



Toward a Comparative and Transnational Perspective on History

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При використанні матеріалів статті обов'язковим є посилання на її автора з повним бібліографічним описом видання, у якому опубліковано статтю. Дана електронна копія статті може бути скопійована, роздрукована і передана будь-якій особі без обмежень права користування за обов'язкової наявності першої (даної) сторінки з повним бібліографічним описом статті. При повторному розміщенні статті у мережі Інтернет обов'язковим є посилання на сайт Східного інституту українознавства імені Ковальських.

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*Laudamus veteres,
sed nostris utimus annis*

*David Thelen (Блумінгтон)**

TOWARD A COMPARATIVE AND TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON HISTORY

The discipline of history has been profoundly shaken over the past generation. The good news is that now we can step back and address basic issues of topics, mission, audience, civics, perhaps rethinking which of history's traditions can serve us best to frame changes in the real world and changes in lenses through which we interpret the real world. Your project to learn from histories of Kharkiv and Cincinnati can pioneer in exploring new directions and possibilities, new ways of imagining and using history that were unthinkable a generation ago. The bad news is that history carries lots of traditions that will restrain the creativity of our experimentation. You are asking perhaps the most nation-centered discipline to interrogate its very core. Being an historian, I think the best way to begin to move forward is to look backward, to the past, to revisit how we got where we are now.

The modern discipline of history took shape early in the nineteenth century around the mission of promoting nation-States as the core identity that the new historians wanted their audiences to embrace and the core narrative for presenting the movement of people through time. The new «scientific» historians wanted to free the study of what people thought and how they acted from the Enlightenment's quest for timeless, universal, natural laws. In place of abstract and universalist 18th century metaphors of invisible hands and states of nature the first modern historians posited irreducible social or historical masses, driven by collective emotions and traditions, which shaped institutions, cultures, and especially nation states. Those nation states should shape the identities, compel the loyalties, and fulfill the aspirations of individuals. The inventors of the modern practice of history believed that nation states provided the greatest arena for individuals to experience inner or spiritual fulfillment. Nation states embodied the thoughts of God, wrote Leopold von Ranke.

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History became even more intertwined with the nation state as the nineteenth century wore on and the discipline responded first to romantic nationalism—Michelet, Bancroft—and later to the nation-centered thrust of professionalization—the American Historical Association was formed in 1884. By the turn of the century professional historians added pedagogy as a civic justification (as formulated, for example, by the American Historical Association's Committee of Seven in the late 1890s). «History definitely came into its own as the primary medium for civic education» in the 1890s, wrote the authors of a civics text. Focus on, if not loyalty to, the nation state should both define the events to be studied in classes on modern history and the perspective from which they should be studied. The organizing narrative should identify and link events from the past by one theme—the nation in which those events took place. And so history departments parceled out the past mainly intonational units.

Emerging from massive conflicts in which the capacity to interpret the past was inseparable from the claims to legitimacy of new nation states, the new historians' insistence that they had developed new scientific or critical methods for adjudicating conflicting claims to the authority of the past was inseparable from their promotion of nation states. The new historians were creating history as a science with special authority at a place, the North Atlantic World, and at a time when war, revolution, and counter-revolution created an unprecedented crisis in the transmission of memory, as Pierre Nora pointed out, when appeals to the past acquired new urgency and visibility, new authority and uses, as cutting edges of political and cultural conflicts. Champions of change were seeking to free individuals—their minds, souls, votes, enterprises, consciences, bodies—from traditional authorities with their privileges and constraints. To replace deference to traditions with a newfound faith in progress and development, to enshrine public opinion as the new arbiter of claims to the authority of the past, champions of change sought to legitimate their new order by presenting their new ways as the natural fulfillment of traditions. They invented national traditions and commemorations, national civil religions, to try to overcome resistance grounded in local memories and traditions. The resulting battles over memories widened into larger struggles over what had actually happened in the past, over what should be remembered and forgotten, over who had the authority and with what sources to arbitrate the conflicts and to provide the most authoritative narratives about change and continuity over time. The new discipline of history grew up alongside the new nation states to record and champion their growing strength, to gather and

disseminate the state's records, to provide the narratives that justified the new nation's claims to fulfill older aspirations. Developing a new discipline with critical methods for sorting through conflicting memories and documents to establish what had actually happened (wie es eigentlich gewesen), the new historians argued that their new science made them the best people to be entrusted with remembering and to identify the continuities that should be passed on. In place of memories grounded in local traditions historians offered «national perspective», privileging wars, revolutions, changes in government all bound together because they happened in the same nation or nation-to-be.

