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HUGUENOT IMMIGRANTS AND THE FORMATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITIES, 1548–1787*

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ABSTRACT. *This article addresses the extent to which Protestant states in Europe and North America depicted the French Protestants who had found refuge in these states, as having contributed to the process of nation building and the formation of national identity. It is shown that the arrival of Huguenots was portrayed positively as the historians of these nations could contend that Huguenots had been absorbed readily into the host society because their virtues of frugality and industry corresponded admirably with the ethic of their hosts. The article demonstrates that, in no case, did this depiction correspond with reality. It shows that within those countries of refuge, Huguenots fostered a distinctive French Protestant identity that enabled them to remain aloof from the culture of their host society. In all cases Huguenots asserted themselves as a self-confident minority, convinced of the superiority of their language and culture who believed themselves to be privileged in this world as in the next. When national histories came to be composed, this dimension to the Huguenot minorities came to be expunged from historical memory as was also the fact that the Huguenots were but one of several minorities whose distinctiveness had contributed largely to the shaping of the state, culture, and society of the emerging nation-states.*

I

Much has been written in recent years on the writing of national histories during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the deployment of these histories to legitimize the dominance of particular ethnic groups within modern nation-states. As Jo Tollebeek has put it, the function of national histories has been less a matter of reconstruction than construction, since authors created narratives to nourish national identities and nationalisms that have been increasingly marked out by one language, one literature, and one formative historical experience.¹

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¹ Jo Tollebeek, 'Historical presentation and the nation-state in romantic Belgium (1830–1850)', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 59 (1998), p. 329.

What such historical writing omitted or eclipsed, at least prior to the second half of the twentieth century, was that each nation-state included other ethnic groups besides the dominant one, and that several nation-states, even at the moment of establishment, were enhanced by the presence of immigrant groups who created narratives in order to sustain national or even supra-national identities that could be at odds with that of the nation-state of which they had become subjects or citizens.

If, as Michael Wintle has suggested, ‘nations² are not a historical reality to be imagined, but the rhetorical product of wilful and normative imaginary constructions³ designed to uphold the hegemony of a social elite, and if ‘these constructions ... determine who is to be included in and excluded from the national project’,⁴ then it has to be asked where and how immigrants and their own origin myths fitted into national narratives of the hosting states.

One such migrant group who contributed significantly to the building of state and society, especially in Protestant countries, were the so-called Huguenots: French Protestants generally perceived as ideal immigrants.⁵ The persecution of Calvinists in France had started in the 1550s and had culminated with the *Dragonnades* in 1681, followed by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Under the reign of Louis XIV alone, about 150,000 French Protestants left France. They settled in the Netherlands, Switzerland, England, Brandenburg-Prussia, Scandinavia, Ireland, the Americas, and South Africa. To some degree, those who fled France identified themselves as an uprooted people and were generally slow to identify with the culture of the host societies. At the same time, they chose to leave behind parts of their families, social frameworks, property, and their regional and national identities. Moreover, the Edict of Fontainebleau of 1685 forbade French Protestants, other than French reformed pastors, to leave the country. Those who chose to flee therefore lost their entitlement to be French subjects.

Settling all over Europe and in the overseas colonies, French Protestants established not only trade but also intellectual networks. Their correspondents included some Catholics and Jews as well as their co-religionists. Through these networks, ideas of the Enlightenment and practical knowledge about such matters as weaving techniques were disseminated. In some respects, national and cultural boundaries hardly seemed to exist for the Huguenot community in exile.

² For a necessary distinction of ‘nation’ and ‘state’ see Michael Wintle, ‘Cultural diversity and identity in Europe’, in Michael Wintle, *Culture and identity in Europe: perceptions of divergence and unity in past and present* (Aldershot, Brookfield, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Sidney, 1996), pp. 16–18.

³ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London and New York, 1991), p. 6.

⁴ Frank Lauterbach, ‘Einleitung: Nationalkulturelle Identitätskonstruktionen im Spannungsfeld dialektischer Differenzierungen’, in Frank Lauterbach, Fritz Paul, and Ulrike-Christine Sander, eds., *Abgrenzung – Eingrenzung. Komparatistische Studien zur Dialektik kultureller Identitätsbildung* (Göttingen, 2004), p. 1.

⁵ Frédéric Hartweg, ‘Hugenotten(tum) und Preußen(tum)’, in Ingrid Mittenzwei, ed., *Hugenotten in Brandenburg-Preußen* (Berlin, 1987), p. 340.

Therefore, in the stream of scholarly writing that treats of this aspect of Huguenot history, Huguenots in Diaspora are frequently represented as promoters of a cosmopolitan culture. On the other hand, those scholars who address the Huguenot migration from the perspective of one nation, as for example Jon Butler writing on Huguenot emigration to British North America, they are represented as migrants who adapted readily to their host society.⁶ A re-reading of the primary sources relating to the entire Huguenot migration suggests that the narratives created about Huguenot national identity and the role they chose to play within the hosting nations was altogether more complex than has been suggested in either body of writing. Huguenots like other exiled groups⁷ formed a 'nation' of their own defined by myth and imagination rather than empirically verifiable fact.⁸

Forging a new 'national identity' through narratives is closely related to the perception of the 'self' and the perception of the 'other'.⁹ While it is impossible to trace perceptions of the 'self' and of the 'other' and changing identities for each exiled individual, some Huguenots, mostly belonging to the social, military, or intellectual elites, left documents about their own individual identity and the national identity of the collectivity of exiles. Most important in creating narratives were sermons (delivered in church and published), published memoirs, pamphlets, petitions, theological and philosophical writings, and private memoirs and correspondence intended for the guidance of family and acquaintances. It goes without saying that Huguenots in exile were not a homogeneous group. However, having reflected upon a broad spectrum of this material, I hope in this article first to elucidate some of the narratives about national identity created by Huguenots, and second to determine what purpose these narratives were intended to serve both for the Huguenots in exile and for the societies in which they found refuge. Finally, I hope to show how trans-national and comparative approaches to both European and North American history and historiography can correct some of the master narratives of the national histories of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Therefore, this article seeks to demonstrate that the 'making of the nation' in Europe and North America was – within each nation-state – the product of the efforts of diverse ethnic groups and the outcome of conflicting national loyalties.

II

Narratives about a distinct Huguenot identity were being composed from the mid-sixteenth century forward. Clearly, even though France was becoming a

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 338, and Jon Butler, *The Huguenots in America: a refugee people in new world society* (Cambridge, MA, 1983).

⁷ See e.g. Jonathan Skolnik, 'Writing Jewish history in the margins of the Weimar classics: minority culture and national identity in Germany, 1837–1873', in Nicholas Vazsonyi, ed., *Searching for common ground: Diskurse zur deutschen Identität, 1750–1871* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2000), pp. 227–38.

⁸ See e.g. Wintle, 'Cultural diversity', p. 18; and Anderson, *Imagined communities*, pp. 15–16.

⁹ Wintle, 'Cultural diversity', pp. 5–6.

political nation, local loyalties persisted, and still in the seventeenth century Catholics and Protestants in France were less French than Provençaux, Languedociens, Dauphinois, Normans, or Bretons. One common standardized language had fostered a sense of unity among French Protestants from as early as the 1530s: Pierre Robert Olivetan had translated the bible into 'received' French and services were held in French Protestant *temples* all over France in one and the same French tongue. Thus every French Protestant in France had knowledge of one unifying language, French, that co-existed with the regional dialect or *patois*.¹⁰

Huguenot pastors and the Huguenots' military leaders, already between 1550 and 1685, attempted to forge a distinct French Protestant identity and patriotism. There, they proved to be precocious relative to their Catholic fellow countrymen.¹¹ On the one hand Huguenot writers advanced strong claims to being subjects of the French king ready to shed 'all their blood in the interest of His Highness and his State'. On the other hand French Protestants in France made it clear that there were limits to their loyalty to the king who, as they perceived it, was not the ruler of their religious beliefs.¹² As long as the crown respected the French reformed faith, the king was assured of French Protestant support. As a result, French Protestants could identify themselves as French patriots throughout the Wars of Religion in France (1562–98) without necessarily being loyal to the crown.

