

CHAPTER II

THE NATION AND THE IMAGINATION

In the Beginning the Words

In an essay which is to focus on what is international, early attention will surely be expected to the nature of the nation and of the state—even though, in books which are readily available, much discussion on such matters may already be found. Not all of this has proceeded from the standpoint to be reflected here. And the reader may presently care to consider just why this has been so. Was it because, while it was sometimes with words, and sometimes with ideas, elsewhere it was with realities that a writer will have been mainly concerned?

The reality, that is to say the social reality, 'out there'—which is the subject-matter to be studied—this reality includes numberless individuals nursing the images, experiencing the sentiments, thinking the thoughts, reacting to the symbols, and using the terminology, of nationhood—the words nation, national, nationality, nationalism are among those most constantly employed—and acting from feelings fostered by their thinking on this theme. The prevalence of the relevant ideas, the focus of emotions important for their bearing on behaviour—the mere prevalence, that is, of those ideas, irrespective of their inherent plausibility—will, by the student of the social cosmos, be perceived as a fundamental datum. The facts of modern social co-existence do indeed include, and are conditioned by, these ideas, and the ideas are fostered by the accumulating facts. (Which—the overt behaviour, or the body of ideas—is logically, or psychologically, prior need not be answered here.) As to the nature of the particular idea—of the 'nation'—we can no doubt agree that, rather than asking what in itself is this idea, the correct and up-to-date question, philosophically, is: What, in the relevant contexts, 'language games', 'forms of life', or, simply, fields of social experience, do

those best at home in the pertinent conversational *genre* mean, and understand, by such a term as 'nation'? Not, What is the idea?, or even, What is the thing denoted?, but, What is *meant* by the term?

Words and Things—

In case the reader feels uncertainty on the point, some further explanation may be helpful. Let him dwell on the evident fact that, when given a word to define, the nature of our task is not always the same. For there are several sorts of definition, and different sorts of it are right for different words. What, for example, is a triangle? What is a bicycle? What a biped? What a sycophant? What an elephant? What an oracle? What a miracle? What a mirage? What a garage? Though similar in their form, by no means all of these questions are similar in kind.

Sometimes one is being asked to give the 'essence' of a species of thing. We may for instance know a mirage when we see one, and yet have no idea at all of what it is. Or again we may know just what an elephant is, yet not know wherein its 'elephant-ness' consists. We may not even know whether the question need have any answer, or whether, if it have one, this should reflect a truth as to the nature of things (in this case, elephants) or merely a convention on the use of a word.

and Something Further

For inland revenue purposes there might well be debate over what amounted to a garage, but scarcely about what conventionally was meant by the term. What constitutes aggression, or collusion, or subversion, may seem to be a question of conventional usage. Yet there may or may not in such cases be a settled convention to which to point. Indeed there is here a whole spectrum of possibilities, at one end of which we find what is termed the 'term of art'. We are asked, for instance, What is a 'negotiable instrument'? Here there is a correct conventional answer, whether we know it or not. Short of that, we may get a term of which the sense may be unambiguous but which different people differently apply. What is a lethal instrument? (What, in certain sorts of hands, is not?) At the other extreme, we get questions to which our only answer will

be an attempt to decide and express what precisely we ourselves understand by a term—in the expectation perhaps that others will concede that we are right. What, for instance, is justice, what peace, what peaceful change? Not of every such term will there clearly exist a common acceptance. What is democracy? You think you know. I think I.

Notions and Elucidations

'Inside our heads' are ideas—such as those of human brotherhood, of the millennium, of social justice, of the Devil. To any of these we may suppose there to correspond a reality, 'out there'. We may suppose it, but can we be sure? If therefore we are asked to discourse upon 'good' cooking, or good education, or good government, we may be wise not to pontificate, but rather to invite our hearers to admit that we at any rate have focused faithfully, and illuminated, the issues that seem chiefly to arise. We may submit, but we had better not claim to have shown, nor shall we simply assert, that things must be as to us they have seemed. The elucidating of concepts should in principle be a useful enterprise, if unemotionally attempted—but a given attempt, with a given concept, may not after all prove helpful to everyone, or even to anyone at all. The proof, so to speak, of the clarifying is in the clarification. And if the analysis carries no conviction, there may, in the circumstances, be little more that one can do.

