Thinking "Postnationally": Dialogue across Multicultural, Indigenous, and Settler Spaces

Kay Anderson

Institute for Culture & Society Pre-Print Journal Articles – Anderson (2000): Thinking "Postnationally": Dialogue Across Multicultural, Indigenous, and Settler Spaces.

1

Thinking "Postnationally": Dialogue across Multicultural, Indigenous, and Settler Spaces

Kay Anderson

Department of Geography, University of Durham

The fin de siecle—that liminal period in time between the century that is passing and the one that lies ahead—seems a productive moment to interject some reflections from a corner of the globe that occupies a similarly "in-between" location. Australia, in its current time-space positioning, belongs to neither its Anglo-centered past nor to an assuredly postcolonial or Asian future. Positioned somehow "down-under," it is thought to sit tenuously on both sides of the North/South divide, as a "western" country under "southern skies" making a "push into Asia," while occupying a "Third World environment!"

If antipodeality has been the raw material for rich myths of this nation, the complexities inherent in its nation-building project afford an opportunity for more scholarly investigations. In Australia, where inklings of a Republic[1] are giving rise to no small measure of reflection about rights to belong among white settler, migrant, and indigenous groups, research possibilities are foreshadowed in ex-British societies beyond the Antipodes for thinking across cultures, spaces of knowledge, and spheres of policy that have framed understandings of pluralism. This need not entail a fashionably transgressive search for cosmopolitan hybridities within the once-assumed "pure" identity spaces of race and nation. Rather, I wish, in what follows, to undo the fixity of nationalist frames of reference for imagining the place of minorities in Australian society, as a case in point of the range of plural states of Britain's so-called New World.

This article uses the internationality implied by the project of nation building in Australia to suggest ways of rethinking the dualism of minority/ majority in popular, policy, and academic discourse on multicultural states. My starting point is to identify lines of continuity across the experiences of three conventionally delimited social categories: first, those who collectively claim the status of "settler," "host," or charter group"; second, those who typically get figured as immigrants or "migrants"—in Australia, the non-Anglo "ethnics" who are never quite Australian; and third, indigenous people. Opening conversation across the domains of settler, migrant, and indigenous difference in ex-colonial settings like Australia is especially timely in the context of institutional and epistemological barriers that close it down. There are the persistently discrete spheres of academic endeavour called "Ethnic and Racial Studies," on the one hand, and "Indigenous Studies," on the other, which in their intellectual and policy separation, continue to inscribe the minority status of those who do not quite fit some (always presumed) norm. This norm, meanwhile, has attracted its own knowledge domain (of "whiteness studies") only recently, so assured

---

[1] In the referendum held in November 1999 to determine support for an Australian republic, a majority of Australians voted to retain the British Queen (Elizabeth) as head of state. The Republic issue is by no means resolved, however, with most commentators agreeing that the outcome was more indicative of the power of politicians to structure the terms of debate, than of far-reaching monarchist sentiment.

Institute for Culture & Society Pre-Print Journal Articles – Anderson (2000): Thinking "Postnationally": Dialogue Across Multicultural, Indigenous, and Settler Spaces.

2

has been its unspoken and unacknowledged claim to naturalness (e.g., Frankenburg 1997; Hage 1998; Schech and Haggis 1998).

The separatisms implied by these knowledge/ identity spheres structure conflict over the meanings of national identity in Australia, but the argument of this paper holds broader application to other bi/multi-cultural states, particularly New Zealand and Canada.[2] It also bears upon national identity and national culture problematics in the U.S. In that country, governments, citizens, and scholars, especially in sociology and geography,[3] have been slow to diversify the dominant national imaginary based around black-white slavery, through equally vigorous study of colonial dispossession. Quite why this eviction of indigenous Americans from the nation's narration has been able to persist—relative to the (to be sure, faltering) efforts of other white-settler societies to come to terms with prior tenure—commands more research attention. Although many would agree that American notions of manifest destiny and the frontier cohered around the white/native encounter (Agnew and Sharpe, forthcoming; Cronon 1983), there appear to be blind spots in public culture and scholarship in the way of more critical engagement with the complex intersections of multicultural, black/white, and indigenous/settler relations in American history and self-perception. And while there are, by now, urgent calls (e.g., Davis 1999) for urbanists to more fully register the visible diversity of the contemporary American metropolis—Asian as well as Latino, still blockages restrain recognition of the cultures, bodies, and economies of those who inhabited the lands on which those cities now stand. It is as if the formal recognition of Indian nations within the U.S. as a "different" case of difference somehow precludes imagining people marked as "native" as fully national. On the other hand, when set alongside the experiences of indigenous people worldwide, indigenity in that country might, as elsewhere, point us beyond national to postnational forms of thinking and theorizing.

Doubtless the origins of the stubbornly binary (black/white) discourse of American public culture are complex, and would repay further scrutiny of their own. But the undoing of this discourse's privilege, or at least its productive complication, would appear to constitute a pressing research agenda for American geographers and others. This would include not only Native American specialists, but also American human geography more generally, a discipline whose record of acknowledging the salience

---

[2] In stating this, there is a need to acknowledge the perils of generalizing, even across countries that share a history of British colonialism. In the case of Canada, the legacies of diverse European colonialisms, British and French, continue to have profound impacts on the national polity and imaginary, but so are there significant contrasts in the indigenous/settler relations between Australia and New Zealand. As for South Africa, the issue of indigenous rights to ancestral lands is also complex, emerging more insistently in the wake of post-apartheid land restitution negotiations. I wish to emphasize that my primary purpose in this essay is to identify channels of dialogue across axes of difference structuring foundational stories of nationhood, not in detailing their manifestly variable outcomes and expressions.