However, for some Protestant writers, the notion of being a French patriot co-existed from the very beginning with the notion of being a 'stranger' in the realm. From a theological perspective, this stranger stood aloof from those who did not share the true, Calvinist faith. This notion corresponded with their being the 'elect', the true Christians on Earth. Their being persecuted was 'a sort of test that God imposed upon the elect'.¹³ Yet, this acceptance of being 'strangers' changed due to the Wars of Religion in France, due to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and due to the mass migration that followed in the aftermath of 1685. The theological discourse now co-existed with a socio-political discourse. French Protestants claimed to be French patriots precisely because the crown refused to accept those of the *Religion prétendue réformée* as being good French subjects.¹⁴ Pierre Jurieu, a French Protestant in the United Provinces, wrote in 1680: 'We are as much French as we are French-reformed Christians.'¹⁵ And the pastor

¹⁰ Eckart Birnstiel, 'Dieu protège nos souverains – Zur Gruppenidentität der Hugenotten in Brandenburg-Preußen', in Frédéric Hartweg and Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, eds., *Die Hugenotten und das Refuge: Deutschland und Europa* (Berlin, 1990), pp. 110–12.

¹¹ Luc Racaut, 'Religious polemic and Huguenot identity', in Raymond A. Mentzer and Andrew Spicer, eds., *Society and culture in the Huguenot world, 1559–1685* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 29–43.

¹² Henri Basnage de Beauval, *Tolérance des religions* (Rotterdam, 1684), p. 41.

¹³ Barbara B. Diefendorf, 'The Huguenot psalter and the faith of French Protestants in the sixteenth century', in Barbara B. Diefendorf and Carla Hesse, eds., *Culture and identity in early modern Europe (1500–1800): essays in honor of Natalie Zemon Davis* (Ann Arbor, 1993), p. 42.

¹⁴ Hubert Bost, *Ces messieurs de la R. P. R.: histoires et écritures de Huguenots, XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 2001), pp. 281–2.

¹⁵ 'Nous sommes Français autant que nous sommes chrétiens réformés.' In Pierre Jurieu, *La politique du clergé de France* (Amsterdam, 1680), p. 125.

Elie Benoist (1640–1728), a Huguenot migrant in Delft (United Provinces), noted in his *Histoire de l'Édit de Nantes* that the edict had guaranteed Protestants equal rights with all other subjects of the monarchy. Therefore, the Edict of Fontainebleau could be considered an illegal act because by law the French Protestants could not be deprived of their entitlement to be French subjects. Many French Calvinists perceived themselves neither as strangers nor enemies: they could not be strangers because they had been born beneath the same sky, the same authorities and the same laws as other French people.¹⁶

There were therefore tensions inherent within narratives concerning Huguenot identity even before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes; theologically they were promoting the view that as the elect the Huguenots stood apart from all other French people, while at the same time they were precocious in identifying themselves as members of a French nation as opposed to identifying themselves with a particular province or locality.

III

The situation in exile was difficult in many respects. In particular the French Protestant elites found that their becoming refugees involved a loss of social status and importance even though in Brandenburg-Prussia the French Protestant nobility was granted the same rights as the German nobility. Nonetheless, in particular after 1685, many French reformed pastors who had to flee France were left without any income in the countries of refuge, dependent on charity and on obtaining positions as tutors and school teachers. In France, they had been part of the elite of their parishes.

What many French Protestants brought into their countries of refuge were strong social ties which often extended to family members and to co-religionists who had come from the same town or village in France as themselves who had now settled throughout the western world. What united all those exiles was not only their faith in Predestination but also their sense of having been persecuted for believing in the true God and true religion. Migration and dispersal seems to have strengthened these ties and it became necessary for them to form 'international' networks which might compensate for the break-up of families. Even before the onset of persecution in France, intellectual networks had often already been established either through trading connections or through correspondence with other Calvinists in the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Scotland. The Protestant academies at Saumur and Montpellier had been especially effective in establishing intellectual contacts that spanned Protestant Europe and engaged with the major European intellectual controversies, especially those of a theological nature.¹⁷

¹⁶ Elie Benoist, *Histoire de l'Édit de Nantes* (3 vols., Rotterdam, 1693–5), 1, p. 321; and Bost, *Ces messieurs*, p. 281.

¹⁷ Horton and Marie-Hélène Davies, *French Huguenots in English-speaking lands* (New York and Oxford, 2000), p. 69.

The largest number of French Protestants in exile had begun to settle in the United Provinces even from the 1550s, and estimates of the size of this community on the eve of the Revocation vary from 35,000 to 90,000. There, their pastors assumed the role of spiritual guides not only to their 'brethren' in exile but also to the French Protestants who stayed in France.¹⁸ The resulting correspondence shows that the principal concerns of pastors were to safeguard the specific French reformed identity of the communities in exile and to establish orthodoxy among the refugees dispersed all over Protestant Europe and on the other side of the Atlantic.

Yet, these correspondence networks between The Hague, Leiden, London, Berlin, Hanover, Leipzig, New York, Surinam, and Geneva did not only provide Huguenot refugees with the orthodoxy of their faith. In particular the librarians and publishers in the United Provinces such as Prosper Marchand, a Parisian Huguenot who had settled in Leiden in 1709, took advantage of the relative freedom of the press in the Netherlands to establish a francophone publishing industry. Prosper Marchand and his brethren published not only the newest books on sciences, philosophy, and literature, but also on gossip and news, and sold them both to the dispersed Huguenots and to everybody interested in the effusions of the Republic of Letters.

The exchange of knowledge, ideas, and news was effected through books and letters but – even more important for the Republic of Letters – through journals such as the *Bibliothèque britannique*, the *Bibliothèque germanique*, or the *Bibliothèque impartiale*. In the Netherlands, the French Huguenot Pierre Bayle published between 1684 and 1687 the *Nouvelles de la république des lettres*. This journal reviewed the newest publications in the sciences, philosophy, medicine, literature, and theology. Bayle thus became one of the most important journalists trying to make the knowledge of his time available to the educated classes. In London, Matthieu Mathy, a Huguenot descendant born in 1718 in Montfort, in the Dutch province of Utrecht, and Jean Deschamps, born in 1707 in Bützow, Mecklenburg, made English language books available to a French-speaking public in reviewing the most recent publications in their *Journal britannique* (1750–7).¹⁹ In Berlin, from 1694 to 1698, Etienne Chauvin had edited his *Nouveau Journal des Savants* which was intended to be the Berlin equivalent to the Parisian *Journal des Savants*. Its aim had been to inform the French-speaking public in the north of Europe about the newest achievements in scholarship and the sciences. This journal was followed by the *Bibliothèque germanique*, edited first (1720) by Jacques Lenfant (1720–8) and Isaac de Beausobre (1728–38), then by Jacques Pérard (1746–9) and Jean-Henri-Samuel Formey (1746–59). Then also – from 1764 to 1781 – the *Gazette littéraire de Berlin* was edited by Joseph Du Fresne de

¹⁸ Myriam Yardeni, *Le refuge Huguenot: assimilation et culture* (Paris, 2002), pp. 40–1.

¹⁹ Uta Janssens, 'French Protestants and private societies', in Jens Haeseler and Anthony McKenna, eds., *La vie intellectuelle aux refuges protestants: actes de la table ronde de Munster du 25 juillet 1995* (Paris, 1999), pp. 69–83.