A Sort of Social Whole

Meanwhile, what we here were proposing first to elucidate was the concept, or the notion, of the nation. How are we to characterise this prevalent idea? It is, is it not, the notion of a certain sort of social whole? It is the notion of something participated in, and belonged to. The nation is a social whole. And, as determining just what sort of a social whole: What is it, we may be moved to ask, that, typically, the members of a nation will be found to have in common?

Teams and Teams

These same eleven men who yesterday were a football side may today be a team for playing cricket. Today, as yesterday, their behaviour is intelligible in the light of the knowledge that

they see, conceive, understand themselves as a team, and, all acting accordingly, understand one another and function together, as together composing a team. Only, today theirs is a different behaviour.

Just as so many men may figure, and function, together as a team, so in principle may so many millions feel, and figure, and function, together as a nation. What, in those conditions, did we mean by a team? What, in these other conditions, do we mean by a nation? The team was no mere plurality of persons: it was a plurality cohering in terms of, and by virtue of, certain assumptions. In particular, its 'team-ness' presupposed a possible participation in a game. Now it is in like manner that the 'nation-ness' of the modern nation presupposes a participation in the life of the modern world. The social universe as we have it is such that, within it, a multiplicity of persons may be associated as members of a nation, seeing, conceiving, understanding themselves as such, and acting accordingly. The social universe . . . such . . . Something evidently depends on that. Save within a picture of the modern world, a picture of the modern nation can hardly be presented.

But, given our social universe as the going concern which it is, it is, conversely, as little intelligible without access to the notion of the nation as is cricket without access to the notion of a team. It is in teams that men indulge in cricket, and in nations that they participate in the politics of the world. And to define a nation otherwise than in terms of men's idea of it would be as difficult as in a corresponding manner to define a team. In these cases the idea, in the relevant heads, is crucial: whereas, by contrast, a constellation, for instance, may be defined without any reference whatever to what the component stars may be supposed to understand by a constellation: and even a swarm without reference to what the individual bees may understand by a swarm.

The Function of the Idea

We might go even further. We might observe that to say: There goes a team, is at most a kind of shorthand way of describing with what ideas and purposes in their heads certain men are proceeding as they do. What else, comparably, does

the fact of nationhood boil down to than the compresence of (a) the idea of the nation-ness of a given postulated-as-existent nation, and (b) the consequences, in the world of overt behaviour, of the prevalence, in certain minds, of that idea?

That such questions should be conclusively answered is less important than that, with a sense of their pertinence, they should have been put. Life will go on, even though they receive no answer: but the individual, for having faced them, should be the better in a position to understand the life that so goes on. Let not the reader be upset by what may seem like a suggestion that the nation is perhaps not exactly the same sort of thing as he took it to be. Life, he may rest assured, will go on as before. And the way of its going will remain a reality: even as people go on thinking and talking in terms of the sun's rising in the morning. Like the sunrise, the nation is something the reality of which we tend, as if naturally, to assume. Indeed our impression, until we think about it, is that the nation is real.

This may be conveyed in a different way: by recourse, namely, to the expression 'in effect'. We say, for instance, of some exciting occasion, that it is 'all over bar the shouting'. It is not in fact all over, since in form it is still going on; but it is, to all intents and purposes, already over. Indeed, it is 'virtually' all over. It is really as if it were indeed all over. In short, it is all over 'in effect'. And so with the reality—that is, the quasi-reality—of the nation. In effect, whether or not in fact, the nation is real.

In effect, it is possible, for the social or diplomatic observer, to say, There goes—there goes to war—a nation.

For it is in the context of social and diplomatic thinking that the notion of the nation has its pivotal place. How far could a discussion proceed, in terms of either of these modes of thinking, without involving this idea? As well might geometrical discussion be attempted without reference to the line. There is a universe of thought and discourse which requires the idea of the line. The like is true of the nation. The political theorist's nation is every bit as real as the geometer's line: or the player's team.

