

The Cultural Politics of Nationalism and Nation-building: Ritual and Performance in the Forging of Nations

Edited by Rachel Tsang and Eric Taylor Woods, 2014

Chapter 1:

Ritual and Performance in the Study of Nations and Nationalism

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Introduction

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11th September 2001, millions of Americans expressed their solidarity and mourning by interacting with the symbols of their nation. This was perhaps most visible in the manifold ways that the national flag was employed and presented in response to the tragedy. The flag was raised, lowered and waved; flown from buildings, porches and balconies; pasted on to windows, walls and doors; pinned to suits, shirts and sweaters; stitched onto t-shirts and school bags; and even draped over the columns of the New York Stock Exchange. In addition to such spontaneous performances of national sentiment, the collective need to perform the nation in response to the tragedy also gave rise to new national rituals of commemoration, such as the moment of silence that the President formally asks American citizens to observe annually on 11 September – now officially designated as Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance.

On a less sombre note, just over a decade later, in the United Kingdom, amid a summer of celebrations that included the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympics, many British citizens similarly felt compelled to express national sentiment through ritual and performance. Whether this was by participating in the flotilla of a thousand ships that sailed down the River Thames to celebrate the Jubilee, or by tuning in to watch the nightly broadcast of British athletes at the Olympic games, the summer of 2012 was characterized by an array of parades, concerts and street parties all geared toward celebrating the British nation.

The events of 2001 and 2012 represent two extremes: the former marking a time of trauma, of intense pain and sorrow, the latter marking a time of great celebration, joy and excitement. Yet, despite such contrasts, these events prompted great surges in expressions of nationalism, which manifested themselves through new and old rituals and performances. These national rituals and performances encompassed actions that originated among elites and masses, that were scripted and spontaneous, and self-aware at times but also unconscious at others. What prompted so many individuals to channel their emotions by collectively wearing, waving or flying symbols of their nations, to participate in elaborate national rituals and to openly 'perform their nation'?? And what is the significance of this behaviour for the salience of national identity and the enduring appeal of nations and nationalism in the modern era? Is it in some way constitutive of national sentiment or is it but an epiphenomenal expression of other

political and economic and social forces? Furthermore, if we are to undertake to resolve these questions, what is the best approach and methodology?

The aim of this volume is to explore, debate and evaluate the role of rituals and performances in the emergence, persistence and transformation of nations, nationalisms and national identity. To put this more succinctly, our focus is on how national sentiment is *experienced*. To address these aims, the chapters comprising this book investigate a diverse array of contemporary and historical phenomena, from the Yasukuni Shrine in Japan to the Louvre in France, written by leading experts in the field of nationalism studies as well as performance and ritual. It is our hope that this interdisciplinary approach will bear fruit in the form of new insights. Moreover, by exploring the significance of national rituals and performances, this book also seeks to address fundamental questions about how to study nations and nationalism, considering whether a renewed focus on rituals and performances demands new or revised approaches and methodologies.

We should also be clear at the outset that we do not claim that the investigation of rituals and performances alone can explain why nationalism remains so integral to the modern world. Clearly any such investigation cannot lose sight of power, materiality, interests and discourse. However, if we are properly to understand the persistence of nationalism, and why it is more important in certain periods and less important in others, then we need to pay more attention to the way that it is enacted. Thus, in our view, while rituals and performances do not themselves provide sufficient explanation, they are nevertheless necessary.

In this introductory chapter we address the concepts of ritual and performance and how they have been heretofore treated in the literature on nationalism, before providing a conceptual and structural framework for the chapters that follow.

Ritual and Performance: A Conceptual Overview

Rituals and performances are central to modern life. Indeed, it sometimes seems as though their significance is increasing, with new forms of rituals and performances emerging everywhere. At an everyday level, we can see this in a diverse range of phenomena, from the rise of roadside shrines commemorating the victims of car and cycle accidents, to the spread of new kinds of life cycle rituals celebrating pregnancy, birth, marriage, divorce and death. In the realm of politics, the trend towards ritual and performance seems even more pronounced. Democratic contests for power unfold as mediated social dramas, citizens-to-be to undergo elaborate rituals to join prospective nations, and political apologies have become commonplace. All of this has caught the attention of the social sciences and humanities. From political science to film studies, rituals and performances have risen in the scholarly agenda. This section touches on several key aspects of how these concepts are defined and operationalized in this diverse body of literature. Nearer to the end of the section, we also discuss the differences *between* rituals and performances.

