

Beyond Imagined Uniqueness

Beyond Imagined Uniqueness:
Nationalisms in Contemporary Perspectives

Edited by

Joan Burbick and William Glass

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

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In Memory of
Dr. Ewa Grzeszczyk,
Scholar, Teacher, Colleague, Friend

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE.	xi
INTRODUCTION – JOAN BURBICK	
Paradoxes of Belonging: The Legacies of Nationalism.	1
PART I	
IMAGINING NATIONALISM IN LANGUAGE, MONUMENTS, AND VISUAL CULTURE	
CHAPTER ONE – TOMASZ ŻYRO	
The Idea of Covenant and a Rise of Nationalism	13
CHAPTER TWO – AHU ANTMEN	
Making or Breaking? Authority, Charisma and Public Monuments: The Case of Atatürk Monuments in Turkey.	35
CHAPTER THREE – GRZEGORZ KOŚĆ	
Nation-Building through Portraiture during the Cold War	47
CHAPTER FOUR – HENIO HOYO	
Posting Nationalism Postage Stamps as Carriers of Nationalist Messages.	67
CHAPTER FIVE – DAVID A. JONES	
Nationalism in China: Is It Increasing? Is This Helpful?.	93
CHAPTER SIX – ROMAN SZUL	
Minority, Regional, and Immigrant Languages in Europe: New Glory and Old Misery	107
CHAPTER SEVEN – ANDREW JACOB	
An Alternate Nationalism: A Comparative Study of B. R. Ambedkar and Ernest Renan	127

PART II

IMAGINING NATIONALISMS: CASE STUDIES

CHAPTER EIGHT – EFE CAN GÜRCAN

The Evolution of Turkish Nationalism: An Unconventional Approach
Based on a Comparative and International Perspective. 141

CHAPTER NINE – KONRAD BŁĄŻEJOWSKI

Connecting Past and Present: Nationalism
in Sino-Japanese Relations 169

CHAPTER TEN – MICHAŁ WAWRZONEK

Andrey Sheptytsky's "Christian Patriotism"
in Light of Ukrainian Nationalism. 191

CHAPTER ELEVEN – ANDREW KIER WISE

The European Union and the "Oriental Other"
in Polish Nationalist Discourse 207

CHAPTER TWELVE – NELLY BEKUS

Belarus after 1989: the Struggle over the Nation between
the Official and the Alternative Public Discourses 241

CHAPTER THIRTEEN – NATALIA SINEAEVA-PANKOWSKA

Multiple Identities as a Basis for Construction
of (Post)Modern Moldovan Identity 261

PART III

IMAGINING THE HOMELAND: IDENTITY AND IMMIGRANT NATIONALISMS

CHAPTER FOURTEEN – ANNA KRAWCZYK-ŁASKARZEWSKA

The World's Longest One-Way Mirror: Contemporary American
(Literary) Studies in Search of a Postnational Poetics. 291

CHAPTER FIFTEEN – WEI-CHEN ROGER LIU

Global Universalism or Diasporic Particularism?
An Analysis of Akram Khan's "If Not, Why Not?" 305

CHAPTER SIXTEEN – KLARA SZMAŃKO

African-American and Asian-American Nationalism in
a Comparative Perspective in Sam Greenlee's *The Spook Who Sat
by the Door* and Maxine Hong Kingston's *Tripmaster Monkey* 321

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN – ANNA BRANACH-KALLAS	
Between the Diaspora and the Nation: Multicultural Identity	
Negotiations in Selected Asian-Canadian Writings	347
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN – ANNA KOWALIK	
Writing at the Frontiers of Postcolonial Geography:	
Caryl Phillips's <i>Cambridge</i>	367
CHAPTER NINETEEN – AGNIESZKA STASIEWICZ	
Swedish-American Childhood and the Hybrid Identity of a Young	
Generation: <i>Thoughts of a Prairie Child</i> by Anna Olsson	385
CHAPTER TWENTY – ANNA SOSNOWSKA	
Poles, Jews, and Puerto Ricans: Polish Greenpoint Community	
Leaders on New York City Ethnic Groups.	409
CONTRIBUTORS	433
INDEX	437

