishes, or Spanishes, who might find it difficult or even impossible to understand one another in conversation, became capable of comprehending one another via print and paper. In the process, they gradually became aware of the hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people in their particular language-field, and at the same time that *only those* hundreds of thousands, or millions, so belongs. These fellow-readers, to whom they were connected through print, formed, in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community.²

And this idea of the imagined community is fundamental to nationalism; in fact, it was the emotional, identitarian metaphor of those emerging markets. The end of the national building of markets, the successive globalisations, resulted, almost mechanically, in a different identitarian crisis that questioned the totalising capacity of national identity, from the internationalism of the Communist left during the First World War (which was a world war both as a symbol and a direct consequence of the incapacity of national markets to keep the development of productivity within

² Ibid.

the old borders) to the neo-nomads and the trans-national identities that belong in a world of distributed global communications.

Second, print-capitalism gave a new fixity to language, which in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation. As Febvre and Martin remind us, the printed book kept a permanent form, capable of virtually infinite reproduction, temporally and spatially. It was no longer subject to the individualizing and "unconsciously modernizing" habits of monastic scribes. Thus, while twelfth-century French differed markedly from that written by Villon in the fifteenth, the rate of change slowed decisively in the sixteenth. "By the 17th century languages in Europe had generally assumed their modern forms" To put it another way, for three centuries now these stabilized print-languages have been gathering a darkening varnish; the words of our seventeenth-century forebears are accessible to us in a way that to Villon his twelfth-century ancestors were not.³

Thus, from the Royal Academy established by Philip V in parallel to the first administrative and legal unification of Spain to today's FUNDEU, born from the internationalisation of Spanish companies in South America, maintaining linguistic unity is a political effort that consciously sustains the aim of market unity.

After the normalisation of languages, their origins in print, that previous difference with respect to vernaculars, gave rise to the first idea of the national as constitutive: language no longer belonged to people, to specific communities of people one speaks to and knows; rather, language became a given, a grace, granted by the historical nation and whose rules must be followed to preserve the unity of the imagined community which sustains the scale economies and network effects of the national (or, in the case of imperial languages, international) markets.

³ Ibid.

The most radical example of this might well be the relationship between Italian and the languages which are really spoken and are now regarded as dialects for colloquial use all over Italy. The imagined community (the Italian nation) prevails over the real community (the community of people we speak to and know), and symbolically imposes its rules.

Third, print-capitalism created languages-of-power of a kind different from the older administrative vernaculars. Certain dialects inevitable were "closer" to each print-language and dominated their final forms. Their disadvantaged cousins, still assimilable to the emerging print-language, lost caste, above all because they were unsuccessful (or only relatively successful) in insisting on their own print-form. "Northwestern German" became Platt Deutsch, a largely spoken, thus sub-standard, German, because it was assimilable to print-German in a way that Bohemian spoken-Czech was not. High German, the King's English, and, later, Central Thai, were correspondingly elevated to a new politico-cultural eminence. (Hence the struggles in late-twentieth-century Europe by certain "sub"-nationalities to change their subordinate status by breaking firmly into print – and radio.)⁴

But even though the linguistic normalisation produced by print was fundamental for the European experience of an imagined national community, it was not the only kind of narrative that contributed to form the first national imaginaries, nor was it even a determinant factor in the appearance of vigorous nationalisms in America, Asia, or Africa. As Michael Shapiro remarks:

Cartography has been one of the early genres of national construction by the State [...] By the seventeenth century, the succession of images

⁴ Ibid.

on maps reflected the historical sequence "from universal Christendom, to dynastic state, to land centered nation".⁵

Irina Popova describes in a brief but interesting article⁶ how in the Austro-Hungarian Empire cartography served to build a discourse of national legitimacy within the imperial dynastic map, showing the various nations in a homogeneous way, and above all presenting the empire as resulting from the union of a set of pieces with their own full (national) sense. A kind of message which, as Shapiro says, following the trend in contemporary historiography, had already started with Bonaparte, when

French cartographic practices were aimed at displacing the spaces of aristocratic privilege with a uniform space in keeping with a republican ideal: "the uniform application of law and administration".⁷

Of course, outside Europe, it might well have been the case that maps took part in a self-fulfilling prophecy rather than in the narrative of an advancing national State:

The map anticipated spatial reality, not the other way round. In other words, a map was a model for what it was meant to represent, instead of a model of what was represented.⁸

⁵ Michael J. Shapiro, *Methods and Nations: Cultural Governance and the Indigenous Subject*. Routledge 2004.

⁶ Irina Popova, "Representing National Territory: Cartography and Nationalism in Hungary 1700-1848", in *Creating the Other: Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*, ed. By Nancy Meriwether Wingfield, Berghahn Books, 2003.

⁷ Shapiro, *ibid.*

⁸ *Siam mapped*, Ph.D. thesis by Thongchai Winichakul (University of Sidney, 1988), quoted by Anderson in *Imagined Communities*.

This took place not only in Asia, where dynastic frontiers were blurry, areas rather than lines. It characterised, above all, the first national imaginary in America, where great colonial units, such as Brazil or the viceroyalty of Río de la Plata, represented under their administrative domains territories that were much larger than those they effectively administered or had even explored.

The homogeneous unity of maps conferred a projection, a spatial transcendence to the Creole community. Creoles were urban, and lived practically isolated from the subjected Amerindian population. But while they felt themselves to be superior to the Amerindians, they were also aware that their social rank in the colonial system and their power within the administration would never equal those of their peers in the metropolis. One of the keys for the definition of South American countries from the old colonial limits, and for their failures – from Bolivarism to the APRA – to build a continental nation based on the imagined community of the language, was that Creole bureaucrats were never sent to serve in other colonies. Their world was *de facto* one-dimensional, a vector joining Buenos Aires or Santiago, Lima or Mexico, Bahia or Goa, to the capital of the empire, but which never joined colonies to one another. This constriction was increased by the restrictions on trade routes imposed by the Bourbon kings in the second half of the 18th century, and which blocked direct trade between colonies.

It's hard to imagine what a map, the association of its function with the territory represented on its homogeneous, imagined, coloured surface, would mean for those Creoles. The map literally re-dimensioned them. From the hierarchical vector of their relation to the capital, to a surface that *emanated* from their real world, the trade port, the viceroyalty capital, or the administrative headquarters.

The children of the Creole aristocracy in different colonies might feel a certain fraternity among themselves, but not so much for their imaginaries to become fused into one single nation. Their nations sprang from maps and were restricted to maps. The map represented the limits of the space where it was possible to live a life parallel to that in the metropolis. It was a map that represented not the past, like the European historical map which started to be

drawn in the second half of the 19th century, but the future. Representing what remained to be explored, colonised and, in many cases (the United States, Argentine, Chile, Brazil) even conquered. The fantasy of living a life parallel to that in the metropolis, characteristic of the Creole elite and present from the beginning of the colonisation in the very names of territories and cities (New York, New Spain, New Biscay, etc.) became, on being represented on a map, a manifest destiny. "What our parents came here for" seemed to demand – when it was cartographically represented – the end of colonial ties: ties which had become an obstacle to the project of a metropolitan life on another continent, which led to the split from the European centre, given the lack of understanding of their peers in the original model:

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.⁹

Moreover, the community that had been imagined on the map would soon generate a community imagined in words and contexts thanks to the emerging press, the maximum scope for whose narrative, due to the same colonial regulations of trade, would be seen as the map of administrative units. The special defining importance of maps in the constitution of national identities in America has survived to our day.

⁹ United States Declaration of Independence.

Few countries in the world represent their national map in their passports, and most of them are in South America.

More generally, it is on this identitarian, liberating and egalitarian projection of the imagined community onto the empty, homogeneous space of the map that the idea of ideal borders is built – the association between "natural" limits, linguistic borders and destiny unit. The concept of national plenitude is a result of the national cartographic narrative: a plenitude which will be, above all, completeness, for, as seen, the map represents not so much an administrative reality as a project, a programme.

It is maps and the logic of their completion that still sustain Morocco's claims on Ceuta, Melilla, and the Canary Islands, Japan's claim on the Kuril Islands, and Argentina's claim on the Falklands. The usual confusion that Spanish schoolchildren experience between Spain and the Iberian Peninsula is, precisely because of the unconscious invisibility of the difference for many teachers, a sample of the discourse of the invisibilisation of Portugal inserted into Spanish nationalism since the second half of the 19th century.

Maps match imagined linguistic communities with *natural* territories and state projects. It was the totem and the motto¹⁰ that turned the world narrative into a jigsaw where each State no longer represented a dynastic administration or a sacred territory, but a piece, a destiny, a small imaginary tectonic plate whose final sum on the plane would amount to the world itself. These were the late 19th-century world atlases, printed after the colonial division of Africa, with each plot of land finally adjudicated to a national State and homogeneous colours representing every last bit of dry land. It was these maps that opened the way for the Society of Nations and the UN, for the idea that the government of the world has a demos that is composed of nations, not of citizens, subjects, or believers.

¹⁰ Cf. Anderson's *Imagined Communities*.

The Political Nation

We have seen so far how the linguistic normalisation generated by print capitalism made it possible to imagine a homogeneous community, distinct from the diversity of subject groups and classes in the dynastic State. We have seen how the cartographic narrative projected this imagined community onto a territory, endowing it with a space and a destiny, turning it into a subject in a world which started to be conceived as international. But it would be the new forms of socialisation and communication that would turn the collective subject that was being conformed into a true political community: the nation.

These new forms had their origins in the feudal Parliaments characteristic of dynastic States or in traditional popular forms, such as councils. In some places, various institutions, more or less representative, contributed to turn the imagined national community into a political community. But although institutions can be seen as bridges to the pre-national past, what is interesting about them is precisely that which leads to change and transformation. And if we think about the nations that emerged at the end of the 18th century, these new spaces were the coffee house and the periodical:

[B]y the first decade of the eighteenth century, there were an estimated 3000 coffee houses in London alone, each with a core of regular clients. Many of the new periodicals - like the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, Defoe's *Review* and Swift's *Examiner* - were closely interwoven with the life of the coffee houses. These periodicals included essays of political commentary and satire which became an integral part of the discussions that took place in coffee houses and

elsewhere. The periodical press thus became a key element of an emerging public sphere in which private individuals gathered together, in coffee houses and other centres of sociability, to engage in critical discussion about the activities of Parliament and Crown.¹¹

What is known as the Habermasian public sphere, which emerged around that time, is a discussion on State and the administration which takes place in a normalised vernacular, and which articulates a social space where the map takes the form of a subject. The public sphere is the nation. That's why in these original nations there was an egalitarian and democratic component which would be lacking in the nationalisms that emerged as a result of the 19th-century rationalisation of dynastic States. Obviously, this egalitarianism was not extended to native populations, slaves, and women, but by comparison to later ages, this Liberal nationalism had certain charms that Imperial nationalism could never aspire to: not even the great Gladstone was able to preserve them in all their purity.

These rising countries, Creole and revolutionary, dreamt of democracy in the coffee shops and small periodicals in their capitals. This is the world of Franklin and Jefferson, but also the world of San Martín and even, one century later, Rizal. It's a world constituted by the unique superimposition of institutional symbols and relationships. What is interesting is not how Franklin's journalism or that of the provincial Caracas newspapers gave rise to a Creole identity capable of positing independence and waging war on the metropolis. What's most interesting is that, meanwhile, the readers of the Spanish *Diario de Cádiz* and the British Whigs, for instance, were going through a similar process: a new symmetry which made it possible for San Martín to feel that he was fighting for the same cause in the Battle of Bailén (in the Peninsular Wars, for the independence of Spain from France) and in the Battle of Ayacucho (the last battle in the South American wars for the independence from Spain). Despite later rhetorics, the Creole independence wars did not lead to the breakdown of that symmetry, that parallel life between

¹¹ John. B. Thompson, "The Theory of the Public Sphere".

metropolis and colony but, on the contrary, it led to parallel forms of the national construction process initiated by the Liberals after the coronation of the first Spanish king who was a product of the French Revolution, Joseph I Bonaparte (Napoleon's brother). This particular case is significant because the Peninsular Liberal themselves took their American peers as their model, and, after the decade of the 1850's, renamed what the British still call the Peninsular War as the War of Independence.

This symmetry was based on the total parallelism of the public forms of communication (periodicals) and socialisation (the coffee house), but also on that of private forms: the Masonic lodge. Much has been written about the role of Freemasons, and it's obvious that from the United States to Argentina and Spanish Liberalism, through Whig England and pre-Revolutionary France, Freemasonry contributed its values and symbols. But from our point of view, which seeks not to tell a story of nationalism, but to draw a map of its most novel symbols and of how the imaginary was configured in a radically different way, the Freemasons' contribution was a different one. A contribution, moreover, which would have been impossible had not periodicals and coffee houses existed.

It's important to bear in mind that periodicals established for the first time a public agenda, a set of topics which were discussed in coffee houses and debated by the nation in chambers and councils. Within that context, the Masonic lodge was defined as a separate but permeated space - permeated by the agenda, separate from debate and divisions. Lodges were the first think tanks, and the first form that preceded political parties as we know them today: an organised subject of collective elaboration, which holds sway over a side or "historical party" - that is, a school of thought *within* the body of the nation which in turn is materialised through newspapers and editorial lines.

That's also why their peak was short-lived: the lodges in favour of independence soon gave way to revolutionary clubs, and these to classical political parties, which in turn gave rise, with the advent of the telegraph, to the mass parties of the last quarter of the 19th century and the entire 20th century.

What is significant is that lodges closed up the symbolic world of the nation – a construct which for most people remains unquestioned today. The nation is still presented as a "natural" fact that we unconsciously seek in every "complete" political unit: a unified language, a unitary map/territory, a media-defined public sphere, and ideologically defined political subjects.

The nation, as a form of political organisation and identity, was much more powerful, encompassing and massive than any of its predecessors because its symbols linked institutions and power to everyone's identity, to the extent of sustaining the configurative and determining power of the nation.

In the end, what is essential about the nation is its exclusive claim over its identity as configurative, as generating co-nationals. It is the nation that makes the nationals, not the nationals that make the nation. People belong to the nation; they are a construct, a product of the "national reality", not the other way round. The nation reinterprets the past looking back on its own historiography, which goes far beyond the time when it was first imagined. In fact, it is the nation that gives rise to History as a supposedly scientific and detached narrative, with the explicit aim of conferring unity through time to the units that emerged from contemporary maps. From Thiers to Stalin, the first form of nationalist imperialism was exerted over the past, as a way of grounding the conversion of people's identities – people who had ceased to be the subjects of History in order to be considered the products of the recently discovered national History. Culture was redefined by the nation and from the coffee house: ceasing to be a personal symbolic sediment in order to become a supposedly constituent political phenomenon.

Race and Culture

Chesterton was doubtlessly one of the fathers of the *pulp essay*, and as such one of the most influential post-Victorians. He lived in a time when political agendas were

presented as the result of alleged scientific results: biology and genetics pointed towards eugenics, ethnology towards the racial theory of nation and identity. Both theories - although under very specific conditions - would lead directly to the instauration of the genocide policy by the German State in the forties. Chesterton, who was rather frivolous and vociferous but clear-sighted, realised that something was seriously wrong with this:

[O]f all the forms in which science, or pseudo-science, has come to the rescue of the rich and stupid, there is none so singular as the singular invention of the theory of races.¹²

Race as the foundation of the nation stood in opposition to the conception of the nation as a psychological fact, as a collective, and, surprisingly, a voluntary identity, as if it were a club. For, for the British ruling classes, the nation that mattered and made decisions was really not very different from the set of their own private clubs. After all, those who ended up representing the nation in Parliament unfailingly belonged to at least one of them.

Nationality exists, and has nothing in the world to do with race. Nationality is a thing like a church or a secret society; it is a product of the human soul and will; it is a spiritual product. And there are men in the modern world who would think anything and do anything rather than admit that anything could be a spiritual product.¹³

The origin of Chesterton's view of the nation lies in the theory of the nation as imagined community which Hobsbawm and Anderson would bring into the historiographic canon fifty years later. But, unbeknownst to him, Chesterton put his finger on what lay at the bottom of racial theories of national origin:

¹² G.K. Chesterton, *Heretics*.

¹³ *Ibid.*

But in each and every case [the] quality [of the nation] is purely spiritual, or, if you will, purely psychological. It is a moment when five men become a sixth man. Every one knows it who has ever founded a club. It is a moment when five places become one place. Every one must know it who has ever had to repel an invasion. Mr. Timothy Healy, the most serious intellect in the present House of Commons, summed up nationality to perfection when he simply called it something for which people will die. As he excellently said in reply to Lord Hugh Cecil, "No one, not even the noble lord, would die for the meridian of Greenwich." And that is the great tribute to its purely psychological character. It is idle to ask why Greenwich should not cohere in this spiritual manner while Athens or Sparta did. It is like asking why a man falls in love with one woman and not with another.¹⁴

That is, the difference between love of science and love of the nation is that even though both can generate an identity, the identity generated by the nations makes possible the collective (military) sacrifice represented by the Spartan and Athenian heroics.

Obviously, Athenian and Spartan freemen didn't die for an imagined community and to uphold their alleged national interests. They died for the specific interests of a real community in which they belonged, whose members they knew by name, and with whom they shared trade, properties, institutions, and political positions, as with the very British ruling class.

Of course, the Spartan helots or the Athenian slaves were a different matter. These were not allowed to fight precisely because they were untrustworthy. Their own interest lay in ridding themselves of slavery, and if left at the rear they would in all likelihood revolt (as was indeed the case with the helots). This was something that Marx doubtlessly had in mind when, in reply to the accusation that Socialism would make workers "lose their nation", he wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* that

¹⁴ Ibid.

proletarians "have nothing to lose but their chains". And precisely in Chesterton's time, as the Russian, German and Hungarian revolutions would prove, as well as mass movements such as Spanish anarcho-syndicalism, the State's main problem was its inability to make a very significant part of the population feel that they were part of the identity that emanated from the State. This was something truly dramatic at a time when war became mass war.

