

## **Chapter Eight**

### **States**

The discussion to this point has argued that there is a particular deduction to Cook's narrative. The voyages not only offer detailed measurements and descriptions, they also create a series — points, coordinates, shapes, islands, and nations — which forms the basic conditions in terms of which natives and nations are identified. To articulate who people are, Cook has started by describing the places where they are from, and then followed the implications of how he began. Where we are determines where we have come from, what groups we belong to, and whom we are obligated to. In this chapter, attention will turn to how these articulations of places and nations parallel the articulations of states, by which is meant in very general terms the organization of sovereignty or government. In the late 18th century European narratives of the South Pacific, the border of the island typically becomes the border of the state. As a result, the arguments for political legitimation that dominated European thought up until the 18th century were no longer as important. Both political contracts and political inheritances, either patriarchal or divine, gave way to national identities based on descriptions of places and peoples. The voyages, in other words, offer a different way of characterizing the nature and legitimacy of political order, in which patriarchy and theology persist, but in very different conditions.

Cook's voyages, placed in dialog with more traditional political theorists such as Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, offer a significantly, if unintentionally, different account of the relationship between the nation, the state, and territory. With Cook's voyages, the island-territory is identified and described first, as a natural, fixed entity, and the nation and the state are

accounted for later. One significant implication is that the political state, far from being either a fluid creation of political power, an artifact of conscious human intentions and agreements, or a divine gift, is a natural entity, one more attribute of the singular territorial national species. The voyages thus provide an account of the state that materializes and naturalizes its formation, area, and character, in ways that have persisted into contemporary thought.

That Cook's voyages had any impact on the understanding of sovereignty in European thought may appear strange. He is not a political theorist and likely knew very little about the concept of sovereignty, at least beyond the specific rituals that would be known by a naval captain. He also does not become a political theorist after the fact. If we consider the passages from the voyages that are explicitly about sovereignty, we will find them to be well-worn repetitions of political categories that were typical of his time, with their talk of monarchs, ministers, and policy. But something important happens with Cook's voyages, specifically with the way that articulations of sovereignty are connected to the geographical, national, and epistemological spaces that have been discovered in previous chapters. The space of sovereignty becomes an area that can be traced by the navigator and the map-maker. As a result, the voyages contain a somewhat innovative account of the sovereign state. But these states are not the states of Europe, they are the islands and the bays that are found throughout the Pacific.

What we will consider in the first part of this chapter are the different ways, in very broad terms, that political power has been related to spaces and peoples, focusing in particular on the articulation of sovereign borders. The three main ideas that will be discussed are the city, the empire, and the early modern state. There are two general concerns: the organization of political spaces and the relationship between social bodies and those spaces. It will be

argued that the conceptualization of political space up until the late 18th century connected spaces that were created by human political and social activity, and that Cook's voyages mark an important shift at the end of the 18th century, where political space became the spaces articulated by navigators, astronomers, geographers, and map-makers. By combining these articulations into a single narrative, the voyages encourage an account of the world in which the continuity between space, nation and politics is both obvious and natural. Rather than politics creating territory, territory came to create politics; and thus the tone, if not the structures, of political debates changed.

### **1. The Ideal State of Cook's Voyages**

The coherence of Cook's articulations of places relies on a series of conceptual shifts: from coordinate points to areas, from areas to containers, from containers to inhabitants, from inhabitants to nationalities and finally from nationalities to states. In his world, each of these line up in a single series, as aspects of a single entity. They *have to* line up, or the epistemological system falls apart, and important aspects of the world become unintelligible. Thus it is not simply a matter of providing accurate maps or descriptions; beyond that, the series is essential to meaningfully organize the map, the nation, and the state.

The coherence of the island-nation-states that are articulated in Cook's voyages are connected to Cook's own ships, which exist throughout the voyages as clear national, monarchical spaces. Within the narrative, the ship is the ideal of the coherent and complete place. Through the narrative, the ships become very clear, determinate, and ritualized images of the mature, rational state. Cook's crew, whatever their origin, are intimately connected, to the point where the ship, like the island, becomes a physical container for the

group. As Williams notes in his history of South Sea navigation,

The long Pacific voyages [of the early 18th century] brought their own tensions; there were quarrels, mutinies and desertions. The language of these disputes was often that of the constitutional struggles of late Stuart and early Hanoverian England.<sup>1</sup>

The ships were microcosms of the European social order. In the case of the buccaneers, these associations were often unplanned and were often quite tentative. In Cook's voyages, the ship remains a key image of political order, but the nature of the political order has changed substantially. The relationship between Cook and his crew suggests an ideal account of the political order. When the ship returns to the Cape of Good Hope near the end of the third voyage, Cook notes that

Every one was impatient to get into port, and for good reasons; as for a long time we had had nothing but stale and salt provisions, for which every one on board had lost all relish. These reasons induced me to yield to the general wish, and to steer for the Cape of Good Hope.<sup>2</sup>

Cook is a benevolent sovereign, but he is the one who is sovereign. He is interested in the general wishes of his crew, but not in obliging himself to follow the general will. As a result, far from portraying the political struggles for power that characterized the narratives of the buccaneers, Cook's voyages narrate the political order of a modern rational monarchy, as contained on the ships of the Royal Navy. As Greg Denning notes,

The essence of shipboard life was boundary-maintenance. On naval vessels especially, but also on other ships, distinction of role and status was precise, not just between quarterdeck and lower deck, not just between watchmen and idlers, but between messes, watches, divisions, fore-, main- and mizzen-topmast and boats, to say nothing of the distinct positions from boatswain to loblolly boys and all their mates.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Williams, *The Great South Sea*, page xiv.

<sup>2</sup> Cook, *Voyages*, Volume IV, page 225.

<sup>3</sup> Denning, *Islands and Beaches*, page 158.

In addition to the functional organization that evokes images of the body politic, the ships were also organized in terms of class. Cook writes in the second voyage, for instance, that his crew,

throughout the whole voyage, merited every indulgence which it was in my power to give them. Animated by the conduct of the officers, they showed themselves capable of surmounting every difficulty and danger which came in their way, and never once looked either upon the one or the other, as being at all heightened by our separation from our consort the *Adventure*.<sup>4</sup>

Not only is the chain of command clear, it is also tied to a system of social classes in which the officers and the gentlemen are intermediaries between the king and the peasants. Here, for instance, is how David Samwell, a surgeon on the third voyage, describes Cook's relation to his sailors:

He was beloved by his people, who looked up to him as a father, and obeyed his commands with alacrity.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout Cook's three voyages, the ship remained the most coherent social unit, with the possible exception of England itself. There are diseases and deaths, but no one escapes either the ship or Cook's sovereign gaze. The ship's crew were studied with perhaps more interest than any other single group in the world. Along these lines, one of the persistent themes of the voyages is the captain's maintenance of the crew's health. Cook writes, for instance, of

the dislike which seamen have to the introduction of a new diet. Their aversion to any unusual change of food is so great, that it can only be overcome by the steady and persevering example and authority of a commander.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Admiralty, *Voyages*, Volume IV, page 223.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Kippis, *A Narrative of the Voyages Round the World Performed by Captain James Cook*, page 400

<sup>6</sup> Kippis, *A Narrative of the Voyages Round the World Performed by Captain James Cook*, page 181.

Although Cook will periodically poison the gentlemen on the ship by serving them the wrong kinds of fish, in the bio-political conflicts between Cook and his crew, Cook's victory is decisive. And so when he writes, in the introduction to the second voyage, that one of his major successes of the second voyage was that he had overcome the threat of scurvy, he has also overcome the irrationality of his crew — his people — and established himself as the epitome of an enlightened sovereign.

The social and political order on Cook's ship parallels the order that he tries to find on the shore. Cook comes to know as much about the islands as he does about his ships, and he organizes that knowledge in more or less the same way. The accounts of the voyages also create various exchanges that not only establish the relationships between the ship and the shore, but also re-enforces the distinctions between the different groups on each side. Rickman's account from the third voyage, for instance, suggests how the interactions between the ship and the shore underlined class divisions.

The chiefs were feasted on board, and the commanders and officers hospitably entertained on shore.<sup>7</sup>

There were also frequent competitions. While these occur throughout the Admiralty's account of the voyages, one of the most succinct examples is from Ellis's narrative of the third voyage. Ellis writes:

Feenow having given a specimen of what his countrymen could do, desired Captain Cook to entertain him with something in our way. The next day (May 30th) the marines from both ships were sent on shore to perform their exercise, which however did not appear to strike him with any very great surprize. Probably, he was conscious of his superiority over us in that particular; at least if he was not, most of us were. However, lest he should think us a parcel of poor creatures altogether, a number of fire-works were set off in the evening, which seemed to turn the balance in our favour.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Rickman, *Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*, page 106.

<sup>8</sup> Ellis, *Authentic Narrative*, Volume I, page 64.

The interaction between ship and island is thus understood as the interaction between two nations, where the identity of the ship helps constitute the identity of the island and vice versa. The dialogues between the English and the native nations are thus telescoped through the principles of representation and the consolidation of voices into a single exchange. While no chiefs are referred to as “captains” of their islands, Cook is frequently described as the “chief” of his ship.<sup>9</sup>

The affirmation, first of the connection between territory, sovereignty and nation, and second of the distinction between one sovereign nation and another, also occurs when the relations between the ship and the shore were openly violent rather than simply competitive. In his biography of Cook, Kippis relates a typical interaction. He writes that the natives

were not ignorant that when he [the chief] was once in Captain Cook’s power, the whole force of the island would not be sufficient to recover him, and that they must have complied with any demands, however great, for his ransom.<sup>10</sup>

As with most conflicts in the voyages, the ship-crew-captain is placed in opposition to the island-natives-king, with more or less complicated interactions, motivations, and desires. The final term of any interaction, however, was the overwhelming power of the English guns. John Marra relates an episode where Cook is responding to the theft of a water cask.

To this remonstrance, menaces were added, and the whole island threatened if the [water] cask was not produced, and the thief delivered up.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout the voyages, Cook is threatening islands, as if they, their inhabitants, and their kings, shared a collective responsibility and are thus subject to a collective punishment.

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<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, Besant, *Captain Cook*, page 179.

<sup>10</sup> Kippis, *A Narrative of the Voyages Round the World Performed by Captain James Cook*, page 195.

<sup>11</sup> Marra, *Journal of the Resolution’s Voyage in 1771 - 1775*, page 181.

However, although often articulated as equivalent kinds of entities, there are at least two key differences between the ship and the island. First, the accounts do not follow the same pattern. While the articulation of sovereignty on the islands begins with geography, the articulation of sovereignty on the ships begins with the prior monarchical sovereign, which, through its orders, makes the existence of the ship possible. Also, in the ship, the members of the crew come from a wide assortment of different European nations. Cook makes very little of this diversity in the narrative, which does not seem to have been either significant or interesting for him. What holds the ship together as a single unit is Cook's sovereign power. The political order of the ship is thus articulated primarily in Hobbesian terms, which distinguishes it, at least in principle, from the native sovereignty of the islands.