Even those historians who have over the past two centuries set out to challenge the nation centeredness of history or even the nationalist bias of some historians have had a hard time overcoming the challenges from the intertwined links of discipline, practice, and audience with nation states. Embarrassed by the superpatriotic excesses of professionals during World War I, many historians used their historical craft to criticize American policy toward Vietnam, Cuba, the Soviet Union even as, until recently, the basic unit of observation for diplomatic history remained national policy.

While many social historians have indeed tried to imagine history beyond national borders—Marx long ago appealed to «workers of the world»—most assumed that the nation state was the natural arena in which struggles would be contested and resolved. In his pathbreaking 1995 book, Rescuing History from the Nation, Prasenjit Duara observes: «That even the best social historians do not find themselves challenges the assumption that the nation is the master subject of history or theorizing an alternative to the already-always nation space is testimony to the complicity of history and the nation state».

Comparative history from the start represented another potential challenge to the nation-centered focus of history. Drawing inspiration from comparative methods developed in the natural sciences, notably from comparative anatomy, trying to identify processes of development and civilization that crossed national borders, some 19th century pioneers in the new discipline insisted, in the words of Lord Acton, that «the process of civilization depends on transcending Nationality. Comparative methods are applied. Influences which are accidental yield to those which are rational». But by the late twentieth century nation-centered practice had captured the movement for comparative history because historians began by assuming—and then finding— that the crucial difference in a trans-national phenomenon—slavery, segregation, welfare states, workingclass movement, feminism—was ultimately difference between nations. The main difference in the development of

Vancouver and Seattle, argues Norbert MacDonald, is that one was located in the United States and the other in Canada. Ian Tyrrell, for example, has criticized «the failure of comparative history to transcend the boundaries of nationalist historiography». Comparative history has mainly provided fresh perspective on the national peculiarities of subjects, why not socialism in the United States, how American slavery differed from slavery or serfdom elsewhere, why the American welfare state took unique national directions.

Over the past generation many challenges have made it possible, maybe necessary, to us to question the connections that have intertwined history—its narratives, methods, audiences, its very authority—with nation states. The symptoms are so common, so seemingly clichéd, that many of us recoil at the litanies of how institutions, ideas, popular cultures, corporations, capital, and individuals cross and then erode familiar national borders. We have heard how the meaning and sovereignty of existing nation states have been challenged from below by individuals and places like Quebec, Scotland, East Timor, Palestine and from above by arenas like the European Union and NAFTA, how the capacity of nation states to meet people's needs have been challenged from within by the Left in the 1960s and the Right in the 1980s, and indeed how movements for Black Nationalism, Nation of Islam and Queer Nation have reshaped our very ideas of nationality. We recognize intellectual trends that challenge our modernist authority to impose master narratives over the experiences of people, that challenge our methods and discipline, our right and capacity to try to recognize and speak for let alone predict and control the behavior of others.

In order to learn from these interrelated challenges to national narratives and to our authority, I want to fulfill my charge at this conference to propose a framework for comparative or transnational history that will begin not by standing outside Kharkiv and Cincinnati and using my expertise as an historian to find and compare things in the two cities but instead to listen to how people themselves made comparisons.

Making comparisons is as natural for people as eating or breathing. We look for similarities and differences as we encounter new people, behaviors, institutions, foods, nations. We compare ourselves with other family members and friends, this time with other times, this place with other places, this experience with other experiences, our circumstances and traditions with others. Comparison helps us to see alternatives, to figure who we are, who we want to be, how to act, whom to marry, where to live or go to school, what jobs to take, what foods to eat, what movies to watch. Comparison is about

possibility, about where and how we try to make a difference in our lives and the world as we imagine how we might experience wonders and delights others have or as we fear that may be moving toward nightmarish experiences others have had, project broken friendships or wars or holocausts as nightmares to avoid, recall nightmarish relationships or holocausts of wars.