Within this framework, racial mystique proved particularly useful. As Jon Juaristi has described,¹⁵ the mythical racial narratives of the nation that spread like wildfire at the turn of the century made possible a dual narrative of identity and national history. The French upper classes could see themselves as Frankish, and the Spanish as Visigothic, and the English as Teutonic - as Chesterton criticised; but at the same time, the working classes could feel Gaulish, Iberian, or Celtic, and the semi-literate middle class could fantasise about the delusions of Madame Blavatsky and her Boreal races. In the end, ethnicism served to create a *popular nationalism* wherever State nationalism was in crisis.

When the French Communist party first brought out Joan of Arc in the anniversary of the Commune, it was clear that the left - even the revolutionary left - had definitely gone from the opposition to the very idea of nation to being the opposition fighting to rule the national State. The helots were starting to think of themselves as Spartan, and their thirst for power was entering the game of identities and institutions that had been denied them until then.

Ethnic nationalism, so often discussed these days, is really neither characteristic of any specific nationalism nor an aberrant deformation of nationalism. It is a mutation of the mythical narrative of national origins which tends to appear under certain social crisis conditions, as we now see in the Andes countries, where a new indigenist ethnicism is clashing with Creole nationalism, redefining the national imaginary from its origins. It will rear its head wherever social conditions leave the State or national identity no other alternative. It will

¹⁵ Jon Juaristi, *El bosque imaginario*.

dilute wherever the State is grounded on a relatively wealthy basis which ensures a minimum of social cohesion.

But in the same way as we cannot reject a designer because he has included a horrible suit in his collection, we cannot reject nationalism over one of its specific incarnations. Of course, it must not be forgotten that both the vilest and the most sublime of its incarnations, its horrors and its glories, follow the same logic.

This is a logic whose nature cannot be dominated or controlled, for, like the gods, its common mythology tells us that it is nations that make and shape us, that give us a specific being to which we *belong* regardless of our will and choice. That's why the concept of nation makes such good bedfellows with race - that other monster, child of modern reason though not its optimal form, its most comfortable suit. Nationalism, when developed powerfully enough, it not racist but culturalist.

The idea of culture and its irreparable origin in German nationalism has been deconstructed many times in all kinds of format. The most popular recent form of archaeology has probably been that undertaken by the Spanish philosopher Gustavo Bueno:

By the end of the 20th century the idea of Culture, which had started to be elevated at the start of the 19th century to the status of the constitutive idea in the ideological dome of modern Christian-tradition societies (together with the ideas of Man, Freedom or Nation) has attained the privileged position of the dome key.

It can be said that nowadays, and in all kinds of Christian-tradition societies, the idea of Culture plays the roles of supreme Idea, and of Idea as primordial force, as a function of which practical and spiritual realities, such as Man, Freedom, or Nation, are defined. Man is "the cultural animal"; true freedom is attained through Culture; and the Nation is defined not so much in terms of race as in terms of culture: therefore every Nation will demand to "give itself" the form of a State, a "Culture State". In any case, the essential mission of the State is

defined as the promotion of National Cultures and enabling the access of all citizens to culture (article 44 of the 1978 Spanish Constitution). Culture is one of the highest-ranking practical ideals: the Culture State has become a higher ideal than that of the Rule of Law, and of course, has a much higher prestige than the Welfare State.¹⁶

It is worth reading Bueno in order to understand the archaeology of its concept and its rise from Herder to our day. Bueno points out that

However, nobody understands what Culture is about, in the same way as nobody used to understand what on earth the Grace of God was. Culture is a myth, and an obscurantist one, as was the myth of the Grace of God in the Middle Ages, or the "20th-century myth", the myth of Race in the first half of this century. In a way, it could be said that in addition the Culture myth incorporates, through the many turn-of-the-century nationalisms, many of the roles played by Race until they end of World War II.¹⁷

For Culture, with a capital C, is everything – from prestigious artworks to more or less reinvented traditional cuisine – that contributes to the formation of a collective identity derived from the constitutive myths of the national State.

National culture is nothing but the set of social and media imaginaries that inhabit the permanent exception of their national reality, an exception that makes their interaction with what is foreign (and, by definition, alien) watertight, and at the same time destroys the meaningfulness of its nationals beyond the national territory (for if all that matters in this reality is an exception and has endogenous causes, everything I know and think will have no validity outside of it).

A *national* is an orphan or an autistic person who cannot find meaning outside his or her relationship to the State-territory-nation. That's why national

¹⁶ Gustavo Bueno, *El mito de la cultura*.

¹⁷ Ibid.

States have their national animals, that die when they cross the State borders, such as the Puerto Rican coqui and the Iberian lynx, in a Disneyfied model of the main national virtue: being unable to exist outside the borders of the State and its imaginary.

That's why culture and its constitutive role are the tools that enable the State to subsume all conflicts within the nation, that is, to ensure its own survival beyond the contemporary political, economic and social conflicts and turmoil, restricting them as far as possible to the forms of its own administrative management.

In countries such as Spain, Nigeria or Morocco, where the State has been unable to impose these myths in a clear and homogeneous way – that is, where the State has failed at least partially as a national project – they appear fragmented, in the form of alternative nationalisms, and in the significance of certain pre-Modern identities and relationships, such as family, clan, religion, or lineage. And precisely because of this, Culture is in these countries, more than anywhere else, central to the debate.

But let us examine the case of France, where identitarian homogeneity is currently foundering due to migratory pressure, or those of Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Cuba, and Byelorussia, where the Modern project, in its national dimension, is alive and well. In all these countries, even alterity, even the alleged opposition to the national State, exists *because of* the State, whose governments or social management are, if anything, criticised for their lack of national sense.

This subsumption of conflict within the *culture state*, within the identity given from the very national State, is particularly clear in debates on culture, and in particular over juridical forms of cultural property. It is not by chance that the European Union fiercely resists opening its market to the United States in those sectors that are deemed worthy of being considered as a cultural exception, from cinema to Camembert cheese. It is not by chance that author rights have been elevated to the category of universal human rights and, from the first time since the

Old Regime, veritable private tax systems (such as the tax on CDs or DSL) have been imposed to "protect" a few hundreds of privileged authors.

In the logic of the national State, the artist, the creator, cannot be but a central figure in national construction, a specialist in the identitarian reproduction of nationalism – a task that deserves to be separate from life. It is a figure that must not be confused with "amateurs who write in their spare time", in the same way in which a citizen who tries to throw light on the causes of the rise of criminality must not be confused with a policeman or a Home Secretary. That's why, once more, the left-right dichotomy is in this sense based on the way of ensuring one's own means, not whether a function makes any sense.

Ensuring these means – or so claim those who are most liberal – is most sensibly done by means of the artificial monopoly known as intellectual property. These means should be ensured through a public salary that would make professionalisation feasible, according to those leftists who intend to "make Culture free" – that is, guarantee its free availability and universality for all. Briefly put, to more effectively spread the identitarian models of national construction.

Thus, in perpetual construction, living inwards and making nationals live inwards, the great social machine that is the national State appears as a magnificent construct that can only be surpassed from an alternative, and therefore identical, national logic.

In this brief biography of the national imaginary, we have seen how it emerged from a real need to imagine the new production and socialisation community generated by the market, as well as from the increase in labour division that became more evident and spread practically all over the planet between the 17th and 20th centuries. We have seen how that imagination took shape and reached its materialisation in the form of the national State born in the French Revolution and the American wars of independence. And finally, how its conversion into a *culture state*, constituting personal identities and the framework for all conflicts, established it practically into our day.

Nowadays, the national State is starting to spring its first leaks. These leaks can be seen, for instance, in the change of direction in the international-national relationship. Originally, as told by the very map narrative, the international was the product of the sum of the national. And it wasn't only due to the omnipresence of the world atlas as a jigsaw. In 20th-century universal national schools, history was told in the way started by Thiers in the 19th century: as the story of the alliances, loves and conflicts between nations. An imaginary that was a copy of that of the Homeric gods and heroes. Godly nations, heroic leaders. Heroes who now appeared as rulers, monarchs, generals, artists, scientists, and other "products" of the specific "spirit" of each nation.

Our parents still talked about the construction of Europe as something built from national States. Those national States are nowadays supported by the EU. Not to mention their national economies. Like the nation itself with respect to its citizens, the whole constitutes the parts, not the other way round.

The national is supported by the international. US negotiators in the Free Trade Agreement forced changes to the legislation on intellectual property which go beyond US law and then, back in the US, forced their passing as part of the harmonisation imposed by strategic international treaties. Even Chávez plays this very same game with his own institutions in South America.

Nowadays, the international is not the surpassing of the national, but its last resort: institutional internationalism is the last support of a hypertrophied state nationalism.

National logic, with its simplifying narrative and its pantheons, with its institutional development and its cultural potency, is extremely powerful. In little more than 150 years, the world came to be constituted by nations and national States. Even the great pre-Modern identities, i.e. religious identities, almost completely left the public sphere or became integrated as one more element in the national identities of countries where the clergy remained a politically active class (Ireland, Iran, Poland, etc.)

Why the Nation Was Imagined

Even though Pilsudski's famous dictum - "it's the State that makes the nation, not the nation the State" - is true in broadly historical terms, we have seen that the origin of the nation is much more dense and complex. For national states and nations to emerge they must previously exist in the symbology and identity of a certain social layer, defining an imagined community which would in turn comprehend the space of its social relations.

As Hobsbawm points out, the country had been until then

The centre of a real community of human beings with real social relationships among themselves, not the imagined community that creates a certain kind of link between members of a population of tens of millions.¹⁸

That's why "countryman" (*paisano* in Spanish and Italian) still refers to the rural domain, the countryside, the neighbourhood of origin, even if we are speaking about Argentina, Spain or Italy as nations.

¹⁸ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire*.

The historical key to our journey through the symbols that constitute the national really lies in the market globalisation which started in the medieval sailing networks and boomed after the conquest of America. When trade globalisation became fused with the social experience of the great imperial administrations and what Anderson calls "print capitalism", an identitarian and linguistic basis emerged for the associated market. This was the market that defined the new country where people really lived through their consumption, their work and their daily transactions – the market that we now explicitly call national. Following Hobsbawm:

With the decline of the real communities people were used to – village, family, parish, borough, guild and many others, – a decline which took place because they no longer encompassed as before most of life's and people's events, their members felt the need for something that would take its place. The imaged "nation" community could fill that void.¹⁹

That is, the nation, as identitarian support, the country, religious real communities, and family ties, precisely for the same reason why the development of the internet and distributed communication networks nowadays pose a threat to national identity: because identity must explain the life that is actually lived, and account for, or at least make it possible to imagine, those who take part in the social relationships that define it.

In the 19th century, wherever the capitalist market dominated social life, the old identities became obsolete. They only survived in places where capitalism took longer to permeate the daily life of large social masses, and even then it did so in opposition to elites who had been educated with imperial references, and who could be defined as national. Before the First World War, this gap between the national elite generated by imperialism and the nation they imagined, then still a mere colonial administrative map, seemed to imply a daily denial of nationalism:

¹⁹ Ibid.

Young Indian students who returned from the United Kingdom might bring with them Mazzini's or Garibaldi's slogans, but for the time being there were few people in the Punjab, and even less in regions such as Sudan, who had the least idea of what they could mean.²⁰

Even if it only existed as a community imagined by a few, the nation's *destiny* was to exist politically, for empires unflinchingly generated the basis for a unified administration and a national market by breaking the old caste barriers that were an obstacle to them. In this way, 19th-century European imperialism became the matrix for most of the nations we know nowadays. By exporting and imposing new market relationships, by imposing English or French as the lingua franca in areas which until then had been linguistically and administratively divided, imperialism also exported the need for a national identity that enabled their self-understanding.

All this process of administrative and commercial extension and homogenisation of the territory would have been unimaginable without the development of a wide network of decentralised means of communication. Their structure definitely consecrated national logic and the universal principles of personal identity and social organisation, from companies to States and parties, from federalism to trade unions. The mature nation of the second half of the 19th century, which was also that of the 20th century, was to a large extent the result of the telegraph, whose structures and metaphors it shared.²¹

And yet, there were resistances. The dream of returning to a real community was present in libertarian utopias and the communist dream, but also in a series of movements and experiences, most of them linked to minority religious communities which did not accept national life in order to preserve or develop their own identities. These were the 19th-century segregationists.

²⁰ Cf. Anderson's *Imagined Communities*.

²¹ David de Ugarte, *The Power of Networks*.

PART TWO: SEGREGATIONISTS

Seeking the Frontiers of a Closing Map

*This my proclamation, announcing
to the Jews throughout the world that an
asylum is hereby offered to them.*

Mordecai Manuel Noah, 1821

Mordecai Manuel Noah is now only a footnote to U.S. history. He was the first Jew to be considered a relevant intellectual in the United States, and the first to be given, under Madison, a presidential mission abroad. When he is remembered for any activities other than literature, it is as a Romantic traveller²² or as a pioneer of the 19th-century press.²³ In recent times, only an underground graphic novel²⁴ has brought back to life the context of what, without a doubt, was his most transcendent political exploration: the City of Ararat.

The *Jewish Encyclopedia* is quite parsimonious about Noah, and gives the impression that he is being forgiven the *deviation* of his original position with respect to Hertzl's Zionism:

His travels in Europe and his thorough acquaintance with Jewish affairs had opened his eyes to the unfortunate situation of the Jews — a homeless people lodged in the midst of other peoples with whom they could never amalgamate. Like the majority of Zionists, Noah advocated the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, their ancient heritage; and

²² His book *Travels in England, France, Spain, and the Barbary States* was quite popular in the first decade of the 19th century, and was a model for other US writers, such as Washington Irving.

²³ He founded *The National Advocate*, *The New York Enquirer*, *The Evening Star*, and *The Sunday Times*, among others. Moreover, he financed James Gordon Bennett and helped him launch the *New York Herald*.

²⁴ Ben Katchor, *The Jew of New York*.

though he firmly believed in the coming of the Messiah, he nevertheless held to the view that the restoration of the Jews must come about through the Jews themselves. That he should have attempted to found a Jewish state in a land other than Palestine is but a confirmation of the view that with all his attachment to the Holy Land, he felt greatly in doubt as to the immediate feasibility of colonizing a large number of Jews in Palestine. Furthermore, he believed that the Jews must first undergo a process of training and preparation before attempting to settle in their ancient historical home under a government of their own. What country could better serve this purpose of a temporary refuge and a place of preparation than the free, prosperous, and still unpopulated United States of America?

With this purpose in view, Noah, in 1825, originated the plan of establishing a Jewish colony on Grand Island in the state of New York. With the assistance of a friend, a Christian of the name of Samuel Leggett, he purchased 2,555 acres of land for the sum of \$16,985. Feeling assured of the success of his undertaking and of the readiness of his coreligionists to follow him, he issued on Sept. 1 of that year a manifesto to the Jews throughout the world, calling upon them to make ready for migrating to and settling in the new colony, which he named "Ararat," and the dedication of which took place in great state in Buffalo, Sept., 1825.²⁵

It could be said that Noah's idea was really something more than an alignment with the Jewish Messianic tradition and epic of return - rather, it had its source in, and reinterpreted, the young foundation myths of the United States.

In a way, it was genuinely American. After all, hadn't the Protestant Pilgrims, whose grandchildren had founded the young nation only two decades before,

²⁵ <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=320&letter=N>

arrived in New England because of the very same thing that the Jews were now undergoing in New York itself?

In the United States, from the very start, the constitutional system took it as a more or less implicit assumption that, beyond the administrative territorial organisation, people would group into belief communities - mainly religious communities. The role of the State with regard to communities was to ensure the freedom of the individual to belong to or leave any of them, while denying itself the possibility of judging without taking into account *community standards*, the moral rules and principles ruling people's communities.

This logic of community development, indissolubly linked to the freedom to choose one's own community, was imbricated, following Noah, in the very history of the United States in its Westward and Southward expansion. As long as there was free territory, there would be a space where one could live and be in a different way: this is the original American dream, its quest for a frontier.

The place chosen by Noah, a territory of about 80 km² on Grand Island, a beautiful river island close to Niagara Falls, was quite a luxury by comparison to what would come later, from Utah to Sealand: it was fertile, easily urbanisable, with a temperate climate and, even back then, accessible through good roads. In the inauguration ceremony, Noah uncovered a monolith bearing the following inscription:

Ararat, a City of Refuge for the Jews, founded by Mordecai M. Noah in the Month of Tishri, 5586 (September, 1825) and in the Fiftieth Year of American Independence.

Ararat, according to Bible tradition, is the place where Noah's Ark ran aground. In fact, the original Armenian mountain is still known as Noah's Mount. Mordecai Manuel Noah was thus elaborately punning on the very name of the new colony. This didn't go unnoticed: the experiment would be the butt, almost from the very first day, of the mockery and satire of the emerging Jewish public opinion in New

York and, above all, in Europe, where the first settlers were expected to come from. Noah, the first public leader of the North American Jewish community, didn't last long and returned to the fold. In his book *Discourse on the Restoration of the Jews* (1844), the idea of a refuge, a place where Jews could live in accordance with their own standards and values, disappeared in favour of the traditional idea of the *return* to Palestine.

This book is particularly interesting inasmuch as it puts forward, for the first time, the perspective of the State of Israel within the framework of an alliance with North American Protestant Christianity, whose eschatology Noah had studied in depth. For many of these Evangelical groups, the return of the Jews to the territory of their Biblical kingdoms was the necessary sign for the Second Coming of the Christ. Noah thus started a strange ecumenical dialogue based on a mythical complicity which, however, would remain extremely influential to our day.

The myth of the lost tribe of Israel was present from the discovery of America. The Spanish conquistadores brought Hebrew translators with them in their explorations, as well as their own encounter narratives. From the 15th to the 17th centuries, constant references were made to this myth, which was so potent in the Hapsburg court that in 1666 many believed Sabatai Zvi's Messianic self-proclamation²⁶, as the return of the lost tribe would mark the start of the end of days.

