The Nation as a Communicative Construct: Toward a Theory of Dialogic Nationalism

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THE NATION AS A COMMUNICATIVE CONSTRUCT:
TOWARD A THEORY OF DIALOGIC NATIONALISM

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By
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ABSTRACT

THE NATION AS A COMMUNICATIVE CONSTRUCT: TOWARD OF THEORY OF DIALOGIC NATIONALISM

By
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May 2014

Dissertation supervised by Janie Harden Fritz, Ph.D.

This project seeks to explore the subject of nation and nationalism in the context of rhetoric and the philosophy of communication. By exploring ancient tropes of nation through rhetorical figures such as Isocrates in Ancient Greece and Cicero in the Roman Republic; through Kant, the Enlightenment and modernity; and, through postmodern interpretations, I attempt to reconceptualize the nation as a communicative construct while pointing to what may lie ahead for the future. By applying Anderson’s (2006) concept of “imagined communities” as an interpretative framework, the nation appears to be a more fluid, contingent space for communication that is grounded in ancient and Enlightenment ideals, but is perhaps reconfiguring in the face of postmodern complexity as advanced by scholars such as Appadurai (1996) and Smith (1979, 1983, 1995, 1998, 2008, 2010). The transition from antiquity and modernity to postmodernity is characterized by what I call a theory of “dialogic nationalism,” which has roots in Martin Buber’s understanding of dialogue (1988, 1996, 2002) and his writings
on nationalism (2005). Dialogic nationalism may serve as an alternative hermeneutic for the nation within the postmodern moment. The experience of international students in the United States and the complex issue of immigration around the world are also explored as practical applications for dialogic nationalism.
DEDICATION

Like the themes that run through the pages of this project, I dedicate this work to six very important individuals who represent my past, present, and future.

**My past** — My grandfather, Thomas Amorosi, and my parents Connie and Carmen DeCrosta, who modeled love and who instilled in me the importance of one’s family, community, country, world, and the human race. Much of what you taught me has resulted in my desire to work for justice and to hopefully make the world a better place, even if only in small ways. Most of all, you sparked a curiosity in me to explore the world and to respect and understand others the best I could. I would not have reached this point in life without the loving world you built for me.

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way you see fit. You amaze me every day; I am so proud of both of you, and cannot wait to see the paths you choose.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Nation as a Communicative Construct: Grounding the Nation in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication and Rhetorical Theory</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imagined, Discursive and Existential-Phenomenological Communities</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple Narratives, Shifting Epistemologies</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dialogic Communication: A Hermeneutic for Postmodern Nationalism</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Project: An Overview</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Isocrates’ Rhetorical Influence on the Idea of Nation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civic Education, Paideia, and Panhellenism</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connecting Isocratic Rhetoric to Nation Studies</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paideia: Culture as a Central Force</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Isocrates’ Panhellenism: A Model for Early Nationalism?</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From Panhellenism to Modern Nationalism: Isocrates’ Influence</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implications</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cicero’s Political Rhetoric: Early Foundations of the Republic</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cicero’s Philosophical and Rhetorical Influences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moving from Isocrates to Cicero</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plato’s Statesman: Cicero’s Guiding Document</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civic Republicanism: Early Notions of a Nation?</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4- Modernity’s Rhetorical Shift:

The Enlightenment and Kant’s Philosophical Influence on the Nation….110

Modern Metaphors of the Nation ................................................................. 112

Modernity as a Centripetal Force ............................................................... 124

The Enlightenment: Kant’s Contribution to the Idea of Nation .................. 126

Lectures on Ethics .................................................................................. 128

Critique of Pure Reason ........................................................................ 132

Perpetual Peace .................................................................................... 136

Origins of Nation: The Philosophical Debate ........................................... 141

Transitions to a Postmodern Hermeneutic of the Nation.......................... 148

Implications .......................................................................................... 151

Chapter 5-The Postmodern Nation: Applying Buber’s Dialogic Theory .......... 154

Habermas’ Critique of Postmodernity: The Postnational Constellation ........... 157

Dialectical Voices of the Postmodern Nation ............................................. 161

Traditions, Culture, Civilization and Diaspora ......................................... 165

The Global Village: An Early Understanding of the Postmodern Nation ....... 171

Grounding Buberian Dialogic Theory ...................................................... 175
Applying Dialogic Theory to Nationalism ................................................................. 185
Buber’s Nationalism .................................................................................................. 192
Implications ............................................................................................................... 200

Chapter 6 - Epilogue - Toward a Theory of Dialogic Nationalism:

Practical Applications ............................................................................................. 202

Indicators of a Changing Nation? ........................................................................... 206

References ................................................................................................................. 211
Chapter 1

The Nation as a Communicative Construct:

Grounding the Nation in Communication and Rhetorical Theory

Throughout history the concept of the nation has textured our notions of communication and community. Disagreement abounds about how and when the nation occupied our social consciousness and constructed the ways in which we have organized our lives in personal, social, political, economic and communicative realms (Anderson, 2006; Gellner, 1983; Kedourie, 1993; Smith, 1983, 1995). The structural components of the nation seem to serve as a panacea for political, social, religious, and communicative problems, while others have seen the nation and nationalism as a significant cause for many political, social, and communicative problems (one must only refer to American Exceptionalism (Bell, 1989; Huntington, 2004; Tyrrell, 1991), Nazism in Germany (Bendersky, 2013), Fascism in Italy (Gregor, 1979), and Afrikaner and African national movements in South Africa (Mandela, 1995), to name a few). Although often viewed as a social and political construct that we often take for granted (see Billig’s concept of “banal nationalism,” 1995), the nation seems to shape the ways in which we view our situatedness within it and communicate across its physical and existential-phenomenological borders to address the complexities and ambiguity of everyday life. This project assumes that the nation plays a significant role in our everyday identities and the ways we choose to communicate and structure our realities.

Although the nation has been analyzed mainly as a historical, political and economic construct, this project considers the nation specifically through a rhetorical/communicative lens that shapes the ways in which we consider our place in the
world as individuals and social beings. We can see the rhetorical qualities of the nation as they have been characterized more recently through tropes such as “imagined” (Anderson, 2006) and “discursive” (Calhoun, 1997) that offer alternative renderings of what has traditionally been framed as the nation. The foundation for this thinking seems to be grounded in rhetorical principles—or, what I view as the formal and informal construction of communication that helps us attain truths by engaging communication to negotiate our realities through social cooperation and communal action. Bitzer’s (1968) and Hauser’s (1999) characterizations of rhetoric resonate with such an understanding.

While defining what he terms “the rhetorical situation,” Bitzer (1968) suggests that, “…rhetoric is a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action,” while Hauser (1999) sees rhetoric not merely as persuasive language, but “the symbolic inducement of social cooperation” (p. 14).

At the moment it seems that the traditional understanding of the nation currently seems to be under scrutiny, as the postmodern moment appears to present a number of challenges. As a historical and academic concept, the postmodern moment is wrought with qualities that express deep rhetorical contingency and fluidity, multiple and varied points of reference, and frequent narrative disagreement about historical, social, political, economic and communicative issues in our world. I will discuss understandings of the postmodern moment through voices such as Lyotard (1984) and Giddens (1990) in more detail later, but this conception of postmodernity underlies the overall purpose and theme of this project since the characteristics of postmodernity create a tension that does not seem to allow ideas of the nation to persist as they have in the past. Rather, the concept
introduces a cacophony of voices that question the traditional understanding of the nation and its legitimacy and utility in our current historical moment (Appadurai, 1996; Habermas, 2001; Smith, 1998). As the postmodern moment and a modern concept of the nation seem to run concurrently, we may be able to find new ways of negotiating national and cultural identities that respond to the nuances of human interaction in the postmodern moment. Questions of the nation and nationalism are foregrounded on a daily basis as we witness and experience the effects of war, terrorism, social, cultural and economic globalization, migrations (forced and voluntary), cultural conflict, and transformed cultural identity. Nations and nationalism provide such unreflective structures in which we function as political and cultural beings that we fail to consider any other system that could manage our political, economic and cultural challenges. This unreflective assumption seems to be a result of modernity.

The nation as a modern construct, emerging and developing with the dawn of modernity in the Enlightenment is a common theme (Anderson, 2006; Gellner, 1983; Habermas, 2001; Kedourie, 1993). Anthologies on the nation and nationalism often begin with Enlightenment thinkers (Dahbour & Ishay, 1995); however, as we will see, the overall concept of the nation has been communicated in cultures and societies as early as the Greeks and Romans. Post-Enlightenment, contemporary renderings of the nation have consistently resulted in a concept that has been appropriated by various intellectual, political, cultural and economic perspectives that tend to place the concept at odds with itself.

Anderson (2006) insists that the concept of the nation is a paradox – although nations carry the political weight to exert powerful influence on people and frame
cultures, theories of nation lack the substantive philosophical ground that permits us to invest a great deal of faith in this social structure that organizes and frequently interprets our lives. “In other words, unlike most ‘isms,’ nationalism has never produced its own grand thinker: no Hobbeses, Tocquevilles, Marxes, Webers. This ‘emptiness’ easily gives rise, among cosmopolitan and polylingual intellectuals, to certain condescension. Like Gertrude Stein in the face of Oakland, one can rather quickly conclude that there is ‘no there there’” (Anderson, 2006, p. 5). For Anderson, the nation is nothing more than an empty concept; he highlights Hobsbawm’s statement that nationalism is “Marxism’s great historical failure” (p. 3). Ernest Gellner (1983) contends that we are better served by studying those scholars who contributed to the understanding of the nation more indirectly such as the philosophers and the rhetoricians, than by those scholars who chose to study the concept of nation itself.

[Nationalism] preaches and defends continuity, but owes everything to a decisive and unutterably profound break in human history. It preaches and defends cultural diversity, when in fact it imposes homogeneity both inside and, to a lesser degree, between political units. *Its self-image and its true nature are inversely related, with an ironic neatness seldom equaled even by other successful ideologies.* Hence it seems to me that, generally speaking, we shall not learn too much about nationalism from the study of its own prophets.” (Gellner, 1983, p. 125, emphasis added)

The internal structure and actual reality of the concepts frequently seem to contradict themselves, and for this reason scholarship and even popular debates on nationalism are widely varied, polarizing and often controversial.
A common feature of the nation and the field of communication is their unreflective, interdisciplinary nature and how they are often embedded into quotidian life without question or contest (Billig, 1995). Thus, a communicative approach is not only unique but also productive when exploring the nation’s and nationalism’s roots in premodern, modern and postmodern orientations. Anderson’s analysis that the idea of nationalism has never produced a “grand thinker” may be pre-emptive or even inaccurate, while Gellner provides an alternative constructive approach for exploring the nation through multiple scholarly viewpoints that may have in fact granted the concept various “grand thinkers” who would have understood this particular concept emerging from questions arising in given historical moments (Arnett & Arneson, 1999). The question rests with whether we would consider ancient thinkers like Isocrates and Cicero as “prophets” of the nation or rather thinkers who discussed such ideas more as products of their overall philosophies. Contemporary scholars rarely refer to these ancient predecessors as thinkers who engaged ideas about the nation, but by taking a more deliberate rhetorical stance, we see that the seeds had been planted and nurtured even within antiquity. More recent scholarship (Cohen, 2000; Smith 1979, 1983, 1995, 1998, 2008, 2010) understands the value of classical political philosophy and the ground from which much scholarship on the nation must begin. This project recognizes the value of ancient rhetoricians in particular, as Isocrates and Cicero provide substantive glimpses into the beginnings of nationalistic thinking and how the nation emerges, not only as a political entity, but also as a rhetorical and phenomenological entity. Scholarship in modernity enlarges the ideas of these ancient scholars, and transforms ideas of the nation and nationalism, as we tend to understand them today. It is important to recognize the
communicative continuity involved in understanding the nation and nationalism and how such continuity in rhetorical representation has shaped the ways in which we have engaged the nation’s power, not only through political, economic and juridical metanarratives, but also in individual, interpersonal and dialogic micronarratives.

Marx’s project is perhaps the most intense modern account of the nation, but clearly it is based on economic principles; the economic construct acts as a hermeneutic entrance through which we can begin to comprehend the complex relationship of individuals, society and the economy under the rubric of nation. For Marx, bourgeois actions and behaviors based in feudalistic economic structures had to be burst asunder and a new organizing entity generated through economic forces and framed by nationalistic, even isolationist tendencies, had to rise up to protect the workers of the world (Findlay, 2004). For Anderson (2006), this Marxist form of the nation never truly takes shape as it focuses purely on economic origins and lacks a substance that addresses real social and human dimensions. Rather, for Anderson, the nation is most significantly a rhetorical phenomenon—“’an imagined political community,’ imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson, 2006, p. 6). Although nations are, at first glance, territorialized within particular physical spaces, this “imagined” character is phenomenological; nations not only exist on land, they live in the minds, hearts and souls of people. Anderson also points out that national identity often supersedes forms of inequality and discrimination that tend to emerge in social contexts within the nation’s imagined borders. For Anderson, in other words,
regardless of conflicts of race, culture or class, individuals and groups alike often are prepared to identify themselves through national citizenship without question. “It is an imagined community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (Anderson, 2006, p. 7).

The validity of Anderson’s claim that the idea of the nation is not substantially philosophically grounded is questionable, however. We can see early versions of the nation even in the ancient world. Aristotle advanced the idea that humans are essentially at their core political creatures: individual beings that are naturally organized into communal structures for the good of the polis. The first lines of Aristotle’s *Politics* bring the communal life of the polis into focus:

Observation tells us that every state is an association, and that every association is formed with a view to some good purpose. I say “good,” because in all their actions all men do in fact aim at some good, that association which is the most sovereign among them all and embraces all others will aim highest, i.e. at the most sovereign of all goods. This is the association which we call the state, the association which is “political.” (Aristotle, 1981, *Politics*, p. 54)

To understand this Aristotelian principle, one could argue that modern (and postmodern citizens, for our purposes of this study) are teleologically pulled toward community life realized in the structure of the nation. For Aristotle (1999), the polis provided the structure in which its members were free to engage in debate and deliberation under which the minimal good could be attained and agreed upon (*Ethics*, p. 2). Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, and Cicero all recognized that the *polis* or *civitas* provided the existential-
phenomenological space in which individuals and groups could strive for justice and rational thought. Just as the family (oikos) provided a similar, but more interpersonal, structure under which individuals could function, the polis provided a larger, public structure under which individuals could work, worship, and interact productively on a larger scale. Although Aristotle saw the polis as a much smaller version of the modern nation-state, he still saw its function as a sovereign political unit (Irwin, 1999, p. 320).

Anderson (2006), perhaps, fails to see the power of Ancient Greek thought as a precursor to the nation, or perhaps considers the polis to be a diluted form of the modern nation. In understanding these scholars’ commentary on how one’s dedication to an identity linked to the nation can often trump other internal social conflicts and inequality, we can explore the idea of the nation in terms of a polis extended to larger land masses and populations. Cohen’s (2000) work on considering Athens as a nation is rife with the complexities of a nuanced society. Cohen engages Anderson’s work to justify Athens’ foundational role in nation studies. Although Anderson does little to acknowledge the value of the ancient world in the historical development of the nation, Cohen employs Anderson’s idea of “imagined communities” to ground his idea of Athens, and thus the polis, as an early form of nation. The nation, even as an extended form of the polis, offers us a social structure under which we can socially and culturally identify where other commonalities may not exist. In other words, we may begin to give the idea of nation-state some philosophical weight by engaging Aristotle’s and Isocrates’ understanding of the polis and Cicero’s analysis of the res publica. This “horizontal comradeship” (Anderson, 2006, p. 7) that supposedly exists within individuals of the modern nation may have also existed in Ancient Greece and Rome.
Imagined, Discursive and Existential-Phenomenological Communities

As mentioned earlier, scholars such as Anderson (2006), Calhoun (1997) have defined the concept of the nation through metaphors of “the imagined community,” and “a discursive construct,” respectively; Deutsch (1966; 1969) sees the nation “a product of social communication,” mostly through the channels of modern communication technologies. He adds, “A Nation, so goes a rueful European saying, ‘is a group of persons united by a common error about their ancestry and a common dislike of their neighbors’” (Deutsch, 1966, p. 3, emphasis added); more specifically, Deutsch defines a nation as, “a people who have hold of a state or who have developed quasi-governmental capabilities for forming, supporting, and enforcing a common will. And a nation-state is a state that has become largely identical with one people” (Deutsch, 1966, p. 19, emphasis added). Deutsch offers a rather straightforward historical, practical understanding of the nation; his understanding is largely framed in modernity as it offers a more technical explanation of the qualities of a nation, while tropes such as “imagined” and “discursive” seem to provide an existential-phenomenological hermeneutic entrance for understanding alternative renderings of what has traditionally been framed as the nation.

In this discussion of “altering reality” (Bitzer, 1968) and “social cooperation,” (Hauser, 1999) communication and rhetoric are the foundations and the channels through which the nation becomes a reality through our communication with others. For these reasons we will see that an application of Anderson’s concept of the “imagined community” (2006) is appropriate for the various forms of the nation and nationalism throughout Western history. Since I will define the nation largely as a communication
construct (not mainly political, economic or cultural), by applying concepts and theories of communication and rhetoric, we will see how our understandings of the nation have begun a transmutation from monologic forms of communication to dialogic forms of communication (Buber, 1988; 1996; 2002).

As a theoretical framework, this project will employ Anderson’s (2006) understanding of the nation as an “imagined community” as a transition toward a theory of the postmodern nation and nationalism. Such a paradigm provides us with substantive scholarship for the way in which the nation might be conceived in postmodernity, after investigating the various iterations of national phenomena in particular historical moments. The “imagined community” has been cited in recent scholarship on the contemporary nation (e.g., Appadurai, 1996; Billig, 1995; Calhoun, 1997; Smith, 1995, 1998, 2010), as it appears to touch on what seems to be most present and salient to our understanding of the development of nations and nationalism—the constitutive power of communicative action. Nations are not the monolithic, permanent structures that we often consider them to be, but rather collective existential-phenomenological entities that live in the hearts and minds of their inhabitants. Once the community is imagined, more permanent political, economic, social and communicative structures emanate to form what we see to be real, tangible entities. Although Anderson’s theory is clearly anchored in post-Enlightenment phenomena, as it depends on the absence of a dynastic ruling structure and the use of modern communication methods such as the printing press, the underlying themes of participatory communicative structures still ring true.

Two elements of Anderson’s conceptual framework are important for our study: that is, the development of print capitalism, and the ability for mass-produced texts to
allow for simultaneous communication across wide geographic areas. Nations are communities imagined in their citizenry because citizens are able to produce and access the same information in their own language over large land areas. The development of the printing press and the ability to distribute this information to multitudes of people throughout one politically unified area not only allowed for the distribution of far-reaching, cohesive messages to one “people” who spoke the same language, but also allowed for a more temporal phenomenon which Anderson outlines as “simultaneity” (Anderson, 2006, p. 24), which he borrows from Benjamin (1973). Simultaneity is the ability for us to construct phenomena of the past and future concurrently in the present moment. Simultaneity plays a significant role in the way people feel as members of groups as large as nations. Here, in the recesses of “suspended” moments divorced from our chronological understanding of time, the idea of an imagined world emerges. This phenomenon, however, is not a metaphysical imagining of our consciousness to construct abstract notions of national structures, but pragmatic displays of how, in fact, we participate in the large context of nation as citizens. This phenomenon of simultaneity channeled through powerful forms of communication, mostly mass communication in this case, reconstructs larger, more tangible ideals of culture and nation. Anderson attributes such phenomena to the power of the novel and the newspaper (p. 25).

The significance of the mass ceremony—Hegel observed that newspapers serve modern man as a substitute for morning prayers—is paradoxical. It is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull. Yet each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he
has not the slightest notion. Furthermore, this ceremony is incessantly repeated at daily or half-daily intervals through the calendar. What more vivid figure for the secular, historically clocked, imagined community can be envisioned. (Anderson, 2006, p. 35)

Anderson (2006) places this phenomenon at the dawn of the Enlightenment when the understanding of cosmology and history were no longer conceptualized as one integrated identity (pp. 22; 35); rather, the invention of new communication technologies, particularly print media, allowed for the two to live in separate realms, where history began to create new perceptions of peoples’ place in their worlds. One might argue, that ancient rhetorical practices (which were often considered the basis for all forms of education by orators like Isocrates and Cicero) are perhaps an early form of communication that led to this simultaneity as a driving force for constituting political, social, and cultural communities. We see the idea of community formation through moral rhetorical practices emerge consistently throughout the works of Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, and Cicero that focus on politics and rhetoric itself, to name a few. As an example, Nichols (1987) points out that, “In writing a Rhetoric about speech that aims at the advantageous and the just, Aristotle is therefore trying to strengthen political community…The potential harmfulness of rhetoric is outweighed by its potential good. If rhetoric does unite men in speech about the advantageous and the just, it would promote political community” (p. 676). For the purposes of this project, I extend the notion of political community to that of the nation in modernity and postmodernity.

Much scholarly inquiry, such as Cohen’s and Nussbaum’s (1996) volume For Love of Country, Benhabib’s (2006) Another Cosmopolitanism, and Appiah’s (2005)
Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers, has posited cosmopolitan thought as a counterpoint to nationalism through themes of patriotism (a form that takes into the account the need to rebuke radical isolationist patriotism), hospitality to cultural others, and ethical approaches for understanding the Other. Nationalism is often lurking deep in the subtext of each of these conversations, but little work in the field of communication or, more particularly, the philosophy of communication has called the idea of nationalism to the forefront as a communicative construct that openly affects the ways in which we talk about the world around us, our very existence in that world, and the existence of the self in relation to the Other in the world. At best, some scholars have explored the rhetorical power behind nationalist sentiment (Shields, 1974; Breuning and Ishiyama, 1998; Van Noije and Hijmans, 2005), but few have constructed a theory that offers an active response to the transformative historical moment of postmodernity where national structures appear more tenuous and, quite possibly, intercultural. One exception is Appadurai’s (1996) inquiry into what he views as the slowly disintegrating character of the nation, on which I will focus in more detail later. At first glance, we can credit the growth of communication technologies, transportation and the global economy for this transition, but if we are to excavate a bit deeper, we might find more substantive theoretical constructs that offer an alternative understanding of why and how such a phenomenon is emerging.

There is a need to explore this tension with nation itself and how we, as a human family, can begin to transform traditional ideas of the nation into postmodern identities that speak directly to the challenges, alliances, and negotiations of contemporary life. Nationalism has been a rhetorical trope through which we seek solace, identify our
friends, and organize against our enemies; yet, it is axiomatic that nationalistic, political issues have been the subject of the most powerful rhetoric ever spoken, redirecting, recasting, and reconstituting the world in which we live. One must only refer to a few of the influential rhetoric and speeches of national leaders such as Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Adolf Hitler, and Benito Mussolini (Bytwerk, 2008; Gilbert, 2012; Safire, 2004; Welch, 1993) to understand how the role of language and rhetoric has deployed entire societies toward communicative action at time of conflict and national pride. At the center of this rhetoric resides the existential-phenomenological entity of the nation. There seems to be a teleological power in the phenomenology of nationalism; however, this power is currently questioned in a context of connected, but competing, often conflicting, narratives (Lyotard, 1984; Appadurai, 1993; 1996; Arnett and Arneson, 1999). These narratives are products of communicative acts, whether through the increasing complexity and frequency of culturally diverse human encounters or the proliferation of highly advanced technologies that change the way we communicate with those within and outside of our own national structures. In other words, we must ask: How can communication theory help us explore traditional understandings of the nation and offer an understanding of the emergence of the postmodern nation? How does a postmodern perspective shift our traditional understanding of the nation and nationalism? How can the philosophy of communication and communication theory situate an interpretative theory of the postmodern nation that responds to the current historical moment?
Multiple Narratives, Shifting Epistemologies

I hope to answer these questions by focusing this project will focus on rhetorical/historical understandings of the nation within antiquity, modernity and postmodernity. I will attempt to frame modernity and postmodernity through the eyes of Giddens (1990) and Lyotard (1984) to situate the question at hand. Both scholars have helped define these significant historical moments that have textured the ground from which communication about the nation emerges.

Giddens’ (1990) sociological inquiry into the concept of modernity illuminates various characteristics of modernity and how it has guided the direction in which institutions and people have developed since the Enlightenment. He points out that the emergence of modernity can, in fact, be pinned to a particular place and time—17th century Europe, which often simplifies the complexities and social phenomena that began to emerge, and according to him, continue to emerge today. However, Giddens believes that modernity must be defined in terms of particular characteristics that emerged from this rhetorical shift and continue to persist until today. According to Giddens, time-space distanciation (p. 14), the disembedding of social systems (p.21), and the reflexivity of knowledge (p. 36) are three phenomena that have contributed to the emergence and establishment of modern norms.

These concepts are particularly significant because of the way modernity is thought to have reorganized the existential-phenomenological construct of time and place and how this bifurcation, which did not exist in premodern societies, altered the ways in which we perceived social phenomena and our place in them. Such a phenomenon encouraged individuals to be more “bounded” to certain modern social constructs such as
the nation; perhaps the most obvious form of modern institutionalization thus far.

“Modern societies (nation-states), in some respects at any rate, have a clearly defined boundedness. But all societies are also interwoven with ties and connections which crosscut the sociopolitical system of the state and the cultural order of the ‘nation.’ Virtually no pre-modern societies were as clearly bounded as modern nation-states” (p. 14). “Disembedding” is the concept that Giddens describes as a certain form of “lifting out of social relations from local context of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space” (p. 21). Disembedding takes on two different forms, symbolic tokens, much like the complex system of money which symbolizes value but is not the value of something itself, and expert systems, or the reliance on professional knowledge that reassures us that information is valid and reliable without questioning its legitimacy. We rely on these disembedded systems and trust them without question (pp. 21-29).

**Reflexivity** is how we epistemologically systematize our world based on the knowledge we gain from the “lifting out” and bracketing of particular social phenomena (p. 36). This reflexivity alters the role of tradition in that it radically shifts the ways people have engaged the past and focuses them more on the future. Social decisions and human behavior become a result of this reflexive knowledge and, in this sense, knowledge is driven by rational claims backed by clear evidence. In other words, grand narratives are guided by rational knowledge that is a result of bracketed social phenomena on which we choose to focus our energies.
Postmodernity, on the other hand, is often viewed with the end of this foundationalism within modernity as well as the “end of history” (Giddens, 1990, p. 50). Giddens (1990) interprets postmodernity as something very specific and pins it to:

[The fact] that we have discovered that nothing can be known with certainty, since all pre-existing ‘foundations’ of epistemology have been shown to be unreliable; that ‘history’ is devoid of any teleology and consequently no version of ‘progress’ can plausibly be defended; and that a new social and political agenda has come into being with the increasing prominence of ecological concerns and perhaps of new social movements generally. (p. 46)

Postmodernity seems to lack the rigid certitude and the epistemological confidence that seems to be a feature of modernity; rather, it throws us into a realm of contingency where the modern structures that we depend on for knowledge and action may no longer apply. These aspects that emerge in postmodernity may force us to reconsider the epistemological, ontological and existential structures of our world.

Having identified postmodernity in the face of modernity, Giddens (1990) believes that we are not actually involved in a clear historical break from modernity, but that perhaps these characteristics are more accurately representative of what we might consider to be “late modernity,” since the ability to do such a thing would be anti-postmodern, by definition. More importantly, these uncertainties about human reasoning and empiricism were really an essential part of the foundational thinking of modernity. Rather, than the absolute end of modernity and the dawn of postmodernity, Giddens sees this more specifically as “modernity coming to understand itself” (p. 48). These elements from Giddens offer helpful insight for our understanding of modernity; these particular
characteristics that he identifies as part and parcel of modernity all point to the existence of what we refer to as grand narratives that guide people and social knowledge deeply. This academic question regarding the end of modernity and the emergence of postmodernity is an important one, but for the purposes of this study, it is necessary to focus on how Giddens understands the shift in the way modernity has been characterized and how it has been understood. Most importantly, Giddens sees these changing characteristics that seem to explain modernity more accurately occurring in the power relations of the West with the rest of the world. These power relations that are a result of a developing modernity are, in fact, implicating the nation and referring to characteristics of what we now call globalization (p. 52). Regardless of how we choose to define it, rhetoric plays a role in redefining how we understand society and actively engage communication, from the interpersonal to the international. This paradigmatic shift shapes the ways in which we understand the nation.

Lyotard (1984), on the other hand, views postmodernity as a more imminent emerging phenomenon. In his seminal work, “The Postmodern Condition,” Lyotard describes postmodernity as a moment in which knowledge is framed by an “incredulity toward metanarratives” (p. xxiv). Unlike the modernist project of constructing a centralized, monolithic, universal narrative that guided our epistemological stance, postmodernity recognizes a moment when critical, reflexive, hermeneutic knowledge essentializes the organic whole of social life (Lyotard, 1984). This organic quality is interpreted through systems of complexity and difference that are characteristic of the postmodern moment. “Postmodern knowledge is not simply a tool of the authorities; it refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the
incommensurable. Its principle is not the expert’s homology, but the inventor’s paraology” (Lyotard, 1984, p. xxv).

Postmodern knowledge questions the legitimacy of social order as it is rhetorical and discursive in nature and lacks a central metanarrative to which the modern framework refers. Rather, it lives in the grassroots that generate civil societies and, to paraphrase Hauser’s (1999) concept, “vernacular publics” that force us to consider alternative modes of social organization through discursive practices. For Lyotard, the internal continuity of the postmodern moment not only affects culture, institutions, and how we communicate, but also the very structure and narrative of the nation as we understand it in modernity.

For the mercantilization of knowledge is bound to affect the privilege the nation-states have enjoyed, and still enjoy, with respect to the production and distribution of learning. The notion that learning falls within the purview of the State, as the brain or mind of society, will become more and more outdated with the increasing strength of the opposing principle, according to which society exists and progresses only if the messages circulating within it are rich in information and easy to decode. The ideology of communicational ‘transparency’ which goes hand in hand with the commercialization of knowledge, will begin to perceive the State as a factor of opacity and ‘noise.’ (Lyotard, 1984, p. 5)

Lyotard situates public discourse and the diversity of messages within those discourses at the center of a transforming idea of nation, which is situated within these conceptions of postmodernity. Throughout this project, I will attempt to characterize the “postmodern nation” as a phenomenon that is indeed “affected by the mercantilization of knowledge”
and morphs into an entity that is perhaps a product of “opacity and noise,” in Lyotard’s terms. Access to information and how that information is conveyed in the post-industrial, postmodern moment undermines our current notion of national structures and forces us to look beyond for systems, or, better, multiple narratives, that will tell the story of complexity and multiplicity while recognizing the need to organize learning and knowledge under a new rubric. Lyotard acknowledges the dissenters who believe that “the breaking up of the grand Narratives” will disrupt society beyond repair, but contests this notion, recognizing that modernity is not the only answer to utopian notions of “organic” societies (p. 15). On the contrary, postmodernity engages social “organicism” more readily and realistically than modernity and, as a result, may transform the very notion of the nation-state, nationalism and national identity, as we know it.

President Barack Obama’s inaugural speech on January 20, 2009, exemplifies this dialectical tension of a modernist nation and nationalism situated in postmodern principles. Attempting to call forth a new era of optimism in the face of daunting political, economic and cultural crises, Obama is compelled to invoke traditional, some might say, modernist, language and images of nationalism while recognizing concomitantly the shifting nature of modernity.

What the cynics fail to understand is that the ground has shifted beneath them, that the stale political arguments that have consumed us for so long, no longer apply… Our challenges may be new, the instruments with which we meet them may be new, but those values upon which our success depends, honesty and hard work, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism—these things are old. These things are true. They have been the quiet force of
progress throughout our history.” (emphasis added, New York Times, January 20, 2009)

Obama emphasizes the liminal (to borrow Turner (1964) and Van Gennep’s (1960) term) moment in which we live—a need to “shift the ground beneath us” while continuing to reflect on the universal qualities that have grounded us in modernity since antiquity and the Enlightenment. Obama’s campaign focused almost incessantly on the metaphor of change, but the fact may be that this is more a moment of “prudent change,” since we must still rely on those virtues and values that have grounded us for so long.

Nevertheless, rhetoric like Obama’s is symbolic of a new transitional moment, where the dialogic “between” (Buber, 2002) can become powerful and real; such rhetoric plays directly into the transformative character of the nation and the power of nationalism in postmodernity.

Nationalism continues to command substantive power in all levels of political, social and economic life despite its amorphous, loosely-defined nature (Anderson, 2006); but, more accurately, the nation is a genuine ontological expression of how we are encouraged to live in communion with each other while simultaneously emphasizing a world of discrete cultural, political and economic differences. One must look only to recent international events such as September 11, 2001, to understand the power of nationalism and national identity in the face of threats and contrasting narratives presented to us through alternative, “other,” frameworks (Huntington, 2004). In these cases, nationalism becomes what seems to be a natural human response to threat and outside pressures. Images of homeland are reified in tangible institutions such as the Department of Homeland Security that were created in response to extra-national
pressures like the tragedies of September 11, 2001. When our governments and the public sphere respond to conflict by enacting institutions and modes of thinking that reinforce nationalistic thinking, it is difficult to accept that the nation-state, especially in terms of power and protection, may transform in reaction to a shift in epistemological and ontological narratives. I would suggest, however, that the postmodern moment announces epistemological and ontological narratives for the condition of the nation and nationalism that encourage us to recast traditional understandings and the current condition of the conceptualization of the nation.

As a powerful rhetorical device, one hermeneutic entrance into understanding the nuanced historical and philosophical underpinnings of the nation, or what some scholars would consider the lack thereof (Anderson, 2006 p. 5), could be to explore the rich metaphors of the nation throughout history, particularly through the words and conceptual constructs of the rhetoricians who were embedded in their particular time and place. By examining these various rhetorical metaphors from the Greeks, Romans, modern, and postmodern scholars, we begin to see common themes, but also transitional moments—the rhetorical turns—that have shaped the conceptualization of nation in various ways, all characterized in persuasive and influential ways that work powerfully because of their incorporation into the universe of discourse of scholars and citizens. Although Anderson’s main objective was to show us how the nation as an “imagined community” is largely a product of modernity, we can apply the overall concept of an imagined community to earlier forms of communication throughout history.

An existential-phenomenological stance allows us to bracket theories of the nation to permit them to emerge as ideas that respond to the current historical moment to create
ground for taking action to improve public (and private) life. By bracketing these theories we can limit their totalizing effect and allow a new understanding to emerge.

Poststructuralist approaches reflect the contingent, diverse world in which we live; themes of “post-modernity” (Lyotard, 1984), a “post-national” society (Appadurai, 1993), “post-colonial” environments (Appiah, 1991), or “post-ethnic” contexts (Hollinger, 2006) have emerged with vigor and have been accepted throughout the academy. These rhetorical tropes of “post-ness” intensify our need to comprehend existential-phenomenological reality of change in social life. Moving beyond antiquity and modernity, post-positivist and post-structuralist approaches are indicators that we, as a society and interconnected world, have begun to understand what intercultural complexities present to us and how they offer a particular hermeneutic to open up a world in flux wrought with contingency and possibility—if, in fact, we are open to experience such phenomena. These problems are not new, but rather framed within a new, more realistic and pragmatic context that expresses not what “is,” but what “might be” in a complex world of multiplicity and cultural diversity. The concept of nation rests on the cusp of this “post-ness,” as it seems to struggle between acknowledging its deep roots in linear, unidirectional, monologic modernity while actively living in a world of holistic, multidirectional, dialogic postmodern uncertainty.

In this exploration of the nation as a rhetorical structure we will examine particular metaphors and thinkers in the development of nationalistic thought. This study will not be an exhaustive historical analysis, but rather an exploration of important rhetorical turns in our thinking about the nation, or the “imagined community.” Although Anderson parallels contemporary ideals of the nation with metaphors of antiquity, such as
the fall of the “dynastic realm” and the development of “print capitalism,” the metaphor of his “imagined community” still holds true when we apply it to concepts of rhetorical/civic education as the basis for the nation as it is grounded deeply in communicative culture. We will explore earlier rhetorical understandings of communal life, how its boundaries are imagined and how they contribute to our current context and the postmodern iteration.

These glimpses provide an understanding of how the modern nation has developed and how its foundation is formed in communicative action, which often is taken for granted in our thinking about the nation. Such an exploration holds implications for educational, geopolitical, economic and cultural spaces. Most importantly, this study will attempt to offer a postmodern understanding of the nation as opposed to the current context of our world that continues to be dominated by Enlightenment thinking.