Rituals and performances have long been objects of study, producing numerous important works: from Émile Durkheim's (1995 [1912]) classic discussion of the intense feelings of

solidarity that can arise from collectively performed rituals to Victor Turner's (2008 [1969]) insights on their transformational potential, and from Erving Goffman's (1959) work on the dramaturgical aspects of everyday interactions to Judith Butler's (1988) elucidation of the performative aspects of identity – to name but a few key texts. Notwithstanding this sustained history of research, there has recently been an upsurge of scholarly interest in the ways that the social and political life is performed and ritualised. This burgeoning body of research is highly varied, encompassing the macro and micro, the scripted and unscripted, the habitual and the spontaneous, the historical and the contemporary. Even the view that rituals and performances are somehow tied to bodily practices has been loosened: the analysis of 'media rituals' is now commonplace (e.g. Dayan and Katz, 1992), and non-human objects are now said to be 'performative' (e.g. Barad, 2003).

The growing diversity of ways in which the concepts of ritual and performance are employed in social research has resulted in their definitions becoming unmoored and even increasingly entwined. For this reason, we have deliberately avoided the potential morass of attempting to provide specific definitions of these concepts. Indeed, in light of the diversity of approaches in this book, such an endeavour would be counterproductive. That being said, we do think it is useful to shed light on how these concepts have been employed in a general sense, even if such an endeavour can only be partial at best.

From a broad, ecumenical perspective, ritual and performance generally refer to expressive behaviour, which can be highly stylised and follow certain conscious or unconscious behavioural patterns. The stylised and patterned aspects of rituals and performances are what distinguish them from instrumental behaviour and which suggest that they involve meanings beyond that of the action itself. Robert Wuthnow (1989: 107) supplies a useful contrast here between eating a snack and taking part in the Christian tradition of the Eucharist. Whereas eating a snack might be seen as a purely instrumental act aimed at alleviating hunger, sipping the wine and eating the bread during the ritual of receiving the Eucharist is laden with more meaning than the mere act of eating.

In classical anthropology, the meanings and norms associated with rituals and performances – referred to as a 'meaning system' in Clifford Geertz' (1957) formulation – are often seen as structuring the ways in which rituals and performances are carried out. Hence, it is the sacred meanings associated with the Eucharist that ensures that it is performed in a particular way. However, that being said, just as rituals and performances might be seen as expressions of underlying meaning systems, there is also a growing trend in the social sciences and in performance studies to see rituals and performances as having the capacity to transform meaning systems – as Jeffrey Alexander (2004) has discussed in depth. In this regard, demonstrations by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals might be seen as performances aimed at attaching new meanings to animals.

While at their core all rituals and performances can be seen as a form of expressive behaviour, as the various examples used in this chapter suggest, they encompass a wide range of activities. Some are highly stylized and tightly regulated, such as the moment of silence observed

annually on 11 September at the Manhattan site of the terrorist attacks. Others can appear more spontaneous, such as suddenly erupting in a cheer at witnessing a point scored by one's favourite sports team. Rituals and performances can also be more, or less, rigorously formal. They encompass a spectrum ranging from highly ceremonial occasions set off from the rhythms of daily life, such as the moment of silence mentioned above, to everyday mundane activities, such as shaking hands during a greeting ritual. Rituals and performances can also be carried out with their meanings more, or less, consciously expressed. Thus, the participants in the moment of silence might be quite conscious about the meanings associated with the ritual. In contrast the meanings associated with a handshake might be more unconscious.

Because of their association with meaning, rituals and performances are seen as a central aspect of communication. Thus, Mary Douglas (2002 [1966]: 62) writes: 'it is not too much to say that ritual is more to society than words are to thought [...] it is impossible to have social relations without symbolic [read: expressive] acts.' From this perspective, the stylised and patterned aspects of rituals and performances can be seen as signalling devices used to facilitate the communication of meaning. Thus, to return to the example of the Eucharist, the various patterns of behaviour associated with this ritual help to convey its meaning. Notably, the kind of communication that rituals and performances facilitate is not necessarily ratiocinative. Rather, by drawing on underlying meaning systems, rituals and performances are often argued to communicate via emotion. Thus, as we will discuss in more depth in the following section, according to Durkheim (1995 [1912]), the intense emotions that can be generated among the participants in a collective ritual play a critical role in conveying meaning.