PREFACE

Beyond Imagined Uniqueness: Nationalisms in Comparative Perspectives is a collection of essays from papers presented at a conference with the same name held in May, 2008 at the University of Warsaw, Poland. Sponsored by the American Studies Center, the conference attracted the participation of some 60 scholars from around the world, and the twenty-one essays included in this volume represent a selection of the best of the papers. Our call for papers stated,

The aim of the conference is to provide a space for an interdisciplinary and international conversation about nationalism. Theoretical perspectives, as well as case studies from various locations and fields—including sociology, politics, media studies, literature and the arts—are welcome. We invite original papers concerning both the history of nationalism(s) and its various present manifestations. Comparative perspectives are encouraged.

The publication of this volume affords the opportunity to acknowledge and offer our gratitude for the help and support from a variety of institutions and individuals that made the conference a success. The Polish-U.S. Fulbright Commission (Andrzej Dakowski, executive director) supported a semester of teaching and research for Dr. Joan Burbick, the keynote speaker for the conference. We had the use of various lecture halls and classrooms of The University of Warsaw (Prof. Katarzyna Chałasińska-Macukow, Rector, and Prof. Konstanty Adam Wojtaszczyk, Prorector). We are most grateful to Louis Alvarez, Peter Odabashian, and Andrew Kolker for allowing us to use their film, *The Anti-Americans* (2007), as a basis for a plenary session that was followed by a lively discussion led by Agnieszka Graff and Ewa Grzeszczyk of the American Studies Center, Jean-Luc Testault, Warsaw Bureau Chief of Agence France-Presse, and Bartosz Węglarczyk, Foreign Editor of *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Ewa Kanigowska-Gedroyc and Marcin

Łakomski provided simultaneous translation for many of the sessions. Finally, the faculty and staff of the American Studies Center (Dr. Tomasz Basiuk, director) gave generously of their time and energy. Dr. William R. Glass served as conference coordinator and Pamela Krzywosz as the administrative assistant. Drs. Basiuk, Burbick, Glass, Graff and Prof. Marek Wilczyński screened the submissions and organized the program. Drs. Clifford Bates, Anna Sosnowska, Bohdan Szklarski, Ewa Hauser, Grzegorz Kość, David Jones, Krystyna Mazur, Zbigniew Kwiecień, and Maria Isabel Arredondo de Cruz chaired panels and kept the conference running on time. Krzysztof Kowalewski, built the conference website and, along with Artur Przewłocki and Andrzej Barczewski provided technical support by keeping the gremlins out of the audio-visual equipment. Members of the ASC student organization helped conferees find their way from one venue to another. Krzysztof Gawrychowski did yeoman work in helping the editors prepare the text, and he did it with grace, patience, and efficiency. And most important were the scholars who presented their papers and engaged in three days of intense, thought-provoking, and irenic exchange on the contentious issue of nationalism.

The essays in this volume reflect the goals in the conference call for papers. They adopt an interdisciplinary approach to the topic of nationalism and its permutations and modes of expression. The comparative perspectives offered by the essays appear in two ways: one is that several authors explicitly draw comparisons between nations and that the essays themselves, even if dealing with a single nation, make for provocative comparisons when read in conjunction with each other. A second, and indeed more thought provoking set of comparisons, come from the way the essays address nationalism from a variety of theoretical perspectives and disciplines from visual culture to history to sociology to literature. Moreover, while traditional themes in the study of nationalism are not ignored, these essays expand the discussion with case studies of nationalism in Turkey, Asia, and Eastern Europe. Even when nationalism is considered in those areas that have been the central focus of nationalism studies (Western Europe and the USA), our authors bring unique voices to the conversation as in portraiture as a vehicle of nationalism in Cold War America or children's literature shaping a Swedish American identity or in the idea of a covenant as a source of Dutch nationalism or the role of minority languages in West European societies.