The origin of all these myths lies in the expulsion of the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492 and the later persecution of converts ("marranos"), who early on were forbidden to leave the Iberian kingdoms and take part in the conquest and colonisation of the New World – exactly what they would most desire. It is no doubt because of this very reason that the popular narrative of the alleged arrival in America of Sephardic *marrano* communities has persisted into our days, and there are even those who interpret the Buendía saga, in García Márquez's *Hundred Years of Solitude*, as a crypto-Jewish tale.

²⁶ Cf. Gabriel Albiac, *La sinagoga vacía*.

In English-speaking America, however, the idea that the Native Americans might descend from an ancient Jewish colonisation is not documented until 1800. Its roots lie in Richard Brothers's apocalyptic theology. In his main work²⁷, Brothers defends the thesis that many of the descendants of the royal houses of Israel, unaware of their lineage, were British Puritans whom he himself would discover and lead to Jerusalem. In the 1820s, Brothers's ideas had been adopted by many New York settlers. While the wealthy classes were really living in a New England, the peasants, who were deeply religious Protestants, lived in a new Old Testament territory in which all parallelisms were possible.

Noah himself, an educated and enlightened man, expressed more than once his belief in the Jewish origin of the Iroquois. It is true that, until a few years before the Ararat project, the Iroquois had claimed the Grand Island lands as their own, and that theories about their origin, widely spread by Noah's press, helped to legitimate this claim. But given that Noah was still defending these theories in 1837²⁸, when he had already sold his rights over Ararat, his sincerity cannot be doubted.

It was all really part of a common imaginary which the Ararat project would contribute to consolidate, and which Joseph Smith would draw inspiration from, directly and indirectly, as some of those who would become his seconds-in-command had worked for Noah or been in close contact with his movement.

In fact, Smith was not only familiar with Noah's propaganda. After half a century's debate, the appearance of a hand-written, unfinished novel by the pastor Solomon Spalding (1761-1816) confirmed the existence of remarkable parallelisms between the *Book of Mormon* and the Ohio preacher's novel.

But beyond the debate on Joseph Smith's literary sources, we might say that the *Book of Mormon* is the syncretistic product of a peasant society as young as it

²⁷ Richard Brothers, *A Revealed Knowledge of the Prophecies and Times*, 1795. Available at <http://olivercowdery.com/texts/brot1797.htm>

²⁸ Mordecai Manuel Noah, *Discourse on the Evidence of the American Indians Being Descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel*, available at <http://olivercowdery.com/texts/brot1837.htm>

was Puritanical, where the Bible was read in the present tense, with the intention to find in it a place for the society's destiny in the New World – a destiny which, like that of the nation, was not only projected into the future, but also into the past.

Moroni's plates performed, for those deeply religious peasants, the same function as the still young "science" of history did for the educated European elite that was discovering nationalism. And it did so by means of a resource that was present in the narrative of the Protestant settlers from their arrival in the continent: the creation of the illusion of a parallel life. While the urban elites imagined lives parallel to those of their metropolitan peers, the Puritan settlers imagined them as parallel to those of Biblical patriarchs.

The essence of the Mormon revelation is the consecration of the idea of America as a parallel world since at least the 7th century BC, a para-Biblical world with its own prophets, tribes, cities, wars and synagogues which was visited by Jesus Christ himself in the three days between his death and his resurrection. This was a world that disappeared in the year 400 and from which a resurrected Moroni returned in order to appear to young Joseph Smith, whose ultimate mission would be to gather and reincorporate to Bible history the teachings and warnings of the Jewish prophets and the forgotten Christianity of pre-Columbus North America.

But while this narrative must have been tremendously suggestive for its original peasant audience, it was also, in the century of science and secularisation, rather *quaint*, to say the least. In its own time it gave rise to all kind of reactions and refutations that would increase over the half century after the Mormon exodus. Even Mark Twain, in his 1872 travel book, *Roughing It*, included "A brief sketch of Mormon history"²⁹, which is still interesting in order to understand the way in which contemporary educated opinion perceived the Latter-Day Saints' movement.

However, the impression made by Mormonism on the Victorian English-speaking society was not due to their theology but to the success of their segregationism, a success that would for years remain awkward for the dominant nationalism in Europe, and which would weigh heavily on the public judgement of

²⁹ Available at <http://www.classicalreader.com/book/1407/81/>

the exotic American religion. Let us remember, for instance, how their pilgrimages, leaders and way of life are described in not very complimentary terms by the Tory British author Arthur Conan Doyle in his 1887 *A Study in Scarlet*, the first instalment of what would become the most successful literary serial of all time.

It could be said, in fact, that the key moment in Mormonism (the "first American religion") was the passage from its origins as a potentially hegemonic English-speaking religious nationalism, in a country that was still predominantly rural and Protestant, to a progressively radicalised segregationism whose faithful withdrew from the United States, going to the far West and finally, in 1847, settling in Utah, which was still, and remained until the following year, part of Mexico. This took place immediately after Smith's death.

Even though the *Book of Mormon* prophesied an American "New Jerusalem", Smith himself clarified that "Zion is all of North and South America". In fact, the first "revelation", including the direct command to build the New Jerusalem, was given not to Smith, but to one of his first followers, Hiram Page, in the early stages in the organisation of the Mormon Church, in 1830. This is striking, mostly because soon afterwards Smith forced Page to deny what he had said, and in 1831 Smith himself dictated a revelation according to which New Zion would be in Missouri, where, the Mormon community set up its headquarters in Jackson county and grew quickly, and everything seemed to predict that Mormons would soon become politically influential.

It's very likely that, until he died, Smith understood Zion to be the future capital of a Mormon America. Smith was never a segregationist, which was the reason why his defence of abolitionism and the role of Native Americans in the divine plan was so striking to non-Mormon settlers in Missouri and the state itself. This played a significant role in the rising tension that led to what is known as the 1838 Mormon War and the expulsion from the state, in caravans and on foot, of the more than 10,000 members of the Church of the Latter-Day Saints.

After this first exodus, Zion came to refer to Nauvoo, Illinois, a city founded by the Mormon refugees, where Smith was mayor and from which he launched his

candidacy to the presidency of United States – evidence that his project, although theocratic, was a national, not a segregationist one. But Smith's murder in 1844 established once and for all that the community's main problem was the persecution it faced, and possibly a new expulsion and extermination order by the Illinois state and militia.

The leader of the majority faction of the community after the founder's death, Brigham Young, forcefully advocated a new march westward, the true Mormon exodus. Young's initial plan was not so much to segregate as to find a refuge for his community. Young clearly saw that the Mormons' final destination must be a place that was not valuable for the settlers arrived from the East. In 1847 he sent an expedition to Salt Valley, possibly the last place in the West where anyone would want to settle. Soon afterwards the first settlements started, as well as the first irrigations and infrastructures, and in less than two year more than 70,000 Mormons and almost a dozen towns were making use of the scarce water sources.

Meanwhile, and as a consequence of the war between the United States and Mexico, the region had become part of the US map. In 1849, Young proposed the reintegration of the Mormon community within the United States, creating a separate state which he called Deseret, a proposal that was rejected by Congress. However, the Mormons were settling ever more solidly in the territory, strengthened by their relationship with the Native Americans. The federal government, meanwhile, favoured non-Mormon colonisation in the hope of decreasing the future political power of their religious leaders.

Given Washington's rejection, Young made a proclamation in defence of polygamy and organised the territory politically as an overt theocracy. Despite he had never theorised about segregationism before, the Mormons practised and defended it, preparing themselves to attain hegemony in a future Deseret integrated within the United States. This issue of polygamy made the relationship with the United States difficult for years, but it also reinforced the settlers' identity and distinctiveness, and, above all, enabled them to win the "demographic war"

with Young, who had at first opposed "plural marriage", setting an example with his 56 children.

Inevitably, tensions rose with the arrival of new settlers, and in 1857 what is known as the Utah War broke out - a series of massacres of new settlers, which led to a Mormon political entrenchment by the end of the year. Only in 1896, after Young's death and the renunciation of polygamy, would Mormons finally achieve statal recognition within the United States, under the name of Utah - a landlocked territory with an extension of almost a fourth part of Deseret as originally conceived.

It had taken two generations and hundreds of lives, but Mormons had gained a territorial and political space for their community in the very heart of the United States.

However, the late recognition of Utah and the "closure" of the United States map also ended the frontier myth. With the Mormon question, the Supreme Court laid the basis for the admissible limits within community standards, that is, the limits to the capacity of community segregation and differentiation - limits which would become even clearer in time, and which would finally legitimate, among other things, Amish pacifism, Christian anarchism, and Quakerism, the historical origins of the non-violence movement.

In Europe at that time, only the vast and badly communicated Tsarist Russia might have produced a segregationist communitarian ideal. Peasant sects - some of them with medieval origins - mushroomed under the Romanov rule. However, as told in the contemporary historiography, persecutions and pogroms against religious minorities were very frequent, and part of the Russian social metabolism of the time. In the end, despite the vastness of the Russian Empire, the only possibility for a free and stable life it offered was flight. A well-known and sad case is that of the Doukhobors, mentioned by Kropotkin in his memoirs, and saved by Tolstoi and by Quaker Societies of Friends who, sympathising with their radical pacifism, financed their exodus to Saskatchewan, Canada.

But while the destination – Canada – is significant, even more so are the debates and factions into which the community split on arrival: between those who intended to reconstruct identitarian peasant communities within the British-Canadian state, and those who advocated urban integration and dispersion. Contemporary Doukhobors, some 30,000, are the descendants of the original settlers, and have a history of conflicts and violence with the Canadian Mounted Police.

At the end of the 19th century, integration as a differentiated body, as a community with its own standards, was something almost impossible even in the young English-speaking Liberal American societies. Moreover, religious communitarianism already displayed, in the limitations of the Mormon project, clear difficulties to articulate a political project for the real community of the faithful, apart from the increasingly absorbing, centripetal forces of the nation.

The exodus which took place at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century were nationalist, not segregationist exodus. The question would no longer be finding a place for a real community whose members consciously interacted, but mobilising an imagined community (Afro-Americans, Jews, etc.) in search of a nationality and statality, something that in the nationalist map of the world increasingly involved, as the century advanced, taking part in colonialist expansion.

It can hardly be argued that the Afro-American colonialism that involved tens of thousands of people in the American Colonization Society (ACS) and led to the creation of Liberia, or Zangwill's or Herzl's Zionism were alternatives to nationalism rather than alternative nationalism, really the fruit of the contrast between the nationalist discourse and its inevitably excluding reality.

There was a flagrant contradiction between the offer of assimilation without limits for everyone who showed their willingness and ability to integrate within the State-nation and the rejection of certain groups in practice. This was especially dramatic for those who had supposed until

then, with plausible arguments, that there were no limits to what assimilation could achieve: Westernised and educated middle-class Jews. This was the reason why the Dreyfus case in France, which was nothing but the sacrifice of a French officer for being a Jew, produced such an intense reaction of horror, not only among the Jews but also among the Liberals and led directly to appearance of [Hertzelian] Zionism, Jewish nationalism based on a territorial State.³⁰

But let us not fool ourselves: the ACS only mobilised 30,000 people out of 9 million Afro-Americans. More people took part in the demonstrations against the colonisation of Liberia than in any colonisation wave itself.

For its own part, Zionism wasn't widely accepted among Jews across the world before the genocide. Even in Eastern Europe, the origin of most of the first settlers and rulers of the State of Israel, the Bund – the largest Jewish European political organisation until World War II – distilled a rabid anti-Zionism. The imagined Jewish nation was caught, until the triumph of Hitler's and Stalin's anti-Semite regimes, between two great identitarian options which equally excluded it: the instituted national identity that most of the Jewish middle class didn't want to give up, and the emerging Socialist universalism which, from Lasalle to Rosa Luxemburg, displayed a faultlessly assimilationist practice.

The Jewish opposition to Zionism was a tragic opposition which resulted in the destruction of the Jews. For anti-Zionists, the idea of exile from the countries in which they made their homes and in which their ancestors had lived for centuries was surrendering to external pressure and a defeat in the face of anti-Semitism. For them, Zionism was a triumph of anti-Semitism, which acknowledged the legitimacy and

³⁰ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire*.

validity of the ancient cry: "Out with the Jews!" as the Zionists agreed to leave.³¹

In this environment, and among these dilemmas created by the contradictory rise of Zionism, there appeared, however, a movement that was clearly atypical in its time, and that in some ways anticipated certain characteristics of the first trans-national identities that can be seen nowadays: Esperantism.

Zamenhof: From Zionism to Esperanto

In 1882, when he was only 23, a young Polish Jew, Ludwik Zamenhof, took up some of Noah's ideas³² in order to make his own analysis of the "Jewish question". The *affaire Dreyfus* had taken place two years before. Anti-Semitism was seen as a relic from the past which the winds of progress would simply blow away.

Jewish secularisation (with its shadow of *assimilationism*) was apparently unstoppable. Most of the Central European Jews regarded themselves as part of the new and vigorous national map of the continent. In 1894, Prussia became unified Germany, while Zionism remained a mere Romantic movement.

In this context, young Zamenhof talked about the disunion within a community that was starting to have definition problems, for it was no longer a religious community but still wasn't a cultural community. Imagining the Jewish people at that transitional moment was still difficult.

In 1881 Eliezer Ben-Yehuda moved to Palestine and started the process of creation of Modern Hebrew (which he taught to his first son). Zamenhof didn't

³¹ Isaac Deutscher, conference given before the London School of Economics Student's Union on 29th October 1964.

³² *Mi estas homo -- Originalaj verkoj de L.L. Zamenhof*. Sezonoj, Kaliningrad, 2006.

advocate recycling the old sacred language. Peoples, he claimed, need not speak the language of their ancestors, but must have their own geographical space. And Palestine was not exactly the best possible option. In fact, the best solution, in his opinion, was to immigrate to the United States, create a Jewish community, and set up in the form of a State, like Utah.

Pioneers were needed, he argued, not in the East, but in America – an idea that he would give up later that year. If the main aim is a space in which to build a nation upon territoriality, having a variety of migratory proposals would be damaging.

But the year that truly shaped contemporary Judaism was 1894, when the Dreyfus case started in France. Jewishness started to be defined in terms that were no longer religious, but negative: a Jew was anyone who was persecuted – or liable to be persecuted – for being a Jew. The scandal was covered by a young Austrian journalist, Theodor Herzl. Moved by the darkness and power of Anti-Semitism in the cultured and progressive Paris of his time, he concluded that total integration was impossible. His dream of progress collapsed. In 1896, he published his response to the affair: *The Jewish State*, the birth certificate of contemporary territorialist, nationalist Zionism.

The Bund ("Union"), the first Jewish workers' party, received much more support in 1887. Founded in Vilna, following the Social-Democrat model – which was increasingly nationalistic – it spread throughout workers' nuclei throughout Russia, Lithuania, and Poland.

After 1883, the Bund adopted the theory of *cultural autonomy*, a project of administrative autonomy which basically had its centre in Galicia and was based on Yiddish as the defining language of the Jewish national identity.

The Bund actually became a mass party, the majority party among Central European Jews until World War II. Its clash with Rosa Luxemburg (who was herself Jewish, the founder of the Polish and Lithuanian Social-Democratic Parties, and later the leader of the left wing of German Social Democracy) and Trotsky embodied the clash between a rising nationalism which reacted identitarily to discrimination but

was necessarily integrationist, and the last assimilationist option, which firmly believe in the surpassing of national and religious identities: Marxist Communism, heir to the hopes for progress of the bourgeois revolution.

In 1901, in a political context where the Bund was the majority party, Zamenhof publicly gave up the "return to Palestine", at the same time as he questioned the very existence of the Jewish people. What does exist, he argued, is coreligionists. Being Catholic does not make the Italian and the French one and the same people. The religious substrate is not enough to build a national identity.

As an alternative, Zamenhof proposed a religious reformation. The idea was for a small initial group to adopt the reforms and show the superiority of the new ideas to the others. He believed that doubtlessly more and more Jews would gradually join the reformation, and in the end all Jews would profess the new version of their religion, which would finally solve the "Jewish question".

That is, Zamenhof attempted to create a synthesis of the main identitarian trends within Central European Judaism: integrationist and nationalist Social Democratic Bundism; lay Hertzelianism, which advocated settling in the Holy Land; and the religious Zionism of Agudat Israel, which proposed basing Jewish identity on the Biblical legislative body.

Zamenhof's reform, Hillelism, followed the tradition of Robespierre's worship of Reason, or the "religion of mankind" of Saint-Simon's followers and Comte. Giving up revealed truth, he proposed to use the sacred texts only as a source of inspiration, equated the voice of God with the voice of conscience - an idea inherited from the Hasidic tradition to which his family belonged - and took as the centre of morality the Talmudic dictum "do not do unto others as you would not have them do unto you".

Zamenhof thought that, in its early stages, this movement would serve to solve the problems of the Jewish people. But, in the long run, as this new people would be built on neutral bases, a human and neutral religion, a neutral language, etc., it would gradually become open to people of all origins. But let us not make a mistake here - the idea of a people who chooses, detaches itself, and sets itself as

an example in order to finally reconcile all mankind within its bosom, lies at the very bottom of Old-Testament Jewish identity. Zamenhof just gave it a Modern rationalist form.

In fact, Hillelism was still a form of Zionism. It rejected Hertzelian Zionism, which, according to Zamenhof, made Jews believe that they would only be happy in Palestine. He claimed that Hillelists would always love Palestine, but denied that the solution to the Jewish problem need involve it. In its place - and this clearly brings to mind both Ararat and Israel Zangwill³³ - a later Hillelist congress sought a place for settlement where their own national culture could be developed.

But every national culture requires a national language. Once more, in overt opposition to Hertzeli-inspired Zionism, Zamenhof said that "when a Jew says that his language is Hebrew, he is lying, because he can't speak it".