Francheville who introduced the French-speaking population of Brandenburg-Prussia, and also in St Petersburg and Sweden, to literary discourse and scientific knowledge.²⁰

Apart from journals, some of the most widely read French-speaking newspapers of the eighteenth century were published and edited by Huguenots. This was the case with the *Gazette de Leyde*, published by the third-generation Huguenot Elie de Luzac and read in France and in all parts of French-speaking Europe. In England, the French Huguenot Abel Boyer published (1705–9) his *Post-boy*, from 1711 to 1712 the *Protestant post-boy*, and from 1711 to 1729 his *Political state of Great Britain*. In these, among other matters, he published debates in parliament despite the risk of punishment for violation of parliamentary privilege. Boyer furthermore published in 1699 his *Royal dictionary French and English* which was reprinted dozens of times into the late nineteenth century.²¹

Huguenots did not only publish and disseminate books, newspapers, and journals but also acted as language teachers and translators from German, English, and Dutch into French and vice versa. They thus engaged as agents for the migration of ideas and for cultural transfer both between France and their countries of refuge, and between residents in the several countries of refuge. Gabriel de Saint-Glain, disciple of Spinoza, translated that author's *Tractatus* into French (1678) and thus made Spinoza available for the non-Latin but French-speaking public. This meant that Spinoza's ideas were now available to a much larger public, as at the end of the seventeenth and in the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, Latin was only spoken by academics while French was the language of 'non-academic' elites.²² Some fifteen years later, another Huguenot, Pierre Coste, both translated John Locke's works into French and composed interpretations on Locke that were to influence how Locke was understood in the French-speaking world until the end of the eighteenth century.²³ Jean Théophile Desaguliers translated the *Physices elementa Mathematica, experimentis confirmata* (1720–1) of Jan Jacob 'sGravesande, a Dutch disciple of Newton, into English, while Elie de Joncourt (1697–1765), a second-generation Huguenot translated the same *œuvre* into French.

²⁰ Jens Haeseler, 'Intégration ou conquête? Le public francophone en Prusse: les lecteurs de la Gazette Littéraire de Berlin', in Jens Haeseler and Anthony McKenna, eds., *La vie intellectuelle aux refuges protestants: actes de la Table ronde de Munster du 25 juillet 1995* (Paris, 1999), pp. 111–36.

²¹ John Christian Laursen, 'Abel Boyer, the translation of libertines, and the politics of French politeness in Britain', in Jens Haeseler and Anthony McKenna, eds., *La vie intellectuelle aux refuges protestants, II Huguenots traducteurs* (Paris, 2002), pp. 37–48. See also Graham C. Gibbs, 'Huguenot contributions to England's intellectual life, and England's intellectual commerce with Europe, c. 1680–1720', in Irene Scouloudi, ed., *Huguenots in Britain and their French Background, 1550–1800* (London, 1987), pp. 20–41.

²² See Jonathan Israel, *Radical enlightenment: philosophy and the making of modernity, 1650–1790* (Oxford, New York, 2001).

²³ Sheila Mason, 'The after-life of Pierre Coste', in Haeseler and McKenna, eds., *La vie intellectuelle aux refuges protestants, II*, pp. 49–62.

Within the Republic of Letters, which included French Protestants, Lutherans, Catholics, and Jews, Huguenot-controlled networks played an eminent role. These stretched from St Petersburg to the German states, Sweden, Denmark, Britain, Ireland, and crossed the Atlantic towards New York, Pennsylvania, Surinam, and finally South Africa. It would be wrong to say that the Republic of Letters and the exchange of ideas and knowledge would not have worked without the Huguenots, but their broad interests meant that their role was important. The Republic of Letters depended heavily on these Huguenot networks, to collect, publish, and disseminate the knowledge available within eighteenth-century Europe.²⁴ The involvement of those who participated in this market in ideas when added to the known process of Huguenots in the realms of commerce and trade contributed to the popular identification of Huguenots as cosmopolitans rather than members of any one host nation. At the same time Huguenot writers continued – even in the second and third generation – to promote narratives about their being French, and, as was noted, they continued to educate the French-speaking public in advanced knowledge.

IV

Most Huguenot narratives promoted, from the onset of persecution, the Frenchness of the exiled group. They were equally identified as French in the various host societies to which they travelled. In exile – whether in the Netherlands, Britain, Ireland, the Protestant German states, or the Americas – the first generation of French Protestant refugees were perceived to be ‘French nationals’ who were teased for their ‘French mannerism’.²⁵

While in the minds of many educated Europeans, Huguenots in exile were clearly associated with the most progressive ideas of a cosmopolitan Europe, the Huguenots’ own narratives about their specific national identity were by no means cosmopolitan in the modern sense of the word. Very few Huguenot writings prior to 1787 identified with the revolutionary concept of the equality of different races and nations as expounded by Kant, or with the early principles of the French Revolution. Equality of all races, nations, and religions seemed to be an impossible concept for most French Protestant writers because, as previously stated, from a theological perspective they came to identify themselves in exclusive terms as ‘God’s elect’ people.²⁶

The ‘elect’, the ‘true worshippers of the Sovereign God’²⁷ as the narratives usually defined it, meant members of the French reformed church, but this could, theoretically, be broadened to include other Protestants, particularly other

²⁴ Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck, ‘De la Haye à Berlin en passant par Londres’, in Haeseler and McKenna, eds., *La vie intellectuelle aux refuges protestants: actes de la table ronde*, pp. 85–9.

²⁵ Yardeni, *Le refuge*, p. 34.

²⁶ Notions of the Huguenots being ‘God’s elect’ can be found in petitions, sermons, pamphlets, memoirs, such as the one of Jaques Fontaine. See Dianne Ressinger, ed., *Memoirs of the Reverend Jaques Fontaine* (London, 1992), p. 113.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

Calvinists, such as Scottish and English Presbyterians and German reformed Protestants. More problematic was the relationship of many French refugees with Lutherans and – in particular – with Anglicans. The latter were seen to be both too close to Catholicism while also being persecutors of Presbyterian churches.²⁸ Nevertheless, the French reformed as well as the Anglican and Lutheran churches considered themselves collectively as a ‘reformed body’ and part of the universal church and thus occasionally permitted inter-communion – despite their disagreement on liturgical questions and church government.²⁹ As Robin D. Gwynn has put it, in spite of the tensions between French Huguenots, Scottish Presbyterians, and Anglicans, they formed a ‘Protestant International’ against the threat of Catholic Europe.³⁰

The surviving sources reveal that the image of Catholics fostered by many Huguenot exiled writers was problematic. Huguenots mostly settled in Protestant states, but Brandenburg-Prussia tolerated Catholic minorities, while Ireland was legally a Protestant state despite the majority of the population being Catholic. Even though French Huguenot pastors and professors corresponded with Catholics within the Republic of Letters, their petitions to the governments of the countries of refuge often included detailed plans for the further settlement of Huguenots, which revealed hostility towards the non-Protestant indigenous population. During the reign of Charles II French Protestants in Ireland had adopted the traditional Protestant attitude towards Irish Catholics and lobbied the English government to establish new colonies of French Protestants in Ireland in their place. Their aim was to have the Irish ‘removed’ from their estates: The ‘Irish Popish’ were described as ‘disloyal subjects to the crown’, ‘non-industrious’ people, ‘lazy’, only interested in ‘planning plots and rebellions to throw off the yoke of the just British domination’. Of all Catholics in the world, the Irish were isolated as the most ‘ignorant and bigoted nation’. And as it seemed ‘unlikely that the Papists would ever accept a Protestant government and therefore would rather try to extinguish their governors’, some Huguenots suggested that the British crown should ‘establish new colonies of Protestants to counterbalance and if necessary to fight the growing power of popery in Ireland’.³¹ The Catholic population had no rights to property and estates. Ireland, a country ‘where milk and honey flow’, had to be ‘handed over’ to the more worthy French Protestants. As the Huguenot petitioners considered French Protestant exiles to be superior to the Irish in character and manners, they defended their right to settle on

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 132–4.

²⁹ Ruth Whelan, ‘The Huguenots, the crown and the clergy, Ireland, 1704’, *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society*, 26 (1997), pp. 601–10 at p. 602.

³⁰ Robin D. Gwynn, ‘The Huguenots in Britain, the “Protestant International” and the defeat of Louis XIV’, in Randolph Vigne and Charles Littleton, eds., *From strangers to citizens: the integration of immigrant communities in Britain, Ireland, and colonial America, 1550–1750* (Brighton and Portland, 2001), pp. 412–24.

³¹ *Address from Protestants in France to Charles II, praying for liberty to remove into Ireland*, seventeenth century, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. A. 478 (11,352).