**Dialogic Communication: A Hermeneutic for Postmodern Nationalism**

To what extent, then, can communication framed by the nation be perceived as monologic or dialogic communication? Martin Buber (2002) outlines his idea of dialogic communication as an existential-phenomenological occurrence in everyday life. It is through dialogic communication that we engage the world and respond to the Other; meaning emerges “between Man and Man,” in the communities in which we live, not in a vacuum of solitary confinement (p. 23). Buber defines dialogic communication in relation to what he calls technical dialogue and monologic communication.

There is genuine dialogue—no matter whether spoken or silent—where each participant really has in mind the other or others in their present and particular
being and turns to them with the intentional of establishing a mutual relation between himself and them. There is technical dialogue, which is prompted solely by the need of objective understanding. And there is monologue disguised as dialogue, in which two of more men, meeting in space, speak each with himself in strangely tortuous and circuitous ways and yet imagine they have escaped the torment of being thrown back on their own resources. The first kind, as I have said, had become rare; where it arises, in no matter how “unspiritual” a form, witness is borne on behalf of the continuance of the organic substance of the human spirit. The second belongs to the inalienable sterling quality of “modern existence.” But real dialogue is here continually hidden in all kinds of odd corners and, occasionally in an unseemly way, breaks surface surprisingly and inopportuneley — certainly still oftener it is arrogantly tolerated than downright scandalizing — as in the tone of a railway guard’s voice, in the glance of an old newspaper vendor, in the smile of a the chimney-sweeper. (Buber, 2002, p. 22)

This notion of dialogic versus monologic communication has been appropriated throughout the academy to describe what we might popularly call not only “effective” communication, but also meaningful communication guided by an ethical orientation (Anderson, Arnett & Cissna, 1994; Anderson, Baxter & Cissna, 2004; Arnett, 2004). Although monologue and technical dialogue are important in the realm of human life and action in appropriate contexts (Arnett, Fritz & Bell, 2009), a dialogic orientation provides a fitting approach to the current project. Dialogic communication provides substantive ground for a study about the postmodern nation, as it contextualizes and situates an
understanding of contemporary nationalism within the disciplinary domain of communication theory.

Buber (2005) also wrote prolifically on issues of nationalism in regards to the Palestinian question in the early part of the 20th century. Buber’s philosophy of dialogic communication pervades his work on nationalism, and like many of these aforementioned scholars, Buber views nationalism as a necessary spiritual and pragmatic force that organizes and gives credence to certain political goals; however, he sees a strong human tendency for the misappropriation of such powerful ideas (p. 54). Nationalism does not mean that individuals and society as a whole must only look within for answers; instead, the nationalism that actually creates the possibility of difference based on physical borders and human sentiment concomitantly allows us to exist in a dialogic world of discrete difference. We must gaze within to see clearly without, but we should not remain only within (pp. 57; 61; 86). An isolated form of nationalism only results in what Buber calls “false nationalism” and misleading ideologies (p. 54). Here, dialogue seems to allow nationalism to tell a more accurate story within the competing narratives of a postmodern world.

My goal will be to understand how historical moments such as postmodernity, manifested in its incessant multiplicity and lack of common philosophical center, convey monologic or dialogic forms of communication as a substrate for philosophical and applied considerations of the nation and nationalism. Before we attempt to interpret the postmodern nation, however, we should explore other pertinent historical moments that contribute to our thinking about it.
The Project: An Overview

For the purposes of this project, I view the nation as a communicative, discursive public phenomenon that allows private citizens to engage issues of belonging and identity rhetorically within strongly defined political, social, economic and communicative boundaries. Following the work of Anderson (2006), Calhoun (1997) and Appadurai (1996), although bound to physical characteristics in our current understanding, the nation seems to be defined more by imagined, existential-phenomenological horizons that offer guidelines for interaction with cultural, political, social and economic selves and others. In this regard, physical boundaries become less stringent, more contingent and permeable. Nationalism, then, is the intellectual and emotional manifestation of that reality in the hearts and minds of that nation’s citizens and interlocutors. It is important to keep in mind that the terms nation and nationalism are often conflated in writings on the subject. Although nationalism is often the sentiment and reaction regarding one’s nation, the term nationalism is often employed to speak about the study of the nation itself (Dahbour & Ishay, 1995). In short, any study of the communicative nature of the nation will ultimately affect the ways in which nationalism emerges and takes shape.

Why phenomenology? Phenomenology as applied to communication theory and research has become an acceptable method for exploring issues of communication and human interaction. Husserl (2012) and, later, Heidegger (2010), provided a framework for appropriating phenomenology to the field of communication, but in the 1970s communication scholars seemed to become particularly interested in exploring a hermeneutic for the phenomenology of communication (Hawes, 1977), its use for the study of organizational communication (Sanders, 1982), understanding identity issues
and social cooperation issues (Gresson, 1978), and the dynamics of interpersonal communication and dialogue (Arnett, 1981). “Phenomenology seeks to make explicit the implicit structure and meaning of the human experience. It is the search for ‘essences’ that cannot be revealed by ordinary observation” (Sanders, 1982, p. 354).

Phenomenology offers an alternative for the study of human communication because it takes a different stance from traditional, positivistic approaches where the research scholar is often seen as an onlooker, prefiguring the world that he is about to investigate (Hawes, 1977). The phenomenologist on the other hand, “assumes the world is perpetually constituted, and ‘what is real’ and ‘how realness is accomplished’ become the phenomena of interest” (Hawes, p. 35). In a phenomenological methodology then, researchers are not only onlookers, but also participants in the world that is constantly constituted and reconstituted before them. Phenomenology is more concerned with ontology and what and how something is, as opposed to epistemology alone and why something is (Hawes, 1977). Holstein and Gubrium (1994) explain that Schutz (1964) brought Husserlian phenomenology into contemporary research methods and gave it credence as a method that investigates the world as it actually is: “Schutz (1964) argued that the social sciences should focus on the ways that the life world—that is, the experiential world every person takes for granted—is produced and experienced by its members” (p. 263). This is accomplished through the phenomenological approach of “bracketing” certain phenomena to better explore that which reveals itself in certain instances.

Although scholars have referred to phenomenology applied in such a way as “qualitative research” (Sanders, 1982), this qualitative research seems to move beyond
what is traditionally considered to be qualitative methods because it is energized by philosophical inquiry. At moments during this study, I refer to the phenomenological qualities of the nation and nationalism as an attempt to describe the nation as an existential, ontological, constitutive phenomenon that is a product of communicative and rhetorical practices. Hawes (1977) provides an explanation for the reason that this study can benefit from a phenomenological perspective grounded in the study of communication:

By viewing human communication phenomenologically and putting commonsense assumptions out of play, one achieves the perspective of an anthropological stranger. Once the familiar is rendered strange, the historicality of the phenomenon—its horizons of possibilities in its past and future—stand out in sharper relief. Hermeneutic explication interprets the now strange communication by displaying it and its implicit suppositions in an understandable fashion; understandable to the speaker as the contemporaneously present non-speakers.

(Hawes, 1977, p. 33)

I hope to not only “bracket” the idea of the nation as a communicative construct and strip it of the common sense, shared notion the we have of the nation, but also in the spirit of existential phenomenology, to analyze the ontological questions of the nation that ultimately affect human life. An existential-phenomenological perspective expands on the notion of phenomenology discussed above because the existentialist approach to phenomenology allows us to move beyond an ontology that only takes into the consideration the metaphysical, spiritual realm to one that considers the “wholeness of the person” (Buber, 2002, p. 192), or in this case, the wholeness of human life. Martin
Buber’s concept of dialogue is deeply grounded in existential phenomenology because of the manner in which his form of dialogic communication relegates these ontological questions that emerge through acts of communication to concrete human beings in their lived experience (Czubaroff, 2000, p. 169).

This project will seek to establish rhetorical and philosophical ground for recasting theories of the nation in a postmodern framework by illuminating theories of rhetoric and communication throughout the Western canon. I will not attempt to reiterate a chronological history of the nation and nationalism, but rather point to its power as rhetorical and cultural currency that has emerged in selected historical moments. Most importantly, we will see that the nation offers an existential-phenomenological, and more significantly, existential-spiritual power that emerges from and offers responses to ideas of belonging and interaction with others. We refer to ancient rhetorical scholarship because of the philosophical and rhetorical foundation it provides for discussions of the modern nation and emerging trends in nationalism. Classical rhetoric, though seemingly distant in time and space, provide us with “elaborate theories” that ground contemporary rhetorical situations and allow to analyze discourse productively (Welch, 1990, p. 5).

This attempt to appropriate ancient rhetoric for the purposes of this project fall under what Welch (1990) coins the Dialectic School of Classical Rhetoric, which relies “not on discovering palpable rhetorical ‘reality’ out there, but concentrate[s] instead on contemporary epistemological constructions that in turn are capable of producing an interpretation of classical rhetoric” (p. 11). My hope is that we can begin to unravel the problem of nation and nationalism through a rhetorical and communicative lens that
begins with those in the Western trope who have essentially established the bedrock on which the tenets of nationalism has been constructed, which includes those in antiquity.

In Chapter 2, I will explore the idea of the nation as it was communicated rhetorically by the single figure who might be considered not only the “Father of Liberal Education,” (Kennedy, 1994, p. 46), who consistently communicated about the ideal of panhellenism—Isocrates. Isocrates offers us a point of departure from which we can explore ideas of the nation and how they are formed through rhetoric in antiquity. Mostly, we will find that Isocratean rhetoric, a staple of ancient rhetorical theory based in logos and phronesis, was an influential method in the way understandings of the nation and nationalism were carried into the Roman Republic and modernity. For Isocrates, rhetoric serves as the guiding principle for civic education, and therefore for the moral and political development of the polis. Cohen (2000) believes that the Greek polis is actually a viable social structure that helps us understand earlier forms of the nation through the ways in which it influenced its own citizens as well as those living outside of the polis. Paideia, a centrifugal social force, as described by Jaeger (1967; 1986), pervades every element of Isocratean rhetoric and forms the foundation for his ideas about education and culture, and ultimately his ideas about nation and nationalism. As a nuanced approach to understanding culture, paideia becomes an essential element in later understandings of the nation.

In Chapter 3, I will explore how the Greek understanding of the polis carries through to the Roman Republic to affect ideas of nation and what constitutes a viable republic. Cicero, one of Isocrates’s intellectual followers (Hubbell, 1913), continues this conversation about nation in terms of citizenship in the civitas—Rome’s polis. I will
attempt to understand how Rome continues to develop ideals of the nation through
Cicero’s understanding of civic republicanism and the function of the state, as influenced
not only by Isocrates, but also by foundational philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle.
Civic republicanism’s focus on justice and the common good echoes goals similar to
those of the polis. As an influential orator, Cicero advanced ideas of civic responsibility
and equality through the construct of the res publica—the republic. Again, I turn to
Anderson’s (2006) concept of the “imagined community” to understand Cicero’s res
publica as a nation, using civic republicanism as its philosophical ground. As we will
see, republicanism reflects some of the central ideals of structural diversity and
multiplicity centered on a common good, but differentiated by Cicero’s focus on human
laws embodied by natural law as a guiding principle. I will also briefly explore Cicero’s
influence on important Christian rhetoricians, such as Lactantius (1964) and St.
Augustine (1984), who would go on to explore the late Roman Empire and Christianity’s
role in the development of the nation. My goal in Chapter 3, as it was in Chapter 2, is to
set the stage for the idea of the nation and principles of nationalism as rhetorical
structures.

In Chapter 4, I will focus on how these ideas transformed into what we
understand to be the nation and nationalism today. It seems to be widely accepted in the
academy (e.g., Carr, 1945; Kedourie 1993; Anderson, 2006) that the current form of the
nation is a direct result of rhetorical forces of the Enlightenment and the work of key
philosophical figures such as Kant (1963, 1990, 2003) and his contemporaries. The
Enlightenment provided the context for a major rhetorical shift in the way most scholars
and everyday citizens perceived the structure of the nation; the notion of the nation was
viewed as the driving force behind events such as the French and American Revolutions, which were enactments of human freedom and democracy in a struggle for nations of their own. I will touch on thinkers such as Hobbes (1968), Renan (1995), and Mazzini (1995) to understand how the nation was situated in the modern moment and to explore how they configured the nation as an existential-phenomenological expression of “imagined” human communities and identity. Kedourie (1993) contends that Kant is the central figure in shifting the philosophical conversation about the way we think about the nation in modernity and how it is expressed in these terms; however, other voices such as Gellner (1983, 1994) will challenge this notion that Kant played such a significant role and will introduce other social forces that seemed to be more significant.

Postmodernity provides an important philosophical and rhetorical framework that influences the nature of our communication, which in turn shapes the construction of our world. In Chapter 5, I will explore how postmodernity may affect the way we perceive current understandings of the nation. The nation becomes a community that is “imagined” through a new lens, a shifting epistemology that influences the ways in which we interact interpersonally, interculturally and socially. I will explore how scholars like Habermas (2001), Appadurai (1996), and Huntington (1996) characterize the postmodern nation, which seems to be a direct expression of narrative disagreement and virtue contention. In response to this deconstructed version of the nation, I will also engage Martin Buber’s dialogic theory as a hermeneutic entrance to the postmodern nation, and attempt to provide a possible communicative framework within the seemingly discordant, but productive, tension of postmodernity.
My intention is to fill a particular lacuna in nation and nationalism studies through the lens of philosophy of communication. Schlesinger (2001) suggests that scholars such as Anderson and Deutsch are focused more on “communications” (mediagenerated forms of communication at a macro-level) than a “philosophy of communication.” Although these thinkers’ ideas certainly contribute to studies in the philosophy of communication, it seems that very few have taken the tack of deliberately attempting to interpret the concept of the nation within philosophical and phenomenological frameworks. By exploring the nation within these various historical-metaphorical contexts from the ancients to postmodernity, we may find ground for moving beyond traditional theories of the nation, whether they are historical, political, social, economic or even based in “communications.” We may also find elements for justifying the promotion of a theory of nation and nationalism framed by dialogic theory, often overlooked in debates about the nation and international communication. In short, it seems that the conversation about the salience of the nation in everyday life is still very present in contemporary discourse. As a philosophy of communication scholar, I hope that these shifting philosophical contexts can guide us toward an understanding of the nation that responds to this historical moment.
Chapter 2

Isocrates’ Rhetorical Influence on the Idea of Nation:
Civic Education, Paideia and Panhellenism

To begin, we turn to Ancient Athens and the metaphor of the polis as our first step in this exploration. The polis itself provides ground from which can begin to understand early concepts of the nation (Cohen, 2000). We must keep in mind, however, that our contemporary understanding of nation is a construct of modernity, developing in the Enlightenment, and any reference to nation should be recast within the understanding of the polis in its historical moment. The polis, understanding the polis as a national structure, and Isocrates’ emphasis on the power of language and the educational use of that language to influence society in productive ways allowed the imagination of the polis as a national structure as we understand it today.

Aristotle’s Politics (1981; 1998) provides us with a descriptive account through which we can structure and engage a community of thinkers, workers, and outsiders within a framework of communal action. Arendt (1998) tells us that Aristotle characterizes the polis as a mechanism for communal action: “…[T]he political realm rises directly out of acting together acting together, the ‘sharing of words and deeds.’ Thus action not only has the most intimate relationship to the public part of the world common to us all, but is the one activity which constitutes it” (p. 199). Arendt highlights this Aristotelian idea that humans are essentially, at their core, political creatures – individual beings that are naturally organized into communal structures for the good of the polis, the common good (Aristotle, 1981; 1998).
To understand this Aristotelian principle, one could argue that citizens are teleologically pulled toward community life realized in the structure of the state. For Aristotle (1999), the polis provided the structure in which its members were free to engage in debate and deliberation under which the minimal good could be attained and agreed upon (Ethics, pp. 1-2). The polis provided the existential-phenomenological space in which individuals and groups could strive for justice and rational thought. Just as the family (oikos) provided a similar, but more interpersonal, structure under which individuals could function, the polis provided a larger, public structure under which individuals could work, worship, and interact productively beyond the family and personal relationships. Although Aristotle saw the polis as a much smaller version of the modern nation-state, he still saw its function as a sovereign political unit (Irwin, 1999, p. 320).

Communitarian scholars like Alasdair MacIntyre (1984) are important contributors to this conversation because they ultimately reject communicative norms that emerge in modernity and encourage us to return to an understanding of traditional and ancient virtues that existed in the polis—a “face to face” society that readily allowed for the creation of a moral, democratic society that was interactive, intimate, and community-based (Cohen, 2000; Clayton, 2006). In the Politics, Aristotle defines the polis in terms of its territorial size (not too small or large), and the fact that its citizens know one another; if not, the essence of the polis is impossible (Aristotle, 1998, p. 199). (Arendt also offers a perspective of the Greek understanding of the population of the polis and its political effectiveness (1998, p. 43)). However, Cohen (2000) extends this notion of the Athenian polis by identifying its form as an *ethnos*, which is more closely related to the concept of
the nation as we understand it today. For Cohen, polis is often a confusing term that applies to all levels of society simultaneously and does not offer a sense of continuity, which Athenians considered to be the true essence of their society. For the purposes of this project, the Athenian polis may be understood as a form of nation, but with a diverse set of qualities and perceptions different from how we understand the nation today. Cohen understands the polis as a different conception from this “face-to-face” environment:

   My Athens is quite different—a nation where households of varied origins and individual persona, created a culturally homogenous world of intricate and multidimensional institutions and ideas, unified by a mutually conceptualized group identity forged partly through historical fabrication; where demographic mobility, civil mutability, cultural complexity, and a dynamic economy generated a society of relative anonymity; where membership in the polis (citizenship) was a fluid asset ultimately available (or deniable) to all segments of the local population, but where “power”—the manifold aspects of control, command, and influence in a society—transcended political arrangements and manifested social, economic, religious, and even sexual dimensions. (p. 9)

By refuting Athens as a mosaic of poleis, and recognizing it as ethnos (nation), Cohen is essentially characterizing nation as a society that responds to the heterogeneity and complexities of human life where the polis is a more provincial, limited notion of communal life that does not allow for the possibility of phenomenological distance from our neighbors. It is for these reasons that Anderson’s work on “Imagined Communities”
(2006) is useful when exploring the idea of the nation, even when engaging the ancient world.

Cohen (2000) employs Anderson’s concept of imagined community to offer a better description for this idea of the polis. Physically, Athens was larger than many modern nations – what made Athens different from other poleis was not only its size but its political unity. Other poleis were not politically unified and did not function as the political structure that Aristotle had described (Cohen, 2000). Thus, it seems that Aristotle’s idea of “knowing each other” may not actually represent true interpersonal relationships, but rather “knowing” others’ political affinities, cultural understandings and ways of life in order to create a coordinated, fluid social context that was easily identifiable among its citizens. Culture, then, provided the channel through which citizens were able to “know” each other politically (through the polis).

**Connecting Isocratic Rhetoric to Nation Studies**

To investigate these ideas I turn to a prominent Greek scholar, politician and rhetorician who would have a remarkable impact on the history of the Greek world and its influence on Western culture: Isocrates. I choose Isocrates not only for his contributions to our understanding of the Greek world and rhetoric, but also because some consider his rhetoric on panhellenism to resemble “nationalist” rhetoric in antiquity (Jaeger, 1986; Haskins, 2004); DeRomilly (1992) suggests that Isocrates was the first in antiquity to shape his political rhetoric in terms of Greece (what she calls Europe) in opposition to Asia (Persia). However, Haskins (2004) points out that this understanding of Isocrates’ panhellenism as nationalistic is misguided and rather an attempt to: “to criticize the contemporary historical situation by comparing it with mythologized
historical past and to remind the audience of its collective identity,” and not a precursor to Nazi Fascism as suggested by scholars such as Vitanza (1997) (Haskins, 2004, p. 125). Most importantly, his teachings of “citizenship education” set the stage for the justification of the power of the liberal arts in education and the effects of education on transformational personhood, mostly for creating citizens who formed rational and productive communities (Poulakos, 1997).

First, it is necessary for us to understand Isocrates’ rhetorical program as what he believed to be the ultimate form of citizenship training. Isocrates saw rhetoric as a form of practical philosophy; for him, the philosophy and rhetoric are inextricably linked. In a sense, Isocrates’ rhetoric was a sort of compromise where philosophy and rhetoric met in a utilitarian compromise for the good of Athens. He encourages us to “reconsider the conceptual categories” of philosophy and rhetoric as they were traditionally understood by conflating the two into an integrated system of thought and action (Livingstone, 2007, p. 19). Philosophy was useless without the power of rhetoric because of the contingent nature of reality, but rhetoric depended on philosophical ground to forge ahead. In Against the Sophists (2000) Isocrates is mostly concerned with the potential damage Sophistic rhetoric can cause, but like the Sophists he admits that transcendental truth is humanly (and even divinely) unattainable; rhetoric allows us to engage contingency as philosophical thinking which can fill this space with viable alternatives. “…Homer, who has been conceded the highest reputation for wisdom, has pictured even the gods at times debating among themselves about the future —not that he knew their minds but that he desired to show us that for mankind this power lies in the realms of the impossible” (Isocrates, 2000, pp. 163-165).
The power of rhetorical education was the central theme of Isocratean theory. Much like Gorgias’ (2001) critique of language having similar effects on the human soul as drugs on the body (p. 32), Isocrates recognized this same power of language in the context of education and politics: “Bodies are naturally built up through measured tasks, the soul through honorable words” (Isocrates, 2000, To Demonicus, p. 22). In Isocratean terms, education “corrected” the Platonic “cookery” of rhetoric and improved this overwhelming power in substantive ways:

Because there has been implanted in us the power to persuade each other and to make clear to each other whatever we desire, not only have we escaped the life of wild beasts, but we have come together and founded cities and made laws and invented arts; and, generally speaking, there is no institution devised by man which has laid down laws concerning things just and unjust, and things base and honorable; and if it were not for those ordinances we should not be able to extol the good. Through this we educate the ignorant and appraise the understanding, and discourse which is true and lawful and just is the outward image of the good and faithful soul. (Nicocles or Cyprian Orations, 1980, pp. 79-81)

It is clear that Isocrates sees dialogue and rhetoric as essential elements not only for public life in the polis, but also as a form of moral education that can ultimately generate the good. Although language is the foundation of rhetoric, human action that is derived from this language in particular frames Isocratean rhetoric.

Isocrates is concerned with the person’s role in the power structure of the polis and how rhetoric and civic education cultivate this role. Isocratic rhetorical and civic education is considered a model for life, a powerful intellectual tool that incorporates
citizens into the larger context encouraging them to act justly for the good of the polis (Morgan, 2003, p. 126). Yunis (as cited in Livingstone, 2007) points out that the “rhetorical situation” of Ancient Greece was that citizenship meant a direct involvement in politics, engaging in politics was ultimately a means of persuasion (p. 16). In other words, citizens were rhetorical beings who shaped the identity and position of the polis through powerful and well-educated language (logos). Isocrates believed that logos not only makes us uniquely human, but also it challenges us to shape our social and political milieu in distinctive ways. Therefore, the very act of communication formed the polis and made it viable: “Isocrates assumes that all higher education of the intellect depends on cultivating our ability to understand on another. It is not an accumulation of factual knowledge in any sphere; it is concerned with the forces which hold society together. There are summed up in one word *logos*” (Jaeger, 1986, p. 143). In this way, Isocrates legitimizes his position in Ancient Greek scholarship alongside other significant Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle by creating a consistent narrative, particularly in regards to public identity within the polis, which contributes to how citizens structured the Greek state. Isocrates’ method was not what the Greeks called mere *tekhne*, but rather a holistic approach for thinking and engaging in the polis (Walzer, 2007, p. 271).

Rhetorical education considered the citizen as a cause and effect of rhetorical discourse (Poulakos, 2004). Through a “hegemonic” form of logos politikos, rhetoric is able to lead citizens toward worthwhile ends which benefit society by constructing social reality, building necessary institutions, and creating human communities shaped by common beliefs (Poulakos, 2004). Rhetorical civic education was understood to mediate political upheaval and harmonize individual and collective purposes to restore Athens to
its inherent greatness (which was Isocrates’ priority). In other words, “hegemonic logos” can bring forth unification, cooperation, consensus, and stability in the wake of political turmoil (Poulakos, 2004, p.73). Rhetoric as a civic force provides direction for the state and the citizens within that state; it equips us with the language and ideas necessary for understanding the challenges and goals of the cultural context in which we live with one another: *paideia*. Poulakos characterizes such Isocratic rhetoric as “centripetal” since it encourages individuals to direct themselves toward a *common center* in moments of disagreeable diversity, while Sophistic rhetoric’s inconsistency provided a more centrifugal force shifting individuals to a more doubtful periphery, which did not guide citizens to a common center for the good of the state:

Unlike the Sophists, Isocrates found himself in a dispersed culture, one plagued with the ills inherent in excessive individuation—conflicting claims and competing interests. His reaction to this state of affairs manifested itself in a rhetoric pointing away from the periphery and towards a center. At this center, there lay arguments for the need of leaders, the importance of rhetorical education, the benefits of political stability, and the advantages of pan-Hellenism. (Poulakos, 2004, p. 82)

Concepts such as “hegemonic” and “center” seem to suggest an inflexible system of rhetoric in reference to political action. As mentioned earlier, Haskins (2004) explains that some scholars have even gone so far as to posit that Isocratic theory of *paideia* and *logos* paved the way for extreme political movements such as Nazi Germany and Hitler’s Third Reich, and has justified actions of cultural imperialism in the contemporary world. Regardless of how some view Isocrates’ orientation, his emphasizes on the “common
center,” “common sense” and “citizenship” all reflect enduring themes of nationalism and an understanding of the nation. Most important, rhetoric provided the channel through which the polis was established, by educating citizens about the virtues of citizenship and moral action within the construct of a formal community. This centripetal force is quite clearly indicated in Isocrates’ belief about the Athenian power in Hellas, and therefore panhellenism. This focus on purity plays out even as Isocrates calls for Greek unity, with the Athenians at the helm. This idea of purity connected to the homeland, or what scholars like Tuan (1977) and Geschiere (2009) describe through the Greek concept of autochthony, is the notion that one has a natural connection to one’s native soil by birth, or what Geschiere describes as “the most authentic form of belonging” (p. 2). Tuan (1977) points out that Isocrates’ emphasis on Athenian autochthony is actually quite evident throughout his work, especially in the Panegyricus (p. 154).

**Paideia: Culture as a Central Force**

One conceptual framework that applies to the idea of “imagined communities” is the foundation of paideia from which Isocrates establishes his own arguments. These imagined communities are created rhetorically through a process that allows citizens to collaborate to form “common sense” in Athenian society. Vico (1999) later defined common sense or “sensus communis” as such: “Since human judgment is by nature uncertain, it gains certainty from our common sense about what is necessary and useful to human kind; and necessity and utility are the two sources of the natural law of nations. Common sense is an unreflecting judgment shared by an entire social order, people, nation or even all humankind” (p. 79-80). Arendt (1998) engages common sense as a mechanism by which we can collectively gauge the reality of our world. Once an
understanding of that which we share in common begins to decline, the more we are “alienated from our world” (p. 209). For Isocrates, common sense takes the form of doxa (personal and public opinion/belief) and kairos (rhetorical appropriateness to the occasion); they are subsets of and function as characteristics of the larger whole of paideia (Poulakos, 2001; 2004). Instead of Isocrates accepting episteme (knowledge) as the guide for personal and public conduct, Isocrates enacts this paideic educational program with doxa as its guide. However, doxa is not sophistic, as it must also be mediated to reach an acceptable form that will benefit society—this mediation occurs through what Isocrates defined as rhetorical education. (Poulakos, 2001;2004). We also see Plato, who addressed concerns of sophistic rhetoric in the Phaedrus (1973), recognized Isocrates’ desire to improve the inherent quality of doxa through education (Poulakos 2001, p.49); however, Plato positioned doxa on a continuum between knowledge and ignorance (Poulakos 2001, p.51), as it did not fulfill the need for Truth. For Isocrates, doxa sublimates episteme by rhetorically constructing the public through the logos, ethos and pathos. Common sense characterized as such becomes the basis for Isocratean rhetoric and ultimately is applied to his project on Greek panhellenism. However, before we address the controversial theme of panhellenism, it is necessary to explicate paideia as the foundation of Greek culture, particularly as Isocrates employed it in Greek thought.

In his landmark work, Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, Jaeger (1967; 1986) traces the development of Greek paideia through its mythology, history, politics, culture, literature and rhetorical tradition. The idea of paideia originates from the Greek principle of arête, or taking possession of the beautiful (Jaeger, 1967). Arête was the basis for
happiness and the teleological principle for Greek society, the pursuit of the cultural ideal; paideia is the integrated system of Greek arête, the cultural ideal that encompasses the meaning of human life in ancient Greece. Paideia was “connected with the highest arête possible to man; it was used to denote the sum total of all ideal perfection of mind and body—complete kalokagathia, a concept which was not consciously taken to include a genuine intellectual and spiritual culture. This new comprehensive conception of the cultural ideal was firmly established by the time of Isocrates and Plato” (Jaeger, 1967, p. 286).

Although mostly present in aristocratic circles, paideia also extended to the polis, as it was the center of Greek life. Jaeger (1967; 1986) tells us that the polis encompassed the whole of Greek life; the polis was the context in which education occurred and allowed for a consistent, integrated message to create cohesive cultural ideals in Greek society. Paideia is perhaps one of the first systematic attempts to create a framework that would envelop the whole of Greek life and within which education, and rhetoric for that matter, would become the center of life in the polis not only for elite aristocracy, but all citizens who participated directly or indirectly in the process.

The emergence of the Sophists and their controversial educational program was a clear indication that the nature of the Greek state structure was transforming (Jaeger, 1967, p. 281). The Sophists’ engagement of culture through intellectual pursuits was conducted with the Greek polis not only as its context but as its ultimate goal. The polis was a comprehensive educative force and the Sophists, although their methods were questionable at times, sought to create a complete program using paideia as its main thrust (Jaeger, 1967, p. 321). The polis was the main field in which sophistry was
executed; rhetoric became the mode of communication that created productive citizens who then advanced the highest arête. It was the Sophists who began the timeless conversation about why and how to teach civic engagement. The following exchange between Socrates and Protagoras, one of the most prominent Sophists of the 5th century BCE, in Plato’s *Protagoras* elucidates this point:

“What I teach is sound deliberation, both in domestic affairs—how to best manage one’s household, and in public affairs—how to realize one’s maximum potential for success in political debate and action.”

“Am I following what you are saying? [Socrates] asked. “You appear to be talking about the art of citizenship, and to be promising to make men good citizens.”

“This is exactly what I claim, Socrates.”

“Well, this is truly an admirable technique you have developed, if indeed you have…The truth is, Protagoras, I have never thought that this could be taught, but when you say it can be, I can’t very well doubt it…Protagoras, I just don’t think virtue can be taught. But when I hear what you have to say, I waver; I think there must be something in what you have to say…” (Plato, 1992, pp. 13-15)

Protagoras’ discourse is significant, particularly because it originates from a Sophistic orientation. For Socrates, this debate about the ability to teach the concept of citizenship is ongoing. The key turning point here is that the Sophists open up the field of inquiry about education and moral virtue; the problem was that the Athenians viewed Sophistic education as a model that lacked a strong moral standpoint (Barrett, 1987; DeRomilly, 2002). The Sophists’ lack of moral direction and questionable activities put their
educational system and their goal of citizenship education in jeopardy (Barrett, 1987; DeRomilly, 2002). Nonetheless, we see that the question does not die; rather, it takes on a new form through Isocrates. Isocrates insists on the power of rhetorical education in citizenship formation, but understands how such an approach must be grounded in the cultural context — the paideia — of the historical moment (Jaeger, 1986). Isocrates’ work attempted to infuse a moral consciousness driven by the solid foundation of Greek paideia (Marsh, 2013). Although Plato felt obligated to search for more definitive responses to what he and others considered morally reprehensible Sophists, Isocrates attempted to marry the two perspectives and transforming sophistic practice by grounding it in philosophical inquiry to orient his rhetoric toward higher moral standards. Isocrates’ deep understanding of Greek paideia within the context of the power of the Athenian polis elicited his unique form of rhetoric (Jaeger, 1986; Poulakos, 1997).

Morgan (2003) suggests that Isocrates’ idea of paideia is consistent because its focus begins with individuals, extends to the polis, and then to the larger political structure – in this case, the Greece beyond Athens. Isocrates was committed to the fluidity and dynamism of paideia, the rich, textured culture of a society, and not Platonic a priori worldview (Jaeger, 1965, p.84). Isocrates viewed culture as a wider, deeper and more indicative field of inquiry than Plato; it was a space where humans are able to engage a truth, which is located in everyday living-in-the-world. For this reason, many view Isocrates conception of paideia as not only culture, but education in an appropriate cultural context. Isocrates (1980) notes:

[Athens] knew…that whether men have been liberally educated from their earliest years is not to be determined by their courage or their wealth or such advantages,
but is made manifest most of all by speech, and that this had proved itself to be
the surest sign of culture [paideia] in every one of us, and that those who are
skilled in speech are not only men of power in their own cities but are also held in
honor in other states. (*Panegyricus*, p. 149)

Isocrates believed that specific schemata structuring rhetoric, such as the rhetorical
guidelines put forth by Aristotle, limited its inherent abilities; rather, rhetorical education
could find the mean between what Isocrates saw as moral indifference and education to
create practical political action (Jaeger, 1965). In other words, Isocrates points us in the
direction of critical thinking and balanced arguments, not rote technical instruction on
how to be an effective and virtuous citizen (Walzer, 2005). In Isocratic terms, rhetorical
education cannot change a person, but it can shape and cultivate his/her thoughts through
the negotiation of nature, art and paideia. Such an education could provide communities
with the means to bring the polis back to its original vigor and its spiritual renaissance
since moral forces were lived out in the communal structure; education helps individuals
and communities attain spiritual leadership to find new approaches for life (Jaeger, 1965).

As we have seen, Isocratic rhetorical principles are based in civic education, the
foundation on which Athenian culture is constructed and guided. A holistic education
creates citizens who can participate in social discourse while changing it from within.
Philosophy and rhetoric are inseparable, one and the same, but this practical approach to
philosophy requires a solid ground on which it can successfully function and call
attention to the importance of the polis’ citizenry. Isocratean rhetoric could quickly
devolve into sophistry because it appears to lack philosophical ground. Paideia fills this
void. Paideia might be understood as the philosophical ground for everyday Athenian
life, as it provides a “common center” to which citizens can refer and construct new realities. Said differently, culture is the philosophical ground from which rhetoric, and civic education, can thrive and serve the polis.

[Isocrates] held that the nation, the ideal of Greece, was the point round which new elements in the spiritual renaissance were to crystallize…The new rhetoric had to find an ideal which could be translated into practical political action. This ideal was a new moral code for Greece. It gave rhetoric an inexhaustible theme; in it the ultimate topic of all higher eloquence seemed to have been discovered once and for all. In an age when the old beliefs were losing their binding force and the long-established structure of the city-state was breaking up (the structure in which, till then, the individual had felt his own moral foundations securely embodied), the new dream of national achievement appeared to be a mighty inspiration. It gave life to new meaning. (Jaeger, 1986, pp. 52-53)

Taking into account Jaeger’s description of this “spiritual renaissance” based in the formation of new attitudes toward the nation, we could view Isocrates’ conception of rhetoric and rhetorical education wrought with the intricacies and nuances of culture as “imagining” a transformed community of citizens—a nation. Yes, this rhetoric still took the form of orations and pamphlets, but by recasting and combining the two conceptual categories of philosophy and rhetoric to create a new form of education, particularly civic education, Isocrates was forming a new rhetorical approach to social life that would carry into subsequent ages. The goal of this new approach was the good of the polis achieved through the highest Greek arête available—paideia. Isocrates no longer saw rhetoric as an instrument of politics but rather as an educational tool that allowed Athenians to rise
above political life and direct the pursuit of political life itself (Jaeger, 1986). By teaching and engaging rhetoric properly, students form ideas and patterns of thought and argument to enhance spiritual life, and therefore the practical life, of the polis. But, in a sense, it becomes difficult to term Isocrates’ method of education as rhetoric or philosophy; instead, it becomes an entirely new system of thought and instruction that leads the conversation about Athens, the polis in general, and the whole of Greece in a new direction (Livingstone, 2007, p. 19). Isocrates’ new form of formal communication and education, centered on uniquely human logos and rich paideia, is contextualized by the community of citizens called the polis. The polis is the common center to which citizens refer and direct transformative action simultaneously. One cannot transform the polis through persuasive measures without the engagement of paideia.