Another important difference between the ship and the island, which will be discussed in greater detail in *Collections*, is that the ship does not have a fixed location in the table of places. The island does not move. It never moves, unless of course it is melting, but then it is located outside of the politics. In contrast, the ship always has a location, but its identity is based on its ability to move from place to place, to transcend the particular identities of the table as it gradually comprehends the table as such. This difference cannot be emphasized enough. At any given point in the interaction, the ship and the island are equals: they are both nations with states. But then Cook moves, the island is lost in the horizon, and it is eventually replaced by another one, inhabited by different people and ruled by another sovereign.

The descriptions of places and nations support each other: every nation has a place and every place, if it has somebody, has a nation. What Cook's voyages allow the reader to believe, in other words, is the ideal of nationalism, where the connection between place, nation, and state is not

only epistemologically pure, but also morally required. By showing the readers how to think through the world in terms of territorial nation-states, and to think through the problems of politics and human identity in terms of coordinates and maps, Cook's voyages may be historically and conceptually connected to the rise of nationalism in the 19th century. At the very least, Cook's voyages offer an important opportunity to discuss the nature of the nation at the end of the 18th century.

In *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Eric Hobsbawm offers an historical account of the idea of "the modern sense [of] nation," which, he argues, is "no older than the eighteenth century, give or take the odd predecessor."<sup>12</sup> The claim, of course, verges on a tautology, given that the modern sense of most words could be connected to the 18th or 19th century "give or take the odd predecessor." Hobsbawm's goes so far as to claim that at the beginning of the 19th century the nation was a "novelty". Hobsbawm recognizes that the term was in use before the 1780s, such as during the American revolution and in a wide variety of books, including Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. However, for Hobsbawm the modern sense of the nation is not evident in these writings.

We cannot therefore read into the revolutionary 'nation' anything like the later nationalist programme of establishing nation-states for bodies defined in terms of the criteria so hotly debated by the nineteenth-century theorists, such as ethnicity, common language, religion, territory and common historical memories.<sup>13</sup>

While Smith was concerned with the state and economic organizations, according to Hobsbawm, Smith had "no place for the nation." For Adam Smith, the nation meant nothing more than "a territorial state."<sup>14</sup> Rather,

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<sup>12</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, page 3.

<sup>13</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, page 20

<sup>14</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, page 24.

Hobsbawm argues that the concept of “nation” radically changed in the 1780s.

The characteristic modern state, receiving its systematic shape in the era of the French revolutions, though in many ways anticipated by the evolving European principalities of the sixteenth - seventeenth centuries, was novel in a number of respects. It was defined as a (preferably continuous and unbroken) territory over all of whose inhabitants it ruled, and separated by clearly distinct frontiers or borders from other such territories. Politically it ruled over and administered these inhabitants directly, and not through intermediate systems of rulers and autonomous corporations.<sup>15</sup>

The concept of the modern nation-state, in other words, depends on a strict correspondence between the nation and the state, where the nation is a spatially coherent group of people who share language, beliefs, customs, and territory. These shared characteristics can exist, however, without “nationalism.” What is missing, and what is first offered with the French Revolution, according to Hobsbawm, is the need for the nation to be self-conscious. It is not enough that France and Germany exist as linguistic and cultural entities, they must recognize that existence and use it as the basis for the political order.

In *Nationalism*, Elie Kedourie likewise focuses on the French Revolution as the key shift in European thought, although he also refers to unnamed English theorists of “popular sovereignty”. His primary focus, however, is on the refinements and variations of the ideal, specifically through the German philosophers of the early to mid-19th century.

According to Kedourie, nationalism held that

humanity is naturally divided into nations, that nations are known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained, and that the only legitimate type of government is national government.<sup>16</sup>

The human world is naturally divided into nations. What changes is that

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<sup>15</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, page 80.

<sup>16</sup> Kedourie, *Nationalism*, page 1.

subjects acquire, or come to recognize, a deeper sense of their collective national identity. A sense of the 19th century romantic and theological account of the nation is evident in Schleiermacher, who claims that:

Every nationality is destined through its peculiar organization and its place in the world to represent a certain side of the divine image.... For it is God who directly assigns to each nationality its definite task on earth and inspires it with a definite spirit in order to glorify Himself through each one in a particular manner.<sup>17</sup>

For writers such as Schleiermacher, the nation became the basic unit in terms of which all political, moral and theological activity should be organized. The nation, as the primary object of nationalism, was tied to the value of reason, self-determination, and perhaps even the glory of God. And so, according to writers such as Hobsbawm and Kedourie, the emergence of the political ideal, while drawing on many traditions of European thought, finally emerged with the French Revolution.

But what were the conceptual transformations that came about with the French Revolution? Some writers respond to this question by appealing to Rousseau. But there was much more going on in the conceptual fields than the glorification of Rousseau's work. Yes, the nation became an important, if not the central category for articulating the creation and legitimation of the political order. The territorial nation-state became the primary political goal. Many political documents produced during the time attest to this. But what 19th century political thought depended on, as a result, was an idea of the nation that could be deployed in political debates, that could be studied, reformed, and fought for. National consciousness thus depended on the creation of a vast amount of knowledge about the nation — studies of landscapes, language, of history, of artifacts, of customs, of literature — that are all connected to each other, and all connected to an emergent national identity which can then be known. It is not enough to say that the people

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<sup>17</sup> quoted in Kedourie, *Nationalism*, page 52.

ought to rule, what became necessary was to study what the people were.

The French revolutionaries, the 19th century nationalists and the 18th and 19th century scientific explorers have similar epistemological methods and goals. In Cook's voyages, however, the ideal of the nation-state arises less from political philosophy than from the clarity of descriptions tied to clear geographical articulations. But this almost natural entity is not the result of conscious human activity. What Cook's voyages help to provide, therefore, is the epistemological basis for nationalism, and that the voyages gave accounts of primitive nations and states is no criticism; in fact, it only helps to naturalize the entire system and turn nationalists towards their nation's history.

For those who follow in Cook's wake, "state-building" becomes an important theme. George Mortimer, for instance, considered the improvements in New Holland that had occurred in the decades leading up to the 1790's. He writes:

We made a circuit of about six miles, and found it agreeably interspersed with hills and vallies. Some of the hills were richly and luxuriantly clothed with trees to their very summits, though many of them were of a great height: there were besides a great number of different sorts of shrubs and plants, some of them, no doubt, of species hitherto unknown; but it is to be hoped they will not long remain so; and that now Government have established a settlement on this Island, a person properly qualified for the undertaking may be instructed to examine them....<sup>18</sup>

In the late 18th century and on into the 19th century, "Government" was being established around the Pacific, not only through direct European rule, but also through the cultivation of native authority. Roughly ten years after Cook, George Vancouver was the captain of the next ship sent by the British Admiralty into the northern Pacific. Vancouver's impact on the Sandwich

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<sup>18</sup> Mortimer, *Observations and Remarks*, page 16.

Islands was far more profound than Cook's had been, especially in that Vancouver intervened to a much greater extent in domestic politics. Vancouver's actions in the Sandwich Islands are comparable to the situation in south Asia in the 19th century that has been described by Edward Said:

as imperialists the British felt their task in India was to solve 'the problem of sovereignty in Bengal' in favor, naturally enough, of the British crown.<sup>19</sup>

By helping to solve "the problem of sovereignty" in the Sandwich Islands, Vancouver was helping to transform Hawaiian social and political relations into western terms, and thus position these islands that much more solidly into the global system of places and peoples. The territory and the people existed, that was not the problem. What was needed was the proper organization of power, the capacity to recognize an appropriately powerful king who, hopefully, favoured the British crown.

Another explorer in the South Pacific who followed Cook's voyages was Otto von Kotzebue. Throughout his account of the Sandwich Islands, Kotzebue takes the nation, by which he means the entire archipelago, as an already existing entity located at the beginning of a generalizable temporal sequence of political development. Kotzebue is interested in several things, but primarily in the political order. During his second voyage into the Pacific as a commander, when he lands on Oahu, Kotzebue offers his readers an account of the "rise of the nation,"<sup>20</sup> which is now an "infant state."<sup>21</sup> The nation is not what is being created, the nation is rather the subject that is rising from an infant to a modern (European) state. In the time between Cook and Kotzebue, Tameamea "became the supreme governor of the whole Archipelago."<sup>22</sup> Kotzebue describes Tameamea as follows:

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<sup>19</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, page 254, following Guha.

<sup>20</sup> Kotzebue, *A New Voyage Round the World*, Volume II, page 189.

<sup>21</sup> Kotzebue, *A New Voyage Round the World*, Volume II, page 195.

<sup>22</sup> Kotzebue, *A New Voyage Round the World*, Volume II, page 191.

Himself endowed with uncommon powers of mind, he entrusted the important offices of state only to such as were capable of discharging them efficiently. He made a very fortunate choice in Karemaku, who, while quite a young man, entered into all the enlightened and comprehensive views of his master, forwarded them with ability and energy, and continued his faithful servant till the death of Tameamea. The English called him the Pitt of the Sandwich Islands.<sup>23</sup>

Tameamea is praised, not only because he is a good king, by European standards, but also because he was quickly changing the islands in ways that conformed to European political ideals. Kotzebue writes, for instance, of how Tameamea

exerted, in short, every faculty of his mind to place the Sandwich Islands in a state of progressive assimilation to the most prosperous nations.<sup>24</sup>

The Sandwich Islands, in other words, are acquiring a full-fledged state, and perhaps the preeminent nation-state of the Pacific. Cook's narrative of sovereignty thus draws a specific connection between rationality and sovereignty, in which the existence of monarchical sovereign power is one of the primary signs of a developed, civilized, and rational nation. In other words, while there is an epistemological connection between the island, the nation and the state, there is also a normative one, in which the nation and the state ought to conform not only to their place, but also to the ideals that are best illustrated by highly-developed European political systems.

## **2. Classical Political Spaces**

To better appreciate the significance of Cook's articulation of the territorial nation-state, where the dominant images of order are the ship and the island, we should take a step back from the late 18th century, and consider in much more general terms how human communities have been connected

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<sup>23</sup> Kotzebue, *A New Voyage Round the World*, Volume II, page 189.

<sup>24</sup> Kotzebue, *A New Voyage Round the World*, Volume II, page 192.

to space. In ancient Greek and Roman political thought, for instance, there were two dominant accounts of the relationship between sovereignty and space: the city and the empire. There were other ideas of collective space, such as “the Greeks” (which were contrasted with the barbarians) and the provincial jurisdictions within an empire, but these spaces were secondary or derivative. A person’s connection to Hellenism as such, for instance, was rarely more important than a person’s connection to a specific city. Likewise, during the height of the Roman empire, connections to specific regions were rarely more important than the connections to the expansive structures of the empire itself. Aristotle may have appealed to his fellow Greeks to enslave barbarians and not each other, but his account of political life focused attention on the social and moral value of membership in a specific city. Likewise, Cicero may have been partial to Rome, but the duties that a person had were the duties of a member of the empire.

