

monarchical institution that claimed a 2500-year legacy. The outcome was a theocratic Islamic society, under Shiite clerical leadership. The forging of an alliance between the Iranian masses and the Shiite clerics was facilitated by certain shared goals: the deep opposition to the Pahlavi dynasty; a strong anti-imperialist feeling and widespread nationalistic ideals. These two latter tendencies saw in the United States the nation's mortal enemy. The new form of Iranian nationalism promoted by the Islamic government highlights the new found role of Islam as the principal element in a new national identity and the discarding of the secular vision promoted by the Pahlavis.

The image of Iran reflects an accumulation of cultural, social and political dynamics over time. As Mackey puts it (1996: 5), "the Iranians are a people claiming two complex and interlocking traditions. One comes out of ancient Persia, the other out of Islam. [...] In the twentieth century, the traditions of Persia and Islam became swords with which the Iranians have fenced in an often deadly struggle over control of Iranian culture and government".

*Natalia Tornesello*

COLE, JUAN R.I. (1996), "Marking boundaries, marking time: the Iranian past and the construction of the self by Qajar thinkers", *Iranian studies* 29: 35-56. — GNOLI, GHERARDO (1989), *The idea of Iran: An essay on its origin* (Roma). — KASHANI SABET, FIROOZEH (1999), *Frontierfictions: Shaping the Iranian nation, 1804-1946* (Princeton, NJ). — ID. (2002), "Cultures of Iranianness: the evolving polemic of Iranian nationalism", in *Iran and the surrounding world: Interactions in culture and cultural politics*, ed. N.R. Keddie & R. Matthee (Seattle, WA): 162-181. — KURZMAN, CHARLES (2005), "Weaving Iran into the tree of nations", *International journal of Middle East studies* 37: 137-166. — MACKEY, SANDRA (1996), *The Iranians: Persia, Islam and the soul of a nation* (New York). — MASHAYEKHI, MEHRDAD (1992), "The politics of nationalism and political culture", in *Iran: Political culture in the Islamic Republic*, ed. S.K. Farsoun & M. Mashayekhi (London): 82-115. — MESKOOB, SHAHROKH (1992), *Iranian nationality and the Persian language*, ed. J.R. Perry (Washington DC). — SPULER, BERTOLD (1955), "Iran: the persistent heritage", in *Unity and variety in Muslim civilization*, ed. G.E. von Grunebaum (Chicago): 167-182. — STERN, S.M. (1971), "Ya'qub the coppersmith and Persian national sentiment", in *Iran and Islam: In memory of the late Vladimir Minorsky*, ed. C.E. Bosworth (Edinburgh): 535-555. — VAZIRI, MOSTAFA (1993), *Iran as imagined nation: The construction of national identity* (New York). — VAZIRI, SHAHROKH (1998), *Iran: Pouvoir politique et société au XXe siècle* (Bern). — WICKENS, G.M. (1971), "Persian literature as an affirmation of national identity", *Review of national literatures* 2: 29-60.

## IRISH

The Irish image has from the Middle Ages onwards been characterized by contradictions. On the one hand, the country, known as *Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum*, was famous for the important role its monks and missionaries had played in the revival of Christian learning and in the Carolingian

Renaissance in eighth- and ninth-century Europe; on the other hand there was a well-established and persistent discourse emphasizing the uncouth, wild and barbaric nature of that distant country and its inhabitants. Descriptions of Irish savagery and sinfulness were important justifications for the English Crown's claim to supremacy over Ireland, which, from the late twelfth century onwards, could thus represent hegemonial expansion as a civilizing mission (Leerssen 1995). This combination of denigration and subjection has led many critics recently to characterize the Irish position, and the representations concerning its character, as a medieval prefiguration and an intra-European example of →colonialism (Cairns & Richards 1988; Kiberd 1996).

The submission of Ireland under English rule took several centuries to complete. Following earlier chorographical descriptions, a literary image of Irish characters became fixed in Tudor times, mainly in the genre of drama (Hinton 1935). The 'Stage Irishman' in seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century English drama is, on the whole, a naive character, uncivilized, tossed by primary, uncontrolled emotions, and either wicked, or ridiculous, or both. As such he functioned as the inverse and counterpart to the ideal of the Elizabethan or Stuart gentleman, who is represented as witty, self-controlled, and of upright virtue (Duggan 1937; Bartley 1954; Truninger 1976).

The stereotypical Irishman, emotionally incontinent and intellectually handicapped, has remained a constant English trope ever since (Waters 1984). 'Paddy jokes' (so called after the colloquial form of the quintessential Irish name, Patrick) are still a recognizable and current genre, and periods of political tension will see an immediate rise in →ethnocentric denunciations of Irish savagery (Curtis 1971; Curtis 1984; Weimer 1993). However, this tradition has become overlaid and compounded by a contrary, sentimental modality (Leerssen 1996a; Viol 1998). From the mid-eighteenth century onwards, the Irishman's dim-witted naivety became a moral asset rather than a handicap. We see a sentimental celebration of Irish spontaneity, creativity, musical abilities and tenderness of feeling.

This amelioration of the Irish image has two sources. On the one hand, it can be linked to the mid-eighteenth rise of sentimentalism, to the newly popular genre of sentimental comedy and the pre-romantic appreciation of 'artlessness' and natural honesty. On the other hand, there was a sensible influence, certainly in work of authors from an Irish background, of a native, Gaelic self-image. For in their writing and ballads, the native population saw itself as the moral superiors of their brutally-efficient English oppressors, and developed a self-image contrasting the unimagined, heavy-handed might of the colonial ruler with their own high-minded, but less efficient, moral and emotional qualities (Leerssen 1996a; O'Halloran 2004).