The nation, then, is a sort of social whole. In this it resembles the tribe. And likewise the association. For the

association, also, is a social whole. But of a different sort. For whereas, typically and in principle, it should be possible to say, of an association, what it is *for*, the nation, by contrast, and *pace* Aristotle, is less essentially, if indeed at all, the expression of a purpose. And again, an association is essentially a many, performing for pertinent purposes as a one. A nation is, by contrast, a one, reducible to a many: for what gives the nation its unity, socially, is its unity notionally. In the association's case the kernel of the matter is the prevalence of a sense of the need, for a specific purpose, to associate. With the nation, it is the prevalence of the image of the nation as such, linked with the notion of it, both of these being evoked by the name, and other symbols, of the nation. And curiously, it is the name and other symbols that sustain the continuity of that of which the image and the notion are prone to change. For, looked at from the viewpoint of the individual member, the nation appears differently from time to time: according, for instance, as his lenses are for the moment those of self-interest, of sentiment, of sociology, or of poetic awareness. And the given nation may equally be viewed through a variety of lenses from outside.

The 'in-fact' and the 'in-effect'

Qua social whole, the nation does no doubt exist in fact, just as, where play is in progress, the teams do exist. But whether either the team or the nation could exist in fact did it not also exist in idea: this one may doubt. For what gives it its possibility of existing in fact is, precisely, it would seem, its existence in idea. What gives it its actual existence is the attitudes and behaviour of enough of those belonging to it. And that behaviour is reflective of their feelings in relation to their image, and to their notion, of the nation. As is their image, such are their feelings, their responses and their behaviour. If it be asked: In what sense does the nation, *qua* unitary, really exist, an answer is that at least it really does in effect exist. In that sense at least it really does. And this after all is also really the case with much else that we have to reckon with in our social experience. What most commonly counts in the social universe is not simply whether something has existence in fact, but whether it has existence in effect. And in effect at

least the team is real, the tribe is real and the nation is real. Did the image of the team not exist, the position would be otherwise. But exist it does—the image of the team—as does the image of the tribe, and of the nation.

The Status-sharers

What, then, in these circumstances, have the members of a nation in common? From the lines along which this tantalising question is often approached, one might suppose there must presumably be some factor—such as language, biological origin or religious adherence—which the members of a nation might in principle be expected to share. What however was it that the members of a team had in common? Simply the fact, was it not, of having been included, as its members, in the team. Need two Britons in fact have more in common than the fact of being Britons? Given the postulated existence of a British nation, with the attendant possibility, for individuals, of being members of it, the question is, Who is regarded as such? Regarded. That is just the word. For membership is a matter not of physical fact, but of regardedness—that is, of status, and status is imputed as existent not in terms of fact alone, but of fact as seen in terms of relevant theory. What constitutes membership? is a way of asking: What, in the theory of the matter, constitutes membership? What, that is, in the sight of the relevant theory, *is* membership? And, when given, by what criteria may membership be known? It is not merely punning to reply that the membership is something 'given'.

Suppose there to be created, by the act of its intending members, an Order of the Disciples of the Devil. What now will constitute such discipleship? The answer can only be looked for in the theory of the game—the game begun by someone's having said, Let's play Devil's disciples! Will it in such case matter whether the Devil do indeed exist, and whether therefore he can indeed have any actual disciples at all? Actual discipleship of the Devil is not being guaranteed: only a status is being established. Likewise, membership of a nation is in the last analysis submittedly a matter not so much of fact as of status. For the fact of such membership is the fact of having that status.

That Which Unites

The unity of the nation, whence then comes it? Whence, by the same or a similar token, comes the unity of a flock of sheep? Or of a constellation in the sky? Or of the class of blue-eyed babies? The unity is in each case in some sense a function of the way those things are thought of, the way they are seen. Beauty, someone said, is in the eye of the beholder. Be that as it may as touching beauty, when it is said of the unity of a social aggregate there is a sense in which it is importantly true. To see the flock now as many, now as one, is to appreciate the degree in which our world depends on us. It is to view the sheep through alternative lenses.

What was it, for instance, that the stars of our constellation had in common? Little, surely, beyond their amenability to being seen and conceived of as one? And it is this their amenability, along with our exploiting of it, that results in our imputing to the constellation, as a whole, of a reality and a unity which, when we reflect, we must see it to possess not objectively by nature, but merely by imputation.

