

OMNI NEWSLETTER #1 ON NATIONALISM, Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace

See: Ethnocentrism, Identity, Imperialism, Jingoism, Militarism, National Security State, Patriotism, Permanent War, Preemptive Invasion, Torture, Xenophobia

These assessments of **nationalism** should be read by people of all nations. I'll add that degrees of self-regarding nationalism exist, from US hyper-nationalism to Danish low-key cultural pride. An essential exploration of US nationalism is *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights*, ed. Michael Ignatieff. All of Noam Chomsky's books that discuss US foreign policy elaborate the subject. See criticism of the US National Security State, which leads to examination of US wars and a host of related subjects. Dick

Contents

Koenigsberg: National Right to Kill?

Mystical Nationalism: *The King's Two Bodies* by Ernst Kantorowicz

Americentrism

White Nationalism

Economic Nationalism: Imperialism

WHY WARS, WHY MASS SLAUGHTER?

Nations Have the Right to Kill: Hitler the Holocaust and War

By Richard Koenigsberg

From Intro.:But what if destruction and self-destruction are the fundamental purpose of warfare? This is the conclusion that I have reached. More precisely, perhaps warfare is undertaken as a form of sacrifice—a gigantic potlatch—whereby human beings give over their bodies and possessions to objects of worship with names like France, Germany, Japan, America, etc.

We would prefer not to know that this is the case. We still exist within the heart of the storm. Nationalism is a living religion, so powerful that we barely conceive of it as a religion. Yet Carolyn Marvin in her ground-breaking *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation* (1999) develops a theory similar to the one I present in this book. She shows how warfare and sacrifice function to support and sustain the idea of the nation.

I explore this idea in Chapter III of this book, "As the Soldier Dies, So the Nation Comes Alive," as well as in Chapter V, in which I examine parallels between the First World War and the Aztec performance of warfare as a ritual sacrifice. Are we in the Western World similar to the Aztecs in that we sacrifice human beings in the name of our Gods?

Sadly, it would appear that this is the case. The difference is that the Aztecs were aware that warfare was a sacrificial ritual, whereas we in the West are not yet aware of this. One objective of this book is to help us to become conscious of the central role of sacrifice in our political rituals.

Marvin writes about blood sacrifice in war as the "totem secret." The fact that nations create warfare as a sacrificial ritual is something that we are not supposed to know. Indeed, we don't wish to know that this is the case. What would it mean if people were to become aware that warfare is an institution whose purpose is to sacrifice—or kill—people?

Hitler nearly understood this. He realized that nations have the right to kill. The purpose of this book is to provide documentation showing how nations act in the name of killing or sacrificing people. We understand that nations have the right to kill, but assume there are specific reasons why states find it necessary to go to war.

But what if it turns out that the production of sacrificial

violence and victims is an essential function of the nation-state? What if wars are waged not for specific reasons, rather in order to produce opportunities for killing and dying? What if it turns out that killing (producing sacrificial victims) is one of the fundamental purposes of collective acts of violence? If we become capable of knowing this, will it make a difference?

DYING AND KILLING FOR LOVE
Lecture by Richard A. Koenigsberg, Ph. D.

Co-sponsored by the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis (NPAP) and the Philosophy Department of the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research
Moderator, Mathias Beier. Discussant, Sy Coopsmith

Friday, January 11, 2008, 8 PM

What is the nature of the human attraction to warfare? What psychological processes transform killing, destruction and the maiming of human bodies into a good thing? War is conceived as a good thing because people die and kill in the name a beloved object, one's nation. . . .

According to the ideology of warfare, bad things (killing, destruction and the maiming of human bodies) become good things because they are undertaken in the name one's beloved nation and its sacred ideals. Collective forms of violence articulate the project or shared fantasy of sacrificing human beings in the name of entities or ideas conceived as greater than the self.

For information on workshops, seminars and lectures presented by Richard Koenigsberg, please call 718-393-1081.

Richard Koenigsberg received his Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research and formerly taught at the New School. INFORMATION AGE PUBLISHING recently released new editions of his books: *Hitler's Ideology: Embodied Metaphor, Ideology and History*; *The Nation: A Study in Ideology and Fantasy*; and *The Fantasy of Oneness and the Struggle to Separate: A Study in the Psychology of Culture*.

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CIVILIZATION AND THE FANTASY OF IMMORTALITY:

Review by Richard A. Koenigsberg of *The King's Two Bodies* by Ernst Kantorowicz (Princeton UP, paperback)

Ernst Kantorowicz was a historian of political and intellectual

history who taught at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, where he published his masterpiece, *The King's Two Bodies*.