Dr. Ewa Grzeszczyk, to whom this volume is dedicated, was a valued and respected member of the faculty at the American Studies Center until her life and career were cut short by a tragic accident. She earned a Ph.D. in sociology

from the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in 2001. Her scholarship included a book, *Sukces: amerykańskie wzory - polskie realia* (*Success: American Models and Polish Reality*, 2003), and articles on American religion and popular culture in a variety of journals and edited volumes. She was a dedicated teacher who pushed her students to do their best and worked tirelessly to help them do that. Above all, she was a colleague committed to the mission of the ASC and a faithful friend to those who knew her.

William R. Glass
Warsaw, Poland

INTRODUCTION

PARADOXES OF BELONGING: THE LEGACIES OF NATIONALISM

Joan Burbick

The title of this volume, *Beyond Imagined Uniqueness: Nationalisms in Comparative Perspective* clearly references the seminal work by Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. First published in 1983, Anderson's writings helped to build an intellectual bridge between the social sciences and the humanities. The study of nation-states as pursued by political scientists, historians, sociologists and economists expanded to include the study of nationalism, the collective values and beliefs that constitute a nation found in art, literature, popular culture, and even public history. The cultural perceptions of nation-ness or an "imagined political community" were as legitimate as empirical analyses of politico-economic systems, the history of warfare, or the investigation of social systems. In the last twenty-five years, Anderson's writings have challenged a generation of scholars, though not without considerable debate and disagreement.

Given this influence, it is surprising to read in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* that Anderson has been reduced to the dustbin of an "anti-realist," a critic whose "constructionist" assumptions have marginalized him in relation to the more rigorous pursuit of nationalism found in studies based on rational choice, sociobiology, and long-standing traditions of political philosophy. Perhaps, academic bridges are unstable after all. It is worth lingering, however, on what Anderson wrote in order to introduce the essays in this volume, a collection based on an American Studies Center conference

held at the University of Warsaw in 2008. Anderson remarked, “no nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind.” Nationalism is by definition a binding and bound form of human imagination. Its power comes from creating “a deep, horizontal comradeship.” And this imagined community, this “fraternity,” as Anderson points out, “makes it possible, over the past two centuries for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.”¹ The ancient rhetorical trope of sacrifice persists in the language of the modern nation.

The shadow over nationalism for Anderson has always been violence and aggression. And it is fitting that the essays in this volume were first presented as papers in the historic city of Warsaw that experienced during the Second World War some of the most egregious effects of aggressive and militant nationalism. In the 1940s, explosions, muffled cries, and silent fears were the sounds of nationalism. And we have yet to shake off this legacy. The linking of violence and nationalism is even more dangerous today since it is coupled with a scarcity of resources in a world in which individual nations often cannot support the needs of their human populations. Further, the organization of massive human populations into nation states with the ability to develop and threaten to use nuclear weaponry has lead critics of nationalism to denounce its limited imaginings as lethal.

This Domsday version of nationalism is, of course, countered by a steady academic interest in transnationalism or “cosmopolitanism,” pointing us in the direction of a post-nationalistic world that advocates the global development of civic structures, human rights, and international justice. But as in many other “post” studies, post-feminism, post-colonialism, and post-nationalism, the “post” is hard to define and even harder to find. In a world that has created a hierarchy of nations with those nations producing and possessing nuclear weapons a select, elite group, post-nationalism becomes more a horizon than a reality.

What is important to remember about Anderson is that he never forgot this shadow-side nationalism while he plotted its methods and means of establishing itself in specific human communities. Nationalism was imagined by him through maps, museums, print capitalism (particularly novels and newspapers), radio, sports events, statistics, and the massive cultural efforts of nation-building found in the reproduction and circulation of national narratives, the promulgation of national languages, symbols, religions, and secular ideologies. When the historical structures of empires crumbled,

¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 7.

Anderson speculated that the political and emotional void was filled by belonging to the nation, a form of “imagining” for every individual, whether or not their nation was a politically sovereign state. Today, Kurds, Basques, Iroquois, Palestinians, and Tibetans struggle in the twenty-first century to preserve their nation-ness in a world that has eliminated their territorial boundaries as sovereign-state entities.