Irishmen's estates. Therefore in addressing the English government Huguenots advised them on how to get rid of the 'originaires du pays' in favour of the new French-Protestant settlers.³²

While petitions provide an insight into the 'official' attitudes of some Irish Huguenots towards the non-Protestant population, private correspondence and autobiographical documents shed light on some individuals' perception of the 'other' in various circumstance: the diary of Elie Bouhereau (covering the period between 1685 and 1719), first librarian of Marsh's Library Dublin, does not mention the Irish at all. Ireland and the Irish did not seem to exist in this refugee's world. The only group to which Bouhereau makes reference is the Irish Protestant community, and then only the Dublin Anglophone Protestant society. It is difficult to ascertain whether this 'silence' signifies that contact between Huguenots in Dublin and Irish Catholics was marginal or whether it was of no meaning to this Huguenot writer. The same silence can be found in Jean Deschamps's (1707–67) *Life and 'Mémoires secrets'* where, while he was living in Bützow and Berlin, Germans are hardly ever mentioned. From his memoirs it appears that still in the second generation the educated classes did not mix socially much with the non-French-Protestant population besides the nobility. In Berlin, the Huguenot colony's social elite of pastors, noblemen, professors, and administrators seems to have moved within an almost exclusively French circle of privileged Huguenot families. From Deschamps's '*Suite des mémoires*' it appears that also in London he moved principally within Huguenot circles.³³ Similarly, in Jacques Fontaine's *Memoirs* of 1722, Catholics are represented as the only group, besides French pirates, which attempted to end the French Protestants' life in the north of France, and as the very individuals who threatened Fontaine and his family after they had settled in County Cork in Ireland.³⁴

Jean Deschamps, born in Brandenburg and from 1749 pastor at the London Church of the Savoy, was scandalized when he heard that in 1763 the Academy of Sciences in Berlin had awarded Moses Mendelssohn, a Berlin Jew, the prize of the Academy. In his letters to Jean Henri Samuel Formey in Berlin he described the election of a Jew, who furthermore had written his essay in German, as a frivolity. As to Lutherans, Jacques Pérard, French reformed pastor in Prentzlow in Brandenburg, referred to them as 'de(s) rustres' (boors),³⁵ while we find Germans in general being depicted in stereotypical terms. Above all Germans were 'miserly' people: 'A German who invites you for dinner will serve tasteless stews

³² *Mémoire pour encourager les Protestants à venir habiter en Irlande*, seventeenth century, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Fonds Français MS 21,622: n. 551, fo. 101.

³³ Uta Janssens-Knorsch, *The life and 'Mémoires secrets' of Jean Des Champs (1707–1767): journalist, minister, and man of feeling* (London, 1990), p. 254.

³⁴ Ressinger, ed., *Memoirs of the Reverend Jaques Fontaine*, p. 28.

³⁵ Pérard to Marchand, 4 Nov. 1738 and 9 Oct. 1731, Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, 2 Mar. Quoted from Berkvens-Stevelinck, 'De la Haye à Berlin', pp. 85–6.

and soup which will taste like water, and he will tell you that the latter is very good for your health.³⁶

Some Huguenots (such as a *Monsieur Durand* of an ancient and noble Huguenot family in the Dauphiné travelling in 1686 to Virginia with a view to settling there permanently) depicted Catholics in less stereotypical terms. In his travel book of 1686 he wrote:

Milor Parker was, as I have said, a Roman Catholic, not in any way a bigot, but truly a man of honour. As he had left our kingdom after Easter 1686, he had been an eyewitness of what we of the Religion had suffered, and knew our innocence as to the charges brought against us, all of which inspired him with so great a compassion for our misfortunes that he never ceased to condemn the inhumanity of the French clergy.

Some personal understanding led to Durand perceiving a Catholic in positive terms for the first time in his life. At Christmas 1686 he noted with no mockery: 'It was Christmas Eve and he wished to make his devotions in his own communion.'³⁷

It is difficult to ascertain to what extent these representations or stereotypes were shared by the entire group of refugees. However suspicion of and distance from the 'other' was general. Gabriel Dumont, Huguenot pastor in Leipzig, predicted in 1707 that further Huguenot settlements in Saxony would be a challenge since the Saxonian Lutherans opposed Calvinists and particularly French Calvinists.³⁸ In England, the Huguenot society was perceived as a society *en vase clos* and as a threat to the hosting society, as the 1710 *Letter to the French refugees concerning their behaviour to the government* shows.³⁹ Members of the hosting society – in this case presumably an Anglican pastor – suspected the French Protestants of being Republicans, who 'think that they only are the Children of Grace, the particular Favourites of Heaven, and therefore that all the Right of Dominion and Power belongs peculiarly to themselves'. According to the author, the French Protestants in England were 'a separate Body in the Nation, not only by [their] manner of dwelling near one another, but by [their] assembling together in [their] French Churches, and also by [their] distinct Language'. Then, he continued in his address to the Huguenots:

because you are universally naturaliz'd, and thereby intituled to the same priviledges enjoy'd by the Natives of this Land; there must be no distinction made between you and

³⁶ 'Un Allemand qui vous invite à manger, vous réglera avec des ragouts fades, et des soupes qui sentent l'eau tiède, A l'entendre, il n'est rien de meilleur pour la santé.' In Edouard Mauvillon, *Lettres françoises et germaniques ou réflexions militaires, littéraires et critiques sur les François et les Allemands* (London, 1740), p. 247.

³⁷ *A Frenchman in Virginia, being the memoirs of a Huguenot refugee in 1686*. Originally published in French in 1687 in The Hague, translated by a Virginian. Privately printed by Harrison Fairfax in 1923, p. 66.

³⁸ 'Or un de ces obstacles est assurément l'aversion que les Lutheriens tesmoignent contre les reformez, or on ne manquera pas de représenter aux refugiez qui pourroient penser a venir s'establis en Saxe, que les Lutheriens du pais on toujours esté rigides contre nous, et qu'ils ne scauroient qu'avoir mille chagrins parmi un peuple aigri a tout moment par le zele indiscret de ces predicateurs et de Theologiens outrez. Vous sçavez que dans toute l'Europe on a ces idees des Lutheriens Saxonx.' In Albrecht Kirchoff, *Geschichte der Reformirten Gemeinde in Leipzig von ihrer Begründung bis zur Sicherung ihres Bestandes. 1700–1925* (Leipzig, 1874), p. 231. ³⁹ Oxford, Bodleian Library, G. Pamph. 1143 (1).

other Her Majesties Subjects: And if there be any difference amongst us in points of Church Government, or in Matters relating to the Constitution and Laws of these Realms; ther's no doubt but your Prudence and Duty, if not your Inclination, should oblige you to side with such as are Establish'd by Law rather than with those which are only tolerated.⁴⁰

V

These perceptions of 'otherness', typical of early processes of acculturation, necessarily changed the narratives about Huguenot identity that had been constructed from the sixteenth century onward. Now the 'national identity' of Huguenots had to be defined as distinct not only from that of French Catholics but as distinct also from and superior to that of the host community in which they found themselves. This was necessarily the case because to identify themselves as the 'elect' French who had originated 'from the first, the most beautiful, the most illustrious and the oldest Christian kingdom', and then to salute another country as their *patria* would have been contradictory.⁴¹

Even though, especially after the Peaces of Rijswijk (1697), Utrecht, and Rastatt (1713–14), hopes that French Protestants in exile would have an opportunity of returning to France were shattered, some still hoped to sustain a coherent French Protestant 'nation'. Thus, Henri Duquesne developed plans to establish a colony of French Protestants on the *Ile de la Réunion*. This was not to be part of any other country but to become a distinct French Protestant state. While this, and other such fantasies, were never followed through, France itself remained for generations of exiles the 'promised land'.⁴²

Since this love of French Protestants for France did not involve any respect for the French king, they experienced no difficulty in opposing Louis XIV and his successors. From the French Protestants' perspective, they were not fighting against the French nation but against a king who by revoking the Edict of Nantes had forfeited his legitimacy as their ruler. According to Jurieu, by supporting foreign forces against France, the French Protestants were helping to liberate the country from her tyrant.⁴³ Their mission was similarly represented when, from 1688 onward, Huguenot regiments helped William of Orange against the Jacobite armies in both England and Ireland.

