

War, Shame, and Time: Pastoral Governance and National Identity in England and America

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This essay examines the emergence of national identity in international society through the curious example of “National Humiliation Day,” a special holiday proclaimed by the head of state in wartime and celebrated in local churches throughout the nation. It argues that the observation of humiliation days produces the nation as the sacred political community because it figures both problems and solutions in a “national” time that is radically different from the dynastic and ecclesiastical times that defined medieval Europe. Unlike those who suggest that the Peace of Westphalia instituted a dramatic shift to an international system of secular states, the essay argues that national humiliation days demonstrate an enduring overlap between the transcendental world order of religion and the temporal world order of territorial states. National humiliation days share not just an invocation of God in politics, but the continual invocation of the nation as the sacred political community. Thus, rather than being the result of a secularizing process, the nation is continually constructed through pastoral governance. The essay’s second argument is more theoretical. It is common in constructivism and critical international relations theory to argue that nations are constructed through the production of foreign enemies in a clear division of a virtuous inside from a vicious outside. National humiliation day texts help us question this understanding of identity politics because they concentrate their critique on the national self rather than a foreign Other; the self here “Others” itself in a productive and contingent identity politics that allows more space for criticism and resistance. Yet the resistance generated in these humiliation holiday texts is not to nationalism as a category of identity per se, but to specific oppressive forms of the nation. Thus the essay concludes that the nation is generated not just through pastoral governance, but also through resistance to pastoral governance.

One thousand six hundred and forty-eight is a pivotal year in international relations (IR). The Treaties of Westphalia ended the Thirty Years War, which was a war of faith between Catholicism and Protestantism. Rather than simply ending a war, the Peace of Westphalia was also a key moment in the founding of the discipline of IR.

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The settlement in 1648 reordered (European) space by shifting from a world order that was guided by a hierarchical goal of universal empire (of Rome or Christendom), to a world order composed of many different and equal territorial states.

This dramatic shift established the state as “the only legitimate entity . . . around [which] a new kind of political life began to develop, and also a new kind of world—*inter-national*—politics. This is the ‘modern age’ and the ‘modern world’ of which we are still parts” (Ringmar 1996:10). In a special issue of *International Studies Review* that celebrated the 350th anniversary of the Westphalian system, Caporaso (2000:1–2) likewise acknowledges that although there is now much debate about the details of origin and development of the states system, “for better or worse, the Westphalian model has served as a point of departure and baseline against which the more complex empirical world is compared” (also see Inayatullah and Blaney 2004:23–4).

Yet 500 miles West of Westphalia on England’s Isle of Wight, in 1648 another treaty event offers a different understanding of identity and world order. Rather than being engulfed in the Thirty Year’s War between Catholicism and Protestantism, England was immersed in Civil War between king and Parliament. The crisis here was not just about space and the territorial state, but about time and national identity.

In a fleeting moment of reconciliation, Charles I celebrated a truce with Parliament by issuing a Book of Common Prayer to mark “the 15 of September, 1648 [as] the day of Fasting and Humiliation for [the obtaining of] a blessing upon the personall treatie betweene the King and his two Houses of Parliament.” The purpose of this special religious day was to celebrate a “ceasing (of) the present differences and restoring of a happy Peace in this divided kingdom,” which momentarily ended the “strange unnatural war” whereby the English had “become executioners of ourselves” (Church of England 1648:1, 7).

Instead of leaving this prayer book in the musty archives, I follow Inayatullah and Blaney (2004:23–24) to see such texts as provocatively providing “the late medieval-early modern context for the origins of the political imagination informing contemporary IR.” Rather than a Westphalian transition from medieval theocracy to modern secular state, the prayer book shows how religion and politics continued to inform each other through a peculiar practice of time, national humiliation day. Although curious, this humiliation holiday, where a special holy day was proclaimed by the head of state in wartime and celebrated in local churches throughout the nation, was not unique. Between the English Civil War (1640s) and the American Civil War (1860s), dozens of national humiliation days were celebrated in Protestant Euro-America. After the mid nineteenth century the practice spread from church services to the editorial pages of the London *Times* and the *New York Times*. Most dramatically, at the height of the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, the United States Congress passed a nonbinding resolution calling upon President George W. Bush to proclaim a “national day of humility, prayer and fasting”; Bush proclaimed May 1, 2003 “A Day of Gratitude, Fasting, and Prayer” (Bush 2003). Although the left-wing press in the United States ridiculed such actions as superstitious and *Le Monde* declared it as indicative of “American exceptionalism,”¹ this humiliation holiday was part of a Protestant political tradition of seeking national security through national salvation. National humiliation days share not just an invocation of God in politics, but the continual invocation of the nation as the sacred political community not just in the United States but throughout the world.

While Ringmar, Caporaso and others remind us of the continuing importance of the Peace of Westphalia in the emergence of the system of states, this essay will argue that we also need to tease out the enduring meaning of national humiliation

¹ See David Corn. (2002) God, Make W. Faster than a Speeding Bullet? *The Nation*, April 4; Dieu et l’Amerique. [*God and America* (editorial)], *Le Monde*, March 29, 2003.

days as an alternative way of tracing the emergence of nations in international society. Both narratives assert the fundamental importance of the nation-state; but each tells a radically different story. Westphalia is figured as a dramatic turning point in the evolution of the international system from the universal empire of religion to the fragmented system of secular states. National humiliation days, on the other hand, were recurrent events that expressed identity in terms of a political theology that combined the spiritual and the temporal to assert the nation as the sacred political community. Moreover, national humiliation days show the radical contingency of national identity, confirming that the nation did not appear fully formed. On the contrary, the nation as the hegemonic mode of identity needs to be continually invoked and serviced through, among other practices, sacred rituals that serve to maintain its symbolic political power. Nationalism thus is not just an issue of domestic politics, for identity also takes shape in the pastoral governance of IR and interstate war.

National humiliation texts are fascinating because their modular continuity over the centuries provides a context through which we can trace the shifting power relations of the emergence of the nation in Europe and America. Each national humiliation day is unique, addressing a singular event in a particular war. When lined up in a series, the dozens of national humiliation day sermons between 1648 and 1865 share a common structure and logic that helps us trace the development of sovereignty, identity and power as early modern England and America congealed into the United Kingdom and the United States. While Enlightenment rationality might lead us to believe that Westphalia was a turning point in the guiding model of world order, national humiliation day texts suggest that power was not divided between sacred and secular, so much as reasserted in a new form, generating a new kind of sovereignty for the nation-state that joined sacred and secular in a productive tension. While the Protestant Reformation entailed a shift from communal worship to individual faith, Protestant humiliation days show how both sin and salvation were increasingly figured as part of a collective national soul. Although the early modern period witnessed the construction of the individual as a legal entity, the power exerted through these national humiliation days was not legal, so much as pastoral. It was policed by both ministers of the church and ministers of the state. The special sermons preached on special days may now seem exotic, but they were an important factor in producing the nation through a complex practice of pastoral governance that persists in the twenty-first century. In this way, America's National Day of Humility, Fasting and Prayer at the height of the Iraq War in 2003 is more than evidence of an odd mixture of religion and politics that grows out of American (or neoconservative) exceptionalism (Fletcher 2004). Rather, it demonstrates how political theology produces not just the nation as a sacred political community, but produces modernity more generally in the sense that security is an issue that joins the sacred and the secular in the pursuit of national salvation (Schmitt 1985; Campbell 1998:50; Fletcher 2004).

To show the relevance of national humiliation day to international politics, this essay will argue two interrelated points. Firstly, it will argue that the observation of humiliation days invokes and produces the nation because it figures both problems and solutions in a "national" time that is radically different from the dynastic and ecclesiastical orders that defined medieval Europe. In this way, the new calendars and new maps that increasingly nationalize time and space signify an important shift away from the universal world order of Christendom (see Ozouf 1988; Anderson 1991:187-205; Shapiro 2001:112-38). But unlike those who suggest that dramatic shifts occurred with the Treaties of Westphalia, I argue that this was an uneven emergence, a shifty shift of world orders. Days of national humiliation, fasting, and prayer demonstrate an enduring overlap between the transcendental world order of religion and the temporal world order of territorial states. Hence, the nation is not a stable thing: the numerous humiliation holidays show how this

contingent national community has to be continually invoked through public rituals.