In the more than twenty-five years since the first edition of Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, critics have studied the sites of the national imaginary from the miniature world of postage stamps and postcards to the ambitious projects of commemoration in museums, murals, and even monumental outdoor sculpture such as Mount Rushmore in South Dakota. And many essays in this volume traverse similar cultural sites of representation and commemoration of the nation, looking carefully at the “politics of memory” in places, material objects, and texts. These cultural sites are rarely without conflict and contestation, but they all speak to the incessant need to imagine the nation, and tell its story, often perceived by its tellers as a “unique” tale of sacrifice, glory, and devotion.

Also of importance to this volume are some of the critics of Anderson’s approach to nationalism. Partha Chatterjee, a postcolonial scholar, has raised a crucial question to Anderson: “Whose Imagined Community?”² He argued that the model Anderson used was based too heavily on European and Western Hemisphere examples. The colonial revolts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Asia and Africa created an “anticolonial nationalism” that was significantly distinct from its western colonizing nations with its enlightenment philosophies of social contract and constitution. Class and caste structures, gender relations, and spiritual and historical traditions created forms of nationalism at variance with what was formed in Europe and the Americas. I would add to this critique that even “Europe” in this instance is narrowly conceived and has virtually eliminated those countries organized for almost fifty years under the political system of the Soviet Union. Hence, this volume includes a significant number of essays from the “other” Europe as well as several from Asia and Turkey.

Another dissenting voice came from Arjun Appadurai, who has written, “One man’s imagined community is another man’s political prison.”³ In Appadurai’s work, the flows of people between homelands, diasporas, and

² Partha Chatterjee, “Whose Imagined Community?” in *Mapping the Nation*, ed., Gopal Balakrishnan (London: Verso, 1996), 214-225.

³ Arjun Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy,” in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During, 2nd Ed. (New York: Routledge, 1999), 221.

refugee camps complicates severely any sense of belonging to a nation and highlights the role of such transnational economic and social forces. He also articulates what he calls the mediascapes of our global cultural economy. Whose imagined community is not then an idle question. It raises the basic problem of power relations both within and without a nation. A nation is often a collection of competing and contested groups whose ability to imagine or even represent the nation is severely constrained by a dominant national narrative, backed by significant political and economic power. In mass cultures in which an individual knows only a tiny percentage of the inhabitants of the nation, this power to represent the whole is enormous. The function of mass media and visual culture—and by that I mean the converging technologies of film, TV, internet, and radio delivered through mobile platforms on an increasingly smaller scale through handheld or attached electronic devices or an increasing large scale on reader boards and even skyscrapers—has increased both the power of reproduction and circulation of national narratives and images. It is not surprising to find several essays in this volume turning to visual culture to understand how nationalism continues to thrive today.

Another strong and compelling critique of nationalism comes from feminist and gender theories such as those put forth by Nira Yuval-Davis, Anne McClintock, Cynthia Enloe, and Joan Wallach Scott.⁴ Often the persuasive rhetorical power of nationalism is figured through metaphors of genealogy. In other words, nationalism is linked figuratively to the language of family and kin. Nationalism becomes a family drama or, what some would call, a melodrama, relying on excess and sentimentality to convey its message. The nation is a fatherland, a motherland, a band of brothers, the sons of liberty, or the daughters of the revolution that parade through public discourses and urban promenades, celebrating origin stories about blood and belonging or prophecies about common destiny. Similar to Claudia Koontz in *Mothers in the Fatherland*, Yuval-Davis analyzes the gender roles in the Hitler Youth Movement. The motto for girls was “Be faithful; be pure; be German;” for boys “Live faithfully; fight bravely; die laughing.”⁵

⁴ See Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1997); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); and Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

⁵ Davis, *Gender*, 45; cf., Claudia Koontz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's, 1987).

Women are often used to symbolize the collective in such figures as Mother Russia, Mother Ireland, Mother India, or Mother Poland. More importantly, only specific women can delineate the racial and ethnic lines between groups and function as symbolic border guards and cheerleaders for the collective actions of chosen men whose “fraternity” constitutes the core of the “imagined community.”