In the world of classical Greece, the walls of the city constituted the primary boundaries of the political space. These lines were geographical and architectural, but they were also cultural and political. To be in a different place, to be contained by a different city, was to *be* different. However, the walls of Athens did not mark the beginning of Sparta. Rather, beyond the city was the country, which was controlled to a greater or lesser extent by one city or another. What was important was that the political order was identified by the coherence of the city, and the outlying areas were secondary and, if necessary, expendable. The relationships *between* cities, therefore, were expressed in terms of distance and landscape rather than borders. An appropriate example of this account of political space is the speech given by Pericles to the Athenian farmers after the Spartans had burnt their crops. He argues, in the translation of Thomas Hobbes, that

If they invade our territory by land, we shall invade theirs by sea. And when we have wasted part of Peloponnesus, and they all Attica; yet shall theirs be the greater loss. For they, unless by the sword, can get no other territory instead of that we shall destroy: whereas for us, there is other land both in the islands and continent. For the dominion of the sea is a great matter. Consider but this. If we dwelt in the islands, whether of us then were more inexpugnable? We must therefore now, drawing as near as can be to that imagination, lay aside the care of fields and villages....<sup>25</sup>

Whereas the other Greek cities were tied to their city and dependent on their lands, the Athenians were able to move their political identity, their city, somewhere else if they had to. The Athenians needed a city, but they did not need that city in particular. The accounts of politics in the works of Plato and Aristotle also rely on the city as the fundamental container of the political order. In the *Republic*, for instance, Socrates discusses the creation and expansion of a typical Greek city.

We are, as it seems, considering not only how a city, but also a luxurious city, comes into being.... If you want to, let's look at a feverish city, too. Nothing stands in the way. For these things, as it seems, won't satisfy some, or this way of life, but couches, tables, and other furniture will be added, and, of course, relishes, perfume, incense, courtesans and cakes — all sorts of all of them....

Then the city must be made bigger again. This healthy one isn't adequate any more, but must already be gorged with a bulky mass of things....

Then must we cut off a piece of our neighbors' land, if we are going to have sufficient for pasture and tillage, and they in turn from ours, if they let themselves go to the unlimited acquisition of money, overstepping the boundary of the necessary.

After that don't we go to war as a consequence....<sup>26</sup>

To the Greeks, cities often acquired land from other cities. But the land is an economic resource, it is not a source of political identity in the way the city

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<sup>25</sup> Thucydides, *The History of the Grecian War*, translated by Thomas Hobbes, in *The Works of Thomas Hobbes*, Volume VIII, page 150.

<sup>26</sup> Plato, *Republic* 373a-e.

itself is. While the walls of the city are roughly fixed, the land that the city controls can fluctuate, depending on the city's ability to either maintain or even acquire land in relation to its neighbours. Thus while the walls of the city create the citizen's sense of place in the world, the borders between one place and another fluctuate and are not necessarily articulated in detail. One political identity does not butt up against another.

The second pervasive way to articulate political space in European thought up until the 17th century was the empire, and the Roman Empire in particular. The empire, which continued to be an ideal for Medieval European thinkers, was a system of connections between cities, centered on Rome, that expanded throughout the Mediterranean. In such a world, political affiliations can acquire cosmic proportions. A Stoic of the time, for instance, could claim that

My country is not one tower, one roof,  
But the whole earth is a citadel and home  
Ready for us to spend our life in.<sup>27</sup>

One thing that changed in the move from Greece to Rome was that conflicts between cities became internal to an over-arching political order. The walls of a particular city were no longer able to contain the primary space of politics. Likewise, the territorial conflicts between cities, when they occurred, could appeal to a larger-scale political order. As a result, the primary opposition, for both military and identity, changed from the neighbouring cities to the groups near and beyond the frontiers. *Civitas* had become *pax*.

But there was an outside, there were peoples and powers who existed beyond the empire, and whatever the cosmic aspirations of some thinkers, there could still be some sense of the spatial limits of Roman influence. In *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: a Social and Economic Study*, C. R.

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<sup>27</sup> Diogenes Laertius VI 98. Quoted in Schofield, *Stoic Idea of the City*, page 145.

Whittaker focuses specifically on the ways that Victorian England understood the spatial organization of the Roman Empire. For Whittaker, the English thought through the problem of the collapse of the Roman Empire as a problem of borders and walls: the Romans simply did not have enough resources to keep back the invaders at their borders. However, on Whittaker's account the British concern with Roman history was more connected to concerns for their own empire. As an appropriate example, Edward Said notes that one of Baden-Powell's goals in creating the Boy Scouts was "fortifying the wall of empire."<sup>28</sup> However, while the focus on walls and borders suggests how the Victorians approached the problems of empire, Whittaker argues that the Roman sources suggest a different organization of political space which does not stress the maintenance of clear geographical boundaries. The Romans did not extend their identity or political power unchanged into other regions. Rather, they put into play a complex process of interactions that included assimilation, adaptation and toleration. The Roman gods were not imposed in other localities so much as the local gods were given places in an ever-expanding Roman pantheon. Rather than the 19th and 20th century territorial nation-states, which were fixated on maintaining the thin geographical lines of sovereignty, the Roman organization was woven out of compromises, connections, and treaties between a wide range of groups. An assortment of alliances and other relationships included many partially-assimilated tribes and regions. In other words, the Romans were collectors of cities, which were tied together by roads, and where cities no longer existed, the empire gradually faded into complex, mottled arrangements of allies and associates. In the Roman empire, neither the cities nor the borders were crucial to human identity, the space of the empire was a terrain of relations in which individuals moved from city to city, and never encountered a line that

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<sup>28</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, page 138.

divides Rome from what is non-Roman.

### **3. The Early Modern State: Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau**

When we turn to early modern accounts of the state, such as those offered by Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, the account of politics changes. The state exists between the city and the empire, as a territorial dominion connected both to a government and a group of people. One important aspect of the central early modern accounts of the state is that the discussions are primarily concerned with the relationships between people — representation, obedience, constitutionalism, common law and so on. *Where* these relationships occurred was secondary at best. One key difference between Hobbes and Locke, as will be seen, is that Hobbes places the political order before the social, whereas Locke reverses the order and assumes, prior to the creation of sovereignty, a well-developed society. In Hobbes, the state creates the conditions for the society, in Locke, the society creates the conditions for the state. In both writers, however, it is only after the creation of the society and the state that the territory of the society/state is created. And it is here, in the relationship between territory and politics, that the account of the state in Cook's voyages is significantly different.

For 17th century writers such as James I of England, Thomas Hobbes, and Bernard Mandeville, the account of the origins of the political order begins with an account of sovereignty, and then moves to an account of the society (or the nation) and then of the territory. In *Leviathan*, building on an image of the violent chaos of the state of nature, Hobbes discusses his key question, which is how a multitude can become a single entity with a single coherent will.

A multitude of men, are made one person, when they are by one man, or one person, represented; so that it be done with the consent of every one of that multitude in

particular. For it is the unity of the representer, not the unity of the represented, that maketh the person one. And it is the representer that beareth the person, and but one person: and unity, cannot otherwise be understood in multitude.<sup>29</sup>

The commonwealth is thus created by collecting obedient bodies together through contract and force. The commonwealth is based on the maintenance of a legal and political jurisdiction, and in particular on the ability to enforce decisions, to command internal parts and to resist external threats.

For jurisdiction is the power of hearing and determining causes between man and man; and can belong to none but him that hath the power to prescribe the rules of right and wrong; that is, to make laws; and with the sword of justice to compel men to obey his decisions, pronounced either by himself, or by the judges he ordaineth thereunto; which none can lawfully do but the civil sovereign.<sup>30</sup>

The basic criteria for membership in the political order, in other words, is the willingness to obey. Hobbes appeals to the Romans as an illustration of how political membership is determined.

The Romans when they had subdued many nations, to make their government digestible, were wont to take away that grievance, as much as they thought necessary, by giving sometimes to whole nations, and sometimes to principal men of every nation they conquered, not only the privileges, but also the name of Romans; and took many of them into the senate, and offices of charge, even in the Roman city.<sup>31</sup>

One implication of Hobbes's position is that a wide variety of people can be permitted to belong to the political body. Other personal characteristics, including religion, language, and nationality, are secondary, and are subsumed by the systems of representation and dominion that form the political body. Hobbes has a concept of national identity, but the nation is not very important to politics.

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<sup>29</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, Volume III, page 151.

<sup>30</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, Volume III, page 568.

<sup>31</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, Volume III, page 184.

Once the political body exists, it can then conquer and consolidate a place. This is an important feature of Hobbes's account of both sovereign territory and private property. In the state of nature there is a division between mine and thine, but "onely that to be every mans that he can get; and for so long, as he can keep it."<sup>32</sup> For Hobbes, therefore, the division between mine and thine has very little relevance for property in the state of nature, and even less relevance when considering land. As Hobbes writes in *Leviathan*:

hence it comes to passe, that where an Invader hath no more to feare, than an other mans single power; if one plant, sow, build, or possesse a convenient Seat, others may probably be expected to come prepared with forces united, to dispossesse, and deprive him, not only of the fruit of his labour, but also of his life, or liberty. And the Invader again is in the like danger of another.<sup>33</sup>

For Hobbes, people leave the state of nature to protect their lives, because they cannot protect it as individuals. It is only after they have become part of a political body that their possession of things can be guaranteed.

The dominion of the commonwealth is thus the limits of sovereignty, the area within which the sovereign is able to protect those who are part of the political body. The territory comes into existence first, and then private property, which is really the distribution of the spoils of war, comes second. One of the implications of Hobbes's position is that the determination of private property is entirely in the power of the sovereign. There are no natural rights to things in the world with which a citizen can make a claim against the sovereign. As Hobbes writes,

In this distribution, the first law, is for division of the land itself: wherein the sovereign assigneth to every man a portion, according as he, and not according as any

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<sup>32</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, Volume III, page 188.

<sup>33</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, Volume III, page 184.

subject, or any number of them, shall judge agreeable to equity, and the common good.<sup>34</sup> With Hobbes, therefore, property is established through the absolute will of the sovereign, making no reference to the history of the property or even to principles of law or good government.

As with the Greek cities, the size of the commonwealth is always contested, in terms of both members (people) and land (territory). Warfare is a constant threat. Thus Hobbes, invoking the classical period as examples, writes of how the Athenians and the Romans

live in the condition of a perpetual war, and upon the confines of battle, with their frontiers armed, and cannons planted against their neighbours round about. The Athenians, and Romans were free; that is, free commonwealths: not that any particular men had the liberty to resist their own representative; but that their representative had the liberty to resist, or invade other people.<sup>35</sup>

One aspect of Hobbes's account of political space is that the spatial distinctions between sovereignties, rather than being single, thin lines, have depth, much like the Roman frontiers or the Greek farmlands. But the fluidity of territory is less evident in Hobbes's account.

We see all countries, though they be at peace with their neighbours, yet guarding their frontiers with armed men, their towns with walls and ports, and keeping constant watches.<sup>36</sup>

As with the classical world, the military importance of cities is connected to their status in relationship to the surrounding territory and to other cities. To dominate an area is not to directly dominate a border, but rather to dominate a city from which a frontier can be patrolled. And so in his account of the English civil war, Hobbes focuses on the acquisition and loss of cities.

In pursuit of this victory the English marched to Edinburgh (quitted by the Scots),

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<sup>34</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, Volume III, page 234.

<sup>35</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, Volume III, page 201.