The Great Bear remains a constellation whether the stars composing it are conscious of it or not. And a 'class' of blue-eyed babies could be, statistically, a class though its members were wholly lacking in any sense of class. But could a nation exist as a nation had its members no sense of its existence? Surely no more than could a *social* class. This element of consciousness seems, in matters social, to be of the very essence of this matter. Without the notion of nationhood, influential in the appropriate minds, the fact of nationhood could hardly occur. Neither, presumably, without the notion of class, could there occur social, as opposed to mere statistical, class.

Social Prevalence

If at this point it be asked in terms of what species of idea the nation, as thus existing in idea, so exists, we shall answer, the nation exists in social theory, socially prevalent. 'Social', as relating to society; and 'socially prevalent', as being sufficiently prevalent to constitute a fact of social life.

So, given the conditions described, the nation is indeed a reality—not by imputation only but submittedly also in fact.

For there does in truth exist the plurality of persons, having prevalent among them the ways of thinking, conceiving, feeling and imagining here germane. While therefore the nation and the constellation are in some respects alike, in this respect they differ. Both may be thought of as in a certain sense existent only in idea. But in the constellation's case the relevant idea had its residence in the mind of the onlooker only.

In common with the constellation it is basically by imputation that the nation has its being as a unit. But in the nation's case the imputing is performed not by onlookers only but prevalently also among those human units, themselves sufficiently real, that make it up.

Given its imputed reality, the social group is able to figure as such—in the imagination as well of others as of those, or enough of them, who compose it. And there are several sorts of group-ness. One sort is nation-ness, or nationhood. It comes of the imputing not of group-ness merely, but of that particular kind of group-ness which differentiates the nation. It comes of the prevalence, in the appropriate minds, of the appropriate image, the image not simply of a social aggregate, but of a 'body', a mystical body, and one of that particular kind which is known, and belonged to, as a nation. In like manner comes team-ness of the entertaining of the image of a team.

The notion of nationhood in general: the notion, that is, that there are indeed such 'things' as nations—along with the image of the given particular nation, and with the notion of its nationhood—these, suitably and sufficiently prevalent, and not any putative community of blood or language or religion, are all that the effective existence of a nation might seem to presuppose. Not, then, necessarily a community, actual or supposed, of blood or religion or language; for, given the social prevalence of the notion of nationhood, and the presence, in the world, of examples of the phenomenon to which it refers, the conditions for the acquiring of individual membership of any given nation can be just what legally or otherwise they may. In this respect there is thus indeed an analogy—if a loose one—between the admitting of new members into a nation and the including of new players in a team.

So much, then, at this point, for the nation. Let the reader,

if he finds the discussion unconvincing, take time to consider just why. And let him incidentally perceive for himself how far it has, alas, proceeded in terms just of bald assertion and how far of exploratory surmise: and how far it has been a discussion respectively of words, of ideas, and of things.

The Question of Race

And what now, by comparison, of race? Is the race any more, or any less, of a reality, any less something given—objectively ‘out there’—than is the nation? And, if equally real, is it such with equal reason, to equal purpose, in equal degree? Is it, for example, as real as is the nation in socially prevalent social theory? No: not, surely, in equal degree? And not for every purpose for which the nation is, theoretically, real. Meanwhile, however, like the nation, the race may be regarded, independently, from more angles than one. At any rate from two. As onlookers at life we may find it almost as easy to think—unthinkingly—of humanity as being divided into races as into nations. And, secondly, the individual may almost equally, though doubtless not as prevalently, feel a solidarity, even a kinship, with those that he thinks of as his fellow-members of a race. What makes the difference in the case of the nation is not that basically it rests on anything more objective than an idea: but that, in socially prevalent social theory as well as in social practice, there is so strong a tendency for the idea of the nation to be linked with the idea of the state. Racial self-determination is not after all a familiar principle. Whereas national self-determination is.