We must remember Anderson came after a skeptical generation of writers on nationalism who like Hannah Arendt in her 1969 book, *On Violence*, described “a curious new brand of nationalism” in which ethnicity won out over civic and constitutional protections because the fear of “bigness,” the looming globalization and centralization of social and economic structures contracted “ethnic” communities to a scale humans could imagine.⁶ This “curious new brand of nationalism” is not without its supporters today, almost forty years later. Contemporary scholars of nationalism like Chaim Gans in *The Limits of Nationalism*, find purpose in the shared values and “collective memories” of particular cultural groups even if limits still exist.⁷ The turn toward an interest in transnational or cosmopolitan beliefs is simply not “deep” or emotionally powerful enough to bind people together. Consequently, a belief in human rights or international laws feels thin and detached in comparison with the thick and textured emotions of homeland. Similarly, the philosopher, John Rawls, commends the enhancing bonds of what is called communitarian nationalism with its nurturing bonds of solidarity, self-defense, and “common sympathies.”⁸ But dissenters to this enhanced nationalism are as persistent as ever. In his study, *Nationalism and Beyond: Introducing Moral Debate about Values*, Nenad Miscevic questions these same advocates of nationalism and asks whether the nation is “morally of central importance to a particular human being or not” (21).⁹ The essays in this volume continue these discussions and remind us how much we still need to investigate both the limits and possibilities of nationalism, its ethnic and communal appeals together with its reliance upon or violation of human rights.

In my writings, I have studied dominant national narratives in the United States that privilege specific groups, leaving others with a tentative and contested sense of belonging. Nationalism is a highly artificial and unstable

⁶ Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1970), 84.

⁷ Chaim Gans, *The Limits of Nationalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 148-168.

⁸ John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples: with “The Idea of Public Reason Revisited”* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 24.

⁹ Nenad Miscevic, *Nationalism and Beyond: Introducing Moral Debate about Values* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001).

construct always in search of a natural home. These paradoxes of belonging to a “nation,” however, can be the creative and necessary tensions that unpack any totalizing narrative of the nation. Eva Hoffman in her recent book, *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust*, discusses how collective and homogenizing myths of the nation prevent forms of freedom. In particular, she reflects on the history of Poland and the violent pasts of its Jewish and non-Jewish citizens, two groups whose historical suffering has anchored deeply felt nationalist values. For Hoffman, the dominant narratives of martyrdom as they are promoted in Israel and Poland are emotionally hot but ultimately defeating. As she writes, “After the collective memories have been excavated, and the individual narratives recounted, [whether they be of the Shoah or the Warsaw Uprising], we need the restoration of principles that will restore mutual respect, even if we do not share enough past to warrant mutual love. Otherwise, the memories of pain will soon turn into someone’s rage, and the conflicting narratives will come into possibly deadly conflict.”¹⁰ Hoffman argues for a “shared moral world” that overlaps national narratives. She argues for a “community of justice and reason,” that would help to balance the emotional language of national belonging. The paradoxes of belonging are necessary to destabilize the controlling metaphor of the nation and make its boundaries permeable to the needs of not only diverse peoples but, I would add, the increasingly interdependent biosphere we also inhabit.

After all, any nation is a territory whose boundaries have usually shifted over time, sometimes dramatically according to the mapmakers. It has been transformed by the flow of rivers, the migration of peoples, and the fluid and layered histories of communities who have settled and, as importantly, disappeared. Likewise, the imagining of the nation can either falter and become fixed in a quest to purify and control both land and peoples, or it can accept the challenge of transformation and indeterminacy, anchoring crucial values in shared human experiences. Belonging can enhance the care and stewardship of place and home or it can repeat the nightmare of exclusion and bloodlust. This volume contributes to our ability to look at and beyond the imagined uniqueness of the nation. At least in the near future of humanity, the nation is still the border we must live within and cross beyond. It is well that we keep watching how it works.