<sup>36</sup> Hobbes, *Philosophical Rudiments*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, Volume II, page xv.

fortified Leith, and took in all the strength and castles they thought fit on this side the Frith, which now has become the bound betwixt the two nations.<sup>37</sup>

What is relevant to our discussion here is the physics of sovereignty that Hobbes offers. Castles and fortified cities are key to creating the kinds of pressure necessary for maintaining dominion or obedience. The primary goal of warfare, in other words, is to maintain sovereignty, not territory. Points on the terrain thus have a military value — rivers, hills, and cities are places where one side may gain an advantage over the other — but that is all. And so the smaller islands associated with Britain are collected, almost as an afterthought. In *Behemoth* Hobbes relates the consolidation of various islands.

This year also were reduced to the obedience of the Rump the islands of Scilly and Man, and the Barbadoes, and Saint Christopher's.<sup>38</sup>

One implication of Hobbes's account of politics is that there is no sense that the terrain has an impact on national identity, either in that the place gives rise to identity or in that the identity extends horizontally to the entire nation. What areas the sovereign controls is not an important concern. The contest in the English civil war is between factions who are fighting for control over cities, people and resources. The factions were not attempting to unite the island as an already-established, even natural, political and national unit. Geography is a terrain of forces, but does not exist as an already-existing, natural goal. In other words, war creates territories, it does not simply acquire them.

One possible exception to this account of Hobbes's articulation of political space can be found in *Behemoth*, in one of the few places where Hobbes considers the geographical shape of the world. He writes:

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<sup>37</sup> Hobbes, *Behemoth*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, Volume VI, page 374.

<sup>38</sup> Hobbes, *Behemoth*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, Volume VI, page 383.

It is strange to me, that England and Scotland being but one island, and their language almost the same, and being governed by one King, should be thought foreigners to one another.<sup>39</sup>

England and Scotland, which Hobbes elsewhere calls separate nations, ought to consider each other as neighbours who share many things, including an island. However, of the three primary criteria Hobbes gives for this imagined unity, the shared geographical area is at least second if not third in importance. While language and geographical proximity are important, the overriding basis for the political identity, for the creation of neighbourliness, is the existence of a shared sovereign power.

The second general account of the origins and character of sovereignty in 17th and 18th century political thought that will be considered here begins with an account of the society, and then moves to consider the creation of the state. Writers such as John Locke and Phillip Sidney can be located in this group. John Locke's account of political order, found primarily in the second *Treatise of Government*, appeals to the individual's absolute right to private property and to a foundational contract between members of the same society to create government.

Locke admits that God "has given the earth to the children of men; given it to mankind in common" but Locke also offers a way of dividing the common world into private property that does not depend on "any express compact of all the commoners."<sup>40</sup> For Locke, the appropriation of property is based on individuals mixing their labour with objects in the state of nature.

Whatsoever then he removes out of the state that nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Hobbes, *Behemoth*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, Volume VI, page 205.

<sup>40</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, in *The Works of John Locke*, Volume V, Section 25.

<sup>41</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, in *The Works of John Locke*, Volume V, Section 27.

Thus “he that is nourished by ... the apples he gathered from the trees in the wood has certainly appropriated them to himself.”<sup>42</sup> Another feature of Locke’s account of the state of nature comes to the fore as he continues his account of acquisition in the state of nature.

Thus the grass my horse has bit; the turfs my servant has cut; and the ore I have digged in any place, where I have a right to them in common with others, become my property, without the assignation or consent of any body.<sup>43</sup>

Next, Locke moves from the fruits of the earth to the earth itself. How can people legitimately claim to possess land? Locke again appeals to labour as the deciding criteria.

As much land as a man tills, plants, improves, cultivates, and can use the product of, so much is his property.<sup>44</sup>

The imperative to acquire land and cultivate it is based on Biblical authority.

God gave the world to men in common; but since he gave it them for their benefit, and the greatest conveniencies of life they were capable to draw from it, it cannot be supposed he meant it should always remain common and uncultivated. He gave it to the use of the industrious and rational ....<sup>45</sup>

Thus, Locke concludes,

He that in obedience to this command of God, subdued, tilled and sowed any part of it, thereby annexed to it something that was his property, which another had no title to, nor could without injury take from him.<sup>46</sup>

On Locke’s account, therefore, the borders of a person’s land are equivalent to

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<sup>42</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, in *The Works of John Locke*, Volume V, Section 28.

This image will be echoed by Kant.

<sup>43</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, in *The Works of John Locke*, Volume V, Section 28.

Note the presence of the servant in the state of nature. This will be discussed below.

<sup>44</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, in *The Works of John Locke*, Volume V, Section 32.

<sup>45</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, in *The Works of John Locke*, Volume V, Section 34.

<sup>46</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, in *The Works of John Locke*, Volume V, Section 32.

the borders of his labour (or the labour of his family and servants). This applies, however, only in the state of nature (and specifically in relation to waste lands). Thus, while the lands of England have already been enclosed, the lands of America (and the desolate parts of Spain) remain available for acquisition.

As with Hobbes, in Locke's narrative of the creation of the modern state, territory comes after the creation of sovereignty. Of course, *property* exists first, but this is private property, not territory. To become the territory of a state, these parcels of private property must be translated through the creation of a political system which, for Locke, is the contractual establishment of a judiciary and a minimal legislature. As he writes in the *Second Treatise on Government*,

civil government is the proper remedy for the inconveniencies of the state of nature, which must certainly be great, where men may be judges in their own case, since it is easy to be imagined, that he who was so unjust as to do his brother an injury, will scarce be so just as to condemn himself for it...<sup>47</sup>

Unlike Hobbes, whose state of nature is composed of isolated and generally hostile individuals, Locke's state of nature contains all the trappings of an extended bourgeois estate, in which the head of the household can be said to own other people's labour and therefore the products of that labour — the servant cutting turf. It has frequently been pointed out that the absolute power that Hobbes gives to the sovereign could be severely limited by Locke only because Locke places so much more political and social power into the state of nature itself. A "war of all against all" arising from profound fear has been replaced with the "inconveniencies" of squabbles arising from private property.

For Locke, the contiguity of the territory connected to a specific state arises from the joining together of individual plots of land. Territory, in other

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<sup>47</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, in *The Works of John Locke*, Volume V, Section 13.

words, is created by the accumulation of smaller pieces of land. However, Locke does not discuss the patchwork of sovereignties that could result from such a contractual arrangement. Why should people who live near each other join the same political body? Not only does Locke fail to address this question, it is not clear *that* he could address it in an adequate way, given the centrality of private property and the non-coercive origins of the legitimate state. And just as Locke cannot appeal to the coercive power of the sovereign, as Hobbes could, he also does not explicitly appeal to the prior existence of a national identity. There is society insofar as there are persistent relations between property-owners, but there is no sense of a politically relevant national identity in the state of nature — the English, for instance — that plays a relevant political role.

With Hobbes, Locke and Cook, therefore, we have three competing narratives of the creation of the modern political system, and in particular the connection between the territory, the people, and the state. Hobbes's account begins with the creation of the sovereign, then of the people, and then of the territory. Locke's account begins with the creation of the people, then the creation of the sovereign, and then of the territory. Cook, on the other hand, begins with the territory, then discusses the nation, and finally the sovereign. These three narratives have significantly different implications, specifically in terms of the modes of justification and the overall character of the political system.

To illustrate the importance of recognizing that these different narratives of the modern state are distinct, consider a recent work by Thomas Kuehls, entitled *Beyond Sovereign Territory*. Kuehls connects the account of the origins of the modern state to the challenges arising from the degradation of the global environment. Kuehls, whose primary interest is the contemporary destruction of the rain-forests by sovereign states and global

capitalism, appeals primarily to Locke's narrative, and in particular to relationship to the land that is offered in Locke's analysis of property. As Kuehls writes:

Sovereign territory, when read through Locke's defense of property rights, becomes an economically and ecologically specific concept. It must exhibit explicit signs of being worked in a particular manner in order to become sovereign territory.<sup>48</sup>

For Locke, the acquisition of private property is tied to an imperative to use the land in a particular way. Kuehls writes:

Locke considered land that is 'left wholly to nature that hath no improvement of pasturage, tillage, or planting' to be waste. The presence of large tracts of wasteland across the earth meant that all could put their labor to the land, claim property for themselves, and deprive no one of a means of subsistence.<sup>49</sup>

Locke, however, argues that, assuming people have acquired property legitimately, they and their inheritors can control the property forever. However, the property has to be *created* by people, it is not found in the world. Europeans were thus able to acquire property in North America because it was in a natural state (undivided and uncultivated), but they had to go there to do so. Within Locke's position, Brazil cannot claim to own the uncultivated land of the Amazon rainforest. Land that is not being cultivated is waste land, and thus available to anyone to turn into private property through labour. If the area is empty, then no one has turned the land into private property, and so no one could have brought the land with them into Brazil.

In Kuehls's account, sovereignty is articulated first, and then territory. But this sounds like Hobbes, not Locke. However, to suggest that the argument of the Brazilian government is Hobbesian is likewise questionable, primarily because the Brazilian claims to the Amazon rainforest are not

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<sup>48</sup> Kuehls, *Beyond Sovereign Territory*, page xii.

<sup>49</sup> Kuehls, *Beyond Sovereign Territory*, page 95.

primarily based on their ability to defend the area from outside aggressors. Rather, as Kuehls's analysis suggests, the control over the Amazon rainforest is based on the national identity of the Brazilians and the strong connection between that nation and that region. As a result, the position of the Brazilian government, combining as it does the national ownership of a natural region with the imperative to cultivate that land, is much closer to the account of politics that can be excavated from the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and that can be found throughout Cook's voyages.

In Rousseau, as with Montesquieu before him, geographical places acquire a new status, as both the nation and the state are tied back into a natural system of separations and unions among people. And as a result, the nation acquires a presence beyond and prior to the creation of the political order. In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau focuses on the creation of an intermediate group that is central to his account of political order: the nation. In Rousseau's writings, the people of the world are also divided into different nations, each with specific characteristics and possible futures. As Rousseau writes,

For nations, as for men, there is a time of maturity that must be awaited before subjecting them to the laws. But the maturity of a people is not always easily recognized; and if it is foreseen, the work is ruined. One people lends itself to discipline at its inception; another, not even after ten centuries.<sup>50</sup>

The size of the territory is an important factor.

Just as nature has set limits to the status of a well-formed man, beyond which there are but giants or dwarfs, so too, with regard to the best constitution of a state, there are limits to the size it can have....<sup>51</sup>

Likewise, in *The Government of Poland*, Rousseau argues that the size of

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<sup>50</sup> Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, in *Political Writings*, page 166.

<sup>51</sup> Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, in *Political Writings*, page 167.

the country should be reduced for the sake of its own internal coherence. He recommends to the Polish reformers that,

If you wish to reform your government, then, begin by narrowing your frontiers, though perhaps your neighbors intend to do that for you. It would certainly be a great misfortune for the dismembered parts, but a great blessing for the body of the nation.<sup>52</sup>

As with Locke and Hobbes, there is an overwhelming need for spatial coherence. In the *Social Contract* Rousseau argues that “once the state is instituted, residency implies consent. To inhabit the territory is to submit to sovereignty.”<sup>53</sup> But submitting to sovereignty is not the same for Rousseau as it was for Hobbes or Locke, who both articulated this submission in terms of simple conformity to sovereignty and its laws. For Rousseau, submitting to sovereignty is tied to being assimilated into the nation, understood as a single social and political unit. Being English or Scottish or Polish thus becomes one of the primary starting points for articulating the origins and character of sovereignty. It is for this reason that Rousseau is described as an early nationalist. Throughout Rousseau’s political writings there is a tendency to idealize a pure, uncontaminated society, in part through the organization of geographical space. Rousseau’s writings exist well within the discourse of city-states. His examples frequently return to ancient Greece and Rome and the idealized Geneva of his own time. The autonomous nation, with a coherent social identity, exists within the confines of a walled city, large enough to defend itself but not large enough to distance its inhabitants from each other.