From the beginning, political adherence and military support to the government and particularly the rulers of their host countries became one of the general patterns in French Protestant narratives in exile. Humble petitions to the king,

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ They define themselves as 'des originaires, du premier, du plus beau, du plus illustre, et du plus ancien Royaume de la Chrétienté'. In *Les protestants réfugiés: entretiens de Pauline et d'Agate* (Amsterdam, 1689), p. 135. As to the notion of a less valuable identity see Jean Henry, *Adresse aux églises françoises des états prussiens en réponse à l'écrit adressé en Allemand en cette année sous titre d'appel aux communs françoises de la monarchie prussienne par un de leurs plus anciens pasteurs* (Berlin, 1814).

⁴² Yardeni, *Le refuge*, p. 55.

⁴³ Pierre Jurieu, *Examen d'un libelle contre la religion, contre l'état et contre la révolution d'Angleterre, intitulé Avis important aux réfugiés sur leur prochain retour en France* (The Hague, 1691), p. 216.

panegyrics, and flattering sermons sustained this group's loyalty to their new monarch or prince and can be found in all countries of refuge.⁴⁴ Officially, most French Protestants identified with the governments granting them shelter, sometimes religious tolerance, and, in the best case, financial support. The first history of Huguenot settlement in Brandenburg, Charles Ancillon's *Histoire de l'établissement des François réfugiés dans les Etats de Son Altesse Electorale de Brandebourg*, published in 1690, developed the gratitude of Huguenots towards their benefactor(s) as a theme that would feature in all subsequent narrations of Huguenot communities in exile.⁴⁵

These findings suggest that Huguenots in exile distinguished between owing political adherence to the government of the host country resulting in their becoming British or Prussian subjects, and safeguarding their specific cultural identity. In 1757, during the Seven Years War, the identification of the French Protestants with their country of refuge was put to test with the arrival of the French army in some German states: Rocques de Maumont, a second-generation yet still French-speaking Huguenot and pastor of the city of Celle, characterized the French soldiers and officers coming into parts of Germany as strangers. His *patria*, as he expressed it in his letters published in 1775, was Hanover and no longer France. Still, it is very clear that despite being a subject of King George II, Rocques de Maumont was not German in the same way as the king's German subjects in Hanover.⁴⁶ In the Huguenot narratives, being subjects to a host always meant that the French Protestants were the 'better' subjects. In all countries of refuge, panegyrics to the respective ruler are joined by the Huguenots' self-praise, as a late seventeenth-century petition to the crown clearly indicates:

Christian charity, Sire, the example of your ancestors and the well-being of your state invite you to meet their expectations and to support them in their designs, because apart from the blessings of Heaven and the love of all Protestants, of which His Majesty disposes, the number of your subjects and of the amount of your income could increase with the accession of a nation whose industriousness and labour would produce in little time affluence, riches and safety by cultivating the soil which Your Majesty will allow them, by their application to the trade and their vigilance, and their fidelity.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Peter Drelincourt, *A speech made to his grace the duke of Ormond, lord lieutenant of Ireland, and to the ... privy council. To return the humble thanks of the French Protestants lately arriv'd in this kingdom; and graciously reliev'd by them* (Dublin, 1682), or François Gaultier, *Sermon sur la mort de tres-haut & tres-puissant prince, monsieur Frideric Guillaume, margrave de Brandebourg* (Berlin, 1688).

⁴⁵ Charles Ancillon, *Histoire de l'établissement des François réfugiés dans les états de son altesse electorale de Brandebourg* (Berlin, 1690), p. 8.

⁴⁶ Yardeni, *Le refuge*, p. 201.

⁴⁷ 'La charité Chrétienne, Sire, l'exemple de vos ancestres, et le bien de vótre état vous invitent a leur être propre et a les encourager dans leur dessein car outre les benedictions du ciel et l'amour de tous les protestants, que V. M. peut s'atirer par le nombre de vos sujets et de vos revenus peut s'accroître notablement par l'accession d'un peuple dont l'industrie, et le travail sera capable d'apporter dans peu de temps l'abondance, la richesse, et la s[ou]reté par la culture des terres que V. M. leur permettra de planter[,] par leur application au commerce et par leur vigilance, et leur fidelité.' Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawl. A. 478. *Address from Protestants in France to Charles II, praying for liberty to remove into Ireland*, seventeenth century.

Also in Britain, the Huguenots emphasized their great value to their hosts because of their prowess in ‘trade, arts and manufactures’.⁴⁸ Similar claims for the contribution they had made to the development of their host society were made by the Huguenots who had settled in North America. The ‘some hundred families’ who had made their homes there had, it was alleged,

improved in a manner those Colonies, by making the Ground Arable, and by their Trades, Labours and Industry; insomuch, that particularly Carolina and New York are, for the most, inhabited by them. That the said French Protestants Refugees, settled here and in those Countries, have, on all Occasions, shewed their Loyalty, Zeal and Affection, to the present Government, by supporting very cheerfully the Charges and Taxes of the Land, and wearing Arms for the Defence of it, especially in the Attacks of Quebec, Martinico, Guadalupa, Jamaica, and St. Domingo.⁴⁹

In those Huguenot narratives which were made available to the public between the 1680s and about 1760 the trope of being loyal adopted subjects and the rulers’ better subjects co-existed with claims that the French Protestant faith was superior to all others and that their French culture and their prowess in crafts and commerce also made them superior to other subjects.⁵⁰ These elements feature not only in narratives composed by authors of the first generation, but were reiterated by writers of the second, third, and even fourth generations in exile, as they proclaimed to be ‘French at heart’ and loyal to an idealized vision of France and the French nation. Thus Jean Pierre Erman and Pierre Chrétien Frédéric Reclam, two fourth-generation Huguenots based in Berlin, professed in 1782 in their *Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire des réfugiés français dans les états du Roi de Prusse*:

The refugees originating from a country, where polished manners are much more developed than anywhere else, whose language is refined and since the century of Louis XIV has manifested its being refined in master-pieces of eloquence and poetry, are not likely to take the citizens of their countries of refuge as a model, but hope to serve them as a model in many different ways.⁵¹

Such seeming arrogance was not exceptional as Huguenot elites sought to make their French culture and civilization available to the populations of their countries of refuge. Their purpose, as they saw it, was to enrich the less-developed nations by their culture and language.

⁴⁸ Wolfenbüttel Herzog August Bibliothek, Tp Kapsel 4^o:2: *Réponse ou copie d’une lettre écrite à l’auteur de L’Avis salutaire aux réfugiés* (London, 1711).

⁴⁹ Oxford, Bodleian Library, fo. THETA 661 (67): ‘The case of the French Protestants refugees, settled in and about London, and in the English plantations in America’.

⁵⁰ Yardeni, *Le refuge*, p. 47.

⁵¹ ‘Les réfugiés, sortant d’un pays où la politesse des mœurs avoit fait plus de progrès que partout ailleurs, parlant une langue cultivée et dès lors fixée par les chefs-d’œuvre que l’éloquence et la poésie produisirent pendant le beau siècle de Louis XIV, bien loin d’être dans le cas de se modeler sur leurs nouveaux citoyens, pouvaient espérer au contraire de leur servir à plus d’un égard de modèles.’ In Jean Pierre Erman and Pierre Chrétien Frédéric Reclam, *Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire des réfugiés français dans les états du roi de Prusse* (9 vols., Berlin, 1782–99), 1, p. 302.

Politically, the process by which Protestant refugees came to identify themselves with the host nation had commenced with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The Huguenot narratives modified through the experience of persecution and exile defined their brethren as being simultaneously loyal subjects to the sovereign of their host country and French nationals, or, as the Berlin pastor Henry put it as late as 1814, they were ‘françois de la monarchie prussienne’.⁵² As a reaction to the French Protestants’ identity being challenged by persecution and exile, in this way Huguenot narratives offered the exiles a possible new identity. This new identity was to unite notions of the French Protestants’ distinct and superior culture and religion with the concept of owing loyalty to the host nation.