Thus, in addition to reforming religion and finding a land in which to settle, Zamenhof gave Hillelism the aim of creating a language proper to Jews, which would not be based on a simplification of Hebrew, but on the set of languages which they already actually spoke - a neutral language which, by the way, would be given the same name as Israel's national anthem: hope, haTikvah, Esperanto.

The speedy success of Esperanto soon obscured the original plan. In 1901, Zamenhof declared:

lel same kiel la hilelismo ne povos ekzisti sen lingvo neŭtrala, tiel same
la ideo de lingvo neŭtrala neniam provos vere efektiviĝi sen
hilelismo!

³³ Israel Zangwill founded in 1905 the Jewish Territorial Organisation. For years, and until it merged with Hertzelianism, the JTO sought to purchase land in order to create a small Jewish state in places as remote from mythic Judea as Canada, Australia, Iraq, Uganda, and Lybia. What was important was segregation, obtaining a space in which to live voluntarily as a community that freely followed agreed premises, in accordance with a "chosen" identity which could be abandoned at any point. This was the notion of the frontier as guaranteeing difference, as opposed to the homogenising voracity of OldWorld states. After the United States ran out of "virgin" territory and the age of exploration was over, the question remained in the air.

[...] Lingvo internacia fortikiĝos por ĉiam nur en tia okazo, se ekzistos ia grupo da homoj, kiu akceptus ĝin kiel sian lingvon familian, heredan.

[...]

Jes, mi estas profunde konvinkita, ke nek solvo de la hebrea demando, nek enradikiĝo de lingvo neŭtrala estos iam ebla sen hilelismo, t.e. sen kreo de neŭtrala popolo.

A neutral language for a people which, lacking a State and a territory, was necessarily neutral within the European "concert of nations".

But the fact was that Esperanto spread as Europe headed towards war, turning into a symbol of the pacifism and Europeanism of those who wanted keep alive the Liberal idea of the "spirit of progress" which had arisen in previous decades.

Esperanto, originally the tool of an unsuccessful Zionist project, started to attract more Gentiles than Jews. Zamenhof somehow came up against the dilemma of universalist Judaism, materialised in the paths taken respectively by Theon of Alexandria and Paul of Tharsus, and followed the latter.

And as the Esperantist movement, beyond its founder, defined Esperanto as a universalist, neutral, and auxiliary language (as stated in the declaration of the 1905 First World Esperantist Congress), so Zamenhof redefined Hillelism on the basis of those same three axes. Significantly, from then on he mostly referred to his movement as *Homarism* (humanism).

The Zionist element gradually became diluted, even though Zamenhof still believed that the Homarist nucleus would be fundamentally Israelite. And he doubted whether to put forward his proposals in the Esperantist congress or to a specifically Jewish audience.

If the aim of Homarism, he argued, was to unite all mankind in a fraternal family, a neutrally-human (*neŭtrale-homa*) people would have to be created, whose members would only be distinguished by their geographic location and political opinion, not by their language or religion.

The first community of this small people was located in Switzerland. But their identity was starting to be redefined as an *auxiliary* identity, as a nexus identity between national identities, in the same way as Esperanto was becoming (and at that time, and until the thirties, its final success seemed inevitable) in the first serious candidate to become the universal auxiliary language.

Thus Hillelism was posited as the second universal religion. Suddenly Zamenhof appeared to be closer to Sterner and his anthroposophy, even to the Theosophic Society, than to Herzl. At home, Hillelists could profess whatever religion they wished, speak whatever language they wished, but in public, in the same way as they would speak a neutral language, they would profess the neutral religion: Hillelism.

In 1913, Zamenhof started working towards a World Congress of the Neutral Human Religion. He wrote:

The aim of my project for a congress on the neutral religion is not to create a mystical cult, but only an official community to which all those who do not wish to take part in any religion traditionally associated with a specific human group (*gento*) may ascribe. I would wish for religious freethinking to be given a form that would make it something non-ephemeral, strong, and hereditary. In the same way as the Catholic knows that his grandchildren will be Catholic, or a Jew knows that his grandchildren (if they do not wish to sell their consciences) will be Jewish – in this way, I would also wish for the freethinker to have this guarantee that his grandchildren will be freethinkers and that nothing will force them to hypocritically return to a religion of a revelatory nature, associated with a specific people (*gento*).³⁴

The outbreak of war prevented this congress, and Zamenhof's death in 1917 definitely removed the segregationist dimension from the Hillelist plan. In his last

³⁴ Zamenhof, *op. cit.*

years, Zamenhof defined himself as an *Esperantist*, as Esperantism was in some way already a humanist, pacifist, and neutralist ideology.

Paradoxically, it would be the stagnation of Esperanto and its years of persecution by the German state and its allies that in some way turned Esperantists into a *gento*, an imagined community of speakers. This despite having a first generation of native speakers (the *denaskaj*), many of whom would even change their surnames for names in the new language. The well-known speculator and philanthropist George Soros, for instance, one of the first *denaskaj*, owes his surname to the verb in disuse *sori*.³⁵

Nowadays, the Esperantist community is studied as a trans-territorialised cultural minority, in many aspects similar in nature to an ethnic group without a *national* territory.³⁶ But there are certain radically novel aspects to it. Firstly, it is a tremendously active community. Many years before the internet, the continual correspondence between its members, the permanent dynamics of its congresses, camps, and seminars, were capable of penetrating even the Iron Curtain separating both political blocs.

The result is that the Esperantist world is not part of an imagined community in the way that national linguistic communities are. It is, for its most part, a real community: its members know each other, or at least know of the existence of others. And the huge majority of its members are so of their own free will, not because of their family roots. It is, like contemporary virtual networks, a community that precipitates from imagination into reality.

In this sense, Zamenhof's dream has turned out to be premonitory, fruitful, and paradoxical. It was born not out of a naive cosmopolitan impulse, as is often thought, but from the fertile debate on Zionism that took place in Central Europe at the turn of the century. It gave up the dream of creating a territorial community in order to become a tool for universal fraternity, and ended up forming the first trans-

³⁵ In Esperanto, *sori* means "to soar", and -os forms the future of verbs.

³⁶ Cf. Mark Fettes, "The Esperanto community: a quasi-ethnic linguistic minority?", Interlinguistics section, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Published in *Intelinguistics: News, Notes, and Comments*. Available at <http://www.eric.ed.gov>.

national community of free aggregation. A late child of the progressive and ecumenical optimism of the last quarter of the 19th century, Esperantism anticipated the new forms of network socialisation which would follow the telegraph world which Zamenhof knew all his life.

Esperanto, the bearer of a universal humanist ideal, showed in practice, probably definitively, that the alternative to surpassing nationalities does not lie in universalist cosmopolitanism, for the only way of being human is to have a tribe, but in making the community real and tangible, and thus truly human.

Esperanto is the prodigal child of Zionism, but also the prophet of its future - the representation that the territorial dream could be surpassed by the dream of a network world.

Segregationism in the 20th Century

In the United States in the '50s, a certain rebellious magma had been forming around Ayn Rand's figure and theses, a magma which included heirs to the Austrian

school of economics such as Murray Rothbard, and the father of self-help books, Nathaniel Branden. 1968, the Vietnam War, and the disasters of the Nixon administration would electrify this environment, giving rise to the libertarian movement.

Libertarians were socially closer to the New Left than to the old Randians. Rothbard himself defended, before Rand, the need for an alliance with the leftists in order to oppose the Vietnam War. Anti-prohibition in drugs matters, generally pro-abortion, and anti-war (even though they used a generic Randian discourse), even aesthetically they belonged to a very different world from that of the author of *The Fountainhead*. They were the other children of '68, and were soon repudiated by Rand, especially after the formation of the Libertarian Party in 1971:

All kinds of people today call themselves "libertarians", especially something calling itself the New Right, which consists of hippies, except that they're anarchists instead of collectivists.³⁷

In 1968 the generational rejection of Nixon spread through a world of fanzines and student digs full of marijuana smoke and Grateful Dead music. The libertarian-Rothbardian discourse presented the Vietnam War and the Nixon administration as a point of no return on the road towards a totalitarian statalism. As the majority of the Radical Libertarian Alliance tended towards the split from the Republican Party and the formation of a new party, a growing group simply opted for creating a libertarian State in a new territory. Actually, both options were not mutually contradictory at all, given the anti-nationalism of the Randian radical individualism.³⁸

³⁷ Ayn Rand, The Moratorium on Brains, 1971, available at http://www.aynrand.org/site/PageServer?pagename=reg_ar_moratorium

³⁸ Roy Halliday, Operation Atlantis and the Radical Libertarian Alliance: Observations of a Fly on the Wall, available at <http://royhalliday.home.mindspring.com/rla.htm>

The project was called "Atlantis", and was headed by Werner Stiefel. In 1969, the project was oriented towards the purchase of a coral island or sandbank which might serve as the basis for an artificial construction in international waters. That very same year, negotiations started over the lease of the Prickly Pear Keys, six miles to the Northwest of Anguilla, in the British Antilles, as did the prospecting to build an artificial concrete island. The original structure was even built beneath a geodesic dome on the grounds of Stiefel's own house, but there was a fire and it was damaged during its launch, due to which the dome was never installed. After several failures and reformulations, including different locations, always promoted by the indefatigable but by now elderly Stiefel, the project became part of the underground folklore. There are plenty of references to that environment and its paranoid delusions in the famous satiric *Illuminatus!* trilogy by Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson, an essential reference for the eighties hacker movement and early cyberpunk. Hagbard Celine's famous golden submarine was a parody of the way in which segregationist libertarianism saw itself. In this trilogy such topics of the libertarian underground as the constant play on the number 23 appeared for the first time. Discreet though constant references are made in films such as *23*³⁹, an excellent reflection of the European hacker world at the end of the eighties, or post-cyberpunk novels such as *Sewer, Gas & Electric*⁴⁰, where Ayn Rand herself appears ironically as a holographic AI inside a crystal ball that conceals a powerful explosive.

In 1970, Michael Oliver, a well-known libertarian activist who had become a millionaire from Las Vegas real estate deals and had come into contact with the Atlantis Project, discovered the possibility of making the Minerva atoll, in the Pacific Ocean, emerge by filling with sand the central lagoon of the main, semi-submerged island. He personally paid for a number of barges which in 1971 carried the materials from Australia, and was able to create a 200 m² surface on which a small tall was built and a flag raised.

On 19th January 1972, Minerva declared its birth as a State, and let its neighbouring states know. In February, Morris. C. Davis was elected provisional

³⁹ Hans-Christian Schmid, 1998.

⁴⁰ Matt Ruff, *Sewer, Gas & Electric*.

president of the republic. But on 24th February, neighbouring Tonga claimed sovereignty over the new territory before the South Pacific Forum Conference, formed by Tonga itself, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Nauru, West Samoa, and the Cook Islands. In June that same year, a Tongan expedition was sent to Minerva that expelled Morris and his companions and took possession of the atoll. In September 1972, the South Pacific Forum recognised Tonga's claims.

Independently from Oliver, Morriss attempted a fruitless reconquest of Minerva in 1982, together by other North American libertarians. The adventure only lasted a few weeks, until they were expelled by Tongan coastguards. Sovereignty over the Minerva atoll is currently under litigation between Tonga, Fiji, and a private group originally linked to Morris with the International Seabed Authority.

After the invasion, Michael Oliver, the true creator of Minerva, defended for the rest of his life the possibility and need for the creation of libertarian States in artificial islands. However, through the Phoenix Foundation, he opted in practice to support independent movements in Abaco (Bahamas) in 1973 and Holy Spirit island in Vanuatu in 1980, with the aim of turning them into tax havens. Both attempts failed.

In the nineties, Oliver, now retired in Vanuatu with his wife and daughter, held talks with the new Atlantis Project. His personal quarrel with Eric Klien, leader of the Atlantis Project, indirectly led to the collapse of the last libertarian sea adventure. Klien had taken up the Atlantis brand between February 1993 and April 1994 to build a floating city in international waters, Oceania, which would be managed and ruled following libertarian principles. The engineering project was developed by Swedish architect Sten Sjostrand, and, after its appearance, was given a certain coverage in the U.S. media (*The Art Bell Show*, *Details magazine*, *The Miami Herald*, and *Boating Magazine*), and also made the news in Canada, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Britain, and Belgium.

The project was cancelled due to the lack of investors in April 1994. Apparently, Klien had hoped that Michael Oliver would finance most of the project,

but the quarrel between them brought to an end the only viable form of obtaining the huge investment required for the project to go on. Years later, Klien wrote:

In retrospect, the biggest problem concerning the Atlantis Project was lack of interest. Lack of interest and the fact that its precepts were based in Libertarian politics. The Libertarian party is small in number and too few members have the financial resources to bankroll their beliefs. The poor performance of Libertarian candidates throughout the nation is reflective of these sad facts.⁴¹

Actually, the Randians have always been caught between the radical individualism of their own ideology and the scope of the segregationist dreams, which obviously required a collective enterprise. This tension doomed their segregationist attempts to depend on the leadership and financing of a providential millionaire *à la* John Galt in *Atlas Shrugged*. And there aren't many of those.

In fact, the most enduring segregationist experiences would come from a political space which was very different from Randism, though contemporary with it.

At the beginning of the sixties, Roy Bates was a retired major in the British Navy who made a living by harvesting ornamental algae with a small trawler. Bates had joined the free radio (or pirate radio, depending on who was telling the tale) movement, and in 1965 expelled the Radio City collective from the Knock John Tower, an abandoned anti-aircraft fort on the Thames Estuary. After that, he broadcast as Radio Essex until 1966. The radio station changed its name in October 1996 to BBMS (Britain's Better Music Station), and stopped broadcasting on Christmas Day that same year.

After being found guilty of broadcasting without a licence, Bates moved to Roughs Tower, another fort, which had been abandoned by the army since

⁴¹ Cf. <http://oceania.org/end2.html>

1956, built on Rough Sands, 10 km away from the Suffolk coast. At that time, the international waters limit was 2 miles, due to which the abandoned platform did not fall within British sovereignty. Roughts Tower, however, had by then been already claimed by Jack Moore and his daughter on behalf of Ronan O'Rahilly, the leader of the Radio Caroline collective. When they found out that Bates had set up in Roughts Tower, O'Rahilly sent a small commando to retrieve the platform, but their raft was driven off with petrol bombs and (according to O'Rahilly's supporters) gunfire.

This took place on 2nd September 1967, the mythical date of birth of Sealand, and which Bates would always cite as the origin of his sovereignty claim over the tiny territory. However, this was not the only violent incident in the history of the principality. In 1968, criminal charges were filed against Bates's son, Michael, for shooting at a British Navy ship sailing around Sealand. According to the Bates, the ship was trying to expel the Bates from the platform, whereas according to the official version it was carrying out repair work on a nearby buoy. On 25th November 1968, the Chelmsford court, which was in charge of the process, declared that it had no jurisdiction over the case, as the facts had taken place outside British territorial waters. Therefore, for the English judicial system, Sealand was not under British sovereignty. Declassified British government documents show that plans were made to retake the tower by force, but they were not approved due to the casualties that the Bates' hostile attitude, displayed twice already, might entail.

In August 1978, when Paddy Bates was not on the platform, the Prime Minister of Sealand, Alexander G. Achenbach, together with a number of Dutch mercenaries, took the platform by force, kidnapping Michael Bates, who was freed days later in the Netherlands. Bates hired a commando and, using an assault helicopter, recaptured the fort. He locked up the usurpers and declared them prisoners of war. The Dutch mercenaries were repatriated after the reconquest. Only one of the plotters remained captive, Gernot Pütz, a

naturalised Sealand citizen, who was accused of treason. The German and Dutch governments requested Britain's help to free him. The British, however, invoked the 1968 ruling. Then Germany sent a diplomat from their London embassy to negotiate with Roy Bates. After weeks of negotiation, an agreement was finally reached, and Pütz was freed. Politically, the negotiations and the German diplomat's trip were in themselves the first international recognition of Sealand.

After the mini-war, Achenbach established a "government in exile" in Germany, holding the position of "Chairman of the Privy Council", a title similar to that of Prime Minister in the British tradition. After his resignation for health reasons in August 1989, the rebel government's "Minister for Economic Cooperation", Johannes Seiger, whom the Bates regarded as the mastermind behind the 1978 coup, took over the reins of the Seiger government. He then created the Sealand Business Foundation, which in 1997 started to sell Sealand passports to Hong Kong inhabitants who did not have the British nationality and therefore had no opportunity to leave the colony after its imminent reintegration into China (1999). Apparently, the price per unit was about 1,000 dollars, and approximately 150,000 were sold.

After the civil war, the Sealand project seemed exhausted, and definitely non-viable in economic terms. The passport affair, which was confusedly denounced in the *Times*, put an end to the possibility of *de iure* international recognition, and therefore, to the prospect of living off the sale of sovereignty by means of convenience flags or passports which made it possible to enter a country.

Roy Bates, now elderly and frail, then announced the sale of the principality, open to new business models.

The answer came from the United States. A group of U.S. entrepreneurs and cypherpunks contacted the Bates and made an original offer: the establishment on the platform of a data haven. On the 22nd August, Michael Bates bought an inactive British company which was renamed

HavenCo Limited. The management board was constituted by Michael Roy Bates and Ryan Donald Lackey, 23 years old and a citizen of the United States. Among the founders were Sean and Jo Hastings and Avi Freedman. Afterwards, the company moved its business address to Cyprus.

HavenCo's activities were widely reported by the media, from the cover of *Wired* to more than 200 press articles and plenty of TV coverage. HavenCo claimed to have set up a farm of secure servers in Sealand, which would start to offer its services as a data haven in December 2000. Its main attraction was not only privacy, but also, as Sealand had not signed any international treaties on intellectual property, HavenCo would not impose upon their clients any restrictions based on copyright ownership or authorial rights over the information kept or published in their servers.

After the 9-11 attacks, Lackey announced that the company would block any initiatives that went against international trade practice, even though no disputes had arisen between HavenCo and governments or courts in other countries as a consequence of the information kept in their servers. Ryan Lackey left HavenCo in 2001 due to disagreements with the Bates family.