[3] There are geographers who have been more careful: e.g., Don Meinig's (1986) *The Shaping of America*, which charts the connections between empire building and displacement in the U.S., plus many of the contributions to the 1992 *Annals* special issue (Butzer 1992). My comments should also not be taken as discrediting the efforts of the Native Americans Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers. Finally, note the complex case of multilayered colonialisms (European and mainland America) in Hawai'i (e.g., Herman 1999), which is suggestive of the rich potential of anticolonial and postcolonial perspectives from the U.S. more generally. Beyond geography, see for example Shapiro (1997) and other work on U.S. genocide (e.g., Jaimes 1992).

Institute for Culture & Society Pre-Print Journal Articles – Anderson (2000): Thinking "Postnationally": Dialogue Across Multicultural, Indigenous, and Settler Spaces.

3

of race has been only weakly sustained (Dwyer 1997). The politics inherent in assembling a naturalized mainstream of those who unreflexively imagine themselves as "hosts" in these New World societies continue to be obscured today. The idea circulates in media and policy discourse that the national body is under siege from escalating flows of immigrants who in time become more or less well "integrated" into the space of the nation-state (see Ellis and Wright 1998, on balkanization discourses in the U.S.). In Australia, the arrival of illegal Asian boatpeople at unguarded sites along its coastline has aroused collective anxieties about the vulnerability of the land/sea border to unwanted penetration, as has recent television footage of Cuban refugees attempting valiant touch-downs on U.S. shores. Alternatively, ethnic difference (such as Asian cuisine) is welcomed as a "contribution" to a "tolerant" multicultural Australia, a move which, in itself, does not necessarily imply a will to silence or marginalize Asian others. But, as Hage (1998) has convincingly argued, this modality of inclusion is still effected by a differentiation between "manager" and "managed" on the part of those who have given themselves the "national governmental right" to script the nation.

In what follows, I attempt to unsettle such conceits among those who see fit to perform the role of "host" or "settler" in ex-British settler societies. This involves less critiquing of their (or any group's) right to claim voice over national space, than the premise that there is a stable and fixed correspondence between nation boundedness and identity (more generally, on nonessentialized theories of space and identity, see Natter and Jones 1997). Invoking the "slippery, nonlocalised" landscapes of group identity (Appadurai 1996), I historicize these conceits in the dynamics of nation building since colonial times. My aim is not, however, to dispense altogether with the concept of the nation-state and herald the arrival of postnational forms of sociopolitical and cultural organization (e.g., Bennett and Bhabha 1998). Rather, I wish to suggest how postnational *thinking* helps to breach the stale polarity of majority culture and its "others," and signals more creative models of citizenship and community for the next millennium. More specifically, I use the millennial moment to demonstrate how culture's political geographies *inhere* in matters of belonging, that have at least as much to do with tensions within nation-building projects, than within the conventionally invoked force-field of racialization and racism.

Altered States

A starting point for this essay is Anderson's (1983) insight, in his influential book on the "cultural roots" of nationhood, that modern nations are moral universes whose identities are socially and politically constructed. Conceived in all its conceptual and instrumental dimensions, nationhood has since been shown to entail struggles over representation, access, and entitlement among differentially empowered ethnic and racialized groups (e.g., Bhabha 1990; Jackson and Penrose 1993). More recently, nation-state formation has begun to be theorized in less "state-centric" ways, moving it beyond a frame of reference that is internal to the nation (Basch et al. 1996; Balakrishnan 1996). Geographers, among others, have been dissecting the "transnational" networks of culture and capital that shape the social relations out of which nation-states are made (e.g., Olds 1999). Against the backdrop of economic and cultural relations that criss-cross national borders, the conceptual resources for theorizing nation building are being recast from a number of directions. One useful strategy has been to historicize the nation-state within the global relations of European

modernity and colonialism, recognizing that the very concept of the "nation-state" was itself an export of Europe (Ang and Stratton 1996) and that there is no necessary congruence between the frontiers of political entities called "states" and those of cultural communities called "nations" (Collins 1991; Bennett 1998). In these moves, the political and the cultural are recognized as divergent, despite how much governments and various arms of media like to indulge the fantasy of "national cultures" or even "national characters."

Critiques have followed, in turn, the processes by which nation-states try to meld "state" and "nation" around a unitary community and destiny of commensurable citizens (e.g., Radcliffe and Westwood 1996). Breaking with ideas of the state as a "container" of nation, a "complete and circumscribed entity" (Mitchell 1997a: 105), these critiques have directed a much more critical spotlight on processes of *nation building* (e.g., Hayes 1945; Breton 1984; Penrose 1997). The diverse and contested strategies of states to build national identities as sources of legitimation have been opened up to critical inspection. This is especially pertinent at a moment when national distinctiveness is being subverted by transnational developments (for example, in communications technologies) and the cultural flows of people that are of immediate interest to this essay and which further relativize claims to sovereignty of nation-states.