For Isocrates, quality rhetoric produced practical reasoning, or the Greek ideal of phronesis, by educating students about rhetorical techniques, eloquence and fitness to the occasion — a complex Greek concept termed kairos (Marsh, 2013). Kairos is an essential element of effective and realistic rhetoric for Isocrates, and which played a major role in his overall educational program, or paideia. Stated in more contemporary terms, Marsh (2013) explains that kairos is both the responsiveness to a particular moment and the ability to act adroitly within that moment: “The Isocratean concept of kairos, then, is somewhat similar to the moment in a wrestling match one wrestler, through rigorous training, simultaneously recognizes an opportune instant and a complementary maneuver that will lead to success” (p. 129). Farrell (1993) defines kairos as a form of refigured phronesis, which can be defined as “proper choices at propitious moments” (p. 39) or a “mastery of the moment” (p. 236). In Against the Sophists (2000), Isocrates outlines three
necessities of rhetoric to develop an educated rhetorician, in which kairos occupies a prominent place: “But the greatest proof of the difference between [letters (techne) and rhetoric (the creative art)] is that oratory is good only if it has qualities of fitness for the occasion, propriety of style, and originality of treatment, while in case of letters there is no such need whatsoever” (p. 171). Paideia provides the parameters for kairotic action within rhetoric. Again, Isocrates’ teachings are grounded in the real world, constantly guided by that which surrounds us: “…[I] hold that men who want to do some good in the world must banish utterly from their interests all vain speculations and all activities which have no bearing on our lives” (Antidosis, 2000, p. 335).

Poulakos (1997) explains that Isocrates’ use of rhetorical education promoted individual self-understanding that would then encourage citizens to work toward a good for the polis. In addition, rhetorical education meets its goals and encourages cultural change by tapping into available narratives within society. Poulakos goes on to note that citizenship is not an a priori concept; rather, it is constructed through logos and paideia. Isocrates adds to such ideas of logos by ensuring a kairotic response to paideia. Ostensibly, for Isocrates a panhellenistic approach to the Greek poleis, with Athens at its intellectual and cultural center, was a fitting response for the cultural and historical moment.

**Isocrates’ Panhellenism: A Model for Early Nationalism?**

Isocrates’ orations, letters and discourses discuss the importance of Greek politics at the time and the need for the Greek poleis to put down their weapons and join forces in a loose confederation of Greek states to defeat and dominate their eternal enemy, the Persians (Norlin, 1980). Sophists such as Gorgias (speech of 392 B.C.) and Lysias
(speech of 388 B.C.) introduce themes of panhellenism and encouraging citizens to band against the barbarians in their famous speeches on Mt. Olympus (Walbank, 1951), and although Isocrates’ was not the first to introduce the idea of panhellenism, his efforts expanded upon these ideas as they were geared toward political education textured by paideia (Norlin, 1980; Jaeger, 1986; Walbank, 1951). Walbank (1951) suggests that Isocrates was the rhetorician to give the concept of panhellenism “cultural value” (p. 46).

Isocrates believed it necessary for the various city-states of Greece to band together in order to form a more cooperative, integrated effort against the “barbarians” in Persia. “It is not possible for us to cement an enduring peace unless we join together in a war against the barbarians [Persians], nor for the Hellenes to attain to concord until we wrest our material advantages from one and the same source and wage our wars against one and the same enemy” (Panegyricus, 1980, p.231). Panhellenism entailed a “brotherhood” of Greek cultures coming together to deal with the complexities of Isocrates’ time (Nash, 1968, p.71).

De Romilly (1992) discusses how Isocrates was among the first to recognize and highlight the cultural difference between Greece (which he refers to as Europe) and Persia, as not much of a distinction was made before the Persian Wars. We might consider Isocrates as a cultural conservative because he considered the Athenian culture as superior, not because of blood and race, but because of its central influence on the intellectual culture of society—a superior paideia. Throughout the Panegyricus (1980), Isocrates makes claims regarding the superiority of Athens and its role as a leader for Greece, particularly in opposition to Persia (Tuan, 1977), but also attempts to create solidarity among the Greek poleis in the name of panhellenism.
For it is admitted that our city is the oldest and the greatest in the world and in the eyes of all men the most renowned...And so far as our city has distanced the rest of mankind through and in speech that her pupils have become the teachers of the rest of the world; and she has brought it about that the name ‘Hellenes’ suggest no longer a race but an intelligence, and that the title ‘Hellenes’ is applied rather to those who share our culture than to those who share our common blood. (pp. 131-133; 149)

Such a feat, however, would not have been possible without Isocrates’ educational program. Nash (1968) explains that Isocrates education system stood out among other systems in terms of promoting a “universal concept of culture” in the creation of a unified Hellas; he suggests that Isocrates’ rhetorical-educational program has been more influential on the Western canon than even Alexander the Great’s controversial political program for panhellenism (Nash, 1968, p.75).

Isocrates’ push for panhellenism is articulated in what is often considered to be his masterpiece, the *Panegyricus* (Kennedy, 1999, p. 43; Norlin, 1980, p. 119; Romano, 2012, p. 555). Isocrates’ ideas of panhellenism necessitate a horizon of nationalism and isolationism, buttressing Greek power while separating it from the rest of the world. He identifies Athens as the political and cultural center of Greece that is capable of leading the effort of joining various city-states under one entity. Athens is the most appropriate haven for those that are both “prosperous and unfortunate,” but seek refuge in a “welcoming and friendly city” (Isocrates, *Panegyricus*, 1980, p. 143). Isocrates seems to echo the Aristotelian phenomenon of friendship for the good of the polis: “[W]e come together in one place, where, as we make our prayer and sacrifices in common, we are
reminded of the kinship which exists among us and are made to feel more kindly towards each other for the future, reviving our old friendships and establishing new ties” (1980, p. 145). Throughout the *Panegyricus*, we hear Isocrates’ intention to create a single nation against an enemy by encouraging the common paideia they all share with Athens at its center.

Isocrates’ rhetorical structure is holistic in that he does not depend solely on dialectical Truth like Plato, rhetorical structure and mechanisms like Aristotle, history like Herodotus or Hesiod or myth and narrative like the great Homer. Instead, Isocrates transforms rhetoric to combine all these elements to create a paideia and an integrated message to the Athenian people. This rhetorical work may, in turn, influence citizens’ attitudes about their nation to form a powerful nationalism that would surmount other political and cultural problems amongst various poleis. Jaeger (1986) explains that Isocrates’ *Nicocles or Cyprian Orations* lay the groundwork for his paideia that eventually lead us to the work that structures his entire educational program, the *Panegyricus*. These *Cyprian Orations* are directed at the leaders in Greek society in hopes of changing the paideia as a whole; this paideia is grounded in education which can result in a rather structured understanding of nationalism. “…[T]hese speeches introduce us directly to a problem, which must, in these circumstances, be of the very first importance – the possibility that *culture may influence the state by educating its leaders*” (Jaeger, 1986, p. 85). Again, we see how Isocrates’ practical stance is focused on the direct impact logos and paideia have on creating a new spiritual context for Greek nationalism. This spiritual context, in turn, “imagines” a community into new attitudes.
and practices. The leaders who embody the Greek ideal and carry it into the everyday life of the polis exemplify these attitudes and practices.

*To Nicocles* (1980) is a prime example of what Isocrates was attempting to accomplish when educating leaders. He not only seems to direct their thoughts and actions from a standpoint that would benefit Greek society, but attempted to create a form of paideia that would result in Greek nationalist ideals. Jaeger (1986) points out that Isocrates’ advice to Nicocles, a new Cypriot leader, rests in the idea of “practical statesmanship,” a compromise between the “Periclean tradition of practical politics…and the ethical criticisms of the philosophers” (pp. 93-94). In other words, rhetoric serves as the engine for which a ruler can function well and in the citizenry’s favor. Paideia, then, is the field in which practical statesmanship functions and gives life to nationalist phenomena. The nation is formed through communication and education of leaders who impart their wisdom on their people and help them “imagine” what the Greek state should be and how it materializes. “…[F]or it is evident that that [kings] will reign well or ill according to the manner in which they equip their own minds. Therefore, no athlete is so called upon to train his body as is a king to train his soul; for not all public festivals in the world offer a prize comparable to those for which you who are kings strive every day of your lives” (*To Nicocles*, 1980, p.47). What is pertinent here is the king’s thoughts, or imagination, toward how a nation is formed through its citizenry. Rhetorical education is how leaders are trained in order to bring the citizenry together through nationalistic ideals. Fitting communication is the key to how a nation is formed, and it begins with its leaders, who have been trained to think and act appropriately through rhetorical principles. Rhetoric is the engine through which its citizenry is educated and formed to
create political communities that not only make life manageable, but with a collective sense of the good, the highest paideia found in arête. For Isocrates, the highest arête for the Greek people will result in Panhellenistic paideia, a world that is teleologically driven toward defending Greek life against its eternal enemy—the barbaric Persians.

Like Gorgias’ Helen, at first glance Isocrates’ Encomium of Helen, although considered to his least important works, is an alternative to the sophistic model for rhetoric, employing the power of sophistical rhetoric to defend Helen’s position in Greek history within Isocrates’ practical rhetoric grounded paideia (Poulakos, 1997; Van Hook, 1968). However, such works also point to Isocrates’ focus on cultural historicity and identifying the cultural needs of the moment. Poulakos (1997), like Walbank (1951), suggests that Isocrates’s rhetoric was not tied to the traditional rhetorical devices, but dependent more on culture and art: “More closely tied now to the cultural and the thematic, eloquence could afford the time it needed to become an art” (p. 70). He grounds his argument in deeply entrenched understandings of history and Athenian paideia while creating new conception of why and how a united Greece can save its people, just as Helen did. The encomium not only trains the student in effective rhetorical technique, but also is a justification and praise for Hellenism. As the most influential figure in Greek paideia, Isocrates persuades the Greeks to consider Helen as the central figure in the first movement toward panhellenism (Kennedy, 1958). For the Greeks, Helen is the ultimate cultural ideal, or arête, that persists throughout history and forms the ground on which the Greek structure their thought and practice; Helen encompasses ideals of beauty, virtue, influence, power, and her influence directed Greece in ways that secured its dominance and protection against the barbarians. “Out of fear of strife the states all
swore to unite on behalf of the one who won her. That is, panhellenism was achieved for the first time under the one who possessed Helen [Theseus]” (Kennedy, 1958, p. 82). As a result, Helen becomes a metaphor for the Greek imagination in political rhetoric and literature, and Isocrates effectively employs the power of her cultural ideal to create a strong case for panhellenism (Kennedy, 1958). While attempting to instruct students on rhetorical principles for the formation of important political ideals and citizenship, Isocrates invokes emotional connections for the Greek mind and unites Greek citizens through powerful metaphors that engage them to a common goal.

**From Panhellenism to Modern Nationalism: Isocrates’ Influence**

Isocrates is an important point of departure for the way in which we can understand the rhetoric and culture of nationalism in the ancient canon. We focus on Isocrates not only for his rhetorical “philosophy” but also for what seems to be his understanding of the nation-state and its significance for the Greek citizen, and ultimately the relationship between the citizen and the nation in many contexts. We can apply Isocrates’ rhetorical methods to contemporary understandings of rhetoric and communication practices (see, for example, Marsh, 2013) and to the requirement to communicate effectively by deploying logos as the energy that drives (and transcends) that which we need to accomplish in both the political world and everyday interactions of citizens within a shared culture and nation-state. The scholarship reviewed thus far as well as scholarship that we will explore later in this project suggests that our contemporary understanding of the nation was formed in the Enlightenment, but as we see, its foundations in the Western trope may begin in Greece and are exemplified by rhetorical figures such as Isocrates.
For Livingstone (2007), Isocrates provides substantial ground for shifting our conversation about rhetoric and its subject matter from a monologic form of communication to a dialogic view. I would argue that Isocrates’ focus on nationalism also helps us interpret the history of thought behind nationalism that may lead us to a postmodern understanding of the nation and nationalism. However, before we venture into this territory we need to understand how such thinking leads to other understandings of nationalism through a rhetorical standpoint throughout the Western trope. Isocrates’ nuanced approach to rhetoric within deeply entrenched Greek paideia not only forms works from within Greek culture itself, but expands and develops more complexity within Greek paideia. While a traditional view of Greek paideia and rhetoric is often interpreted through a form of one-way, monologic style of education, Livingstone suggests that Isocrates’ approach carries rhetoric into much more textured ground.

By creating an adaptable, self-confident Hellenic political discourse which takes “commonsense” ethical values for granted, Isocrates inaugurates the tradition of Hellenic paideia, and thus, indirectly, the later humanist culture built on Greco-Roman models, with the ideal of culture as a mutually respectful exchange between (elite) individuals united by their commitment to edifying and civilizing the power of logos. On the other hand, in abandoning antilogy in the name of consensus and homonoia, he also anticipates situations in the modern world where the transition from the public or parliamentary debate to monologic communication in the mass media risks creating an overweeningly confident, unitary political discourse in which dissent and critique are easily marginalized as irrational or absurd. (Livingstone, 2007, p. 31)
Livingstone’s analysis directs us to an important theme of this study. By understanding the salience of paideia and directing his attention to it in all his work, Isocrates seems to see the slippery slope that occurs in what we now philosophically comprehend as “monologic communication.” Although not always an inappropriate form of communication, monologic communication is problematic in this particular instance since, in Isocratean terms, it would not be considered kairotic because it does not seem to fit his notions of participatory rhetoric and communication, as Livingstone points out above. Instead, I advance the notion that dialogic communication may emerge as a more fitting response to this historical and contextual moment. Although not often part of scholarly opinion, Isocrates’ approach may be understood as participatory and somewhat inclusive when it came to citizen development, as it encouraged more involvement in civic life while evoking action and results. Thus, the polis, or the nation, was a result of citizens who were well trained to participate and interact within the complexities of the nation.

Implications

So, we begin with Greece, and by proxy Isocrates, as the first logical foundation for the nation as a rhetorical structure. Although countless other rhetoricians that came before him and lived alongside him constructed the paideia that provided the context for Greek life and the way citizens lived within the polis, Isocrates’ focus on panhellenism and ideas of national and nationalism paved the way for others that would follow and employ rhetoric, education and an holistic understanding of the world around them to create national identities and devotions to their particular paideia. Jaeger (1986) advances that no other culture that we know of advanced the ideals of community in the
way the Greeks did, and this organized notion of community helped formed the foundation for the modern nation as we know it. Most important, the way in which ideas of the nation were communicated, in turn, created a culture that understood citizenship, democratic participation and the function of the polis. However, access to the polis, as in contemporary society, was not always inclusive for certain groups. Literature regarding the Athenian metic (foreigner) and his or her rights within Athenian society suggest that many foreigners may have been active participants, but not without limits to particular rights and access to democracy (see, for example, Cohen, 2000; Whitehead, 1977); however, addressing these issues in detail would reach far beyond the scope of this project. Nevertheless, understanding Greece through the eyes of Isocratean rhetoric at least forms a consistent paideia under which these ideals were allowed to flourish and translate into new, shifting cultural ideals that would then carry into the transformed historical moment.

[The Greeks] established an entirely new set of principles for communal life. However highly we may value the artistic, religious, and political achievements of earlier nations, the history of what we can truly call civilization — the deliberate pursuit of an ideal — not begin until Greece. (xiv)… It is true of Greek art as well as of Greek literature that until late in the fourth century it is principally the expression of the spirit of the community…But the true representatives of paideia were not, the Greeks believed, the voiceless artists – sculptor, painter, architect – but the poets and musicians, orators (which means statesmen) and philosophers…They considered that the only genuine forces which could form the soul were words and sounds, and — so far as they work through words or sounds
or both—rhythm and harmony; for the decisive factor in all in paideia is active energy, which is even more important in the culture of the mind than in the agon which exercises physical strength and agility. (Jaeger, 1967, p. xxvii)

Jaeger’s comments are salient because they highlight why Greece and its pursuit of a cultural ideal were so important in Western history, and for the purposes of this project, essential to ideals of community and the establishment of nations.

Isocrates positions his “imagined community” within the holistic nature of the world around us; in other words, it is situated in the liberal arts. If we take Livingstone’s (2007) interpretation into account, this imagined community could presumably result from an early form of dialogic communication as we understand it today—communication grounded in this understanding of common sense that emerges from multiple voices and participation centered around a common goal. Isocratean conservatism originates from the idea of paideia centered on a common goal and from the concept of kairos. The nation forms and flourishes from such ideals. However, his ability to invoke a rhetoric based in intellectual thought that incorporates myriad areas of life and shared experiences draws on a dialogic understanding of communication. As Jaeger (1986) states, the rhetoricians were considered responsible for the formation of the polis and the nation. The nation and its various systems are formed out of logos — the thoughts and words of its leaders and citizens. The nation is “imagined” through rhetoric and therefore communicative life. Grounding the initial phase of our conversation in the Greeks and Isocratean participatory rhetoric may offer new openings for the goal of exploring postmodern nationalism framed by dialogic communication theory.
Our next step will be to carry this unique Greek ideal into the consequent historical moment experienced in the Roman Republic and its approach to “civic republicanism.” Civic republicanism, and Cicero in particular, build on the profound statements and rhetorical tradition of Greece and Isocrates to expand on the understanding of community and the nation.
Chapter 3

Cicero’s Political Rhetoric: Early Foundations of the Republic

“But when you view everything with reason and reflection, of all the connections none is more weighty, none is more dear, than that between every individual and his country. Our parents are dear to us; our children, our kinsmen, our friends are dear to us; but our country comprehends alone all the endearments of us all” (Cicero, 1855, On Duties, Book I, p. 32).

The great Roman rhetorician, Cicero, offers a nuanced understanding for our thinking about the ancient rhetorical roots of the nation and the idea of nationalism. Cicero, like Isocrates, was a proponent of liberal arts education who not only provided important observations and lessons about rhetoric in general, but whose rhetoric shaped the ways in which the Roman Republic, and the Roman Empire for that matter (Digeser, 2004), considered concepts of justice, the common good, civic morals and virtue, and citizenship within Rome’s version of the polis, the res publica—the republic. We see that Isocrates’ and Cicero’s notions of civic education and a focus on the common good influence notions of nationalism and some of the essential elements of what we now understand as the structure of a nation.

Cicero’s focus on a dialogic form of rhetoric is also significant for the purposes of this study. Casaregola (1998) points out that Cicero’s revival of Platonic dialogue is perhaps an early understanding of how rhetoric and oratory can produce “shared meaning” among publics (p. 73). Ancient rhetoric serves as a foundation where dialogue was seen as more of an intellectual conversation—the ever-important dialectic—to
expand on philosophical ideas and moral conversations, as we can see in Plato and Cicero. We do not necessarily see the concept of dialogue developed philosophically as we understand it today through thinkers like Buber (1988, 1996, 2002, 2005), Bakhtin (1981), Levinas (2004), but Casaregola’s point helps us connect the study of Cicero’s traditional rhetoric to more contemporary ideas of dialogue. Czubaroff (2000) also points out that a case should be made for a “dialogic rhetoric” that moves beyond the ancient ideal of dialectic and a modern form of rhetoric that focuses exclusively on social and psychological aspects but ignores the ontological and existential notions of the dialogic act (p. 170). Although Cicero was quite obviously engaged in dialectic quite deeply, we may be able to make a case to recast his traditional rhetoric regarding the republic as an ancient form of dialogue that in fact attempted to create an existential-phenomenological realm of civic engagement for the Roman Republic. In other words, ancient rhetorical antecedents like the work of Cicero may have begun the conversation that eventually leads us to dialogic theory. When analyzing Cicero’s dialogic rhetoric in works such as the Republic, it seems that dialectic may serve as a point of departure for producing “shared meaning” in the Roman community that perhaps helped shape his ideas about the Roman republic itself.

Cicero’s concept of res publica set the stage for ancient renderings of the nation-state and the contemporary concept of the republic. Scholarship regarding Cicero’s influence on the concept of the nation tends to be confounding at moments since terms like state, nation, nation-state, country, and republic are often used interchangeably and without consistency. For the purposes of this project, I see the state and the nation as symbiotic concepts that rely on each other. Cicero’s system of state serves as an essential
foundation and hermeneutic entrance for the formation of the nation, but the concept of the nation allows the states to function as a social mechanism. (see Gellner, 1983; Smith, 1983, 1998, 2010 for treatment of state and nation).

With recent scholarship dedicated to the revival of civic republicanism in contrast to the Western focus on liberalism (Digeser, 2004; Honohan, 2002; Nederman, 2000; Weinstock and Nadeau, 2004), we turn to Cicero to understand the origins of the republic situated in the Roman civitas, which provides a foundation for contemporary understandings of the state (Wood, 1988).

Rhetoricians Isocrates and Cicero played an essential role in understanding how human dialogue and education contribute to the development of the nation-state. Plato and Aristotle grappled with comprehending and espousing notions of the polis for the greater good in canonical works such as Plato’s Republic and Statesman and Aristotle’s Politics, but as a rhetorician, Cicero makes a pragmatic move toward viewing rhetoric itself as an essential element for the development of the state. In De Oratore (1904), Cicero draws a direct connection between the rhetorical ability and human communication and the development of the state:

It is the fact this one characteristic that give us our chief superiority over the brute creation, the habit, I mean, of conversing with one another, and the power of expressing our feelings in words…Finally, to come to what are the main advantages of speech, what other power could have gathered the scattered members of the human race into one place, or weaned them from a wild and savage life to the humane and civilized life of citizens, or, when their various
communities were once established could have defined for them their laws, their judicial procedure, and their rights? (Cicero, 1904, p. 14)

We continue to see this connection to rhetoric and communication can be seen throughout his seminal works, but through Cicero’s political-rhetorical lens. In *De Officiis*, or *On Duties* (1855), Cicero again highlights the human ability to communicate and reason to the good society: “[…]that which is perceived in the society of the whole human race, and of this the bond is speech and reason, which by teaching, learning, communicating, debating, and judging conciliate men together, and bind them into a kind of natural society” (Cicero, 1855, pp. 27-28).

Plato and Aristotle provided a solid foundation for discussing the philosophical characteristics and complexities of the ethical and moral embodiment of a state and its function, but as was already discussed in the previous chapter, Isocrates and Cicero as rhetoricians in the tradition of the School of Civic Rhetoric see philosophy and rhetoric as symbiotic, the function of each dependent on the other (Hubbell, 1913). Like Isocrates, Cicero foregrounds human action through language and community, as he utilizes rhetoric as the vehicle through which community is formed and maintained—demonstrated by his belief that the functions of the orator and statesmen must be joined as one and the same (Hubbell, 1913). Where Isocrates’ conservative focus is on recognizing and developing a common ground among citizens through the available means of persuasion (Poulakos, 1997), in *The Republic*, Cicero recognizes the need for common ground contextualized by *ratio*, the human ability to reason and to reflect on that reason. For Cicero (1998), reason is a God-given ability only available to humans who can engage language for the formation of community and, therefore, the republic
(On Laws, p.105). Reason not only has the ability to teach us, but also the ability to learn from itself (On Laws, 1998, p. 107). Above all, we see how rhetoric in antiquity contributes to the larger conversation about nation and citizenship. Through antiquity, rhetoric is an essential force in the ways we enlarge our thinking about our embeddedness in the social and political context as a whole.

Since the “imagined community” (Anderson, 2006) is our hermeneutic entrance to our renderings of nationhood and nationalism, we will also explore the idea of Cicero’s republic as an imagined community in the late Roman Republic. How did rhetoric and education capture the political, social and cultural narrative of the moment? Why is Cicero’s conception of the republic important for understanding the nation as an existential-phenomenological instance, allowing its participants to imagine their situatedness in a particular way? How can his ideas lead us to a theoretical understanding of the nation and nationalism in the postmodern moment? In short, why is Cicero’s work on the republic an important component of nationhood as a communicative construct in contemporary times? Do these ideas burst asunder our contemporary notions of the state, or do they reinforce and enlarge the individual’s role in society, and therefore, the nation?

Cicero’s Philosophical and Rhetorical Influences: Moving from Isocrates to Cicero

Although a student of rhetoric can readily recognize the various principles and elements of rhetoric both Isocrates and Cicero share, very little scholarship has identified Isocrates’ prominent influence on Cicero’s work in any direct way. Muir (2005) states, “Cicero’s Republic and Laws are modeled on Plato’s dialogues of the same titles, but are intended to provide an Isocratic alternative to them, substituting Isocrates’ learned orator for Plato’s philosopher king” (p. 182). A relatively obscure work by Hubbell (1913)
addresses this issue in much detail. Hubbell (1913) purports that both men had a tremendous respect for a comprehensive knowledge of the liberal arts and that the idea of universal knowledge was paramount to a rhetorician’s ability to persuade and educate those who would serve the polis or republic. He notes that both men recognized the power of language for political influence and practiced those principles of influence, engaging human action as an essential element of rhetoric that, when engaged properly, can benefit the greater whole—the nation, in this regard. Isocrates and Cicero understand that human action should not be bracketed but must emerge and resolve within a complex social framework; in short, rhetorical action requires social conditions for its performance (Hubbell, 1913). Therefore, becoming a virtuous citizen requires acculturation, example, and education (as repeatedly advanced by Isocrates and Cicero throughout their works like Against the Sophists and De Oratore, respectively). A good state can allow us to realize these common goods and to exercise virtues to participate in society and to reciprocate the gifts society has bestowed upon us (Cicero, 1998, The Republic, p. 8).

Cicero and Isocrates also place a strong emphasis on rhetoric as a mode of education; rhetoric is education in their worlds, and education prepares citizens for service to the polis and res publica. Aristotle (1998) in the Politics espouses that education makes citizens aware of their interdependence and of the importance of supporting the common goods shared in the polis: ”...[O]ne should not consider any citizen as belonging to himself alone, but as all belonging to the city-state, since each is a part of the city-state” (p. 227). Both Isocrates and Cicero follow this line of thinking and believe that speech/language and communication allow us to sustain life; however, the republic is essential in providing a field, an existential-phenomenological context, in
which this communication and hence education is productive and apparent (see Chapter 2 regarding Isocrates advocacy of panhellenism; Cicero, 1998). For Cicero, a political community is the highest association in which we function, the embodiment of rhetorical action that manifests in communicative acts (Cicero, 1998, p. 4; Honohan, 2002).

As part of this discussion, then, rhetoric as an expression of the nation is not an expression of permanence but is rather purely contingent, responsive and contextual to the historical moment. As we explored earlier, Isocrates “sees logos as the expression of a particular kind of truth, and he locates it within a given cultural and social context, moving in space and time” (Fontana, 2004, p.29). Rhetoric and the nation are interdependent—each provides the existential-phenomenological space in which the other can respond to the issues, actions, and culture at the time. Rhetoric is essentially a form of republican and democratic communication that thrives within an environment of conflict, multiplicity, plurality and difference, which simultaneously attempts to bring some stability to the contingency caused by these uncertain conditions. For these reasons, effective orators take on a significant role in the functioning of the state (Fontana, 2004, pp. 29-30).

Isocrates sees participation in the public sphere differently from Cicero in that Cicero does not view it as full participation but rather as the participation of the ruling elite that keeps the “interests of the whole of society at heart” (Honahan, 2004, p. 36). Cicero’s (1998) ideal republic is governed by a mixed constitution that grants power to both the aristocracy and a democratic government, but gives precedence to an aristocratic ruling class that keeps the best interests of the common citizens in mind. In other words, although both were committed to the idea of the civic republican tradition, Isocrates
considered civic participation in self-government at a broad, inclusive level while Cicero placed enormous emphasis on constitutional rule of law, monitored and regulated by the ruling class (Honohan, 2002, p. 40).

Isocrates’ belief that the orator has great authority over political questions guided his principle that orator, statesman and philosopher are one and the same (Hubbell, 1913). Cicero bases his ideas of the orator in *De Oratore* largely on Isocratean ideals (Hubbell, 1913). “Yet in the debate between philosophy and rhetoric, philosophy and politics, Cicero seems to return to Isocrates’ understanding of rhetoric. It is a technique and method by which power may be acquired, but also, precisely because it is a means to power, it assumes a determinate political, moral and social order within which it acquires meaning and value” (Fontana, 2004, p. 51). Still into the modern age, there was much criticism about how these thinkers were actually practicing philosophy. Karl Marx, although applying Ciceronian thought to his own studies in political science, declared that Cicero “knew as little about philosophy as the President of the United States of North America” (Wood, 1988, p. 7). Regardless of this debate, Ciceronian principles have impacted the way in which scholars have understood the Roman Republic and the function of the state into modernity.

For Cicero, the orator is by default a statesman at large, a leader, educating citizens and imparting useful knowledge to citizens in the *res publica* (Hubbell, 1913, pp.19; 30). Cicero saw the orator as a powerful player in the rehabilitation of the Roman Republic, which was slowly deteriorating before him (Lacey & Wilson, 1970). Isocrates viewed oratory as the main function of the state, an art responsible for the transmission of ideas and practices that contribute to and transform the state into nation (Hubbell, 1913,
Rhetoric reigns as the supreme art for creating a social and national consciousness among its citizens; the idea of nation is a state of mind within its citizens, shaped by the language, ideas, and culture, or in Greek terms, paideia. Cicero’s work reflects how the orator as statesman uses the craft of rhetoric to convey very distinct language to persuade Roman society of what a political society should look like. His ability to address national issues reflects his predecessor’s ability to speak (and write) quite convincingly about the state of affairs in their own political environments — polis for Isocrates, and res publica for Cicero. For both men, rhetoric is ultimately a moral venture, educating fellow citizens about the needs and the best conditions of their political environment (Hubbell, 1913).

As discussed earlier, Isocrates expounds ideas of the Greek polis and statesmen, but above all the idea of panhellenism. Cicero’s rhetorical philosophy is not confined to the function of oratory and language. Like Isocrates, he carries his expertise particularly as a rhetorician to outline and influence the nature of his republic in very specific terms, particularly when it comes to the role of reason in rhetoric. However, unlike Isocrates, as we will see in The Republic, Cicero is not necessarily promoting a Pan-Roman world, but rather turning within to strengthen his own society, which consequently bolsters its political structure and the overall ideal of the nation through which citizens can thrive, function and serve. To explore this point more deeply, I will focus mainly on two Ciceronian texts, On The Republic and On Law, to explain how Cicero sets the stage for premodern ideals of state, nation and nationalism.

In summary, both Isocrates and Cicero emphasize metaphors of the common center/common good to convey ideals of political economy (Honohan, 2002). Cicero
develops on Isocratean rhetoric about nation and nationalism through understanding how moderation and regulation are central to the republic, and he understands how the nation is a physical manifestation of a phenomenological context in which laws guide our freedom and provide justice. Like Isocrates, Cicero is the quintessential pragmatist; both men seem to be engaging the resources that are available to them to create a political community that seems even more accessible and possible for the quotidian citizen.

**Plato’s Statesman: Cicero’s Guiding Document**

Although this connection to Isocrates is clear and important, I would be remiss not to acknowledge Plato’s direct influence on Cicero’s system of state, particularly in his work *The Statesman*. Plato, and Aristotle to a certain extent, provide philosophical ground for Cicero’s understanding on the influence and utility of rhetoric on the republic. (Wheeler [1952] points out that Cicero’s work is often attributed to Plato’s work on the state, but any reference to Aristotle’s *Politics* in reference to the republic is most likely “not causal but coincidental” [p. 51]). Cicero’s core ideas also seem to emanate from the philosophical and rhetorical influence Plato and Aristotle had on ancient Western thought, particularly regarding our ability to reason for the sake of social and political development (How, 1930). Cicero integrates Platonic and Aristotelian contemplative thought into his own work by effectively applying them into the Roman context of action (How, 1930). Seminal works such as the *Republic* and *Laws* are not “philosophical fiction but [are] real and historical” because they described what was actually emerging in the Roman republic at the time (How, 1930, p. 26).

There are several core ideals such as moderation in rule, the interaction of rule of law with the chosen leader, rule of a few over the rule of many, and the power of rhetoric
in the role of the state, that Cicero seems to borrow from Plato for use in the Roman world (Wheeler, 1952); however, How (1930) points out that the “differences [in Cicero] are as clear as, and more profound than, the resemblances” (p. 26). Plato believes, in an uncharacteristically Aristotelian sense, that the state cannot function or succeed without looking toward moderation in how one rules and in how society behaves. “…[A] view to the attainment of the mean, seems to afford a grand support and satisfactory proof of the doctrine which we are maintaining” (Plato, *The Statesman*, 2008, p. 89).

The rule of law is also given to us as an a priori, but for Plato, the rule of law alone does not suffice because it is itself rhetorical—it does not “comprehend what is noblest and just for all” (Plato, *The Statesman*, 2008, p.104) and therefore must be administered by wise men who understand this and can respond to the temporal quality of the law. The rule of law and the statesman have a complex, symbiotic relationship—one cannot function without the other. Law would have no legitimacy without the guidance and wisdom of the endowed ruler who possesses the true art of leadership; the law is necessary, but cannot create any form of good rule without a leader who possesses knowledge of the “art” of rule itself (Plato, *The Statesman*, 2008, p.104).

Plato believes in the divinity of law, its a priori nature, but also understands its imperfections when engaging human complexity. God’s law has been given to us, but God is displeased with our ability to apply it well; he has handed it over to the earthly domain in order for us to apply it justly and fairly (Plato, 1998). Thus, the philosopher king’s duty is to moderate the law and apply the art of leadership to human behavior for the benefit of society.
Although a proponent of the philosopher king, one endowed with the abilities to rule moderately through law, Plato prefers the rule of a few (an aristocracy or oligarchy) over the rule of many (democracy); mobs can easily turn the state into an anarchistic tyranny (Plato, *The Statesman*). Cicero’s ideal state rests in an aristocracy that rules under a mixed constitution. In *The Republic* Cicero also believes that pure democracy can be detrimental to a successful state, but that the rule of one individual will quite easily spiral into an opportunity for despotism. For Plato, the king can negotiate those a priori laws that are complicated by humans en masse.

For Plato, rhetoric plays an important role in the development and maintenance of a just state, but he does not believe it to be the art by which a state is formed and maintained. Plato very clearly states that rhetoric is quite different from politics (“Rhetoric seems to be quickly distinguished from politics, being a different species, yet ministering to it” (*The Statesman*, p. 217)), where Cicero and the Romans believe that rhetoric and politics are one in the same art. Walzer (2007) points out that Roman rhetoric was civic rhetoric in that it was “taught in the context of telos,” not merely as a technical practice, but as a form of citizen education for the good of the civitas (p. 271). Cicero’s *De Oratore* points to the character of oratory as such:

> It may, indeed, occur to an objector that oratory ought to be compared with other pursuits such as deal with more abstruse subjects and imply a wide acquaintance with literature, rather than with the excellence of a general or the practical wisdom of the good statesman; but let him only turn to such other branches of study, and observe how numerous are the distinguished names in each, and he
will realize what a great paucity of orators there is, and always has been. (Cicero, 1904, p. 4)

Cicero cannot emphasize the importance of rhetoric and oratory enough; oratory forms the foundation on which all other disciplines are grounded and provides the channels through which knowledge and moral conversations are disseminated. Most importantly, rhetoric and oratory are essential to the creation and function of a just republic.

On the other hand, for Plato, politics and the affairs of the state are arts of their own, and rhetoric is not an essential element for creating a just state. Rhetoric, when not Sophistic, can act as a guide aiding “the pilot” (p. 195)—a recurring metaphor in the Statesman—of the great ship of the state to steer toward moderation and justice. Sophistic rhetoric will persuade citizens to disregard the rule of law, but an ethical rhetoric can point citizens to desirable ends (Plato, 1998, p. 111). Politics take a hierarchical precedence over rhetoric since politics is the art that helps us decide whether we should engage rhetoric as a tactical measure; the art of politics creates the epistemological field in which rhetoric functions. “And the science which determines whether we ought to persuade or not, must be superior to the science which is able to persuade? Of course” (Plato, 1998, p.119). Although rhetoric is not a requirement for effective politics, by fluidly and artfully combining the arts of politics and rhetoric, the ruler can “weave” (Plato’s metaphor) the various abilities of the masses to form a state that benefits all of its citizens. The art of politics, not the persuasive abilities of rhetoric, actually grants the a priori ability to choose the capable politician/leader:

Then the true and natural art of statesmanship will never allow any State to be formed by a combination of good and bad men, if this can be avoided; but will
begin by testing human nature in play, and after testing them, will entrust them to proper teachers who are the ministers of her purposes – she will herself give orders, and maintain authority…(Plato, 1998, p. 127)

It is important for us to extrapolate these various themes from Plato’s work on the Statesman in order to gain a full understanding of Cicero’s influences from the Greek world. This project contends that Isocrates has a strong linkage to Ciceronian thought through the ways in which the polis and republic, and therefore the nation, were conceived in antiquity. However, Plato, particularly regarding his requirements for an ideal state, had a strong impact on the way Cicero thought about the republic. By combining the technical and political aspects of Platonic thought on the state and Isocratic principles for civic rhetoric and social engagement, Cicero recasts a version of the republic through Roman ideals that serves as a transition to later understandings of the nation in general.