The great Irish historian of the British Empire, Nicholas Canny, urged historians not to impose their comparisons on their subjects but to listen to people make their own comparisons. Listen to why they compared their circumstances with the Roman Empire instead of the Habsburg or Russian or Ottoman or Aztec empires. Listen to whether they framed their personal experience as slavery, whether they thought of Biblical accounts of the Israelites or of Greek or Brazilian slavery, whether they compared chattel slavery with wage slavery. By making these comparisons people locate themselves in the world's history on their own terms. The largest mass movement of 19th century American farmers, the farmers' alliance movement of the 1880s, seemed to identify with Russian peasants when it decided to base its program for escaping the private credit system on a Russian plan for assisting peasants. This very week the Israeli Peace Now movement compared the attack by Jewish mobs, unhindered by police, with early 20th century pogroms, also unhindered by police, against Jews in Czarist Russia. Racial segregation in the United States seemed to provide the Nazis with a perfect comparative model for how they wanted to segregate Jews in Germany; and they adapted American racial laws to the German experience. Ian Tyrrell has mapped how individual Australians and Californians constructed each others' experiences as models from which they adapted irrigation and horticultural innovations. These examples, though conventional, point toward the first step for freeing comparative history from its nation-centered preoccupation by listening to actors in the past define where they stand and what they see, listening to the comparisons they make and live through, where they look for ways of framing their lives and choices. We can share authority with people we study, at least imagining a tension between what they experience and want to compare with the perspective we later bring as a kind of Eye of God peering down on them with the benefit of hindsight.

You could map the kinds of comparisons that people make in the two communities. Where are people thinking and doing things that provide models or resources for people in Cincinnati and Kharkiv, things that help them to understand where they fit in the larger world? How do they argue about and act on those comparisons, and with what audiences? What models of how people

move through time, what visions of a future—scientific knowledge, industrial development, religious orthodoxy or tolerance, political freedom, social diversity or homogeneity, national identity, languages, institutions—do different people adopt and promote as they define how they will use their pasts to move toward a future? Such a map should pay attention to family gatherings, history classrooms, civic arenas.

To listen to the range of ways people learn from and act on the experiences of others we could observe sister city and sister parish movements through which individuals and families look for and find things in the other community that they find missing in their individual and communal lives. Kharkiv and Cincinnati are after all sister cities, and I would like to listen to the range from individual through communal to global comparisons participants in the program make and look for in the two communities. When in September 2000 six members of the Santo Domingo de Guzman Catholic parish in Guatemala visited their sister parish of St. Thomas Lutheran Church in Bloomington, Indiana, they were overwhelmed to discover how public education could win wide community support, while the Bloomingtonians discovered from earlier visits to the Guatemalan sisters what Reverend Lowell Anderson called «a spirituality that I covet. They have a sense of the presence of God, of trusting in God—that you don't have to be in control, you don't have to be in charge». In more than 40 U. S. communities in the 1980s, activists formed connections with like-minded groups of (primarily) Sandinistas in sister Nicaraguan cities. Those connections carried everything from love been individuals and families in the sister communities, in which individuals shared in the joys and sorrows that accompanied the rhythms of births, deaths, and marriages, to material aid from the Americans and a living model of political empowerment by the Nicaraguans. Through these dozens of sister cities individuals lived and worked together, shared values and resources, even though their national governments were at war with each other. They not only envisioned but also participated in making family and community and world alternative arenas to nation states for personal life and for civic participation.

By letting participants replace professionals as the makers of the comparisons we need to revisit perhaps the strangest thing the new scientific historians did. At the very moment when novelists were discovering and releasing individuality, often putting individuals into conflict with their larger societies, the moment Emerson called «the age of the first person singular», the new scientific historians submerged individuals into masses, groups, cultures, nation states, and events? By making nation states or at least institutions and

cultures the real actors in history, the first modern historians froze individuals into interchangeable and largely invisible pieces set into motion by things those historians believed were larger and more important, charting a course for the new discipline that even down to the present has led historians often to dismiss individual experience as random, private, shallow, and even self-deceptive.

In seeking to observe individuals separately from the masses where historians submerged them I am not sure whether changes have assigned individuals more centrality as sites for interpretation and taking responsibility or whether I am just seeing history differently. On the one hand, there is evidence that Americans experience national citizenship more often in face-to-face relationships than in pressure groups or mass parties, that social movements increasingly emphasize personal transformation more than social position, and that we all respond more to postmodernism's challenge to respect individuals and suspect master narratives. On the other hand, the antislavery and Washingtonian temperance movements before the Civil War were also about individual moral transformation, that novels began to see individuals clearly apart from groups by the early 9th century, and that as early as the 1910s social scientists were beginning to peel back the large institutions that interested historians—mass production factories, mass consumption radio and movies, even the army—to find that the real centers of creativity, responsibility, and productivity in those institutions were welters of primary, face-to-face groups of friends on the shopfloor, at the movie theater, or in army platoons who felt more loyalty to their primary groups than to the large institution. Where and how individuals and primary relationships are in fact more central or merely more visible would make a good question to guide a map of historymaking in the past.