If the ideology and practice of nation-building has been of intense interest to social and cultural theorists, it has held no less heightened significance in policy and popular circles, taking again the example of Australia. The fragility of recent nation-state formulations that underwrite themselves as "multicultural" has been richly registered in that country, and especially in the conservative heartlands of rural Queensland and New South Wales (Stratton 1998). A recent wave of populist white nationalism marked out the limits of consensual representations of Australia enunciated in the loudly trumpeted policy document *Multicultural Australia: A Way Forward* (ADIMA 1997). This statement argued the (none too original) need to promote "cultural diversity as a unifying force for Australia" (ADIMA 1997; see also Canada 1969). In turn, Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party branded people of Asian background as antithetical to Australian national culture, despite (or perhaps because of) government attempts to redefine Australia as "part of Asia." Aboriginal people were also angrily targeted as, at once, welfare sinks and land grabbers. Today, discourses of white decline continue to circulate through sections of Australian society, notwithstanding gestures toward "reconciliation" by both Labor and Liberal governments, as well as recent efforts to rewrite the preamble to Australia's constitution to acknowledge the prior tenure of Aborigines (and the special status of a Christian God).

These developments invite an elaboration of the analytical frameworks used in human geography to understand tensions surrounding difference in ex-British societies. The existing tools of critical race theory have helped advance the understanding of such tensions by unsettling common sense ideas of innate difference, and deconstructing the relations of inferiority/superiority asserted by dominant groups (e.g., Anderson 1991). This analytical frame is not so richly equipped, however, to highlight the nationalist dimension of racism—the territorial/spatial power that is inherent in forms of exclusion/ inclusion of racialized difference by those who imagine themselves as "guardians of national space" (Hage 1998). As I shall argue later, moreover, the existing analytical frame of racialization continues to inscribe notions of minority/

Institute for Culture & Society Pre-Print Journal Articles – Anderson (2000): Thinking "Postnationally": Dialogue Across Multicultural, Indigenous, and Settler Spaces.

5

majority as if those binary positions were derived from a politics that is wholly internal to the nation. By contrast, a "postnational" imaginary works to undo the conceptual infrastructure of such distinctions. It is possible to unsettle the moral foundation of claims to primary standing on the part of Anglo-derived white settlers, using the Australian experience, and the tools of a perspective I later call "geographies of nation-building politics."

In the next section of the paper, I wish to clear the conceptual ground for such a perspective by advancing a case in support of a postnational imaginary. This is mounted by reviewing, in the first two subsections, the twin regimes of transnational power out of which nation-building processes have been negotiated in such ex-British societies as Australia; but (in a third sub-section) without erasing the nation-state's efficacy in shaping contested geographies of belonging within such societies.

Modern Colonial Formations

European colonial appropriation of the land that provided the territory of what are termed "New World" nation-states, has been a distinct historical form of transnationality operating since Europe's age of "discovery" (Pagden 1995). Europe's various empires extended their overseas reach in partnership with not only the export of capitalism and Christianity, but also modernity, as demonstrated in studies of European intellectual discourses about the nonwestern people that were encountered (e.g., Adas 1989; Pearce 1953/1988). The Enlightenment belief in the irreconcilability of premodern ways of life with western models of progress was a crucial connecting tissue between colonial and modernist discourses (Anderson 1998). Across the World that was considered "New," the notion of the premodern justified a range of practices, from mass murder, genocide, dispossession, and displacement, to more benign gestures of protection, assimilation, and institutionalization in the segregated spaces of missions and reserves. In the case of Australia, the premise of a country that was *terra nullius* (not owned by anyone), and later on, nationalistic exclusion of nonwhite immigrants, were critical to the 1901 amalgamation of the separate colonies into the Commonwealth of Australia (Castles et al. 1988; Pettman 1992). Ethnic variation among immigrants of the British diaspora and other white European immigrants was homogenized beneath the unifying myth of a mono (Anglo-Celtic) national culture. Visitors came to imagine themselves as hosts.[4] "Australia" was seen as emerging, even organically, from a British racial/cultural heritage, in cavalier defiance and denial of more than a hundred Aboriginal language groups (whose tenure is now known to date to at least 50,000 years ago) (Reynolds 1996). The White Australia policy ensured that difference stemming from other sources, such as nonwhite immigration, did not upset the representation of Australian nationhood as racially and culturally homogeneous. By the 1970s, when the myth of a national identity dependent on a British origin could no longer be sustained in the face of the demographic facts about all manner of diversities, multiculturalism became the new national cultural policy, against which "Aboriginal affairs" were pitted.

By today, the colonial legacy resounds in the struggles of indigenous citizens in many ex-British societies to subvert its narrative and material power (e.g., Braun 1997; Peters 1998; Pawson 1999). Colonialism's geographies are, and always have been,

---

[4] I am grateful to Affrica Taylor for this phrasing.

Institute for Culture & Society Pre-Print Journal Articles – Anderson (2000): Thinking "Postnationally": Dialogue Across Multicultural, Indigenous, and Settler Spaces.

6

overlain with other cartographics of indigenous exchange, dependency, accommodation, appropriation, and resistance (e.g., Rundstrom 1991; Jacobs 1996; Sparke 1998). The postcolonial moment is registered, too, in the efforts of various Aboriginal authors to rewrite those histories and memories that continue to "center" white power (e.g., Anderson 1997). That the Imperial center was never so coherent, and is today fragmenting into the increasingly *dis*-United Kingdom, also speaks to the instabilities in the disparate social formations that make up colonialism's projects.