Civic Republicanism: Early Notions of a Nation?

The next phase of our discussion involves a pragmatic move toward viewing rhetoric as an essential element in the development of the nation. Cicero is often considered the last great republican statesman of antiquity: “Through his modification of Stoicism, Cicero erected the basic conceptual framework of the ‘law of nations’ within which, or against which, all subsequent international law and normative international relations theory has defined itself” (Pangle and Ahrensdorf, 1999, p. 51). Cicero was “one of the national heroes of old Rome” and was the first to be called the “Father of His Country” (Rolfe, 1963, pp. 108; 110) because of his unwavering support of a republic that not only cared for its citizens, but also encouraged participation by its citizens.
Cicero’s influence reached far in terms of distance and time, as he heavily influenced modern politicians in post-Enlightenment England and France, particularly in Republican France during their struggle for liberty and civic participation (Rolfe, 1963). Coined the “Prince of Eloquence,” (Wood, 1988, p.3), Cicero is one of a few rhetoricians considered an ancient “antecedent” to the conception and development of the idea of civic republicanism in contemporary times (Honahan, 2002, p. 41). Even Parenti (2003) who writes an unusually scathing account of Cicero’s controversial role in Roman society, criticized for his ideas and methods behind the creation and maintenance of the republic, still acknowledges Cicero as an exemplary orator.

Today there is a movement towards reinvigorating the merits of civic republicanism in the contemporary world (Digeser, 2004, Honohan, 2002, Maynor, 2003, Nederman, 2000). Communitarian scholars like Taylor and MacIntyre contend “that liberal theory and practice yield an impoverished and distorted conception of human community and public life” (Nederman, 2000, p. 17), where the foundations of civic republicanism are reflected in important indicators such as civic participation and the primacy of human interdependence (Honohan, 2002). This theme of a common center is the main focus of modern republican thought, and hence often considered a “conservative mentality” politically and intellectually (Wood, 1988, p. 206). Aristotle and Cicero can be viewed as civic republicans in the sense that they view this notion of interconnectedness, particularly as a political construct, necessary for the foundation of the nation, which takes on a very different character and function of other communal associations in society (Honohan, 2002, p. 15).
It is evident from these considerations, then, that a city-state is among the things that exist by nature, that a human being is by nature a political animal, and that anyone who is without a city-state, not by luck but by nature, is either a poor specimen or else superhuman. Like the one Homer condemns, he too is ‘clanless, lawless, and homeless.’ For someone with such a nature is at the same time eager for war, like an isolated piece in a board game…Hence that the city-state is a natural and prior in nature to the individual is clear. For if an individual is not self-sufficient when separated, he will be like all other parts in relation to the whole. Anyone who cannot form a community with others, or who does not need to because he is self-sufficient, is not part of a city-state – he is either a beast or god. Hence, though an impulse toward this sort of community exists by nature in everyone, whoever first established one was responsible for the greatest of goods. (Aristotle, *Politics*, 1998, pp. 4-5)

Thus, it is with Aristotle that we begin to see that the concept of community is a priori to our existence and that belonging to a community is essential for human life; we are savages without the support, and acceptance, of community. This idea that a man without a land is a man without a home comes into focus in the Greek polis.

Cicero contributes to the conversation about civic republicanism in a much different way than many of its contemporary proponents, especially concerning ideas of national defense and the necessity of war—two very important discussions tied to the notion of contemporary nationalism. “For Cicero, the pursuit of peace, rather than war, and statesmanship, rather than military command, are the prime tokens of patriotism and exemplars or republican virtue” (Nederman, 2000, p. 19). Cicero saw the need for just
war when the security and integrity of the republic were threatened from the outside, but overall his republican system of government and the concept of nation called for the need to consider alternatives to war and foster peace and civic participation in the public sphere (Nederman, 2000; von Heyking, 2007). Laws that are led and enforced by learned leaders create an environment that encourages civic participation that is energized by a clear understanding of the state—that entity which promotes and provides protection, particularly in moments of strife (Cicero, *The Laws*, 1998, p. 150). Civic republicanism is an understanding of the state through its purest communal roots; those interconnected communities of active citizens are not left to their own devices, but rather thrive in a context that is framed by good laws and leaders who understand the laws (Honohan, 2002). The state then becomes the existential-phenomenological manifestation where justice is not only recognized, but also applied to quotidian life. Civic republicanism, then, may be considered an early form of nation: It provides the ground on which a state must form and function, guided by principles of law, leadership and justice (for which both Plato and Aristotle planted the seeds). Cicero builds on these principles to drive a theory of civic republicanism that breathes life into the idea of the republic through Roman paideia, to use the Greek term.

**Res Publica as Nation**

Although Cicero elucidates the notion that rhetoric and the idea of republic are inextricably linked in his orations, letters, and dialogues, two of his most important works, the *Republic* and *the Laws* clearly outline his program for a public entity that can thrive and serve its citizens ethically and responsibly. As we have explored earlier, Cicero’s rhetorical approach to understanding statehood and his state in particular
attempted to create a cultural framework that resonated in the hearts and minds of its citizens. However, we must understand the foundations of republic and the indicators that elevate it from purely a technical system of state to a cultural construct, a Greek paideia, for the Roman populus.

The most basic understanding of Cicero’s *Republic* is contained in the meaning of the word itself. *Res publica* literally translates from the Latin to “public thing” or “public business.” Cicero saw the republic as a function of its citizenry, a field for public participation, under the guidance of a learned ruling class (Fott, 2014; Powell & Rudd, 1998). “Part Aristotle, part Cicero, part Machiavelli, civic humanism conceives of man as a political being whose realization of self occurs only through participation in public life, through active citizenship in a republic. The virtuous man is concerned primarily with the public good, res publica, or commonwealth, not with private or selfish ends” (Kramnick, 1982, p. 630). As far as we can tell, Cicero was the first to have phrased the idea of a public state in these terms. “And who are ‘the people?’ ‘The people’ is a union of a number of men, acknowledging each other’s common rights, and pursuing in common their advantage or ‘interest.’ *Res publica* then is a community, and the business of such a union of men, no more, and no less” (Lacey & Wilson, 1970, p. 1). *Res publica* is a complex statement about communal relationships, and therefore rather difficult to translate directly; this is clearly indicated by the ways in which the title of Cicero’s work itself has been translated, as *Res publica* is sometimes referred to as a republic, a state, or a commonwealth. All of these factors encompass various aspects of Cicero’s republic, but none truly grasp the essence of his system completely (Lacey & Wilson, 1970).
For the purposes of this project, it is important to explore the specific characteristics of a republic as well as the question of why Cicero’s republic fits into our understanding of a nation. Wood (1988) contends that Cicero’s state is “non-ethical and secular,” and that there is “the separation of the state from both government and society, all of which have a beginning in the thought of Cicero” (1988, p.125). Civitas is the technical term regarding the complex system that regulates the states, while *res publica* is based in common interest and rights (1988, p. 128). Civitas tends to be somewhat less normative and emotive term than *res publica,*” but that patria (fatherland, in a sense) is the most emotive of all (p. 126; p. 139). In other words, the more we move down the hierarchy of social constructs, the more pragmatic and technical they become; patria is an existential-phenomenological construct that lives in the hearts and minds of its citizens, while *res publica* and civitas are the technical constructs that inform the patria through systems of justice and common humanity (Wood, 1988). These two statements, however, seem to confound the function of Cicero’s *Republic.* On one hand, we have an entity that is non-ethical and secular, but on the other hand we are asked to view the *res publica* as a philosophical construct grounded in common humanity and justice that then shapes the way the civitas functions. In other words, the *res publica* conjures up notions of the “material world,” the actual social mechanism that invokes the emotions and actions of his fellow citizens to form a functional state (Dugan, 2007, p. 19).

Cicero’s focus on an Aristotelian style of moderation within the state is noteworthy as well. In *The Republic,* Cicero (1998) makes it very clear that temperance, particularly the temperance of a leader, helps to construct a practical collective experience that produces the characteristics of a solid republic; “excessive license”
promotes an environment of anarchy that quickly devolves into tyranny (Cicero, 1998, p. 31). In other words, clear and distinct boundaries between the leadership and citizenry create the necessary phenomenological distance that makes the construction and function of the state possible and accessible. Mob rule will undoubtedly bring about destruction, but knowledgeable and ethical leaders are able to impart justice through the law that is supported by a constitution. A true state is grounded in philosophy from which emerges a strong practical approach that forms and manages that state.

Thus, the Republic provides a pragmatic context for moral excellence in which citizens can improve their lives. Philosophy’s practical home is located within the state. [The] most important field of [moral] practice, moreover, is in the government of the state…For nothing is laid down by philosophers—nothing right and honorable at any rate—which has not been brought into being and established by those who have drawn up laws for states…We are led by a powerful urge to increase the wealth of the human race; we are keen to make men’s lives richer and safer by our policies and efforts; we are spurred on by nature herself to fulfill this purpose.

(Cicero, 1998, p.4)

The state is a function of rhetoric, the practical philosophy that helps citizens make sense of their world and provides refuge in a constantly contingent world. There is no greater activity closer to the divine than the creation of a state (Cicero, 1998); the creation of a state is a practical moral act that not only helps us form communities but allows us to understand our situatedness in those communities (Cicero, 1998, pp. 17, 19). The nation is ethical, rhetorical action as it provides the natural existential-phenomenological context for its citizens; however, we only arrive at this pragmatic entity through grounded
philosophical thought from which the creation of laws and natural leadership emerge. In short, the state is teleological, providing a vision for what is possible: “…[F]or it is the crowning achievement of political wisdom…to divine the course of public affairs, with all its twists and turns. Then, when you know what direction things are taking, you can hold them back or else be ready to meet them” (Cicero, 1998, p.49). Within such rhetorical constructs public and personal liberty is a reality.

**Cicero’s Rhetorical Contribution to the “Imagined Community”**

Although ancient rhetoric can be viewed as a technical art, applying the necessary rhetorical mechanisms for successful persuasion, such as the case with Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* (1984) and Cicero’s *De Inventione* (1949), we can also readily regard rhetoric as a mode of communication and way of life that shaped the cultural mindset. Dugan (2007) argues that Cicero’s rhetorical approach is not only technical, but sets up a cultural framework for his place and time; it plays directly into the public imagination of the republic in the Roman historical moment. Cicero’s works are “culturally significant,” not only technical: “Rhetoric is treated as a cultural construct embedded in society” (Dugan, 2007, p. 16), as rhetoricians like Cicero were conveying the “Roman cultural unconscious” (Dugan, 2007, p. 18). We can see this framing in Cicero’s treatment of his notion of the *res publica*; not only did he provide guidelines for what ideals should be applied for successful governance, but the very notion of his republic reflected what was occurring in that historical moment while he was attempting to transform it from within. Powell and Rudd (1998) elude to this quality in the republic by addressing Cicero’s focus on the profession of the politician and ultimately how it affected the common citizen: “Cicero was concerned not just to encourage political participation, but to present politics
as a branch of knowledge which needed to be studied and mastered, *and which aimed at the greatest good not of the politicians themselves but of the governed*” (p. xxii, emphasis added).

Cicero was writing these seminal works at a time when the Roman Republic was in major distress, wrought with corruption, and on its way toward the new Empire (Cowell, 1968; Hamilton, 1932). His emphasis on civic republicanism was an attempt not only to strengthen his state, but also to work this idea quite deliberately into the public consciousness to shift the cultural framework and the actual structure of his state at the time. He does this by engaging justice as the foundation on which the cultural and political landscape in the Roman world could be transformed. In short, rhetoric and jurisprudence needed each other in this growing populace; Cicero’s emphasis on law and justice is enveloped in rhetoric and pulls everyday citizens into republican life.

Rhetoric had an influence on matters of the republic not only at the elite levels but on that of the commoners as well (Alexander, 2007). When Cicero was writing his masterpiece of political theory and statehood, the moral character at the time of Cicero preceded by Cato was in ruins and much of Cicero’s ideal emerged out of a politically vital but socially doubtful moment (Cowell, 1967; Hamilton, 1932). *De Republica* is more and more an idea that was a reflection of the concern of the republic’s demise (Cowell, 1967). Although *De Republica* outlines specific guidelines for the success of a just and moral state, at a more global level it creates a cultural framework for society; Cicero’s republic is an “imagined community” not in the sense that it is only a pure ideal, but in the Andersonian sense that it can truly exist in the hearts and minds of its citizens when communicated effectively (Anderson, 2006). In the Roman world, rhetoric is the
tool and method of communication through which this “imagining” occurs. One way in
which we can explore this notion of rhetoric as a method of cultural significance is to
delve a little more deeply into some of Cicero’s writing focused specifically on rhetoric
itself. We can see that even in some of his earlier writings on the art of oration and its
function as a public good, the question of state is at the center.

*De Oratore (On Oratory)* does not only provide the function and utility of oration
in Roman society, but integrates the function of rhetoric into more global concerns for the
state in general. In *De Oratore*, Cicero underscores the two major questions before the
republic: “The reform of judicia, and the extension of the civitas to all the Italian
yeomen” (Moor, 1904, p. viii). For good oratory one needs knowledge of moral
philosophy and law – the former allows the orator to persuade well (Moor, 1904), but
without law and reason there is no justice to guide us. “….My deliberate opinion is, that
the controlling influence and wisdom of the consummate orator is the main security, not
merely for his own personal reputation, but for the safety of countless individuals, and the
welfare of the country at large” (Cicero, 1904, p. 13, emphasis added). As we can see in
*De Oratore*, Cicero viewed rhetoric as one of the most important, if not the most
important, methods for creation and maintenance of a just republic. Rhetoric was the
available means of public communication and persuasion in Roman society, and through
both word and deed, leaders could convey the importance of reason, law and justice
within that entity which could protect and provide for its citizens. In Ciceronian terms,
then, rhetoric is necessary for the development of a national consciousness.

*On Duties* (1855) advances Cicero’s program for pragmatic morality. Leaders
and citizens alike contribute to society through active citizenship; as members of an
organized state, we are behooved to act not in our own interests but in the interests of the republic for the good of all that surrounds us. Like many of Cicero’s other discussions, both reason and justice compel duties—we serve to benefit every level of society. We are justified when defending our country, but at the same time, we must regard others around us by acting in moderation and beneficence. Cicero’s penchant for the Stoic cosmopolitanism and his love of country contradict, yet somehow support, each other when thinking about nation particularly in postmodern terms. There is a fine line between what we hold as our own, and what all of mankind is meant to share. The nation is the social construct in which we carry out our duty to engage in an active political life that is enforced by justice and ethics. Regardless of the evils that pervade political activity, Cicero believes that its benefits far outweigh the costs. As animals with reason and language, it is our obligation to serve and protect the community of which we are a part.

But (as has been strikingly said by Plato) we are not born of ourselves alone, and our country claims her share, and our friends their share of us; and, as the Stoics hold, all the that the earth produces is created for the use of man, so men are created for the sake of men, that they may mutually do good to one another…(Cicero, *On Duties*, 1855, pp. 14-15)

Mutual, communal action is natural—our duty to every level of society from country to family is implanted in us to serve and protect the common good. The *res publica* is the practical manifestation of our duty to ourselves and our fellow citizens, but ultimately the *res publica* conceived as nation is a nation among nations, participating in the larger context of an international web of associations. For Cicero, the state creates a society
that realizes full human potential in the world; it provides a tangible context and acts as a guide for its citizens to act justly in communion with their fellow human beings.

Through the law, the state provides protection for personal property, both tangible property and intangible human properties such as human rights and freedom. The state is a moral entity because it is the work of the gods; it is the pinnacle of human community and is tantamount to the survival and success of the human race. “All that is distinctively human, according to Cicero, depends on the existence and well-being of the state…The state provides an environment conducive to the flourishing of culture and it highest manifestation, philosophy. With the state, philosophy would not have been born, and without philosophy’s guidance the state is like a rudderless ship (Wood, 1988, p. 120-121).”

Wood (1988) contends that Cicero was among the first to define the state in a concise manner, but was more concerned about the non-moral, technical aspects of the state as opposed to something that would shape the human soul. Thus far, we see that although Cicero did in fact create a technical program for the state, the underlying intention was that these guidelines would allow us to form an understanding of the state that was pleasing to the gods by protecting fellow humans through acts of justice and providing a space for meaningful conversation about our relationships with our fellow citizens and those beyond our “borders.” For these reasons, perhaps Wood fails to see the rhetorical forces behind Cicero’s work, as his rhetoric contextualizes the goals of his technical guidelines for the republic. It is difficult to see that Cicero’s work, which is deeply grounded on justice and reason, is “non-moral.”
Again, we see that Anderson’s notion of the nation as an imagined community continues to assist us with even ancient conceptions of the nation. It is important to point out, however, that Cicero’s Republic may be “imagined” in a theoretically rich, Andersonian sense as it forms common ground; it is not “imaginary” in the sense that it is overly ideal and unattainable (Wood, 1988, p. 139). Rather, Cicero’s Republic is a real, tangible system grounded in significant Roman ideals. The imagined community is constituted through human language and communication and the distribution of that communication to the community. Cicero’s writings on the republic not only convey the ideal political community, but they delineate an imagined community because they capture the pulse of the historical moment and speak directly to the problems that everyday citizens are facing in the late republic. Cicero’s idea of the republic is an early rendering of the nation as he attempts to prefigure an identity for the citizens of Rome that is tied to place politically, culturally, and juridically while engaging rhetoric as the available means of persuasion and the most accessible form of public communication. Cicero engaged rhetorical methods and principles which he had outlined for Roman citizens, as in De Inventione, to convey a message of statehood that would resonate in the minds and hearts of its citizens throughout a burgeoning, yet troubled, society, and create a shared meaning for nationhood and citizenship within that nation.

The Centrality of Natural Law

Such a discussion leads us to Cicero’s notion of nature and natural law. Rhetoric and, therefore, the state are not exclusively social constructs, originating from the complex relationships with community; rather, they are products of natural law, a common center that derives from the divine. “[I]n all times and nations this universal law
must forever reign, eternal and imperishable. It is the sovereign master and emperor of all beings. God himself is its author, its promulgator, its enforcer” (Cicero, *On the Commonwealth*, 1929, p. 270). Laws that result in justice are not human, earthly laws but rather a result of the laws that the gods have handed down to us, which then become human constructs (Cicero, 1929, p. 254). Natural law ensures that the law is in fact centered on a common good that emerges through the way we view and enact justice, and therefore allows us to form common goals and aspirations within a political structure regardless of the diversity that exists. We can see this influence as referred to in Plato’s *Statesman*: Humankind cannot precisely understand how the law guides us, nor does the law understand human nature, but it strives to infiltrate our political associations and control our ways. Plato and Cicero agree that the wise ruler, the philosopher king for Plato and educated royalty for Cicero, must mediate the function of the law with human action as well as its converse. We can see both of these ideas emerge in Plato’s *Statesman* (2008, p. 104) and Cicero’s *Republic* (1998, pp. 4; 14), respectively. Cicero (1998), although he ultimately admits that Plato’s design for the state was more idealistic than practical (in Cicero’s words, “desirable” rather than “feasible” (p.51)), he follows those same principles as a foundation for his vision of a functioning, just republic.

The state, then, is a teleological manifestation of nature, or natural law in particular, which is the ground on which the development of functional communities emerges. At its very core, reason—rational reflection, or phronesis in the Greek lexicon—is the channel through which natural law reaches the wise rulers and is applied to the state (Cicero, 1998). Laws emerge from reason. Of course, reason itself “moderates” communication in the Aristotelian sense, which Cicero then carries into his
own goals for a realistic republic. However, we do not necessarily observe Isocrates engaging reason as a starting point in the same way, but rather focusing on phronesis to accomplish his task (Schwarze, 1999). We see all of these influences in Cicero. In *On Law*, Cicero describes the importance of reason and how this hierarchy of virtue allows us to arrive at the functional state, the necessary structure for human community and communication. Reason, which is inherent in nature, results in law, which Cicero believes to be the highest form of human reason. “For law is the force of nature, the intelligence and reason of a wise man, and the criterion of justice and injustice” (Cicero, *The Laws*, 1998, p. 103). Law, and therefore justice, is the manifestation of practical reason. Cicero explains the Roman diversion from the Greek in the way the cultures viewed the law—the Greek word for law, *nomos*, was defined as something that was bestowed upon the polis that focused on ideas of “fairness,” while the Roman word, *lex*, was not simply something that was granted to the Romans, but rather a matter of “choice” in the ways in which they behaved for the good of the republic (Cicero, *The Laws*, 1998, p. 103). Cicero agrees that both elements are central to the law, but we see the penchant for Roman action over the Greek contemplation. “…Cicero distinctly claims to speak with authority on the ground that he combined both theory and practice, thus excelling his predecessors, who…were either mere theorists or, if practical, devoid of skill in exposition” (How, 1930, p. 25). Reason is the pure essence of all that regulates human interaction; without reason we will not arrive at laws that promulgate justice. More importantly, the crucible of republic provides the existential-phenomenological space for reason and justice to emerge.
“...[T]here is nothing better than reason, and reason is present in both man and God. But those who share reason also share right reason; and since that is law, we men must also be thought of as partners and with the gods in laws. Furthermore, those who share law share justice. Now those who share all things must be regarding as belonging to the same state; and much the more so if they obey the same powers and authorities. And they do in fact obey this celestial system, the divine mind, and the all-powerful god. Hence this whole universe must be thought of as a single community shared by gods and men. (Cicero, The Laws, 1998, p. 105, emphasis added)

It is interesting to note Cicero’s expansion of the concept of the republic in this regard. A community is a product of shared laws and justice; however, he does not see law and justice as specific to a particular state, but rather universal laws that encompass the whole of humanity. For that reason, community extends beyond the political structure of the state to the larger, universal community. As we will explore later, such a focus on the whole of humanity plays directly into Cicero’s understanding of the larger human community as influenced by the Stoics, and the balance between the need for a republic and this human community at large.

For Cicero, then, the state is grounded on the notion of what we, as citizens, all agree to be just and how that justice is preserved: “For what is a state other than an equal partnership in justice?” (Cicero, The Republic, 1998, p. 22-23). Agreement within the state, which is regulated by justice, is akin to the natural harmony within music—the bonds of difference that work in concert to keep the state functioning well. “What, in the case of singing, musicians call harmony is, in the state, concord; it constitutes the tightest
and most effective bond of security; and such concord cannot exist at all without justice” (Cicero, *The Republic*, 1998, p. 58). Natural law and reason all result in how justice is perceived and practiced; if justice is not guided by the law, and natural law in Cicero’s case, then it is selfish kind of justice that does not consider the Other in its application. For Cicero, the law ensures that justice is oriented toward the Other, which in turn helps to create the true essence of the purpose of a republic; that is, a space in which we agree upon the tenets of justice, but also where justice is applied with our fellow citizen in mind (Wood, 1988).

The Dream of Scipio is perhaps Cicero’s most prominent chapter of the *Republic* because of the effective use of narrative and metaphor that grounds his major ideas of the republic in a cohesive, and memorable, narrative for the Romans. Scipio’s dream is otherworldly, as Scipio, a great leader descended from great leaders, is flying through the cosmos with the gods (1998, *The Republic*, Book IV). Such a perspective on the world not only demonstrates the importance of a nation in the minds of the gods, but it emphasizes Cicero’s main ideas about the significance, origin and structure of a republic. From the cosmos, the earth is miniscule and society even smaller; even in their seemingly insignificant presence, well-ordered societies please the gods, and the leaders in those societies, who are chosen by the gods, are granted a direct link to divinity (p. 88). From this perspective Scipio sees a nation for what it really is: A significant, but small element in a much larger system deemed invaluable by nature (the gods). Should these societies be well-ordered and led by those naturally chosen to carry out the function of a state, the gods will grant their blessings upon the nation (Barham, 1841): “I want you to know this: for everyone who has saved and served his country and helped it grow, a sure place is set
aside in heaven where he may enjoy of life of eternal bliss” (Cicero, The Republic, 1998, p. 88). From the gods’ perspective, the nation is the most manageable and accessible form of the divine for earthly citizens, and therefore is the work of the gods: “To that supreme god who rules the universe, nothing (or at least nothing that happens on earth) is more welcoming than those companies and communities of people linked together by justice that are called states. Their rulers and saviors set out from this place [the cosmos], and to this they return” (Cicero, The Republic, 1998, p. 88).

Cicero’s rhetorical technique of setting Scipio’s dream in a somewhat fantastical, out-of-this-world context connects the practical function of the state, and the effective ruling of the republic, to the cosmos and the larger, a priori context. The mind, or what some might consider more accurately the soul, is an a priori creation of the divine. Cicero believes that God has granted us life and formed our souls to be stewards of the earth; the republic is the organizing entity that allows us to carry out that responsibility (Cicero, The Republic, 1998, p. 89). We must act according to the requirements within a republic to attain an understanding of our origin while creating an acceptable structure that pleases the gods. The human soul is eternal, and the republic allows for the earthly existence of the eternal soul. A nation is not formed out of a vacuum, but rather the earthly manifestation of a sort of divine ordering of our world. Scipio learns from his forefather Africanus that all things good derive from an “Eternal Being,” and when not derived from such a source “all nature must perish” (Cicero, On the Commonwealth, 1929, pp. 310-311). In this life, altruistic political activity that is focused on those with whom we share our world is rewarded in the afterlife.
Cicero’s application of the law to justice, and the communication of these ideas to fellow citizens, is yet another example of how Cicero and the Romans “imagined” their community and developed their notion of the republic. Law and justice are not possible without citizens sharing these ideas and applying them to everyday life in order to form a just and ethical republic. Works such as Cicero’s *Republic* and *Laws* were foundational pieces that reinforced the Roman pragmatic ideal into the minds of its citizens to form a more desirable space for nation, the space where an understanding of common justice was made possible and a space where its citizens granted the privilege of protection and freedom.

**Cicero’s Cosmopolitanism**

Given the above elements of Ciceronian thought, we can invoke such ideas of the republic as foundations of what we understand to be a contemporary concept of the nation. Although not directly “national” in our contemporary understanding, they are important ancient antecedents to the ways in which we view the nation and nationalism. As mentioned earlier, I understand the concept of nation to be a communicative, discursive public phenomenon that allows private citizens to engage issues of belonging and identity rhetorically within strongly defined political, social, economic and communicative boundaries. Although bound to physical characteristics in our current understanding, the nation seems to be defined more by imagined, existential-phenomenological horizons that offer guidelines for interaction with cultural, political, social and economic selves and others. In this regard, physical boundaries become less stringent, more contingent and permeable. Nationalism, then, is the intellectual and emotional manifestation of that reality in the hearts and minds of that nation’s citizens.
and interlocutors. These existential-phenomenological horizons explored by Cicero, and to some extent, Isocrates earlier, are driven by the law and thus justice as a common, moral center that allows citizens to make sense of the political, social, economic, and cultural world around them. Nations allow citizens to “moderate” the world around them, as they make social, cultural and political issues manageable and accessible for the masses. Of course, the nation, or the republic in Cicero’s terms, is not possible without a knowledgeable leader who respects the presence of the law derived from the a priori conditions that guide the ways in which we act and interact to form the common ground for justice and, eventually, peace.

Cicero was considered a patriot to the Roman Republic, but, like Aristotle, he understood that moderation was necessary to live a chaotic political, social world (Rolfe, 1963). As a cosmopolitan Stoic, Cicero, particularly in On Duties, vacillates between the greatness of the Roman citizen while acknowledging the need to incorporate others into the political community (Pangle, 1998). Patriotism is an important aspect of life in the republic, but must be balanced so as to not degenerate into forms of nationalism that are damaging and disregard the existence of other surrounding communities. Rolfe explains that in even Cicero’s world that was less connected than in the contemporary world, recognizing others outside of one system played an important role in patriotism. “Still, love of country when it does not degenerate into chauvinism and national selfishness, is the mark that distinguishes a good citizen from a bad, and this quality Cicero possessed to an unusual degree and put it on record” (Rolfe, 1963, p.167).

We cannot deny his love of country, his need to regulate the masses while encouraging active participation, and the ability to extol human freedom within the
construct of the republic. Freedom and justice are possible only within an organized, concerted effort to “herd” citizens (to use Plato’s extended metaphor in the Statesman (2008), p. 99) and provide resources that create an environment where freedom is made possible through justice. The republic was the highly organized manifestation of a community that provided that manageable context.

At the heart of this complex and highly nuanced rhetorical project is an appeal to certain transnational rules of conduct embodied in the Stoic notion of “natural law” and the kindred conception of the “law of nations” (ius gentium) (Pangle and Ahrensdorf, 1999, p. 52). The Stoics evidently promulgated the first widely influential cosmopolitan ethical ideal, rejecting the need for allegiances to country and political affiliations: “All good men, whatever their social or geographic position may be, are equally citizens of the larger polis which embraces the entire cosmos: they are in fact…citizens of the world” (Hadas, 1943, p. 108-109). Reinvigorating Stoic principles, to a certain extent, Cicero is seen as an important advocate of a Roman form of cosmopolitanism. Law, not power, is the guiding principle through which all human relations are governed, and pave the way for how citizens not only interact within their own political entities but within the enlarged space of the human race as a whole (Hadas, 1943). Substantive relations between citizens grounded in justice emanates to the larger whole of the world beyond one’s borders. Cicero’s focus on natural law is quite different from that of the Stoics—a contemplative life is truly perfection, but because we can never reach perfection, action is the way to live on earth (Pangle, 1998). True commitment and participation in political life brings us close to the gods since the active life reserves a contemplative life in the afterlife. The Stoics are starkly conservative where Cicero liberalizes their ideals to be
more engaged common, everyday life (Pangle and Ahrensdorf, 1999). Cicero’s cosmopolitan ideals that focused on common humanity are based in duties, qualified by stages of commitment to nation, family and then all of humanity.

It is important to note that Cicero’s cosmopolitanism is grounded in Stoic ideals, as he believes in a community of citizens, but not in the same nation-less sense the Stoics believed. Because of this relationship to the Stoics, we tend to idealize Cicero when it comes to our contemporary understanding of cosmopolitanism. At its very core it speaks to a common world of citizens, but not the Stoic intercultural, international community that transcends borders; rather, it is a practical, utilitarian form of cosmopolitanism that focused on community and is realized through law, justice, moral order and the affairs of the republic.

Today…some scholars have concluded that Cicero’s humanitas and societas generis humani (society of mankind)—both a Stoic derivation—have more to do with a common culture, a community of interests, or shared values originate in reason and speech than with an inner or emotional feeling of universal love or kindness. Human solidarity, then, for Cicero, despite his sometimes misleading rhetoric of spiritual brotherhood and fraternal intimacy, implies not so much a loving sympathy or compassion for other as it does the kind of relations and shared interests existing in a community of citizens, with all the inequalities entailed by such a traditional social order. (Pangle and Ahrensdorf, 1999, p. 52)

We can see how Cicero’s understanding of the republic is not a selfish one, but a practical application of what we could coin “othering.” Cicero’s “othering” of citizenship is a recurring theme that also leads some scholars to discuss his work as an early
cosmopolitan (Pangle and Ahrensdorf, 1999). We live in communion with our fellow citizens, and the nation exists not only to share what we hold in common with our fellow citizens, but also to regard those outside of ourselves as essential elements of the nation. The structure and space that the republic creates allows for citizens to live together in a practical manner with those who may be different from them. For Cicero, citizenship itself is the pragmatic manifestation of the republic, where the citizens create the possibility of the republic and, by the same token, the republic grants the space for participation and protection. “Cicero had a clear conception of the rights and duties of citizenship and the dynamic relationship between citizenship and the health of the republic. A citizen of Rome was entitled to expect his government to grant him libertas and justice, on the one hand, and on the other, he was obliged to consider and treat all Roman citizens as his equals under the law and as his kin” (Digeser, 2004, p.8). Reason, law and justice created the requisite rhetorical space where citizenship was formed—a space for citizen participation and interaction. In Ciceronian terms, Roman citizenship was a powerful concept in that it not only acted as an identifier for its people, but also granted the portable “protection from arbitrary treatment” that could “command respect”(Digeser, 2004, p. 6). Roman citizenship protected its citizens well beyond its political and existential-phenomenological borders. In terms of our study, Roman citizenship is the practical manifestation of an “imagined community” through the ways in which reason is understood, the law is shared, and justice is conceived.

Cicero provides insight into this idea in the way he prioritizes allegiances and commitments to our more immediate communal units while recognizing how contributions affect the larger context, the nation. This systemization of citizenship is an
early attempt to justify a concept of postmodern nationalism that recognizes the need for national entities while acknowledging their impermanence, permeability and interconnectedness. Additionally, Cicero exhibits elements of cosmopolitanism in the ways he treated ideas of interconnectedness and interdependency in an expanded community.

**Cicero’s Influence on Christian Rhetoric: Transitions to Modernity**

Cicero makes the pragmatic move from Plato’s and Aristotle’s forms of state that provide a context for the development of human souls and facilitating moral virtue (Wood, 1988). However, in Ciceronian thought, much of what we have seen in this study has everything to do with creating a pragmatic social entity for protecting, providing, and promulgating an environment for peaceful, virtuous action in society. Like Isocrates, Cicero is a civic rhetorician concerned with the practical applications of the more global issues of justice and citizenship grounded in a common center.

Although Cicero was not completely revived in a scholarly context until the Middle Ages, Christian rhetoricians such as Lactantius and St. Augustine of Hippo recognized his impact on political thought, and exploited his political/rhetorical theory in different ways. Lactantius (1964) offered the first type of Christian overlay to Ciceronian thought (Digeser, 2004), and Augustine expanded on Ciceronian concepts of public virtue, but also challenged his notion of shared justice within the commonwealth (St. Augustine, Book II, Ch. 21). Although the scope of this project does not allow for a full exposition of Lactantian and Augustinian thought, it is important to touch on their timeless contributions as key transitions from the ancient world to more contemporary
renderings of Ciceronian thought, particularly as it pertains to our thinking about the structure of the nation.

A Christian humanist follower of Ciceronian rhetoric, Lactantius promoted the re-imagination of the republic at a tumultuous time for Christians in the forth century Roman Empire; Lactantius’ most important work, the *Divine Institutes*, serves as a *De Officiis* for the “new” commonwealth (McDonald, 1964, p. 5). Most notably, he carried the idea of natural law in the Christian context of the state, which was a new understanding of natural law in Christianity (Digeser, 2004).

The writings of Lactantius, therefore, were composed in one of the most eventful epochs of ecclesiastical history. The Church, after suffering the most severe of despotic persecution, was suddenly received under state protection and began to enjoy, not merely tranquility and legal status, but even a considerable portion of political influence. The fourth century saw the great fusion of Christian Church with the Roman state and Hellenistic culture, the fusion which was to spell out Western civilization and determine its achievements. (McDonald, 1964, p. x)

Thus, we can trace Lactantius’ intellectual lineage from figures like Cicero and, as a result of our study, Isocrates. For these reasons, Lactantius has been coined the “Christian Cicero” (MacDonald, 1964; Digeser, 2000).

The existence and immediacy of God was central to Lactantius’ Christian understanding of reason, law, and justice within the state; where Cicero recognized the presence of the a priori understanding of law and the cosmological realm of the gods, Christianity recognized the existence of a monotheistic realm from which our a priori understandings originated. Lactantius, a rhetorician, engages Cicero as his rhetorical
guide, and argues that wisdom is a gift from God; philosophy alone cannot be the provider of truth without the presence of God. In the true tradition of rhetoric then, philosophy has no real effect on us if it is not employed ethically, practically and meaningfully. God has given us knowledge, but waxing philosophically will do us no good; rather, we must engage it practically. “If the precepts of philosophy are to be learned, then, surely, they are to be learned for this reason, that we may live rightly and wisely; but, if we are to live civilly (or as to become private citizens), then philosophy is not wisdom since it is better to live civilly than philosophically” (Lactantius, 1964, pp. 199-200). Lactantius (1964), like Cicero, also deals with questions of justice, and explores whether justice is the highest virtue or the origin of virtue itself (pp. 338-339). Pure justice is realized through the worship of one God; Jesus was sent to guide us back to the true form of justice to listen to the divine wisdom, the natural law, which has been granted to us. “But God, the most indulgent parent that He is, when the end of time was drawing near, sent a messenger to lead back that old age and the justice that had been routed, so that the human race would not be thrown about by great and everlasting errors” (Lactantius, 1964, p. 343). Lactantius connects the notion of a return to Cicero’s concept of the republic to a divine state, one that includes the idea of one God, exemplified by Jesus Christ. “[F]or the Son of God [was] to descend upon the earth in order to erect a temple for God and teach justice; but He was to come, however not in the strength or heavenly power of an angel, but in the form and mortal condition of man” (p. Lactantius, 1964, p. 263). Justice, and therefore an understanding of our origin of wisdom, had gone astray and God sent his only Son to our earthly dwelling to emphasize the centrality of justice and divine wisdom; more importantly, Jesus was the embodiment of practical
reason and justice. This form of justice is the foundation on which the Christian world, the Roman Empire in this case, moved into subsequent historical moments (particularly as we will see in St. Augustine’s account of justice). God, and his only Son Jesus, then becomes the center of everything, including the conditions of our human community as composed by the nation. Although Lactantius is a follower and student of Cicero, his focus is on divine providence; he attempts to “synthesize” religion and philosophy to legitimize the role of Christianity in the face of those who were attempting to dismantle it (McDonald, 1964, p. xx).