Thus, this essay will examine how national identity projects involve more than elites instrumentally recruiting sources of symbolic power (i.e., religious and national icons) to assert sovereignty, gain legitimacy, and unite the masses. I will argue that national humiliation days are involved in a broader process whereby the nation emerges as the hegemonic political community as opposed to other options; dynastic, regional, economic, ecclesiastic, or universal. Resistance to this cultural governance, as we will see, is not to the nation as the dominant category of political community, but to particular authoritarian forms of the nation.

The second point of this essay is more theoretical. It is common in constructivism and Critical IR theory to argue that nations are constructed through the production of foreign enemies in a clear division of a virtuous inside from a vicious outside. Most discussions of identity in IR theory thus focus on the (often brutal) drawing of boundaries to clearly distinguish the self from the Other. As William Connolly (1991:64) famously wrote, "Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty" (also see Levinas 1989; Neumann 1999). Although the exclusivity of self/Other relations has become an article of faith among many political psychologists, sociological constructivists, and critical IR theorists, national humiliation day texts will help us question this understanding of identity politics because they concentrate their critique on the national self rather than a foreign Other. Rather than only producing an Other, the self here also "Others" itself in a productive and contingent identity politics that allows more space for criticism and resistance. This shift from self to Other to self in identity construction is significant because it refocuses attention away from the border between inside and outside (Walker 1993), to consider how internal debates are also important in constructing identity. Indeed, the resistance generated in these humiliation holiday texts is not to nationalism as a category of identity, but to specific oppressive forms of the nation. The nation thus is generated not just through the state's centralized cultural governance, but also through resistance to this cultural governance.

The first section will examine the background of this secular holy day by putting it into a religious, historical and theoretical context. Although national humiliation day is very much a religious practice, I will trace how it emerged as a timely event to mark the very worldly concerns of contemporary foreign policy crises in secular politics. The second section will examine the temporality of national humiliation day in the double-sense of a secular now-time. While it is now popular to trace how national space emerged as some territorial borders hardened while others were contested (see Anderson 1991:187–192; Thongchai 1994; Shapiro 2004:56–60), this essay will show how the *day* was a singular event that generated *national* identity (out of dynastic, ecclesiastical, local, and transnational identities) through the proclamation and policing of temporal borders. This pastoral governance is interesting because it was part of an emerging logic of sovereignty that addressed the tension between the power of the church and that of the state in the modern practice of sovereignty. The third section will analyze national humiliation sermons delivered in the Church of England and its American cousins to examine how national communities are formed through religious activity, especially when individual pastors interpreted national humiliation day proclamations for their flock. The fourth section will examine resistance within national humiliation discourse to show how the nation is not simply generated by elite schemes or populist patriotism; it also emerged in a critical form through temporal festivals and local sermons that questioned centralized state power.

Like Ringmar's and Inayatullah and Blaney's analysis of how seventeenth century international history helps us understand the workings of the sovereign state in the international system (Ringmar 1996:10, 14; Inayatullah and Blaney 2004),

this essay uses historical examples to argue that the narrative of national salvation and national security embedded in this odd collection of holy days can tell us much about the continual project of national identity construction in international society. This historical context helps us understand the Iraq War's national day of humility, fasting and prayer in 2003 as more than a curious example of American exceptionalism. With this theoretical and historical background, we can understand such events not as exceptions to the rule of secular statehood, but as evidence of the enduring power of the nation as a sacred political community in international space far beyond English and American shores.

Humiliation, Nationalism, and IR Theory

Although humiliation seems rather distant from international politics, a reexamination of the important headlines shows that humiliation is often used to describe key events. On September 11, 2001 the headline for the BBC's Six o'clock News was not "America Attacked," but "America Humiliated." The 2003 invasion of Iraq was understood by Arab intellectuals as their "national humiliation."² The collision of Chinese and American military planes over the South China Sea in April 2001 was seen by both sides as a national humiliation, prompting China to revive its own national humiliation day later in 2001 (Kagan and Kristol 2001; *Zhonghua renmin* 2001:articles 12, 20). When the peace talks in Northern Ireland broke down in 2004, both sides used the language of humiliation. While the Irish Republican Army (IRA) declared that "We restate our commitment to the peace process. But we will not submit to a process of humiliation," a key Unionist politician replied that the IRA itself has "engaged in some of the grossest acts of humiliation against human beings in the last 30 years."³ A Lexis-nexis search yields similar uses of "national humiliation" to describe national crises in Russia, South Korea, Argentina, and so on (also see Mack 2003).

More than just a *description* for headlines, humiliation recently has been used as a *concept* to understand the workings of international organizations and foreign policy, not just in Euro-America but also in China and the Middle East (Harkavy 2000:354, 357; Weisband 2000; Gries 2004:43–53; Callahan 2004a:37–8, 146–154). More to the point, Chinese intellectuals themselves have used the concept of "national humiliation" to understand their diplomatic and military defeats since the nineteenth century; like in Euro-America, recognizing national humiliation is seen as necessary to achieve national salvation in China (Liang 1931; Guo 1996; Cohen 2002; Callahan 2004b).

In most of these cases, people speak of humiliation in the context of war, including civil war. This suggests that the crisis is not just for the national interests of the state, but for national identity itself (see Ringmar 1996:187). Yet rather than defending national identity through positive narratives of "glory, reputation and honor" (Ringmar 1996:191), these examples suggest that national identity—and national salvation—also is produced through negative narratives of humiliation. The oddness of national humiliation day lays bare the contingency of the nation: states and peoples have to work very hard to maintain this unstable community, recalling not just a heritage of past glories but also the humiliations that needed to be overcome for national salvation. As Ozouf (1988:270) wrote about the festivals of the French Revolution, nations are produced according to a "negative logic . . . in a whole enterprise of subtraction and purification." The title of a modern Chinese

² War in the Gulf: Reaction: Arab World Riven by Rage and Despair: Sense of Humiliation and Revenge. *Guardian*, London, April 9, 2003, p. 7 (website read on December 10, 2004).

³ IRA: Willing to Disarm, but photos impossible. *Reuters*, December 9, 2004; DUP Meet Decommissioning chief de Chastelain. *Belfast Telegraph*, December 8, 2004 (websites read on December 10, 2004). (Political humorist Mark Steel (2004:41) comically concluded that humiliation of the IRA was actually the Unionists' main goal.)

history textbook series is telling: “China: from humiliation to glory” (Zhongguo geming bowuguan 1997; also see Guo 1996).

Certainly, the seventeenth century meaning of humiliation, as self-examination and self-contemplation, is different from the modern meaning: hurting someone’s pride. But it shows how words like shame are double-coded as humiliation/humility, in the very modern context of problems of the self. It is noteworthy that humiliation in either sense has been dismissed as “A Monkish Kind of Virtue” by modern European political theorists as different as Hume and Kant because it relies on a hierarchical concept of society. As Button concludes his survey of humility’s conceptual history,

... humility seems to embrace not only a low or diminished assessment of the self, relative to some standard of the good, but humility entails forms of self-curtailement and self-abnegation that can run counter to political freedom (Machiavelli), equal moral standing (Kant), and the preconditions for a self-creating life (Hume and Nietzsche) (Button 2004:19; see also Button 2005: 849–851).

But rather than discarding humility, Button looks to an alternative set of sources in order to rehabilitate a practice of “democratic humility.” Thus humility is a public and civic virtue because it encourages “attentiveness to multiple forms of difference and an acceptance of contingency” (Button 2005:861, 841).

This essay likewise looks to an alternative set of sources to argue that national humiliation day texts can tell us about the very modern problems of identity formation (also see Ringmar 1996). But rather than limit ourselves to an examination of the intellectual history of humiliation and nationalism as ideas (and virtues), it is necessary to see how they emerged through political performances. In addition to considering what people “think,” we must examine what people “do.” In this way, we can see how humiliation discourse is used as a technique for generating national community by both sides of political crises: both pro- and antimonarchy in the English Civil War, pro- and anti-Union in the American Civil War, and pro- and antiwar more generally. Although national humiliation days first emerged to address the peculiar sovereignty crisis of the English Civil War, this technique of producing the nation as the sacred political community has spread far and wide.