VI

From the onset of persecution, narratives about Huguenot identity which displayed arrogance and superciliousness had co-existed with narratives about the Huguenots being respectful and deferential to the authorities and subjects of their host countries. In 1688 Jean Barbin, writing in his *Devoirs des fidèles réfugiés* which he published from Amsterdam, asserted that anybody who denounced the *manières hautaines* of the French refugees defamed the character of this nation. ‘On the contrary’, he averred, Huguenots had always shown deference towards the ‘inhabitants of the countries of refuge, great esteem for their wishes, if we know them, and we are submissive and respectful towards the orders of their superiors.’⁵³ Barbin was one of the French Protestants in exile who, already at an early stage, tried to convince the entire French Protestant nation to get rid of their Frenchness and to become integrated subjects or even citizens within their host societies.⁵⁴ This was also the case with the so-called French Proselytes, or French Catholics who converted to Protestantism upon arrival in England. In 1722, John Baptist Denis, a naturalized French Proselyte (who had already lived in England for fourteen years) was appalled that the French refugees in England, even though many of them had already been naturalized, still characterized themselves as Frenchmen and as part of the ‘French nation’. He claimed that any French refugee arriving in England should not be proud of his or her French descent but should become ‘English’, particularly once naturalization had been granted to them. Denis defined it a ‘duty’ to be grateful and to lose any ‘Frenchness’ upon arrival in England.⁵⁵ In Brandenburg-Prussia, still in 1814, 120 years after their arrival in Berlin, the pastor Thérémin appealed to the

⁵² Henry, *Adresse aux églises françaises*, pp. 31, 38, 47.

⁵³ ‘Ayons au contraire toujours beaucoup de déférence pour les habitants des lieux où nous sommes à refuge; ayons beaucoup de considération pour leurs volontés, quand nous les connoissons, ayons toute la soumission et le respect possible pour les ordres des supérieurs.’ In Jean Barbin, *Les devoirs des fidèles réfugiés* (Amsterdam, 1688), p. 15.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 89–90 and 190.

⁵⁵ *A plot discovered*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Pamph. 316 (18), 1722.

Huguenots of Prussia to become fully integrated German nationals, thereby adopting the German language and ridding themselves of their French mannerisms.⁵⁶

Significant social endogamy as reflected by the numbers of intermarriages in the countries of refuge indicate that at least up to the 1750s, narratives encouraging the Huguenots to preserve their exclusiveness might have been accepted by a majority of Huguenot exiles. In Britain, Ireland, and Brandenburg-Prussia, up to the 1720s, the numbers of Huguenots who married non-Huguenots were small, amounting only to 6 per cent of the refugees. Between the 1720s and the 1780s the rate of intermarriage increased. In the three countries during these later decades, between 15 and 20 per cent of the refugees married non-Huguenots. Even more pointedly in Brandenburg-Prussia, these self-proclaimed citizens of the Republic of Letters – professors, pastors, and journalists – refused to marry outside Huguenot society.⁵⁷ Huguenot elites endeavoured to promote intellectual networks all over Europe and also the overseas colonies, and at the same time the majority of the Huguenots refused to link their families with non-Huguenots. Remaining a closed society through social endogamy was considered essential to sustaining their sense of exclusivity and superiority.

However, the Huguenots' 'national identity' as promoted by Huguenot narratives in exile came to be challenged from within. While in 1700 70 per cent of all Huguenot refugees in Berlin still accepted Holy Communion within a French reformed church, these numbers had declined to a mere 21 per cent by 1795.⁵⁸ Also, intermarriage increased in the three countries with the Seven Years War; an event that proved crucial in accelerating integration processes in Britain and Ireland as well as on Continental Europe and even in British North America. At the beginning of the Seven Years War, all countries involved in the conflict were in need of large numbers of soldiers. The Huguenots, having been naturalized in most countries of refuge, at the latest at the beginning of the century, were required to take up arms for their country of refuge. In Brandenburg-Prussia, during the Seven Years War, patriotism, Archenholtz's so-called 'Geistesrevolution', became a strong element,⁵⁹ motivating Prussian soldiers to stay in the field. Some scholars have argued that this was also the case in Britain

⁵⁶ David Louis Thérémín, *Zuruf an die französischen Gemeinden in der preußischen Monarchie von einem ihrer ältesten Lehrer* (Berlin, 1814).

⁵⁷ The church registers of the French reformed church of Berlin indicate that, between 1695 and 1704, there was no intermarriage of pastors, university professors and other members of the 'intelligentsia' outside the Huguenot society. Between 1740 and 1750, only 5.7 per cent of the 'mixed marriages' are members of the intelligentsia, while they form between 1685 and 1800 13.5 per cent of the Berlin Huguenot society. Only between 1790 and 1795, 13 per cent of the 'mixed couples' are members of the 'intelligentsia'. Church Registers, Archiv der Französischen Kirche Berlin.

⁵⁸ Birnstiel, 'Dieu protège nos souverains', p. 121.

⁵⁹ Anke Waldemann, 'Reichspatriotismus im letzten Drittel des 18. Jahrhunderts', in Otto Dann, Miroslav Hroch, and Johannes Koll, eds., *Patriotismus und Nationenbildung am Ende des Heiligen Römischen Reiches* (Cologne, 2003), pp. 59–60; and Hans-Martin Blitz, *Aus Liebe zum Vaterland: Die deutsche Nation im 18. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg, 2000).

and North America.⁶⁰ The fact that the Seven Years War was perceived as a 'patriotic war' and that the Huguenots were required to take up arms might have led them increasingly to identify themselves with the countries of refuge. Being at war together, for the same 'patriotic cause', might have lessened prejudices between Huguenots and the indigenous populations. However, further research needs to be carried out as to why the Seven Years War significantly accelerated the Huguenots' integration into the countries of refuge. In Berlin, in 1772, 50 per cent of all marriages blessed in French reformed churches were marriages between Germans and descendants of Huguenot refugees. In the 1780s this increased to 60 per cent, in the 1790s to 70 per cent. Simultaneously it became more and more obvious that the French reformed communities were losing traits of their Frenchness. After the Seven Years War, the third and fourth generation of Huguenots ceased to use French as their everyday language. In 1785, one hundred years after the Edict of Potsdam had been issued, the Berlin pastors A. R. Bocquet and Pajon berated the Huguenots for the loss not only of their language but also of French Protestant virtues such as modesty, probity, frugality, industry, and moderation.⁶¹

In the end, even the privileged groups of pastors and administrators who had previously cultivated a distinctive Huguenot identity became affected by the 'lingering' process of integration and assimilation. They were no longer able to draw a clear line between Huguenots being politically Prussian, English, or Dutch subjects and culturally French nationals. Their identity in exile was more complex. Many Huguenot discourses in letters and diaries clearly oscillated during the interlude from the mid-eighteenth to the early nineteenth centuries between a 'we the French' and 'we the Germans, English, Irish, or Dutch'. The example of Jean Deschamps, a French pastor in London who had been born in Brandenburg, provides a practical example of this hesitancy. In 1748, Deschamps described the duke of Marlborough as the 'well-known hero of the British nation',⁶² suggesting that this was a community to which he did not belong, but in 1754 he remarked of himself that although 'a stranger for England by birth and by nation' he had 'never ceased belonging to this [the English] nation through [his] feelings for her'.⁶³ Then, in 1763, Deschamps referred to French as 'notre langue' while contradictorily speaking of 'notre bon roast beef en Angleterre' and 'notre plus excellent Théologien, ... le fameux Warberton,

⁶⁰ Linda Colley, *Britons: forging the nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT, 1992); and Fred Anderson, *Crucible of war: the Seven Years War and the fate of empire in British North America, 1754–1766* (New York, 2000).

⁶¹ Rudolf von Thadden, 'Vom Glaubensflüchtling zum preußischen Patrioten', in Rudolf von Thadden and Michelle Magdelaine, eds., *Die Hugenotten, 1685–1985* (Munich, 1985), pp. 187–8.