If we listen to and try to map how people use the past to live their lives, we must be prepared to find people using the past in strangely active ways, across a much wider range of space and time and events than the one dimensional categories forced on history by nation-centered practice. By narrowing our spatial perspective to the nation state, Richard White has argued, we ignore the many ways that individuals imagine, use, produce and move through space as they live their lives, spaces like talking around a kitchen table or attending a sports event or political rally. By limiting our perspective on time to the rhythms of the nation state—wars, elections, policies—we forget Fernand Braudel's observation that individuals and families experience time differently from, say, a high school or the Catholic Church or the Mediterranean Sea. And

individuals experience some things in minutes, others in seasons, still others as time they have spent in a school or on a job, and still other things as an eternity. And they experienced the past in intimate terms. In 1994-95 Americans by a three-to-one margin reported that their family pasts were more important to them than the past of the United States. They trusted their grandparents more than books or television programs for information about the past and felt much closer to the past when they gathered with their families than when they studied history in school. While historians have tended to see events as the basic units that move across time, Americans have preferred to talk of their experiences. The Latin origins of «experience» refer to knowledge acquired by actual trial or observation or test, by personal and practical engagement, by active participation. The event, by contrast, is defined in dictionaries as an occurrence that carries no particular relationship to observer or participant. But experience is a slippery word that historians shy away from, perhaps because, as Wilhelm Dilthey observes, it is something that participants experience more intimately than historians can easily observe. We recognize the coherence of our lives by experiencing things in our own unique and continuous flow from moment to moment. But we can also stop that flow, as Dilthey says, freeze a moment, gather up a pattern of similar experiences, try to identify formative experiences from that flow.

Let me illustrate. In the process of thinking about and writing these sentences supporting Dilthey's perspective and wondering how I might talk about it with people from Cincinnati and Kharkiv I travelled in space between the IU library, my study at home, a seminar room in Bloomington, the IU swimming pool where I first hit on using the idea as I was swimming laps, and my memory played across visits to St. Petersburg, Budapest, and the Croatian coast, travelled in time between two weeks in the future and 27 years in the past. My journey and conversation with a man who wrote these words in Germany almost a century ago illustrates the incredibly active and diverse ways we travel through many spaces occupied by many different people, forward and backward in time, how we pick up and discard pieces from all kinds of places and conversations as we try to place a single experience in the context of the flow of our experience.

The intertwining of vivid personal remembrance with larger cultural statement took dramatic form in the AIDS Quilt of the 1990s. Individuals made visual reminders of loved ones who had died of AIDS on small patches of cloth, reminders that depicted the tastes and temperaments of lovers in relationships that had lasted months or years. These individual patches were stitched together to make a huge quilt that turned hundreds of intimate relationships into a larger

visual imagine of a culture suffering from a traumatic epidemic—giving collective and cultural meaning to the names and memories of individuals—a visual cry for help from a larger American culture whose hostility and indifference had contributed to the epidemic.

By focusing on how individuals experience and use nation states, moving through time and space according to rhythms and needs and relationships of their own, we can explore how they move above, below, through, and around nation states, drawing from, transforming, constructing and defining claims of nation states as they make or encounter them. We watch as farm workers and diplomats create, experience, interpret and invoke nations as they explore how nations can both liberate and constrain the movements and creativity of individuals. Johannes Brahms did not worry about the national origins of the syncopation he sometimes incorporated into his rhythms, and Scott Joplin did not worry about the national origins of operatic form he sometimes wrote in. Sometimes individuals experience nation states as containers that hold things within, as borders where police keep people or things apart. But sometimes nation states seem permeable or invisible, broad borderlands where people are drawn together to meet everyday needs rather than kept apart by cultural or national identities.

Resisting at tempts by an Anglo-Saxon ruling class to narrow the content of American culture to a British nationalism, Randolph Bourne wrote a classic 1916 essay, «Trans-National America». In it he argued that the United States «is coming to be, not a nationality, but a trans-nationality, a weaving back and forth with the other lands of many threads of all sizes and colors. More than eighty years later scholars have shared Bourne's vision of Americans as people whose individual lives and identities involve multiple, rich «threads» as well as his suspicion of those who invoke the nation-state to constrain people from expressing their full humanity. For contemporary scholars, as for Bourne, the term connotes movement and connection through time and space. In explaining her choice of the term to describe emerging patterns of citizenship, Aiwah Ong recently wrote:

Trans denotes both moving through space or across lines, as well as changing the nature of something. Besides suggesting new relations between nation-states and capital,

transnationality also alludes to the transversal, the transactional, the translational, and

the transgressive aspects of contemporary behavior and imagination that are incited,

enabled, and regulated by the changing logics of states and capitalism.