The Romans? But they became conquerors out of necessity and, so to speak, in spite of themselves. War was a corrective measure forced on them by the peculiar vice of their constitution. They were an island of discipline in the midst of a sea of barbarism, always attacked and always victorious, and they became masters of the world by constantly defending themselves.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Rousseau, *The Government of Poland*, page 26.

<sup>53</sup> Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, in *Political Writings*, page 205.

Just as the island is an image of intellectual purity for Kant, the island is an image of political purity for Rousseau. In the *Social Contract*, after discussing what conditions are necessary for a proper social contract to be established, Rousseau offers a vision of what could happen.

In Europe there is still one country capable of receiving legislation. It is the island of Corsica. The valor and constancy with which this brave people has regained and defended its liberty would merit having some wise man teaching them how to preserve it. I have a feeling that some day this little island will astonish Europe.<sup>55</sup>

The fact that Corsica is an island may be circumstantial. However, given the importance of natural boundaries, shared climate, and national isolation in Rousseau's account of politics, islands offer the ideal conditions for the creation and maintenance of a people. The island is an image of isolation, separating a coherent people from the chaos of those who are not connected to distinct places or who do not have distinct identities.

Beginning with Rousseau's work, the island becomes the daydream of the nation-state. However, the ideal also ends up casting a cynical shadow over the possibilities of legitimate political order. There are not many islands in Europe, and most nations are beyond hope. Thus, while Rousseau's objections to the current political situation rail against the bloated states of western Europe and the confusion that can be found everywhere else, the appeal to the natural limits created by national identity and geography make workable alternatives all but impossible to imagine.

#### **4. The Native State in Cook's Voyage**

With this conceptual terrain in mind, it is possible to articulate Cook's voyages as offering a significant alternative to the 17th and 18th century understandings of politics. With Cook's voyages, the relationship between

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<sup>54</sup> Rousseau, *The Government of Poland*, page 80.

<sup>55</sup> Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, in *Political Writings*, page 170.

territory, nation, and state is reworked, not only in the order with which they are described in the narrative, but also in the relative importance they each have in constituting the identity of the whole. Territory, far from being secondary and always contested, is naturalized and given priority over the nation and the state. The territory is the first thing that is understood. For this reason, the articulation of sovereignty in Cook's voyages is more in line with Rousseau's work. However, while Rousseau's *Social Contract* offered an almost unattainable and currently non-existent ideal, Cook found that ideal, in an almost natural form, almost everywhere he went. But what is equally important is that Cook approached the question as a navigator and a cartographer rather than as an historian or a political theorist. As a result, the ideal of state in Cook's voyages arises more from the epistemological goals of accurate description than from the moral goals of political legitimacy.

In the last chapter we considered the way that the nation existed at the intersection of biology and geography. By constantly connecting natives to their islands, Cook's voyages naturalize the relationship of a specific kind of social group to a specific articulation of areas (fixed boundaries, homogeneous space). There are also times when a native national sentiment is described. Consider, for example, Forster's account of one event from the second voyage.

A native, who in all likelihood had never been on the beach before, came through the croud, and began to walk across the space which our people occupied. The sentry pushed him back among the rest of his brethren, who were already accustomed to this injurious treatment, and acquiesced in it. The new-comer, however, refused to be controlled on his own island by a stranger, he prepared once more to cross the area, perhaps with no other motive at present than that of asserting his liberty of walking where he pleased. The sentry drove him back once more, with a rude thrust sufficient to rouse a man much less irascible than a savage. He, to vindicate his right, laid an arrow on his bow, which he aimed at the (centinel) aggressor; but the soldier instantly levelled his musket, and shot him dead. Captain Cook landed in the same moment; he saw the

native fall, and many of his countrymen running off to hide themselves from the cruel and treacherous people who had polluted their island.<sup>56</sup>

Forster's account of this episode describes the native as protecting a collective property. The native is not angry for personal reasons, or reacting to personal harm, but is acting in terms of the collective national identity of the islanders (his brethren). Being a native of Tanna is thus not simply a personal characteristic or a natural grouping, it is the basis for collective actions.

In Cook's voyages, the identity of the nation moves from the walls of the city to the coasts of the island. Cook rarely finds "cities," although there are often centers of population. It is not the case in the South Pacific that the king rules his subjects by ruling the primary cities. The order of precedence changes: the king rules everyone within the territory, while the territory pre-exists both sovereigns and subjects. On a theme, Rousseau notes that where kings once claimed to rule people, they now claim to rule places.

One can imagine how the combined and continuous lands of private individuals became public territory; and how the right of sovereignty, extending from subjects to the land they occupied, becomes at once real and personal. This places its owners in a greater dependence, turning their very own forces into guarantees of their loyalty. This advantage does not seem to have been fully appreciated by the ancient monarchs, who, calling themselves merely King of the Persians, the Scythians, and the Macedonians, appeared to regard themselves merely as the leaders of men rather than the masters of the country. Today's monarchs more shrewdly call themselves King of France, Spain, England, and so on. In holding the land thus, they are quite sure of holding the inhabitants.<sup>57</sup>

With Cook's descriptions of nations and states, something similar to this political strategy is articulated as the natural order. First, there were island-

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<sup>56</sup> Forster, *A Voyage Round the World in His Britannic Majesty's Sloop, Resolution, Volume II*, page 352.

<sup>57</sup> Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, in *The Basic Political Writings*, page 152.

territories, which existed before humans arrived, and it was in these containers that nation-states were formed. One example of many is from the second voyage, where Cook emphasizes not only the spatial separation of islands, but also the way that some islands were even naturally fortified.

This island, and also that of Eaoowe, is guarded from the sea by a reef of coral rocks extending out from the shore one hundred fathoms more or less. On this reef the force of the sea is spent before it reaches the land or shore. Indeed, this is, in some measure, the situation of all the Tropical Isles in this sea that I have seen; and thus nature has effectually secured them from the encroachment of the sea, though many of them are mere points when compared to this vast ocean.<sup>58</sup>

The geographical divisions between points in the ocean thus become the foundation for the political and national divisions between people. It becomes possible to locate nation-states on maps, which not only places one nation in relationship to others, but also clearly and distinctly separates each nation. The articulation of the nation-state is thus built on a sense of space where there is, at least at first, neither overlap or mixture.

However, while the island is the primary form of geographical and political separation, Cook also describes similar divisions that appeal to other geographical forms, such as rivers and mountains. During the stay at Otaheite on the first voyage, for instance, Cook notes that

we reached a low neck of land, or isthmus, at the bottom of the bay, that divides the island into two peninsulas, each of which is a district or government wholly independent of the other.<sup>59</sup>

One thing that is interesting in this passage is the idea that an isthmus divides one place from another, rather than connects them. Cook may count only one island, but he is articulating the world as if it were two islands, perhaps encouraged by the political divisions. The division created by the

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<sup>58</sup> Admiralty, *Voyages*, Volume III, page 219.

<sup>59</sup> Admiralty, *Voyages*, Volume I, page 158

isthmus, therefore, is evidence of a pervasive need to find the political and geographical worlds divided in equal and correlated shapes.

As someone who is interested in presenting a complete and accurate account of the world — geographical, biological and political — the islands and other physical divisions are a godsend. Rather than having to be concerned with investigating where one place begins and another ends, Cook typically takes those borders for granted and focus on describing the character of the nation and the identity of the sovereign thus contained.

By coming to the description of the state so late in his articulation of places, Cook's voyages face the opposite problem that Hobbes does. In Hobbes, the sovereign is obvious: it is a spectacular entity whose presence in the body politic must be pervasive and visible for it to work as a sovereign at all. In Cook's voyages, on the other hand, one of the key problems is with finding out who the sovereign is. There are no major cities, but the territory is obvious. The reliability of the maps exists alongside Cook's own claims that he either does not know or does not understand the political order. In fact, Cook often claims in his narratives that the political order, along with the religious beliefs, is one of the hardest things for an outsider to give an account of. He writes in the third voyage, for instance, that

We are utter strangers to their religion; and but little acquainted with their government. They seem to have chiefs among them; at least some were pointed out to us by that title; but, as I before observed, they appeared to have very little authority over the rest of the people.<sup>60</sup>

Often, the government is quickly identified, if only to Cook's satisfaction. At other times, however, Cook finds natives who seem to live outside of any kind of sovereignty. For instance, during the narrative of the second voyage he writes:

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<sup>60</sup> Admiralty, *Voyages*, Volume IV, page 76.

I am satisfied that the people in this Sound, who are, upon the whole, pretty numerous, are under no regular form of government, or so united as to form one body politic.<sup>61</sup>

In a Hobbesian world, this situation is all but unthinkable. The lack of government implies the war of all against all. With Locke, on the other hand, the situation is at least possible, but only within an already-existing system of private property. However, the account in Cook's voyages suggests a much more complicated sense of the nation. The people in this sound are not simply individual property owners tolerating the inconveniences that arise from no central government. There are customs, interactions, and a language. What is lacking, however, is a sovereign power to enforce a legal and moral order, and to mediate the relationship between that nation and the outside.

While Cook is often unable to describe the specific character of the government, he is able to offer, to the highest degree of accuracy, the outline of the territory. There is thus an interesting inversion in what Cook can confidently describe. Cook's account of sovereignty moves very quickly between absolute certainty and almost complete confusion, a movement which is made possible by the way that the territory, the nation, and the state are described and related. During the second voyage he says that

It is to be regretted, that we know little more of this government than the general outline; for, of its subdivisions, classes, or orders of the constituent parts, how disposed, or in what manner connected, so as to form one body politic, we know but little.<sup>62</sup>

Having mapped the territory and described the nation, the account of government, however much cloaked in confusion, can be contained within an extensive and reliable account of other aspects of the entity under consideration. The state, even if poorly understood, thus exists in the shadow of certainty, as always connected back to cartographical and astronomical

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<sup>61</sup> Admiralty, *Voyages*, Volume IV, page 147.

<sup>62</sup> Admiralty, *Voyages*, Volume III, page 347, see also an example in Admiralty, *Voyages*, Volume V, page 457.

measurements that can be verified and made ever-more accurate. To those who might be suspicious of Cook's account of the sovereign dominion, Cook can describe the identity of the nation. To those who wonder about the coherence of the nation, Cook can respond with the clear and distinct shapes on his maps. And to those who question the reliability of his maps, Cook can offer a table of coordinates, a description of his instruments and methods, as well as a gauntlet, challenging the sceptics to verify the measurements for themselves.

Often, Cook identifies the sovereign of a specific island with little hesitation or doubt. In these instances, an important political bias becomes evident. Cook's understanding of political order is centered on monarchy and all but rules out the possibility of other systems. In the second voyage Cook writes of one island that

I am of opinion that the government is much like that of Otaheite; that is, in a king or great chief, who is here called Areeke, with other chiefs under him, who are lords of certain districts, and perhaps sole proprietors, to whom the people seem to pay great obedience.