Although rituals and performances are seen as a form of communication, it is important to note they do not necessitate face-to-face interaction, as is apparent in the large body of research, as mentioned above, on the performative and ritualistic aspects of the media. In contemporary societies meaning is communicated via numerous forms of media, including television, internet, radio and newsprint. Furthermore, and perhaps more controversially, rituals and performances can even be carried in private, in the absence of communication. For example, as Wuthnow (1989: 103) observes, privately performed acts such as meditations and prayers might be conceived as expressive behaviour. Wuthnow (1989: 104) conjectures that such private rituals might be expressions of the 'disciplining' of individuals interests and thus convey meaning in the sense that they express the relationship of the individual to society.

To conclude this section, a few words are in order as to what, then, distinguishes rituals from performances. The study of ritual, on the one hand, and performance, on the other, initially proceeded along separate tracks. In general, whereas ritual once referred to symbolic action, performance referred to theatre. If the concept of performance was used outside of the confines of the theatre, it was as a metaphor. To be sure, the dramaturgical metaphor remains an important heuristic device, yet it is also true that the very meaning of what is a 'performance' has begun to migrate beyond the stage. Richard Schechner, in collaboration with Victor Turner, played no small part in this development. Schechner suggests that all activities associated with ritual or theatre should be seen as performances. In his view, whether or not a particular performance is closer to theatre or ritual depends on its function. Performance that is aimed

more at entertainment is closer to theatre, whereas a performance that is aimed more at effecting social transformations is closer to ritual (Schechner, 1988: 130). Thus, although previously two distinct lines of enquiry, recently these topics have converged. In keeping with this development, in this volume, we have adopted an inclusive definition of expressive behaviour that encompasses rituals and performances.

Ritual and Performance in the Study of Nations and Nationalism

Having discussed the concepts of ritual and performance, in this section we provide a brief review of their treatment in the study of nations and nationalism. Our intent here is to situate the current volume within the literature and to highlight its potential contributions. In sum, our review suggests that, after a period of sustained interest in rituals and performances within the field following the Second World War, such interest declined in the face of widespread criticism of the prevailing approaches. Recently, however, the study of nations and nationalism has seen renewed interest in rituals and performances, reflecting wider trends in social research mentioned above. The intent of this book is to add to, and shape, this fast growing body of research.

Research on the significance of rituals and performances for nations and nationalism in the decades following the Second World War was driven mainly by anthropologists. This was a result of the resurgence of interest in ritual in this period within anthropology. Durkheim's (1995 [1912]) masterwork, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, played a particularly influential role in the literature of this period. As such, we will briefly explicate this work before addressing its influence.

Through an analysis of ethnographic data of Australian corroboree rites, Durkheim argues that the object of collective rituals is to communicate a group's meaning systems to the members of the group, thereby periodically enhancing and sustaining group solidarity. As Catherine Bell (1992: 20) neatly summarizes: '[Durkheim] reintroduces ritual as the means by which collective beliefs and ideals are simultaneously generated, experienced, and affirmed as real by the community. Hence, ritual is the means by which individual perception and behaviour are socially appropriated and conditioned.' As we noted above, in Durkheim's view, the intense emotions generated among ritual participants – which he refers to as collective effervescence – enables this process to occur. As Durkheim (1995 [1912]: 216, cited in Bellah, 2005: 183) writes in relation to the corroboree rites: 'once the individuals are gathered together a sort of electricity is generated from their closeness and quickly launches them into an extraordinary height of exaltation'.

Although Durkheim's analysis of ritual is based on religious rites of small pre-industrial societies, he frequently alludes to the applicability of his argument to secular modern societies. This insight proved fertile ground for research in the decades following the Second World War. In such research, nationalism is seen as a secular religion premised on the worship of the nation, with attendant rituals and beliefs. In a much discussed study, Edward Shils and Michael Young (1953) draw on Durkheim in an analysis of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation, suggesting that it was an integrative ritual reaffirming the shared values of British society and the centrality of

the monarchy as its national symbol. In turn, the legacy of this essay can be seen in a number of important related studies published in subsequent years, including William Lloyd Warner's (1959) analysis of memorial day in the U.S. and Robert Bellah's (1968) research on John F. Kennedy's presidential inauguration.

The tradition of Durkheimian analysis in the post-war era did much to shed light on the underlying 'religious' character of ostensibly secular nations and the importance of collective rituals in their endurance. Indeed, it continues to produce important insights, notably the recent analysis of American nationalism by Carolyn Marvin and David Ingle (1999), who argue that it is a civil religion organized around a 'sacred' flag, whose followers engage in ritualised self-sacrifice through warfare to maintain solidarity. However, despite its important contributions, Durkheimian analysis of this kind is limited by its tendency to downplay the differences between small pre-modern societies and their modern corollaries, with their high degree of internal segmentation and reflexivity. This tendency began to attract much criticism in the 1970s.