"Kantorowicz's book is one of the most significant titles ever published on political theory. It traces the nation-state or body politic to the mystical body of the church. The author shows how the idea of death on the battlefield, dying for one's country, descended from Christian martyrdom. Though we imagine we live in a secular society, we still are immersed within a mystical body. As once we sought immortality through Christianity, now civilization's dream of eternal life is bound to the idea of the nation. We identify our own bodies with this omnipotent entity. We die and kill in defense of our dream of eternal life."

The King's Two Bodies is available now through Amazon.com at special, discounted rates. We urge you to obtain a copy of this classic work that reveals the fundamental structure of Western political thought.

For information on how to the paperback edition, [PLEASE CLICK HERE](#).

Read at no charge: Excerpts from
THE KING'S TWO BODIES

In *The King's Two Bodies* (1957), Ernst Kantorowicz describes a profound transformation in the concept of political authority that occurred over the course of the Middle Ages. Kantorowicz found in Edmund Plowden's reports (1571) a collection of law cases written under Queen Elizabeth I the first clear elaboration of "that mystical talk with which the English crown jurists enveloped and trimmed their definitions of kingship and royal capacities." The following discussion of the "King's Two Bodies" is based on Kantorowicz's presentation and analysis of Plowden's reports.

The King, Plowden says, has two bodies: "a Body Natural and a Body Politic." The King's Body Natural is his mortal body, subject to "all infirmities come by nature or accident," the "imbecility of infancy or old age," and the "defects that happen to the natural bodies of all people." In short, it is the biological body that the King has in common with each of us a body that ages and eventually dies.

However, the King also has a Second Body, a Body Politic. This body that "cannot be seen or handled" is "utterly void of old age and other natural defects and imbecilities" to which the Body Natural is subject. The King's Second Body, in other words, is invulnerable, immortal and "cannot be invalidated or frustrated by any disability in his natural body."

Still, his Body Natural is not "distinct or divided" from his Body Politic. Rather, the King's Body Natural and Body Politic are "together indivisible." The two bodies are "incorporated in one

person." The body corporate is contained within the Body Natural; and the Body Natural within the body corporate. The King's Two Bodies thus form "one unit indivisible, each fully contained in the other." Yet, Plowden explains, while the King's two bodies form an indivisible unity, no doubt can arise regarding the "superiority of the Body Politic over the Body Natural." Not only is the Body Politic "more ample and large than the Body Natural," but in the Body Politic dwell certain "truly mysterious forces which reduce, or even remove, the imperfections of the fragile human nature." Although the King contains within himself two bodies—one and indivisible—the Body Politic is the greater of the two.

To comment on Koenigsberg's review essay, please [click here](#).

This Body Politic draws the King's Body Natural into itself, altering the latter. The Body Politic "takes away the imbecility of the Body Natural." When the Body Natural fuses with the Body Politic—when these two bodies unite—the Body Politic acts to "wipe away every imperfection" of the Body Natural. By merging with the Body Politic, one's natural body is transformed into an omnipotent body. The King's Body Natural (like other human beings') is subject to passions and death—but not when it is united with his Second Body. For as his Body Politic, "the King never dies." When a King dies, his Second Body is "transferred and conveyed over from the Body Natural now dead to another Body Natural." In short: "The King is dead—long live the King."

The idea of the King's Second Body has profound implications for our understanding of the human being's relationship to civilization. The King's Second Body, I suggest, symbolizes culture itself, that which (as Anthropology and Sociology texts used to say) "lives on." The Second Body of the king—the Body Politic—is culture: that part of human beings which endures even while individuals pass away. Social theorists typically view the self as created and shaped by culture. However, we may also view culture as the creation of the self. I propose the idea of culture as a double of the self: the King's Second Body; fantasy of an immortal self bound to our mortal selves. We project our bodies into the symbolic order. We create and nurture cultural objects that symbolize our Bodies. Culture thus constitutes the Second Body of the King: the fantasy of an immortal, self-perpetuating body not subject to death or decay.

Egyptian pyramids mark the beginning of Western civilization. Well before the Middle Ages, Kings were conceived as partaking of immortality. A pyramid was the Pharaoh's Body Politic: his immortal body that transcended his natural body. Egyptians believed that the Pharaoh could live forever—within a massive structure that contained and symbolized his body. Pyramids constituted a double of the Pharaoh's self: the King's Second Body.

The Pyramids were the result of hundreds of thousands of hours of labor and the expenditure of enormous wealth. Human energies were poured into building these gigantic structures—that had no practical

value whatsoever. Civilizations begin with the fantasy of immortalityóprojected into monumental creations that stand as a double of the self. Monumental structures such as the pyramids embody the fantasy of living on even as our actual bodies die. To comment on Koenigsberg's review essay, please [click here](#).