HavenCo named and partly inspired the data haven in *Cryptonomicon*, Neal Stephenson's famous novel. Some details, such as one of the founders' being called Avi, the data haven's being located on an island, and the passion for cryptography, seem to confirm the legend according to which Stephenson had known about HavenCo's history before it became public, due to his friendship with some of the Bates' cypherpunk partners.

On 23rd June 2006, while most of the stable population of Sealand was on the continent, the main electricity generator exploded and caused a fire that destroyed a third part of the facilities and rendered almost all services useless. The HavenCo servers, however, blacked out for only two minutes and suffered no significant damage thanks to their isolation. The platform was evacuated with the help of the coastguard service, the port authority, and the

British air force. Residents returned on 25th. Damages were estimated at half a million pounds sterling.

In January 2007, Digg.com published a post in a British forum which, in turn, picked up the news which appeared on a Spanish site concerning the transfer of Rough Towers to whomever wished to become the new occupant of Sealand, following payment of a nine-zero figure.

The news burst immediately into online fora, blogs, and press all over the world. The P2P community, through the mostly Swedish Pirate Bay bittorrents, even considered bidding for the platform, which caused a great furore. Until then, no serious offer had been confirmed, but according to the Bates the negotiations held with the Swedish community involved a price of about 65 million pound sterling – at first sight, a steep price for a place with little income.

It might be said the HavenCo, the great wager for the viability of the platform as a mini-state, died at the hands of P2P, which, by generating a distributed and hardly traceable structure for information storage, makes any data haven much less attractive. And even though since 2007 Sealand has tried to take advantage of its fame by organising tourist visits, the rest of traditional income sources for Sealand, besides the failed sale of passports and naturalisation certificates, are rather marginal. Sealand nowadays makes a living from the sale of nobility titles at affordable prices on eBay and by issuing stamps, stamp collections, and *souvenirs* in a style similar to that of popular royal wedding mementoes. In fact, the Bates keep their head above water thanks to their position as shipowners with Fruit of the Sea, a company which owns two algae-harvesting trawlers in the North Sea for their sale as an ornamental element in aquariums and flower ships.

The fact is that Sealand requires too much effort for such an uncomfortable life. The scarce space on the platform makes it necessary to lead a life similar to that on board a ship – as when Roy Bates was a sailor – at high sea. Only 3 showers a week are allowed (lasting a maximum of 5

minutes), the connection with the outer world takes place practically only through the internet, and the thing that most resembles going for a walk is doing press-ups in the room which has been turned into a gym.

Sealand is quite a symbol for the conclusions that might be drawn from 20th-century territorialist segregationism: after so many adventures and efforts, after so much violence, hardly a few isolated industrial ruins remain, incapable of generating networks which might support them, and whose only worth lies in the attractive they might still hold for certain more or less freakish virtual communities. In fact, it has been of no interest even for the Mafia networks or para-states that have blossomed since 1989 until today, as there is a wide smorgasbord of failed states and frontier territories with no *de facto* state control.

What remains of the impulse behind all these experiences are not the libertarian paradises dreamt up by the Randians, or ever the family company in the shape of a State sought by Roy Bates, but the irony of the so-called artistic micro-nations, parodies of the national State which would end up trying on trans-national forms, a bridge between the old segregationism and the first experiences of networks and virtual communities which were cohering almost at the same time.

In 1868, Bruce Greenville, a New Zealand anarchist artist, created his own country. Even though the creation of a country usually brings to mind epical struggles over territories, Greenville's feat didn't take any such battle and was somewhat "calmer".⁴²

Overnight, an East Timor province not only became independent, but came to have its own history, rather different from the official one. The province of Occusi Ambeno became the Sultanate of Okusi-Ambeno, ruled by His Majesty Sekrup Semesta Alam Sri Sultan Gare, who was no other than

⁴² The following paragraphs were published, in their original version, by Arnau Fuentes in his blog on 22nd December 2007, and appeared in practically the same form in the Spanish Wikipedia entry on Occussi-Ambeno on 23rd March 2008. The original article appears as a source in said publication.

Greenville himself - a Sultanate with its own airlines, exclusively constituted by ecological zeppelins, and whose economy was based on the exportation of poetry, stamps, and hallucinogenic toadstools.

Sultan Greenville sent Okusi-Ambeno stamp catalogues to European and American stamp magazines, and "Okusiambesian" stamp sales provided some funding, but the real bombshell that brought the new Sultanate into the global spotlight took place in 1973.

One year before, Bruce Greenville had got a job that gave him access to photocopy and teletype machines, and thus he started to send Western news and press agencies dossiers on the Sultanate and statements by its leaders, creating what he himself would term a "terrible and very funny confusion".

When in January 1972 Michael Oliver declared the independence of the Republic of Minerva, press agency teletypes started to receive communiqués from the Sultanate of Okusi-Ambeno in which the new republic was formally recognised, and a New Zealand newspaper, the *New Zealand Herald*, published the news as a top story under the headline "World leader recognises reef".

But the "international" actions of the philatelic Sultanate didn't stop there. Their peak took place in 1977, when the Okusi-Ambeno Consulate in New Zealand, that is, Bruce Greenville's home address, received a proposal from an investment group which urged the "consul" (unaware that they were contacting Sekrup Semesta Alam Sri Sultan Gare Greenville himself) to convince the "sultan" to grant the monopoly for international distribution of Okusiambenian stamp production to that group.

Greenville and the "royal family" were delighted to take the bribe and, thanks to the new funds, produced better-quality stamps which they then sold directly to collectors all over the world.

But Greenville's irreverence and daring managed to fool not only investment groups and a newspaper, as thanks to the teletypes and

Greenville's work, Okusi-Ambeno officially signed bilateral treaties with the very Vatican State in Rome, Brunei and Taiwan, and a mutual defence treaty with Singapore.

Even though Okusi-Ambeno is one of the most famous philatelic republics, it's not the only one. Other imaginary nations have followed on its steps, such as the Kingdom of Sedang, the Khanate of Bukhara, the Sultanate of Upper Yafa, the Free Republic of Vinland (an ex-colony of Okusi-Ambeno in the North Atlantic), the Democratic Popular Republic of Kemp Land, the Republic of Liegerland (created after the invasion of the Okusi-Ambeno colonies in the North Atlantic by Tyr, and thus a sister republic of Vinland), Tui-Tui, or the Republic of Port-Maria, some of which made an official statement condemning the terrorist attack on the New York Twin Towers.

What is common to all these republics, besides the fact that they make a living from the export of commemorative stamps and sign anti-weapons and anti-nuclear treaties, is such funny histories as that of the Khanate of Bukhara, which after its "independence" in 1798, created a "super-fast" post service exclusively constituted by camels which deliver the post both in the country and abroad. It just happens that the Great Khan of Bukhara, crowned in 1998, spends a lot of time in New Zealand.

Most of the imaginary republics constitute the International Council of Independent States, a sort of United Nations or ASEAN of so-called "fifth world" countries, founded in 1984 and which - unsurprisingly - manages the philatelic resources of its members.

The history of Okusi-Ambeno is something more than a philatelic game and a virtual happening. It represents the origin of artistic micro-nations: imaginary states created as a result of an artistic formalisation process. Following - without saying so - the example of Okusi-Ambeno, many artists or academic groups of artists have built fictional nations in order to materialise and be ironical with regard to the artificial nature of consolidated States and nations.

Like its forerunner, the criticism implicit in experiments such as Ladonia or the FTR⁴³ has become widespread, even though they have not generated the amusing confusion which Greenville's actions gave rise to, to a large extent because they were open about their artistic nature and used a discourse proper to those who take part in the established avant-garde art happening, installation, and event circuit.

But the fact is that art, that central part of the deified National Culture, was treating the nation as a genre, laying the ground for the practical mass questioning which the social experience of the internet would bring about and turn into an everyday thing.

When, at the beginning of the 2008, "the country called a"⁴⁴ appeared in Spanish media, a few days after its founding, with the spontaneity of any established social organisation, few people in the blogosphere remembered the amazing Freedonia affair (1997-2002), the first virtual community which almost obtained territoriality.

This was the time when the United States and Europe were joining the internet in mass, the time when the World Wide Web (WWW) and html were expanding. This was the time of the second great wave of new web surfers, the glory days of the dotcom bubble. internet seemed to be a new territory where everything was, or would be, possible. In the trusting post-Berlin Wall of the Clinton era, visionaries were triumphant, and a good headline for a dreamy article was enough to give rise to a state of mind.

At the end of the affair, *Metroactive* ran the headline "Wanted: Homeland for 300 Webheads".⁴⁵ The subtitle went on:

In cyberspace, anyone can stake a claim to nationhood and rule with a scepter and a mouse.

⁴³ See <http://www.ladonia.net> and <http://transnationalrepublic.org>.

⁴⁴ <http://elpaisllamadoa.org>

⁴⁵ <http://www.metroactive.com/papers/cruz/11.22.00/netnations0047.html>

Nowadays, when just in *NationStates*⁴⁶, the website run by the post-cyberpunk Australian writer Max Barry to promote his latest novel, there are almost two million imaginary States and their respective players, we cannot but smile. But back in 2000, it all sounded quite different and it seemed that young John Kyle's imaginary country would materialise at any time.

But let us move even farther back in time, to the beginning of the nineties. In March 1992, John Kyle was a thirteen-year-old student who had just enrolled in high school at his home town of Houston (Texas, U.S.) He was, in his own words,

"intrigued" by the possibility of declaring his parents' home independent of the U.S.⁴⁷

That is, he was highly influenced by the Texan confederation tradition and its foundational myths at a time when, as Manuel Castells tells⁴⁸, quite a few counties in his state had joined a movement for the active non-recognition of the federal government. Kyle and his friends then created Freedonia, unaware that it had the same name as the fictional country in the Marx Brothers' film *Duck Soup*, as part of a game whose aim was to declare the independence of their parents' homes. They tried to organise themselves as a community as if they were playing a role game. They first tried "a sort of oligarchy", then (1996) a presidentialist republic and finally (1997) a parliamentary monarchy (whose parliament never actually functioned), and in 1998 they changed its name into the Principality of Freedonia.

In 1997, the game moved to the internet,⁴⁹ at the same time as Kyle graduate and enrolled in Babson College. New active citizens from all over the world joined in, and the Freedonia virtual community reached almost 300 members. Kyle's

⁴⁶ <http://www.nationstates.net>

⁴⁷ <http://www.metroactive.com/papers/cruz/11.22.00/netnations0047.html>

⁴⁸ Manuel Castells, *La era de la información*, Alianza Editorial, 2003.

⁴⁹ <http://www.freedonia.org>

ideological position moved towards the Libertarian Party line, and his discovery of the by then abandoned Atlantis Project turned his project around. From then on, the virtual community was seen as an outline for the political structures of a future territorial State.

At first, the search for territoriality focused on the recovery of the Atlantis Project. Freedomia contacted the same manufacturer of floating structures on which the latter project had been based. The costs and recognition problems derived from the then novel international legislation on floating island would lead them to leave this path.

The project would soon be oriented towards obtaining the concession of sovereignty when they discovered the history of Pitcairn island, a small 47km² colony in the Pacific which Britain in the eighties had considered handing over to France due to its maintenance costs, or even selling to an American millionaire. Conversations with Britain would soon prove difficult and fruitless, and Freedomians reoriented themselves towards a new and exotic destination: Awdal region in Somaliland, an old colony in British Somalia.

Somaliland is a State that was *de facto* created from the decomposition of Somalia in May 1991, and has only been internationally recognised by Ethiopia. During the prevailing chaos in the Horn of Africa in the nineties, Awdal in turn proclaimed its own independence from Somaliland as an independent sultanate, encouraged by the promises of investment made by some American investors.

At the end of 1999, Kyle arrived in Awdal together with two adventurers from U.S. libertarian circles (Michael van Notten and Jim Davidson), who had founded a company, the Awdal Roads Company⁵⁰, in order to convince local clans of the feasibility of their development project for the new country.

At the end of 2000 and the start of 2001, van Notten and Davidson, who was married to the daughter to one of the most relevant members of the Samaron clan, the dominant clan in Awdal, had a series of on-site meetings with high representatives of the newly created independent sultanate. In the middle of the

⁵⁰ <http://www.awdaldevelopment.org>

mission a malicious fax arrived claiming that the true aim of their trip was to acquire a broad strip of the local coastline for Freedonia. The ensuing meetings with ministers and civil servants took place in a climate of mistrust and disappointment. The entrepreneurs received death threats and were expelled from the country. Soon after, a tumult broke out as the Vice-president's retinue passed. Many Awdalis had heard the story, and supported the Awdal Roads Company's alleged plans. The Vice-president's guard opened fire, and between two and four people died, according to local sources. In the following days, six more people were arrested in the protests.

Kyle, deeply shocked, published, in the midst of a downpour of pressures and troll flamewars, an exonerating letter that was endorsed by Davidson and Van Notten. Disappointed, and fearful of the consequences of the movement which he had inspired, he retired and let the virtual community that had supported him die. Nowadays, he only maintains the webpage as a historical relic. His last message to the community was sent on 4th July 2002.

The Freedonia story represents the transition and continuity between the Randian segregationism and the new world of trans-national communities. The segregationist temptation appeared repeatedly in virtual networks in the second half of the nineties. It was the easiest option. When network life occupies the identitarian space and explains more about who we are and who we speak to than the nation, the immediate temptation is to replicate the national model, seeking a territory and building a customised micro-state. Segregationism was always there, underlying, inviting us to occupy a distant island or build a floating city where the real community can be accommodated and new forms of social organisation can be tried. And the myth of Mormon success is still powerful.

But the 20th-century groups were no longer like 19th-century ones. Randian attempts are unlike those of the Mormons, a presential and real community. With their form of shareholders' society, Randian experiments resemble more the failed colonisation societies than John Smith's persecuted and cohesive religious parishes, where, despite their being more people, everyone knew each other, worked alongside each other, and personally trusted each other, generating, in so doing, an

economic basis and emotional ties which were strong enough to support the gigantic efforts and sacrifices which proved to be necessary.

Actually, when we think about it, Sealand, once the mythical layer of *Cryptonomicon* and *Wired* is stripped, is nothing but the adventure of a family of British squatters who kept some bad company.

Freedonia, the first internet-era community that sought its own territoriality, was, in its naivety, both a forerunner and a frontier. Its scarcely 300 members led a real and intense political life. They built a conversation that provided them with an explanation and a meaning. They shared their daily lives and built a common identity which bound them together more than their respective national contexts. Briefly put, they constituted a trans-national community. But they never had an economic basis, a map, a common space between the conversation flows and their own way of making a living.

It is true that a community can be based on collective conversation and the consequent political play. In an extended and interesting experiment⁵¹, Dutch ethologist Frans de Waal showed how a group of chimpanzees all whose members enjoyed unrestricted access to food not only preserved power structures, but experienced them more intensely than ever. Politics does not arise in politics as a result of scarcity: it is not only an organised struggle for the surplus, as Marx thought. It is there before and after abundance.

But maintaining a conversation and social game does not equal supporting a human community. Beyond conversation, nothing generated the need or the possibility of a headquarters territory in Freedonia. There was no persecution forcing them to do so, not a prior economic activity among its members which justified their settling in a specific place. Randians likewise lacked both. That's why Freedonians and Randians sought their destiny from the settler's logic. Believing that the territory would generate its own economic structure, an economy hardly sketched out from libertarian principles which would ground a community which would not longer be trans-national or virtual but territorial. This is a mistake. And

⁵¹ Frans de Wall, *Chimpanzee Politics*.

that is why segregationism fails. Without a shared economy, there is no human community which will endure in time. That's why unfaithfulness, transitoriness, and temporary alliances are, as Juan Urrutia points out⁵², common to all network conversational identities.

After Freedonia, trans-national conversational communities evolved dramatically, both in number and in form. Some of them, like Second Life, included as an extra attraction a small parallel economy - which artificially produced scarcity - and a certain political space. But, for the time being at least, they are merely a game and a representation, a pastime and a simulation of a world which can already be intuited but which must come from elsewhere.

New identities will only emerge when trans-national conversational spaces are superimposed onto economic spaces within a similar domain and they interact. On different scales, from the networks constituted by tens of thousands of Neonomadic individualists to the great corporate Venices, this is exactly what we are starting to see this decade, and what prefigures the forms of the great future post-national map.

PART III: THE INTERNET AND TRANS-NATIONAL LIVES

⁵² Juan Urrutia, *El capitalismo que viene*.

New Challenges, New Spaces for Freedom

By the end of the eighties, the relationship between economic freedom and political freedoms seemed unquestionable. Who could deny that, from the point of view of Eastern Europe, democracy, development, and capitalism went hand in hand?

The Tiananmen Massacre, far from contradicting the general framework, seemed rather to confirm it. Reforming currents and democratic demands – it was

said - emerged from the emerging prosperity which could already be felt in the *experimental* poles of the free market.

Outside the communist world, the Taiwanese and Korean transitions seemed to reaffirm this idea: economic freedoms and free trade were the doorway to development and the matrix for strong democratic reform movements which, in turn, generated institutional frameworks generating more capitalism and more development.

Democracy, development and capitalism seemed to be as inseparable as they were evident. It was the time when Francis Fukuyama published his book *The End of History*.

But let us examine what remains nowadays of the "dragons". Singapore, the enterprise-cum-authoritarian State, not Havel's Czech Republic, seems to be the new beacon for the developing world, a beacon very well-liked by totalitarian states in the midst of economic reform. Lee Kuan Yew, the perennial Prime Minister of Singapore, told *Time* magazine:

I advised Deng Xiaoping when he visited Singapore in November 1979. This man, small in size but a giant as a leader, told me that he congratulated me on having done a good job, as he noticed that, since the first time he came to Singapore, it was no longer the same place, and he found it much better. I then thanked him and told him: "What we can do here you can do better. We are the descendents of landless peasants from South China. By contrast, you have Mandarins, writers, intellectuals, and a whole group of brilliant people, and so you can do better." He took a look at me, but said nothing.