Americans sounded less like interchangeable pieces of larger groups and more as though they had experienced individuality as something larger than groups or cultures. A woman could draw on her experiences as a woman, lawyer, Democratic, Milwaukeean, lesbian, Italian-American, college graduate, or human being to shape her political views. To describe any one of these identities alone is to fall short or describing the multi-faceted individual as a whole person with multiple, overlapping and conflicting identities. Today, as some individual and group leaders draw circles around poles of identity and try to keep members from straying and strangers from entering, many people describe themselves as «betwixt and between» poles—to use George Sanchez's description of Mexican-American life as border-crossers who construct their lives between Mexican and American, Republic and Democrat, gay and straight.

Back in 1903 William E. B. DuBois wrote a classic analysis of the «double consciousness» black Americans felt in which they could draw on both their African and American experiences if only Americans did not draw a color line that sought to keep the races and experiences unnaturally apart. In her brilliant Borderlands/La Frontera Gloria Anzaldúa describes how «I, a mestiza, continually walk out of one culture and into another, because I am in all cultures at the same time». «Like others having or living in more than one culture, we get multiple, often opposing, messages», adding that her lesbian sexuality also permitted her to choose male and female experiences. «I am an act of kneading, of uniting and joining that not only has produced a creature of darkness and a creature of light, but also a creature that questions the definitions of light and dark and gives them new meanings. A tolerance of contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity».

As we listen to individuals struggle as they try to carry pieces across national and cultural borders, we see individual creativity more clearly. Within five days after Congress signed the Declaration of Independence translators for the Pennsylvanischer Staatsbote struggled to translate the phrase "necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds." What did Jefferson mean by "one people"? German offered two choices. Did he mean "volk" (connoting people with deeply shared traditions) or did he mean "Einwohner" (connoting simply inhabitants of the same place)? As English speakers listen to the German translators struggle, we suddenly see something new in the Declaration and wonder with the German translator just what Jefferson did mean and which vision of «one people» to construct for German readers.

The increasingly multiple, diverse, and intimate spaces in which citizens

construct hybrid and creole identities as they imagine how to act as citizens, corresponds and contributes to the many overlapping developments that have decentered whatever allegiances the nation state has been able to command. As growing numbers of people move from one place to another, they have brought into sharp dispute the earlier linear view in which migrants were assumed to undergo a complete transformation from their Mexican past to the American present, for example. Immigration historians are increasingly questioning whether the linear progression from one national loyalty to another was ever the case, but it's certainly clear that it is not the case now. Now, writes Nina Glick Schiller, «immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation state». As people (perhaps increasingly) lived lives in circuits that looped between two or more countries, as they communicated in hybrid languages like «Spanglish» and adopted liminal identities like Chicano, Hispanic, or Latino, as candidates for public office in Mexico campaigned in the United States, movements for democracy, citizenship, and human rights burst across national borders and became transnational struggles. Drawing pieces from more than one nation State or national culture, they «destabilized fixed and unity notions of community, culture, nationality, and, indeed of the territorial 'nation' itself,» write David Gutierrez. Indeed, the burgeoning international movements for human rights envisioned rights not as things given by nation-states, as earlier, but as things people carried with them by virtue of their simple humanity, as rights that should accompany them as they crossed national borders and encountered nationalist movements that sought to deprive them of public rights and benefits in their new homelands. Coming to see how the United States government, ostensibly committed to democracy, supported Mexican one-party rule and authoritarianism, Sergio Aguayo founded Alianza Civica to rally human rights advocates from both sides of the border to challenge both nation states to support movements for democracy in Mexico. The struggle for democracy in Mexico was multi-national; the resistance to it was also multi-national.

When facing problems, people look abroad for models, possibilities, resources, encouragement, ideas, for like-minded people to join in their struggles often against national policies, institutions, and cultures. Many citizens built new non-governmental organizations through relationships with other activists that cross national borders. Reflecting this growing transnational approach to problems, the number of NGOS dedicated to human rights has risen from 33 in

1953 to 168 in 1993, to women's rights from 10 in 1953 to 61 in 1993, and to environmental protection from 2 in 1953 to 90 in 1993. Once transnational movements became obvious in the present, scholars began to discover that earlier movements for abolition of slavery, temperance, women's and worker's rights, Socialism, peace, revolution, and democracy had also been transnational. These transnational movements frequently both challenged and were subverted by national allegiances, as when the international Socialist movement foundered in the 1910s when most national socialist parties voted to support their nation's participation in the Great War even though their common ideology has asserted the class unity of workers across national boundaries.