Foucault’s concepts of “governmentality” and “pastoral politics” are useful for an analysis of identity performances. Governmentality expands the notion of power from juridical concepts of power that restrict action, to productive understandings of power that are generated by social relationships (Foucault 1982:209). Foucault argues that even though writers like Machiavelli concentrated on the prince and state sovereignty, the “art of government” that developed in response to such state-centric approaches located power in the many relationships that constitute social life:

the practices of government are, on the one hand, multifarious and concern many kinds of people: the head of a family, the superior of a convent, the teacher or tutor of a child or pupil; so that there are several forms of government among which the prince’s relation to his state is only one particular mode; while on the other hand, all these other kinds of government are internal to the state or society Thus we find at once a plurality of forms of government and their immanence to the state; the multiplicity and immanence of these activities distinguishes them radically from the transcendent singularity of Machiavelli’s prince (Foucault 1991:91).

Whereas juridical sovereignty is discontinuous in that it tries to draw a line between the power of the prince and any other form of power, the task of the art of government is to establish continuity between different spaces of activity. Foucault

underlines how this new practice of power emerges from the Christian church, where pastoral politics is

no longer a question of leading people to their salvation in the next world, but rather ensuring it in this world. In this context, the word *salvation* takes on different meanings: health, well-being (that is, sufficient wealth, standard of living), security, protection against accidents. A series of “worldly” aims took the place of the religious aims of the traditional pastorate . . . (Foucault 1982:215).

What I call “pastoral governance” thus does not frame the sacred church and the secular state as rivals, so much as describe how “the function of pastoral power has spread far beyond the church to inform the state’s modes of managing society” (Foucault 1982:214).

Shapiro’s application of these ideas is useful for understanding how pastoral governance unites sacred and secular power in the service of constructing the nation as the hegemonic community. Instead of being a self-evident “fact,” Shapiro (2004:49) sees the nation as a narrative performance: “The nation-state is scripted—in official documents, histories, and journalistic commentaries, among other texts—in ways that impose coherence on what is instead a series of fragmentary and arbitrary conditions of historical assemblage.” Thus rather than taking the nation for granted as an actor in a rational or social calculus, Shapiro examines how it takes on coherence through a cultural governance that expends large amounts of financial and symbolic capital. Indeed, as we will see below, the state and church both have expended considerable resources to proclaim, celebrate and police national humiliation days. While state sovereignty initially relied on “military and fiscal initiatives,” Shapiro (2004:34) argues that by the early modern period these

coercive and economic aspects of control have been supplemented by a progressively intense cultural governance, a management of the dispositions and meanings of citizen bodies, aimed at making territorial and national/cultural boundaries coextensive.

But as the state can never attain complete dominance over cultural production, resistance to these centralizing and homogenizing efforts takes the form of alternative cultural productions: “At the same time, other modalities of writing, for example journals, diaries, novels, and counter-historical narratives—challenge the state’s coherence-producing writing performances” (Shapiro 2004:49; also see Campbell 2003; Dillon 2004).

To understand the pastoral governance of national humiliation days we must examine the “historically constituted character of the categories that we use”—nationalism, sovereignty, and so on—“to see how they emerged in response to specific historical conjunctions and contradictions” (Walker 1993:91–92). National humiliation day comes out of a particular social and political context where late-medieval sacred/secular relations underwent dramatic change. Rather than recounting the noble narrative of the secularization of the state according to the Westphalian model, I argue that this shift also involved the embedded nature of spiritual power that produced a new range of threats and dangers. As Delumeau (1990:1) tells us, late-medieval Europe saw itself as “besieged . . . by a multitude of enemies—Turks, idolaters, Jews, heretics, witches, and so on.” We might expect that European leaders’ “siege mentality” led them to focus on material defence, and that they “would not have had time for much introspection.” But Delumeau’s research shows that “exactly the opposite happened.” From the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries there was an obsessive focus on the nature of sin, which led to “an unprecedented movement toward introspection, and the development of a new moral conscience.” The new danger was not the Other (Turks, idolaters, and so on),

but the “fear of one’s self.” The greatest enemy, according to theologians at the time, was the self because people were seen as inherently weak and sinful because of Original Sin (also see Campbell 1998:49). Thus as bloody wars were raging on the continent, much time and effort was devoted to fighting sin within one’s soul. This strong notion of sin and guilt was popular because of the coincidence of a “pessimistic brand of preaching . . . and a series of vast collective disasters that besieged Europeans from the Black Death to the end of the Wars of Religion” (Delameau 1990:556; also see Schama 1987). This negative preaching entailed a suspicion of the body and the material world that was characteristic of the notion of contempt for the world (*contemptus mundi*), which dominated late medieval and early modern Europe. A host of material dangers thus led to serious self-contemplation.

According to Delumeau (1990:531), sixteenth and seventeenth century England “offers a prime example of a mental system that brought together danger, fear/expectation, and the language of intimidation.” The logic of national humiliation day in the Church of England and Protestant sects in America grows out of the covenant theology that was popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The covenant is an Old Testament concept whereby the Chosen People are joined directly to God, as were the Jews to Jehovah (see Bercovitch 1978; Smith 2003: 44–65). National humiliation sermons characteristically rearticulated the covenant as a way of asserting the English or the Americans as the new Chosen People, who were forging new Israels. Indeed, in England and America, national humiliation sermons narrate how national history emerges from Biblical history through a series of new covenants. The historical lessons of Biblical wars were applied, for example, in 1803 to England’s struggle in the Napoleonic Wars: “a striking resemblance that prevails between our own circumstances, at the present moment, and those into which the ancient Jews were brought by the invasion of the Assyrian conqueror” (Wellbeloved 1803:13; also see Wither 1666; Duffield 1861:32).

According to the covenant, punishment for sins and rewards for piety were not just in the next world, but in this one too. Indeed, in *The Broken Covenant*, Bellah (1992:17) concludes that early America was governed by this “Old Testament notion of the covenant between God and a people held collectively responsible for its actions” (also see Bercovitch 1978; Religion and the Founding 1998). As President John Adams (1798) declared in his proclamation of a national humiliation day, “the safety and prosperity of nations ultimately and essentially depend on the protection and the blessing of Almighty God.” National humiliation days thus became prominent in the context of a new notion of sin, self-examination and covenant theology.

Although the social history of sin sounds distant from contemporary international politics, this obsession with the self’s activities had important consequences for both the rise of the state and the nation. While Ringmar (1996:10) joins other IR theorists in arguing for Westphalia as a founding moment that signified a clean break between sacred and secular order, Campbell and Smith make important arguments about how the state and the nation emerged from religious order *in continuity*, rather than in opposition: rather than a secular state, the result has been a political theology and a sacralized nation. Indeed, while the canonical view of IR theory sees the rise of the modern state as an “edifying tale of modernization” where the disorder of medieval localism is overcome by the centralized territorial state, Campbell (1998:41–42) argues that there is continuity between church-centric and state-centric regimes. With the breakdown of church authority in the late middle ages, “subjects looked to a new order (emerging ‘states’), just as they had looked to the church during the demise of the Roman Empire as a solution for a crisis of social identity” (Campbell 1998:43–44). Moreover, Campbell uses Delumeau’s analysis of sin and danger to argue that the continuity persists: “Danger . . . might therefore be thought of as the new god for the modern world of states, not because it is peculiar to our time, but because it replicates the logic of Christen-

dom's evangelism of fear" (Campbell 1998:50). Fear thus becomes the logic of foreign policy, which is not directed at clear external enemies and definable external dangers, so much as producing an identity politics that distinguishes between domestic and foreign, self and Other. Church and state address problems of security and identity according to a similar political theology: "the state project of security replicates the church project of salvation" (Campbell 1998:50; also see Foucault 1982:215; Schmitt 1985; Fletcher 2004).