In a particularly strident and much-cited critique, Steven Lukes (1975) rebukes what he refers to as 'neo-Durkheimian' scholarship for three linked reasons: 1) ignoring social segmentation within modern societies and the concomitant possibility that rituals may actually be as divisive as they are integrative; 2) not addressing the possibility that rituals, and by extension, 'value consensus' may not be a necessary condition for cohesion in a society; and 3) focusing too much on top-down, society-encompassing rituals, thereby ignoring how rituals among subordinate groups can potentially harden, rather than dissolve, intra-societal segmentation. This kind of criticism has continued into the present-day and can be found, for example, in Gordana Uzelac's (2010) essay on the impact of national ceremonies on the formation of national identity. Lukes' critique also finds echoes in Jon Fox's contribution to this book. However, as we will discuss shortly, such criticism has begun to be incorporated into the analyses of the new generation of Durkheimians.

Before moving beyond the post-war era of literature, it is important to note the study by George Mosse (1975), published on the cusp of the decline of anthropological interest in national rituals and performances. While drawing on Durkheim, Mosse nevertheless also sought to account for the differences associated with modern social life. Concerned particularly with explaining Nazism's success in inter-war Germany (and also mass movements in the 19th Century), Mosse suggests that the terror and propaganda associated with it cannot sufficiently explain its popularity. It is here that Mosse turns to Nazism's use of large-scale collective rituals, suggesting that it was a 'civic religion' whose success lay in the ways that it drew upon myths, symbols, music and practices that had deep historical roots in the German national consciousness. According to Mosse, the result was that these ritual performances generated a kind of Durkheimian collective effervescence, thereby unifying large numbers of ordinary Germans under the banner of Nazism.

Mosse's analysis provides an important development on the Durkheimian tradition of his predecessors for several reasons. Firstly, in many ways, he treats modern rituals as analogous

to theatrical performance. This allows Mosse to account for the possibility of the ‘failure’ of some collective rituals, in the sense that they risk being deemed ‘artificial’ by their participants if they are not effectively performed (Mosse, 1975: 90). Secondly, Mosse also takes care in his analysis to distinguish the producers of the ritual, the liturgy (that is to say, the particular ritual form being enacted), and the ritual participants. Bracketing out these different elements, allows for a better accounting of social hierarchies and segmentation and, in this way, presaged Jeffrey Alexander’s (2006) call to integrate all the elements of a social performance into its analysis.

Although Mosse’s insights represent an important development, he did not dwell on them at length, nor did he seek to develop them further. The result is that for at least one critic, Mosse does not go far enough in accounting for challenges associated with successfully enacting rituals and performances in modern society (Uzelac, 2010). Nor were Mosse’s insights taken up by his contemporaries: much of the scholarly interest in Mosse did not emerge until fairly recently. This may be due, in part, to the fact that research on national rituals and performances began to wane around the time of the publication of his book.

Going into the 1980s, if anthropologists had turned their attention elsewhere, historians of nations and nationalism were just beginning to become increasingly interested in rituals and performance. The impetus was in large part provided by the publication of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger’s (1983) edited volume on the ‘invention of traditions’. Although not solely focused on the phenomena of nations and nationalism, it quickly became associated with their study - likely in no small part because of Hobsbawm’s own deepening interest in nations and nationalism in subsequent years.

The historians brought with them the kinds of concerns associated with their discipline. Whereas the ‘neo-Durkheim’ scholarship of the post-war era is interested more in function, the ‘invention of tradition’ literature is more concerned with origins. In what might be seen as a critique of Mosse’s contention that rituals ‘succeed’ when they draw on aspects of culture that have deep historical roots, the research agenda triggered by Hobsbawm and Ranger has demonstrated in countless instances that many of the most successful rituals are actually fairly recent inventions (e.g. Handler & Linnekin, 1984; Handler, 1985; Guss, 1994; Linnekin 1991). However, although the ‘invention tradition’ literature has done much to stimulate the study of rituals and their relationship to nations and nationalism, it has not been without criticism. For example, Anthony Smith (2004, see esp. ch. 3) criticises the research agenda for over-emphasising the degree to which national rituals and traditions can be wholly invented, suggesting that they might be better seen as attempts at reinvention or renewal. In her fascinating chapter in this volume, Athena Leoussi similarly questions Hobsbawm’s arguments via an analysis of the ethno-classical revival in France at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Moving forward into the 1980s, aside from the then rapidly emerging literature on the ‘invention of traditions’, the most prominent debates in nationalism studies had become oriented to large-scale historical comparative research on the rise of nations of nationalism and its relationship to processes of modernization (e.g. Anderson 1983; Breuilly, 1982; Gellner 1983; Giddens, 1985; Smith 1986; Tilly, 1975). Indeed, these debates continue to dominate the