Historians of migrations both within and across national borders have developed sophisticated multinational collaborative research projects like the Italian Workers Around the World Project to explore how people experienced and constructed nation states. The 27 million individual migrants who left Italy migrated through networks of kin and neighbors; they saw themselves first as members of families and *paesani*. On one level, they discovered the United States in the form of demands for passports, health inspections, taxes, military service, departure, naturalization and loyalty. On another level, many became «Italian» only when they left home but, upon returning after years or decades, learned that their neighbors called them «*germanesi*» or «*americani*» even though German cultural nationalists or Americanizers had viewed them as a menace during their sojourns in the United States or Germany. As we listen to the migrants describe what pushed and pulled them across national borders, as we listen to national public officials try to turn them into loyal Americans or to condemn them as traitors for abandoning their homelands, as we listen to those who went to the United States compare receptions and experiences in the US with experiences from neighbors who went to France, Switzerland and Germany, to Australia, Argentina, and Canada, we can explore how people framed their lives in every scale from family and neighborhood to region, nation, and indeed humanity. Immigrants bring into clear view the tension between individuals and nation states as they pose threats to the sending nation state's capacity to meet its residents' needs and the receiving nation state's capacity to assimilate them. Since migration across national borders was important in both Kharkiv and Cincinnati you could certainly develop a project that compared how Germans and Jews experienced both places and more broadly how migrants and their hosts framed their experiences, their encounters with people from different places, with different backgrounds, and with the nation states they abandoned and joined.

While individuals themselves were the migrants who crossed borders, a full picture of how residents in Kharkiv and Cincinnati used the past should also attend to how they as individuals—on their own terms—experienced the world historical phenomena that swirled around them. The standardizing spread of transnational corporations, mass marketing, and mass popular culture, of CNN and Coca Cola, in the United States and abroad, have long been associated with both dreams (both individual and mass marketed) of freedom and fears (both individual and mass marketed) of a loss of national and cultural autonomy. By transporting materials across cultural barriers they have at once encouraged cross-cultural borrowing, to turn cultural and national borders from barriers into broad borderlands of creolization and hybridization, on the one hand, and attempts by organic gardeners, labor unions, and nationalists to prevent the circulation of culture and capital across all kinds of borders. With an ancient mission as the chroniclers and advocates of popular sovereignty historians could listen to how people in Cincinnati and Kharkiv make sense of the growing tendency of multinational corporations, loyal to stockholders and to the country of origin, to sap traditional authority and autonomy of nation states, including the capacities to define citizenship, control currency, impose law, maintain security and generally guide the national economy.

To understand how individuals experience larger events on their own terms we can begin with a tremendously rich ethnographic literature on how people receive and incorporate popular culture into their everyday lives, of how children in Sydney watch and use television in their daily lives, of how housewives in suburban Kansas City experience romance novels, and more generally about how people mediate and experience and use television and advertising in their daily lives. There are studies comparing Israeli, Arab, and Dutch viewers of «Dallas». And we have seen how people use mass or global institutions and cultures to resist local elites. The development of the continent-wide European Union provided an arena for Scottish and Catalonian nationalists to contest British and Spanish control. And throughout the twentieth century young people around the world have made popular musical forms—jazz, rock n'roll, rap, forms often originating outside the commercial mainstreams of the countries where they originated, in urban and rural black music or rural or working-class music, and then provided rallying points for children to resist their parents' authority. American teenagers used Elvis Presley to challenge their parents, and Austrian teenagers embraced Presley to punish their parents for supporting Nazism. The particular recent role of the United States as the site of the modern and avant garde—from democracy to hip-hop— is not simply an American

invention, for Europeans and others advanced this idea because they needed a place where European ideas could be advanced without European constraints as well as a place they could condemn for introducing strange new ways that undercut cherished traditions of religion, family, foodways, of making and doing and celebrating things.

The nation-centered focus of history has blocked us from seeing how individuals have experienced remarkably similar worldwide patterns that they, encouraged by nation-focused interpreters, may have interpreted in national terms. By stepping up to look around Kharkiv and Cincinnati and back to look around the world, we see that both places were scenes of strikingly similar struggles as 17th and 18th century military outposts on the peripheries of empires turned into 19th and 20th battlegrounds over cultural and national identities. By the 19th and 20th centuries people moved a lot, largely into cities that in turn became places where people from different backgrounds, languages and histories encountered each other. The growing heterogeneity of urban populations posed challenges and opportunities that stretched at the intimate level from love to violence between individuals from different cultures and at the governing level from immigration to assimilation policy as regimes tried to figure out how to manage these diverse peoples.