In *Chosen Peoples*, Anthony D. Smith (2003:10–11) likewise argues against the prevailing modernist view that sees the nation as a secular category that emerged with post-Enlightenment ideology's repudiation of religious sources of order and identity. Anderson (1991:19, 36), for example, reasons that nationalism emerges when the centralized sacred language and cosmology of universal religious civilizations both "gradually fragmented, pluralized, and territorialized" into particular (i.e., national) languages, histories, and nations. Smith (2003:15, 17), on the other hand, argues that although "nationalism is still a secularizing doctrine," it has taken the "form of a political 'religious surrogate.'" Moreover, in the modern era the covenantal myths of ethnic election, especially in Protestant communities, have demonstrated the "capacity for mobilizing and motivating communities and states, and underpinning a sense of national identity through a sacred communion of the elect" (Smith 2003:77). *Chosen Peoples* thus examines an alternative range of ethnographic sources—including scriptures, chronicles, epics, music, architecture, painting, sculpture, and crafts—"to discover the deeper cultural resources and sacred foundations of national identities" (Smith 2003:18).

Following Smith's lead, the remainder of this essay will examine the emergence of the nation as the sacred political community through an analysis of a unique set of national humiliation texts. I will argue that these texts promote a unified national identity in the curiously negative way of proclaiming, celebrating, explicating, and enforcing a collective national humiliation. These texts are interesting because rather than presenting an intellectual history of the nation, they record how the nation emerged through the activities of the state, the church, and the people as they came together to celebrate dozens of humiliation days in a simultaneous national time.

The Practice of National Humiliation

Since the early seventeenth century, there are records of the Church of England proclaiming special days for humiliation, fasting, and prayer. Such special periods of fasting and prayer for purification, atonement, and contemplation are a common religious event—Yom Kippur, Lent, and Ramadan, for example. Their practice in the Church of England most likely grew out of Catholic monastic rituals. Since the seventeenth century, these days of humiliation, fasting, and prayer were celebrated with a special sort of sermon that developed into a genre called the "fast-sermon," which was delivered to the public in a church service on the fast day (see Trevor-Roper 1964:85–87). The historical record shows how fast days were declared to address specific problems—Biblical chastisements such as fire, pestilence, famine, and war, which were seen as reflecting the nation's bad fortune (see Blacker 1847:14). Days of public humiliation were a special kind of fast day that were proclaimed in "times of crisis" (Trevor-Roper 1964:87). Indeed, a similar practice took place in seventeenth century Holland: "When crises threatened to turn truly apocalyptic, *bededagen* (days of prayer and fasting) were decreed throughout the Republic, and whole congregations prostrated themselves both inside their churches and in the public squares where meetings of hymn and prayer were held" (Schama 1987:15). Thus in the course of the seventeenth century, the meaning of humiliation shifted from being a personal matter of individual sins, to being a collective matter of national humiliation for national sins. Likewise, the focus of

salvation shifted from the individual soul to the nation through an appeal to national security.

These new national sins and national humiliations emerged most dramatically during the English Civil War, where both sides took the existing ritual of fast days of humiliation and prayer and reinterpreted it to address the national fate. In addition to Charles I's prayer book for national humiliation, the Parliament commissioned dozens of special fast-sermons to address the crises of the Civil War.⁴

Humiliation holidays were regulated through a discourse that utilized four types of texts: official proclamations that announced the special day, prayer books that instructed pastors in how to celebrate the day, sermons that explained the meaning of the day, and another set of official proclamations that empowered magistrates to police the day. Initially humiliation holidays were celebrated first in Parliament and Westminster, and then held a few weeks later in the rest of country; but after 1642, they became national events when "Parliament, City, and country would celebrate the fast on the same day" (Trevor-Roper 1964:98). Hence national humiliation days were events that brought the nation together simultaneously in the Church of England in a new and special national time.

Proclamation and Policing

Humiliation holidays were special in their timing. These fast days were not held on Sunday; rather they necessitated a special weekday service. Official proclamations were read in churches to inform the general public of its duty of public humiliation for the nation. People therefore had to take time out of their regular work schedule to contemplate national and personal sins. As well as communal, the ritual was also deliberately very public. As one minister declared, "the nation is called upon . . . [to] publicly acknowledge and confess our national sins" (Blacker 1847:28).

After the middle of the seventeenth century, England's and America's national humiliation days came thick and fast, appearing with increasing frequency in 1642, 1647–1649, 1652, 1666, 1701, 1707, 1739, 1756–1762, 1774, 1776–1778, 1780, 1798–1800, 1803, 1812, 1814, 1832, 1840, 1847, 1854, 1855, 1857, 1861, 1863, and 1865. The first sermon whose title links war and national humiliation is "Times of War, Times for National Humiliation and Repentance," which was delivered to address a crisis in the Second War of Spanish Succession in 1707 (Dawes 1707). The sermon is also interesting because it emphasizes the temporality of the problem and the solution: *times* of war, *times* for national humiliation. In addition to civil wars, the national humiliation days marked England's imperial wars with Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain, France, America, Russia, and India, and America's conflicts with Britain and France. Although a few of these humiliation holidays were commemorative of past events, most national humiliation days marked the horror of ongoing battle because they were organized in response to a current crisis.

National humiliation days thus were not (just) creatures of the church. Rather they were generated in partnership with the state as a mode of pastoral governance that asserted the primacy of national identity in wartime. With an impending naval battle in 1666 of the Second Anglo-Dutch War (whereby England took control of what would soon be New York), "King and people [were] joyned as one in penitence" on a day of national humiliation that was formally announced with a "Royal proclamation" (Wither 1666:3, 21; also see Schama 1987). The title page of the sermon given in 1707 by the Queen's chaplain explains: "Being a Fast-day appointed, for imploring the Continuance of God's Blessing and Assistance on the Arms of Her Majesty and Her Allies, engag'd in the present War, etc." (Dawes

⁴ These were in addition to the monthly fast that was held on the last Wednesday of every month from 1642 to 1649. For a complete list of fast days and the texts of many of the sermons (see Jeffs 1970).

1707). During the Crimean War, a Church of England minister in Dublin preached a special sermon on “April 26, 1854, Being the Day appointed for national humiliation and prayer on account of the war” (Day 1854). Meanwhile, during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln (1863) stated: “I do, by this proclamation, designate and set apart Thursday, the 30th day of April, 1863, as a day of national humiliation, fasting, and prayer . . . [for] the pardon of our national sins, and the restoration of our now divided and suffering country, to its former happy condition of unity and peace.”

The gravity of national humiliation day was policed by officers of both the church and the state. An Act of Parliament in 1649 makes clear that not everyone was enthusiastic about participating in these national humiliation days. This act not only proclaimed a new humiliation holiday, but also “repeal[ed] the former Monethly Fast” that had been “neglected” and “not observed” by the people. A minister’s complaint about the “lukewarm response to this [National Humiliation Day] proclamation” shows that there was similar popular resistance to such pastoral governance two centuries later (An Act for Setting Apart a Day of Solemn Fasting 1649; Blacker 1847:1).

The documents show the fascinating pastoral governance of national humiliation day. On the one hand, the rules of fasting are asserted: people are restricted to “one meal a day except children, old, weak, or sick folk and necessary Harvest-laborers.” On the other, in the spirit of *contemptus mundi*, it specifically forbids pleasures of the flesh “in taverns or alehouses; no pastimes or idleness, lasciviousness, wantonness, drunkenness” (Fast for the Plague 1665). Thus, in addition to requiring the cultivation of spiritual contemplation by “hav[ing] to go to church, . . . Parliament forbids fairs, markets, and servile works,” which are practices of the material world (An Act for Setting Apart the 13th Day of October 1652).

To make sure that these rules were obeyed, there was a “constant stream of orders and ordinances, imposing new burdens of enforcement and new penalties for omission” (Trevor-Roper 1964:102). Proclamations made clear that those who did not observe fast days would be punished, and they gave temporal officials authority to police these religious activities: “all Mayors, Sheriffs, Justices of the Peace, Constables, and other officers, are hereby enjoyned to take special care for the observation of the sayd Day accordingly” (An Act for Setting Apart a Day of Solemn Fasting 1649). Hence, a successful national humiliation day relied on a governance of people’s thoughts and actions by both God and the state.