field in the present-day. Generally, although rituals and performances do feature in such analyses, they are treated as epiphenomenal of wider political, economic and cultural processes. While rituals and performances may feature tangentially in recent major works, their significance has been largely inferred and the processes related to how and why they contribute to the construction and endurance of nationhood have been largely neglected. Certainly, Smith (see, esp. Smith 2003) has frequently pointed in his works to the significance of rituals and performance for the endurance of nations and nationalism, however his concerns are much broader, and does not go into depth into the dynamics of the function or impact of such rituals. By contrast, in his contribution to this volume, Smith places ritual and performance firmly at the centre of his analysis, arguing compellingly that their significance lies not in whether or not they may be popular at any given time, but in their regularity and their historicity.

A notable exception to the tendency of macro historical comparative literature to downplay the significance of ritual and performance is Benedict Anderson's highly influential *Imagined Communities* (1983), wherein ritual is accorded a central role in the instantiation of a shared national imagination. Anderson's approach to ritual marks a significant departure from the 'neo-Durkheimian' and 'invention of tradition' literatures. Rather than focus on large ritual events marked by intense passion, Anderson focuses on the habitual. In Anderson's view, it is the mass performance of everyday rituals which contributes to the construction of a shared national imagination. Anderson pays particular attention to the significance of the daily ritual of reading a newspaper as a result of the spread of print capitalism in the 19th Century. In this regard, Anderson writes:

The significance of this mass ceremony – Hegel observed that newspapers serve modern man as a substitute for morning prayers – is paradoxical. It is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull. Yet each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion. Furthermore, this ceremony is incessantly repeated at daily or half-daily intervals throughout the calendar. What more vivid figure for the secular, historically clocked, imagined community can be envisioned?

Imagined Communities is perhaps the single most influential text in the study of nationalism. Its impact can be seen in the explosion of research on how nations and national identities are constructed via written texts, such as newspapers and textbooks.. However, Anderson's insights on the role of the habitual and everyday rituals in the construction of the imagined national community remains a largely untapped vein of potential research. Such research might also draw on important work by Randall Collins (2004), who by combining Goffman and Durkheim, suggests that underlying social structures are maintained by way of countless everyday 'interaction ritual chains' among individuals. Such a research agenda might also bolster the burgeoning body of research on the significance of nationalism in our everyday lives (Fox 2008), which has heretofore focused more on discourse than on enactment.

Although the debates of the 1980s and 1990s continue to loom large in the study of nations and nationalism, recent years have seen a renewed interest in ritual and performance. In the following paragraphs, we will briefly address these developments, before discussing where we think this book can contribute. Because there is not space to go over all the new lines of research, we will focus on two areas that have been particularly fruitful. These include the on-going revival of diverse strands of Durkheimian analysis, albeit in a much more nuanced form, as well as the emergence of interest in the phenomena of nations and nationalism from the interdisciplinary field of performances studies.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Durkheim's stature has grown again in the recent spate of research on national rituals and performances. His influence can be seen in several recent works covering a wide variety of phenomena, including (but not limited to): commemorations (e.g. Gillis, 1996; Spillman, 1997); sporting events (e.g. Bairner, 2001); national days (e.g. Elgenius, 2011; McCrone & McPherson, 2009); truth and reconciliation commissions (e.g. Goodman 2006) and official apologies (e.g. Barkan and Karn, 2006). However, while Durkheim is a significant influence in this new body of work, it is important to note that it is generally much more nuanced than the post-war generation of Durkheimians we discussed above.

Where current work differs from the earlier generation of Durkheimians is that the function and impact of rituals and performances are not assumed. In other words, not all national rituals and performances are assumed to provoke a uniform response among the participants. Instead, the fact that national rituals and performances often provoke differing meanings and responses among participants and can even be hotly contested is generally foregrounded. Importantly, the role of the mass media in conveying and potentially fuelling such contestation is now also widely acknowledged (e.g. Burney, 2002; Marvin and Ingle, 1996; Mihelj, 2008; Wardle and West, 2004). In this volume, Rachel Hutchins focuses on the contentious role played by the media in analysis of the on-going struggles over the American national identity.