Race sentiment, race feeling, race prejudice, the idea of race—these are indeed among the facts of present-day life. Racial solidarity is no doubt, as a rule, rather more of a theoretical possibility than a fact. Though there is in principle no more reason why the negroes of the world should not—any more than should the workers of the world—respond, as one man, to a summons to unite—organising for the concerted exercise of their massed political strength—yet, even in an era of Afro-Asian assemblies and anti-colonialist fronts, such a consummation seems still rather far away.

Meanwhile the practice of organising, when appropriate, for the concerted exercise of their combined political strength is in

the social thinking socially prevalent among the fellow-members of a nation seen as virtually a matter of routine. What in principle is the state, as we nowadays know it, but the machinery whereby the members of a nation—for the fostering and the safeguarding of interests which, as being the fellow-members of the given nation, they conceive themselves to have in common—play in with the expectations of the modern world?

We thus see that, whether race be biologically a reality or not, there does indeed obtain the *idea* of the race: and, whether understandably or not, there exists the idea of the nation—as well as behaviour informed by that idea.

The Postulated Presence

And what now finally shall we say of the state?

So familiar indeed is the associating of the nation with the state, so linked in common thinking are the two ideas, that it is not surprising that in unsophisticated minds they should sometimes be conceived as interchangeable. How often will one not indeed find a state referred to as a kind of group. An association, it is sometimes even said to be, of fellow-citizens.

And yet how questionable this conception is! For one thing, though in some sense the nation exists only in men's mental pictures, in another, very effective, sense, it exists ‘out there’, consisting as it does of real people, having the pertinent nationality in the eye of the law; whereas the state—the state of which the ‘national’ is a citizen—what else is it at bottom but an abstraction, not by, but in the name of, which, he is told what to do and where to go. The apparatus of government he so to speak can see. And the processes of government he can observe as they proceed. And all are more or less related together as if integral parts of a single concern. But is the machinery of government, considered as a single whole, what we do precisely mean by ‘the state’? Or is it not, considered as a whole, merely the state machine? Surely it is at least possible, and perhaps rather common, to think of the state as standing above and behind its machinery, a reified abstraction, the repository of that authority in reliance on which the processes of government are carried on. In the sight of socially prevalent social thinking, the machinery of government is, submittedly, not itself the state, but rather the paraphernalia

established for exercising governmental functions in the service of the state. Scrap the machinery and do you *eo ipso* scrap the state? Or might there not tomorrow, for the needs of the same, persisting, state, be established new machinery?

The same, persisting, state! What, on these assumptions, is it that persists? To say of a state that it persists is not to say that it persists as does a nation. In order to persist as does a nation it is not sufficient merely to persist in social theory. For as composed of flesh and blood the nation is physically, factually, there. And what is given in social theory is not *eo ipso* given in fact. Whereas, in the case of the state, the notion of the state, the state as given in social theory, is all that we have—even though its nature is conceived of, in social thinking, as if not notional but real. However real your reified abstraction may in theory become, notional at best, if it be but an abstraction, it must in fact remain. So, while the nation as composed of flesh and blood is in reality a reality, the state, as distinct from its machinery, from its citizenry, and from its territory, is a reality only in idea.

From its citizenry—yes. The state, it was contended above, is not itself a social whole. Its image, from the viewpoint of the citizen, is not the image of himself and his like, but of an institutional structure, an organisational set-up, or even, to borrow an unbeautiful term, an *apparat*. Whenever, in living together, men develop processes whose logic depends on the positing of that to which there may be imputed interests, attitudes and activities distinct from those of human persons, this same is true. Whereas the nation is indeed a social whole, the state is a social set-up.

Set-up of Set-ups

As it happens, there exist in the world a very galaxy of such social set-ups, having relations *inter se*. These relationships are made intelligible only by the imputing to the set-ups of what in fact they cannot have, but only can have in effect—the quality, namely, of being persons. Inter-state relationships are intelligible as being, conceivedly, the relations between persons. In effect, it is persons that they are—their personality being theirs not by nature but by imputation. And let us remember that what may especially matter, socially, is how

things are in effect. In effect, the state is a person, having selfhood and so much that goes therewith—the possibility, for instance, of self-assertion, self-administration, self-frustration, self-worship, self-control. Self-control through self-organisation.