Each of us is like a King or Pharaoh: we project our bodiesóour life energiesóinto the creation of cultural objects which, we imagine, will live on even though we are fated to die. Cultural objects are the Second Body of the King: symbolizing a body (politic) not subject to death or decay; the superorganic; that which transcends the lives of individuals and lives on.

Nations function like the Second Body of the King. One's nation is a double of one's self: a larger, "more ample" body with which we identify. Our nation is a Body Politic that seems more powerful than our actual body. We identify with a nation as if it were our own body. We project our bodies into a Body Politic. We wage war in the name of our nation to defend the fantasy of an omnipotent body that will live forever.

Whatever theories scholars put forth, we nevertheless exist: each human being lives within his or her biological body. In order to escape one's biological body (and the death that it contains), we identify with nations, cultures and the symbolic order. The Body Politicóour Second Bodyóis conceived as an omnipotent body that will wash away weakness, defect and death.

We seek to bind our actual body to this symbolic body: The King is dead, long live the King. Or as the song from a James Bond movie puts it: "You only live twice: one life for yourself and one for your dreams." Our life in culture is a dream life: the projection of a fantasy. Our actual bodies are small, frail and vulnerable. The Body Politic is large and apparently invulnerable. What's more, the national body seems to contain "everything" within itself. We want it all, and we want it all forever. We project our beings into this dream body.

The "split subject" is a human being that exists in two places; two dimensions of reality. On the one hand, we exist in a concrete place and time. On the other hand, we are "spirited away" by the symbolic order. We identify our existence with another dimension of realityónone other than "culture" itself: a world that seems to exist "out there," separate from us and moving eternally through time and space like a film that never ends.

We want to be part of this never-ending movie. We would prefer to be a character in itóa Queen or King ourselves ("Fame, I want to live forever, baby remember my name"). If this is not possible, we link ourselves to individuals who seem to be part of the Body Politic; to exist within it. Famous peopleóthose who are written up in history booksóare like bodies contained within the Body Politic: part of the cellular structure of a nation.

The immortal bodies with which we connect may be sports figures (Babe

Ruth or Lou Gehrig), singers (Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley or Michael Jackson), movie stars (James Dean or Marilyn Monroe), political figures (John F. Kennedy or Lee Harvey Oswald), scientists (Albert Einstein), or academic heroes (Lacan). Each is dead, yet we experience them as if they still exist: they constitute the Second Body of the King.

Human beings pour their life-energies into the creation of cultural objects—symbols of our own bodies—that we hope will become elements of culture: fusing with the Body Politic. In this sense, the pyramids represent a paradigm for how human beings connect or relate to civilization. Pyramids symbolize our aspiration to create, preserve and identify with “permanent” objects. A poem by the baseball umpire Grantland Rice concludes: “For all men die, but the Record lives.” To create a cultural object is to create a double of the self: a symbol of one’s body that makes its way into—finds a place in—the external world. One pours one’s energies into the creation of an object which, one hopes, will continue to exist after one dies. One dreams that one’s own body will be preserved within one’s creation. The created object (a Beethoven sonata, a Picasso painting) is the Second Body of the King.

One may create and produce a “book,” hoping it will rest on the shelves of a library, snuggled next to the other symbolic bodies. If a book becomes a “classic” (part of the canon), we imagine that this entity will survive forever. Huckleberry Finn will live forever, as will its author, Mark Twain. Catcher in the Rye will live on, as will J. D. Salinger. Though Salinger hid himself away through his lifetime, his Second Body is seen, touched, held and read by millions.

Perhaps the fundamental fantasy sustaining civilization is the idea that human beings exist in—are preserved within—the cultural objects they create. We imagine that the created object is the Second Body of the King: a body without defect, subject to neither decay nor death. One’s life may revolve around the fantasy of fashioning an immortal object containing one’s self. We imagine that a “piece” of our body will continue to exist, contained within and preserved by the cultural object one has created.

Today, mass media functions as the Second Body of the King. We possess our own lives, but also possess another: the life we lead by virtue of identifying with events and people “brought to us” by television, radio, the Internet, movies, etc. For some, this world constitutes reality itself.

Do we exist where we are—or “out there”? Do we identify with our concrete existence, or with significant events and famous people that are quite distant from our lives. It is common and ordinary for people to bind their lives to Another World (the title of a television soap opera). This other world seems to contain abundance and infinite possibilities. What’s more, this other world keeps moving on endlessly. When one anchorwoman leaves the show, another takes her place: The Queen is dead, long live the Queen.

What are the consequences of identifying so deeply with the cultural world? I've been discussing this tendency as if it's a benign fantasy. However, there is a profound price to be paid. Norman O. Brown states that the essence of sublimation is the "reification of the superfluous sacred into monumental, enduring form." Using the pyramids as a paradigm, Brown suggests that sexual energies are siphoned off for the purpose of creating sacred structures that exist solely to materialize fantasies of immortality. Death is overcome, Brown says, on condition that the "real actuality of life pass into these immortal and dead things."