The Era of Transmigration

The escalating flows of immigrants and capital from the diverse countries lining the Pacific Rim is another, more contemporary transnational relationality in a world for which national borders matter less and less. Again, using the Australian case, business migration from throughout Asia, and especially Hong Kong, Korea, and Taiwan, has had significant implications over the 1990s for the labor and housing markets of the major eastern seaboard cities (Burnley 1998; Inglis and Wu 1992). In the case of Sydney, this form of skilled and entrepreneurial migration constituted the major migrant category between 1991 and 1995 (ADIEA 1995: 16). Notable within that stream are those so-called wealthy male "astronauts" who return to Hong Kong for work or business, while the rest of the family (wives and child "parachutes") remain in typically high-income suburbs (Pe-Pau et al. 1996). This commuter migration pattern has already attracted a good deal of scholarly interest, not least because it unsettles conventional images of a western modernization trajectory—of a linear move from a point somewhere in the "undeveloped" world to a place in a more "developed" country, where migrants are thought to face a period of difficult but irreversible "integration" (e.g., Mar 1998; Silvey and Lawson 1999).

The paradoxical exigencies of a transnational floating life for Hong Kong emigrants, for whom "there" and "here" are in no way dichotomous locations, are furnishing a rich field of investigation at a time when concepts of hybridity, borderland, and flow, populate geographic research agendas (see Mitchell 1997b). When set cautiously alongside the parallel finding that neither people nor commodities move randomly, these itinerant attachments invite exciting possibilities for rethinking migrancy, but in ways sensitive to colonial legacies and the distinct class-variable formations of already constituted spaces. Indeed, for ongoing streams of working class, refugee, and unskilled immigrants from Asia to Australia, constraint and confinement are more relevant images than fluidity and flow (Coughlan and McNamara 1997). Old bases of power relations are not so much eliminated by transnational flows of migrants and money, therefore, as reinscribed in new configurations—ones that challenge utopic projections that a liberating, multivoiced cosmopolitanism is in the air (Cheah and Robbins 1998; for a review of the "new cosmopolitanism," see Neilson 1999).

Erasing the Nation-State?

It is also the case that national policy mediates the outcomes and character of such flows, as well as the fate of indigenous (and nonindigenous) aspirations for reconciliation with their colonial pasts. To that extent, problematizing the process of nation building within the transnational logics reviewed so far (of colonialism and escalating migration flows), should not be taken as implying the evacuation of the analytical space of the nation-state itself. National policies in relation to immigration

control, multiculturalism, and indigenous rights are central to the process by which differences (of ethnicity, locality, and race) are rendered sociopolitically significant. Indeed, in part, the concept of difference only makes sense in the context of the state's homogenizing project of building national communities, even explicitly multicultural ones. It is this effort to generate binding symbols that apparently hold the nation together—based in the premise that societies will be rendered unstable in their absence—that creates the discursive conditions for what come to be defined as "ethnic" and other forms of exceptionalism. In that sense, post-national theorizing—imagining and feeling geopolitical connection across and beyond national borders—need not entail any ethical or political redundancy of the nation-state. Issues of indigenous sovereignty and succession, for example, are increasingly being debated in international arenas where indigenity comes to transcend a problematic of nationhood (Pogge 1992). But the federal governments of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand continue to have distinctly variable bearings on the fortunes and forms of indigenous self-determination in their respective countries (see, e.g., Gilbert 1993; Boldt 1993; Cant 1995; Howitt 1998).

Beyond Race and Racism: Undoing Moral Claims to a Core Culture

The twin strands of nation-state building in settler societies such as Australia—of colonialism/modernity and transnational migrant flows—are key vectors implicated in the tensions over belonging that are of interest to this essay. Thinking in terms of nation-building politics promises to move the understanding of inclusions/exclusions in such societies beyond a frame of racism toward or against "others"—typically Anglo-Celtic majorities versus nonwhite minorities (e.g., Vasta and Castles 1996; Cowlishaw and Morris 1997). The problem of differential belonging—of variable access to citizenship entitlements (see below)—stems not only from white racism's many crude and subtle forms. Inscribing such exclusions in the language of racism serves the unfortunate purpose of reinforcing popular views of a universal human tendency at work. Nor, as mentioned earlier, have critiques of the dynamics of racialized domination/subordination in ex-British societies served to adequately displace the antinomies of majority/minority. On the contrary, critical race theory has, in practice if not in intent, rehearsed the binary fix of a (nationally conceived) majority and its "others." In its recurring focus on negatively racialized others (Bonnett 1997), it has held in tact a certain narrative of the world within which an unnamed whiteness is anchored as the core culture of ex-British nations. A perspective of nation-building politics, however, unsettles the ground beneath claims to ownership of a "core" culture, casting the full range of migrants, settlers, and indigenes into a variegated field of struggle over rights to belong.

Today's multicultural orthodoxy also turns one's gaze inward, to the relationship between (in the example chosen here) "the migrant" and "Australian society," or "Aboriginal" versus "mainstream Australia." That is, tensions over ethnicity, race and cultural difference risk being conceived within a problematic that is internal to the nation, to Australian history, Australian culture, Australian racism. (The risk is perhaps clearest in the example of Canada, which has historically indulged the nationalist narrative fantasy that it is made up of a uniquely harmonious "mosaic" of cultures. In the U.S., the problem assumes a different inflection in that multicultural discourse is often seen as a threat to the cherished ideal of national unity and cohesion

Institute for Culture & Society Pre-Print Journal Articles – Anderson (2000): Thinking "Postnationally": Dialogue Across Multicultural, Indigenous, and Settler Spaces.

8

[Stratton and Ang 1998]). In both countries, as well as for Australia, the relations of minorities to core cultures are unhelpfully construed as "domestic" matters stemming from internalized, national conditions, as if such affairs can in fact be neatly separated from that which is "foreign" (Agnew 1999).