In general, national humiliation days were exceptional events in both the spiritual and the temporal sense. They were also deeply political; they were proposed by parliament and congress, and proclaimed by monarchs and presidents. They were celebrated in the official chapels of parliament in London, as well as in the chapels of state legislatures of the Confederate States of America during the Civil War (Dawes 1707; Taylor 1757; Tucker 1861; Palmer 1864). In addition to state sanction, they utilized a parallel mode of pastoral governance that employed a network of churches throughout England, and to some extent America. In the English Civil War national humiliation sermons were crucial media outlets for distributing both strategic and tactical messages from Parliament. “Political parsons” were commissioned to float new ideas and policies from the pulpit in their sermons, in what was recognized at the time as party propaganda (Trevor-Roper 1964:85, 102; see the sermons gathered in Jeffs 1970). The state sought to centralize and nationalize its power through, among other things, publishing common prayer books and requiring local pastors to announce national humiliation holidays. The publicity of these proclamations was a powerful form of pastoral governance that not only restricted activity, but also actively generated national identity through the Church of England: “His Majesty hath commandeth all ministers with all possible earnestness to stir up the people” (A Form of Common Prayer 1666; also see An Act

for Setting Apart the 13th Day of October 1652). Indeed, national humiliation days produced the nation by synchronizing the national calendar in nationalized time: after 1642 national humiliation days were celebrated simultaneously throughout England—and since 1776 in America. Hence the proclamation (and then celebration) of national humiliation day integrated local congregations into the nation through a nationalized time.

The last major national humiliation day mourned the death of Abraham Lincoln in 1865, just after the end of the Civil War. Even so, the practice continued to be invoked in times of national crisis. During the Boer War, there was an outcry from the English public for the queen to declare a national humiliation day, which she resisted. During World War I, King George V proclaimed January 3, 1915 as a “Day of Humble Prayer,” while Woodrow Wilson proclaimed May 30, 1918 as a “National Day of Public Humiliation, Prayer and Fasting.” At the depth of the Great Depression in 1931, church leaders called on President Herbert Hoover to follow Lincoln’s lead and “set aside a certain day as a day of national humiliation and prayer.”⁵ Although national humiliation days appeared less and less frequently after the mid nineteenth century, it would be a mistake to see this as the end of this practice. Actually national humiliation day was spreading beyond its Protestant roots, with national humiliation sermons beginning to appear in Jewish temples and Catholic churches in England and America at this time (A Sermon Preached in the Catholic Apostolic Church 1857; Morais 1865).⁶

More importantly, the phrase “national humiliation” continued in a new venue; by the twentieth century, it had largely moved from the old-style mass media of the pulpit to the modern mass media of newspapers. In addition to being a popular phrase in the British press, since the turn of the twentieth century “national humiliation” has been used in *New York Times* editorials to criticize anything from bogus presidential candidates (1896), trade unionism (1904), U.S. imperialism (1916), the Weimar Republic’s constitution (1924), the anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack (1943), the Vietnam War (1979), the Iranian hostage crisis (1980), the Falklands War (1982), the East Asian economic crisis (1997), up to the U.S.–China spy plane collision in 2001, and the poor response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005.⁷ The phrase “national humiliation-*guochi*” is also very popular in the Chinese press both in the early twentieth century and since 1989; some suggest that the style of protest speeches and newspaper editorials grew out of the sermons Chinese students heard in Protestant missionary schools (see Wasserstrom 1991:218).

National humiliation day reappeared in March 2003 when Congress passed a nonbinding resolution that called upon the president to proclaim a “national day of humility, prayer and fasting” to mark the invasion of Iraq. The House version of this resolution “recogniz[ed] the public need for fasting and prayer to secure the blessings and protection of Providence for the people of the United States and our Armed Forces during the conflict in Iraq and under the threat of terrorism at home . . . [while] the United States is currently engaged in a war on terrorism.”⁸ In addition to stressing the need for humility in wartime, the 2003 resolution directly recognizes itself as part of the practice of official national humiliation days going back to the Civil War and the Revolutionary War. Like in earlier times, the purpose of this holiday at crisis times is *national*: “humility, fasting and prayer in times of danger have long been rooted in our essential national convictions and have been a

⁵ National Fast Day Urged on Hoover. *New York Times*, July 27, 1931, p. 12.

⁶ Also see Day of Prayer for the War. *Times*, November 5, 1914.

⁷ *New York Times*. October 18, 1896, January 20, 1904, September 1, 1916, August 12, 1924, December 6, 1943, February 19, 1979, October 22, 1980, April 11, 1982, December 11, 1997, April 7, 2001. The London *Times* archive also includes dozens of editorials and letters to the editor that employ the language of national humiliation in wartime, such as France overcoming the “national humiliation” of surrendering to the German invasion in 1940 (*Times*, February 25, 1944, p. 5).

⁸ 108th Congress, H. Res. 153, March 27, 2003.

means of producing unity and solidarity among all the diverse people of this Nation” In response to this joint resolution, the president extended the title of the already existing National Prayer Day to include “A Day of Gratitude, Fasting and Prayer” when he proclaimed it for May 1, 2003 (Bush 2003). Although National Prayer Day is a “mega-event on the evangelical Christian calendar,” this event also was marked by numerous groups throughout the country including the Orthodox Union, which represents many orthodox Jews.⁹ While the hey-day of national humiliation days has passed, National Prayer Day 2003 shows how the practice of setting aside a special day to contemplate collective sins in wartime persists as a national (and nationalizing) festival. Pastoral governance in the twenty-first century certainly is not limited to the United States; the most prominent antiwar voice in Europe was not French President Jacques Chirac, but Pope John Paul II.¹⁰

Proclamations of national humiliation days from 1642 to 2003 underline the problems of canonical understandings of the nation and the state as modern secular institutions that emerged dramatically from a religious order. Rather than following Anderson’s (1991:11, 33) narrative of nations emerging through a radical shift from sacred to secular through print media, national humiliation day texts suggest that newspaper editorials are a direct outgrowth of political sermons, on the one hand, and that there has been no radical break between sacred and secular identity politics, on the other. These proclamations, which start in the seventeenth century and continue into the twenty-first century, all share not just an invocation of God in politics, but a continual invocation of the nation as the sacred political community. The popularity of this technique, which resulted in the expenditure of considerable financial and symbolic resources over two centuries, is testament to its success in producing national community. National humiliation days thus provide an alternative way of tracing the emergence (and maintenance) of nations in international society.

The Logic of National Humiliation Day

The logic of humiliation holidays is quite simple: when there is a national crisis—usually a war—the state proclaims a day of national humiliation, fasting and prayer in order to humble the nation before God. Through this collective contemplation of national sins, the wrath of God is placated and the crisis resolved, the battle won, and peace and prosperity restored for national salvation. In other words, the observation of humiliation days invokes and produces the nation because it figures both problems and solutions in a nationalized time. As we will see, the criticisms generated in national humiliation sermons do not focus on a foreign Other, so much as on the national self. The worldly struggle between armies is secondary to internal spiritual trials because, for these sermons, war is not an issue of interstate conflict, but a matter of the nation’s very personal relationship with God.

This national narrative is produced in the sermons and prayer books that celebrated days of national humiliation, fasting and prayer. The sermons had titles like “Times of War, Times for National Humiliation and Repentance” (Dawes 1707), “National Humiliation the Best Atonement for National Sins” (Arnold 1739), “National Reformation is the Only Proof of a Due National Humiliation” (Taylor 1757), “National Humiliation and Repentance Recommended, and the Causes of the Present Rebellion in America Assigned” (Cooper 1777), “The Causes and Effects of

⁹ National Day of Prayer to include fasting. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 26, 2003; also see Associated Press, March 26, 2003; Dieu et l’Amerique [God and America (editorial)]. *Le Monde*, March 29, 2003.

¹⁰ The head of the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury who is appointed by the Prime Minister and sits in the House of Lords, is also outspoken on issues of war and peace: one Archbishop supported the invasion of Afghanistan while his successor opposed the Iraq War.