According to Plowden, there is no doubt that the Body Politic is superior to the Body Natural. Hitler explained to his people: "You are nothing, your nation is everything." Lacanians often claim: "There is no other but the Other." What happens when a Body Politic with which an individual identifies overwhelms his or her actual body? What is the price we pay in order to sustain our belief that we possess a second, immortal body?

To comment on Koenigsberg's review essay, please click here.

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Americentrism

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Americentrism is a term referring to the [ethnocentric](#) and [xenophobic](#) practice of viewing the world from an explicitly [American](#) perspective, with an implied belief, either consciously or subconsciously, in the [preeminence](#) of American (and, more generally, of [Western](#)) culture.^[1]

Among others, U.S. broadcasting networks^[2] and U.S. celebrities such as [Quentin Tarantino](#)^[3] have been accused of being *Americentric*.

See also

- [American exceptionalism](#)
- [Manifest Destiny](#)

Geocultural perspectives:

- [Afrocentrism](#)
- [Eurocentrism](#)
- [Sinocentrism](#)

Notes

1. [^] NI, Chun-yan. (2008). Analysis of ethnocentrism. *US-China Foreign Language*, 6 (2), 78. Retrieved March 20, 2009 from <http://www.linguist.org.cn/doc/uc200803/uc20080316.pdf>.
2. [^] <http://www.salon.com/news/sports/col/kaufman/2004/08/20/friday>
3. [^] <http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/festivals/04/32/udine2004.html>

Nationalism and Color

The New White Nationalism in America: its challenge to integration by [Carol Miller Swain](#) CambridgeUP, 2002 - [Social Science](#) - 526 pages

Over the past ten years, a new white nationalist movement has gained strength in America, bringing with it the potential to disrupt already fragile race relations. Eschewing violence, this movement seeks to expand its influence mainly through argument and persuasion directed at its target audience of white Americans aggrieved over racial double standards, race-based affirmative action policies, high black-on-white crime rates, and liberal immigration policies. The movement has also been energized, Swain contends, by minority advocacy of multiculturalism. Due to its emphasis on group self-determination, multiculturalism has provided white nationalists with justification for advocating a parallel form of white solidarity. In addition, as Swain illustrates, technological advances such as the Internet have made it easier than ever before for white nationalists to reach a more mainstream audience. Swain's study is intended as a wake-up call to all Americans who cherish the Civil Rights Era vision of an integrated America, a common humanity, and equality before God and the law.

More http://books.google.com/books/about/The_new_white_nationalism_in_America.html?id=HB1wyFPRGm4C

Nationalism and Economics

International Socialist Review Issue 7, Spring 1999

“U. S. Imperialism: A Century of Slaughter” By Lance Selfa

THIS YEAR marks the 100th anniversary of the emergence of the U.S. as a major world power. Under the pretext of responding to a bombing on the *USS Maine* anchored in Havana, Cuba, the U.S. went to war with Cuba's colonial overlord, Spain, in 1899. After routing Europe's weakest colonial power, the U.S. made off with all of Spain's colonial possessions in Latin America and Asia, seizing control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines.

The Spanish-American War marked the entrance of the U.S. into the worldwide scramble for colonies among the advanced powers. Novelist Mark Twain made no bones about what this meant:

How our hearts burned with indignation against the atrocious Spaniards. . .But when the smoke was over, the dead buried and the cost of the war came back to the people in an increase in the price of commodities and rent--that is, when we sobered up from our patriotic spree--it suddenly dawned on us that the cause of the Spanish-American war was the price of sugar. . . . that the lives, blood, and money of the American people were used to protect the interests of American capitalists.

A century later, the U.S. stands alone as the world's superpower. It is the only country with the ability to go to war anywhere in the world.

The U.S. attained its position of dominance through competition with other powerful nations. The U.S. and the world's other major powers--Britain, Russia, China, France and Germany--fought two world wars, threatened each other with nuclear annihilation and divided and redivided the world between them.

How can we explain this madness?

It is important to understand that wars and violence stem not from the whims of politicians but from the nature of the system itself. Capitalism is based on the exploitation of the vast majority of the world's population by a small minority who own and control all the resources. A recent United Nations (UN) study showed that all of the world's poor could be lifted out of poverty by spending the wealth of the world's seven richest billionaires.

At the heart of a system which produces this kind of obscene inequality is ruthless competition between corporations constantly on the lookout for new ways to make profits. The process of competition forces capitalists to look beyond their own national boundaries to gain access to new and cheap raw materials and workers.

More http://www.isreview.org/issues/07/century_of_slaughter.shtml

END OF NEWSLETTER ON US NATIONALISM #1