One important way that Cook identifies the king is by noting how the natives treat each other. Can some people command or at least influence others? Are some people respected more than others? In the third voyage Cook describes a person who

sent to one place for fish, to another for yams, and so on, at other places; and all his orders were obeyed with the greatest readiness, as if he had been absolute master of the people's property.<sup>63</sup>

In the second voyage Cook writes:

I was told by the officers who were on shore, that a far greater man than any we had yet seen was come to pay us a visit. Mr. Pickersgill informed me that he had seen him in the country, and found that he was a man of some consequence, by the extraordinary

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<sup>63</sup> Admiralty, *Voyages*, Volume V, page 382

respect paid him by the people.<sup>64</sup>

Cook also tries to determine who the monarch is by asking the natives themselves. How this is achieved varies from place to place, and tends to be relied upon only after the Europeans have gained some acquaintance with the people and the language. And so Cook notes in the second voyage that

I have frequently mentioned a king, which implies the government being in a single person, without knowing for certain whether it is so or not. Such an one was, however, pointed out to us; and we had no reason to doubt it.<sup>65</sup>

The account of the voyages typically do not contain any direct representations of the dialogs that occurred, but readers may nonetheless wonder whether Cook's questions were understood clearly. There are certainly times when the answers that were given were later found to be wrong, such as when a more powerful or more respected person comes on to the scene, and the prior king is relocated as a secondary figure. Other times, however, the answers seem to be accurate, but the results confusing. For instance, Ellis writes during the third voyage that

This circumstance appeared very strange to us, no less than three people having been pointed out to us as king.<sup>66</sup>

In the accounts of sovereignty dominant in Europe at the time, there cannot be three kings. Behind these interactions is a sense of confusion, and, more than confusion, a sense that the western political categories may not be appropriate for the South Pacific. But Cook's voyages do not pursue this question. Instead, the possible complexity of the political system is turned into a question of intensity. If there are three kings on the island, it is because there are no kings, only three people with limited power and a series of confused or deceitful natives. Thus Cook describes, at least tentatively, the

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<sup>64</sup> Admiralty, *Voyages*, Volume III, page 213.

<sup>65</sup> Admiralty, *Voyages*, Volume III, page 228.

<sup>66</sup> Ellis, *Authentic Narrative*, Volume I, page 73.

people who attended the Tahitian king in terms of modern European monarchies.

We have been told, that the Eowas, who have the first rank, attend in their turns, a certain number each day, which occasioned us to call them lords in waiting; but whether this was really so, I cannot say.<sup>67</sup>

There are no democracies or aristocracies in Cook's world. There are powerful leaders, lords in waiting, and prime ministers, but these are all located in a monarchical system, however obscured or ill-formed. Thus, rather than articulating a variety of political systems, even ones that can be found in European thought, Cook focuses on the presence or absence of a single ideal system: there is either a government or there is not, and the government is either a clear or a confused monarchy.

The articulation of the political order has therefore become turned into a problem of description, tied to a specific model of national sovereignty. The king is the person who can command the greatest amount of respect or authority. Connecting to the functional account of the nation, which personified the nation as a single coherent entity, the king is thus the head of the political body, and can be identified through direct observation. Cook's assumption that government is monarchical connects to the tendency for the monarch to be included in the narrative as an individual. Not only is the monarch important, and therefore worthy of respect, but also the monarch is an individual because government, if it exists at all, must ultimately have an individual at its pinnacle. The other natives that are individuals in the narrative, typically labelled as either ministers or friends, acquire their individuality through their relationship to the sovereign power, either of the native monarch or of Cook.

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<sup>67</sup> Admiralty, *Voyages*, Volume III, page 347.

The tone of Cook's description of native political systems is important insofar as it reinforces several significant themes that will be raised later in this discussion. Specifically, Cook's voyages adopt a tone of paternalism, persistently emphasizing the immaturity and under-development of the political systems of the South Pacific. In the third voyage, for instance, Cook notes how the sovereign authority along the coast of North America has not developed beyond the extended family.

But, I should guess, the authority of each of these great men extends no farther than the family to which he belongs, and who own him as their head.<sup>68</sup>

Severe criticisms of uncivilized nations are implied by this account. Cook does not simply describe the authority structures, he is also constantly tying those descriptions back to an ideal in which sovereignty not only extends beyond the family, but also controls human life beyond direct physical threats. A nation needs both a strong sovereign and self-discipline. Marra echoes this concern when he writes that

Few of the common men therefore chose to wander among the woods and deserts where nothing was to be hoped, but much to be apprehended from the treachery of the natives, who, friendly as they may appear to be when awed by fear, are not to be trusted when under no restraint.<sup>69</sup>

The ideal description is thus closely tied to the ideal situation. Cook is searching for strong sovereigns, not only because his description is incomplete without them, but also because the world is imperfect until they exist. To debate the key issues of political philosophy, in other words, it was possible, if not necessary, to appeal to the already existing and natural attributes of space. Of course, it is not that people suddenly recognized a relationship between geography and politics, as if it was only in the late 18th century that the British realized that they lived on an island, or that the

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<sup>68</sup> Admiralty, *Voyages*, Volume VI, page 306.

<sup>69</sup> Marra, *Journal of the Resolution's Voyage in 1771 - 1775*, page 102.

English Channel suddenly became an important site of demarcation. Rather, the identification of the British, the feelings of nationalism, and the statistics of the nation, became the object of a diverse set of political and social projects, which were tied back to changes in navigation, mapping and description. The character of the nation became a core political concern once the geographical borders became clear and distinct. In other words, the change that came about is that geography became more than a topic, it became the origin of an ideal and the basis of an analysis.

## **5. Kant**

In Cook's voyages, the connection between places, peoples and states is not only an epistemological ideal. The value that Cook places on the maintenance of order on the islands and his own ships is enough to suggest that the ideal connection is also political. But Cook is not a political theorist, and while those who are involved in producing the published accounts of Cook's voyages were often closely connected to political power, their immediate goals were scientific. However, while the articulations of politics in the texts that surround the voyages are typically limited to recounting people and events, the implications of the voyages for political philosophy can nonetheless be traced in the writings of some of Cook's contemporaries and of writers throughout the 19th century. What I am proposing here, at least in a general way, is a contrast between, say, 17th and 19th century political philosophy, where the texts of Cook's voyages are used as an important marker for the change in the conceptual terrain on which political philosophy rests. We have already discussed some of the key thinkers that were writing before Cook's voyages, such as Hobbes and Locke. A significant political thinkers who can be connected to the voyages, and whose writings were influential throughout the 19th century, was one of Cook's

contemporaries: Immanuel Kant.

There are several important biographical facts that can be offered to suggest a preliminary connection. Kant and Cook were contemporaries. Kant was born in 1724, while Cook was born in 1728. The admiralty's edition of Cook's first voyage was published in German in 1774 and the second voyage in 1778, the year of Cook's death. Kant published his first major work, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, in 1781 and continued to write until the year of his death, in 1804. Kant's political works, which consider how human beings are manifested "in the world of phenomena,"<sup>70</sup> were thus published primarily in the 1770s and 1780s, at the time when Cook's voyages were a common currency in European intellectual communities. Also, George Forster, who returned to Germany in the 1780s, frequently appealed to Cook's voyages in his writings. Kant and Forster engaged in an extended debate over the status of race as a descriptive category,<sup>71</sup> and Forster's influence can be noticed among Kant's contemporaries, such as Herder and Humboldt.<sup>72</sup> Thus, even if Kant was not directly influenced by Cook's voyages, he was nonetheless engaging with people who had been influenced by them.

It is significant to note at the beginning of our analysis that accounts of Kant's discussion of territory, nations and states is not something that can be readily found in the secondary literature. There is ample concern for Kant's republicanism and cosmopolitanism. There is widespread concern for how Kant articulates politics as a system of rights or as a kingdom of ends, and

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<sup>70</sup> Kant, *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*, in *Political Writings*, page 41.

<sup>71</sup> See, for instance, Strack's "Philosophical Anthropology on the Eve of Biological Determinism: Immanuel Kant and Georg Forster on the Moral Qualities and Biological Characteristics of the Human Race."

<sup>72</sup> See Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, page 203.

how Kant connects those rights both to the enlightenment and the intersection of law and ethics. But when it comes to consider Kant's articulation of space, the commentators focus on the discussion of space as a form of sensory intuition in *the Critique of Pure Reason*, and when it comes to consider Kant's articulation of nations, the commentators are largely silent. To consider the connection between the nation, the state and territory in Kant's writings, therefore, it is necessary to work against the tendencies of the commentators, and perhaps to move Kant's arguments in directions that they are not used to go.

The importance of the nation as a basis for political order is evident when Kant discusses the legitimacy of republican forms of government. The point that needs to be established here is not that Kant is a republican thinker, a claim that is largely uncontroversial, but also that his account of republicanism is based on the priority he gives to territorial national identities. The importance of nations will help connect Kant to Cook's voyages. In *The Contest of the Faculties*, for instance, Kant writes that

there is the right of every people to give itself a civil constitution of the kind that it sees fit, without interference from other powers.<sup>73</sup>

The right to self-determination is not a right held by individuals, but by peoples. The political system is thus not simply an arrangement of rights between individuals (as it is with Hobbes and Locke), but rather an arrangement of rights among members of the same national group. The state is both a legal and political entity that establishes the proper organization of its members. The articulation of a political order is primarily the articulation of a system of rights, with an account of where rights come from and how they can be changed. To this point, Kant is similar to Hobbes and Locke. But an important difference arises when the political order is placed in relation to

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<sup>73</sup> Kant, *The Contest of the Faculties*, in *Political Writings*, page 182.

human society, or in Kant's terms when the commonwealth is understood as a nation. In *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant summarizes the form of the state as follows:

Because of its form, by which all are united through their common interest in being in a rightful condition, a state is called a commonwealth (*res publica latius sic dicta*). In relation to other peoples, however, a state is called simply a power (*potentia*) (hence the word potentate). Because the union of the members if (presumed to be) one they inherited, a state is also called a nation (*gens*).<sup>74</sup>

Republicanism in Kant's writing is not a specific form of government, but rather the proper relationship between the citizen and the sovereign. Whether monarchic, aristocratic or democratic, a republican government is one in which the people (as a group) are represented by a government. The alternative is despotism, in which there is no presumed connection beyond domination between the rulers and the people. As a result, whereas Hobbes and Locke offer a thin account of human society prior to the establishment of regular government, Kant, much like Rousseau, places considerable emphasis on the nation, with its specific history and location.

As with Rousseau, Kant articulates a global vision of humanity based on national divisions that frequently depend on natural, or at least naturalized, geographical divisions. One relevant text here is Kant's *Philosophical Anthropology from a Pragmatic Perspective*, a book which is based on notes from a course that Kant had taught from the late 1760s and finally published in 1797.<sup>75</sup> The first main portion of the work is devoted to articulating the nations of Europe. In this discussion, the exemplary nations are England and France. As he writes:

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<sup>74</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, page 89.

<sup>75</sup> Kant, *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View*, page ix. The version that was published was the last version, which makes it impossible to note any development in the course notes through time.