War” (Emerson 1812b), “National Humiliation: A Sermon, with Texts and Hints” (Buckley 1855), “Our National Sins To Be Repented of, and the Grounds of Hope for the Preservation of Our Federal Constitution and Union” (Duffield 1861), “God in the War” (Tucker 1861), and “Patriotism Aiding Piety” (Brainerd 1863). They addressed the increasingly common sovereignty crises of the expanding empire of the United Kingdom, and the founding and preservation of the United States. Once again, the nation is not a stable or preexisting community, but has to be continually invoked through special events.

Rather than simply summarizing the discursive logic of the sermons by pointing to commonalities among sermons across two centuries, I will conduct a close reading of one sermon from the beginning and one from the end of this period: William Dawes’s “Times of War, Times for National Humiliation and Repentance” (1707), and John Buckley’s “National Humiliation: A Sermon, with Texts and Hints” (1855). These two sermons are interesting because they clearly lay out a narrative of sin and salvation, with humiliation as the catalyst that joins the problem with the solution, which is shared by other sermons as well.¹¹

Dawes’s sermon is useful for two reasons. Firstly, as mentioned above, although there were earlier sermons that talked of war, nation and humiliation (Wither 1666; Schama 1987:148–150), Dawes’s 1707 sermon is the first to link them so closely in the service of a state ritual of pastoral governance. Secondly, the sermon is useful because it explains the utility and the necessity of national humiliation through four linked arguments: (1) God inflicts war on nations as punishment for national sins, (2) these sins become even worse in wartime, (3) nations must appeal to God to resolve international conflict, and (4) the issues and events that seem to cause war are secondary to the spiritual strength of the nation (Dawes 1707:4–8).

After listing these four reasons for national humiliation, Dawes elaborates on each. Firstly, he underlines how war and peace are acts of God that are the result of national sin: “Wars are generally sent by God, upon Nations, as Punishments for their Sins . . . *Peace* is always promis’d by God, to his People, as a Reward of their Righteousness and obedience to him” (Dawes 1707:4; also see Arnold 1739; Well-beloved 1803:3; Blacker 1847:6; Day 1854:16). Thus as Delumeau (1990:1–2) argues more broadly this notion of national sin was part of an “evangelism of fear” which asserted a

causal relationship [that] linked the sins of mankind to a variety of collective punishments sent by an irate God. Although bishops and preachers were most active in affirming this connection, they were not alone. Heads of state also considered wars to be a form of celestial chastisement for the faults of the people . . . (also see Schama 1987:139–140)

It is important to underline how after the seventeenth century, the notion of sin was shifted from matters of Original Sin and individual souls to focus on the collective soul of the nation. In 1628, for example, a humiliation holiday sermon to the House of Lords clearly points to individual sins: “It is a time of Lent, or publique Sorrow, over all, or the greatest part of the Christian World, wherein men doe vse to humble themselves, by Fasting, Prayer, Repentence, and all manner of Deuotion, for their sinnes against God” (Williams 1628:4). The transition from individual sin and individual humiliation to national sin and national humiliation took place

¹¹ There are many more national humiliation sermons than those cited in this essay. To consult them see the special collections at the Library of Congress, the British Library, the New York Public Library, Oxford University’s Bodleian Library, the University of Durham Library, and Harvard University’s Houghton Library, Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Widener Library, and Harvard-Yenching Library. I would like to thank the librarians at these institutions for their timely help.

during the English Civil War, with its monthly fast sermons to Parliament (Trevor-Roper 1964:85–87; Jeffs 1970). These sermons asserted a *united* nation just because it was divided by civil war. After the Commonwealth was founded, a day was proclaimed in 1650 to practice “Humiliation for the Sins of the Nation . . . for seeking unto Almighty God for pardoning the Great Sins of this Nation, and for a Blessing upon the councils and endeavours of the Parliament, for the Preservation of this Nation against all the Plots, Designs and Combinations, of the enemies of the Commonwealth” (Jeffs 1970, Vol. 33:8–9).

But importantly, this *nationalization* of humiliation survived the radical political preaching of the Commonwealth. With Restoration in 1660, the practice was utilized by “the enemies of the Commonwealth” (i.e., the Royalists) to proclaim a national humiliation day to commemorate the execution of Charles I in 1649 (see Hampton 1661). The new king, Charles II, was particularly active in ordering his subjects to set aside “a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation, to implore the mercies of God, that it would please him to pardon the trying sins of the Nation” when England suffered Biblical chastisements such as the Plague and the Great Fire of London (Charles 1666:1–2). Thus sins were no longer just the responsibility of individual souls, as they had been for humiliation days in the early seventeenth century. Toward the end of the seventeenth century, the discourse of sin and chastisement had expanded significantly to focus on the nation: national sins provoked war as national chastisement.

In America, the notions of sin and humiliation were nationalized in a different way. In England national humiliation days were centrally proclaimed and celebrated. Although the church was not centralized in colonial America, that does not mean that it was not involved in generating communities through pastoral governance. Rather, the Jeremiad tradition in the early colonial period produced political sermons to mark public events; these sermons addressed the issues of the day in order to arouse congregations in political communities of faith (Bercovitch 1978:3–10). Religion and politics therefore interacted at the local level. Likewise, because the government of the colonies was not centralized, it was common for individual colonies to declare their own days of humiliation.¹² Indeed, some states bucked the trend that saw the gradual secularization of state rituals, and thus the demise of national humiliation days after the American Civil War: “New Hampshire continued as the sole state to have Fast Day as a legal holiday until 1991, when Fast Day fell to the new Civil Rights Day” (Gilbreth 1997).

The transition from colony rituals to national rituals, not surprisingly, came with the American Revolution. In 1774, the Virginia House of Burgesses declared a day of humiliation in support of the people of its “Sister Colony of Massachusetts Bay” when London closed Boston harbor as punishment for the Boston Tea Party. The Burgesses sought “devoutly to implore the divine Interposition for averting the heavy Calamity, which threatens Destruction to our civil Rights, and the Evils of civil War” (Wythe 1774). Two years later, proclamations were expressed in more national terms: Congress proclaimed May 17, 1776 as a “day of Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer” throughout the colonies (Religion and the Founding 1998). Humiliation days also were clearly national events during the American Civil War: both the North and the South proclaimed numerous national humiliation days as a way of asserting the unified sovereignty of a divided nation (Duffield 1861:11; Handy 1861:15; Tucker 1861; Elliott 1863; Palmer 1864). Hence, Dawes’s invocation of national sin as the cause for war summarizes the radical shift from early seventeenth century notions of sin and community: from Original Sin and the individual souls in many congregations to national sin as divine judgment of the national community.

¹² See A National Thanksgiving. *New York Times*, November 23, 1890, p. 17; David D. Kirkpatrick. Putting God Back into American History. *New York Times*, February 27, 2005, pp. 4.1, 4.4.

Dawes's second argument for national humiliation warns that sin actually increases in "times of war" because the "looseness and licentiousness" of warfare will corrupt the home country as well as the warriors themselves (Dawes 1707:4). Hence, the sin that is the source of war becomes even more of a threat to the nation in the course of war. Dawes goes on to describe how once the governors of the nation are distracted by the waging of foreign war,

Subjects are but too ready to take advantage of this, . . . and to indulge themselves to the full in all that Wickedness and Licentiousness, . . . And both thus join'd make that worst of Plagues, the Plague of Wickedness . . . [a] great corruptness of Manners (Dawes 1707:5–6).

To address this resistance, Dawes enjoins both sacred and secular "Governors" to be even more vigilant against the sin of their nation during wartime (also see Cappe 1780). Indeed, a listing of sins of the flesh is very common in other national humiliation day sermons, as it was in the proclamations (see Handy 1861:11; Brainerd 1863:19).

In addition to bad manners, Dawes also lists political sins against the Governors: "All Sins of Sedition, Undutifulness, Disrespect, or even Coldness and Indifferency, towards Governors." As Dawes assumes that Governors are acting for the "common good," no loyal opposition is possible because all criticism "give[s] Hopes and Advantage to the Enemies" (1707:13). As Cooper (1777:23) likewise concluded in December 1776 about the growing rebellion in America, "were it not for our Divisions at home, our colonies abroad would never have DARED *insult* us." Hence Dawes here describes what could be called a "nationalization of criticism" that moves from spiritual sin to temporal sedition: from the sin of taking the Lord's name in vain, to the sedition of criticizing national leaders.