If, however, one's geographical and historical imaginations are enlarged to conceive of diaspora relationships and histories more broadly and dialectically, there is the potential for recasting the entire status of what it means to belong to a "minority" or "majority." Such a vision draws on the (by now) routine vocabulary in human geography of local/global relations, as well as evocations of that part-physical, part-metaphorical territory called the "border" (for a review, see Sandercock 1998: ch. 5). Both status positionings—majority/minority—entail hyphenated structures that relate them by inside/outside connection to Greece, China, Scotland, Ireland and so on, within a framework of indigenous tenure that is itself no pure space but inhabited by traces of Old World/New World relation. The transmigration/colonial/world-systems circuit as a whole is the defining identity field in this vision. Geographical thought, which grew out of the human activity of measuring, dividing, and transforming the earth's surface (Hooson 1994), is as richly equipped to rewrite mappings of identity and home that articulate these relational positionings, as much as it has been historically implicated in fixing them.

A move that draws lines of connection among indigenous and ethnic difference is one that has been resisted, not least in the case of Australia, by Aboriginals themselves (Castles et al. 1988:117; Huggins 1998:116). Conversation across such axes has been inhibited not only, then, by the segmented knowledge spheres mentioned earlier (of "Indigenous Studies" and "Multicultural Studies"). For strategic reasons, many Aboriginal Australians have refused to have their rights and histories conflated with other groups, whether settler or migrant. The strident defense of Aboriginal political turf to recuperation by white multiculturalism can be understood at many levels. To the extent that multicultural discourse opposes non-Anglo migrants to "Australians," it erases the fact that such migrants have been present within a dominant, if always differentiated, stream of colonizers. And indeed it is the case that Greek migrants to Melbourne, Italians of many generations within Sydney, and so on, are as vulnerable to anti-Aboriginal sentiment as are white citizens of Australia stemming from an Anglo cultural tradition.

Figuring the terrain of nation building to take in past and present transnational relations need not, however, produce a "leveling" of competing claims to belong. Rather, it enlarges the epistemic field for theorizing the profoundly unequal exchanges out of which social arrangements in specific nation-states have been produced. It follows that theorizing indigenous dispossession within power relations that exceed the boundaries of the nation-state, far from weakening the logic for claims to special status, potentially strengthens them.

Geographies of Nation-State Building

As will be clear from the preceding comments, the processes of nation-state building in ex-British societies take their character within diverse time-space configurations. That is, they take shape within: global geographies of colonization, modernity, and migration; national policy contexts that mediate other scales of negotiation; and local

geographies of everyday life. These scales need to be conceived relationally, so as to clarify how the forces of nation building extend and interact across a wide range of surfaces. To date, however, there has been a dearth of work linking contested claims to space and place at the local level to the meanings and practices of national identity and belonging (Holston and Appadurai 1996). And yet the processes of nation-building are enacted in the local spaces of lived experience as much as the spaceless clauses of national and international political and policy discourse. To that end, there seems much to recommend the adoption of a broad concept of citizenship (e.g., Smith 1989; Painter and Philo 1995) to theorize struggles over rights to belong, define, and fully participate in communities within the contradictory tensions of building national forms of identification, whether "Australian," "Canadian," or "American." These identities have acquired meanings that imply one can be more or less "Australian," even un-Australian, however that might be culturally sanctified. One's "larrikin" quality, for example—invoking the characteristics of the irreverent and rowdy hooligan—is just one marker of the arbitrary (and highly gendered) meanings surrounding Australian identity over the past century (Moore 1998).

Although citizenship is the primary formal indicator of national belonging—and in the Australian case, of nationality—its granting by the state does not necessarily imply the communal will to include citizens equally in practical ways. A recent study of Asian immigrants in Australia found that legal citizenship has not led to a sense of full incorporation at the neighbourhood scale, as indicated by their continued labelling and perception of themselves as "migrants" (Ip et al. 1997). Nor should the emphasis on one's sense of place in the nation be taken as implying that "belonging" is a symbolic matter alone. It is a fully material concern, entailing those politically robust issues of welfare, justice, and access (to, for example, minimal food, shelter, health, and safety). These resources are profoundly underwritten by racialized, sexualized, and other systems of entitlement that are themselves discursively woven into negotiations over national belonging. Substantive citizenship, as distinct from formal citizenship, is thus rich in nonjuridical meanings. In some cases of settler-colonial thinking in Australia, standards of behavior, even the ways houses were used, have been the basis for the admission or exclusion of Aboriginal people from the "civil societies" of Australian towns (Rowse 1999: 185–86).

The local level of everyday life is thus a crucial relational field within which qualitative determinations over national belonging are grounded. In Australian metropolitan settings, where ethnic and racialized difference has a proliferating presence (Burnley et al. 1997), struggles over "who belongs where" are routine. Whereas some groups are able to command the living and commercial spaces of our cities, others have a more precarious hold on them. Aboriginal tenants, executives from Hong Kong, and Australian-born descendants of British origin do not by any means compete equally for citizenry rights. Nor do they share even access to the power to shape public landscapes (civic, corporate, commemorative), or local development character. Government-doctored "Chinatown" streetscapes might be seen as appropriate recognition of the "contribution" of Chinese people to multicultural Australia by some groups, and as minority type-casting in the eyes of some Chinese. Not that these issues of space and place making are ever neatly reducible to racialized positionings and subjectivities alone. Multiple axes of identity converge and conflict (see, e.g., Fincher and Jacobs 1998). A male indigenous elite's initiative to redevelop central Sydney's well-known Aboriginal Block in time for the

Institute for Culture & Society Pre-Print Journal Articles – Anderson (2000): Thinking "Postnationally": Dialogue Across Multicultural, Indigenous, and Settler Spaces.