In the Roman world, membership in the republic also implied allegiance to one’s spiritual connection. “One’s citizenship determined not only the law to which one was subject, but also, in part, the god to whom one was bound. Thus, the grant of Roman citizenship to all the empires’ free inhabitants had profound implications for Christians, who recognized this intimate connection between cult and citizenship” (Digeser, 2004, p.16). Here, we see the precursor to our modern preoccupation between the concept of state and religion, where the two concepts are often linked within the existential-phenomenological structure of the nation. Even through Cicero we see the importance of acknowledging spiritual guidance, but Lactantius who is writing in the throes of the Roman Empire, attempts to revitalize republican thinking using Christianity as its lifeblood. “A return to res publica, then, would – as in Cicero – return the populace to a condition of libertas in which deliberative reason could prevail. Accordingly, even polytheists would have their full citizen rights in Lactantius’ res publica” (Digeser, 2004, p. 18). When deliberative reason prevails, communal and political participation ensue and
a republic, particularly in the Ciceronian sense, becomes the juridical construct where common ground is formed.

Justice, and therefore, public deed, continue to be the centerpiece of social life even 300 years after Cicero’s death. The Christian moment provides Lactantius with the tools to suggest modes of living the good life in community with others. Although much less known as his predecessors like Cicero and other contemporaries, Lactantius shows how Ciceronian republican thought, and practice to some extent, continued to thrive well into the rule of the Roman Empire (Digeser, 2004).

One hundred years later, St. Augustine, one of the most important figures in Christian rhetoric, would emerge to discuss similar issues, enhancing a Christian understanding of the foundations for citizen action within a republican context. Augustine challenges Cicero’s notion of justice while providing both an expansion and a critique of the Roman world (von Heyking, 2001). Essentially, St. Augustine rejected the notion that a true Ciceronian republic could exist for two reasons: On a basic level, a true republic could not have existed without the existence of Christianity, and that the notion of a justice held in common was unattainable, because of this lack of Christianity.

For I intend in the appropriate place, to examine Cicero himself in which…he laid down in brief what constitutes a “commonwealth” and what constitutes a “community”…I shall do my best to demonstrate the that commonwealth never existed, because there never was real justice in the community…But true justice is found only in that commonwealth whose found and rule is Christ…we may say that at least there is true justice in that City of which the holy Scripture says, “Glorious things are said about you, City of God.” (St. Augustine, 1984, p. 75)
Christian principles called for a new understanding of shared justice; for Augustine, justice was not simply a product of the law, guided by natural law, and reason, but a virtue conditioned by the proper ordering of “loves.” Augustine’s access to Christianity allows him to create this notion of what our place is in the world and how we must focus our attention and love in order to recognize what is deserving of love, and how those things are to be loved (Naugle, 1993). In language of the Greeks, love must be kairotic, a fitting response, to all that surrounds us. Once these loves are “rightly ordered” and responsive “kairotically,” happiness and positive conditions of life can be achieved in the City of God (Augustine, 1984), and such an order would result in actions of justice that create a earthly community of citizens that serves its members. The greatest “right” love is the true love of God. From that, rightly-ordered earthly love follows.

But if the Creator is truly loved, that is, if he himself is loved, and not something else in his stead, then he cannot be wrongly loved. We must, in fact, observe the right order even in our love for the very love with which we love what is deserving of love, so that there may be in us the virtue which is the condition of the good life. Hence, as it seems to me, a brief and true definition of virtue is ‘rightly ordered love.’ (Augustine, 1984, p. 637)

Augustine’s understanding of Love expands Cicero’s notion of common justice. God is Love, and without virtuous love that begins in God and is acted out among his earthly subjects, can we even achieve the remote possibility of justice and therefore the just nation? Justice is realized in the Heavenly City of God, it is unattainable in any earthly city (Gregory, 2008). Because the ordering of loves is a human choice (Naugle, 1993), justice is always in question; the human factor, regardless of law and reason, will always
be subjected to the perils of earthly domain, and justice becomes more difficult to attain. How could society be bound by an unachievable common justice? It is Love that takes its place, but Love can also be employed wrongly resulting in vice and sin. The complex relationship between love and sin is a human construct, which often results in political injustice and the disregard for human dignity. “…[S]in is a species within [Augustine’s] internally diverse conception of love. Vice always lurks among the virtues. Love, like cholesterol, can be healthy or deadly” (Gregory, 2008, p. 33). Accordingly, it seems that Cicero influenced Augustinian thought on a number of levels. Most importantly, Augustine paid much attention to Ciceronian social thought and offered a transformed version of Cicero’s res publica, challenging the notion of common justice and assigning it to the role of love and choice.

…[I]f one should say, ‘A people is the association of multitude of rational beings united by a common agreement on the objects of their love,’ then it follows that to observe the character of a particular people we must examine the objects of its love. And yet, whatever those objects, if it is the association of a multitude not of animals but of rational beings, and is united by a common agreement about the objects of its love, then there is no absurdity in applying to it the title of a ‘people’. And obviously, the better the objects of this agreement, the better the people; the worse the objects of this love, the worse the people. (Augustine, 1984, p. 890)

Augustine’s “rightly ordered loves” pervades his analysis of Roman society, particularly in terms of Cicero’s understanding of the res publica. One could argue that if Cicero had access to the same Christian theology and philosophy as Augustine, the result
may have been very similar. We see Cicero referring to the gods regularly, an otherworldliness that guides reason, law, action and justice. The a priori understanding of the world, on which Augustine builds his monotheistic philosophy and rhetoric, was the ground on which Cicero formulated his notion of res publica and the conditions under which public virtue and justice emerged.

Lactantius, who seems to be a direct intellectual descendant of Ciceronian rhetoric (MacDonald, 1964; Digeser, 2000), and later Augustine (Eskridge, 1912), are important links to Cicero and subsequent moments in which these religious, social and political issues are discussed within the context of rhetoric. Christians and non-Christians alike seem to build on Ciceronian thought, particularly when it comes to “communities of interest” and the foundations on which communities are “imagined” in the hearts, minds, and worlds of its citizens.

Implications

Cicero’s works on the republic in particular are seminal to our thinking about the concepts of nation and nationalism, especially through our rhetorical/communicative lens. Cicero is a frequent reference in terms of political science and rhetoric, but rarely a point of reference when thinking about the concepts of nation and nationalism themselves. Like Isocrates, who was coined the Father of Nationalism, Cicero inherited the title of Father of his Country precisely because of his work on the republic, the rhetorical context he attempted to create for his fellow citizens, and the goals of justice and peace he wished to espouse throughout his work. It is appropriate to explore Ciceronian rhetoric particularly when it comes to discussing origins of nation-state theory and the concept of the “imagined community” in the context of dialogic theory. Isocrates
and Cicero play a foundational role in the ways they related individuals and communities to their larger political and social context through rhetoric, but they also seem to address existential-ontological issues as well. For Cicero, the state offered ground for the technical aspects that made the nation possible, as the manifestation of humans living together in community—not only a phenomenological entity, but also an epistemological, existential, and ontological construct that encouraged dialogue to produce shared meaning among publics.

So, why consider Cicero as an essential antecedent to our thinking about the social construct of the nation? Like Isocrates, Cicero attempts to expose a field of existence where his fellow citizens can live productively and ethically. Cicero’s *res publica* is both a practical construct of what happens in society everyday, and a cultural manifestation of the historical moment. Pre-Christian Rome still understood that life was subject to the gods, and the state satisfied the need to construct a system that pleased them. The former characteristics of Cicero’s *Republic* are deeply pragmatic, the latter perhaps more controversially idealistic. However, for the purposes of our inquiry, Cicero’s work foregrounds essential issues that situate the idea of the nation throughout history framed by a dialogic form of rhetoric. There is a multitude of scholarship that would point us in similar directions to discover various foundations and understandings of the nation-state, but a rhetorical/communication perspective of the nation and nationalism would not be complete without exploring the foundational work of Cicero. Because of his prominent position in Roman society, and his effectiveness and influence as a successful orator, Cicero’s ideas have remained a centerpiece of Roman thought, and
have been passed down through the centuries to help us understand why the Roman Republic is an essential piece of the historical puzzle.

From this intellectual lineage we see that Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates and Cicero all occupy themselves with timeless questions of human community and the manifestation of that community in the formal structure of the state. Those who are considered to be “civic” rhetoricians like Isocrates and Cicero offer a particular perspective of nationalism as they not only grapple with the important questions raised by their predecessors, but they engage the questions that confront human action, and lead us to not only philosophical renderings of the human community and the nation, but also the quotidian concerns for citizens and their role in the nation itself. Nationalism, in this sense, is not an emotional sentiment, but rather the apex of Roman pragmatism about how the structure of the state is a part of our everyday lives and how it responds to the historical moment.

As we continue to explore this notion of a contemporary understanding of a nation and nationalism, Cicero not only teaches us about the foundations of a formal, thriving community, but he directs us to the need to respond to our historical moment by constructing entities that constantly refer back to laws of nature and the a priori understanding of the world, while rhetorically and dialogically engaging the dialectic nature of community in all its complexity. Cicero’s political and personal demise did not allow for the full realization and application of these rich principles in the end, but his foundational ideas endure as seminal works when engaging rhetoric, dialogic communication and political science.
The next step in this analysis will be to understand the modern conception of the nation and the rhetorical interruptions that encouraged a shift in our understanding about nation and nationalism from the ancient to the modern. The Enlightenment provides some substantive knowledge about how philosophical thought influenced social and political thought, grounding the nation in these ancient principles of the state while shifting commonly held notions about how society and communities were structured and organized in relation to each other. Kant, among other notable luminaries, offers the groundwork for modern notions of state and nation. One might argue that the ways in which we perceive and communicate the modern shift of the nation from ancient and Christian renderings is in fact seismic.
Chapter 4

Modernity’s Rhetorical Shift:

The Enlightenment and Kant’s Philosophical Influence on the Nation

“As the custodian of reason, philosophy conceives modernity as a child of the Enlightenment.” (Habermas, 2001, p. 133)

“Without Country you have neither name, token, voice, nor rights, no admission as brothers into the fellowship of the peoples. You are the bastards of humanity.” (Mazzini, 1995, p. 93)

Thus far we have explored the ancient philosophical and rhetorical antecedents to ideas of the nation and how they are a response to both divine law and communal life. The nation has endured as a field in which communication organizes social, political and economic life simultaneously while serving as the catalyst for the emergence of these phenomena. In this chapter, we will attempt to understand the concept of nation and its philosophical underpinnings in the context of modernity, more specifically how Kant’s philosophy may have influenced the role and nature of the nation in modernity, and how contemporary scholars understand the origin of the nation and nationalism. We will see how certain scholars of nationalism like Kedourie (1993), Gellner (1983; 1994), and Smith (1992, 1998, 2008, 2010) interpret the origins of nationalism differently and how they contest the concept’s genesis as a result of varying social and communicative phenomena. Most importantly, I will explore how these scholars disagree about the role of Kant’s philosophical influence on the development of the modern nation. However, before we delve into these conversations about the origin of the nation and the role of Kantian philosophy, I will focus on significant philosophical voices like those of Hobbes...
(1968), Ferguson (1995), Mazzini (1995) and Renan (1995), who have situated the nation through particular metaphors that seem to respond to Enlightenment ideals. Furthermore, I will continue to keep the notion of “imagined communities” present as a retrodictive existential-phenomenological construct for exploring such origins.

In following with the theme of the nation as a communicative phenomenon, we should consider some of the theories that have characterized nation and nationalism as an imagined, discursive, existential-phenomenological construct. Some of the most significant works of philosophy, politics, art, music and science throughout history have emerged out of a commitment to (or one’s displeasure with) one’s nation-state:

“Nationalism has emotional power because it makes us who we are, because it inspires artists and composers, because it gives us a link with history (and thus with immortality)” (Calhoun, 1997, p. 2). The power of the nation has moved individuals and groups to some of the most enduring thoughts and actions throughout history. Nevertheless, nationalism seems to be engrained as an unreflective act in the everyday, or what Billig (1995) coins as “banal nationalism:” a nationalism that is subtly influential through the everyday nationalistic symbolic messages that reinforce our commitment to our nation and everything for which it stands (i.e. the pledge of recited in U.S. schools each day, or a nation’s flag passively displayed in a corporation’s lobby) (p. 6). “Daily, the nation is indicated, or ‘flagged’, in the lives of its citizenry. Nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition” (Billig, 1995, p. 6). The question is: What are some of the philosophical and historical indicators that have formed our modern unreflective understanding of the nation and how has this unreflective understanding influenced us to communicate the concept so forcefully (through
diplomacy and war), and how has it shaped the ways in which we communicate socially and interpersonally on a daily basis?

Through our previous analysis, we can see nationalistic tendencies manifest as early as the Ancient World in understanding conflicts between the Hellenistic “nation” and Persia or even within the Roman Empire, but some scholars believe our contemporary understanding of nations and nationalism emerge as a result of the Enlightenment, when the “rational man” was encouraged to seek other forms of identity outside of the realm of religion and dynastic realms (Anderson, 2006; Calhoun, 1997). Marx, in particular, has influenced our analysis of the modern nation-state, but countless scholars, politicians and social commentators have contributed to a robust conversation about what national identity and the “imagined” nation mean throughout history. Before we embark on a journey to understand the modern shift to our current understanding of the nation, it is important to understand how current renderings of the nation have been explained from those thoroughly engaging it. We see that “space” articulated by the ancients and pre-modern thinkers persists but takes on a new character that seems to recenter human epistemology, sentiment and emotion. The existential-phenomenological home becomes apparent.

**Modern Metaphors of the Nation**

Hobbes’ *Leviathan* (1968) set the stage for these conversations about the interplay of social consciousness and the formation of the nation. Functioning from a mechanistic approach, which favored a sovereign form of governmental control, Hobbes established the foundations from which community and civil society emerge, but are eventually subsumed into the monolith of the nation, or what he coined *the Leviathan*. Individuals
within society agree to a Covenant — a social contract, a central guiding principle, which allows them to function under the rule of government and therefore live under protection and well-organized systems.

This is more than Consent, or Concord; it is real Unitie of them all, in one and the same Person, made by Covenant of every man with every man, in such manner, as if every man should say to every man, I Authorise and give up my Right of Governing my selfe, to this Man, or to this Assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him, and Authorise all his Actions in like manner. This done, the Multitude so united in one Person, is called a Common-Wealth, in latine Civitas. This is the Generation of that great Leviathan, or rather (to speak more reverently) of that Mortall God, to which wee owe under the Immortal God, our peace and defence. (Hobbes, 1968, p. 227)

One interpretation of Hobbes, however, is that society is in constant tension between individual sacrifice and community; he conceives everything in conflict to be a result of competition, but to limit competition we sign a social contract with the sovereign government because in the long term it benefits our own self- interests (Hobbes, 1968). Atack (2012) tells us the in Hobbes’ Leviathan the social contract is derived through individuals relinquishing their individual rights and forming a collective for the good of the state; this “real unity” grants the states its ultimate sovereignty and power (pp. 42-43).

Hobbes’ construct is an interesting contrast to the various “spiritual” conceptions of nationalism offered by scholars such as Eliade (1959) and Mazzini (1995), yet continues to follow the Ciceronian view of natural law, to some extent. For Hobbes, the nation-state is an artificial manifestation of natural occurrences. “For by Art is created
the great Leviathan called the Commonwealth, or State, (in latine Civitas) which is but Artificial Man; though of greater stature and strength than the Natural, for whose protection and defense it was intended, and in which the Sovereignty is the Artificial Soul, as giving life and motion to the whole body…." (Hobbes, 1968, p. 81). His mechanistic viewpoint offers a discrete sense of nation building while emphasizing the need for individual action within civil society. Again, we see nation advanced as an “artificial,” or man-made manifestation of natural law. In Hobbes’ analysis, then, the machinations of the Leviathan thus create a powerful structure under which we not only agree to function, but under which we wrap our allegiances and identities. Not only is the nation an influential spiritual occurrence, it is an effective mechanical social structure that literally transmutes these natural occurrences into concrete, tangible events that help us make sense of the world around us. As we will see, Hobbesian thought is not only influenced by ancient philosophy but it seems to be a precursor to the influential Enlightenment/Industrial political thought, perhaps influencing the nation-state and its organizing power in modernity (Pagden, 2013).

Similarly, Adam Ferguson (1995) recognizes the power of individual action within society while engaging the Aristotelian inclination toward communal life. Unlike Hobbes, Ferguson’s civil society does not embody a unidirectional construct that requires us to surrender our individual self-determination in such a dramatic manner. He views this naturally occurring phenomenon of human interaction in the form of civil society where men band together to function in societal context, but not necessarily within a national structure per se. Ferguson’s concept of civil society seems to extend itself to our modern conception of the nation as he recognizes why the rational man joins together to
respond to social forces: “The state of nature is a state of war or of amity, and men are made to unite from a principle of affection, or from a principle of fear, as if most suitable to the system of different writers” (Ferguson, 1995, p. 21). Through our contemporary understanding, we view the nation as the structure under which we come together to ward off threat or welcome accord. For Ferguson, civil society is a necessary foundation for national thought, but civil society can exist without the nation. For Hobbes, there is no distinction between the state and civil society (Pagdon, 2013); civil exists for the nation and the nation eventually subsumes and consequentially transforms civil society. This is an important contrast for the purpose of our study since the concept of civil society seems to speak directly to the issue of nationalism in the context of postmodernity. Although civil society and nations are products of Enlightenment thought and a modern move toward social organization, civil society’s diverse and less formally organized character tends to reflect the multiplicity and fluidity of postmodern thought — that is, “Pluralism and polycentricity are the hallmarks of civil society...[C]ivil society is fairly well synonymous with what Cicero would have called res publica, i.e. a free society in its entirety, or again, a society organized in a particular way, viz., in away designed to promote the freedom of all its members” (Madison, 2001, p. 220). Given this discussion, it is important to acknowledge that civil society is an inherently rhetorical phenomenon (Hauser & Grim, 2004, p. 9). In civil society, individual interests often will diverge and conflict, but it can also serve as a communicative space for productive discourse and eventual mutual cooperation (Hauser & Grim, 2004). Such a characterization of civil society helps us see its relevance and applicability for contemporary understandings of the nation and its constitutive role for the construction of political, economic, social and
cultural spaces. It has also been seen as yet another indication of the transitional moment of the modern nation-state within an international context, or what I characterize as postmodern nationalism (Bell, 1989).

Nineteenth century political theorist Ernest Renan (1995) attempts to define the essence of a nation as an imagined, existential-phenomenological entity. Although he recognizes the human tendency to accept race, language, religion, community and geography as essential factors in national formation, he ultimately rejects them, leaving us to find other reasons for the emergence of national sentiment. He concludes that a nation is, in fact, the culmination of collective memory (or lack thereof) and moral consciousness. Renan offers a substantive approach to nationalistic origins and encourages us to ponder why a nation is ultimately a powerful phenomenon on which we structure our thoughts and actions as political and cultural beings.

The nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which are really only one, go to make up this soul or spiritual principle. One of these things lies in the past, the other in the present. The one is the possession in common of a heritage of memories; and the other is actual agreement, the desire to live together, and the will to continue to make the most of the joint inheritance. (Renan, 1995, p. 153) By shunning the “transcendentalists” he refuses to accept the amorphous, ungrounded nature of national thought, but rather sees that spiritual, moral consciousness legitimizes the very existence of nations. For Renan, nations are organic entities always subject to change and transformation, according to the moral collective consciousness of a community of memory. In short, memories are steeped in historicity (Arnett & Arneson, 1999) and play a rhetorical role in how a national consciousness plays out at any point in
time. Most importantly, Renan agrees with Kantian analyses, as we will see later, as he advocates that a uniform global political structure would ultimately result in despotism, and that the natural state of the world should be organized into national entities that regulate the ways in which we structure moral consciousness and interact with the Other.

Renan’s use of collective memory (or better stated, a collective amnesia) within a spiritual framework also strongly suggests an existential-phenomenological approach to analyzing national structures. “To forget and—I will venture to say—to get one’s history wrong, are essential factors in the making of a nation; and thus the advance of historical studies is often a danger to nationality…Now it is the essence of a nation that all individuals should have much in common, and further that they should all have forgotten much” (Renan, 1995, p. 145). Here, Renan espouses that nations are collectively formed around common goals and aspirations; the less fragmentation within a society the more of a potential for a cohesive nation. To challenge Renan, however, it is difficult to say that citizens are not products of their history; rather, a nation is composed of citizens who are in fact products of their unreflective history. Most citizens may be aware of their historic past, but do not actively reflect on their historic origins; their common belief in the unspoken philosophical foundations and principles join them together in a national collective; in addition to Renan, Billig’s (1995) and Deutsch (1966) have commented on similar issues of the lack of conscious reflection about the nation. Again, Renan’s focus on consciousness and shared experience is at the core of his understanding: “That moral consciousness which we call a nation is created by a great assemblage of men with warm hearts and healthy minds: And as long as this moral consciousness can prove its strength by the sacrifices demanded from the individual for the benefit of the community, it is
justifiable and has the right to exist” (Renan, 1995, p. 154). These philosophical foundations of a nation do not emerge from a vacuum, but are rather steeped deeply within unquestioned meaning and existence. It seems that nations are direct results of history, but more importantly, well-orchestrated systems of unreflective collective belief. From a similar perspective, nations are a form of “sacred space” protected by a moral consciousness at a particular historical moment (Eliade, 1959). The issue, however, is how and why this concept of such sacred space is so resistant to the change of which Renan speaks. Collective memory seems to be an essential force behind this seemingly impermeable sacred space.

As Tuan (1977) explains, one’s homeland is often viewed as the center of one’s cosmos. All life and activity originate from this point of reference while all else extends from this point. “The stars are perceived to move around one’s abode; home is the focal point of one’s cosmic structure…Should destruction occur we may reasonably conclude that the people would be thoroughly demoralized, since the ruin of their settlement implies the ruin of their cosmos” (p.149). He insists however, that this type of place is not based on place itself but on human beings who are literally at the center, and can easily move this “anthropomorphic center” to another place to become the center of their cosmos (p. 150). Tuan believes that the power of such a place is enacted by religion “the guarding spirits and gods” and the beliefs, commitment and memory that these belief systems invoke in its human subjects (1977). Memory is an essential element when comprehending the power of place phenomenologically (Tuan, 1977).

Although Eliade’s (1959) use of sacred space was originally appropriated for religious contexts, we could apply such a concept to nationalism theory as the nation
flourished when religious life became more and more divorced from the public realm and encouraged the public to seek alternative belief systems that could provide an existential-phenomenological “home.” Eliade’s concept of sacred space has also been employed by scholars such as Jacobsen (1996) to discuss the idea of a nation’s impenetrable borders as a result of immigration policy. The power of the nation can have such a profound effect on the way people think about themselves as individuals and within groups in relation to others that it creates what can only be understood as sacred demarcations. For Eliade (1959), we must exist in something, and “it is for that reason that religious man has always sought to fix his abode at the ‘center of the world.’ If the world is to be lived in, it must be founded – and no world can come to birth in the chaos of the homogeneity and relativity of profane space. The discovery or projection of a fixed point—a center—is equivalent to the creation of the world” (p. 22). Even within extreme cultural variation, like the Ancients, Eliade finds that we always tend to situate our world “at the center” (p. 42).

Although modernist in his approach given his orientation toward a universalist, centrifugal mode of thinking, Eliade’s (1959) metaphor is helpful when thinking about the structuration of the nation as an abode for humanity. As we join together in community, “settling in a territory is equivalent to founding a world” (p. 47). Eliade’s analysis is certainly applicable to the concept of the nation as he creates substantive philosophical ground for an ontological space that ultimately emerges from a “center.” Although the creation of a “center” is the work of the gods, it lives in human beings through religion, politics, communication, in the lived experience of the church, temple or mosque, local communities and neighborhoods, and the nation-state. The notion that
we are communal creatures who live in space and time is essential for understanding the powerful, often readily accepted idea of the nation. Human interaction converts such places into spaces (Appadurai, 1996; Tuan, 1977). However, I would advance that understanding the nation as a product of centripetal thinking leads us to engage nationalism as unreflective quotidian experience that forms our social, cultural and economic consciousness and eventually encourages us to behave and interact with the Other in particular ways (Billig, 1995).

This idea of this existential-phenomenological center, a centrifugal force, is reiterated in the work of notable historical figures such as Giuseppe Mazzini, a prominent figure in the reunification (il Risorgimento) of Italy in the 19th century. He underscores this idea when attempting to convince the Italian citizen-to-be that the nation is a human necessity as it provides the political, cultural and economic space that individuals, a province, or the world cannot provide on their own (Mazzini, 1995). Mazzini makes the case for a societal shift in order to cure the ills of the discontent (the provincial fragmentation of Italy) and by improving the well-being of others by uniting the nation of Italy from its many provinces—remnants of the medieval city-state structure. Mazzini is attempting to uncover social structures that can educate and protect all citizens, and which can assist them in resolving conflicts and misunderstanding. Most importantly, however, he defines the nation as a conglomeration of duties that ultimately serve the greater good. The nation acts as a practical and unencumbered entity that allows us to act responsibly and serve our fellow countrymen and humanity in general. It is our duty to serve humanity, which prepares us for God. “We seek the reign of God upon earth as in heaven, or better, that the earth shall be a preparation for heaven, and society an endeavor
towards a progressive approach to the Divine idea” (Mazzini, 1995, p. 91). The nation is the philosophical and practical space in which individuals perform duties and leads them to the Absolute.

It seems then that, for Mazzini, the nation is a mechanism that can help individuals negotiate the larger issues of the world—it is neither too close to us nor is it too far from us, but rather attainable and accessible. Mazzini thinks of Country as an organizing principle that can help men carry out their duties and contribute to Humanity—God is too vast and the individual is too small, but a nation can liaise between the two and relieve some the tension that exists within the vastness of Humanity (Mazzini, 1995).

The individual is too weak, and Humanity too vast. My God, prays the Breton mariner as he puts out to sea, protect me, my ship is so little, and Thy ocean so great! As this prayer sums up the condition of each of you, if no means if found of multiplying your forces and your powers of action indefinitely. But God gave you this means when he gave you a Country, when, like a wiser overseer of labour, who distributes the different parts of the work according to the capacity of the workmen, he divided Humanity into distinct groups upon the face of our globe, and thus planted the seeds of nations. (Mazzini, 1995, p. 92)

Thus, we may be existentially lost if it were not for the safe abode of the nation. Nations remedy the discomfort and confusion that ensue in a complex world; they provide a home and fulfill a particular function in the larger context of social relations.
For Mazzini, it is the Italian citizen’s moral duty to support the idea of one single nation that could protect and provide for the Italian people; to suggest otherwise would be detrimental to a people seeking political identity in the contemporary world. Culture, along with more tangible demarcations of geography and language, is the driving force that brings a people together, but ultimately for Mazzini they are not enough; the pragmatic structure of the nation will satisfy this higher need (Mazzini, 1995).

“Il Risorgimento” is an example of how cultural, linguistic and social forces contribute to the manifestation of not only a physical national space, but also to a national identity. Mazzini (and Renan, for that matter) is influenced by Cicero’s notion of the res publica, as nationalism is based on human action, which offers us the possibility of citizenship—a sense of belonging to a structure that serves us as long as we agree to serve. In a Ciceronian sense, Mazzini believes that fulfilling our duties to society retains our rights as citizens; these rights are enclosed within the protection of the nation (Mazzini, 1995). Just as the United States Constitution ensures “inalienable rights and the pursuit of happiness” within its political boundaries, Mazzini asserts that citizens’ rights are protected by the nation.

Through this metaphor of moral duty, Mazzini sees a co-dependent relationship between the nation and its citizens; we must actively contribute and perform our “duties” as citizens in order to form our nation and for the nation to reciprocate and provide its protections and political stability. “Without Country you have neither name, token, voice, nor rights, no admission into the fellowship of the Peoples. You are the bastards of Humanity” (Mazzini, 1995, p.93). Mazzini’s approach to nationalism is steeped in rhetorical principles; word is transformed into action, and the rhetorical, imaginative
construct of the nation is formed through citizenship and duty, while the imaginative construct informs duty. Nationalism is the spiritual, existential-phenomenological experience that others emphasize, but is impossible without men taking definitive collective action toward a common good. The good, which points us to God and Humanity, exists in the Nation. “A Country is a fellowship of free and equal men bound together in a brotherly concord of labor towards a single end. You must make it and maintain it such. A Country is not an aggregation, it is an association” (Mazzini, 1995, p.95). Mazzini, however, sought to accomplish this duty through “brute force” (Mazzini, 1995, p. 89) to form a united Italy that would respond to the nationalistic needs at the forefront, but this force would not be made possible without the rhetorical context that was formed by Mazzini and his colleagues, Garibaldi and Cavour.

Isocratic and Ciceronian concepts of “center” and natural law seem to influence the conservative approach to understanding the nation as an existential-phenomenological construct emerging from a particular “center,” as mentioned in the first chapters of this project. In other words, the existential-phenomenological manifestation of the nation is made possible through functional a priori characteristics that provide the necessary guidance for the creation of a nation through history, culture (paideia), and the marriage of the two. Again, we see how ancient social and political thought provided a solid foundation, and even a point of reference, for other concepts that would emerge during subsequent periods of history, particularly as it pertains to ideas of social contracts and the construction of civil society.

Although these are just a few characterizations of the idea of a nation, they represent a significant recurring theme throughout various historical moments. So, why
does Anderson view nationalism as loosely defined, lacking adequate philosophical ground if we can point to these various thinkers and philosophies when discussing nationalism and the nation-state both in antiquity and in modernity? Perhaps it is the inherent dialectical tension and overarching competing narratives that exist within the concept itself. As we see, many argue that we need nations to organize our cultures and politics, provide a space for our collective memories, create a sense of place and belonging, and offer space to imagine particular metanarratives: the important communicative concept that there exists an overarching story, wrought with complexity and nuance, that guides our social, political, economic and personal lives (Arnett and Arneson, 1999), but at the expense of misinterpreting and misunderstanding a larger, more complex world.

**Modernity as a Centripetal Force**

All of these ideas continue to point to the idea that nations are products of human communication and the nation acts as a persuasive mechanism for providing an existential-phenomenological home and identity for its members who create contracts with the nation to serve in return for protection and solace. In our contemporary world, we are often perplexed by individuals who seem to lack real or imagined citizenship — those who lack a home, or through Arnett’s (1994) concept, are “existentially homeless.” Deutsch (1969) alludes to the powerful rhetorical manifestation of nationality as the following:

The nationalist… is a person dedicated to his own nation. He devotes most of his attention to it and gives preference to his countrymen. He is afraid of the rest of the world because his early experience taught him that the rest of the world is
uncertain, dangerous, and rather incomprehensible. He fears his environment, and he fears the foreigner; his attention and preference are centered on the in-group as if he is an intense nationalist, he’s often using his ability to perceive the outside world at the same time that he zealously strives to promote national power. If he has his way, his nation ends up resembling the nightmare of the Detroit automobile designer: a car with an even more powerful engine than ever and a shrinking windshield guided by even weaker headlights. It would be an excellent design for committing individual or national suicide. (p. 32)

Deutsch (1969) presents us with an important paradox: the tension between the positive organizing power of the nation and the unfortunate narrowing phenomenon of what nationalism can do to the human mind and, ultimately, community. Although a nation fulfills a variety of human needs, from the physical to the emotional, and provides us with the practical services that make everyday life more navigable and secure such as the economic, legal, juridical, and cultural, it may come at the cost of isolationism and a failure to understand the needs of our neighbors or those who are not “native” to our nations (p. 33).

Buber (2005), in his contributions to the Jewish-Palestinian problem, espouses this idea almost 50 years earlier. Buber, like many of these aforementioned scholars, views nationalism as a necessary spiritual force that organizes and gives credence to certain political goals; however, he sees a strong human tendency for the misappropriation of such powerful ideas. Nationalism does not mean that individuals and society as a whole must only look within for answers; instead, the nationalism that actually creates the possibility of difference based on physical borders and human
sentiment concomitantly allows us to exist in a world of discrete difference. We must gaze within to see clearly beyond the confines of our existential-phenomenological home, but we should not remain only within. An isolated form of nationalism only results in what Buber calls “false nationalism” and misleading ideologies (Buber, 2005, p. 52). We will explore the tenets for Buber’s philosophical contributions to ideas of nation in more detail later.

Many of the aforementioned conceptions of the nation are often considered to be direct descendants of Enlightenment thinking, led by Kantian philosophy, as Kant’s system is often viewed as the basis for modern understandings of nation and nationalism (Kedourie, 1993). However, given our discussion of Isocrates and Cicero, it is clear to see how their philosophical systems guided by concepts of culture, common center, natural law and rationality all contribute to understanding the nation as an organizing structure that provides a common point of reference for complex social phenomena. So important is Kantian thought that influential scholars such as Kedourie (1993) believe that it provided ground for national movements such as the French Revolution and Italian Reunification. The remainder of this chapter will explore the influence of Kant’s philosophy on the aforementioned philosophers, and the scholarly conversation that has emerged around understandings of nationalism in modernity.

The Enlightenment: Kant’s Contribution to the Idea of Nation

In the spirit of this project, I have attempted to show various salient historical moments in which nationalism was at the center of the metanarrative and how a rhetorical, existential-phenomenological focus can help us unravel the challenges and issues connected to ideas of nation and nationalism. Enter Kant. Kedourie (1993)
contends that political events as well as philosophical thought during the Enlightenment were transforming the idea of the nation, as both had a great effect on the political, social and economic structure of the world as we understand it today. Kantian philosophy provides a significant rhetorical interruption in the way that the world has thought about several epistemological questions, including those of national structures (Kedourie, 1993). Kant becomes a central figure in the conversation about nationalism because of the manner in which he views the existence of natural law, human liberty and their affect on human society. Kant essentially disagrees with Luther in that morality must originate from God, because a focus on morality and freedom from God would not afford us true freedom. For Kant, the individual, under guidance from God, was at the center of power and determination — a major shift away from the faithful stance of Martin Luther and Augustine centuries before.

For Kant, the categorical imperative, obedience to which makes us free, is not a divine command. It is a command which wells up within the soul, freely recognized and freely accepted. Just as the natural world cannot be the source of moral value, so neither can the will of God. If the will of God is the ground of the categorical imperative, the man’s actions are dictated by an external command, freedom disappears, and morality becomes meaningless. This then is Kant’s ‘new formula’ that the good will, which is the free will, is also the autonomous will. ...For Kant’s doctrine makes the individual, in a way never envisaged by the French Revolutionaries or their intellectual precursors, the very center, the arbiter, the sovereign of the universe. (Kedourie, 1993, pp. 16-17)
Thus, the shift occurs, and Kant’s rhetorical stance more than ever affects the ways in which society, and national structures, are formed, maintained and contested. Kant’s understanding that human morality originates within the individual is then translated into the national context. A nation is a collection of individual wills where the love of nation resides in the souls of those individuals; it is not an external political entity that imposes itself upon its citizens. As we will see throughout his seminal works, Kant’s system is primarily based upon individual liberty, morality and pure reason; these all work together to ensure one’s freedom in the context of the political formation of the nation. Kant’s system of political morality plants the seeds for various post-Kantian Enlightenment thinkers who cultivate these seeds to define the nation and nationalism as we mostly understand it today.

To dissect Kant’s understanding of the nation and the modern Enlightenment foundations of the nation-state and nationalism, we will focus on three essential Kantian texts as they refer to individual freedom, the individual’s situatedness in the nation, and the moral system that ultimately forms the idea of a nation: Lectures on Ethics (1775-80), the Critique of Pure Reason (1781) and Perpetual Peace (1795). We will deal with these texts chronologically as they might offer a glimpse into the intellectual progression of Kant’s arguments as they pertain to the impetus and structure of the nation-state.