Years later, in November 1992, during his tour of the Southern provinces, he pointed out: "Learn from Singapore" and "Do better than them". And I realised that he had never forgotten what I had told him then.

Today Vietnam and China have the highest growth rates, while the world pampers China after symbolically recognising it as an equal in the Beijing Olympics.

The "Russian model" fits naturally into this map, and is spreading throughout the once Second World like a plague: limited pluralism, plebiscitary populism, the cult of providential leadership, a war-like language, the development of the authoritarian patronage of an increasingly autonomous State.

In parallel, in the countries once known as free, the trend, encouraged from the United States and the European Union, seems to be towards the establishment of control societies⁵³ fed by the fear to the consequences of globalisation, articulated by an increasingly disciplinarian State, and identified once more with a Neo-Puritan political culture.⁵⁴

This global political framework contrasts with the social experience of a new kind of identities born in the new distributed and de-territorialised social networks -- identities which therefore arose from a certain experience of abundance and pulriarchy.⁵⁵ The clash would result in a revaluation of the new de-territorialised lives, a certain awareness that from this kind of life one can not only experience but consolidate a space of personal and political freedom which surpasses in a tangible and specific way the space offered by States.

⁵³ Cf. José F. Alcántara, *La sociedad de control*.

⁵⁴ As predicted by Albert Boadella in an interview with *El País* available at http://www.elpais.com/articulo/cultura/Hay/intento/convertirnos/sociedad/puritana/elpepucul/20080508elpepicul_3/Tes

⁵⁵ Cf. *The Power of Networks* and the next chapter.

Netocracy: Explorers of a World of Network Cities

The first ones to talk about the "netocracy" were the Swedes Alexander Bard and Jan Söderqvist. They have interesting biographies. The former is a professor at the Stockholm School of Economics, a musician and the founder of the main Swedish record company. The latter is an essay writer and cinema producer.

They took their thesis from Pekka Himanen (the author of *The Hacker Ethic*) and other sociologists such as Manuel Castells. Capitalism will be followed by a new social and economic order: informationalism, whose dawn we are currently experiencing. In parallel - and this is their main contribution - while in previous social systems the nobility and bourgeoisie played the main roles, in the new one the main players will be netocrats, a new social class defined by their capacity of

relating to and arranging global networks. It is a social class defined not so much by its power over the production system as by its leadership over the consumption of mass members of social networks.

Bard and Söderqvist not only created the term and the concept, they also provided Himanen's hackers with a step beyond in time and influence. Netocrats are hackers who have not integrated into the establishment and salary workers, and who have managed to achieve -- normally using the internet in some way or the other -- a state of economic independence and personal freedom. Their netocrats are hackers who have a real political and economic influence. They are technophile microentrepreneurs, creative social innovators, the local heroes of the knowledge society.⁵⁶

Netocrats inherit from hackers their conception of time, money, and work, a time which is no longer measured by the stopwatch or the working day. Their work is creative, their time flexible. They think in the midterm, and do not measure their time in hours but in projects. In their lives, leisure and work become one in terms of pleasure and intellectual challenge. Working time is no longer an opposite and separate *non-life*, made contingent by a barrier of working days and salaries. Netocrats express themselves in what they do. They live out their selves, and are paid in terms of intellectual and social recognition once they attain the monetary income that allows them to devote themselves exclusively to their own self-expression.

In the same way as their time and work are not kept in watertight sections, neither are their personal relationships. They work with whomever they wish; it work are life are not opposed to each other, how can hackers draw distinctions

⁵⁶ For these authors, however, the term would soon acquire a negative meaning: netocrats came to represent a privileged, dominant class. Their social organisation, pluriarchy, wouldn't be a new horizon of personal freedom, but a possibility restricted to an elite capable of imposing their points of views and freedoms to a majority of passive consumers. The bards of pluriarchy have come from other traditions and regions: Spanish cyberpunk and Brazilian glocalism, the latter more rooted in the tradition of local development and the former in the cyberactivist traditions of the hacker world.

between personal and working relationships? Netocrats want to experience relationships, maximise their enjoyment value. In exchange, they offer accessibility to their being, not right of property over their time or physical location. What matters is the flow generated by the relationship, not its capitalisation by turning it into a stock.

A projection of its social being, the political ideal underlying the netocracy is no other than a metaphor of perfect competition. The maximum degree of decision power over oneself, the absence of coercing power over others. This is the essence of netocratic libertarianism, the nature of networks, reluctant to accept any explicit complex legal system which goes beyond netiquette.

They are, in brief, the creative stars of the post-industrial society. But unlike their older siblings (star publicists, designers, architects, etc.), they do not work in creative substitutes of industrial factories. They flaunt their independence; they do not hold wealth as a symbol of power, but rather equate it with their network. This is the kind of people who can live alongside each other within an academic or freeware community, and then obtain what they need from the packing and sale of the product created in common or from customisation. This is the kind of people who gift music online in order to get more gigs or who write copyleft books in order to give conferences and obtain an agenda afterwards: hackers who measure the worth of their work not in terms of direct income, but of their capacity to generate relationships.

The netocracy started to take shape at some point in the nineties, linked to the first internet opportunities, creation, and small technology consultancy markets. The emergence of the network society allowed netocrats to marginally creep into mass media, at the same time as their virtual networks took advantage of the general growth of the web and the number of private connections to the internet. The turn of the century found them hardened by the information society wars, moving along, and the owners of their own destiny. They are the electronic explorers of a trans-nationalised world which knows neither territories nor capitals.

In the old pre-globalisation world, what defined the importance of a capital city was the territory over which it exerted a direct influence. This territory was, above all, a political and cultural state with a market that was identified, depending on the situation, with the region or the nation – a nation or region that were given a substantial distinctness with respect to their competitors by virtue of the political sovereignty and tax centralisation exerted from the capital. This distinctness served, indistinctly, protectionism, war mobilisation, or whatever was required from the logic of the identification of the masses with their rulers.

As seen, the world of capital cities is a world of national culture: a space which reverses Renaissance logic. By acquiring the adjective "National", culture ceases to be something that belongs to people and rather people come to belong to the national culture. This territory of alienation and homogenisation is the essence of the closed world.

But as the market has become global, and substantial parts of economic policy have become trans-national (such as currency in Europe), capital cities have ceased to be the main players. Who can believe that Morris dancing is part of his or her roots when they spent their childhood listening to American rock music? Access to global cultural consumption privatises culture once again, and make the national myths of intrinsic differences alien.

The life so beloved of netocrats moves with them to a different kind of city, what Manuel de Landa has called the metropolis.

Its current power, as in the Renaissance, lies in the opposition between the values that define it and those of the capital city. While capitals are defined by the series territory (nation) – law – taxes (for the capital city is above all the physical seat of legislative and fiscal power), metropolises are defined by (trans-national) network – trust (network and trust are, after all, the values of Renaissance sea trade, which operated in the absence of a State and international law) – exchange (trade, again) – difference (the basis of trade value).

Netocracy, the pioneers of that informationalised and de-territorialised life, is located in metropolis. And not by chance. Information society rewards flow as opposed to stock, the capacity to relate and exchange over bureaucratic power.

For authors such as Castells, Ohmae, or de Landa, in the network capitalism which now heralds the birth of informationalism is in many senses similar to the trade capitalism from the time of the Italian city states and the Aragonese Mediterranean expansion. In fact, not only their metropolises live again, but also the networks which they once formed. Nowadays we see how a new Hanseatic League is emerging in the Baltic which knows no national borders and trades more within itself than with its respective States. The appearance of a Padanian nationalism is also read by many as the result of the network development of cities in Northern Italy since the second half of the seventies, a development which seems to look northwards rather than seawards.⁵⁷

Reluctant with regard to capital cities, netocracy identity knows no nationalism. Its power derives not from the national homogenisation of a territory locked within borders, but from the differentials of knowledge and value established in networks. The more heterogeneous the network, the more powerful its associated netocracy. A child of globalisation, it demands space and right of way.

It doesn't care about the countryside except as a landscape, as a leisure option. That's why it has reinvented the rural territory as a theme park from the past, a productive landscape. Rural tourism tastefully managed by small players, a virtuoso exercise in virtual reality or roleplay.

That's why it separates the State from national identity and bets on larger freerange spaces as it demands power for the cities. As a new class in conflict with the bourgeoisie and distinct from it, it does not flee cities or fears living alongside immigrants. It occupies the old degraded inner cities and reindustrialises and pedestrianises them. It prefers bikes to cars and trams to tube. Its natural environment is a diversity theme park; open-air cafés and open spaces are their true business centres. It trusts in safety, but knows its own instability; for a change

⁵⁷ Cf. for example Kenichi Ohmae, McKinsey's famous partner, and his series of books starting with *The Next Global Stage*.

of scenery, netocrats will flee at a low cost to the next network node. Netocracy knows itself to be desired, and allows politicians to woo it.

Freedom lies in movement. The trans-nationalised urban space of netocracy is a chessboard through which its knights leap. In their movements, netocracy will merge and become one with the last heirs of classical segregationism, the PTs (cf. next chapter) who surpassed Randian territorialism, as well as with the first trans-national identities to emerge from the internet, making way for a new global phenomenon catalysed by the de-territorialisation of large corporations: Neo-Venetianism.

Neo-Nomads and PTs

As we have seen, in the last thirty years of the 20th century, there were plenty of attempts of creating libertarian mini-States, many of them promoted by people close to the American Libertarian Party.

From the founding of Atlantis in 1968 until the abandonment of Freedonia in 2002, many were the projects for the creation of freedom territories which failed, sometimes due to flaws in project design and sometimes because they clashed with the interests of national States, which took care to dash the dreams of many American libertarians.

Some people within the same environment also started to experiment with other ways of fleeing statalism and social control in parallel to the groups which were trying to create mini-states or floating islands.

Sir Harry Schultz, a financial advisor from Milwaukee (United States) and the author of 23 books, developed from the 40s on a new way of living avoiding the pressures of nation-States: neo-nomadism.

Dr Schultz was for many years the best paid financial advisor in the world. He became famous in the seventies, mostly due to his highly accurate forecasts on

currency fluctuations and his predictions on the evolution of financial markets and metals like gold.

The Neo-Nomadic way of life started to develop during World War Two, when Harry Schultz was posted in Shanghai as a soldier in the U.S. Army. During the time he spent in China, he realised that it was very easy for him to do financial business in his spare time. When he returned to the United States, he settled down in California and with the money he had made in China purchased one of the Palm Springs weeklies. In a very short space of time he turned it into a daily publication, and the best selling newspaper in town. Later on, a large communications group bought the paper, which Schultz had managed to revalue. With this experience, Schultz discovered a very attractive way of doing business: buy a company, make it grow in a short time, and sell it shortly afterwards. Within a relatively short period of time, Schultz bought and sold more than dozen papers, until he decided to start travelling around the world. From that moment, he never lived permanently in the United States again.

Almost twenty years after he left, Harry Schultz realised that the American society which had emerged after World War Two had changed considerably from the America he had known in his youth. In those years, social control had increased, and it had become a social custom - which still persists -- to sue any person or entity for any reason in order to quickly obtain economic benefits. Schultz himself, after a few bad experiences as a the sued party, decided to take off and live in several countries all over the world in order to minimise his risks and preserve the highest possible degree of independence and freedom. Thus, this businessman became the first nomad of the post-industrial age: he was the first Neo-Nomad.

In 1964, Schultz created one of the most successful newsletters in the finance world during the second half of the 20th century. The Harry Schultz Letter (HSL), still active⁵⁸, allowed its author to develop his work in an itinerant manner, as he has edited the newsletter for forty years from his different places of residence.

⁵⁸ Available at <http://www.hsletter.com>

Moreover, his fame as a financial advisor allowed him to have important clients who contracted his services wherever he was living.

Also in 1964, Schultz published the book *How to Keep Your Money and Freedom*, in which, from his own experience, he described how to live as a true Neo-Nomad. It was then he met Bill Hill, who would later become another libertarian guru, and with whom he created and perfected some of the ideas which he later developed.

These two authors, the parents of libertarian Neo-Nomadism, coined the acronym PT (Permanent Tourist, Perpetual Traveller, or Prior Taxpayer) in order to designate people who live with a very high degree of individual sovereignty, avoiding, to the utmost extent, the strict rules of States. Thus, PTs live in countries which only impose legal obligations on residents and never stay in these territories long enough to be considered resident citizens.

Neo-nomads or PTs move from country to country, avoiding becoming "rightful" citizens in any of them, in such a way that they constantly enjoy the advantages and the preferential treatment that many States accords to tourists and visitors.

In the sixties, Schultz and Hill came up with the Three Flags Theory to sum up the three conditions which must be met by anyone who wishes to live as a PT and avoid State controls.

The first of the three conditions refers to the necessity of having a passport and citizenship of a country which pays no attention to its citizens living abroad, and which basically imposes no taxes on citizens who do not live within its borders.

The second condition involves having one's address and legal residence in a well-communicated and stable tax haven or semi-haven. This should be a place with a high quality of life, a certain degree of legal security, and an international position which is stable enough for its residents to have minimum legal guarantees for their own purposes.

The third condition suggests creating companies and doing business in a third country, or in various other countries which are different from the citizenship

and residence States. Ideally, these places should have a relatively "soft" tax policy with regard to entrepreneurial benefits.

However, the authors, in later publications, added two new recommendations, including two more flags in their theory.

The fourth suggestion recommends keeping one's deposits or assets in places where an accountant or representative can manage them in an anonymous and safe way.

Finally, the fifth flag refers to the places where the PT spends a substantial part of his or her time, spends money, and enjoys his or her freedom, but not staying long enough to be considered a resident.

Since Schultz and Hill started to theorise on PT life, dozens of books and manuals on how to develop this lifestyle have been written. Since the 1989 publication of *PT: A Coherent Plan for a Stress-Free, Healthy and Prosperous Life Without Government Interference, Taxes or Coercion*, Bill Hill has written various books series on how to keep secret bank accounts, how to obtain a second passport, or how to do business in tax havens.

These manuals are complemented by a series of monographies on how to set up business in tax havens or semi-havens (Gibraltar, Monaco, Andorra, the Channel Islands, Malta, Switzerland, or Lichtenstein). The use of tax havens to do business and keep capital is not exclusive to Neo-Nomads, as it is currently estimated that a fourth of private fortunes in the world are deposited in these mini-states.

Even though the PT uses tax havens and lives travelling around, he is not a member of any Mafia clan that wishes to dodge taxes or launder money.

Nor is the PT stateless, an exile fleeing his home country due to persecution or for political reasons. The PT is generally a libertarian, a firm individualist who either has made a significant amount of money, or has a number of international businesses which provide a stable income regardless of the country in which he or she resides. The PT believes that if he or she keeps his or her earnings in locations

which offer privacy and security and far from the control of the great States, he or she will be able to enjoy a comfortable, playful life.

Even though it is hard to quantify the number of PTs, it is estimated that almost a million people are currently living as permanent tourists all over the world.

The mass establishment of technological innovations has simplified global business, and due to this it is nowadays easier to live as a PT than in previous decades.

Due to the large number of Neo-Nomads in the world, there are also a number of consultancies for this public. Companies such as PT Club⁵⁹, PT Shamrock's Guide⁶⁰ or Expat World⁶¹ offer their customers legal advice and management of the paperwork to open accounts abroad, change their legal residence, obtain passports from other countries, or have mail forwarded from their business headquarters to their physical location.

The PT's life requires the use of updated information on legislation, border requirements, capital movements, investment opportunities, ways of avoiding international mafias, etc. This is why the PT networks created around these consultancies and clubs reinforce the Neo-Nomadic way of life.

However, despite the advantages that being a PT offers libertarians and people fleeing state control, it is not easy to lead this kind of life. Having to reside in three or more countries and accepting the loss of contacts, roots, and security of the territory of origin, privacy and freedom can quickly turn into loneliness, the need for recognition and belonging, and even a loss of fraternity.

That's why there are also many cases of Neo-Nomads who end up withdrawing from the diaspora in order to return their country of origin and subject themselves once again to the strict State laws. However, unlike the pioneers, contemporary PTs have some tools which can help them to secure social and business spaces which are sufficiently broad and stable.

⁵⁹ <http://www.ptclub.com>

⁶⁰ <http://www.ptshamrock.com>

⁶¹ <http://www.expatworld.com>

Thanks to the web, one can have online business, manage one's correspondence, assets, and communication with customers from anywhere in the world. Moreover, it is now possible to be in permanent communication with anyone in real time and establish a social network of one's own.

The true homeland of Neo-Nomads is in cyberspace. Neo-Nomads have discovered digital Zionism.

Digital Zionists

A few days ago, *Wired* ran an article on Randian segregationism.⁶² There was definitely something new about it, something very far from Minerva and other libertarian experiments of the last century:

With a \$500,000 donation from PayPal founder Peter Thiel, a Google engineer and a former Sun Microsystems programmer have launched The Seasteading Institute, an organization dedicated to creating experimental ocean communities "with diverse social, political, and legal systems".

To some extent, they believe the outfittings for the seasteed will be dependent on the business model, say aquaculture or tourism, that will support it and the number of people aboard. "We're not trying to pick the one strategy because we think there will be multiple people who want one for multiple reasons", Gramlich said.

Between virtual and politically naive Freedonia and this (extremely expensive) bet on diversity which aims to provide physical space "to diverse social, political, and legal systems", lies the mass social experimentation with the internet. Things have changed.

When Second Life had its fifteen minutes of fame in 2006, including Barack Obama rallies, tens of thousands of people visited virtual islands, demonstrated,

⁶² <http://www.wired.com/science/planetearth/news/2008/05/seasteading>

bought mementoes, etc. It was an instance of mass digital tourism which inevitably destroyed, *Majorca-ised*, a relational space which was technologically prepared to accommodate many tents, but philosophical helpless to meet mass demand for social and political experimentation.