Section One of this volume contains essays that examine the terrain of the national imaginary through language, monuments, and visual culture. Tomasz Żyro begins with a challenge to the enlightenment origins of the

¹⁰ Eva Hoffman, *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 177.

nation. Rather than the secular time of reason and social contracts, Żyro finds sacred time, covenants, and the language of the chosen people woven throughout the nationalisms of the United States, Poland, and Holland. Ahu Antmen finds a strong but contested need in Turkey to represent the nation, especially after two military coups, through the notion of a demi-god, particularly in the public monuments of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey. Portraiture intrigues Gregorz Kość as he traces a Cold War American style to discern national values in an anti-communist era. Henio Hoyo turns to the even smaller scale of postage stamps, a research source often overlooked by scholars, to discuss official national imagery. His case studies on Germany and Mexico examine significant historical transitions that refashioned national imagery in miniature, everyday forms.

Public imagery again becomes the focus in David A. Jones's essay on Chinese nationalism in a discussion that explores a complex web of agendas behind its use, including what he calls, "Earthquake Nationalism," in times of crisis. Roman Szul turns to the political use of language, particularly government policies as states establish official languages and suppress the languages of minority groups, especially before World War II. After the war, other linguistic movements such as bilingualism, language revivals, and even decorative language niches alter the relationship between national identity and state language. This section ends with Andrew Jacob's comparative analysis of Ernest Renan, French philosopher and political theorist, and Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, the Indian nationalist, who, faced with the intractable caste system in India, advocated for a nation that embraced civic virtue and the tenets of Buddhism as the most inclusive, and least violent, form of nationalism for India. Enlightenment values return, modified and filtered through the specific conditions of religious and political power relations in India.

Section two provides more individual case studies of nations, though many of these essays engage significant regional and international tensions especially in a post Cold War world that has often influenced the internal dynamics of nation-building. Efe Can Gürcan returns to Turkish nationalism with a comparative look at Russia, China, Cuba, and Venezuela in order to understand the history of Turkish forms of nationalism and Turkey's current responses to globalization, especially to the forces of neo-liberal micro-nationalisms as opposed to anti-racist, popular democracy movements. Konrad Błażejowski studies the deteriorating relationships between China and Japan in the last two decades as a function of their approaches to nationalism. The legacies of World War II and the Chinese revolution continue to challenge how the remembrance of the past still shapes perceptions and assumptions about

each other. Michał Wawrzonek reappraises the role of Andrey Sheptytsky, the Archbishop of the Greek Catholic Church, in the rise of nationalistic movements in the Ukraine during and after the Second World War. Sheptytsky's insistence on a form of "Christian patriotism" that rejects terror and promotes brotherly love is contrasted with the aggressive nationalistic actions of a nation struggling for independence. Another influential thinker, Feliks Koneczny, the Polish historian whose works were banned under communism, has been experiencing a revival in Poland today. Andrew Kier Wise reads Koneczny's major works, discussing how the concept of the "oriental other" permeates Koneczny's belief in Poland as an outpost of Latin civilization, fighting off the dark forces of Byzantium and more currently among his followers, the European Union. Nelly Bekus studies the tumultuous nation-building process in Belarus within the last decade, positioned as it is between resistance to and dependence on Russia and the former Soviet State system with its policies of modernization and collectivization. This section's final essay on Moldova by Natalia Sineaeva-Pankowska brings to the fore even more dramatically the values that inclusiveness rather than uniqueness or unity can play in nation building in the post-Soviet era. A country always on the border of empires and nations, Moldova has stressed interethnic and religious peace, modifying a pan-Romanian or Soviet identity to that of an independent state built upon a common civic identity.

Section Three moves the focus away from the nation to immigrant communities, especially those in the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean. Diasporas throughout the world have challenged many theories about the nation, as crossing borders becomes the norm rather the exception. Anna Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska interrogates exactly who is given the authority to speak on these topics, especially in the field of American Studies. Wei-Chen Roger Liu brings the art of dance into the discussion through the diasporic inventions of Akram Khan's choreography as he traverses the traditions of classical Indian dance and indeterminacies of modern dance. Klara Szmańko reads the fictional diasporas of Sam Greenlee and Maxine Hong Kingston and finds differing mentalities yet common ground in white racism. Anna Branach-Kallas studies several Asian-Canadian writers whose work both transgresses and incorporates elements of Anglo-Canada. Caryl Phillips's Caribbean with its transatlantic crossings and desires informs Anna Kowalik's essay. In Phillips's novel, *Cambridge*, linear genealogies fall away and hidden affinities between the colonizer and colonized emerge. Agnieszka Stasiewicz examines children's literature written by a Swedish American, Anna Olsson, in which imitation of parents and religious identification become the fragile