Pastoral governance here expands from the surveillance of people's activities on the special day set aside for national humiliation, fasting, and prayer to entail both a continual surveillance by ecclesiastical and secular "Governors," and more importantly a continual self-examination of individual and collective action. Hence, as Delumeau argues more generally, a continual self-examination and self-governance—under the direction of governors—is necessary. National humiliation day is one of the important events on this calendar of endless self-examination and pastoral governance. Yet, it is important to note that these sermons' criticisms do not focus on a foreign Other, so much as on the national self.

Dawes's third argument for the necessity of national humiliation is that "War is an Appeal to God, praying [to] him to shew himself as Sovereign Judge between Nation and Nation, and to determine the Controversies, that are betwixt them" (1707:6–7). In addition to quoting Biblical texts to argue for sacred sovereignty, he deploys Grotius's *Prolegom de Jure & Pacis* to argue that God as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" is the court of final appeal for interstate conflict (Dawes 1707:7). The idea of God as the highest political leader is invoked throughout the discourse of national humiliation sermons; indeed, temporal leaders are often told to cede their authority to the Heavens for a curious antipolitics (see Arnold 1739:5, 12; Emerson 1812a:3; Buckley 1857:6; Handy 1861:9; Hawley 1866:5).

Dawes's fourth argument for the necessity of national humiliation develops the idea of God as Governor to explain the causes of war:

The Issues and Events of War are of the last Importance to any Nation: and consequently it stands every Nation, engaged in War, in more than ordinary stead, to be careful so to behave itself, . . . [because] the Smiles and Frowns of Providence, upon them, may probably signify nothing less, than lasting Peace, Security, and Happiness, or total Ruin and Destruction (Dawes 1707:8).

Hence war is not about temporal events. It is *not* an issue of political or economic struggles, the strength of political leadership, or even the morality of “just war” (Buckley 1855:6). Although Dawes’s sermon to Queen Anne was provoked by a current foreign policy crisis—a battle in the Second War of Spanish Succession—it only talks about that conflict in the most general terms (see Dawes 1707:8). Indeed, among the dozens of national humiliation sermons preserved in the archives, only a few describe the current historical events of the specific war (see Abercrombie 1798; Cooper 1777:2; Dana 1799:35). They are the exceptions that prove the rule of indifference to the historical details of the war in question.

The temporal struggles between men [sic] are secondary to spiritual trials because war is not an issue of interstate conflict or international crisis, but a matter of the nation’s very personal relationship with God. One might assume that national humiliation sermons would assert that God is on one’s side, in the sense of nationalizing God against a foreign enemy. But that is not the case. The main enemy or ally is not another nation, but God himself. As Dawes (1707:9) tells us, “what a terrible thing it is, for any Nation, to have God as enemy in its Wars.” The way to win a war is not through material strength or strategic sophistication, but through penitence to God for national sins, and making the “Nation to behave it self humbly.” The 2003 House Resolution likewise calls upon Americans to use the special day to look at the failings in their own everyday life, rather in a foreign enemy, and “to seek guidance from God to achieve a greater understanding of our own failings and to learn how we can do better in our everyday activities, and to gain resolve in meeting the challenges that confront our nation.”¹³

According to Dawes, sincere national humiliation is necessary to cleanse national sin, and thus ensure a victorious outcome of the war. Moreover, because the cause of the crisis is a nation’s relationship with God, the opposing force on the battlefield is not necessarily transformed into the enemy-Other. Many of those who deliver national humiliation day sermons go out of their way to caution against pursuing revenge against the current military enemy, for vengeance is seen as a national sin. These pastors look forward to quickly reestablishing friendship with enemy nations (Wither 1666:28–9; Emerson 1812b:5, 16; Buckley 1857:7–8).

A century and a half later in 1855, Buckley even more clearly makes the linkage between *reasons* for national humiliation, *acts* of national humiliation, and *results* of national humiliation. Like Dawes, Buckley sees war as “a judgment of God” for national sins. National humiliation is the way to cleanse these sins: “The visitation of war, then, is a reason, generally, for national humiliation; and that, without particular reference to the justice or injustice of the cause for which war has been entered upon. It is a general judgment of Almighty God for the sin of man” (Buckley 1855:6).

As the reason for war is national sin, an act of national humiliation is necessary: national fasting and prayer. Like in many other national humiliation sermons (Wither 1666:20; Cooper 1777:4; Moore 1812:3; Handy 1861:11), Buckley (1855:9) draws upon the Biblical example of the city of Nineveh to argue that the nation must be sincere in its humiliation—or face horrible divine punishment in the material world. Although humiliation and fasting are focused on a special day, self-contemplation on one day is not enough; eternal vigilance and pastoral governance are necessary. Buckley recalls Nineveh’s story to warn his flock to be sincere in its humiliation. The people of Nineveh atoned by fasting, wearing sackcloth and sitting in ashes (see Jonah 3:3–8)—but they were humble for only a short period before reverting to their corrupt and sinful ways. Once God saw this hypocrisy, he punished them *collectively*, obliterating the entire city “generation after generation” (Blacker 1847:12). Hence Buckley tells the nation that “We should

¹³ 108th Congress, H. Res. 153, March 27, 2003.

meekly search for our national sins,” in “acts of humiliation” that not only “judge ourselves,” but serve to “lower ourselves in our own sight” (Buckley 1855:10–12). Like Dawes, he warns “do not take national blessings for granted” (Buckley 1855:11).

The *results* of national humiliation for Buckley are clear: “Almighty God will protect us from any greater perils and perils of the future . . . God will graciously bestow upon us again the inestimable blessings of peace” (Buckley 1855:12, 14). Other sermons have a similar understanding of the power of national humiliation for peaceful IR. A sermon for the Crimean War states that “Humiliation [is] confessing sins before God, and seeking their forgiveness. . . as might restore us again to a solid and substantial peace” (Day 1854:6). Likewise in 1739 Arnold preached (1739:5): “By National Humiliation I understand such Times and Seasons, as are wisely set apart for the most Solemn Acts of Prayer, and Fasting; to deprecate the Divine Wrath, and implore his Almighty Protection for the Future. The Sins of the Nation cannot be atoned but by National Repentance.” Lincoln (1863) also proclaimed national humiliation for “the pardon of our national sins, and the restoration of our now divided and suffering country, to its former happy condition of unity and peace.” Hence the linkage between national sin, national humiliation, and national salvation is strong in the narrative invoked by national humiliation day. The observation of humiliation days thus produces the nation as it figures both problems and solutions in a “nationalized” time. Although the nation is not a stable thing, it is invoked and promoted through public rituals such as national holy days.

Certainly, we could see this as but one more example of the state instrumentally recruiting sources of symbolic power (religious and national icons) to assert sovereignty and gain legitimacy: nationalizing God and religion in the official Church of *England* is a key example of this mode of pastoral governance. But relying exclusively on this understanding of power significantly narrows the range of political possibility as the nation emerges as the hegemonic identity form. As I will argue in the next section, national humiliation day and its sermons also provide opportunities for resistance through self-examination and critical commentary that were an important part of the growth of popular media and popular politics. As we will see, this is a curious resistance because it does not resist the nation as a category of identity, so much as call for a more just and participatory national community. Hence, even in resistance, the nation is asserted as the primary political identity on national humiliation day.

Pastoral Governance and Resistance

The national humiliation day proclamations and sermons examined above suggest that pastoral governance has not been completely successful. Recall that legislators and ministers both complained about a lack of enthusiasm among the political and religious flock, who either “neglected” the special holiday or gave it only a “lukewarm response” (An Act for Setting Apart a Day of Solemn Fasting 1649; Blacker 1847:1). Indeed, at various times, the congregations needed to be “stirred up” (An Act for Setting Apart the 13th Day of October 1652; A Form of Common Prayer 1666).