10

2000 Olympic Games, and "end welfare dependency," is a "sell-out to white capitalism" in the eyes of some Aboriginal women tenants of that district (Anderson 1999).

In any event, intercultural contests over place meanings and access to urban space, and about what constitutes appropriate scale and development character, point not only to the operations of race (class/gender) alignments in white-settler societies. They are also constitutive of broader deliberations over membership and voice that lie at the heart of nation-building politics. Their more detailed analysis than is possible here would help highlight how intercultural exclusions, inclusions, and exchanges in everyday life—far from being "only local"—are produced out of the much wider geocultural relations outlined earlier, and are also microarticulations of macronegotiations over national belonging. A model here is Massey's (1993) "extra-verted" sense of "the local," as copresent within a wider range of spatial and analytical scales (see also Marston, forthcoming). Again, this is not to erase the nation-state as a salient analytical entity. Indeed there is much scope for comparative research among white-settler societies of the relationship between citizenship outcomes and nation-building projects (e.g., Smith 1993). Comparative work of this nature would enable more considered (as opposed to banal) judgments to be made about the mediating role of national conditions in the global/local politics of nation building. Regarding the case mentioned earlier—indigenous governance in ex-British societies—the more extensive treaty negotiations in relation to First Nation and Maori people in Canada and New Zealand suggest the potential for radically new legal arrangements in Australia that transcend the mere recognition of prior tenure.

Conclusion

One of the many exciting developments in human geography today has been the rise of a style of "relational thinking" that helps us move beyond the binary fixes that inform such stock-in-trade dualisms as center and margin, core and periphery, urban and rural, developed and underdeveloped, society and nature (Massey et al. 1999). The challenge has been issued from many theoretical directions—postcolonial and feminist among them—to study the "complex entanglements" and "coexisting multiplicities" of previously opposed spheres.

Despite this growing interest in the geographies of coexisting social orders, models of the nation-building process in ex-British countries have been slower to link up the hybrid threads in their making and "rearrange the 'truth'" of their nations (Jacobs 1997: 207). The categories of Old World/New World did not exist in sharply contrastive center/periphery relation that predated their mutual encounter, but rather came into being through a matrix of (violent and nonviolent) articulations. Indeed the potential of relational thought for crafting more complex models of nation building in ex-British settler societies has been inadequately grasped by scholars and policymakers alike. While the discourse of self-determination—of Aboriginal sovereignty within the nations of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the U.S.—has circulated widely in public debate over the past decades, there may be additional ways forward. Reconciliation might lie less in invoking the separatisms of identity and nation than in foregrounding the histories and politics of the nation-building process itself. And this need not be a purely academic exercise. Rather it potentially fortifies

practical efforts to disperse political authority over nested political units, and more generally, "undo" dominant meanings of nationhood.

In this paper, I have sought to recast the multicultural ideal by invoking a notion of "rights to belong" to the spaces that are made to ideologically stand as nations. Such rights are cultural, economic, political, and social. My path to this point has come by uncoupling the ideology and practice of nation building from the political institutions of the state, in such a way as to illuminate the contested politics of belonging in ex-British settler societies. My major concern has been to specify the simple but strategic point that the process involves majorities and minorities alike: migrants and indigenes most obviously, but also those Anglo-Celtic migrants who claim the status of settler. A channel for dialogue across Aboriginal, Multicultural, and Settler Studies has thus been cleared in the space of the nation-building process. Pluralism has never made any sense as a problematic of "them" alone, and yet until recently the gaze of race/nation scholars has been directed at those minority groups problematized in race-relations discourse. While whiteness studies may offer a useful counter to this fetish, a more integrative, critical approach to nation building may also supply a productive way forward. Acknowledging that diverse ethnicities are collectively, albeit differentially, inserted in the fields of power and fantasy out of which (ex-British) nations are made, removes the subject/object relation of racialized thought. Consistent with the spirit of Katz's (1996:487) vision of "minor theory," this perspective "reworks marginality by decomposing the major." Reimagining models of cultural contracts among groups may yet be crafted for the new millennium out of discursive materials in the national archive. And these consist less in the facts of coexistence within the space of the nation per se, as if its boundedness was somehow pregiven. Rather, new ethics of engagement across groups reside in acknowledging the transnational terrain of encounter, exchange, memory, desire, and struggle out of which nations are made, remade and unmade. From a site "downunder"—one whose antipodeality makes sense as a series of contradictions only if one's geographical imagination is normalized around Anglo-Americanness—I have attempted to chart some signposts for their study.

Institute for Culture & Society Pre-Print Journal Articles – Anderson (2000): Thinking "Postnationally": Dialogue Across Multicultural, Indigenous, and Settler Spaces.

12

References

Adas, Michael. 1989. *Machines as the Measure of Men.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Agnew, John. 1999. The New Geopolitics of Power. In *Human Geography Today,* ed. D. Massey, J. Allen, and P. Sarre, pp. 173–93. Cambridge: Polity.

——— and Sharpe, Joanne. Forthcoming. From Abstract Space to Worldly Place: America, the Frontier Nation. In *American Space/American Place*, ed. J. Agnew et al., chapter 4. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso.

Anderson, Ian. 1997. I, the "Hybrid" Aborigine: Film and Representation. *Australian Aboriginal Studies* 1: 4–14.

Anderson, Kay. 1991. *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1874–1980.* Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press.

———. 1998. Science and the Savage: The Linnean Society of New South Wales 1874–1900. *Ecumene: International Journal of Culture, Environment and Meaning* 5(2): 125–43.