⁶² '... a l'honneur du grand Malborough: et jamais Général n'a mérité ni reçu des Trophées plus glorieux de la part de sa Patrie que ce fameux Héros du Peuple Britannique.' In Janssens-Knorsch, *The life and 'Mémoires secrets' of Jean des Champs*, p. 250.

⁶³ 'Tout étrangers que je suis à l'Angleterre du côté de la naissance et de la Nation, je n'ai jamais cessé de lui appartenir par mes sentimens.' In Janssens-Knorsch, *The life and 'Mémoires secrets' of Jean des Champs*, p. 261.

Evêque de Gloucester [sic].⁶⁴ Further proof of his uncertainty about his identity came in 1764 when, in the course of writing to Frederick the Great, Deschamps remarked that while his 'work' and 'position' had forced him to 'become all English' his heart had 'never ceased to be Prussian'.⁶⁵ In effect, the French Protestants in exile were culturally and politically of hybrid nationality, which enhanced their integration but not their full assimilation into the host societies.

In 1787, an Edict of Toleration, published in France, permitted Huguenots to live freely and practise the trades and professions from which they had been excluded. The first French constitution of 1791 enshrined the equality of all citizens before the law, and insisted that no one should be troubled for their religious opinions unless public order was infringed. Special rights were given to descendants of Huguenot refugees wishing to return to France; rights which were to persist until the Second World War. Yet, most of the descendants of Huguenot refugees did not take advantage of the opportunity to return. The advanced stage of integration, as previously described, explains why the majority of the 'French nationals' preferred to stay within the former 'countries of refuge'.

VII

In the countries of refuge, narratives about the 'poor refugees' proved helpful in negotiating privileges that would have been closed to normal immigrants. Forging and promoting narratives about the Huguenots' exclusive identity also served the survival of the refugees as a group. This purpose outlived the immediate phase of persecution. When in 1758 Jean Deschamps, who had never suffered religious persecution, was trying to obtain a sinecure from the bishop of London, the bishop's chaplain promised to represent his case as that of a pastor who had been persecuted for his faith and had lost everything for the Protestant cause.⁶⁶

After 1787, persecution could no longer serve as an argument. And after 1789 the French Revolution and the arrival of French Catholic *émigrés* in England, Brandenburg-Prussia, and North America made it apparent that the Huguenots in exile, now mostly the fourth and fifth generation, had become integrated into the host societies. How could the group's privileges be conserved if there was proof that the Huguenots no longer formed an exclusive group and no longer shared one common Huguenot identity? Narratives about an exclusive and distinct French Protestant identity had to be adapted to changed historical circumstances.

To this purpose Erman and Reclam, fourth-generation Huguenots in Berlin, placed emphasis in their narrative on the benefit that the Prussian state of 1685 had derived from the arrival of the Huguenots there, arguing that they quickly

⁶⁴ Jean Deschamps to Jean Henri Samuel Formey, 15 Feb. 1763 and 27 Aug. 1764, Berlin Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, FF 15,15.

⁶⁵ 'Tout Anglois que je suis devenu par mes emplois et mon établissement, mon cœur n'a jamais cessé un instant d'être Prussien.' In Janssens-Knorsch, *The life and 'Mémoires secrets' of Jean des Champs*, p. 283.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

became model subjects for less educated Germans, and that it was their standing apart as a privileged group that had made it possible for them to present an example in civil and economic living to the Prussian population at large.⁶⁷ Late eighteenth-century Huguenot narrations thus provided Prussian historians with the opportunity to incorporate their particular story concerning the role of Huguenots in cultivating Prussian virtues as another myth in the emerging grand narrative of the nation.

This proposition emerged most clearly in 1814 in the course of the debate between David-Louis Thérémín and Jean Henry over the extent to which Huguenots should preserve their distinctiveness. Thérémín, as was previously mentioned, favoured full integration, arguing in German that a Prussian state, threatened by Napoleon and the French, needed to consolidate a state around a single nation, language, and culture.⁶⁸ Even under these circumstances Henry encouraged Huguenots to retain their distinct identity, pointing to the fact that it was their difference as a community that had made it possible for them to make such a consequential contribution to the enrichment of Prussian culture and the economy. Such assertions made it possible for Henry to argue that the privileges that had always been enjoyed by the Huguenots in Brandenburg-Prussia should be continued because it was from their position of privilege that they had made their particular contribution to the strengthening and enrichment of the Prussian state.⁶⁹ This line would have been especially pertinent because five years previous to this, in 1809, Prussian reforms had deprived the Huguenots of most of their privileges and placed them on a more equal footing with the remainder of the Prussian population.

The more Huguenots lost their privileges and their distinctive characteristics of language and culture within a host state, the more they had to rely on the fostering of memory and heritage as a means of salvaging something of a 'Huguenot identity' within a community into which they had been assimilated. Such efforts were especially evident in the centennial year of 1785, but became general from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1880s in almost every country in which Huguenot communities had endured. During these decades Huguenot descendants in all countries in which their ancestors had found refuge began to publish church registers, consistory minutes, and memoirs as a means of memorializing the special contribution that the Huguenots had made to the greatness of the nation-states that had provided them with a new home. Also as these nation-states of the nineteenth century seemed more securely in place, descendants of the original refugees began to establish Huguenot societies associated with particular states rather than with the general diaspora. Thus, in 1883, the Huguenot Society of America was established in New York, the Huguenot Society of London was founded in 1885, while the German Huguenot Society

⁶⁷ Von Thadden, 'Vom Glaubensflüchtling zum preußischen Patrioten', p. 195.

⁶⁸ Thérémín, *Zuruf an die französischen Gemeinden*, pp. 29–30.

⁶⁹ Henry, *Adresse aux églises françaises*, pp. 48–9, 64–71.

dates from 1890.⁷⁰ This trend persisted into the twentieth century with, for example, the establishment in 1922 of the Huguenot Society of the Founders of Manakin in the Colony of Virginia, and in 1975 of the Nederlandse Huguenoten Stichting.

In Brandenburg-Prussia, Huguenots were both Prussian patriots and proud French Huguenots, as is illustrated in parts of the *œuvre* of the famous German author Theodor Fontane, a Huguenot descendant.⁷¹ Between the end of the nineteenth century and 1945 the French Protestant identity in Brandenburg-Prussia began to contribute to a symbiotic relationship with Prussian patriotism and German nationalism. It became the view among Germans of Huguenot descent that Prussian and German virtues had been deeply influenced by the French reformed spirit ever since the 1660s. In this way they defined themselves both under the Kaiserreich and during the Nazi regime as Germans of French Protestant descent who had become the 'best Germans'.⁷²

VIII

When looked at from the other perspective it appears that while most governments accepted and even cultivated the distinctiveness of the community of French Protestant descent within their frontiers, others perceived the reluctance of the Huguenots to become fully integrated citizens or subjects within the host society as a problem.⁷³ In 1708, the magistrate of Torgau in Saxony refused to settle French Protestants because he feared that they would not integrate into the host society: their love for their fatherland (France) was well known, as were their attempts to establish their own colonies with their own French authorities and jurisdiction.⁷⁴ However, more often than not, the will of the governments prevailed. Not only the Edict of Potsdam of 1685 but also the Brandenburg-Prussian legislation of 1709 and 1720 cemented the Huguenots' privileged status within that German Protestant country. *De jure* the French Protestants enjoyed the same rights as the German subjects of the state. *De facto* the refugees were in many respects more privileged than many German subjects.

⁷⁰ Bertrand van Ruymbeke, 'Minority survival: the Huguenot paradigm in France and the Diaspora', in Bertrand van Ruymbeke and Randy J. Sparks, eds., *Memory and identity: the Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora* (Columbia, SC, 2003), p. 13.

⁷¹ Theodor Fontane, *Schach von Wuthenow: Erzählung aus der Zeit des Regiments Gensdarmes* (Berlin, 1966), pp. 19 and 79; and Theodor Fontane, *Meine Kinderjahre: Autobiographischer Roman* (Berlin, 1919), pp. 17–21.