The migrations and jostling of peoples both caused and resulted in a second central theme, the construction of cultural identities and nationalisms whose spokespeople increasingly demanded if not a territorial state at least autonomy for their cultures' traditions and particularly their languages. They developed nationalisms which they presented as the means to fulfill their demands for identity, freedom, and saw as their right and destiny that was temporarily blocked (or fulfilled) by the regimes that governed them also in the name of national destiny, seeking to Americanize or Russify the increasingly diverse people they governed. Several of the papers deal with migrations and movements for cultural and national peoplehood. I can imagine a wonderful project that would try to map the shifting and contested ideas, forms and institutions that individuals in both places as they asserted or discovered traditions that they claimed entitled them to some kind of nationhood. Struggles over cultural and national autonomy blurred into constitutional struggles over the appropriate geographic scale for the exercise of popular sovereignty that often culminated in war or shifting federalist compromises even in older modern nations like the United States, Mexico, and Canada. In various ways they tried to secede from established and oppressive empires—in the United States this movement included New England Federalists in 1815 as well as southern nationalists who

formed the Confederate States of America. And the centralizers frequently resorted to military force to defeat defenders of smaller-scale nationalisms, as in the United States, Mexico, and Italy in the middle of the nineteenth century. It included the creation of autonomous Indian nations and the secession of Texas from Mexico. Nationalism inspired constructions ranging from Queer Nation and Nation of Islam to Black Nationalism.

If we move closer up, we see that the official role of languages of people has been a central arena for the struggles over cultures and nations. In the imperial world of the 18th century the secessionists who formed the United States welcomed military allies who were commanded in the French language. But in the nineteenth century, when migrations and nationalisms collided with explosive results, the measure of cultural survival was often language. In a city a neighborhood named Over-the-Rhine, German became an official language in the publically-financed schools as early as 1840 (as it did in many midwestern cities), but during World War I local public officials suddenly decided that languages carried sedition. In July 1918 the school board not only fired all 175 teachers of German and abolished German classes for 17,000 students but also tried to wipe out even the memory of things German by changing street names, turning Berlin street into Woodrow street, Bremen into Republic, Frankfurt into Connecticut (of all things). The Mexican state tried to impose Spanish on people who spoke nearly a hundred distinct languages and by 1900 had pretty much failed; only some 10% of Mexicans spoke Spanish in 1900. Canadians have sought to extend the federal principle to languages, requiring bilingual practice throughout the country. It seems that the official status of the Ukrainian language was an important issue in Kharkiv since at least the Russian banning of Ukrainian books in 1720.

We can step further back and see common themes whose very commonness was hidden by the nation-centered practices that emphasized unique national framing for those themes. The history of the United States, for example, has been told as a set of unique stories: of its founding as colonial outposts to advance commercial and religious agendas born in Europe, as the nation's birth in a revolution against a European empire, of a moving frontier engagements with strange forms of nature, others empires, and Indian tribes; of massive 19th century constitutional debates and ultimately civil warfare over whether power would be in local or national hands; of victory by the forces of nationalism; of turn-of-the-century revolts to redistribute power from the privileged to the people; of a popular president in the 1930s who established a social security net; of movements for democratization and empowerment that flowered in the 1960s; of a New Right

movement and its president in the 1980s who deregulated the economy and promoted free trade; and finally, in the 1990s, of a far-reaching debate about national identity, about whether the nation's construction of itself as a melting pot fits either the national culture or its people. But these narratives of the United States of America also provide the central narratives of Estados Unidos Mexicanos, the United States of Mexico, as the Republic of Mexico is officially called.

On the streets and in the homes of Kharkiv and Cincinnati human beings experienced the global conflicts known as World War I, World War II, and the Cold War as their governments marshalled unprecedented ideologies and technologies of opinion management to demonize the enemy and its ideologies. In some cases the military conflict came in their very doorsteps and in others the shooting itself was thousands of miles away, but in all cases people experienced remarkable demands for popular legitimacy and loyalty, incredible pressures, ideologies, conscriptions of their minds, resources, and bodies. A map of historymaking in both communities would certainly include how agencies of opinion management—mass media, public schools, churches, political parties, local governments—presented the other nation and its ideologies and how people connected and failed to connect their individual histories, including a vast range of loyalties from family to humanity, to these pressures. Whether we look at the fall of the Soviet regime or the only forced resignation of a president in US history we see now the limits of opinion management, that underneath official talk human beings live their lives by other rhythms and values and scales and those intimate spaces may center resistance to regimes. The rise and fall of protest, of popular attachment to and disagreement with their regimes' foreign and domestic policies, could provide an important chronology of rising and falling faith in popular government in both places at a time when dissidents in both places complained that regimes used aggressive foreign policies to distract attention from their domestic failures. The Vietnam War led many Americans to question the sacrifice and then the cause they were asked to make to advance an ideology and a nation that many now came to see as an empire. The habits and costs and mobilizations of empire—for taxes, bodies, loyalty—encouraged people to retreat into more intimate loyalties, more intimate memories, to family, to racial or ethnic or religious group. In what similar and different ways did residents of Kharkiv and Cincinnati, those at home and those sent abroad to fight, connect their positions in an empire with their yearnings for self-determination?