———. 1999. Reflections on Redfern. In *Australian Cultural Geographies*, ed. E. Stratford, pp. 67–84. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Ang, Ien, and Stratton, John. 1998. Asianing Australia: Notes toward a Critical Transnationalism in Cultural Studies. *Cultural Studies* 10: 16–36.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Australia, Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (ADIEA). 1995. Settlement Planning Information, June Update: Information on Migrants in New South Wales, Sydney.

Australia, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (ADIMA). 1997. *Multicultural Australia: The Way Forward.* National Multicultural Advisory Council, Issues Paper. Canberra.

Balakrishnan, Gopal, ed. 1996. *Mapping the Nation.* London: Verso.

Basch, L.; Glick, Shiller N.; and Szanton Blanc, C. 1996. *Nations Unbound.* Pennsylvania: Gordon & Breach.

Bennett, David, ed. 1998. *Multicultural States: Rethinking Difference and Identity.* London: Routledge.

Institute for Culture & Society Pre-Print Journal Articles – Anderson (2000): Thinking "Postnationally": Dialogue Across Multicultural, Indigenous, and Settler Spaces.

13

——— and Bhabha, Homi. 1998. Liberalism and Minority Culture: Reflections on "Cultures in Between." In *Multicultural States: Rethinking Difference and Identity*, ed. D. Bennett, pp. 37–47. London: Routledge.

Bhabha, Homi, ed. 1990. *Nation and Narration.* London: Routledge.

Boldt, M. 1993. *Surviving as Indians.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Bonnett, Alistair. 1997. Geography, "Race" and Whiteness: Invisible Traditions and Current Challenges. *Area* 29(3): 193–99.

Braun, Bruce. 1997. Buried Epistemologies: The Politics of Nature in (Post)Colonial British Columbia. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87: 3–31.

Breton, R. 1984. Multiculturalism and Canadian Nation-Building. In *The Politics of Gender, Ethnicity and Language in Canada*, ed. A. Cairns and C. Williams, pp. 27–66. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Burnley, Ian. 1998. Immigrant City, Global City? Advantage and Disadvantage among Communities from Asia in Sydney. *Australian Geographer* 29: 49–70.

———; Murphy, Peter; and Fagan, Robert. 1997. *Immigration and Australian Cities.* Sydney: Federation Press.

Butzer, Karl, guest ed. 1992. The Americas before and after 1492: Current Geographic Research. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82(3).

Canada. 1969. *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.* Ottawa: Queen's Printer.

Cant, Garth. 1995. Reclaiming Land, Reclaiming Guardianship: The Role of The Treaty of Waitangi in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Aboriginal History* 19: 79–108.

Castles, S; Kalantzis, M; Cope B; and Morrissey, M. 1988. *Mistaken Identity: Multiculturalism and the Demise of Nationalism in Australia.* Sydney: Pluto Press.

Cheah, Pheng, and Robbins, Bruce, eds. 1998. *Cosmopolitics.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Collins, Robert. 1991. National Culture: A Contradiction in Terms? *Canadian Journal of Communications* 16(2): 1–10.

Coughlan, J., and McNamara, D., eds. 1997. *Asians in Australia: Patterns of Migration and Settlement.* Melbourne: Macmillan.

Cowlishaw, Gillian, and Morris, Barry, eds. 1997. *Race Matters: Indigenous Australians and "Our" Society.* Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.

Cronon, William. 1983. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England.* New York: Hill and Wang.

Institute for Culture & Society Pre-Print Journal Articles – Anderson (2000): Thinking "Postnationally": Dialogue Across Multicultural, Indigenous, and Settler Spaces.

14

Davis, Mike. 1999. Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the US Big City. *New Left Review* 234: 3–43.

Dwyer, Owen. 1997. Geographical Research about African Americans: A Survey of Journals, 1911–1995. *The Professional Geographer* 49: 441–50.

Ellis, Mark, and Wright, Richard. 1998. The Balkanization Metaphor in the Analysis of U.S. Immigration. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88: 686–98.

Fincher, Ruth, and Jacobs, J. M., eds. 1998. *Cities of Difference.* New York: Guilford.

Frankenburg, Ruth, ed. 1997. *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Gilbert, Kevin. 1993. *Aboriginal Sovereignty: Justice, the Law and the Land.* Canberra: Barrambunga Books.

Hage, Ghasson. 1998. *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society.* Sydney: Pluto Press.

Hayes, Carlton. 1945. *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism.* New York: Macmillan.

Herman, RDK. 1999. The Aloha State: Place Names and the Anti-Conquest of Hawai'i. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 89: 76–102.

Holston, James, and Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. Cities and Citizenship. *Public Culture* 8: 187–204.

Hooson, David, ed. 1994. *Geography and National Identity.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Howitt, R. 1998. Recognition, Respect, and Reconciliation: Steps towards Decolonisation? *Australian Aboriginal Studies* 1: 28–34.

Huggins, J. 1998. *Sister Girl.* St. Lucia: Queensland University Press.

Inglis, Christine, and Wu, Chung-Tong. 1992. The "New" Migration of Asian Skills and Capital in Australia. In *Asians in Australia* , ed. C. Inglis, S. Gunarsekaran, G. Sullivan, and W. Chung-Tong. pp. 193–205. St. Leonards: Allen and Unwin.

Ip, David; Inglis, Christine; and Wu, Chung-Tong. 1997. Concepts of Citizenship and Identity among Recent Asian Immigrants to Australia. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 6(3–4): 363–84.