⁷² François Centurier, 'Die Hugenotten-Nachkommen und der Deutsche Hugenottenverein', in von Thadden and Magdelaine, eds., *Die Hugenotten, 1685–1985*, pp. 215–16; and Etienne François, 'Vom preußischen Patrioten zum besten Deutschen', in von Thadden and Magdelaine, eds., *Die Hugenotten, 1685–1985*, pp. 198–212.

⁷³ 'A letter to the French refugees concerning their behaviour to the government', Oxford, Bodleian Library, G. Pamp. 1143 (1).

⁷⁴ '... wegen derselben bekanden all zu großen Liebe gegen ihr Vaterlandt'. Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden (SHStAD): Loc. 10 333 Bl. 192 and Bl. 195.

In this respect the position of the Huguenots was very different within Brandenburg-Prussia from that of another diasporic community, the Jews. They too became the object of special legislation, but one that defined theirs as an inferior ethnicity, as opposed to the Huguenots, whose language, culture, and Calvinist faith were admired by the elite of Brandenburg-Prussia. Immigrating French Protestants were encouraged to foster and preserve these distinctive traits, and the Huguenot intellectual elites responded to this encouragement by forming an endogamous society which made claims to their culture being superior both to that of the Jews and German Protestants (mostly Lutherans) who lived within the same state.

A similar process occurred in other German states, notably Hesse-Kassel and the Palatinate. This is in sharp contrast to what occurred in Britain and Ireland, where pressure was exerted to have the immigrating Huguenots – especially the elites – learn English. Thus, in many German states, and for different reasons, Huguenots and Jews preserved their distinctive cultures – at least up to 1750 – and lived as clearly separate communities within Germanic cultures. In Brandenburg-Prussia, and also in other countries such as Ireland which were less developed economically, the myth was fostered both by the Huguenots and by Protestants from within the host society that Huguenots had made a unique contribution to the cultural and economic progress of their host countries. Already in 1770, Frederick II acknowledged the special contribution that Huguenots had made to the economy and culture of Brandenburg, thus adopting a myth that had been fostered by the immigrants themselves.⁷⁵

German national historiography of a later date perpetuated this myth and accepted descendants of Huguenot immigrants not only as the ‘elect’ but as the ‘best Germans’. Their arrival in Brandenburg-Prussia, mostly after 1685, was seen to coincide with Prussia’s rise to power, which in teleological national histories of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was seen to have culminated in the German unification in 1871. Also the more integrated and assimilated the Huguenots became the more they also emphasized their identification with Prussian virtues and the Prussian state.⁷⁶

In other countries of refuge, such as Ireland, Britain, and North America, the Huguenots were accorded a different – yet distinct – role within the nation-building process. In North America, both American and American-Huguenot historians of the nineteenth century, as Bertrand van Ruymbeke has stated, incorporated the Huguenots ‘into the White-Anglo-Saxon Protestant model’.⁷⁷ This in turn contributed to the myth that America ‘was peopled largely by settlers fleeing religious persecution and yearning for the opportunity to worship openly

⁷⁵ Frédéric Hartweg, ‘Die Hugenotten in Berlin’, in Frédéric Hartweg and Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, eds., *Die Hugenotten und das Refuge: Deutschland und Europa: Beiträge zu einer Tagung* (Berlin, 1990), p. 20.

⁷⁶ François, ‘Vom preußischen Patrioten’, p. 205.

⁷⁷ Van Ruymbeke, ‘Minority survival’, p. 15.

and without fear'.⁷⁸ Yet, as Bertrand van Ruymbeke has argued, American historians – in some way similar to their Prussian counterparts – of the nineteenth century were convinced that French Protestants had impregnated the American national character with 'specific' desirable traits: religious freedom, economic success, perseverance, and the entrepreneurial spirit. Thus, it became possible to represent the Huguenots as 'the essence of what America is all about'.⁷⁹ This positive portrayal of the Huguenots in American historiography provided them with more latitude to preserve more elements of their national character, which, until recently, had gone unnoticed. Thus, as has been pointed out by Paula Wheeler Carlo, French reformed churches in New York have continued, even to the present day, to conduct services in French.⁸⁰

In the Irish case, the state church wished the Huguenot refugees to assimilate with and consolidate the Protestant ascendancy within a predominantly Catholic country. Evidence, particularly that concerning the assistance offered by several Huguenot regiments to William of Orange, was cited to show that they had contributed to the Protestant cause. But, for all that, the Huguenots retained some of their distinctive culture, and were generally slow to intermarry with Irish Protestants.⁸¹

Similarly in Britain, Huguenots became a significant element within the British army, even to the point at which Macaulay acknowledged the 'heroic, empire-building' character of the Huguenots.⁸² While, until recently, Huguenots were identified as 'an outstanding example' of 'the successful integration of a large immigrant community' into British society,⁸³ more recent research suggests that Huguenots in Britain worked to preserve something of their culture, as well as religion, and were also slow to intermarry within the broader Protestant community. They were assisted in this by the fact that throughout the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Huguenots in Britain were, as Matthew Glozier has stated, 'looked upon with suspicion by a largely xenophobic British public'.⁸⁴

All of this suggests that in every instance where Huguenots settled in a host society in significant numbers, they succeeded for some considerable time – in

⁷⁸ John M. Murrin, 'Religion and politics in America from the first settlement to the civil war', in Mark A. Noll, ed., *Religion and American politics: from the colonial period to the 1980s* (New York, 1990), p. 19.

⁷⁹ Editorial published in 1990 in a Charleston newspaper. Quoted from van Ruymbeke, 'Minority survival', p. 16.

⁸⁰ Paula Wheeler Carlo, 'Anglican conformity and nonconformity among the Huguenots of colonial New York', in Vigne and Littleton, eds., *From strangers to citizens*, pp. 313–14.

⁸¹ Raymond Pierre Hylton, *Ireland's Huguenots and their refuge, 1662–1745: an unlikely haven* (Brighton and Portland, 2005), p. 179.

⁸² Thomas Babington Macaulay, *History of England from the accession of James the Second*, illustrated edn, ed. C. H. Firth (8 vols., London, 1913–15). On Huguenots and their role in British history, see II, pp. 675–81, 732–4, 868; III, pp. 1074–7, 1084; IV, pp. 1678–80, 1690, 1875, 1880–1.

⁸³ Robin D. Gwynn, 'Patterns in the study of Huguenot refugees in Britain', in Scouloudi, ed., *Huguenots in Britain*, p. 218.

⁸⁴ Matthew Glozier, *The Huguenot soldiers of William of Orange and the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688: the Lions of Judah* (Brighton and Portland, 2002), pp. 5 and 136. Cf. Bernard Cottret, *The Huguenots in England: immigration and settlement, c. 1550–1700* (Cambridge and Paris, 1991), p. 191.

most countries for at least two to three generations – in preserving their distinct Calvinist faith and French cultural identity. This was not generally acknowledged in the national narratives which came into favour in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, although in several instances the authors of national histories praised some special contribution made by the Huguenots to the nation being venerated, even if only because their particular ‘virtues’ complemented these same ‘virtues’ of the nation.⁸⁵ To this extent some acknowledgement was being made of the existence of cultural diversity within the emerging nation-state, even if only to the point where narratives of Huguenot experience within the several host communities could be incorporated into the national myths that legitimized the emerging nation-states. Acknowledgement was also made in several of these national master narratives of the presence of distinctive Jewish communities; but, with the possible exception of Sephardic Jews in France and in the Netherlands, their presence was represented in negative terms as contesting the emergence of the nation-state.

These insights into the experiences of several Huguenot communities in exile suggest how trans-national and comparative approaches to European history and historiography can correct the master narratives which were favoured in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to enhance the standing and reputation of individual nation-states. The most obvious corrective to the received wisdom on the building of the state system of the west is that, in many cases, the rationale that justified the states that were formed was the product of the merging of narratives and myths of several groups rather than the invention of one dominant national group.

⁸⁵ This is not the case in Colley’s, *Britons: forging the nation*, where the Huguenots’ or the Sephardis’ contribution to the formation of a ‘British national identity’ is not mentioned at all.