**Lectures on Ethics.** Very early in his Ethics, Kant justifies the existence of the state and the presence of the individual within the state. He states that ethics based on “outer grounds” rests on two elements: education and government (Kant, 1963, p. 12). As two very essential components of nation, his system of ethics is already guided by principles that emerge from the nation. For Kant, ethics is the pinnacle of practical
philosophy, which is lived out in communal structures. However, Kant’s most notable concept of the “categorical imperative” shapes the ways in which philosophers and statesmen start to reconceptualize contemporary iterations of nation. Kedourie (1993) credits modern Enlightenment ideals of the nation to Kant, with the categorical imperative as its foundation. Philosophy played a powerful role on the political events of the time, influencing the transformation of nations through the social, political and economic structures that legitimized them. Kant plays a central role in understanding not only important political and social structures, but also the essential role of the individual within these particular structures. Within Kantian ideals, individuals play a pivotal role in the way their societies are structured. Free will and self-determination become the central elements for the ways in which individuals influence the direction of the state, which in turn, provide an organizing social structure for the way they live.

The free man asserts himself against the world; by the strength of his soul he bends it to his will, for conviction can move mountains; and his head is bloody but unbowed. The characteristic euphory is the product of self-determination… Nationalism, which is itself, as will be seen, largely a doctrine of national self-determination, found here the great source of its vitality, and it has therefore been necessary to examine how self-determination came to have this central importance in ethical and political teachings. (Kedourie, 1993, p.23)

Kant’s practical philosophy and system of ethics provides the basis for free will and self-determination. Morality does not rest with God, nor is it God’s responsibility; rather, it rests with the individual and how that individual chooses to engage the a priori guidance God has provided to him. “Principum morale est intellectual internum” – basic moral
principles are products of internal intellectual morality (Kant 1963, p. 14); however, these internal intellectual principles are guided by universal, natural laws handed down by God. When individual morality and the universal a priori come into harmony with each other, human morality is at its zenith and works toward a universal good. Reminiscent of Cicero’s conception of natural law and human law, Kant argues that ethics must harmonize with the Divine in order to reach the highest law and morality. “It is only in the observance of the divine laws that ethics and law coincide. Insofar as God is concerned both are compulsory; for God can compel us to ethical as well as logical action, but He demands that we should act not from compulsion but from duty…A moral law states categorically what ought to be done, whether it pleases us or not; its origins, therefore, are purely within how humans choose to interpret and act on divine guidance” (Kant pp. 35-37). Moral law is not a product of interpretation, rather a product of free will that is enacted regardless of the end (Kant, 1963).

This argument in particular is very important as it contests Hume’s notion of ethics and human behavior purely as a product of experience and sensation. Kant believes that the categorical nature of moral law cannot be a result of experience, but rather originates in an intellectual a priori approach, which is universal to all humanity (Kant, 1963). “Thou shall not kill” is not based on experience, the law exists as an a priori imperative designed by the Divine. In the Treatise of Human Nature, Hume intricately dissects human nature by attempting to understand how humans make decisions and come to particular conclusions regarding human experience, behavior and choices. Hume and Kant are at odds regarding the origin of moral law and the ways in which we, as its human actors, arrive at certain conclusions. Hume states,
Most of the philosophers of antiquity, who treated of human nature, have shewn more of a delicacy of sentiment, a just sense of morals, or a greatness of soul, than a depth of reasoning and reflection. They content themselves with representing the common sense of mankind in the strongest of lights, and with the best turn of thought and expression, without following out the chain of propositions, or form the several truths into a regular science. But ‘tis at least worth while to try if the science of man will not admit of the same accuracy which several part of natural philosophy are found susceptible of…The sole end of logic is to explain the principles and operations of our reasoning faculty, and the nature of our ideas; morals and criticism regard our tastes and sentiments; and politics consider men as united in society, and dependent on each other. (Hume, 2000, p. 407)

Kant contests this notion; he states that moral law is not a “feeling” and could never be based only on intellect and sensation; rather, it is categorical and precise (Kant, 1963). “The ethical principle is, therefore, sheerly intellectual principle of the pure reason” (Kant, 1963, p. 39). Theories of modern nationalism as advanced by scholars such as Kedourie (1980; 1993) and Gellner (1983; 1994) also diverge according to the Kantian and Humean schools of thought, which we will explore more in depth later. Although we must acknowledge this intellectual lineage and rhetorical dialectic in order to understand the concept of nationalism in modernity, this project focuses more directly on Kantian ideals of nation for two reasons: Its affinity to ancient ideals of natural law, pure reason and human action as well as the genesis of discourse about cosmopolitanism, which leads us through our conversation of the nation in modernity and postmodernity.
In sum, Kant’s *Ethics* provides ground from which we can begin to understand the modern version of the nation and our contemporary understanding of how nation and nationalism are structured today. However, before we move into further explanations of nationalism in modernity, we must consider Kant’s philosophy in the context of his other works that paved the way for modern nationalism emerging out of ideals of free will and self-determination.

**Critique of Pure Reason.** Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (1990) begins to establish the principles set forth in his *Lectures on Ethics*. Similar to his system of ethics and morality, Kant places humanity, as opposed to an external rational order that was very much advanced by proponents of the Enlightenment, at the center of his philosophy. He elevated the need for transcendental idealism and metaphysics at a time when the real physical world was considered the only proof of humanity and existence, and develops an alternative theory beyond the readily accepted theories of rationalism, empiricism and pure transcendentalism. Such an approach seemed to affect the ways in which we think about communicative action within the nation and it philosophical foundations into modernity.

Kant’s argument centers on the question of how we come to understand the world. Is the world revealed through our experiences alone or does the world have the potential to reveal itself to us? Although Kant attempts to construct a theory that argues against pure empiricism, where experience is central to understanding our world, he accepts its place and power in human epistemology. However, he also wants to advance the importance of understanding the need for a priori knowledge that comes to us through concepts that are outside of our experience – space and time. His modern a priori approach favors the
metaphysical realm where first theoretical principles often trump the physical world and position knowledge outside of experience. Through such an approach Kant is able to raise such an ideal of the transcendental a priori to a universal principle that governs human epistemology.

There is no way than through intuition or conceptions, as such; and these are given either an a priori or a posteriori. The latter, namely, empirical conceptions, together with the empirical intuition on which they are founded, cannot afford any synthetical proposition, except such as it itself also empirical, that is a proposition of experience. But an empirical proposition cannot possess the qualities of necessity and absolute universality, which, nevertheless, are the characteristics of all geometrical propositions. As to the first and only means to arrive at such cognitions, namely, through mere conceptions or intuitions a priori, it is quite clear that from mere conceptions no synthetical cognitions, but only analytical ones can be obtained. (Kant, 1990, p.18)

Again, Kant responds to Hume’s (2000) experiential, cause-effect claim that all knowledge derives from experience. Kant, instead, seeks to raise our awareness regarding existence and that experience rather conforms to knowledge. In the end, Kant attempts to challenge the close-ended Empiricists (such as Hume and Locke) and tempers the scientific revolution from completely disregarding God, Pure Reason and the Transcendental Ideal. He restores the universal “a priori” during the Enlightenment when experience ruled supreme. Ultimately, his solution lies in the ancient Greek ideal, phronesis or practical reason, where human liberty, God and immortality exist concurrently. By searching for a bond between earthly materialism and idealism, Kant
engages in a praxis that allows us to transcend and understand the a priori. Kant forces us to consider alternatives to human understanding and makes us realize that morality comes through not only theory or practice, but rather a powerful union of the two: praxis. As a descendant of Greek and Roman ideals, morality is embodied in practical reason.

Although Kant claims to explore another alternative to traditional approaches, he still must rely on those existing claims to build his argument. Kant ends up relying on a Platonic universal a priori to structure his claims for transcendental idealism, which does not necessarily offer us a new alternative to understand human knowledge and experience. Kant allowed the debate of experience and reason over universal a priori to continue into modernity and create formidable ground for a justification of communication and rhetoric as useful methods of understanding our world, and for the sake of our argument, the ways in which we structure society and the contexts in which we organize our lives, most notably the nation in political, economic and cultural contexts.

Kant is an essential figure in helping us understand the continuing arguments about human knowledge and whether it originates in experience, the scientific methods, and empiricism or if they it resides in a larger Truth that is lived through practical reason. First and foremost, however, is Kant’s emphasis on praxis and how we can use theory together with practice to create substantive and realistic versions of life. The quintessential embodiment of this praxis is experienced in our social lives, which are governed by the nation-state—the political structure that dictates laws, justice, economy, and communication.
Kedourie explains that Kant, particularly in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, sought a solution to the problem of empiricism and morality. This reasoning eventually led to an understanding of the roots of free will and subsequently the role of self-determination in communal life. Universal laws derived from a priori are then found within human nature, not solely through experience and appearances. Man is free when he is guided by internal a priori, moral laws and not by external, a posteriori experience; by moving inward Man is free and, therefore, virtuous (Kedourie, 1993, p. 15).

The conception of morality and free will places the individual at the center of the narrative that unfolds in communal life. Individuals are empowered through universal a priori guidance who allow them freedom and the ability to act morally and good. This autonomy leads to self-determination, and for Kant, “Self-determination thus becomes the supreme political good” (Kedourie, 1993, p. 22). Kedourie (1993) attributes the strong, deterministic political movements that formed the states of the modern era, such as the French Revolutionaries and the leaders of Italian Reunification, to this form of self-determination derived from Kant’s system of ethics and morality. “…[T]he influence of Kant’s thought was decisive; the solutions he provided for the problems of philosophy, and the difficulties which these solutions raised in turn, left a lasting, unmistakable imprint of subsequent speculation” (Kedourie, 1993, p. 24). Thus, for some, Kant is credited with transforming the structure of modern thinking in a way that empowers individuals to follow certain “pure” principles while exercising their rights to freedom and the ability to organize their public lives in the ways in which benefitted them the most.
Although Kant does not directly address concerns for the structure of the nation, his philosophy and defense of pure reason in the face of pure empiricism leads the way to thinking about how humans choose to organize themselves in society. Pure reason led to a morality that afforded individuals the autonomy to choose what was appropriate and beneficial to all. Later, Kant begins to discuss his vision of a world that would be rendered as possibly one of the first defenses of a cosmopolitan world. Perhaps Kant began to see both the possibilities and limitations of a world comprised of self-determined individuals in need of narrow communal structures.

**Perpetual Peace.** If individuals are free to determine their destiny, and this destiny can be realized within the structure of the state, then it would align that this “state” could include everyone that strives for this existence. In other words, for Kant (2003), peace is realized in a cosmo-political version of divided states. I refer to this concept as hyphenated for the very reason that we must heed the rhetorical influence of both the cosmopolitan nature of society while bracketing the need for understanding the political as a separate but related concept. Although the origin of “cosmopolitan” derives from the terms “cosmos” and “polis,” their meanings are frequently disguised in this oft-misunderstood concept. By the same token, although Kant’s political philosophy has been discussed in terms of cosmopolitanism, we must be careful to directly closely align the two closely as it may be more of an imposition of the current modern understanding of cosmopolitanism and not the actual complex system of cooperating nations that would ultimately create what he coined “perpetual peace.”

For Kant, peace, a state grounded in the universal a priori principle of goodness, is a natural phenomenon, while evil, war and conflict are not. Peace is not some bogus
ideal, but rather a real, pragmatic phenomenon that is fueled by moral action where politics becomes the structure of that moral action, which ultimately culminates in the republic. Politicians and philosophers must work together to preserve peace, and politics and morality must be united to create peace. Moral politicians are those who choose politics consistent with morality; the political moralist is one who forges morality in such a way that it conforms to the statesman’s advantage (Kant, 2003).

Kant does not oppose the idea of a republican state, as advanced by many of his predecessors and peers, nor does he balk at the need for aggression when absolutely necessary; however, he realizes that peace is practically possible through the cooperation of states on a higher, more coordinated level.

A state is not, like the ground which it occupies, a piece of property (patrimonium). It is a society of men whom no one else has any right to command or to dispose except the state itself. It is a trunk with its own roots. But to incorporate it into another state, like a graft, is to destroy its existence as a moral person, reducing it to a thing; such incorporation thus contradicts the idea of the original contract with which no right over a people can be conceived.

(Kant, 2003, p. 4)

A world state, then, is not wise; rather, it is the powerful connection between states, expressed in his proposal for a league of nations that ultimately addresses the need for peace.

The law, and ultimately republican constitutions carried out by representative democracies (not pure democracies, which Kant considers despotic) are the true vehicles for peace and cooperation. Constitutions not only implore citizens to function within the
law, they encourage citizens to author the law themselves to create civil order. Perpetual peace is a priori through what Kant refers to as natura daedala rerum (nature, the great artist); the law enables such a priori approaches to social life to emerge naturally (2003).

Kant sees the cooperation of the moral and political only possible through the engagement of collective pure reason. Without a sense of reason, the free association of world leaders that preserve peace becomes impossible. “That is, they must not be deduced from volition as the supreme yet empirical principle of political wisdom, but rather from the pure concept of the duty of the right, from the ought whose principle is given a priori by pure reason, regardless of what the physical consequences may be” (Kant, 2003, p. 45). Pure reason culminates in the “public-ness” of morality, which enacts the practice and enforcement of reasonable morality by engaging a check and balance for all to consider.

Kant’s approach to peace is grounded in reason and pragmatism. He sees the natural states of the world as a peaceful association of humans that behave morally as guided by man-made legal imperatives. He recognizes the instability of man while acknowledging the natural occurrence of peace simply because man has been forced to share this globe together. In other words, peace is a natural phenomenon until humans become part of the equation. It is not clear through Kant’s argument, however, if peace is truly a natural occurrence since it requires the interaction of humans in communion with one another. He wants to achieve the possibility of a cosmopolitan world where humans think and behave according to collective pure reason, but understands that humans are corrupted through the various political structures that have emerged and govern our behaviors and interactions with one another. “Since the narrower or wider community of
the people of earth has developed so far that a violation of rights in one place is felt throughout the world, the idea of a law of world citizenship is no high-flown or exaggerated notion. It is a supplement to the unwritten code of the civil and international law, indispensable for the maintenance of public human rights and hence also of perpetual peace” (Kant, 2003, p. 23).

Most importantly, he constructs a paradigm for the true nature of peace and its earthly necessities. Juridical and political structures that are truly grounded in morality and pure reason will help forge international political relations that constantly recognize peace as a moral duty. Ultimately, however, behavior must be fueled by moral action. Constitutions have no meaning or value in a state where moral action is not paramount. By considering moral action as the basis for legal action, we are forced to entertain the notion of immoral agents that rule states and blemish possibilities for perpetual peace. One subcategory under such a rubric includes the movement of people across national borders, namely issues of immigration, national membership or citizenship. Conflict, which is originated through inhospitable approaches, counteracts the natural phenomenon of peace. Rather, the free movement of people around the world is a significant indicator (and ultimate test) of peace.

We can see, even in actual states, which are far from perfectly organized, that in their foreign relations they approach that which the idea of right prescribes. This is also in spite of the fact that the intrinsic element of morality is certainly not the cause of it. (A good constitution is not to be expected from morality, but conversely a good moral condition of a people is to be expected only under a good constitution). Instead of genuine morality, the mechanism of nature brings it
to pass through selfish inclinations, which naturally conflict outwardly but which can be used by reason as a means for its own end, the sovereignty of law, and, as concerns the state, for promoting and securing internal and external peace. (Kant, 2003, p. 31)

Nussbaum (1997) explains that much of Kant’s philosophy on perpetual peace and cosmopolitanism were based on the teachings of ancient philosophers such as the Stoics, Cicero and Marcus Aurelius. The Stoics focus on pure reason paved the way for thinkers, such as Kant, who based their philosophies on a priori principles, and provided a context for cosmopolitan thinking. The Stoics considered politics as a divisive force that legitimized the alienation of other groups outside of one’s political and social context. They believed that we should be more inclined to engage in “empathetic understanding,” even with our enemies, to foster an environment of cooperation focused on a common telos. The Stoics were practitioners of empathy who believed that, in the words of Marcus Aurelius, we should “enter into the mind of the other,” to accomplish our goals and create productive communities of interest (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 33).

Kant’s philosophy of peace and his insistence on the need for international cooperation becomes one of his core beliefs, which provides a foundation for scholars and practitioners of peace and conflict studies. However, Kant reconceptualizes cosmopolitanism in the context of modern social structures and sees the need to understand the intricate balance between individual self-determination and public action. The negotiating mechanism between these two opposing forces is Kant’s concept of pure reason, and how it can assist us in justifying how peace is an a priori phenomenon only to be threatened by “unnatural” and “unreasonable” human action. Such an approach to
peace that ultimately avoids cultural and political conflict is grounded in moral human beings who create juridical and political structures that perpetuate peace in quotidian, pragmatic ways.

Although some scholars such as Gellner (1983) emphatically oppose Kedourie’s characterization of the philosophical foundations of the nation and nationalism in modernity, Kant’s concepts of the categorical imperative, self-determination, and cosmopolitanism frequently emerge in discussions about the nation and the history of contemporary nationalism. Although this debate is important and productive, Kant seems to remain a pivotal voice in the ways in which the modern nation is characterized through his foundational ideas of the self-determined individual in society, the guidance that is provided to these individuals through a priori pure reason, and the communicative nature of nations for healthy international cooperation.

**Origins of Nation: The Philosophical Debate**

So far we have explored these core Kantian concepts to provide a philosophical foundation and hermeneutic entrance for a modernist understanding of nationalistic structures. Nonetheless, there has been significant scholarly debate about Kant’s actual influence on such thinking and how it has influenced the shaping and organizing principles of the modern world. As mentioned earlier, Kedourie (1993) has viewed Kant at the significant rhetorical interruptive power in the shaping of modern nationalistic structures, and Kedourie himself shifted the contemporary conversation of nationalism by beginning what some have called the “modernist school of nationalism” (Thompson and Fevre, 2001, p. 305). Ernest Gellner (1994), on the other hand, has challenged Kedourie and introduced other possible alternatives for the origins of modern nationalistic thinking.
Some scholars suggest that Kedourie’s focus on conceptual philosophical origins rather than historical accounts of the nation disconnects the issue from real world issues and provides no solid ground from which we can begin to understand the problems associated with nationalism in the contemporary world. Kedourie’s connection to Kant “not only suffers from ‘conceptual determinism’ but from considering German nationalism as the historical manspring for all nationalisms” (England, 1978, p. 39). However, Kedourie (1989) defends such a characterization of this misleading assumption:

The idea of the individual as the fundamental, primordial element in society and politics can be said to be a European seventeenth-century invention. This individual—along with his fellow individuals—is a sovereign king, to use Locke’s description. It cannot, however, be supposed that this individual emerged fully fledged from the minds of philosophers. Rather, before and along with the theorizing of this individual, we see in Western society the spread—whatever its reason—of an ideal in which men and women increasingly look upon themselves as foci of independent judgment, final arbiters from whose verdicts there is no further appeal, alike in their preferences and aversions, and in their notions of right and wrong. The theorizing of this ideal issues in the philosophical abstraction known as the individual—and on this abstraction Liberalism is erected. (Kedourie, 1989, p. 266)

For Kedourie, then, Kant and other Enlightenment scholars constructed epistemological and ontological approaches to ways in which the individual began to emerge in social settings. From the interaction and communication of these self-determined individuals
sprang a new conceptual framework from which the home (oikos), community, society, justice, education, politics, economics and the nation were re-enacted.

Gellner’s (1983) critique of Kant vis a vis Kedourie is a significant argument in understanding theories of the nation. We explore Gellner’s approach not only to offer an alternative line of thinking for theories of nationalism, but also to understand the rhetorical discord behind ideas of nationalism and what seems to be a constant inherent internal conflict within the concept itself, a position with which various scholars mentioned previously concur.

Before we delve into the philosophical disagreements proposed by Gellner (1983), we should understand his basic understanding of nationalism. First and foremost, Gellner recognizes the necessary symbiotic relationship between the state and nation; for him, the natural ordering principles of the state are necessary prerequisites for nations, and therefore nationalism. Gellner takes the stance that nations cannot exist without the state, whereas others thinkers that we have mentioned earlier have seen the nation as the driving force for creating the actual state. He defers to Weber’s definition of the state, where the state is the legitimization of violence and order (p. 3). “The ‘state’ is that institution or set of institutions specifically concerned with the enforcement of order (whatever else they may also be concerned with). The state exists where specialized order-enforcing agencies, such a police forces and courts, have separated out from the rest of social life. They are the state” (p. 4).

Apart from this technical description of the state, Gellner (1983) recognizes the existential-phenomenological and emotional power the nation has conjured in the modern mind. The frequently uttered phrases about “men without nations” come to mind when
considering Gellner’s characterization of the nation. The need for humanity to be enveloped by national structures is most likely not a natural occurrence: “Having a nation is not an inherent attribute of humanity, but it has now come to appear as such” (p. 6).

Human history, and thus the development of the concept of nation, is divided into three rather distinct periods: pre-agrarian, agrarian and industrial (Gellner, 1983). The state has no real foundation and organization within the pre-agrarian cultures, but it began to emerge with agrarian societies, and more importantly and unavoidably in the Industrial Age, where a need for order and legitimate violence were necessary requirements within the web of chaotic relations (Gellner, 1983). It is important to recognize that Gellner is not simply tying the advent of the nation to the rise of industrialization; rather, he sees unequal distribution of modernization and industrialization as the catalyst of nation-building and nationalism by providing a common existential-phenomenological center and perhaps a replacement for religion at a time when the complexity of social life was overwhelming and disparate. “Thus, in the agrarian world high culture coexists with the low cultures, and needs a church (or at least a clerkly guild) to sustain it. In the industrial world high culture prevails, but they need a state not a church, and they need a state each. That is one way of summing up the emergence of the nationalist age” (Gellner, 1983, pp. 72-73.

The Industrial Age provided the practical ground from which scholars like Hume and Kant could present their arguments about rationality and experience, where human relations in the world and across state structures, and therefore cultural identities, were more complicated and textured by communication at macro, international levels as well as more micro, interpersonal levels. Industrialization demanded a reshaping of the
narrative that contextualized not only structures of law, government, and order, but also the role of the individual within this shift in narrative. Industrialization introduced an enlarged mentality that expanded the world on every level: “[Industrialization] was a totally new vision. The old worlds were, on the one hand, each of them, a cosmos: purposive, hierarchical, ‘meaningful’, and on the other hand, not quite unified, consisting of sub-worlds each with its own idiom and logic, not subsumable under a single overall orderliness. The new world was on the one hand, morally inert, and on the other, unitary” (Gellner, 1983, p.23). The philosophy of the moment, as shaped by individuals such as Kant and Hume, grounded a rhetoric that could offer a new vision which organized the macrostructures in the world, but also, for the purposes of our argument, affected the way in which “petits recits” (or micronarratives) (Lyotard, 1979, p. 60) and interpersonal relations would eventually morph to accommodate this “web of affiliations” (to borrow Simmel’s term, 1955).

For Gellner (1983), there are clear antagonistic forces that helped create nationalism: When society begins to experience economic, educational and social inequality and cleavages, culture begins to align with polity to form a nation based on ethnicity for its members. There is a way to exclude or include others when necessary, and an identity is formed (Gellner, 1983). Two essential forces contribute to nationalism – communication and mobility (Gellner, 1983). The ease of communication, like the discovery of writing in the agrarian world and the advent of the printing press during the Industrial Age, quite readily helped those with common cultures and causes to band together, as in an Andersonian imagined community, while mobility delineated very clear existential-phenomenological lines of belonging to culture and polity.
Constant occupational changes, reinforced the concern that most jobs with communication, the manipulation of meaning rather than the manipulation of things, makes for at least a certain kind of social equality of diminished social distance, and the need for a standardized, effectively shared medium of communication. These factors underlie both modern egalitarianism and nationalism. (Gellner, 1983, p. 112)

Again, we see the power to communicate to the masses affected identity as it relates to governance and culture—how individuals and groups begin to create meaning and form narratives around messages affects the ways in which societies choose to organize themselves and create formal structures that organize communal life.

It was not philosophical influence that formed nationalistic structures; rather, it was modernity itself – the process of social, economic and technological modernization and industrialization that beckoned the need for national sentiment. Gellner (1994) insists that citizens really had no choice in the matter; industrialization imposed a great deal of influence on the ways citizens viewed the structure and sentiment toward the organizing body of the state. Kant’s analysis was only a product of what modernization initiated (Gellner, 1994).

Within industrialization, there is more communicative power across a wide range, which plays into the Andersonian sense of imagined community. Gellner (1994) does not see print capitalism as espoused by Anderson (2006), in particular, as part and parcel of the emergence of nationalism, only the ability to communicate across the masses and across distances is necessary and sufficient for the formation of nationalism. One might surmise that Gellner, like McLuhan (1989) that more technologically advanced forms of
communication such as the Internet, voice and video communication as well as modern forms of transportation all contribute to our ability to accomplish this.

The guiding question continues to be one of origin, and Kant provides the philosophical foundations for understanding Gellner’s (1994) explanation. Gellner, however, challenges Kedourie’s notion that Kant’s philosophy is one that provides answers. Gellner is strongly opposed to Kedourie’s recognition of Kant as a philosophical founder of nationalism. He vehemently argues against the idea that Kant’s ideals of self-determination and individual autonomy have anything to do with the notion of nationalistic thinking; rather, nations emerged in direct opposition to Kant’s ideals (Gellner, 1983). “Kant’s main problem was the validation (and circumscription) of both our scientific and our moral knowledge. The main philosophic device he employs for the attainment of this end is the contention that our guiding cognitive and moral principles are self generated, and inescapably so. As there is no final authority or validation to found outside, it must be inside” (Gellner, 1983, p. 130). Rather, Kant invoked his concepts of a priori morality and self-determination as an answer to a rather complicated question. Gellner insists that Kant’s theory of individual autonomy and its effects on communal life deliberately ignore the power of culture in the national context. Ignoring the effect of the Industrial Revolution on nation-building and reducing society to mere recipients of dominating philosophical ideas, as Kedourie suggests, does not tell the true story of nationalism’s genesis. However, O’Leary (1997) suggests that Gellner’s interpretation of nationalism’s relationship to industrialization may be overly functional and attribute much more emphasis to modernization than is really the case. Gellner’s theory was considered to be “unashamedly functionalist,” focusing more on economic
origins while organizing human and material culture (O’Leary, 1997, pp. 203, 215). As a result, Gellner’s theory tends to be quite “apolitical,” discounting the need to acknowledge the political aspects as opposed to the cultural and materialist aspects (O’Leary, 1997, p. 215). “So the economy needs both the new type of central culture and the central state; the culture needs the state; and the state probably needs the homogenous cultural branding of its flock…In brief, the mutual relationship of a modern culture and state is something quite new, and springs, inevitably, from the requirements of modern economy” (Gellner, 1983, p. 140). O’Leary also believes that Gellner’s model for types of nationalism only addresses societies which are mostly considered homogenous or, at the most, bi-cultural; his theory doesn’t address multiculturalism, an essential element of society in contemporary society (O’Leary, 1998). Because of Gellner’s discrete treatment of culture and the ability to identify nations and nationalism through individuals, some scholars have suggested that his theory tends to describe “nationalities” as opposed to “nationalism” (Englander, 1978, p. 37).

Transitions to a Postmodern Hermeneutic of the Nation

As we have seen, scholars such as Gellner and Anderson who have delved deep into the subject of nationalism cannot avoid acknowledging the presence and power of human communication and the role it plays in the rise and transition of nationalist ideals. Smith (1995) also offers a detailed analysis of the formation of the nation and the direction in which social, political, economic and communicative forces are driving it. Smith’s cogent analysis of the development of nationalism is helpful in determining some of its significant moments, but it is clear that his definition of nationalism falls within the realm of “false nationalism” (Buber, 2005) perspectives. This bias presupposes the need
to shift from contemporary structures of nationalism into the inevitable transition to postmodernism. Smith declares, “Our world has become a single place” (1995, p. 1), and the need for a postmodern theory of nationalism is essential for responding to the current historical moment. More importantly, Smith, unlike most contemporary scholars of nationalism, recognizes the influence of premodern thought on the development of nationalism through social history and its direct relationship to postmodern renderings of the nation. Yet again, we see the deep connection of premodern ideals to postmodern characteristics (Smith, 2008, p. 32).

The story we tell about the dating and shaping of nations must begin in antiquity…The first glimmerings of such national communities could be found in ancient Egypt, and more obviously in Christian Armenia and post-Exilic Judea; while in the ancient Greek world, Athens, the largest polis – and in Aristotle’s eyes and ethnos (nation) – displayed at least some of the processes of national community. (Smith, 2008, p. 34)

Smith harkens back to our analysis of Isocrates and Cicero and their contributions, particularly those of culture (paideia) and natural law, to the conceptions of nationalism throughout history.

Smith (1995) explains that nationalism scholarship tends to refer to three distinct schools of thought: the first recognizes the nation and nationalism as organic responses to the historical moment; the second tends to be more Kedourian or Gellnerian, where nations and nationalism are direct results of modernization and industrialization; and the third sees nationalism as a constant centerpiece of human society that persists while all other aspects “pass away” (pp. 3-4). Until recently, the first school of thought has been
discussed much less frequently than the other two schools of thought, but contemporary thought seems to be hovering within what Smith coins “the First School.” The first school of thought also seems to address nation and nationalism within a communicative structure that recognizes historicity and the needs of the human community within a particular historical moment. Smith (1995) argues that, if interpreted under the rubric of the first school of thought, our contemporary understanding of nationalism does not indeed respond to the needs of the current moment; rather, we are embedded in the realm of the other schools of thought.

In fact, we are already witnessing the breakdown of the 'homogenous nation' in many societies, whose cultures and narratives of national identity are becoming increasingly hybridized and ambivalent, and the emergence, some would say re-emergence, of looser polyethnic societies. A 'post-modern' era, like its 'pre-modern' counterpart, has little place for politicized ethnicity or for nationalism as an autonomous political force. (pp. 3-4)

Smith provides an important transition in our discussion about the character of the nation and nationalism in postmodernity. Not only does Smith recognize the importance of the ancients in shaping our historical and metaphorical renderings of nation, he sees the nation as an ontological phenomenon that must respond to the needs of the human community at any particular point in time. As scholars such as Lyotard (1984) acknowledge the breakdown of metanarratives and a departure from the epistemology of modernity, so too must the nation reconceptualize its structure and role to respond most effectively to the needs of the contemporary world. We can only accomplish such a task under the guidance of all of those who have come before such as the ancients and the
Enlightenment philosophers to arrive at a constructive hermeneutic approach on contemporary nationalism.

**Implications**

This chapter has explored the various renderings of the nation and nationalism in modernity through existential-phenomenological, philosophical, sociological and economic perspectives, which reflect the diversity as well as the internal discord within the concept itself. In short, there seems to be very little agreement among scholars about the origins and emergence of modern nationalism. Scholars do not seem be able to agree on the historical point at which and the philosophical concepts through which nationalism emerged. This project takes the stance that the nation is essentially a product of ancient philosophy, politics and rhetoric like that of Smith (1983, 1998, 2010). Kedourie and Gellner see nationalism as a product of the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, major interruptions which identify movements of modernity.

The diversity of the origins of nationalism seems to be limitless. Whether it is considering its ancient antecedents, attributing it to philosophical or economic roots, or understanding its existential-phenomenological power, it is clear that nationalism has entered the world stage from a variety of ideological perspectives. In this chapter, we began to move into modernity’s version of nationalism through hermeneutic devices such as sacred space, collective memory (or, better stated, collective amnesia), duty to one’s own citizenship and citizenry, and the influence of a social contract and civil society on the macrostructures of society and its contribution to the creation of the nation and nationalism.
This project has focused on the influence and power of Kant’s contribution to the idea of the nation through concepts such as the categorical imperative and self-determination, as well as the historical events such as the vast Industrial Revolution that spread across the Western world and influenced the Western trope on countless levels. I chose to focus on these two particular events as they allow us to frame the argument about nationalism through a communicative lens, offering a focus on the ways in which society chose a rhetorical stance to help them negotiate a complicated social world. Although many scholars, such as Gellner, may not agree about Kant’s influence and others may not agree with Gellner’s overly mechanistic, economic perspective of the Industrial Revolution, they are two significant worldviews that frame our understanding of nationalism as an existential-phenomenological, communicative construct.

Kedourie and Gellner provide significant theories of nationalism within the framework of modernity, but postmodern life seems to texture the metanarrative of nationalism differently, incorporating the philosophical, political, social, economic, and for all intents and purposes, communicative ground to fuel human action. Englander (1978) states:

It is the history of individuals reflecting on, and judging, the situations that confront them; a history of individuals molding traditional terms to fit their own frame of reference, rather than passively receiving them; it is a history, not of supraindividual forces, as in Gellner, nor of abstract ideas, as in Kedourie, but of human action. (p. 45)

The function of this particular study is to uncover some of the philosophical and rhetorical antecedents helpful for understanding nationalism; the constraints and focus of
this project to do not allow for an exhaustive anthology of the multitude of theories and approaches about the nation that have been expounded by timeless scholars such as Marx and Engels (2004), Rousseau (1973), and Fichte (2013), to name just a few. However, the scholars that I have chosen offer a compelling tale of nationalism’s philosophical origins and how these hermeneutic approaches help us evaluate the presence of nationalism in our communicative lives.

Our next task will be to engage previous scholarship on nationalism, which includes the ancients, and move the discussion about the current nature of nationalism in postmodernity to contemporary issues, recognizing how human communication again is placed at the center of this discussion. Most importantly, postmodernity recalls the need for what the ancients called phronesis, or practical reason, and the need for rhetorical approaches in contingent circumstances textured by multiple voices and perspectives in an ever-growing diverse paideia. However, it is important to realize that we may not be able to move into such a discussion without acknowledging the foundational role of modernity, which I have addressed in this chapter.
Chapter 5

The Postmodern Nation:

Applying Martin Buber’s Dialogic Theory

“In a new day of mankind, the early dawn of which we believe we have already perceived, nationalism will become more loving and more attached to the life of individuals, will fashion it more richly and freely, will be the most private and hidden essence of mankind” (Kohn, 1980, p. 30).

Postmodernity provides a fitting, yet complex, framework for the concept of nationalism in the contemporary world, textured as it is with diversity and with the ever-increasing connections and ability to communicate more directly across this diversity. Of course, from a global perspective, it is not that diversity never existed or that diversity is more evident in postmodernity, but rather how opportunities for cross-fertilization and interconnectivity seem to be acknowledged more than ever before. Given our analysis of nationalism theory thus far, it is clear that the way in which human communication is structured, disseminated and utilized transforms the concept of nationalism. My next task is to move from our historical and metaphorical discussion of nationalism with its contributions to communicative, social, political, and economic thought and move toward an understanding of nationalism within the postmodern realm by understanding the historical-structural shift of postmodernity, the shift in the structural and existential-phenomenological nature of communication, and how all of this responds to our current communicative moment.

In a letter to Martin Buber, his friend and colleague, Hans Kohn (1980), a well-known scholar of nationalism, outlines a brief history of nationalism and expresses his
vision of a transitional moment in the idea of nationalism in the early 20th century (p. 27). Immediately after the First World War, Kohn saw a shift in the way individuals viewed nationalism’s role in their personal, political and economic lives. For Kohn, The Great War was the pivotal moment in which nationalism would meet its inevitable demise. In hindsight, we can see that this transition was in fact delayed and more drawn out than he had surmised, but there still seemed to be an unavoidable next phase for nationalism’s fate. The focus on the individual in 19th century thought and social behavior seemed to be collapsing on itself, creating a social and political tension that called for a new era of the nation, perhaps no longer structured and validated by the state as it had been as a result of Enlightenment thought (Kohn, 1980).

At the beginning of the twenties in our century, one can see this reformation of nationalism almost everywhere. It is the sense of a new, powerful, connected life, the certainty of standing in tradition and yet being touched by totally new winds, the yearning for a new strong faith, that holds all these movements together. At the same time there is a conscious seeking for an ethical anchoring of nationalism. …Nationalism is becoming a question of personal ethics, personal shaping life; it is becoming questionable. It is faced with new problems. Things close to it are now remote. Certitudes are questionable, and people are trying to interpret uncertainties from the breadth and depth of solitude… Among the Jews, Martin Buber gave form and expression to this movement. (Kohn, 1980, pp. 27-28, emphasis added)

Kohn’s comments seem to be situated within the realm of communication ethics; the monolithic modern nation seems to be transforming under postmodern dialogic,
interpersonal pressures that no longer can contain individuals within clearly defined political, cultural, economic and communicative boundaries. The nature of human connection can no longer sustain a rigid structure of the nation in modernity.