A demand that was covered all over the world by such collectives as "El país llamado a", which invited everyone who wished to join in to take part in the foundation of a virtual country. But there is no such thing as "people" in general. The lack of a real community, of identity, is paid for in the end. Inevitably, the same problem arises as for Freedomia or Second Life: we are playing a role game, not living a "truer" life.

Social experience remains. Real communities of people who share and debate are flourishing, and distributed, de-territorialised socialisation is becoming an accepted cultural fact. Citizenship is being joined, if not displaced, by what Marcelo Estraviz had called linkship back in 2001:

That's what linkship is. It's citizenship without cities. It's de-territorialised. Actions are local, but connections are global.⁶³

We explore our linkships, our belonging to socialisation spheres where abundance prevails, where there is no need to vote on anything, where pluriarchy⁶⁴ is the

⁶³ <http://tzatziki.wordpress.com/linkania>

⁶⁴ A term coined by Bard and Söderqvist to define the collective decision-making process within netocracy. According to these authors, "every individual agent decides for himself, but lacks the capacity and opportunity to decide for any of the other agents". In pluriarchy theories (as opposed to Bard and Söderqvist's theory of netocracy), this system emerges spontaneously in distributed social networks and becomes possible in these networks because in them prevails what Juan Urrutia has called "abundance logic": one's option does not detract from everyone else's possibilities. In democracy, by contrast, scarcity imposes collective decisions over individual ones, and thus pluriarchy "makes it impossible to maintain the fundamental notion of democracy, where the majority prevails over the minority when there are differences of opinion." In a pluriarchic system, decision-making is not binary. It's not a matter of either/or, yes or no: it's a matter of degrees. Someone proposes something, and anyone can join in. The scope of the action will

"natural" regulating system. That's what's *addictive* about digital life. Inevitable, the will arises to move the highest possible number of socialisation spheres to that pluriarchic, diverse, free world. That is what we call "digital Zionism".

The name itself comes from a post by Pere Quintana in a 2006 forum in which he celebrated the result of the collective experience: a life that is autonomous from the public agenda set by the media, an environment of trust and conversation constituted both by visitors and by peers who have been in the network for years:

For some time now we haven't been Spanish or European or anything else. For some time now we have been digital Zionists. What brings us together is certain common values, not the fact of having been born here or there. In fact, we don't even see each other's faces - our identity lies in our online texts. We don't belong to the newspaper world. We are free!

The forum in which this was published - possibly not by chance - was "Ciberpunko Internacia", a short-lived mix of two traditions, the pluriarchy of Spanish cyberpunk in the nineties and noughties, and old Zamenhof's dream of a trans-national space.

But digital Zionism is something more than a mass social trend in cyberspace. It is the matrix from which a highly interesting reflection sprang to which this book owes a debt.

To being with, digital Zionism must understand and re-appropriate internet comprehension. The apex of the Web 2.0 discourse had been accompanied by the ranking boom. The blogosphere was depicted as a single space, relatively homogeneous and hierarchised (in terms of "influence"), in which small communities constituted a tiny, irrelevant "long queue". It was a bad place to understand and place oneself.

depend on the sympathy and degree of agreement caused by the proposal. Even if the majority not only not sympathised but were also against it, they would be unable to prevent its implementation.

Digital Zionism is actually a pluriarchic, free-aggregation communitarianism, not a marginality discourse. It remaps the blogosphere and produces a topology that radically refutes the media message. There is certainly a huge web in the blogosphere, but there are also thousands of small independent networks, hardly connected to each other, autistic in the face of the striking and media-advertised circus of the gurus' blogosphere. This is the *sea of flowers*. Ongoing experiments and measurements have ratified the fact that the sea of flowers is many times larger than the great central artichoke.

The internet is a space of irreducible diversity, of different and more or less overlapping identities between which one can continually skip. A huge chessboard through which to move and in which to socialise, not a cheap digital version of the 20th-century de-centralised media universe.

But when the freedom of pluriarchy is recognised, when our main social community is really articulated in virtual conversations, and these, within the universe of the Western Latin languages, quickly transcend state borders, a new and inevitable question arises. Can't I also take my economic life to such a world? Can't I work within an online network, make my way of making a living independent from erratic economies and national crises in the same way as my conversation has gradually become mongrelised, open, and independent from the media agenda?

There are small and medium businesses that work within online networks. Having a virtual co-worker, keeping one's IM window permanently open, starts to be common. This kind of change starts to be of interest to entrepreneurs who have very small companies.

The time has come to look at large companies, the trans-nationals which some multinationals are gradually becoming. The time has come to experiment with hard core of every social articulation: the economic-territorial structure.

From Internationalisation to Transnationalisation

Fiat is an example of the model company of the European dream. To begin with, it is a manufacturer. It sells objects, and is highly sensitive to distances and logistic costs. In its current apogee, Fiat generates a third of its turnover in Italy, a third in

the rest of the European Union, and the other third in the rest of the world, a good part of which, very significantly, in Mercosur, where the Italian immigration substrate makes possible a linguistic-cultural connection.

The implicit political model is that of internationalised national companies that develop their markets as if they were the layers of an onion. First, the national market, which remains the main one, then the regional, and finally the global market.

Let us now compare it to Telefónica. This company tends towards a model comprising 45% Spain, 45% Latin America, and 10% rest of the world. BBVA and Endesa display very similar profiles. Even Santander, the Spanish financial group with the most globally distributed interests, has its gravity centre in South America.

In all of these cases, the *Spanish* character of the company is diluted within a broader linguistic-cultural identity. Similar examples could be found in companies that were originally Brazilian or Mexican.

This moves beyond the European Union globalisation model. These are not Manufacturers, but service companies, with strong local investment, in principle not particularly sensitive to customs and tax barriers, and much more sensitive to linguistic and cultural synchronies.

Language and culture both expand and limit, as investments in third countries, in different languages and different cultures will generate inner spaces which are inevitably segregated unless English, the alleged *lingua franca*, is taken as the group language. This option, which has been seen to emerge several times already, backfires in the end, as its managing posts are inevitably occupied by native English speakers, alienating the talented base of the organisation from the perspective of a real global career and from the organisation itself, whose borders, after all, tend to coincide with those of the *Latoc* world, the social space in which the Iberian Peninsula Latin languages are spoken.

In fact, cultural synchrony is even more important than the linguistic one. It is remarkable that the globalisation of companies with a Catalan management and capital has faced serious difficulties to follow a similar model to that which prevails

in Madrid companies. Let us remember Agbar's *orderly retreat* or the sale of Repsol-YPF: the Ebro cultural divide can be a much broader gulf than the regulatory divide.

The idea, widely spread by Castells, Ohmae, and de Landa, and mentioned before, of the return of regions (Mediterranean arc, Hansa, etc.) as the economic-political spaces of the future is valid only on a local level. It is in fact restricted to cultural zones which when divided by frontiers did not generate integrated economic spaces, but which generated them due to economic reasons when customs fell away. The closest example would be the relationship between Spanish Vigo and Portuguese Porto.

However, the rise of this kind of spaces is linked to the achievement of scale economies typical of the industrial world and requires a complementariness which cannot be replaced with political will: what is known as the Mediterranean arc, the emergence of a Milan-Barcelona commercial axis, by now appears as a Messianic litany of late nationalism.

Thus, even successful regionalisation areas (such as the Vigo-Porto axis) do not determine a territory, but a node within a much larger trans-Atlantic economic space.

The economy of the network society is essentially an information and services economy. It is an economy of markets which are drawn along the lines of cultural spaces and trans-nationalised companies which does not require geographic continuity. It simply has no territorial map because logistics does not lie at the centre of its costs. Its map is made of networks and itineraries.

The New Corporate Venices

When the great Spanish companies started their internationalisation in Latin America over ten years ago, the organisational model of reference was the Anglo-Saxon multinational. This model reinforced efficiency in the development of well-established objectives in protocolised and standardised tasks. Moreover, it reinforced the ties of the company to the territory in successive autonomy domains, from the high street branch to the global presidency -- a stratification which

followed the network structure of the (decentralised) telegraph system which lay at the origin of the model.⁶⁵

But the last decade has been that of the emergence of distributed networks. Within the domain of internal communication, companies already operated as a sea of small and dense networks of electronic distributed communication thanks to the generalisation of email use.

In the domain of value creation, it becomes increasingly evident that scale advantages are generated from transnationality, accompanying final customer in their own internationalisation processes. Globalisation itself is really the process whereby a world market which in practice was the sum total of a number of national markets which were interconnected by means of large institutions which could act as filters, that is, a classical decentralised network, became one single great commercial and productive network in which every product and service involves the confluence of elements and people who do not belong in the same national domain.

In fact, the very word "internationalisation" loses its meaning and reveals what is going on. In all the talk about the internationalisation of small business in the nineties it was implicit that what was at stake was the internationalisation of small business in central countries. In practice, of course, things were quite different, and it is striking that it is small businesses that seems to have the most opportunities -- something which has already become a topic for popular literature.⁶⁶ Large banks, consultancies and telephone companies which had become internationalised in the nineties now had to help small businesses in each country to move beyond national borders. Strictly following the upwards hierarchical structure towards the headquarters in each country, and from them back downwards in a different national structure, was slow and inefficient. Levels had to be directly linked to each other through local organisation in the safe, and increasingly reference and identitarian framework of a central umbrella which was becoming less and less identifiable in national terms.

⁶⁵ David de Ugarte, *The Power of Networks*.

⁶⁶ Thomas Friedman, *Earth is Flat*.

Multinationals gave way to transnationals. The logic of extraction gave way to the creation and generalisation of consumption bases. From the neat decentralised to the distributed tangle of a commercial territory of relationships sheltered within an identity-brand. New Venices were being born.

It is no foolishness to think that in large organisations the percentage of active bloggers is not smaller than the average of authors in the territories in which they act. In fact, everything seems to indicate that it should be larger, given the age and education profiles. A recent extrapolation showed that, only within the BBVA group, there might be almost two hundred active bloggers.

Once a certain geographical extension and population have been reached, the generation of its own blogosphere becomes the main way in which an organisation can make knowledge emerge and use experiences which in the traditional hierarchical structure would remain isolated and unused. Distributing information and monitoring the development of debates in order to locate the emerging problems and conversations in the network periphery thus becomes the new frontier for managers.

At the same time, and almost inevitable, the corporate blogosphere becomes the first distributed form of representation for the company⁶⁷, and it transforms the development and end of corporate careers, making them much less dependent on the territory. New network-related values are gradually emerging, and with them a new recognition profile. The successful worker is now somebody sensitive enough to recognise emerging demands in the company environment, create *ad hoc* transnational teams, and generalise the assumption of new discourses and approaches within the corporate network.

The role played by the relationship between the worker's identity and the original national identity of the company is gradually being displaced to language, as the virtual relationship space in the place where professional life is little by little being focussed. Moreover, given that the capacity to seduce and put into action the

⁶⁷ Something which we had already predicted in *The Power of Networks* and which nowadays starts to be common. Cf. for instance, <http://blog.wellsfargo.com> or, on a smaller scale, the first recorded case in the world, <http://lasindias.net>.

new demands is an increasingly valued ability, it gradually extends into a form of spontaneous "normalisation" of the language on the basis of shared elements.

But this process, in turn, stresses the divide between the large linguistic areas. Companies extended throughout relatively homogeneous areas obtain new competitive elements, but those which wish to grow among linguistically heterogeneous populations of customers and workers lose a significant part of the new advantages and opportunities.

In the new world of transnationals, the corporate blogosphere is both a map and a newspapers for a community based on mobility and intelligence, in which the border between the real and the imagined communities is gradually fading away. The company appears as the core of a community whose identity plays an increasingly significant role in the lives of their members, over nationality and other considerations.

Given that we have seen in less than two decades the leap from national to trans-national companies, it is tempting to imagine the next step -- the company-based trans-national urban identity. The analogy with the Venetian myth is obvious, as during Venice's apogee, a man's personal career and his political biography were one same thing. As in classical Venice, the new transnationals are defined from an exiguous territorial basis and an ever-changing networks of relationships and routes, of itineraries and more or less temporary headquarters in trade ports. Like Venice, the new corporate main players are taking charge of more and more aspects of their people's lives, making them, at the same time, play an increasingly large role in the common destiny. In fact, I don't think it is a flight of imagination to think that in the next decade there will be large and small transnationals, networks of de-localised small and midsize businesses, or new kinds of company which identify with, and compete against, distinct social models. Actually, they already have started to do so, pushed both by their environment and by the hunt for talent.

In any case, it is increasingly difficult to imagine workers in global corporations in the next decades from the point of view of national-based identities. It is rather hard to lead a life within mobility, moving within de-territorialised

conversational spaces, while still explaining oneself in the terms in which the State-nation intended to constitute its citizens.

The nation was the community which we imagined in order to explain the social relationships that enveloped us when the market grew beyond the local, the community which we imagined in order to provide a framework for a life which branched out across the territory, bringing the market to every aspect of our daily lives. It wasn't easy to give up traditional identities, based on family and religion, which grouped only people whose names we knew in space we knew like the back of our hand. That's why the nation took centuries to mature, until it seemed as though it had always been there.

But nowadays the new corporate Venices and their emerging virtual spaces surely explain better and in a way that is more tangible, more personal, less abstract, and closer to a real community, the lives of hundreds of thousands of people who move across the great trade and financial creepers of the world.

Neo-Venetians

We have all heard many times that the great political challenge for our century is to bring democracy to business. This is no simple pious wish, no cyberpunk dream, and no mere declaration of intent.

A new generation of netocrats, as we have seen, is changing the corporate organisation -- changes whose depth and extent economists are only just now beginning to glimpse.⁶⁸

Within this framework, it is no wonder that new phenomena emerge in which online communities start to organise themselves no longer as NGOs, associations, or parties, but as *economic democracies*.

These are *democratic* companies, surprisingly stable and profitable, which are thought and which grown directly on trans-national soil, as the heirs to virtual communities in which only language constituted a frontier of some sort. These are the companies which we call Neo-Venetian, because they arise not in a passive way from general evolution, but from the will to develop and experience a certain kind of life, surely more in sync with the possibilities for freedom offered by our time.

These are more than companies, as they have genuine trans-national identities and political-economic arrangements of their own, and so a certain kind of

⁶⁸ Cf. Juan Urrutia, *The Coming Capitalism*.

literature refers to them as *phyles*. They did not appear out of the blue. In the same way as the Mondragón Cooperative Group was once born from specific socioeconomic conditions, taking advantage of new possibilities in order to rise in a certain original way to the challenges of a new world, these Neo-Venetian networks now try to respond to the possibilities offered by a trans-national, distributed world.

And like Mondragón, even though they are part of a cooperative tradition which goes back to the 18th century⁶⁹, they are new because they bring our attention on new topics, such as socio-environmental sustainability, internal freedoms, the new non-monetary incentives, or free knowledge, which are strictly contemporary, resulting from a world of distributed networks.

A document recently published by one of these phyles⁷⁰, to which two of the authors of this book belong, clearly showed how digital Zionism, the experience of life in distributed networks, has been a school to a whole generation of new initiatives:

A person can only be free if he or she is the owner of the basis for his or her own subsistence, when he or she is under no obligation to kowtow to anyone, and can effectively abandon his or her network if he or she understands that it no longer meets the needs of his or her own happiness, a happiness that only that persona can judge.

The possibilities for everyone to own property and for the general trade development are thus the economic grounds for any citizenship that does not consist in mere representation. This simple truth is what we call Neo-Venetianism.

Exploradores Electrónicos is a network of merchants and free entrepreneurs for the purpose of constructing and experiencing its own space of free citizenship, constituted under no group or state coercion, and devoted to the development of a trans-national and de-territorialised space in which the freedoms and rights can be deepened

⁶⁹ Cf. Appendix 1 to Gerald Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth*.

⁷⁰ http://www.exploradoreselectronicos.net/e4pedia/Declaración_de_Montevideo

that make possible a full life in overlapping, pluriarchic, and non-coercive communities.

To this end, we constitute ourselves as a distributed network of persons in free association, acting politically by themselves and economically through companies which will voluntarily coordinate and ally to each other for the creation of a common infrastructure of bases which, distributed throughout the world, will serve to make our trade and our debate independent from the vicissitudes of any State of market. Above all, it will provide equal opportunity among all explorers, independently of the States that provide them with their passports.

These last few lines are particularly significant. In a globalised and increasingly distributed world, affinity groups, debates and businesses, envelop people whose *passports* belong to different States: people who feel, live, act and talk as equals, sharing a common identity, creating a real community, and sharing a worldview which appropriates a public agenda that is no longer national, but at the same time unique and broader.

However, the relationships between States are usually not symmetrical: the free movement of people is becoming increasingly restricted, and the gap between social coverage in South America, Africa, and the UE is enormous.

That's why Neo-Venetianism is not only a social phenomenon proper to large trans-national companies. It is also the will to build economic and deliberational spaces which provide "equal opportunity" in networks that already exist thanks to the internet, "independently of the States that provides [...] passports" to their members.

THE NEW DISTRIBUTED TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITIES

Maps and Representations For A New World

When on 4th January 2008 Héctor Milla presented his project "el país llamado a" (the country called a),⁷¹ he immediately attracted the attention of many Spanish bloggers, creating huge expectations in many circles.

At first sight, the defining elements of his initiative seemed clearly *déjà vu*: from the rather anachronistic creation of symbols (flag, motto, etc) to the insistence in the first point of his founding document that the community-country

does not discard, if its citizens so decide and the necessary resources are available, purchasing in the future a small, legally adequate territory anywhere in the world, which will allow it to become also a State.

This was Freedonia once again, eleven years later! Of course, over a decade the social experience of the internet had profoundly transformed the meaning of community life. Beyond the literary exercise and the creation of mottos and banners, beyond the roleplaying, the conversational basis for the new identity appeared once more:

Our country already exists, and in it we use all kinds of platforms such as Flickr, Upcoming, Twitter, Jaiku, Dopplr, Facebook, Google, YouTube, Seemic, etc., in addition to our own visual environment in order to communicate and share a common identity.