Since the coastlines of England and France are close to each other and separated only by a channel (which could well be called a sea), the rivalry of these two people nevertheless produces in each of them a different turn of political character in their conflict: on one side apprehension, and on the other hatred.<sup>76</sup>

As with Rousseau, the divisions between peoples is a question of space as well as a question of character, language and custom. Kant focuses on the coast and the channel to mark the distinction between France and England. The other peoples of Europe that he considers, such as the Italians, the Spaniards and the Poles, are not completely separate nations, but are instead the result of mixtures.

The Spaniard, born of the mixture of European with Arabic (Moorish) blood, shows a certain solemnity in his bearing, both in public and in private, and even the peasant shows an awareness of his dignity in the presence of his betters, to whom he is obedient.<sup>77</sup>

“The Spaniard,” then, while still a recognizable national identity, is nonetheless the result of a combination of two prior identities. Kant’s terminology here is a bit ambiguous: is “the European” a national identity or something more general, which is also shared by nations such as England and France?

Kant continues his list of national identities, gradually moving to the south and to the east. While “the Spaniard” still has a coherent character, other countries farther away from the English Channel fair worse.

Russia has not yet reached the stage where we could form a definite concept of what natural tendencies lie ready to develop. Poland is no longer at this stage. But the nationals of European Turkey never have attained and never will attain what is necessary to acquire a specific popular character. So we are properly excused from sketching these peoples.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Kant, *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View*, page 178. See Darian-Smith’s *Bridging Divides: the Channel Tunnel and English Legal Identity in the New Europe*.

<sup>77</sup> Kant, *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View*, page 178.

In his *Anthropology*, Turkey is as far afield as Kant takes the discussion. In other places, however, he considers the various South Pacific nations, and in particular the New Zealander and the Tahitian. Here, however, the move from clear identities to mixed identities is reversed. The nations of the South Pacific are primitive, but they are not mixed; rather, they are naturally pure.

What is most interesting for the discussion here is not whether Kant's account of these nations is accurate, but that the values that he weaves into the account are so close to the ideals of both Rousseau and of Cook's voyages. As an epistemological ideal, it is only clear and distinct nations that can be well-described, so as Kant's account moves from England to Turkey, it also moves from the most intelligible to the least. As a political ideal, it is the clear and distinct nations that are the best candidates for having governments of their own, and it is these nations that are to become the core of Kant's cosmopolitan order.

In Kant's account of the origins of political order, the nation becomes a civil society through a social contract that establishes a republican government. But how does the nation relate to its territory? Before considering Kant's account, we should recall how Hobbes appealed to a territorial war that occurred after the social contract had taken place, where the commonwealth consolidates its area, and how Locke appealed to the already-existing private property of those who enter into the social contract. For both writers, the contract (or at submission) is an essential condition for the creation of sovereign territory. There are times when Kant's account echoes the ones offered by Hobbes and Locke, appealing sometimes to warfare and sometimes to the social contracts that consolidates private property. However, at other times, Kant's discussion organizes the relationship between nations and places in geographical and anthropological terms that

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<sup>78</sup> Kant, *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View*, page 181.

are much closer to those that pervade Cook's voyages.

We will start with what has been taken as the most direct account of the creation of national territory in Kant's work, which begins with private property in a pre-political world and then articulates the nation's territory as the accumulation of this property into a single political unit. In the opening sections of *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant considers how it is possible for someone to possess external objects, that is to say, how private property is to be understood. Kant frames his discussion with the assumption that at first all human beings owned the earth in common. With this assumption, an account of private property must consider at least two key issues: how objects become connected to one individual rather than another, and how the world becomes divided into separate objects that can be possessed at all.

Kant's account of the acquisition of land in *The Metaphysics of Morals* parallels to some extent the one offered by Locke in the *Two Treatises on Government*. Both writers begin with individual's acquiring private property. The key difference is that whereas Locke focuses on cultivation as the key for translating common property into private property, Kant focuses on protection. As he writes:

The question arises, how far does authorization to take possession of a piece of land extend? As far as the capacity for controlling it extends, that is, as far as whoever wants to appropriate it can defend it — as if the land were to say, if you cannot protect me you cannot command me.<sup>79</sup>

The personification of the land in this passage is important, not only because it helps establish something like a legal-moral relationship between people and places, but also because it re-enforces the separation of one place from another. Kant continues by appealing directly to military force.

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<sup>79</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, page 52.

My possession extends as far as I have the mechanical ability, from where I reside, to secure my land against encroachment by others.<sup>80</sup>

The original distribution of land arises from individual warfare, or at least the threat of warfare, centered around an already established residence.

Forgetting for a moment whether this narrative is even plausible — how, for instance, does it differ from Hobbes’s account of a similar state of war in the state of nature in which both protection and residence is impossible? — one thing that Kant establishes with this image is a specific sense of bordered space that is clear and distinct. Even cultivation can produce overlaps and conflicts. Protection, on the other hand, may be morally and militarily tentative, but it is not ambiguous: the range of a cannon or some other machine marks the divisions.

But the initial acquisition of property is only the beginning of Kant’s account. Kant argues that, although we can acquire a tract of land by taking possession of it, a rational title to land depends on the agreement of everyone. We cannot put others under an obligation to respect our property claims (that is, we cannot acquire a right against them) prior to civil society. “Hence,” Kant argues, “original acquisition can be only provisional.”<sup>81</sup> As a result, one of the primary functions of civil society is to bring people together into a legal and moral agreement where initially provisional property is ultimately confirmed. There are two distinct levels of agreement: the first is civil, the second is cosmopolitan.

Before considering Kant’s cosmopolitanism, it is important to pause and consider how the intermediate agreements between people are not only civil, but also national. Unfortunately, Kant’s account of property (of both how objects are created that can be owned, and how it is decided who owns

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<sup>80</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, page 56.

<sup>81</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, page 52.

what) moves quickly from personal to national ownership without offering an account of how they are connected. Rather, Kant appeals to two distinct stories: the first of individual acquisition of specific objects, the second of collective acquisition of territory. There are thus times in Kant's discussion where the territory of the nation-state is not simply the accumulation of private property, but rather the nation exists in its own right, and owns territory in the same way that individuals do. In *The Metaphysics of Morals*, for instance, Kant claims that the principle of control

is how the dispute over whether the sea is free or closed also has to be decided; for example, as far as a cannon shot can reach no one may fish, haul up amber from the ocean floor, and so forth, along the coast of a territory that already belongs to a certain state.<sup>82</sup>

Territory belongs to a certain state. The shift to nation-states as the agents of protection resolves the problem of protection that arose in Hobbes's state of nature. Individuals are incapable of protecting anything for any length of time, but states can, and even though Kant begins his articulation of property with individual acquisition, the acquisition that is carried out by groups offers Kant a much more plausible narrative to respond to Hobbes's challenge.

One issue that arises from combining these two narratives of ownership is whether Kant can have both systems of property at the same time: one that divides the world into private property and the other that divides the world into national territories. For Hobbes, the issue would not arise insofar as all property became organized at the level of the nation-state, whereas for Locke the issue would not arise because all property was organized at the level of the individual. For Kant, the ability to move from individual to collective acquisition is based on the natural organization of human beings into geographically distinct areas. As Rousseau's argument may also allow, individual and national ownership are reconciled by

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<sup>82</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, page 52.

appealing to the natural divisions of human beings into nations, so that the organization of individual property corresponds to the organization of national property, and that the movement from one to the other is simply a movement of levels. But the nation at this point is not simply a social contract between individuals, it is also anthropological and geographical.

It may be objected that there are two ways of reconciling personal and national property rights. The first, which is Rousseau's response, is with a strong nationality, to which individuals and their private property conform. The second, which is Locke's response, is with a very weak nationality, in which the national territory corresponds to the accumulation of private property because the nation is nothing but the accumulation of private property. All that Kant's position must reject, at least to this point, is that the national and the individual claims to land do not line up. The individual and the collective must be part of the same geographical and political system. To decide whether Kant is closer to Locke or Rousseau, therefore, it is necessary to focus on Kant's discussion of the nation, and consider whether national identities are more than the accumulation of individuals.

Kant only hints at an account of the origins of nations. In *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant defines a nation as "a multitude of human beings living in proximity to one another."<sup>83</sup> While this definition may seem trivial, it relies on the assumption that proximity is something that occurs naturally, what Kant calls "a necessary result of their [people's] existence on the earth." If, on the other hand, the earth's surface were an unbounded plane, "people could be so dispersed on it that they would not come into any community with one another"<sup>84</sup> and so never be formed into nationalities. But the world is in fact bounded, and therefore human beings

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<sup>83</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, page 123.

<sup>84</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, page 50.

are organized into nations. Proximity must therefore function in two opposite directions: first in joining together some people and second in separating that group from an outside which is not proximate. Of course, this is easy to establish with islands, or by pointing to channels, but its application to continents is rather more awkward. Yet if the nation and the state are connected to territory, and if territory is what creates the proximity necessary for the nation and the state to arise, then the separation of one territory from another — the existence of a territory as a thing that is already divided from other territories — is essential.

One persistent image of political space in Kant's writings is his appeal to the image of insularity. Not only do mixtures between nations indicate a lack of identity, the identity itself is best formed in enclosed areas. As Kant argues in *Perpetual Peace*,

Thus nature wisely separates the nations, although the will of each individual state, even basing its arguments on international right, would gladly unite them under its own sway by force or by cunning.<sup>85</sup>

Kant appeals to the geographical separation of peoples, as they are connected to specific and different tracts of land, to articulate a universalized principle of natural and national ownership. In the *Metaphysics of Morals* Kant asks:

Can two neighboring peoples (or families) resist each other in adopting a certain use of land, for example, can a hunting people resist a pasturing people or a farming people, or the latter resist a people that wants to plant orchards, and so forth?

His answer, which assumes the natural existence of both peoples and places, is:

Certainly, since as long as they keep within their boundaries the way they want to live on their land is up to their own discretion.<sup>86</sup>

In other words, so long as the lands do not overlap, it is possible for diversity

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<sup>85</sup> Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, in *Political Writings*, page 114.

<sup>86</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, page 53.

to exist. The more awkward issues, such as whether people can share land, or not connect to any specific land or connect to the same land in different ways, are not raised in the discussion. All that Kant establishes here is that different nations can co-exist as neighbours, so long as they keep to themselves. It is significant that Kant discusses the relationship between peoples in terms of whether “they keep within their boundaries” and not in terms of their ability to continue to protect those boundaries. In other words, while Kant narrates the origins of private property in terms of protection, when he turns to consider the nation, he argues that there are natural boundaries which separate nations from each other. Thus, in *The Metaphysics of Morals* Kant claims that the victors in a just war

are not called upon to divide its territory among themselves and to make the state, as it were, disappear from the earth, since that would be an injustice against its people.<sup>87</sup>

Kant likewise argues that it is wrong for Europeans to take land from natives, however savage. He writes that

it can still be asked whether, when neither nature nor chance but just our own will brings us into the neighborhood of a people that holds out no prospect of a civil union with it, we should not be authorized to found colonies, by force if need be, in order to establish a civil union with them and bring these human beings (savages) into a rightful condition (as with the American Indians, the Hottentots, and the inhabitants of New Holland); or (which is not much better), to found colonies by fraudulent purchase of their land, and so become owners of their land, making use of our superiority without regard for their first possession.<sup>88</sup>

Kant is not attacking the desire to enlighten other peoples and the moralizing despotism that could result. Instead, the paragraph establishes limits to the ways that one people can intervene in the lives of other peoples and places. Kant thus articulates the political spaces of the world in terms of nations and

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<sup>87</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, page 119.

