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The Limits of Nationalism

This book discusses the justifications and limits of cultural nationalism from a liberal perspective. It begins by presenting a normative typology of nationalist ideologies. The main distinction in this typology is between cultural nationalisms and statist nationalisms. According to statist nationalisms, states have an interest in the cultural homogeneity of their citizenries. According to cultural nationalisms, people have interests in adhering to their cultures (the adherence thesis) and in sustaining these cultures for generations (the historical thesis). Gans argues that freedom- and identity-based justifications for cultural nationalism common in the literature can only support the adherence thesis, while the historical thesis could only be justified by the interest people have in the long-term endurance of their personal and group endeavours.

The Limits of Nationalism examines demands often made in the name of cultural nationalism. Gans argues that national self-determination should be constitutionally interpreted in sub-statist rather than statist forms. The book presents two conceptions of the notion of historical rights. It also discusses the demands entailed by cultural particularism as opposed to cultural cosmopolitanism.

CHAIM GANS is Professor of Law at Tel Aviv University, Israel. His previous publications include *Philosophical Anarchism and Political Disobedience* (Cambridge, 1992).

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For my father

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