Scenes at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the most popular memory site in Washington, illustrate tensions between individuals and nations. Jan Scruggs,

the veteran who led the campaign for the memorial, insisted that «there was no such thing as ‘the war in Vietnam.’ There had been many wars. The people back home had fought about Vietnam while their soldiers fought in Vietnam. And the soldiers themselves had vastly differing opinions and experiences». Bearing the name of each veteran killed, reflecting off its black marble surface the faces of individuals as they looked at the memorial, inviting them to wonder what this event has to do with them, this memorial provided a stunning opportunity for individuals to bring their own memories and use in their own ways a place marked for national remembrance. Individuals in the present left their personal memories as letters and mementos. «Dear Michael: Your name is here but you are not. I made a rubbing of it, thinking that if I rubbed hard enough, I would rub your name off the wall and you would come back to me. I miss you so». Or a mother: «So here I am again, left with empty arms and memories. But as my tears fall, I am thankful to God for having had you for 21 years and all the remembered love and happiness we shared. I will hold you in my memories and wait for another night when I dream of you again. Mom». Individuals brought and left items that linked them to other individuals, stuck into letters or cracks on the wall.

Since all uses of the past, from intimate reminiscences by a husband and wife to the writing of a history textbook for schoolchildren or the preparation of a history exhibit in a museum, depend for texture and content on relationship of historymaker to audiences, I think your project could deepen its contribution by moving beyond the conventional content of history to try to map changes and continuities in how and where people in Kharkiv and Cincinnati have used the past. From what sources and in what arenas—genealogy, family reunions—have families tried to uncover and record their pasts? How have institutions and cultures used and documented their pasts? At the other extreme history came to be a subject that was taught in schools, seminaries, and universities, and various institutions developed ways of gathering, recording, and presenting their narratives. In particular, cultural and national movements, whether for Ukrainian autonomy or Jewish or German identity, gathered and presented narratives to buttress their voices and claims while local and state and imperial authorities used ways to tell their versions through Russification and Americanization, national narratives that both dovetailed and clashed with folk or vernacular or group histories and narratives. Such a map of how the past or history is presented should try to identify where and how public memories and traditions were commemorated, contested, and presented, where in giving names to streets and parks or building statues and monuments or creating holidays and days for

marking anniversaries of important events or movies and television programs or plays. It should include the development of private and public resources for gathering and preserving records and materials, genealogical or manuscript or library or archeological or public or community or parish records. The map could note funding and resources, audiences, authorities used by people in different arenas. Conflicts over textbooks or monuments. In what ways did audiences of professional academic historians shape how stories of change over time got subdivided, presented. How did people insert, look for, and imagine themselves in relation to larger events of national and international history? How did professionalization shape audiences and narratives? What were patterns of amateur historymakers, by ethnic group or gender or religion or nationality.

By trying to map patterns and beginning our inquiry with individuals and intimate spaces we imagine a civics of individual participation and don't assume nation states are organizing narrative. We narrow the gap between amateur and professional users of the past and thereby begin to think about new ways of connecting what are after all simply different uses of the past. We center our narratives not on experts' themes and nation states but on how individuals live their lives. It changes what we see as marginal and central.

From nightmarish experiences with militarized nationalism some historians came to rethink the civic consequences of the discipline's historic vision of subordinating individuals within larger social and historical contexts. No historian did more to turn individuals into irreducible social forces than Marc Bloch, but when France fell almost overnight in 1940 to the German military, Bloch, the resistance fighter, questioned Bloch, the social historian. Bloch brooded that by making history into the story of large groups and circumstances, his generation of French scholars had engendered «a sort of fatalism» in individual scholars that had contributed to the lack of civic strength revealed in the easy Fall of France. By emphasizing groups instead of individuals in history, Bloch worried, historians taught people to become inhibited from «embarking on individual action. We have grown used to seeing great impersonal forces at work in society, as in nature», wrote Bloch: «In the vast drag of these submarine swells, so cosmic as to seem irresistible, of what avail were the petty struggled of a few shipwrecked sailors?» From Bloch, as from respondents to our survey, I learned a late 20th century lesson that individuals, not large institutions and cultures, do a society's civic work.