In the hands of many of the new Durkheimians, the analysis of ritual events therefore has the potential to become a powerful heuristic for uncovering mediated conflicts over the meaning and definition of the nation. This has been taken up by a group of new Durkheimians building on the approach developed by Jeffrey Alexander (Eyerman, 2008; Goodman, 2006; Kane, 2012; Spillman 1997; Woods and Debs, Forthcoming A). Drawing on Durkheimian distinctions between the sacred, profane and mundane, the The general thrust of this work is to uncover how particular meanings and cultural forms are contested, replaced and established in the national 'collective consciousness'. Given its emphasis on the relative independence of culture, this This research agenda has the potential to strongly complement the culturalist approaches to nations and nationalism put forward by Anthony Smith (2009) and John Hutchinson (2005), which tends towards the historical, by adding a strongly processual component (see Woods and Debs Forthcoming B).

In addition to the resurfacing of Durkheim, there has been a small, but growing area of research germane to the study of nationalism, which also draws on the burgeoning field of performance studies literature (e.g. Cole, 2001; Kear & Steinberg, 1999; Mason and Gainor, 2001; Taylor,

2000). This new area of research tends to be strongly interdisciplinary, reflecting the research agenda put forward by Turner and Schechner. Instead of merely analysing rituals or analogising them as a form of theatre, this literature also analyses ‘real’ theatrical performances. In a study of Argentina during the so-called ‘dirty war’, Diana Taylor (2000) brings to light a struggle over Argentina’s national identity through analysis of a wide array of ritualised *and* theatrical performances, including military parades, football matches, theatre festivals and the famous marches by the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo.

In the preceding paragraphs, we briefly traced some of the key developments in the research on national rituals and performances. In the following chapters that comprise this book, we hope to build upon the diverse areas of research touched on in this section in order to stimulate new debates and new lines of inquiry. By demonstrating the vitality of one area of research which we believe has much potential to generate new insights, our overarching aim with this volume is to reinvigorate the study of nations and nationalism. In the light of the increasing heterogeneity research on rituals and performances within nationalism studies, we particularly hope that this volume will provoke further conversation and debate, not only on the significance of rituals and performances for nations and nationalism, but also on questions related to approach and methodology. Thus, while we intentionally assembled a diverse body of contributors employing a wide variety of approaches and methods, we have also encouraged the contributors to think about how their particular approach and methods relates to the others. This has given rise to several recurring debates and themes running through the book over how we ought to approach rituals and performances and how they might best be studied. It is our hope that these debates will find their way into future research on rituals and performances.

Approach and Methodology

As noted above, a key theme of this book concerns approach and methodology. In light of the growing diversity of approaches and methods in the study of ritual and performance, we feel that it is time to initiate further discussion of their relative strengths and weaknesses. For instance, should we focus primarily on extraordinary events, such as the royal wedding or September 11th and its aftermath, or can we learn more about nations by observing everyday interactions, such as regularly drinking at the pub after work or pledging allegiance to the flag before class? Is there greater value in observing the construction of high culture by elites, such as the opera and national museums, or, should there be greater emphasis on popular culture, such as the widely watched television programmes *America’s Got Talent* or *Eurovision*? Such methodological questions are discussed and, indeed, at times hotly debated across the various chapters comprising this book.

It is worth noting, however, that many of the questions concerning how to study ritual and performance are related to wider debates within the field of nationalism studies. For instance, scholars such as Rogers Brubaker (2004; et al 2007) have advocated investigating how ‘ordinary’ people respond to, and enact, elite-level representations of nations and nationalism. Similarly, others, such as Michael Billig (1995), have highlighted the importance of exploring the informal, everyday processes that produce and reproduce nationhood. By contrast, other scholars, such as Anthony Smith (2008), while acknowledging the importance of these new

approaches, have argued that a proper understanding of the persistence of particular nations and nationalism requires a continued focus on their historical genealogy and the role of elites (on this debate, see Smith and Jon Fox and Cynthia Miller-Idriss, 2008). The reader will find this debate in particular taken up in the context of rituals and performances in the contributions by Smith and Fox.

As Smith highlights in his contribution to the volume, a greater focus on rituals and performances may also help push the field of nationalism studies towards uncovering and analysing new sources of information beyond literary texts and survey data. When seeking to explain questions related to nations and nationalism, the tendency has been to focus on data gleaned from government reports, textbooks, censuses, surveys, newspapers, speeches, diaries, etc. While these texts have been, and continue to be, extremely useful, if we are to properly understand the meaning of national rituals and performances, there may also be scope for paying more attention to other sources of data, including art, archaeology, architecture, music, drama, film, sport, etc. This, in turn, suggests that there is greater scope for ethnographic and other forms of participatory and observational research in nationalism studies than has heretofore been the case.