connections to a distant homeland. This section ends with Anna Sosnowska's detailed analysis of the Greenpoint community in New York City that has had several waves of Polish, Puerto Rican, and Jewish immigration. Both the histories of the home countries and the conditions of the new shape the hostilities and understandings of the residents.

PART I

IMAGINING NATIONALISM IN LANGUAGE, MONUMENTS, AND VISUAL CULTURE

CHAPTER ONE

THE IDEA OF COVENANT AND A RISE OF NATIONALISM

Tomasz Żyro

We are now acutely aware that the Enlightenment project as a secularizing process seems to be an inadequate explanation. In such a perspective a linear process of supplanting “religion” by “nationalism” is false and fails to capture the complexity of the belief in chosenness. The idea of covenant is a good point of departure to adumbrate the main forms of a nation’s election. Three nations—the Dutch, Polish and American—serve as good examples of communities which entered into a covenant with God. To be covenanted, a people need to have a mission to fulfill. It draws our attention to the origins of the idea in the seventeenth century due to a return to the Old Testament, and the parallel with the original elect, the children of Israel, that took new form by Christ’s coming.

Listen to Jonathan Edwards, the eminent minister in eighteenth century America. His imagery is appealing, his method illuminating. In the General Introduction to his major writing, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, he explains: “The work of redemption and the work of salvation are the same thing. What is sometimes in Scripture called God’s saving his people, is in other places called his redeeming them. So Christ is called both the Saviour and the Redeemer of his people.” He likened the grand design to a magnificent temple. God began the work of redemption immediately after the fall and will proceed to the end of the world. Then shall the top-stone be brought forth, and all will appear complete and glorious.

Of these two, God's righteousness and his salvation, the one is the cause, of which the other is the effect. God's righteousness, or covenant mercy, is the root, of which his salvation is the fruit. Both of them relate to the covenant of grace. The one is God's covenant mercy and faithfulness, the other intends that work of God by which this covenant mercy is accomplished in the fruits of it. For salvation is the sum of all those works of God by which the benefits that are by the covenant of grace are procured and bestowed.¹

So, we can directly go to what Anthony D. Smith called "deep cultural resources" on which members of the nation can draw for the maintenance of their national identity. These basic elements include community, territory, history, and destiny. It is the first proposition and the last that are crucial. As a result, nations have created the image of the sacred communion of the people. A special and sacred bond was tied, by the concept of covenant.

He offered magisterial analysis of the concept of covenant. He claims that there are six meanings of the idea of covenant with God. "The first is that of choice. God chooses a community, and/or individuals, to fulfill His designs for the world. It is God who chooses and the people respond. . . . The second idea is one of divine announcement or promise. God's choice is expressed by a promise to His chosen people, usually in the form of land, prosperity, and/or power. This may also include a promise to make the chosen people a source of blessing to other peoples. . . . The third is that of sacred law. God seeks out families and a community that will do His will by keeping his commandments and laws—that is, by adhering to His code of morality, law, and ritual practices and by observing the things He has sanctified, and separated, from the everyday world."

The fourth idea is the drive to collective sanctification. "The people are commanded to be holy as God is holy; they thereby agree to be adherents, even priests of the true faith and members of a holy community, set apart from all others." The fifth is corollary of the fourth and refers to the state of conditional privilege. God will favor and bless the community provided they keep His commandments and obey His law. "The sixth idea is that of witness. God reveals Himself to the community and/or its leaders through signs and miracles witnessed by the community as a whole, and it is as witnesses and recorders of God's promise and theophany that the community establishes its unique claim and justifies its role in the covenant."