As we will see, Kohn’s predictions echo Buber’s philosophical approach for the existence of man, and whose concerns eventually are ideated in his hopes for the Jewish state in the early 20th century. We will see how Buber’s philosophy of dialogue reflects the concerns of nationalism at the time, as expressed by Kohn, and how they can provide a lens through which we understand nationalism not so much in the 20th century, but as we transition into the 21st century and beyond. Concerns for the individual’s embeddedness in community as well as the relationship that emerges “between” individuals have a lasting effect on the shifting idea of the nation and the individual’s role within the nation. In other words, “dialogue,” particularly in the Buberian sense, becomes an essential concept for framing the nation and nationalism in a new form.

At the moment we see the characteristics of a postmodern nation emerging through various media, particularly through the ease of communication technologies, but also through the movement of people and the ability to interact on a more interpersonal level, or “second person” level (Verlinden, 2010), shifting the ways in which humans think about the world around them and their particular place in the world. A theory of postmodern nationalism can help us answer these two worldviews by applying our understanding of communication theory and the influence of communication on a number of levels, whether they are interpersonal, inter-group, intercultural, or international. Most importantly, we will see that, with the power to communicate across vast spaces and
cultural divides, the nation and nationalism can take on dialogic characteristics. Dialogic theory can provide substantive ground for texturing the concept of the postmodern nation.

By invoking dialogic scholar Martin Buber, I will attempt to construct a theory of what I call “dialogic nationalism” that takes into consideration not only communication at a more macro level and across borders, but also the importance of interpersonal, intercultural interactions between peoples who communicate across their national borders and national identities every day. Our “imagined communities” have become even more imagined and are no longer relegated only to print capitalism as indicated in Anderson’s (2006) seminal work, as technology and dialogue together form a bond that allows us the imagine communities that are less rigid and seemingly more natural to the human communicative process — all while creating more complexity and contingency than ever before. Cosmopolitanism provides a glimpse into understanding a more interconnected world, but it does not provide the practical answers that a theory of dialogic nationalism, an intermediary solution, might. Dialogic nationalism does not discount the power of institutions within the state and nation, but rather acknowledges their existence as a vehicle toward increasing communication across cultures and borders. There is a continued sense of public participation as advanced by the Greeks and Romans.

Habermas’ Critique of Postmodernity: The Postnational Constellation

As illuminated at the very beginning of this project, Lyotard’s analysis of the dawn of postmodernity and the destruction of the metanarrative provides a framework for exploring the rhetorical/metaphorical history of nationalism. It also provides an opening where “dialogic nationalism” becomes a possibility. Given this discussion on the many characteristics of the nation, it may seem more appropriate to consider nationalism as a
major feature and phenomenon of modernity, always providing an existential-phenomenological center, a necessary point of reference, for its members to live within a Western notion of reason and security. Human discourse forces the nation to engage in constant transmutation over space and time. Therefore, a conversation about the contemporary nation is pointless without exploring its particular characteristics and how it is influenced within postmodernity.

In his famous essay on the “Postnational Constellation,” Habermas (2001) offers a detailed analysis of the effects of communication on an ever increasingly globalized world at a systematic political and economic level. Since modernity, the self-determining nature of the nation-state has served as the social mechanism where democracy and individual freedom could flourish. “…[T]he very success of the social democratic process, as one could call it, has nourished the vision of a society capable of conscious change through the will of its democratically united citizens” (Habermas, 2001, p. 60). Habermas, however, offers a rather grim outlook regarding the erosion of the nation-state. The deconstruction of the nation, under the pressure of various postmodern narratives of globalization, results in the volatility of institutionalized systems of government and economic markets and a disjuncture between human life and institutionalized systems. However, Habermas realizes that these external forces of postmodernity and their effect on the nation as we understand it are inevitable; he attempts to construct an argument that addresses the concerns of the disintegrating modern nation and the inevitability of postmodern forces that challenge the existence of what he calls the postnational constellation.
Habermas understands that the debate about the changing world is a complex dialectic of a swinging pendulum between the nation-state within modernity and the postnational constellation in postmodernity. This dialectic is also expressed in the fact that humans are constantly opening and closing their lifeworlds to external pressures. We inevitably open and close our minds, expanding our horizons of understanding and opening ourselves to alternative ontological paths, only to engage in this process over and over again. A dialectic of the private citizen’s identity tied to the nation gives way to what we generally consider static forces in the public sphere (Habermas, 2001).

We need to distinguish between two different aspects here: on the one hand, the cognitive dissonances that lead to a hardening of national identities as different cultural forms of life come into collision; on the other hand, the hybrid differentiations that soften native cultures and comparatively homogenous forms of life in the wake of assimilation in a single material world culture. (Habermas, 2001, pp. 72-73)

The loss of a “democratic form of self-control” that is made possible within the modern nation is not only a result of larger political and economic pressures, but also the product of the communicative life of individuals within their lifeworlds. Although Habermas chooses to focus on the larger political and economic effects on postmodernity, it is clear that he sees the interpersonal, intercultural experience as a foundational factor in the movement to a postnational formulation of the world. “Reacting to the homogenizing pressure of a material world culture, new constellations often emerge which do not so much level out existing cultural differences as create a new multiplicity of hybridized forms… a process kept in motion through intercultural contacts and multiethnic
connections” (Habermas, 2001, p. 75). The dismantling of various forms of political and economic systems forces us to reconsider modern forms of the nation and to function with a newly organized, multidimensional sphere where alternative political voices are heard (p. 87).

Habermas begins to investigate the formation of the European Union as well as the United Nations as the first postnational entities to systemize these multidimensional global political challenges. However, it is still clear that the world is still attempting to grasp what it means to develop political, economic and communication systems that address the dismantling of the nation as we know it. He suggests that the “rhetorical strategies” that address concerns of these multiple narratives are often supplanted by larger institutionalized structures of the state, but recognizes that the “discursive structure of opinion” has an effect on the “loosening of the conceptual ties between democratic legitimacy and the familiar forms of state organization” (Habermas, 2001, p. 111).

Habermas’s analysis explores the relationship of the public sphere, systematized through government and public opinion, in addition to the pressure that individuals’ private voices have on the restricting of the existential lifeworlds of the nation. Dialogic theory may serve as one window into understanding how individuals can affect the transformation of larger, seemingly monolithic political, economic and communicative structures while this transformation takes place. The dismantling of the modern of nation-state presents a number of complex political and economic challenges that seem almost unforeseeable in an increasingly deterritorialized world; in the spirit of Habermasian philosophy, he emphasizes a need to focus on coordinated institutionalized public
structures as paramount to the successful functioning of society in this postnational constellation (Habermas, 2001, p. 88).

Postnational entities are like the individual stars of a constellation that create dynamic meaning and telos with other stars; their meaning and purpose is less sophisticated when they live on their own, but teem with meaning when intricately coordinated with the other stars in the larger constellation. The postnational constellation cannot be a dysfunctional cacophony of multiple narratives, but rather a systematized network of coordinated action that responds to the needs of a multiplicity of voices. Like Giddens (2001), for Habermas, the modern nation may not be completely on its ways out; rather, the postnational constellation, like the possibility of dialogic nationalism, serves as a transitional moment that recognizes the benefits of self-determined nations grounded in modernity succumbing to the pressures of postmodern narrative confusion.

**Dialectical Voices of the Postmodern Nation**

Michael Ignatieff (1993) recognizes this tension and the need to transmute nationalism in the postmodern moment; we need nationalism, and alongside it provinciality, to interact dialectically within cosmopolitan norms in order to exist in an enlarged global context. For Ignatieff, nationalism takes on new meaning in a post-dynastic realm, for it must transform to accommodate real world problems today; but, in a Mazzinian sense, cosmopolitan, post-nationalist thinking can only occur in the crucible of national protection. Such was the case in Bosnia, a region which he coins a “true cosmopolitan society;” Bosnians fell victim to extranational pressures because they did not have a state to protect them as a recognized ethnic group. “[C]osmopolitans are not beyond the nation; and a cosmopolitan… post-nationalist spirit will always depend, in the
As mentioned earlier, Calhoun (1997), by way of Michel Foucault, explains nationalism as a “discursive phenomenon.” Acts of human communication construct the “realized imaginative” boundaries that manifest in our private and public consciousness, and therefore our actions, beliefs, and ultimately our institutions. Although ideas of nationalism are real political and economic forces by many accounts, Calhoun frames them largely through existential-phenomenological means because they exist in the hearts and minds of those who are an integral part of the larger discourse, and therefore define the rhetorical nature of national identity. We will lose sight of the power and complexity of nationalism if we treat any one element of nationalism as its “master variable” (p. 21). For Calhoun, treating nationalism as a coherent, well-articulated narrative reduces its textured complexity and therefore its rhetorical qualities. It is for this reason that nationalism’s power resides in acts of communication and rhetoric and responds to the narrative confusion of the postmodern communication context. We often see nationalism as a practical approach to the problems that the world presents to us—we form governments, institutions, economies and communication systems in the context of defined physical characteristics of what we view as a nation. However, we see the reality of nationalism with greater clarity when we evaluate it as a social phenomenon that resides in the hearts and minds of its members; exploring its “discursive” qualities leads us to a postmodern understanding of national power as adequate to this historical moment. “Nationalism is not just a doctrine, however, but a more basic way of talking, thinking and acting. To limit nationalism simply to a political doctrine … is to narrow
our understanding of it too much. It doesn’t do justice to the extent to which nationalism and national identities shape our lives outside of explicitly political concerns – and especially outside competition over the structuring of state boundaries” (Calhoun, 1997, p. 11).

Smith, unlike Gellner (1994) and Kedourie (1993) discussed in Chapter Four, recognizes the premodern roots of nationalism and rejects the notion that nationalism is simply a manifestation of modern thought; ultimately, he considers globalism a result of democratic ideals and the emergence of mass communication (Smith, 2008, p. 34). Smith also supports exploring the influences of postmodern thought on the nation and nationalism. Scholars such Nussbaum (1996, 1997) and Appiah (2005, 2006) have contextualized the contemporary state of nationalism through theories of cosmopolitanism, while Smith recognizes this trend in cultural, political and economic globalization. However, Smith attributes the emergence of global cosmopolitanism to what we might call an Ellulian “techne” (1965), by granting power and access specifically to the technological aspects of communication that empower those with such expertise (Smith, 1995, p. 21). Globalization, therefore, is largely in the hands of the computer scientists and networking specialists as well as the creative minds of cyberspace and social media. He argues that such a focus on the technical form of cosmopolitanism does not only support the economic forms of globalization, but also contests the very nature of politics and culture (Smith, 1995). Current modes of technology provide the form and channels through which a new world communication order occurs both economically and culturally. Our attitudes and behaviors are influenced by the form and frequency of communication, which enables us to interact with others,
either directly or indirectly. This focus on culture can also be seen through Smith’s call to understand this cultural shift in the study of nations and nationalism through the lens of ethnicity and ethnic groups (Smith, 1992). Technology that has brought us together has provided a foundation to justify extreme nationalistic tendencies or more cosmopolitan worldviews. In other words, increased ability to engage in interpersonal and intergroup dialogue across cultures and national borders more than ever has influenced the conceptual shift of the nation and nationalism in either direction. One could only acknowledge our ability to interact with others through the Internet, modern transportation, and the opening of certain borders to business and education to understand the acute shift in nationalism inquiry. Global business practices, interethnic marriages and international student mobility are just a few examples of how modern technology has influenced the frequency and ability to communicate and transform our understanding of culture, nation and world. Our mental and communicative constructs are subject to inevitable forces of interaction in both impersonal (business, corporate, internet) and interpersonal (travel, education, cultural exchange) realms.

Smith (1992) points out that there is an imminent decline in nationalism studies and the concept of the nation within the construct of classical modernism (p. 3). The concepts of nation and nationalism have been subject to postmodern deconstruction through new approaches such as Anderson’s “Imagined Communities” as well as Hobsbawm’s (1983) concept of “invented traditions” (p. 3). Traditional historical analyses such as those of Kedourie and Gellner that I discussed in the previous chapter, although key to our discussion, have been supplanted and transformed to address the current state of nationalism studies – an academic response to that which is transpiring in
real life across the globe. Gellner’s idea that the concept that nationalism may have actually invented those nations to which it was loyal may actually hold true, as the postmodern form of nationalism studies in communicative terms reflects the nature of national and cultural communication today. A world with access to more dialogic settings of communication is a world influenced by multiple voices and disparate perspectives. The rather modern concept of the nation, emerging from a controlled, structured center, is challenged by a world that must inevitably face the multiple, contingent messages of the day. Metanarratives are burst asunder to reveal a world where traditional understandings of nation no longer provide guidance to those who must function in a world with a constant, even overwhelming, flow of information and voices.

**Traditions, Culture, Civilization and Diaspora**

Studies since the emergence of postmodern thought have highlighted the transforming nature of nationalism and how it seems to be constituted in everyday life. Ideas such as Hobsbawm’s “invented traditions” (1983) and Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” (1996) have attempted to recast the structuration of national and cultural thought by offering new ideas to the classical understanding of the nation and nationalism. For Hobsbawm,

“[I]nvented tradition” is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly and tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past. (p. 1)
He suggests that where “genuine” traditions are strong and unwavering, there is no need to “revive or invent” new traditions to honor what already exists (p. 8). Hobsbawm contends that nations are, in fact, new “exercises in social engineering” that actually require the invention of tradition and innovation to legitimize their existence and social function; this new idea of nation has, ostensibly, served as a catalyst for significant social phenomena that emerged in the 20th century, such as the struggle for territory and “national” recognition in Palestine (pp. 13-14). Hobsbawm’s idea of nations as “invented traditions” debunks the claim that nations are rooted in “genuine” tradition and tied to deep historical continuity. Rather, nations are relatively new products that masquerade as the timeless social constructs embracing all that become part of them (p. 14).

As a contemporary of Lyotard (1984), Hobsbawm sees the diversity and multiplicity in the ideas of the time. Through a postmodern lens, “invented traditions” are perhaps manifestations of the historical moment, lacking a metanarrative and relying on “inventions” for cultures and nations to create their own new stories. Traditions, although often thought to be immutable and static, are frequently contested as constantly transforming and responsive to the moment. The tradition that we often regard as an artifact passed down from time immemorial is our own new version of that which came before us, one that responds to the current historical moment in all its contingency and diversity. In a sense, the nation is an invented tradition, responding to the historical moment.

Culture and tradition (like Greek paideia discussed earlier), as the central force behind the development of “nations,” continues to gain traction in discussions of nationalism (Huntington, 1996), but as seemingly unnatural entities artificially
constructed and legitimized through the social contract. In the contemporary world, people administer their lives within nations, but it seems that the way people conduct their daily lives rests on the idea of culture, or what Huntington (1996) refers to as “civilizations.” The post-Cold War, New World Order brought forth the reorganization of how we think about nation. For Huntington, civilizations rather than nations constitute the major spheres of influence within the post-Cold War period, and at the core of these civilizations lies the power of culture. “In the post-Cold War world, the most important distinctions among peoples are not ideological, political or economic. They are cultural” (p. 21). Over the last 15 to 20 years, we can see clearly how the notion of nations, particularly the core characteristics of the national phenomenon, has transformed. What is important, however, is how we define this core element of culture. Culture must be understood in postmodern terms in order to locate its rhetorical, practical strength; we even hear the echoes of postmodernity through Huntington’s rather modern voice—that global politics are “multipolar and multicivilizational” (p. 21). Huntington deploys modern universal structures of “civilization” for a system that he attempts to frame as non-universal and contingent. Again, we find ourselves at a crossroads being asked to choose one of two paths of national identity, but in reality there may be a third path of compromise that will lead to a better understanding of its growing complexity.

Huntington’s pivotal work in the field of international relations quickly becomes supplanted by the unfortunate events of September 11, 2001, where scholars like Huntington seem to respond to a call for national unity in opposition to those forces that threaten core “national” beliefs (Huntington, 2004). In Who We Are, Huntington (2004) characterizes national identity as a fixed concept, deriving its energy from internal unity
and continuity focused on a central core, evidently returning to his modern roots. Cultural diversity, immigration, cosmopolitanism and “subnationalism” all pose a threat to the power of nationalism and the individual’s place in it. Until September 11, 2001, Huntington characterized American national identity as disjointed and therefore lacking the necessary substance to bring its people together effectively. For Huntington, September 11 was a pivotal moment for American national identity; most Americans readily identified their place in the world as solely American, and most other identities with which they positioned themselves in society quickly faded into the background. Essentially, for Huntington, postmodern approaches to diversity and multiplicity are inauthentic claims about the nature of nationalism and its goals. Elitist cosmopolitan views of nationalism threatened the very core of national identity and did not speak to what the American public believed (Huntington, 2004, p.7).

Even when giving strength to what he believes to be the damaging effects of multiculturalism and diversity to the American national identity, Huntington (2004) acknowledges that American national identity is a product of competing narratives and differing opinions. His overall theoretical framework for preserving national identity works against this acknowledgement:

While the salience of national identity may vary sharply with the intensity of external threats [therefore questioning the value and substance of the national identity], the substance of national identity is shaped slowly and more fundamentally by a wide variety of long-term, often conflicting social, economic, and political trends. The crucial issues concerning the substance of American identity on September 10 did not disappear the following day. (p. 9)
Diversity framed by democracy lives at the very core of the American national being, but continues to pose challenges of uncertainty and fluidity that are not characteristic of a solid national identity structured through modernity. Postmodern claims offer a context for the American national identity question, but for modernist thinkers such as Huntington, postmodernity still does not provide a necessary centripetal force that must guide competing narratives to create a cohesive and powerful nationalism. Huntington’s arguments contribute greatly to the conversation on postmodern nationalism in the sense that these two competing narratives—one based on the diversity of culture, and the other based purely on an immutable, immobile central core—help us form a more sophisticated understanding through the lack of an overarching, unified metanarrative on nation and nationalism.

Appadurai (1996) is advancing a postmodern approach to understand the transformational phenomenon on a grassroots level through rhetorical and narrative structures; he conceptualizes the current state of nationalism as what he calls the “postnational imaginary” (pp. 21-23). As is the central theme of this project, these types of postnational imaginaries are directly linked to the mobility of people and advancement of communication technology that allow for faster and more efficient exchange of ideas, opinions, and politics quite readily across national physical and ideological borders. These “diasporic public spheres” push the limits of the modern concept of nationalism and challenge what we already know and think about the nation (Appadurai, 1996, p.22). What has emerged historically is now under close scrutiny, recasting the nation into multiple, amorphous, complex narratives.
My general argument is there is a similar link to be found between the work of the imagination [Anderson] and the emergence of a postnational political world. Without the benefit of hindsight (which we do have with respect to the global journey of the idea of the nation), it is hard to make a clear case for the role of the imagination in a postnational order. But as mass mediation becomes increasingly dominated by electronic media (and thus delinked by the capacity to read and write), and as such media increasingly link producers and audiences across national boundaries, and as these audiences themselves start new conversations between those who move and those who stay, we find a growing number of diasporic public spheres. (Appadurai, 1996, p.22)

Appadurai’s anthropological perspective analyzes the case of postnationalism through an intercultural communicative lens in that he acknowledges the importance of the mediated message in the ways we structure our national and cultural selves. What is notable is not so much the importance of the mass media itself, but the voices that create these narratives of possibility that are not confined to one’s own national, political, economic and cultural life. Rather, the exposure that various messages and, therefore, people expand our horizons and encourage us to play with concepts that we may not normally engage. Interculturalism is inherently a natural part of our lives sometimes mediated through mass media, but more importantly originated and conceptualized by people affected by intercultural versions of life, or what Appadurai calls a “global and deterritorialized” human existence (p.55).

The idea that the nation and culture are primordial by nature, as espoused in the Enlightenment, is readily debated in this postnational order, as it limits the
epistemological and communicative forms of contemporary life (Appadurai, 1996). Concepts such as imagination and invention, which have been discussed thus far, and dialogic communication, which will be invoked soon, are not inherently primordial and do not speak to the compartmentalized nature of primordialism; rather, they address issues of “being” and “interbeing” to transform our understandings of the world around us. Appadurai points out that the work on imagination (Anderson), along with others on ideology (Lefort, 1986) and hegemony (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985), “began to show us a new way of seeing subaltern consciousness” (p. 145). The official word of the state, although still powerful, begins to be subverted in the language of postmodernity, offering access to alternative voices and intersubjectivity, much like the “invented traditions” that Hobsbawm (1983) advanced, or what Appadurai views as the “dialectics of implosion and explosion” (p. 157). However, Appadurai does not suggest that any of this has the ability to subvert what we currently understand as the nation in many respects; rather, a postnational context could mean that the existential-phenomenological essence of the nation may continue to exist in the hearts and minds of its citizens, but the territorial aspects the deeply associate with the nation may actually be on the decline (p. 169).

**The Global Village: An Early Understanding of the Postmodern Nation**

In their timeless work, *The Global Village*, McLuhan and Powers (1989) (henceforth McLuhan) offer an analysis of the nation and globalization through the development of various technologies and the ways in which these technologies affect our thinking and approaches to quotidian issues. They recognize a conceptual shift in the ways people understand the world around them and explore how this shift will ultimately connect us to each other differently than before. McLuhan believes that our
epistemological approach to the world around us is shifting from what is thought to be more what he views as linear, mechanistic, left-brain, visual thinking to more holistic, technological, right-brain, acoustic thinking due to the simultaneous, multiple messages we receive in an age of postmodern technology and multiple media. In the famous statement, “the medium is the message,” McLuhan comments on the importance of “ground” (the non-linear, multifaceted, acoustic form of the message) and how such ground forms the context, content, and channel for the message one wishes to convey (p. 6).

In the order of things, ground comes first. The figures [the tangible, visual elements] arrive later. Coming events cast their shadows before them. The ground of any technology is both the situation that gives rise to it as well as the whole environment (medium) of services and disservices that the technology brings with it. These are the side effects, and they impose themselves haphazardly as a new form of culture. The medium is the message. As an old ground is displaced by the content of the new situation, it becomes available to ordinary attention as figure. (p. 6)

This technology that forms the context and content is an extension of our biologic selves in postmodernity (p. 87).

McLuhan (1989) recognizes this shift in the manner in which we approach the world, and therefore view our place in the world among this great web of associations, constantly connecting us and embedding us in physical and social existences. The way in which we utilize and engage technology has important implications on the ways we view ourselves in the world, particularly as we have been made to think of ourselves in the
context of the nation and the world. This epistemological shift to the holistic causes us to recast our identities within the context of the nation and view the world more as a “global village” more than ever before (p. 95).

McLuhan (1989) suggests that this access to electronic media and the possibility for limitless communication across individual, cultural and national boundaries causes a loss of individualism, that in turn causes us to cling to more “tribal loyalties” for a sense of belonging and comfort. These tribal loyalties that are enacted may be misconstrued as national devotion and fervor, but McLuhan makes it clear that, as a result of the electronic age, these loyalties are more accurately tied to culture and multiple “centers” of thought and action. Tribal loyalties are not discrete, boundary-driven connections, but rather fluid, acoustic forms of affiliation that foster belonging, but in a way that is quite different from that of Enlightenment influenced epistemologies (p.92; p. 118). These ideas provoke pre-modern thinking discussed earlier, where culture (much like the Greek paideia), forms “centers” of identity and social context; they create the ground on which figures such as nations exists (or do not exist), and allow humans to communicate in ways which seem natural than the more linear, visual or mechanistic epistemological structures introduced in modernity.

The nature of the satellite surround is that it has no center and no margin. ‘Centers’ exist everywhere. This is the way the Europeans understood the character of reality and culture in pre-Renaissance times; no national borders, simply centers of thought and influence; cities which were haunts of being, of ideas — the universe of Duns Scotus and Erasmus where nationalism did not yet exist. In the age of the super satellite, large numbers of people will be unable to
think merely of regional monopolies of information. Satellites will be able to
‘talk’ to each other and total coverage will lead to total, low cost communication.
Slow information movement will be possible only under the greatest restrictions;
estionage will, therefore, begin to disappear. (McLuhan, 1989, p. 118)

One can see McLuhan’s foresight currently in development: the Internet is becoming
more complex and faster, email, videoconferencing, social media like Facebook and
Twitter allow us to transform the ways in which we communicate; information
technology companies like Apple, Google and Yahoo, have become powerful centers for
political, social and cultural communication; and, mobile handheld technologies that
bring the world to our fingertips and allow us to communicate seamlessly, all resemble
this “satellite” that McLuhan invokes. Even his understanding of a dissolving privacy in
the face of these complex technologies has become accurate as recent news emerges
regarding the government’s ability to monitor and intercept individual Internet
communications for the purpose of “national security.” (Baker & Sanger, New York
seems to be inherently postmodern, recognizing how new communication technologies
that connect individuals shift the ground on which we stand, ultimately participating in a
variety of narratives that establish and transform our identities.

It is difficult to discuss the nature of postmodern communication and
epistemologies without mentioning the necessity and power of such technologies. As a
harbinger of communication, and therefore culture, in a postmodern age, McLuhan
understood the future of the technologies that were available to him in the 1970s and
1980s. The limits of this project do not allow me to engage a detailed analysis of some of
the abovementioned technologies, but like McLuhan, I recognize their existence and power in order to arrive at a conceptual and practical understanding of how this global, postnational world is emerging, and what philosophical, ontological phenomena contribute to this new understanding of the communicative world.

**Grounding Buberian Dialogic Theory**

In more recent scholarship, the transformative nature of the modern nation-state as we know it is discussed through these concepts of imagination, invention, postnational order and the like, but the transition is relatively abrupt with few offering a transitional phase between the nation in modernity to the nation in postmodernity. Both Appadurai (1996) and McLuhan (1989) offer an interpretive analysis for such a link between the traditional nation as we understand it in modernity and the nation as it may emerge in postmodernity. Since the act of communication is at the core of the nation’s essence and existence, communication scholarship can offer a substantive approach to thinking about this transitional, rhetorical moment in the nation, particularly as it pertains to dialogic communication theory.

Traditionally, dialogic communication is a form of communication theory that explains how meaning and relationships emerge interpersonally through existential-phenomenological and ontological means. Scholars such as Bakhtin (1981), Levinas (2004), and Buber (1988, 1996, 2002, 2005), among others, have all grappled with existential questions of ethics and being through the act of human dialogue and how it affects the ways in which we communicate, create meaning, structure thought and exist as human beings. Although dialogic theory from this perspective has been readily appropriated to studies of interpersonal and intergroup communication, for the purposes
of this project I hope to ground the idea of postmodern nationalism, or postnationalism, in the idea of dialogic communication and what it can offer for this transitional moment in the nation—the transition grounded in Lyotard’s (1984) and Anderson’s (2006) scholarship and characterized more recently by Appadurai (1996) and McLuhan (1989). I turn to Martin Buber’s understanding of dialogue and its applications for two reasons: His detailed treatment of dialogic theory, as well as his commentary on nationalism in the 20th century. Buber’s ideas may open up particular lines of inquiry that emerge from our previous investigation of a communicative-rhetorical history of nationalism as well as this apparent transformation of the nation and nationalism.

The application of dialogic theory to issues of global justice and how justice emerges in the nation, as well as in its political, social, economic institutions, is beginning to emerge as a mode of inquiry (Verlinden, 2010). Scant scholarship has taken ideas of dialogics, particularly as they have emerged in Martin Buber’s work, and applied it to larger social issues as opposed to interpersonal, relational communication studies. A literature search on the connections to dialogic theory and nationalism studies reveals very little; the scholarship is virtually non-existent.

I hope to explore and provide an interpretive analysis of Buber’s works on dialogic theory (Between Man and Man, 2002; I and Thou, 1996; The Knowledge of Man, 1988, among others) as well as his various writings on nationalism specifically in response to the problem of the Jewish state in the early 20th century (Buber, 2005). Buber’s scholarship becomes an important element of this study, as it links the idea of dialogic communication to that of the nation. Scholarship on Buber seems to divide his work into dialogic theory and his nationalism writings, but few seem to connect the two
directly. It is clear that Buber’s dialogic approach lives deeply in his views and actions regarding nationalism and the Zionist movement, but a more deliberate investigation of his work in both areas might allow us to develop a better understanding of what I mean by “dialogic nationalism.”

Applying dialogic communication theory to the problem of postmodern nationalism might help us understand the nature of an increasingly technological world that seems to lend itself to more interpersonal forms of communication rather than more commonly applied political communication methods where individuals often seem to be removed as more distant, disengaged, passive agents in the communication and creation process. Of course, political communication still plays a central role in understanding the problem of the nation, as is evident through our inquiry into Isocrates and Cicero. Nevertheless, the idea of interpersonal communication may play an even more prominent role as communication technology blurs the communicative, institutional, and political boundaries and ties people together through more direct forms of communication. Although we regard the ancients as foundational in helping to create an understanding of political communication and the human role in the nation, ancient political communication involved more direct, individual participation, more than those that immediately followed it. In a sense, the infinite web of “centers,” similarly professed by Isocrates and McLuhan, are now demanded by postmodernity since this immense network transcends traditional structures like the nation (albeit constructed on a large scale) and challenges the idea of international communication by perhaps replacing it with new forms of interpersonal communication.
Dialogic theory by way of both Buber and Levinas has also been applied to understanding our engagement of global justice issues (Verlinden, 2010). Dialogic theory provides a transition for two traditional approaches to social issues—the particular, partial, individually-centered approaches and the universal, impartial, collectively-generated approaches (p. 83). Verlinden (2010) argues that these two rather discrete worldviews no longer provide a helpful answer to issues of global justice and how we as people-living-in-the-world respond to everyday problems, particularly those that affect us more indirectly and impersonally (p. 90). By invoking the works of Buber and Levinas, Verlinden is able to arrive at a transitional point similar to that which I hope to explore for the discussion of transforming nationalism. Buber’s concept of the “interhuman” points us in a moral, ethical direction that privileges the actual emergent relationship, the “between” that is essential to our existential being (Verlinden, p. 96; Buber’s works).

Although not directly addressing issues of nationalism, Verlinden’s focus on global justice directs us to a conversation about the transitional moment in global communication for individuals who otherwise might feel that they are, or actually are, removed from issues that may not have a direct effect on their daily lives. Previously thought to be quite discrete and separated from global communication, dialogic theory can help bridge the gap between particularistic and universalistic approaches to social problems. Buber’s dialogic is not confined to the interpersonal; rather, it is a modality of turning toward existence, an embodied communicative approach that influences all other modes of communication whether they are interpersonal, intergroup, intercultural, or international, essentially because it is “interhuman.” Verlinden helps us mend this gap by explaining that Buber’s I-Thou not only applies to “concrete individuals” but also to the
“we of community,” the dialogic structures of society; however, the structural nature of modern society complicates the essence of community as “an abstract organic structure” that eludes any sort of genuine and practical engagement (Verlinden, 2010, p. 97). In Buber’s world, the “voice of the particular” must be heard above the various political institutions and conversations that take place in a national context. In short, Buber’s dialogue is not only an ontological explanation of the interpersonal relationship, but it is a vehicle for allowing voices to connect to each other substantively on a much larger scale—socially and internationally.

Buber’s use of dialogics is clear throughout his rhetoric of the nation as early as the 1920s. His focus on dialogics offers us a foundation for understanding the transformative character of the nation, how it affects international communication and why the individual interlocutor plays such an elevated role in this transformation. However, we must understand Buber’s philosophical anthropology—a philosophy focused on the whole human being—and how it offered credence to the interpersonal relationship, the necessity of “turning towards” the Other, to offer his philosophy as an overlay to our discussion about postmodern nationalism.

Anderson and Cissna (1997) situate Buber as an important, although perhaps less evident, contributor to the postmodern conversation on dialogue. They investigate how his philosophy helps us explore alternative philosophical standpoints for human communication at every level of interaction—‘the interpersonal, intergroup, inter-social, or intercultural, and international—what Buber coins “interhuman.” Buber’s anthropological philosophy is significant in the conversation about dialogic theory because it encourages us to explore “how to turn toward, address, and respect otherness”
Arnett and Arneson (1999) point out that Buber sets himself apart from other dialogic theorists (like Rogers) in the way he views the self as deeply situated in the narratives of the historical moment. Buber recognized the embeddedness of these individuals in narratives and their existence as communicative, dialogic beings that emerge out of intersubjective consciousness — the “interhuman”— and the meaning that emerges “between” those persons engaged in dialogic communication. The self does not exist in a self-reliant vacuum for Buber, but rather a relational, ontological realm where meaning and responsibility emerge (Arnett & Arneson, 1999). The concept of the “between” becomes a consistent metaphor in Buber’s work (Buber, 1996; 2002). In a need to address “the between,” Buber addresses our disillusionment with institutions that are constructed to support human activity, and most importantly, human relations:

When the automatized state yokes together totally uncongenial citizens without creating or promoting any fellowship, it is supposed to be replaced by a loving community. And this loving community is supposed to come into being when people come together, prompted by free, exuberant feeling, and want to live together. But that is not how things are. True community does not come into being because people have feelings for each other (though that is required, too), but rather on two accounts: all of them have to stand in a living, reciprocal relationship to a single living center, and they have to stand in a living, reciprocal relationship to one another. The second event has its source in the first but is not immediately given with it. A living reciprocal relationship includes feelings but is
not derived from them. A community is built upon a living, reciprocal relationship, but the builder is the living, active center. (Buber, 1996, p. 94)

Buber, then, distinguishes between emotions and the self, and that the human communicative relationship builds community through reciprocity. Strong, functional communities are the results of a dialogic relationship that emerges in the “between,” not an egotistical focus on developing one’s self without the guidance of the narrative, or what he refers to as the “center.” This distrust in institutions is a direct comment on the characterization of the nation in modernity and the dilemma of postmodern contingency, the lack of the metanarrative to which Lyotard refers. However, Buber recognizes that the reality of shifting meaning and multiple narratives which lack a guiding metanarrative does not have to mean that we are lost in a world of individualism and personal emotions; rather, community is still possible when finding a “center.”

Buber attempts to describe the nature of the dialogic relationship through Christian, Hindu and Buddhist metaphors to demonstrate how modernity has corrupted the concept of the self by detaching it from the dynamics of human relationship. From a Christian perspective, the Holy Trinity is a prime example of pure dialogue. These seemingly separate entities become one in the purest forms of communication, but also take on different roles to create the dialectic of communication: The relationship of the Father to the Son is hierarchical, but complementary and necessary; the manifestation of the Spirit through the two is also different, but dynamic and necessary. Like dialogue, the concept of the Trinity is an elusive concept, difficult to grasp in human terms but real and possible. Any refocusing on the “I”—the self situated at the center of it all—loses the essence of what is meant to be as holistic and complete.
“All modern attempts to reinterpret this primal actuality of dialogue and to make of it a relationship of the I to the self of something of that sort, as if it were a process confined to man’s self-sufficient inwardness, are vain and belong to the abysmal history of deactualization” (Buber, 1996, p. 133). Dialogic communication recalls the notion of religious tropes such as the Trinity and invokes a re-centering of the self and other as a complementary relationship, inextricably linked, as one turned toward the other completely and fully.

Buber’s dialogic theory speaks about the “quality” of contact through instrumental and objective means (Stewart, Zediker, and Black, 2004, p. 33). Arnett (2004) explains that this “quality” in dialogic communication, particularly in the constructs developed by Buber and Levinas, is inherently ethical and elicits what he calls a “responsive ethical I” (2004, p. 87). A “responsive ethical I” is one that understands that responsibility rests in our true dialogic relationships with the Other – relationships that acknowledge a “decentered self” who is committed to the Other and also responsive to the historical moment (p. 88). The “I” cannot exist without the “Other,” as the “I” finds itself emerging out of responsiveness to the “Other” while recognizing the narratives that live around them and within which they dwell. However, life does not always present what is expected or desired, but is it is subject to contingency, uncertainty and the reality of everyday life—what Arnett and Arneson (1999) refer to as Buber’s “communicative poetics” (pp. 140-142). “For Buber, poetry is more concrete than a logical description of issues such a friendship, love, hope or loyalty. Buber’s communicative poetry guides without dictating a linear series of expectations. Following the horizon of Buber’s perspective, … a dialogic ethic ‘interprets otherwise,’ unable to
provide a graspable answer, pointing to ‘concrete’ life in which real meeting lives in fuzzy clarity, in a guided temporal response” (Arnett, 2004, p. 89).