Structure and Outline

The book is divided into two sections: approaches and applications. The chapters in the first section are concerned primarily with how to study rituals and performances, with each of them presenting what are often conflicting analytic frameworks. The chapters in the second section are concerned more with understanding and explaining specific empirical phenomena. Yet, it is important to note that this is a very broad distinction as all of the contributors to the volume are concerned with approach and all engage with a variety of specific case studies. Indeed, providing the structure for this volume was a daunting task because, although we are keen to highlight a number of important themes and issues, we do not wish to create or sustain dichotomies. The rationale behind the structure of the book is therefore primarily to serve as a guide for how to develop an understanding of this fascinating and complex topic. Thus, although each chapter provides an independent argument, for scholars who are new to this topic we suggest reading the chapters in the order in which they are situated in the book – this applies particularly to the chapters in the first section.

Section 1: Approaches

In the first chapter, Anthony Smith provides a thorough introduction to the significance and key themes of performance and ritual for the study of nations by undertaking a broad comparative historical analysis of celebratory and commemorative rituals as well as non-textual sources of the nation. Smith argues that ritual and performance play a central role in the forging and re-forging of national communities. However, against those who argue that analysis should proceed primarily from the perspective of ordinary citizens, Smith seeks to demonstrate that attention must also be paid to the elites who design and represent collective rituals, as well as the genealogy of such rituals, if their role in the persistence of nations is to be fully understood.

By observing national holiday commemorations, in the second chapter, Jon Fox highlights a crucial issue for ritual and performance in the study of nations; namely, how to identify and measure the success of a ritual or performance. While the scholarship on nationalism has generally assumed the success of such commemorations, scholarship on ritual and performance has generally assumed the opposite. Nevertheless, Fox argues that both views are united by a 'top-down' logic and thus, against the position taken by Smith, Fox argues for a study of national rituals and performances that focuses primarily on the perspective of ordinary citizens. Observing that there is often a disjuncture between the officially intended meaning of a particular national ritual, and the way that it is perceived and received by ordinary citizens, Fox suggests an emphasis on the latter will help researchers to focus on the particular rituals and performances that are of national significance.

In the third chapter, Randall Collins explores the significance of rituals by theorising nationalism as a process of surges in time. Like Fox, Collins acknowledges the fact that nationalism and national identity remain, for the most part, latent. Collins thus attempts to explain the ebb and flow of national sentiment through social movements. At their peak, Collins argues that these movements manifest themselves as huge interaction rituals which are time-bubbles, lasting for a few weeks or months then fading, and are subject to a refractory period during which they cannot be mobilised at that same intensity. In this view, rituals thus possess great explanatory power in theorising the rise and fall of nationalist sentiment. Collins draws upon evidence from the aftermath of September 11th, 2001 and Arab Spring of 2011 to illustrate his case.

In the fourth chapter, Jonathan Hearn argues that, rather than simply examining their content, greater emphasis should be placed on exploring the *form* of rituals. Hearn's contribution also provides an excellent discussion on the definition of ritual. Unlike Smith and Fox, Hearn is not concerned with questions about the design and reception of rituals, rather, by drawing on the ritual of competition in liberal national states to illustrate his case, Hearn emphasises the significance of underlying ritual processes. For Hearn, formalised competition is the defining ritual for core liberal political and economic institutions (e.g. elections and markets), as well as a cultural trope that permeates society as a whole, in education, sports, entertainment and the arts. Hearn's underlying argument, therefore, is that we need to look beyond the more overt civic rituals that affirm national identity and social solidarity (e.g. national days, funerals of public figures, pilgrimages to historic sites, etc.), and look for those rituals that, in their very form, affirm and dramatize the constitution of society.

Section 2: Applications

The first two chapters in the second half of the book discuss efforts by elites to construct or embody the 'authentic' nation. By focusing on elite design and adopting an historical perspective, we see echoes of Anthony Smith's contribution to the volume in both of these chapters.

Of all the means through which elites have sought to capture the spirit of the nation, perhaps none have been applied as universally as the national art museum. In the fifth chapter, art historian Carol Duncan theorises the experience of a national art museum as ‘civilizing ritual’ that transforms individuals into national citizens. Describing the genesis of the national art museum in 18th Century France and beyond, Duncan argues that art museums' combination of architectural features and art installations constitute a ritual scenario, a kind of score or script, that structures the visitor's experience (even if visitors are not equally prepared to enact it).