Jackson, Peter, and Penrose, Jan, eds. 1993. *Constructions of Race, Place and Nation.* London: UCL Press.

Jacobs, Jane M. 1996. *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City.* London: Routledge.

Institute for Culture & Society Pre-Print Journal Articles – Anderson (2000): Thinking "Postnationally": Dialogue Across Multicultural, Indigenous, and Settler Spaces.

15

———. 1997. Resisting Reconciliation: The Secret Geographies of (Post) Colonial Australia. In *Geographies of Resistance*, ed. Steve Pile and Keith Michael, pp. 202–18. London: Routledge.

Jaimes, M., ed. 1992. *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance.* Boston: South End Press.

Katz, Cindi. 1996. Towards Minor Theory. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14: 487–99.

Mar, Phillip. 1998. Just the Place Is Different: Comparisons of Place and Settlement Practices of Some Hong Kong Migrants in Sydney. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 9: 58–73.

Marston, Sallie. Forthcoming. The Social Construction of Scale. *Progress in Human Geography.*

Massey, Doreen. 1993. Power-Geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place. In *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*, ed. John Bird et al., pp. 59–69. London: Routledge.

———; Allen, John; and Sarre, Philip, eds. 1999. *Human Geography Today.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Meinig, Don. 1986. *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Mitchell, Katharyne. 1997a. Transnational Discourse: Bringing Geography Back In. *Antipode* 29: 101–14.

———. 1997b. Different Diasporas and the Hype of Hybridity. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 15: 533–53.

Moore, Clive. 1998. Guest Editorial: Australian Masculinities. *Journal of Australian Studies* 56: 1–16.

Natter, Wolfgang, and Jones, John Paul III. 1997. Identity, Space, and Other Uncertainties. In *Space and Social Theory*, ed. G. Benko and U. Strohmayer, pp. 141–61. Oxford: Blackwell.

Neilson, Brett. 1999. On the New Cosmopolitanism. *Communal/Plural: Journal of Transnational & Cross-Cultural Studies* 7: 111–24.

Olds, Kris. 1999. *Globalisation and Urban Change: Capital, Culture and Pacific Rim Mega-Projects.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pagden, Anthony. 1995. *Lords of the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c.1500–1800.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Painter, Joe, and Philo, Chris. 1995. Spaces of Citizenship. *Political Geography* 14(2): 107–20.

Pawson, Eric. 1999. Postcolonial New Zealand? In *Cultural Geographies*, ed. K. Anderson and F. Gale, pp. 25–50. Melbourne: Addison Wesley Longman.

Pearce, Roy Harvey. 1953/1988. *Savagism and Civilisation: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Penrose, Jan. 1997. Construction, De(con)struction and Reconstruction: The Impact of Globalisation and Fragementation on the Canadian Nation-State. *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 16: 15-46.

Pe-Pua, R; Mitchell, C; Iredale, Robyn; and Castles, Stephen. 1996. *Astronaut Families and Parachute Children: Migration between Hong Kong and Australia.* Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Peters, Evelyn. 1998. Subversive Spaces: First Nations Women and the City. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16: 665–85.

Pettman, Jan. 1992. *Living in the Margins: Racism, Sexism and Feminism in Australia.* Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Pogge, T. 1992. Cosmopolitanism and Sovereignty. *Ethics* 103: 48–75.

Radcliffe, Sarah, and Westwood, Sallie. 1996. *Remaking the Nation: Place, Politics and Identity in Latin America.* London: Routledge.

Reynolds, Henry. 1996. *Aboriginal Sovereignty: Three Nations, One Australia?* Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Rowse, Tim. 1999. *White Flour, White Power.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rundstrom, Robert. 1991. Mapping, Postmodernism, Indigenous People and the Changing Direction of North American Cartography. *Cartographica* 28(2): 1–12.

Sandercock, Leonie. 1998. *Towards Cosmopolis: Planning for Multicultural Cities.* New York: John Wiley.

Schech, Susanne, and Haggis, Jane. 1998. Postcolonialism, Identity and Location: Being White Australian in Asia. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16: 15–29.

Shapiro, M. 1997. *Violent Cartographies: Mapping Cultures of War.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Silvey, Rachel, and Lawson, Victoria. 1999. Placing the Migrant. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 89: 121–32.

Institute for Culture & Society Pre-Print Journal Articles – Anderson (2000): Thinking "Postnationally": Dialogue Across Multicultural, Indigenous, and Settler Spaces.

17

Smith, Susan. 1989. Society, Space and Citizenship: A Human Geography for the New Times? *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 14(2): 144–56.

———. 1993. Immigration and Nation-Building in Canada and the United Kingdom. In *Constructions of Race, Place and Nation*, ed. P. Jackson and J. Penrose, pp. 50–77. London: UCL Press.

Sparke, Matthew. 1998. A Map that Roared and an Original Atlas: Canada, Cartography, and the Narration of Nation. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88: 463–95.

Stratton, John. 1998. *Race Daze: Australia in Identity Crisis.* Sydney: Pluto Press.

——— and Ang, Ien. 1994. Multicultural Imagined Communities: Cultural Difference and National Identity in Australia and the USA. *The Australian Journal of Media and Culture* 8(2): 1–23.

Vasta, Ella, and Castles, Stephen, eds. 1996. *The Persistence of Racism in Multicultural Australia.* Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Institute for Culture & Society Pre-Print Journal Articles – Anderson (2000): Thinking "Postnationally": Dialogue Across Multicultural, Indigenous, and Settler Spaces.

18