The covenant is freely chosen. The chosen assent, become partners in the covenant, and are called upon to be active. Thus, the whole community's observance of their part of the covenant is the critical factor in its making and

¹ Jonathan Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*. New Haven 1773, II, 1-2.

unmaking, and hence not only in the fate of the people, but also of the whole world. The ultimate purpose of the covenant is global salvation. The doctrine of divine election harnesses universalism to particularism, and makes the salvation of all hinge on the conduct of a special few. It is always God who chooses.²

One needs to pay tribute to Anthony D. Smith's seminal remarks on the covenant. However, my purpose is to circumscribe fascinating and intriguing relationships between the idea of covenant and meanings that passing time gives to a political community. The relationship can highlight a rise of nationalism.

The Covenant

When the term "covenant" is used, it immediately uncovers lodes of religious meanings. The more specialized religious readings prove that though the "covenant of grace" is central, there are a number of other covenants in that system: covenants of redemption, works, and church and state. William Bradford thus described the most sacred act of the American nation—The Mayflower Compact—"these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, Covenant and Combine ourselves together into a Civil Body Politick" (I set aside a process of "commodization" of the covenant expressed in terms of contract, pact, etc. that will soon begin due to Hugo Grotius and John Locke). Jonathan Edwards was concerned with all of these, especially the covenants of redemption and of grace. His followers two generations later found it helpful in promoting the cause of independence and nation-building.

In the American context we will likely think of the "covenant of grace," which can be likely associated generally with Protestantism, and especially refers to Calvinism and Puritanism. In comparison, the Polish case highlights other domains which were penetrated by the imagery and language brought about by the idea of covenant.

When Pilgrims and then Puritans decided to move to America, they were not quixotic errands in the wilderness but were acutely aware of trials and torments of the human condition to meet on the path to salvation. The covenanted people take for granted hardships and tribulations as an essential part of life. It explains why the jeremiad was so popular a form of

² Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 50-51.

expression. Cotton Mather in his *Magnalia Christi Americana* noted in the characteristically metaphoric language that colonists had to meet wilderness and flying serpents. "Flying serpents" are a synonym for trials that are unavoidable to expiate the original sin in the time of final proof. Imagery from the Old Testament pervaded their way of perceiving things. But it is also worth reminding that as they were the twelfth lost tribe of Israel they had to fulfill the aforesaid mission as the people of the covenant. It is the choseness that was their lot. As the people of the covenant they had to fulfill a specific mission on earth.

The biblical imagery created in the American mind a conviction that there were three stages of destiny: the covenant, trial (the wilderness, the desert, flying serpents), and the final one when time comes for rising the "city upon a hill" (the covenant reaffirmed). This kind of experience was not new. The Dutch and English experience was very instructive and of very heavy import.

The Dutch succeeded in using this kind of biblical imagery and language on their path to independence. Bradford's group was permeated with manners, rituals, behavior, and language of the ardent Calvinists in Leyden and Rotterdam. They began to view Europe as the modern Egypt and their errand to America as the prefigurative announcement of redemption (e.g. William Bradford's chronicle *Of Plymouth Plantation*). Several chronicles were written to reflect this kind of mood. They mirrored everyday situations and hazards that immigrants had to face. Narratives drawing up in the form of chronos were produced so as not to forget the first steps on the new land and the history of growing settlements.

But simultaneously, the "rendez-vous with destiny" (Eric F. Goldman) took place offering a meaningful narrative of history perceived as the fulfillment of time. American colonists sunk deeply in the peculiar understanding of time that as the covenanted people realized the "eternal plan of Providence." Protestants were ardent disciples of Augustine. Thus, the New Israel produced a peculiar imagery of landscape that resembles the march through desert on a way to Canaan (again, I put aside the moral geography which was invented), but also a very specific vision of time to fulfill. Durkheim's distinction between *profanum* and *sacrum* would have been completely alien to them. Those in the covenant took for granted that they lived in a sanctified place and time. not only a meaning of history has arisen, decades before Giambattista Vico's concept, but also time had totally sacred meaning.

The spirit of time was well caught by Harold Berman when he described the dawn of English Puritanism, tracing "the origins of historical jurisprudence,"