In chapter 6, Athena Leoussi explores the engagement of avant-garde French artists in the movement for national physical regeneration that followed the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. Leoussi demonstrates how the French tried to revive the ancient Greek cult of the body. This body-centred, ethno-classical revival became associated with a Catholic revival which re-affirmed chastity and motherhood and celebrated another "golden age", that of the Gothic cathedrals, an age of moral virtue. She explores how these two ideals of the two French "national" traditions, the classical and Catholic, were appropriated by elites and enacted or performed in French art, and especially in the art of the impressionist artists, Paul Cezanne and Pierre-Auguste Renoir. In their paintings, the two artists showed the new French ideal: France regenerated, physically and morally, by return to the Mediterranean homeland and way of life.

In chapter six, Japan specialist John Breen, draws on a similar theme to that of Randall Collins by exploring the rise and fall in the significance of a national ritual. By focusing on Yasukuni, a contentious shrine to the Japanese war dead in Tokyo, Breen also raises issues about how national memory and mourning become manifest in ritual. Breen sheds light on Yasukuni's rise to prominence as a national ritual site before and during the Second World War, arguing that it played a vital role during the Second World War by which the Imperial Nation could be experienced. However, in democratic post-war Japan, Breen suggests that the strict constitutional separation between church and state has led to the decline of the Yasukuni as the ‘nation's shrine.’

The final two chapters of the volume both focus on attempts to re-define or re-appropriate national identity through ritual and performance. By examining Maori imagery in ephemera produced for the 1901 visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall, Chris McDonald's chapter demonstrates how "pakeha" New Zealanders fashioned identities not just for Maori but also for themselves as a distinctive group of British colonists. McDonald argues that the colonists were aware of their own difference and sought to define this positively, often as an extrapolation from recognised "British" characteristics or ideals. By creating the appearance of a bi-cultural state, "pakeha" New Zealanders were able to situate themselves in the vanguard of a new breed of empire builders, differentiating New Zealand from the newly federated Australia where "the race issue" was more problematic. In making this distinction, pakeha New Zealanders avoided direct comparison with their cousins "at Home", and defined unique aspects of their identity as a series of contrasts with colonists elsewhere.

The focus of Rachel Hutchin's contribution to the volume is the Rally to Restore Sanity, which was held on the 30th of October 2010 in Washington D.C. and was organised by Jon Stewart,

the host of cable television's The Daily Show. Initially billed as a counter-protest against the Tea Party movement (including the 'Restoring Honor' Rally of August 2010, which featured Fox News' Glenn Beck), the rally led various media outlets and commentators to struggle to define its meaning. Hutchins draws upon themes set out by Fox and Collins on the success of rituals and performances, demonstrating how the rally, media coverage of it, and participants' perceptions and objectives often included discourse relating to national identity – from the hosts' abundant, somewhat ironic use of American flags and flag motifs, to explicit proclamations of national greatness and calls for national unity. The rally is an example of extraordinary collective action that provides an opportunity to examine both the salience and conceptions of national sentiment and national identity.

Concluding Remarks and Suggestions for Further Research

Although ritual and performance have largely remained peripheral subjects of enquiry within the discipline over the past two decades, an explosion of recent scholarship reflects a rapidly growing interest in the area. As we have sought to demonstrate above, this scholarship encompasses both a resurgence of established issues and debates, as well as the emergence of novel questions and modes of enquiry. This volume seeks to draw together many of these diverse topics, questions and approaches, and attempts to highlight key theoretical and methodological issues with the aim of developing understanding of this topic and stimulating further research.

The study of ritual and performance forces us to reconsider the role of elites and masses, of societal structures and micro-processes, of different approaches and methodologies, of unconsidered behaviour and scripted practices, of the everyday nation and extraordinary national moments. We hope that the reader will find echoes of all of these issues and debates in the chapters that follow, and be prompted to take up further enquiry. Yet, we are also aware that there are many other significant topics that are not covered here. Constricted by both space and time, for instance, this book has a *predominantly* Western focus, where ideas of the nation are relatively well-established. The history of nationalism demonstrates the diversity of its origins, forms and functions across the globe. There is much that can be said about the role of ritual and performance for emerging nations and trans-national identities, and for nationalisms outside the West. Indeed, ritual and performance open up novel sources of information for the field, which, in turn, necessitate further discussions about approach and methodological rigour. There is also, however, much that remains to be said about ritual, performance and nationalism more generally. It is our hope that this volume can provide the foundation for further discussion of these complex and fascinating issues.

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