<sup>88</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, page 53.

protection, in which national entities form *a priori* bonds with specific tracts of land through their ability to resist incursions by other nations. And this is, or at least ought to be, the case for all the nations and places in the world. But there is a tension here between the importance of protection as the foundation of legitimate ownership and the close connection between nations and places. On the one hand, non-European peoples clearly *cannot* protect themselves from Europeans. As a result, the connection that Kant draws between protection and property suggests that the mechanical power of European nations legitimates any kind of colonial intervention. If people cannot protect their land, then even the land will tell them that they do not belong there. On the other hand, Kant argues that the reason it is wrong to take land from the natives is because they already own it, at least provisionally.

In the same way that the civil union helps to confirm property arrangements within the state, Kant argues that a cosmopolitan union confirms property arrangements around the world. There are two distinct levels of reconciliation. The first is what occurs within the nation-state, where members accept the property-relations internal to that nation. The second, which depends on the political and moral effectiveness of nations, is what occurs between nations in a cosmopolitan world system. Having established the identity of nations, and having given them some sort of state, Kant turns to the ocean and images of oceanic navigation to bring the nations together.

Although the seas might seem to remove nations from any community with one another, they are the arrangements of nature most favoring their commerce by means of navigation; and the more coastlines these nations have in the vicinity of one another (as in the Mediterranean), the more lively their commerce can be.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, page 121.

The progress of history is the progress of ever-increasing connections between nations. Sometimes, these connections are brought about through warfare, and sometimes through economic exchange.

The peoples of the earth have thus entered in varying degrees into a universal community, and it has developed to the point where a violation of rights in one part of the world is felt everywhere.<sup>90</sup>

The result, for Kant, is a repetition of the civil contract at the level of nations. As he writes,

abandoning a lawless state of savagery and entering a federation of peoples in which every state, even the smallest, could expect to derive its security and rights not from its own power or its own legal judgement, but solely from this great federation.<sup>91</sup>

As may be evident by now, to label Kant as a cosmopolitan thinker is inaccurate. He is rather a a cosmo-nationalist thinker. He rarely writes about cities, and these are never the primary political units. Rather, the primary relationship is between the cosmos and the nation. And while the move to a global federation of nations may shift some political power (the state) beyond the nation, the nation itself continues to exist as the primary building block of a global system of identities. As we will see in the next chapter, the image of the cosmopolitan world parallels the image of the collected world, in which each of the isolated, coherent political entities are brought together in a single table of relations.

## **6. The 19th Century Account of the State**

Cook maps an area, labels the nation, finds its rulers, and positions his ship, his crew and himself in relation to the island, the natives and the monarch. His confidence is infectious, while his claims to know a place,

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<sup>90</sup> Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, in *Political Writings*, page 108.

<sup>91</sup> Kant, *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*, in *Political Writings*, page 47.

apparently so certain and complete, become the epitome of what it means to know any place. Kant has been an appropriate example of the appeal to geographical as the basis for national identity. But as the ideal of the nation-state extends through the 19th century, the basic epistemological and political categories of Cook's voyages extend as well.

There is an obvious objection to using Cook's voyages to explain changes in 19th century European accounts of the state: How can any single author or text be so important and yet be so absent in the discussions themselves? The books may have been popular, but no political philosopher appeals to Cook's account of politics, and although there are references to events or identities that can be traced back to descriptions in Cook's voyages, these are incidental references at best. Of course, it could be argued that these "incidental references" suggest how pervasive the voyages were, much in the way that Said's discussion of imperialism used incidental references to Antigua in Austen's novels to suggest the pervasiveness of imperialism in late 18th century England. France, Germany, and Britain were more important topics, but New Holland and Tahiti persistently existed at the margins. Writers in the 19th century could take the descriptions of places in Cook's voyages for granted, not only of ready examples of primitive human conditions, but also of the ideal scientific description of national identities, with which any serious political philosopher would have to engage.

Another response to the absence of references to Cook, which connects back to the discussion of authorship in the second chapter, is that most of the important epistemological activity in Cook's voyages were not Cook's, at least insofar as the production of knowledge on the ships used techniques that were developed by others. Cook is the voice of the narrative, but not of the world-view. The justification of the world-view in the voyages, in fact, has been shifted so much towards instruments and self-evidence that there is no

sense of an epistemological shift at all in the published accounts of the voyages. Cook is describing the world as he found it. He is making no claims to originality, only mastery.

While the islands of the South Pacific needed states, Europe needed nations, or at least they needed nations and states that were better defined. Of course, the idea that nations had places was not new. What changed in the 19th century, however, was the clarity with which those borders had to be articulated. It is thus relevant to notice that it was not until the 19th century that the borders of the nation states were re-worked by cartographers, surveyors and politicians. And their ideal was the ideal of the island: sharp divisions, preferably natural, that created distance and separation, if only through markers and the map.<sup>92</sup> Hence Cook's voyages, as the epitome of the scientific exploration narrative, are organized by a conceptual frame that becomes pervasive in the articulations and idealizations of politics in European thought. While it will be impossible here to trace out these connections in any detail, we can suggest at the very least how the voyages resonate with romantics and social scientists in the 19th century.

But what does it mean to find the ontological commitments of Cook's voyages in other texts? Given that very few people directly reference either Cook or his companions, what should be looked for in these other works to suggest at least the possibility of a connection? There are several basic claims which have been discussed. The first is the focus on the nation as the primary human group, which is then strongly connected back to a specific, naturally occurring place in the world, and strongly connected forward to a specific political system. Finally, encircling this triad are pervasive systems of nature and knowledge, in which the connections between places, nations and states

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<sup>92</sup> One example of the clarification of borders in the 19th century is Peter Sahlins's *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrennes*.

are ideally explained in terms of natural laws and where the entire system is subject to a comprehensive scientific analysis of those laws and their manifestations in particular instances. These claims form the ideal object of Cook's analysis, and it is also the ideal of 19th century nation-states.

In opposition to historians of ideas who locate the rise of the nation-state in the turmoil of the French Revolution, Benedict Anderson has argued that important aspects of nationalism arose in the Spanish colonies of South America. The relationship between Cook's voyages and the nation-state adds to the global origins of the ideal by pointing to the connection between the ideals of the nation state and the descriptions of the islands of the South Pacific. Thus dominant themes in 19th century political thought, focusing on the nation-state, operated within a vision of the world where nations were naturally occurring entities, tied to geographically distinct places. If this characterization is correct, then one important aspect of Cook's voyages is that they will show how the entire conceptual framework holds together, how nationalism is tied to social sciences, how specific geographical formations became idealized, and how these formations were constructed where they could not be found. The island was not only the day-dream of the nation-state, it was an intellectual condition that made the nation-state intelligible.

In the 19th century, the ideal connection between places, peoples and states was forcefully advocated by Romantic thinkers. Writers such as Fichte, Herder, and Humboldt articulated the world as a series of nations, internally coherent and externally distinguished from every other nation. The natural border, coupled with the influences of climates, resources and histories, offered a natural account of large-scale human communities that had not yet become fully conscious of their own existence. Tennyson's "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" includes the lines:

Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set  
His Briton in blown seas and storming showers.<sup>93</sup>

While the South Pacific islanders were positioned as the best examples of pure, natural, and unconscious nations, the people of Europe, and western Europe in particular, were positioned as the best examples of developed, conscious nations, which could not only look back on their own history, but also compare themselves, in a methodical way, with the other nations of the world. The connection between place and identity became a central political concern, and deepening this connection, drawing more inspiration from an imagined autochthonous identity, becomes the central political project. What Romantic political thought attempted to do, in other words, was to recreate the earliest natural connections between a people and a place, as a way to naturalize and purify a nation. As a result, they attempted to offer the kind of information that Cook could offer about the character of South Pacific nations “before European influence” had corrupted them.

But the nation was not only a central concept to the romantics, who tended to support the French Revolution, it was also a central concept for those who opposed both the romantics and the revolution. The criticisms of the French Revolution in the works of Edmund Burke, for instance, do not challenge the connection between the place, the nation, and the state. If anything, his criticism of the events in France and his subsequent appeal to British common-sense and common law further emphasizes that connection. Burke’s argument, in other words, turns on an analysis of the French nation, and a concern for the threat that this nation poses to the British nation.

Some have argued, especially those who focus on the Romantics such as Herder and Fichte, that nationalism is a reaction to rationalism. But the romantics are not the only thinkers to discuss the nation and nationalism.

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<sup>93</sup> Tennyson, *The Poetical Works of Tennyson*, Volume II, page 200.

What happens, rather, is that there are two general themes in 19th century nationalism: the first being the romantic nationalism of thinkers such as Herder and the second being the rationalist nationalism of thinkers such as Burke and Bagehot. What Cook's voyages help to establish, in other words, is not so much a way to decide between radical and conservative political projects. Cook may support king and country, but the articulation of the system of nations, states, and territories in the voyages allow for a wide range of political engagements. The voyages are important for the way they establish the connections between nations, states and territories as the primary terrain on which politics must be articulated. The discussions of rights and of contracts are still important, but only as placed in relationship to a nation that exists in its own specific place in the world. Whether the nation needs to change its government, then, becomes an internal problem, surrounded by the laws of nature.

What Cook and other navigators to the South Pacific offered was, in its clearest form, a set of ideals that wove together geography, epistemology, and a natural territorial nation-state. The connection in European thought between the state, the nation and the territory can be organized into four distinct stages. The first stage, before the voyages, is where the nation is a concept that is at best loosely tied to the state. Kings may, from time to time, appeal to the shared identity of the nation, but they were more likely to appeal to the loyalty or obligation of subjects. The second stage, directly tied to Cook's voyages, is where the nation becomes a clear and natural entity that can be closely tied to the sovereign order. Nations naturally have states, no matter how uncivilized. The third stage is where the ideals of Cook's voyages, based on geometry and tabulated data, become part of the ideal for European states. The connection between the nation and the state is no longer simply natural, but for that very reason it can become self-conscious and rational.

The fourth stage is where the ideals, worked through the European enlightenment, are turned back on the island nations of the South Pacific, not to confirm their ideal existence, but to locate them as infants who, lacking civilization, require the intervention of more enlightened and self-conscious nation-states. Kant was very clear that Europeans, as fiduciary agents, would legislate for the rest of the world.

The world of nation-states and of global empires are thus created together, from the same basic articulations of place. The final part of the dissertation will consider the relationship between the consolidation of the articulated world in Cook's voyages and the sense of the world that permeated 19th century accounts of empire. The next chapter, *Collections*, will thus focus on the epistemological aspects of Cook's global articulations. The voyages do not simply identify and describe nation-places, they also collect them into much larger structures, such as archives and encyclopedias. Then, it will become possible to infuse this collection with power, and discuss how collecting specimens becomes tied to collecting territories, and thus to the formation of 19th century ideas of empire.