This “responsive ethical I” also leads us to engage dialogics in terms of community. Arnett’s work on Buber and what dialogic theory means for community (Arnett, 1986) actually preceded his work on the “responsive ethical I” (Arnett, 2004), but it seems that this “I” is a requirement of dialogic communication and applies to the formation of healthy, productive communities. Communities are a result of this “fuzzy clarity” or communicative poetic because they emerge from what Arnett refers to as “dialogic tension.” “In essence, the usage of the word community…is not rooted in a precise definition, but in an attitude sensitive to the dialogical tension between self, other, and the principles of a group or organization” (Arnett, 1986, p. 17). However, we must be careful not to conceptualize community as collectivism. Buber warns, “Modern collectivism is the last barrier raised by man against a meeting with himself” (Buber, 2002, p. 239). In other words, man is not dialogically joined with man in a collective; otherwise, he is embedding himself in a collective that masks his true relationship with the other and himself. In community, there is a dialogic tie that recognizes and acknowledges the other as an embedded other and all that comes with her—uncertainty, tension, agreement, disagreement, and cooperation – a full menu of life’s experiences. However, living in community requires a thoughtful response to everyday communication, or what Buber called the “narrow ridge”—an alternative to the dualistic form of oppositional communication that we are often accustomed to, particularly in contemporary Western culture. The “narrow ridge” depolarizes our communication recognized through multiple viewpoints, “as an alternative to absolute positions that
characterize communication in a polarized community” (Arnett, 1986, p.31). The “narrow ridge” is also an ontological communicative space where contingency thrives as a positive element of human communication, where answers are reached and solutions are discovered. A linear, rational methodology for problem-solving may not always be the solution; instead, through a constructive conversation of opposing viewpoints, answers emerge in the “between,” textured even more by the diacritic of what has been described as Buber’s “unity of contraries” (Arnett, 1986, p. 65; Arnett & Arneson, 1999, p. 142). It is important to note, however, that Buber referred to the “unity of contraries” when discussing mankind’s tendency to escape individual responsibility under the protection of the collective. Not until the individual was able to achieve a sense of unity would she be able to emerge from the collective to engage in dialogic communication and, therefore, the productive, meaningful construct of community.

But unity itself, unity of the person, unity of the lived life, has to be emphasized again and again. The confusing contradictions cannot be remedied by the collectives, not one of which knows the taste of genuine unity and which if left to themselves would end up, like the scorpions imprisoned in a box, in a witty fable, by devouring one another. This mass of contradictions can be met and conquered only by the rebirth of personal unity, unity of being, unity of life, unity of action – unity of being, life and action together. This does not mean a static unity of the uniform, but the great dynamic of unity of the multiform in which multiformity is formed into unity of character. (Buber, 2002, p. 137-138)

Buber sets himself apart from other philosophers of communication, and scholars of dialogue in particular, because he does not focus only on the existential-
phenomenological qualities of the dialogic act. Rather, for Buber, the ontological qualities are deeply rooted in and between people and not Being alone. His theory is a practical approach to intersubjectively lived experiences that address quotidian problems. “Buber opted for real people, real problems, the calling of conscience in the existential moment…he doesn’t discuss being-in-the-world, but persons-in-the-world” (Arnett, 2004, p. 78).

**Applying Dialogic Theory to Nationalism**

Arnett (1986) explains that Buber’s dialogic theory has been often misinterpreted as “soft” and “expressionistic,” (p. 40), but he also points out, other scholars have understood Buber’s philosophy as one that stands its ground while being able to engage in productive dialogue (p. 40-41). As a result, these concepts of Buber’s dialogic theory are relevant to our discussion of postmodern nationalism for a number of reasons.

Traditionally evaluated as a relatively modern concept, nationalism has proven to be a somewhat contradictory, controversial subject structured within modern notions of boundary and organization, but appearing to have more rhetorical characteristics of uncertainty, contingency and fluidity. The postmodern moment, which has been outlined as one that lacks a central metanarrative but embraces multiple petite narratives, seems to lend itself to a rhetorical understanding of nationalism. As we have seen, dialogic theory fits well within this approach by offering not so much a structural approach, but rather a post-structural approach, or a dialectical guideline, for how nationalism emerges and why communication is at the center of it. Most relevant, however, is how dialogic theory becomes a useful and practical approach to nationalism because Buber, as a dialogic theorist, was also directly involved in activities of nationalism both academically and
politically. We will see how dialogic theory appropriately textures the difficult conversation of Israel in the early 20th century, particularly how Buber stands his ground, but also employs dialogic theory to engage his colleagues and the opposition alike.

Because this project has attempted to view the rhetoric as an essential tool in developing the concept of the nation and nationalism as early as the Ancients, it is important to valorize the dialogical approach in exploring postmodern nationalism to rhetoric as well. Czubaroff (2000) states, “Significant work remains to be done for those who wish to explore the relevance of dialogical tradition to rhetoric” (p. 183). Czubaroff believes that Buber’s theory makes a case for dialogic rhetoric because it shifts the influence of communication from “impositional, transactional, persuasive centers in the rhetor to an influence that is truly centered on the ‘between’” (p.181). This new rhetoric framed in dialogics is ontologically, historically and contextually bound and can have deep implications for community building, as posited by Arnett (1987). Czubaroff (2000) admits, however, that it is difficult to design dialogic research because dialogic theory is steeped in everyday lived experience and not subject to straightforward research methodologies that extrapolate particular experiences and permit clear structuration (p. 182).

The previous analysis suggests that communication studies becomes a necessary and appropriate field through which we can explore the development and nature of the nation and nationalism. We can see that rhetoric and dialogic theory are certainly worthy of connection and development. Martin Buber’s works on dialogue and nationalism can provide an opening for exploring nationalism in terms of dialogic communication.
Although heavily involved in the Zionist movement of the early 20th century, Buber often offered dissenting views of Zionist policymaking and diplomatic relations regarding a new state for the Jewish people. He firmly stood his ground on his visions for nationalism in general, and the Jewish nation more specifically, while attempting to engage in dialogue with his colleagues on the subject of Zion and a binational agreement with Palestine. His dialogic orientation (even before his published philosophical works on dialogue) was fully and completely a part of his approach to the Jewish state and to the idea of nationalism in general.

Additionally, Buber’s dialogic theory is relevant to issues of nationalism in the sense that he employs the metaphor of “borders” to describe his concept of monologic versus dialogic communication. Where monologic (I-It) communication is a “reflexion” on the self (Buber, 2002), it invokes a “border”—a discrete separation and objectification—between the Self and the Other. Dialogic communication, on the other hand, is a mindful “turning toward the Other” (Buber, 2002, p. 25) that recognizes both distinction in the self that works from a particular standpoint while also turning toward the Other (Arnett, Fritz, and Bell, 2009)—there is an transformed connexion between I and Thou (You), that seems to be more holistic and dialectically united. “[E]very It borders on other Its; It is only by virtue of bordering on others. But where You is said there is no something. You has no borders. Whoever says You does not have something; he has nothing. But he stands in relation” (Buber, 1996, p. 55).

This metaphor of “border” plays directly into Buber’s views on the nation and nationalism over the years. Nations and the concept of nationalism itself depend greatly on the existence of “borders” as well as the literal and figurative understandings of views
on nationalism. Dialogic concepts such as Buber’s concept of I and Thou provide ground for approaching practical solutions regarding the structure of a nation which, in turn, structures political, social and economic institutions that affect human relationships and potential.

Buber might say the concepts of the nation and nationalism are formed during crucial moments of human solitude (what he calls “the ice of solitude”) or “existential homelessness,” where humans lack the security of abode and are forced into self-reflection and desperately search for a home (Buber, 2002 p.151). For a moment we return to Kant’s contribution to the structure of the self, how it relates to the modern understanding of nationalism, and Buber’s reaction to Kantian ideals in view of the “interhuman” and its implications for communication and community. Buber explains that the Aristotelian world viewed Man as a part of a larger whole in the cosmos, a necessary, integrated cog in the complex, fluid wholeness of life. “Man is comprehended in the world, the world in not comprehended in him” (Buber, 2002, p. 151). Man is not a discrete object that conducts the world, but is an essential, integrated element that keeps the cosmos flowing and whole.

The Aristotelian man wonders at man among the rest, but only as a part of a quite astonishing world. The Augustinian man wonders at that in man which cannot be understood as part of the world, as a thing among things; and where that former wondering has already passed into methodological philosophizing, the Augustinian wondering manifests itself in true depth and uncanniness. It is not philosophy, but it affects all future philosophy. (Buber, 2002, p. 153)
“The wholeness of Man,” then, actually becomes an important question to resolve following Augustine’s concept of Man, which affected much subsequent philosophical thought, and is expressed in Kant’s works (Buber, 2002).

Buber’s (2002) philosophical analysis of man’s place in the universe and his connectedness to the universe begins with Kant’s question of “What is Man?,” but harkens back to Aristotle and ends with Nietzsche and Feuerbach, while visiting with Aquinas, Cusa, Hegel and Marx along the way. The point here is that, like Kedourie (1993), who saw Kant as a pivotal figure in the understanding of the concept of nationalism, Buber believes that Kant’s work is foundational and essential for understanding the pure nature of Man. However, for Buber, Kant’s important questions, although attempting to find a philosophical home for Man, separates and alienates him from the wholeness of man. We see this same idea emerge in Kedourie’s work as it pertains to the conceptual evolution of nationalism through Kant’s principles of the categorical imperative and self-determination. Although such principles originate in a priori guidance with Man connected to a greater whole, his reason and actions toward the world are focused completely within an independent, autonomous self. There is a turning inward that neglects Man’s need to connect to the larger whole. If we understand the nation and nationalism as a practical concept that emerged out of Kantian thought, as espoused by Kedourie, then we might be perplexed by Buber’s comments. How can concepts such as the nation and nationalism, which seem to be a necessary product of communication and community, be a product of Kantian individualistic, self-reflective thought? Buber believes that the questions focused on “What is Man?” never really quite reach an acceptable answer because they lack a necessary and sufficient element that all
of these philosophers have seemed to neglect along the way — community. Our interconnectedness and intersubjective existence cannot be ignored if we are to answer this question. Without community, I and Thou cannot emerge in areas beyond the communicative dyad; neither Man, nor any other philosophical field for that matter, can be realized and explored to its fullest (Buber, 2002, p.185).

Perhaps by utilizing Buber’s intellectual lineage and Kedourie’s understanding of the nation and nationalism, both centered on Kant, we can begin to understand why the concept of the post-Enlightenment nation does not seem to respond to the needs of humankind. Although seemingly based in community, its Enlightenment roots are grounded in ideas of self-determination and self-sufficiency and do not respond to the basic needs that are answered in terms of community and connectedness. Kant’s understanding of cosmopolitanism and a perpetual peace were well intended, but alienating, isolationist structures. Although communities were brought together to form nations, nations were then structured under ideas of autonomy, individualism and, in turn, justified to act as individuals entities themselves, with no regard to concepts such as dialogic I-Thou relationships. The network of nations that can create a perpetual peace existed, but the boundaries and borders that define these nations blatantly ignore the dialogic connections that must exist for peace to exist in a cosmopolitan world. By man’s shifting his place in the world from the Aristotelian embeddedness to Kantian individuality, the purpose of community also shifted. The idea of nation may have existed in the Ancient world, but its focus, as we can see in Isocrates and Cicero, was formed around community. According to this line of reasoning, the modern understanding of the nation was formed around individual identity.
European man became more and more isolated in the centuries between the Reformation and the [French] Revolution. United Christendom did not merely break in two; it was rent by numberless cracks, and human beings no longer stood on the solid ground of connectedness. The individual was deprived of the security of a closed cosmic system. He grew more and more specialized and at the same time isolated, and found himself faced with the dizzy infinity of the new world-image. In his desire for shelter he reached out for a community—structure which was just putting in an appearance, for nationality. The individual felt himself warmly and firmly received into a unit he thought indestructible because it was “natural,” sprung from and bound to the soil. (Buber, 2005, p. 47)

Buber’s dialogic existence does not necessarily calls us back to the ancient understanding of Man’s embeddedness in community. Rather, it negotiates ancient and modern understandings of Man and how they have formed functional communities to create solutions that recognize Man’s connected individual existence that cannot thrive without I-Thou relationships lived out in community. Buber’s anthropological philosophy grounds postmodern nationalism because it recognizes the natural connections that people have to each other regardless of the nation and culture in which they live. The narrative multiplicity of postmodernity seems to reflect a more fluid, a priori structure in which Man dwells, where dialogic communication as a tool is at the core of this structure.

The idea of the nation in postmodernity is reflective of how Buber views individual agents in a communicative act. Nations are like the individuals in communicative acts, but in order to develop dialogic relationships that enhance life, they must engage in meaningful I-Thou relationships. As we are all now able to communicate
across national borders in an instant, the ways in which we engage others throughout the world interpersonally seems to transcend national borders on a daily basis. The ability to engage in such communication requires us to reconsider our place in our local community, our nation and the world. The concentric circles of identity not only offer us a “home,” but they force us to reconsider our situatedness within our historical context. Just as the I-Thou relationship has no borders, our postmodern international and intercultural relationships—whether they are a product of international travel, face to face interpersonal communication or virtual, high-tech communication—push the boundary limits of nation and culture and encourage us to question our discrete place in the greater whole.

**Buber’s Nationalism**

Buber’s philosophy can be seen quite clearly through his writings on nationalism and the Jewish state in the early 20th century. As an original member of the Zionist movement, he was often an iconoclastic voice in the struggle for a Jewish “home,” considering the various elements that surrounded the Jewish question and the necessity for productive relationships with those in close proximity. One can see the origins of his thinking on dialogue through his struggles with Jewish nationalism and nationalism in general.

Although brief, his address to the Twelfth Zionist Congress in 1921 on nationalism is essentially a plea to the Jewish people to consider the ethical implications of engaging in “false nationalism,” and regarding the nation as an end in itself (2005, p. 54). He regards the nation as a concept that has been broken since the Reformation when communities where increasingly isolated from each other and sought safety and solace in
the nation (Buber, 2005). For Buber, nations are formed when communities become aware about how they differ from other communities and attempt define an identity based on this difference. He defines a nation as such:

So the term nation signifies the unit ‘people,’ from the point of view of conscious and active difference. Historically speaking the consciousness is usually the result of some inner—social or political—transformation, through which the people comes to realize its own peculiar structure and actions, and set them offer from those of others…A nation is produced when it acquired status undergoes a decisive inner change which is accepted as such in the people’s self-consciousness. To give an example: the great shift which made ancient Rome a republic made it a nation, too. Not until Rome became a republic did it become a nation aware of its own peculiar strength, organization, and function, differentiating itself in these from the surrounding world. (Buber, 2005, p. 51)

The spiritual connection to the nation, what we define as nationalism, is a symptom of an unhealthy nation, one of overemphasized awareness, unaware of its own disease (Buber, 2005). This tendency of the nation to focus only on itself, and as an end in itself, disregards the existence of other communities and peoples, and very clearly crosses over into what Buber believes is a “false” form of nation and nationalism (2005, p. 53). A nation’s refusal to acknowledge the existence of a “greater structure” that reigns over any sort of national supremacy, and believes itself to be the be-all-end-all in international and human relationships, will result in despotism and danger (2005, p. 54). Such a national ideology is isolationist and egotistical and will cause great strife and eventually its own
For Buber, the occurrence of false nationalism was leading to a major shift in nationalism:

In this day and age, when false nationalism is on the rise, we are witness to the beginning of a decline of the national ideology which flowered in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It goes without saying that it is perfectly possible for this decline to go hand in hand with increasing success of nationalistic politics. But we live in the hour when nationalism is about to annul itself spiritually. (Buber, 2005, p. 54)

The breakdown of the nation, in Buber’s eyes, is a reaction to the strong nationalistic forces that were actually attempting to fortify and validate its very existence. Such a “false nationalism” is not a true reflection of human existence and our attempts to connect with each other; false nationalistic tendencies, therefore, will eventually work against any unnatural forces that do not allow us to form communities, wherever they may be.

The existence of a “common center” is a recurring theme in our discussion about the formation of nations. Buber’s acknowledges the existence of a “greater structure” that is more important than the nation itself; when a nation disregards the existence of this greater structure and refuses to heed its guidance, it will cause its own demise. We are led to believe that this “greater structure” is God, who perhaps has created a greater functional structure, and is the greater structure itself, which forms a community of nations without domination and power. For Buber, a nation and the spiritual connection to that nation can only exist morally and ethically with constant reliance on this greater structure, which in turn, forms a community of nations.
As a proponent of the Jewish nation, Buber warns against these pitfalls of false nationalism and reminds the Jewish people that their nation is created not only historically, but also through the eyes of a higher power, as a “community of faith” (Buber, 2005, p. 55). The Jewish people must transcend this idea of, what Buber calls, the “formal nation” and understand that this community of faith will not allow it only to exist as a viable nation, but also as a nation that does not engage in false nationalism. He implores that Judaism must rise above what we have known as a nation in modernity, and quite possibly imagine a community of faith if it is going to create a home for those who have been searching since the Diaspora. Because the type of nation that Buber is suggesting is not a community as an end in itself, it will then be able to engage in “supranational responsibility” (Buber, 2005, p. 57).

Buber (2005) begs the Zionists to move beyond what we have understood as a formal nation and begin to understand its overarching purpose and goal—to live in a interconnected world where nations are not final, but rather necessary tools that organize peoples, offering them existential-phenomenological homes that house their collective history, memory and cultures while helping them understand that they are products of a larger interconnected context. Buber is not suggesting that nations are unnecessary, but that a nation’s focus and purpose must be transformed to accommodate the needs of the world. The new Jewish State can act as an example of one as long as it does not prescribe to the ideas of nation from the past: “In our case, more than any other, the decision between life and death has assumed the form of deciding between legitimate and arbitrary nationalism” (2005, p. 57).
Such ideas can be understood in Buber’s discussions about the new Jewish state’s relationship with the Palestinian people. Although often a dissenting voice of the Zionist movement in his approach to collaborating with the Arabs in Palestine (Mendes-Flohr, 2005), Buber continued to advocate for a peaceful accord with the Jewish people in light of the Balfour Declaration which began the process of granting the Jewish people land under British rule in Palestine. He adhered to his strict approach to nationalism that transcends common understandings and attempted to help the Zionists engage in legitimate nationalism that regarded all members of the region. Again, we can see clearly his philosophical, dialogic stance in the face of national conflict. He insists that the Jewish plan is not a plan “aimed against any other people,” but an effort to regain a long-awaited home for the Jewish people (Buber, 2005, p. 61); however, this can only happen when genuine Buberian dialogue that creates an existential-phenomenological space of “common interests” and “mutual respect and goodwill” between the stakeholders that demand recognition in terms of a nation (Buber, 2005, p. 61). “Only then will both peoples meet in a new and glorious historical encounter” (Buber, 2005, p. 61).

Buber’s dialogic rhetoric is focused on the Other, and the new Jewish state’s responsibility to the Other. That is, the need for the Zionist movement to not participate in any form of colonial hegemony toward the Arabs and to react to the Arab uprisings unlike any other national movement before. Buber’s nationalism, fueled by religious supranational intentions and focused on a higher power that forces humans to engage in justice toward others framed by a dialogic viewpoint, leads him to this point: “But the human aspect of life begins the moment we say to ourselves: we will do not more
injustice to other, than we are forced to do in order to exist. Only by saying that do we begin to responsible for life” (2005, p. 86).

Most striking, of course, is Buber’s focus on the interpersonal and how it plays such an essential role in the development of this new type of nation in the face of distress and conflict. Buber understands that the creation of Israel can be formed, in large part, through interpersonal/intercultural encounters between men and women from each side unlike any other nation on earth at the time (2005, p. 85). Justice will live in the relationships that individuals forge across religious, cultural, political and communal boundaries and create new “centers” that at as binding agents for multiple narratives. As an alternative to false nationalism, Buber’s legitimate form of nationalism seems to manifest as a “dialogic nationalism” formed between Man and Man who live in their guiding narratives yet are willing to negotiate and transform those narratives to live in a supranational context. “More than anywhere else in the world there is here a topos—a place where there is a concrete social transformation, not of institutions and organizations, but of interpersonal relations” (2005, p. 85, emphasis added).

Buber’s Zion was rife with conflict in a pre-Israel world when he was writing his philosophy of the nation in the early 1920s. One might even say that Buber missed the mark after witnessing the atrocities that affected not only the world, but the Jewish people in particular, not even 20 years later. However, one might also regard Buber as ahead of his time when understanding his thoughts on the nation and nationalism as a progressive, even radical, voice in the face of recurring conflict that resembled national conflicts of the past. He is a voice of hope, but also one of solid philosophical ground, forming a view of dialogue that was not applied to the problems of nationalism before.
Even after years of domination of the Jewish people in Europe and constant conflict with Arabs in Palestine, Buber wrote his most important works on dialogic communication and the need to turn toward the Other. We can see clearly that Buber’s dialogic theory grew directly from his hopes and dreams of a new nation within the context of the Jewish-Arab relationship. It is no coincidence that during the same period (in 1923) Buber would create *I and Thou*, his original work on dialogic theory.

The above analysis is just a glimpse into Buber’s long and tumultuous relationship with Zionism. However, the above discussion may point us toward a theory of dialogic nationalism framed by Buber’s conception of dialogic theory and his writings about the nation in general. Grounded on a theological/religious/philosophical stance, Buber breathes life into debates about real world problems particularly as they pertain to the nation and nationalism. Buber’s disdain for politics and the role it plays in the formation of the nation, asks us to focus on a morality that is centered on a higher guiding principle (much like Kant) in order to reach justice through peaceful coexistence with the Other. Nationalism can, in fact, be grounded in interpersonal relationships when focused on a common cause and regard for justice. Just as Buber’s theological question of “If not Me, then Who?,” Buber’s question about the formation of Israel and the Palestinian state also takes on an existential-phenomenological character by asking “If not Now, When?” (2005, pp.102;106).

As we return to Kohn, Buber’s trusted colleague, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, we can not help but think the he got it all wrong: Did he not foresee the tragedies of World War II and the diabolical Hitler regime that annihilated millions in the name of nationalism? Or, the continuing challenges in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that
has claimed countless lives as well? Buber’s concept of “false nationalism,” on the other
hand, may have in fact reluctantly admitted to their inevitable occurrence, but for Buber
these events are products of old conceptions of nationalism and domination.

The Closed-minded attitudes inform the dominant type of nationalism, which has
gained so many adherents among us—the most worthless assimilation—it teaches
that everyone must consider his own nation as absolute and all other nations as
something relative; that one must evaluate one’s own nation on the basis of its
greatest era, and all other nations on the basis of their lowest points. If this idea
continues to gain acceptance it will lead to worldwide disaster. (Buber, 2005, p. 89)

On the other hand, we might think that Kohn and Buber were philosophical visionaries
who saw an inevitable metamorphosis of the nation. Yes, this transition has taken much
longer than perhaps hoped for, but the age is upon us, beckoning new relationships in the
context of the nation, through every form of communication available to us. Dialogic
theory, particularly as Buber has contextualized it, is one window through which we can
explore the communicative nature of the nation in the postmodern moment. The
contingency of our lives and the narratives that guide them leave us to search for possible
answers in a world that seems to be restructuring or reconstructing, rather than
decomposing, before our eyes. The real and phenomenological boundaries and
delineations are no longer static, but moveable and fluid.

Buber begged his constituencies to regard the process of national formation as a
delicate balance between forming a community of faith and culture and accepting those
who do not share this faith and culture. Although he considered it necessary for a nation
to be based on theological and ethical principles, he also recognized the need to acknowledge those who structured these principles differently. Buber’s philosophical propensity toward dialogic thinking allowed him to see the possibilities for peace and co-existence even in the face of distress. Humans can authentically and genuinely communicate with each other when they are turned toward one another across the divide of difference. Such interactions begin interpersonally but emanate into structures of the nation that, in turn, form our nationalism. In a sense, Buber reminds us of the Ancients who were constantly attempting to form structures and an understanding of the function of the polis, never forgetting that the polis is a product of the people and communities of these people, and not vice-versa. For all of these thinkers, a nation is possible through the existence of an existential common center as a guiding principle, even if there are many.

**Implications**

This preceding discussion seems to point to the fact that nature and character of nationalism is changing. Nations still exist – their function and the way they define our lives continue to persist. Is the nation, as it existed in modernity, on its way out? Does a postmodern nation encourage us to engage in relationships that are founded on multiple narratives of postmodernity? It seems that the extent to which nations are bounded and static in modernity is transforming our approach to nation and culture in general. Appadurai (1996) and Huntington’s (1996) conceptions of culture and civilization that are permeable and impermanent seem to be apparent.

The progressive nature of technology, particularly communication technology, that allows us to communicate easily and regularly across national borders affects the
way in which we involve our identities, and the ways in which these institutions affect our lives on a regular basis. Contrary to some intellectual thought, the nation may not be gone, but the ways in which embedded, communicative individuals transform the nation may change its face forever. Dialogic theory provides a transition point from which we might frame postmodern nationalism in a way that recognizes the Other embedded in national structures, across multiple narratives and layers of existence. Nations provide an existential-phenomenological home, but the preceding discussion suggests that the manner in which we begin to imagine our existence in the nation is rapidly transforming.

By definition, the multiple centers of postmodernity allow nations themselves to persist. Postmodernity does not necessarily require a movement toward global politics (Habermas, 2001). Their very existence valorizes multiple voices and narratives; globalization does not dissolve borders, it reinforces them but shifts the ways in which we view those borders as accessible and permeable. As individuals living in a postmodern moment, we are no longer deeply embedded in one imagined community of a nation, but rather we are embedded within multiple identities that force us to comprehend a more globalized world. Dialogic nationalism does not necessarily see the dissolution of the nation, rather it sees a need for phenomenological “centers” of identity, culture, economics, and politics but with more contingent, permeable borders. It sees a need to view our embeddedness in the nation as more transformative and communicative across these borders as well as within those borders. Within these borders we hear multiple voices that have literally transcended physical borders and have introduced new, multidimensional voices to the conversation on the nation, nationality, and nationalism. Dialogic theory provides a philosophical framework for interpreting such phenomena.
Chapter 6

Epilogue - Toward a Theory of Dialogic Nationalism: Practical Applications

At the beginning of this study I situated the question of how communication and rhetorical studies could inform a constructive hermeneutic for understanding of the nation, nationality and nationalism. I explored the contribution of the ancients—specifically, Isocrates in Greece and Cicero in Rome—to locate conceptions of the nation even in the ancient world as an attempt to combat any tendencies of what Roberts (2008) describes as “chronocentrism” or the “belief in the uniqueness of special difficulties in our own time as somehow more important than the past” (p. 93). As we discovered, many scholars have considered the genesis of the nation to rest mainly in modernity, but further investigation into ancient rhetoric suggests otherwise. Isocrates and Cicero (along with the more obvious contributions of Aristotle and Plato) both seriously contributed to the conversation about the nation, even if the qualities and structures of nation were somewhat varied and focused on political as well as communal understandings of the nation.

As we can see, the ancients provided important ground for our conversation that included the nation within modernity and postmodernity. We can see the principles and rhetorical power of the ancients in both philosophical standpoints quite clearly—there is structure, discreteness and boundedness while there is public participation as well as the centrality of interpersonal, dialogic communication when discussing the formation of the nation. Consequently, I moved (rather abruptly) into the Enlightenment and the influence of modernity on what we know understand as the nation. The modern nation seems more
familiar to us in the contemporary world, but also a bit outdated in what some consider as postmodernity.

The Enlightenment philosophers like Kant in particular seem to have had a significant impact of how the nation would be structured and respond to political, social, economic and communicative aspects of everything from interpersonal to intercultural communication and international politics. The autonomous individual played a significant role in how nations were formed and imagined by its members, but not without a general guiding principle, which organized and shepherded those individuals into a communities of memory and culture.

My task was intended to explore these phenomena throughout history not only as historical phenomena, but also as metaphors that can inform current phenomena pertaining to the nation. As studies of the nation within postmodernity have emerged in the last 20 years, many have chosen to focus on globalization and cosmopolitanism in particular. Without a doubt, these approaches are necessary when understanding the nation, but my focus to frame the nation itself presupposes the existence of these phenomena while attempting to explore the more specific phenomena of nation, nationality and nationalism. My bias rests in the fact that a dialogic ethic can provide answers for current existential-phenomenological forces. Dialogic communication theory, in particular at it has been explicated by Martin Buber, seems to provide a philosophical home for the way I understand the emerging “post-national imaginary” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 177). Dialogic nationalism does not necessarily call for the end of the nation as we know it, rather it acknowledges a discrete Other while allowing meaning to emerge between the two to create a third alternative. In this sense, dialogic communication as
framed by Buber—not just dialogue—allows us to view the nation as a communicative phenomenon that engages the Other differently. Monologue will persist even in these discussions of dialogic nationalism. Dialogic nationalism is not suggesting that by turning toward the Other we will resolve all the political, economic and social problem of the world, completely avoiding diplomatic breakdowns and war. However, dialogic nationalism highlights the centrality and importance of the embedded individual and the dialogic act as influential and transformative for people whose identity is closely tied to the nation. Dialogic nationalism is an integrative approach to seeing the nation and nationalism as an ever-changing phenomenon in terms of how people imagine their place in the world simply through an encounter with the Other, but framed by national identity.

In the midst of an apparent breakdown of a grand guiding narrative, dialogic theory may be able to provide some starting points from which we can explore the multiple narratives, and the communication of those narratives and how they affect the idea of the nation. I have attempted to bracket the nation and nationalism through the lens of communication; however, other issues such as language and religion introduce even more complexity to the nature of the changing globe and the role of the nation itself. The scope of this project does not allow for a more detailed elaboration on such issues, as whole chapters could be dedicated to them; however, I hope that this study can serve as a foundation for those discussions, and place the nation into dialogue with barriers (and bridges) of language and religion.

There are several areas in our daily lives that affect the way in which we communicate with Other and, in turn, encourage us to reconsider our place in the world. One may argue that those international and intercultural interactions may in fact affect
the way one reacts to difference and multiplicity, forcing them into the cocoon of isolation. However, all indicators seem to at least shift our thinking about the world into new realms. Just as Appadurai (1996) suggests that transportation, immigration and technology are transforming modern man into a post-national imaginary, I would suggest that our lives are affected by those phenomena everyday either directly or indirectly. We no longer passively absorb information about the world around us through unidirectional, monologic media such as television and radio, but as McLuhan (1989) suggested, we are engaged in more frequent interpersonal/social relations, mediated through technology, that enlarge our local village to a global one.

The forces of postmodernity seem as if they will forever change and challenge the nation as we know it, deterritorializing the nation more than before. One might only mention the social and communicative phenomena emerging in the Arab world at the moment, the global debate on immigration, or the global financial and economic crisis, to see how these events are shaping – or rather reshaping—our world. This is not to say that these events will not be wrought with conflict and seemingly monologic behaviors, but the pressures of multiple voices and new forms of instantaneous communication may restructure the nation, as formed in modernity. Autonomous individuals still play a role in how this will happen, but individuals tied together in even more powerful forms of communication may change the way in which we view the nation into the future.

Like Bhabha (1996), Roberts (2008) points out that globalization, which should be investigated well beyond the frame of three decades, has fostered the phenomenon of identity hybridization, or a “dialectic between two or more identities” (p. 98). Roberts contests the notion that mass media, as espoused by Appadurai (1998) and McLuhan
are the only forces that influence our notions of increased globalization, but rather how in the postmodern moment interpersonal communication, cultural performances, and public participation have an even more prominent and influential presence (Roberts, 2008). Dialogic theory not only provides a framework for such an approach to globalization and the state of the nation, but also points us in the direction of how the idea of the nation is relying on more personal, participatory forms of communication rather than the traditional, institutional, almost monolithic forms, of communication as characterized in modernity.

**Indicators of the Changing Nation?**

My experience in this form of dialogic nationalism lies directly in my work with international students in the United States. Working with this population has encouraged me to think about this very subject and to academically engage the origins of the nation and nationalism as well as their transformative character. With the largest number of international students studying in the United States ever (Farrugia, et al., 2012, p. 2), the mere number of international students may be a clear indication of the changing character of the nation and nationalism. International students live “between” (Bhabha, 1996; Hegde, 1998) national and cultural contexts on many levels and offer insight into how we might characterize the pragmatic shift of our thinking about this idea of the nation. Students have long played an influential role in national change whether through surreptitious activity or overt protestations; Tiananmen Square, the Wall in East Berlin, Otpor in Serbia (York, 2001), all exemplify the power of student voices in civil society, particularly when it comes to the changing character of a nation. International students can provide insight for thinking about the changing character of the nation within
globalization and postmodernity as their experience occupies a liminal space that transcends the traditional understanding of the nation and nationalism. Many of these students, not all, are part of the socially influential sectors of society, which can often encourage change at home and abroad. The narratives of international student experiences can provide a hermeneutic entrance through which the postmodern nation may reveal itself through human communication.

Very little research has contributed to the conversation about international student flows and its effect on the perception of the nation and nationalism. A few, but significant, studies that have been done (Szelenyi, 2006; Szelenyi & Rhoads, 2007; Kramer, 2009) seem to indicate that international students—genuine “postnational imaginaries” who are part of the “diasporic public sphere” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 177; p. 4) — in fact, place a considerable amount of pressure on the concept of nation, and therefore on practices in international relations.

I hope that my exploration about the rhetorical/communicative nature of the nation and its changing character can lead to even more research about how the changing nature of human contact is forcing us to live more interculturally and internationally, particularly from the standpoint of philosophy of communication. To build upon Waltzawick, Beavin and Jackson’s (1967) edict “we cannot not communicate,” (p. 49) I would suggest that, in our current interconnected, globalized world, “we cannot not communicate interculturally.” It is my stance that the presence of an international student in the classroom and on a university campus, and our interactions with that student, whether directly or indirectly, not only presents new cultural perspectives on a subject, but also encourages us to question our own convictions and worldviews.
My question about the nation and nationalism originated from such heated debates over immigration and how migrants can influence perceptions about the overall economic, social, and political health of a nation. Immigration, or what Appadurai (1996) coins the “diasporic public sphere,” (p. 4) is a useful pragmatic public problem that illustrates the power of nationalistic rhetoric and communicative action framed within the context of the Other, and the conceptual matrix of postnational theory. Much research has focused on the impact of immigration on individuals, identity, social justice, cosmopolitanism, and public policy (Abbott, 1969; Busey, 1969; Carens, 1999; Demo, 2005; Gerstle, 2001; Ingram, 2002; Jones, 1992; Kraut, 1982; Payrow, 2007; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Scott, 1984; Seglow, 2005; Vertovec, 2001), but little research has attempted to frame the problem of immigration within a framework of postmodern nationalism addressing issues of identity hybridization, which may result in the deterritorialization of the nation itself.

More specifically, the subject of immigration is often a polarizing, politically charged debate that engages societies to either emphasize or reconsider their current political and social standpoints (Carens, 1999; Demo, 2005; Ingram, 2002; Seglow, 2005; Vertovec, 2001). It invokes emotional reactions as well as rational inquiries into the state of private and public postmodern life. Current debate in the U.S. about immigration speaks volumes about the power of migration and inter-border, cross-cultural interactions. Immigration has been a robust debate throughout history, as it seems to directly affect the ways in which individuals and groups identify with their national heritage and create or reinforce particular social standpoints when citizens feel threatened—that is, immigrants present unknown social risks that devalue the perceived
comfort and feeling of protection of a particular community (Demo, 2005). For these reasons, immigration can also reveal an interesting hermeneutic entrance when considering the nation and nationalism. By understanding migratory phenomena through communicative constructs, we may begin to understand how individuals, groups and the larger public form identities around the experience of migration and, in turn, affect the entire notion of the nation, nationality and nationalism. Immigration in the context of the nation can also offer ground for justifying the promotion of a model of dialogic nationalism.

My hope is that this study can provide even more questions about the validity and possible transformation of the nation in the contemporary world through a philosophy of communication lens. I believe that such an approach to the nation is heuristic in that it leads us to more specific phenomena that put direct pressure on the nation as we understand it. Additionally, other conceptions of dialogic theory, like that of Emmanuel Levinas and his views on dialogic reciprocity, may provide another framework in which we can refine this idea of dialogic nationalism; in other words, is Buber’s suggestion of turning toward the Other and acknowledging the Other enough to explicate the shifting nature of the nation through a philosophy of communication lens. Within the limits of this project, many questions have gone unanswered because of the sheer complexity of the idea of nation and the plethora of scholarly conversations that have engaged studies about the nation and nationalism. However, this has provided a starting point from which we can ground additional questions of dialogic nationalism and its applicability in conversations about the nation in postmodernity.
Dialogic nationalism may provide a transitional hermeneutic for the postmodern nation. As we are engaged in more intellectual relationships, we are confronted with difference, hanging onto our own identities while allowing them—either intentionally or unintentionally—to be transformed from within. My hope is that this study of nation and nationalism from antiquity to the postmodern provides a unique rhetorical/communicative view of the nation and nationalism. I also hope that this discussion of the postmodern nation from a communicative/dialogic standpoint is heuristic as it has many applications for various national and cultural phenomena and, ultimately, how we imagine the world around us.
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