In matters, however, of social organisation, there are different degrees of intensity. For a group merely to have a leader, perhaps also a deputy leader, and roles assigned to the various classes of its members, is hardly yet to have a bureaucratic set-up. But organisation can involve the bureaucratic set-up too. In that event it may, as we saw, be helpful to distinguish between the group as so organised and the machinery which it so employs. While a trade union may have a mere minimum of machinery, a Church may have much. And a bank simply has to: indeed a bank is mainly its machinery. A university, again, is both of these at once—a community, that is, and also a machine. And the state? Seldom is it appropriate to equate the state with its citizenry: for these are better referred to as the 'people'. The state, as distinct from the people, is the mechanism, the organisational set-up, the instrumentality, by means of which the people's interests are sought to be served. It is a set-up conceived as a unit; its unity being that of the abstraction behind, as it were, and underlying, as it were, the system of its administrative machine. Basically, then, the state is simply an idea in men's minds, which they entertain as of a thing 'out there'.

Imputed Thing-ness

Reified abstractions, conceived of as 'out there'. An adjective with which conveniently to characterise such entities and to mark them off from those having an existence independent of our imaginations is 'notional'. The soil is real, the people also, their relationships too. But, like a Church, or a university, or a bank, the state is, from many important points of view, rather notional than real. And the notion that we have of it is the notion of a set-up. Not, that is, or at any rate not simply, that of a group. The practice of reifying abstractions is after all ancient and common enough. And in prevalent social thinking it is prevalent indeed.

Law, Logic and Psychology

Imagine there being formed an alliance between the Big Five banks. It is the bankers, not the banks—the men, not the institutions—that will have negotiated the deal. But what results from it will be a relationship not between the men, but between the banks as such. This, in the sight not of the law only, but of men and of society. In legal parlance, yes: but in common parlance also. In legal perhaps even *because* in common parlance.

Even before trade unions existed, as persons, in the contemplation of the law, they functioned, as persons, in the sight, and in the idiom, of common, popular, prevalent, usage. Collective beings are felt and experienced by men in society, and so by society (itself such a collective being), as persons.

And the law's way of thinking in this matter merely follows the generally accepted way of thinking. No need to speak of a *persona ficta*. No need to suppose that anyone, ever, actually came out with a 'Let's pretend . . .'. The pretending in such cases is, typically, as much of a 'myth' as is that original contract whereby men have been thought of as first having come together in society. This is, after all, only one instance of the pervasiveness, throughout men's social arrangements, of the influence of myth. Yes, it is the psychologists who may be invited to explain. The anthropologist has merely to note, and report, the pervasiveness.

A Subtlety of Adverbs

As in common, no less than in legal, parlance, the alliance obtains not between the bankers who brought it about but between the banks, so, in common and in legal parlance, an alliance made by statesmen obtains not between the statesmen, but between their countries. In common, and in legal, parlance, and also in the parlance of diplomacy. In the relevant variety, the 'diplomatic' variety, that is, of official thinking. In the orthodoxy, indeed, of the matter. And we need not suppose it actually to have all begun with someone's saying 'Let's pretend . . .'. Factually, the countries may seem to be geographical units and nothing more. But legally they are persons. Legally. In legal idea. And how comes it? Is it not because

they are persons popularly, in ordinary, everyday, sentimental, poetical and human, idea? Ideally, shall we say? Conceptually? Or, again the useful word, notionally? Notionally the countries do exist as persons—as do the banks, the world, fate, the weather, and who knows what? For such, in the world of ideas, the fairy-land of our communal imagining, is what they are. Persons, not in fact, but as conceived of. Notional persons: let us leave it—but also let us retain it—at that.

What Explanation is Impertinent?

That the banks and the trade unions and the countries and the West and the World are popularly conceived of as if persons—this we can admit is a fact. But that persons they actually are—that we cannot admit. Conceptually, yes. Factually, no. Conceptually, the stars of the Great Bear are components in a constellation. They are seen and conceived of as such. But in fact they have no more in common than have any other selection of separate stars. It is in our imagination and in the world of fiction that we accompany Sherlock Holmes on his inquiries. It is by contrast *de facto* in the world of fact that we live our daily lives, even though, psychologically, it is in the world of our concepts that we live them, in the world that is, as we conceive it. But explanations in terms of fact for how things are in terms merely of conception—of prevalent, popular, social, communal, public, conception—explanations, that is, of how they *are*, as distinct from how historically and psychologically they came so to be conceived of—for such explanations we may expect to seek in vain. Accounting for a belief is not the same as proving the existence of the thing believed in.