The parallelism with the birth of digital Zionism as defined in 2006 by Pere Quintana was striking:

⁷¹ <http://www.hectormilla.com/innovacion/1849/manifiesto-el-pais-llamado-a>

For some time now we haven't been Spanish or European or anything else. For some time now we have been digital Zionists. What brings us together is certain common values, not the fact of having been born here or there. In fact, we don't even see each other's faces - our identity lies in our online texts. We don't belong to the newspaper world.

But also the differences: by contrast to Quintana's pair of values/texts, Milla's tools/visual environment pair indicates the need for a new kind of map for the identitarian narrative, a representation than Milla makes as a map of tools rather than networks, a map of conversational spaces rather than of places and connections.

It is also true that "the country called a" was born at the apex of the web 2.0 discourse⁷², with its exaltation of tools over their meanings.

But it must be pointed out, above all, that it is not the territory that gives corporality and materiality to a conversational identity until it becomes something able to surpass the national idea, but rather the economy, the existence of an underlying economic substrate. The nation was imagined from vernacular conversation, but that conversation had been represented and self-aware in different ways since at least the 7th century. It was really the national market and its determining role in the explanation of everyone's social being that made it possible to imagine the nation and its spatial projection, what turned the cartographic narrative into a *nationalising* dialogue.

The maps of the new world have not been drawn yet. They will be not only a representation of spaces, but of interests. They will be more Neo-Venetian than digital Zionist. They will create a narrative that explains and projects not only values but also interests, flows not only of ideas and words, but of wealth that can be transformed into means. Because that's why they are necessary -- to explain

⁷² Cf. David de Ugarte, *The Power of Networks*.

ourselves from routes that are not tourist, but trade routes. For, after all, maps were made for trade.

Milla stressed the effort to provide his community/country with its own visual environment, possibly a metaverse. In all likelihood, in the next years a true distributed network will emerge, a www of metaverses similar to Second Life thanks to OpenSim. It is quite possible that many communities and companies will have their own metaverses devoted to meetings, training, virtual chats, etc. The network will generate virtual archipelagos that will also represent community conversation.

But those maps, like Second Life's today, will not constitute a substantially different -- or richer -- narrative than those of current aggregation systems.

In this sense, it is interesting to observe how companies that start to define themselves as trans-national communities represent themselves. There is, on the one hand, an obvious effort to represent internal conversation, to create a sort of conversational map which we can see in BBVA-blogs or, in a more modest and fledgling way, in WellsFargo.

These are really blog aggregators which, from community tag clouds, searchers, and interactive Feevy portals, try to represent the different conversational paths that articulate the spontaneous and distributed flow of internal information. Something that moves in parallel to what many bloggers and their networks are already doing.

The question is how those representations that tend to reinforce the real community by repeatedly displaying the faces and avatars of the people behind the nodes will fuse with the projection of the real physical territory and geographical spaces.

The seed lies in Google Earth and Google Maps. The possibility of adding and linking to contents on the conventional map leads, through itineraries, to a new form of narrative.

In these applications, the debate on the size of territories on the map is rather unimportant. What matters is nodes and the information they contain and agglutinate. And what is even newer: given that itineraries are read sequentially,

the map incorporates time, is read like a literary tale, has a timeline, a sense which it had lacked until now and which allows it to represent a conversation, or at least the informational stock which remains of it.

This radical change in maps, which have gone from depending on sizes and territories to depending on vectors and people, is made dramatically manifest in Twittervision, an application that displays, in real time on a world map, the messages written by Twitter users, showing also the avatars of their authors.

The new cartographic representations have little to do with territories, simply because the main character in the map narrative is no longer the State, defined by its administration of the community that lives within a national territory, but the network, defined by its nodes and the links between them. A network, even if it wished to, would be unable to use the modern metaphors of World Mapper, where information modifies the surfaces of States in order to represent different development variables.

The network and its identity, its network texts according to Quintana's definition, mutate over time, acquire meaning. As opposed to the immutability of national borders, which are meant to represent the stable anatomy of a territory with a historical destiny, network identities use the map to narrate their evolution, their inwards growth, their organic development, their ever-changing borders. The sum of them all will however have no meaning, for one does not start where another ends, but rather they overlap and interconnect. Not even when superimposed will they constitute a world map, as nation States do, but just a node census.

The map for post-national identities will be drawn from a chessboard, and narrated by the chess knight.

Language, Identity, School

The world of distributed networks is necessarily a diverse world. Economic globalisation processes are not proving unidirectional after all, or at least not as unidirectional as many had feared.

Globalisation is really a process of extension of the domain of socioeconomic networks linked to trade that multiplies and moves the compartmentalised diversity of the old international map to a new game board essentially constituted by cities. The world becomes fractal: more or less the same languages will be spoken in all cities, but there will be thousand of languages in every city. That will be the trademark of network cities in a world that will increasingly become more Neo-Venetian than national.

What's interesting about the way in which those networks are already working is that there will be no lingua franca, but rather many languages living alongside each other in every geographic space, as every network and every activity involving a number of nearby networks will have its own language.

This is a phenomenon that can be already observed in the cases of Punjabi, Al-Jazeera Arabic, or Urdu, inextricably linked to trade and financial circuits, to business and identity networks that have spread over the last fifty years in the wake of post-colonial migrations.

It should however be pointed out that, for the time being, these extended networks, linked by a close geographic origin and by a destination social space similar to that in the metropolis, have been unable to solidly configure identities which are already de-territorialised.

It is worth wondering whether the new rise of new forms of Islamic identity, from the renaissance of the concept of *umma*, is but the result of the clash between than inability and the urgent need for the so-called "third generation" to acquire a solid identity that explains its own transnationality and non-territoriality.

Marc Sageman⁷³, who has studies the process whereby young European Muslims turn into Jihadists, has distinguished four stages in the adoption of this umma-based identity, which could hardly be explained without this previous identitarian void:

⁷³ Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*. Pennpress, 2007.

The initial trigger is a sense of moral outrage, usually over some incident of Muslim suffering in Iraq, Palestine, Chechnya or elsewhere. This acquires a broader context, becoming part of what Mr Sageman calls a "morality play" in which Islam and the West are seen to be at war. In stage three, the global and the local are fused, as geopolitical grievance resonates with personal experience of discrimination or joblessness. And finally the individual joins a terrorist cell, which becomes a surrogate family, nurturing the jihadist worldview and preparing the initiate for martyrdom. Many Muslims pass through the first three phases; only a few take the final step.⁷⁴

This indicates a radically new element with respect to the processes of formation of national identities: language is no longer a central determinant of the imagined identity. Another matter is wondering whether network identities, even within broader identities, will be limited by language. In this sense, jihadism is again striking: the jihadist groups which were formed in Europe after 2001 grouped people who shared similar dialects of the same language, finally using for internal communication a standardised version of it. When we talk about the real community, linguistic proximity matters. A lot.

We must not forget either that the State will still exist and that, however transnationalised the networks articulating alternative non-national identities may be, they will have to co-exist with States that will remain linked to a specific language, not only making use of them, but using them to generate the body politic and make it coherent.

In all likelihood, in fifty years' time the State will still have an official language. The main language in London will still be English, but it will serve as a lingua franca to deal with the administration and within certain socioeconomic domains. It will be the lingua franca in the City, but will be spoken on a very basic level in many boroughs.

⁷⁴ "How Jihad Went Freelance", *The Economist*, 31st January 2008.

Thus, the average person will have a familiar language, that of his or her phyle, possibly shared with his or her neighbourhood and virtual conversation and work community, and institutional language with which to communicate with the State, and a third and even a fourth trade languages, which will be used within the economic circuit.

It is perfectly imaginable for an oenologist to use Spanish as his familiar and company language, to live more or less permanently in Brazil, using Portuguese in his dealings with the State, and to be more or less fluent in French – a specialised language of study and professional information – and Italian, the language of investors in the wine sector. This is so imaginable, in fact, that similar cases are already an emerging reality in many South American countries.

What is clear, in any case, is that there is no one language of globalisation. Because globalisation is not a centralisation process, but a distributed process that will multiply the power of real networks over States and State-based identities.

This does not mean that linguistic distribution is random or equalitarian. One does not learn a language out of mere curiosity or cultural contact. It is the network maps of personal and economic globalisation that determine that diversity space that will be the multilingualism of the new century, not national States.

Our lives and ourselves will be defined on the basis of a number of languages, dialects, and *linguas francas*. Irremediably, we will speak them increasingly badly, that is, increasingly further from the immobilistic linguistic ideals of States and Royal Academies. Diversity will make us and we will make diversity. And on the way, languages will become once more a mongrel, fertile continuum, increasingly distant from the State with its territorial mystic and its love for the *purity* of the imagined communities.

In fact, in all likelihood the State will *serve* this process by consolidating the identitarian reproduction of the Neo-Venetian networks which are bound to surpass it.

In the United States there is a huge debate on education outside of schools, both in its communitarian version (*home schooling*) and in its anti-authoritarian one

(*unschooling*).⁷⁵ What is new about this movement in this decade is that, from different points of view, they increasingly use the internet as the articulating element of the children's experience, combined with activities organised by parents' networks, and oriented towards the socialisation of students with other children their age.

In Europe, States are investing more and more in their international school networks, and above all in new *e-learning* strategies to satisfy the educational needs of their expatriate students, and strengthen the presence abroad of their *national* language.

The result is that *transnationalised* people have more and more opportunities to provide their children with an education in their mother language. Paradoxically, as the State reinforces its educational presence beyond its borders, it abandons it within those borders, and the privatisation of education seems unstoppable.

The national State takes part in this apparently contradictory movement, moved by the logic of our times. At the same time as globalisation produces more and more diversity of nationalities within frontiers, it makes expatriates increasingly important. Even though expatriates have less and less biographical relations with the territory managed by the State that gives them their passports, without them it is quite difficult to reach the critical mass of cultural and social penetration that makes it possible to access political influence and export success.

Consequently, European States take such care of the expatriates who use their official languages so determinedly that it seems no exaggeration to assert that in ten years' time, in all globalised metropolises, most of the European transnational networks will have schools in their own languages paid by a State to which they will be more linked through a trade, linguistic, and cultural tradition than through the basic tax link of classical Liberal citizenship. And the networks which have as their native languages those of less powerful or generous States will always

⁷⁵ See Sarah Karnasiewicz's article "Endless summer". <http://dir.salon.com/story/mwt/feature/2005/10/03/unschool/index.html>

have internet-based educational alternatives, which will be complemented with their own community activities.

Thus, the national State and trans-national networks find an odd symbiosis in de-territorialisation: networks gain generational transcendence, they reproduce maintaining the linguistic identity and cultural substrate from which their original identities arose; and the State acquires a social capital and an economic projection which they would be unable to attain by their own means in a world with new maps.

In the same way as religion divided national states into cultural blocs, the foundational culture and linguistic group will draw the trade and social limits of the great Neo-Venetian networks. In the same way as the secularised world never became a churchless world, the world of trans-national identities will witness new symbioses between States and networks parallel to the weakening of the economic and political frontiers of the national age.

In the same way as national identities subsumed religious identities by privatising them without giving up their social cohesion function, trans-national identities will surpass linguistic identities by appropriating them as distinctive features within a generalised multilingualism.

The Horizon of a Post-National World

The conquest of Venice by Napoleon in 1797 is one of the great symbolic scenarios in History. It is important to understand it today in its full significance, as it meant the end of a long historical cycle and the true birth of the Europe of national States. This was a wave which didn't end until the 19th century, with the unification of Italy, and would end with the independence of Norway and of Ireland.

From the beginning of the 15th century, with the expansion of Italy, it was quite clear that the political, economic and identitarian model of the republic constituted a threat to the Papacy, and a dissolvent for Christendom. The Serenissima, which had been able to remain independent both from Byzantium and from the Sacred Empire, had played its own game in the Crusades and based its economy in the fortress of trade networks which regarded the frontier with the Muslim world as no wider gulf than that which separated it from the Christian

kingdoms. Immersed in a Catholic world, Venice however played Vatican politics and even fought theological battles in order to weaken the Byzantine, Roman, and Imperial positions. And Venice played with cunning and intelligence, earning its own survival. It did suffer a long decadence, not as a result of the exhaustion of its political and identitarian model, but due to the peripheral position in which it remained after the discovery of America. And what is most important: when it disappeared, it was not at the hands of Rome, but of Napoleon. It was not a strengthening of Christendom that destroyed Venice or what finally shaped Europe, but national sovereignty, heir in illo tempore to the identity, superimposed onto economic networks and personal careers, that Venice had generated thanks to its collective government system together with the economic management of its markets.

Christendom still exists, and nobody can say that religious identity has not been important in the last two centuries. But after Napoleon's self-coronation in the presence of the Pope, the Church, the churches, have been able to do little in the face of a concept of sovereignty and an identity linked to the national market. Dynastic state and Christendom are no longer politically operative categories. Religion and even monarchy have been *privatised* to the north of the Mediterranean in a stable way.

When we draw a long-term perspective, when we try to imagine a future postnational world, the Venetian analogy seems relevant.

Some authors, such as Xabier Zabalza or Juan de Aranzadi, have been analysing for years the perspective of a *de-nationalisation* of public life and even of personal identity. The former presents this perspective in a rather volutarist, naïve and in a number of senses ahistorical way:

Until the 18th century, the peoples of Europe bled in the name of religion. We Europeans killed each other because we were Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, or Muslim. Until a time came when it was said: "Enough deaths! Let us circumscribe the religious question to the

private domain. Public life must be aconfessional." My theory is that more or less the same thing must happen with nations. During the 19th and 20th centuries, we have killed in the name of the nation, because we were German, French, Spanish, or Basque. Those feelings are all very well, but in private life. Public life, nowadays, should be de-nationalised.

The latter writes from an anti-nationalism with libertarian and rationalist roots which affords glimpses of the PT dream when he builds an ethic that intends to ground happiness not on honour or bravery, not "on dialogue or, much less, violent conflict", but on the fact of "fleeing, moving, changing places and people, living with another group", until every last "illusion of belonging in a people" is dissolved.

What is interesting about both approaches is that the already glimpse a post-national world in which the national feeling, the love for the imagined national community, will be purely private or even non-existent.

We can nowadays see, as we have seen when we spoke about Neo-Venetianism or the ethnic-familiar communities when we talked about linguistic networks, a world in which identity and economy are adopting the structure of a network, bursting into many nodes interconnected into networks that generate identity and overlap with States: nodes and networks which constitute and articulate real communities, whose members know each others even if they have never been physically together.

In practice, the current situation of most of those networks, when they act politically with regard to their environment, is not very different from that of medieval burghs and trade republics.

They already constitute a surpassing of national identity and potentially of the national State itself, inasmuch as their economic metabolism is able to provide their members with certain social and economic guarantees, as well as for their personal careers. But they necessarily turn towards the national State, or rather the national States in which they operate in order to claim basic conditions, access to

infrastructures and autonomy in a way similar to that in which the Hansa cities or the German "palisade burghers" demanded political independence and safety on the roads from the feudal lords and later from dynastic States.

Nowadays we can not only dream of, but predict, new Venices. And, on a small scale, for some, among which are the authors of this books, it is even something that can be experienced.

No doubt, the new Venices will come into conflict with national States, as they follow different logics both in the identitarian and in the economic domains. And for the same reason, they will take sides in internal State battles, gaining influence in them as both kings and sea republics did in the Vatican.

It is foreseeable that State and nationality will remain with us for a long time, in the same way as Christendom still exists and some dynasties still reign, even though reigning involves much less than a few centuries ago, and Christendom is no longer a political or military subject capable of mobilising anyone.

For a long time we will still hear talk about *origins* and *culture*, in the same way as we still have a religion and remain loyal subjects to the king. Giving the lie to Trotsky's famous dictum, history has no dump. Identitarian forms don't just disappear, but endure even after losing their meaning and political operativity.

Hobsbawm describes, with a very vivid metaphor, the terms in which religion was surpassed as a political-communitarian identity two centuries ago:

Religion, from being something like the sky, from which no man can escape and which contains all that is above the earth, became something like a bank of clouds, a large but limited and changing feature of the human firmament.⁷⁶

Let us replace *religion* with *nation* and we will have the horizon of the 21st century. In the same way in which, in less than two century, Spain, France and Italy, from being vague geographic objects came to be political subjects, the awareness of

⁷⁶ E.J. Hobsbawm, *The Bourgeois Revolutions*.

living in a network which is currently emerging will finally constitute new subjects and domains.

Its cultural forms will probably give primacy to the lyrics of networks rather than to the national epic; the intrahistory of subjectivities rather than national history; the relational ethic of merchants rather than the sacrificial morality of the patriotic hero.

But let us not fool ourselves, the future is post-national, but not only trans-national and neo-Venetian. It is also neo-tribal. Social decomposition, *failed* States, para-States such as Hamas or Hizbullah, are the dark face of the crisis in the national logic of the State, the result of its failure to generate identity when social cohesion is unattainable.

Post-Modernity can also be found among the Somali warlords, the Afghan Taliban, or the Malacca pirates. Pre-Modern categories with network technologies. Primitive weapons, light guns, and GPS superimposed to band and horde identities. The new world is not only *Islands in the Net* but also *Black Hawk Down*. It is not only the trans-national conversations in the blogospheres, but also the logic of al-Qaida as the trademark and stamp of a distributed terror that self-organises in a spontaneous and unpredictable way.

The horizon is not one but many, and not all of them are exactly lyrical. It is within that framework of conflict and fermentation where the new Venices will have the chance to experience the future forms of a new global world.

Its developments must not be seen as alternatives to a choice between national State and postnational forms. One cannot choose between the future and the past. Ways of life are chosen from among future narratives.

The most powerful emerging identities nowadays - from al-Qaida to neo-indigenism, from Hamas to the Chechen resistance - reflect, expand and respond to a social decomposition that is hardly justifiable.

From the universe of network logics which are able to claim the future, neo-Venetians, in their different forms and ideologies, do not merely constitute one

more subject, but a different way of understanding 'we'. For the time being, it is the only option that is feasible and constructive, cohesive and concerned with freedom.