Of how the sun contrives to be such an early riser there can after all be never a true explanation. For explanations are appropriate only of what happens in fact. What time does the sun arise—on a particular morning? To that question we can give no answer. All we can give is the time at which at any given point on the planet the sun seems to arise. And even this seeming is found to vary from point to point. The proper question to be asking in the presence of certain sorts of puzzle is: Are we asking a proper question?

There is doubtless a merely notional component in the

conception that any one of us may have about almost any event whatever. But there is a difference between the mere adulterating of fact by fantasy, and the treating of what is pure fantasy as if it were pure fact. It is the difference between a subjective account of an actual happening, and an account, however exact, of what has happened in a dream. To treat the subjective account as objective is not the same thing as treating the dream as fact.

The Gift of Personality

Let psychologists say, if they can, why it is that, whatever happens to them, men so commonly tend to ascribe it to some human, or quasi-human, agency. Happy he, wrote someone, who has been able to ascertain the causes of things. Happier still, don't you think, if he has found whom to praise or blame, and hold responsible, for them. Anyhow, happiness apart, man does tend to ascribe things to a 'will', or does so when he has such a word for it. And psychologists may at the same time explain why we so easily accept the metaphor of imputed 'personality'—personality attributed, for instance, to a place or institution, or, especially, to a collectivity. Let Europe arise, to do this or that. Dear London, welcoming me back. It is a graceful usage, neither novel nor unfamiliar. And if we do not personify, then we 'hypostatise', and we 'reify', at least.

What do we *not* hypostatise? The elimination of mosquitoes is in principle a concrete task. By contrast, the stamping out of malaria is not strictly a task at all. At most it is a result, the result perhaps of the elimination of mosquitoes. Though malaria is not a removable substance, usage does rather suggest that that is virtually what it is. The metaphor seems hardly to be a metaphor at all. Almost it is as though malaria were indeed a substance—if only in theory. And what is not possible, in theory? Legal theory, social theory, diplomatic theory—these all may hypostatise, and reify, and personify—to any congenial extent: and that they do. Social cosmology, by contrast, will be concerned to detect and expose, rather than itself to practise, such manoeuvres of the mind. This therefore is why it may applaud our reducing of the state from a thing that people encounter to an idea they entertain.

A World of Dreams?

But socially prevalent social thinking is familiar not only with the state, but with that still more abstract—since it is doubly abstract—abstraction, the society of states. Though we may refer to it as the 'family' of nations, it is of the 'society' of states, of sovereign states, that we are thinking when we turn to the problems of the state in its relationships with other states. And the question which suggests itself is this: Assuming, if we must, that for the purpose of internal domestic social thinking the state, though theoretically a reality, is in reality no more than an idea—what now is its status in the context of its inter-relatedness with other states? Can what when at home is no more than a notion become a reality when it goes abroad? The question may look tricky, but it is really not so tricky as it looks. And this is because of the fundamental difference between milieu number-one, the domestic, and milieu number-two, the international. It is as the difference between the wideawake world and the world of dreams. Or between the world of fact and the world of fiction. Or the world of life and the world of law. For it is the difference between the world of living men, observable with the eye, and the world of sovereign states, present only to the mind. It is, in short, the difference between the real, and a notional, world. And, in a notional world, what more natural than that the beings who compose it should be notional also? The sovereign states—and it is of sovereign states that the international society is composed—are, *par excellence*, notional beings. And, just as it is in the name of that notional being, the state, that government is domestically conducted, so in the name of those notional beings, the members of the international society, the society of states, do the processes of diplomacy keep proceeding on their artificial way.

It is not in fact a world of dreams. But it is indeed a world of notions. And it is because men take so readily to living in terms of notions that they can—as indeed they so evidently can—be so apparently at home in such a world.