But national humiliation days generated resistance not just through a popular avoidance of the required rituals, but also through a very enthusiastic use of national humiliation days to question the rallying of the nation for war. As the problem is not with the enemy on the battlefield, but with the nation’s personal relationship with God, the enemy is not necessarily transformed into radical Otherness (Wither 1666:28–29; Emerson 1812b:5, 16; Buckley 1857:7–8). Indeed, the national humiliation day sermons provided a special time for critique. As local interpretations

of the central edicts that proclaimed the humiliation holiday, they were outside the direct discursive control of the state and church.

The sermons therefore show how humiliation holidays help us question our understanding of the relation of self/Other and domestic/foreign in ways that challenge critical IR theory's criticism of the Westphalian system. The canonical view stresses the interstate tolerance of the Westphalian model: after the Thirty Years War, they tell us, religious pluralism was allowed, at least at the state level. Critical IR theorists, on the other hand, argue that the Westphalian system entailed the deployment of a new mode of *intolerance* within states. As Blaney and Inayatullah (2000:32) explain: "the Peace was an attempt to formally contain difference within states so as to avoid the destruction of international war. The price of this move was to sanctify the continuation of conquest, purification, and conversion within a ruler's realm." They argue that religious debates between Protestant and Catholic princes provided the background of and the justification for the shift from allowing difference within the domestic realm before Westphalia to excluding difference as foreign Otherness in an "evangelism of fear" with its "purifying hatred" in the Westphalian system (Campbell 1998:49; Blaney and Inayatullah 2000:38; Inayatullah and Blaney 2004:21–45). Shapiro (2004:126) reminds us that the romantic narratives of nation building are necessarily linked to (the often hidden) practices of nation destroying, especially of indigenous peoples. Blaney and Inayatullah suggest that we address the problem of the self's exclusion of the Other by looking for connections between the self and the Other. Indeed, they find hope in the Other as an "external representation of a disturbing internal doubt . . . [that] also is a resource for self-reflecting, learning, and designing arrangements for peaceful co-existence" (Blaney and Inayatullah 2000:55, 56).

This analysis of the Westphalian system raises important questions about the often-violent consequences the rise of the nation-state in the states system. I argue that the national humiliation sermons add to this analysis by pointing to a more subtle and complex relation of self and Other that does not rely on simply reversing the valence of self and Other (also see Neumann 1999:1–37). Instead of nationalizing Otherness and locating it as an enemy (or a savior) on the outside, a close examination of the sermons shows that they are not simply diatribes against evil foreigners. Although the proclamations instructed ministers to "stir up" their congregations, the faithful were not necessarily mobilized against external enemies. Rather, many of the national humiliation sermons stir up their congregations by making an enthusiastic critique of triumphal patriotism. In 1840, a prominent minister in Boston used his humiliation holiday sermon to "speak of public, state, or national affairs," as a way of "speak[ing] truth to power" during a conflict between England and America (Wither 1666; Church 1812). Indeed, an early humiliation holiday prayer book is actually a *satire* of the Parliament's fast day sermons in the English Civil War (A New Booke 1647).

Many of the sermons quite directly question the value of war for the nation. Some English sermons lament the destructive waste of "alienating America" in the Revolutionary War (Cappe 1780:27; Walker 1784:23–4). Many American sermons are likewise antiwar (see Church 1812; Emerson 1812b). Moore concluded that the War of 1812 had "no just cause," because the British government had corrected its illegal trade policies even before the war was declared (1812:15). Moreover he saw this war as an example of the vanity of the American public who were greedy for more territory (i.e., Canada) (Moore 1812:10). Emerson likewise criticizes the War of 1812 as a waste that would have disastrous "effects on property, religion and morals, happiness and lives of the nation." He agrees with Moore that "Canada is not profitable to us . . . war is bad for trade [and is] worst to religion and morals" (Emerson 1812b:10, 11). During an Anglo-American conflict in 1840, Pierpont criticizes the growing British and American empires, which saw the "freest and most enlightened [nations] . . . now both desolating God's earth thru conquest,

wars, drunks" (1840:10). During the Boer War, a letter to the London *Times* cautions that

A day of national humiliation ought not to be appointed lightly. . . . Surely there is something unspeakably mean in thus ignoring God in regard to our unparalleled national prosperity and power, and turning to Him only because our pride is hurt by some military reverses which possibly ought never to have been suffered. Let us by all means have a day of national humiliation, but let it be appointed on grounds which will appeal to the conscience of the nation.¹⁴

Hence even when sermons (and then media commentaries) are antiwar, they are not antination; rather, they redefine the national objectives (i.e., conquering America in 1780, Canada in 1812, empire in 1840, South Africa in 1900) as national sins that themselves call for national humiliation. In this way the English and American sermons debate the shape and style of their nations, as well as the content of their national covenant. Even in resistance to war, they still stress the nation as the proper sacred political community.

The latest national humiliation day, proclaimed in 2003 at the height of the Iraq War, generated resistance that likewise took a national form. Certainly, National Prayer Day was criticized as a violation of the constitutional separation of church and state; others felt that this public holiday risked reinforcing the view that the war on terrorism is actually a war on Islam (see Ackerman 2003). But like in early modern times, religious leaders responded to a national crisis of war by declaring a special humiliation holiday: the *National Council of Churches* proclaimed Monday January 27, 2003 as its own "national day of prayer and fasting for a peaceful resolution to the Iraq crisis." This day was announced at a key moment in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq, just before Hans Blix's report to the Security Council and George W. Bush's State of Union speech. Protestant church leaders enjoined all people of faith to "fast, pray for peace, and search for alternatives to war."¹⁵ Moreover, once Congress passed its resolution declaring a humiliation holiday, another group of citizens petitioned the president to proclaim an alternative national holiday—the *National Day of Reason*.¹⁶ Thus instead of using reason to criticize the link between religion and politics, this petition reproduced the pastoral governance of national humiliation day: it was similar in form to the congressional resolution calling for a national day of humility, prayer, and fasting. Once again, even resistance to humiliation holy days reproduces the logic of a national community invoked according to national time. Moreover, this debate in 2003 shows the persistence of a political theology that produces modernity more generally in the sense of rationality not replacing the myths of religion so much as being mobilized to support salvatory notions of security and the nation as a sacred political community.

Not surprisingly, sermons that generate resistance follow much the same logic as Dawes' and Buckley's pastoral governance sermons, but with a more critical twist. While Dawes worries about the temptations of wartime corrupting the manners of the common people, in 1780 a preacher used the same logic when he worried about the national sin of war as leading to a "time of temptation of rulers to encroach

¹⁴ Robert Anderson. (1900) A Day of Humiliation or Intercession (letter to the editor). *Times*, January 3, p. 10; also see Dunraven (1899) The War in South Africa (letter to the editor). *Times*, December 26, p. 5.

¹⁵ January 27—a day of fasting for peace. Witherspoon on the web, www.witherspoon.org/02-12/day_of_prayer.htm, January 24, 2003.

¹⁶ For the petition asking the president to declare a "National Day of Reason" see <http://www.nationaldayofreason.org/ndrproc.html>. (Accessed on August 8, 2005.) The homepage of this National Day of Reason website is also interesting. Also see Associated Press, March 26, 2003; National Day of Prayer to include fasting. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 26, 2003; also see National Day of Fasting and Prayer? October 18, 2002, <http://www.expertclick.com/NewsReleaseWire>. (Accessed on December 10, 2004.)

upon the rights and privileges of their own subjects . . . [and thus] establish tyranny” (Cappe 1780:28–29). Hence with a slight twist, arguments supporting pastoral governance can become resistance to that very governance. It is important to note that resistance sermons in both England and America are delivered and often published locally, outside of the center of power.

Hence, these texts show how the nationalization process works to produce the self more than alienate the Other: sermons locate the fault for war in national sins. Instead of this new concern being simply a “fear of oneself” as Delumeau argues, the self-examination that national humiliation entails can also be quite edifying, entailing a mode of resistance to pastoral governance. In this way, national humiliation sermons serve as an example of going beyond what Blaney and Inayatullah describe as the dualistic splitting of self/Other and the resulting Westphalian deferral of the problem of difference (see Inayatullah and Blaney 2004:11, 44). Rather than looking for hope in the Other as they suggest (2004:219–22), the national humiliation sermons show a fruitful ambiguity about the self where difference is not necessarily transformed into Otherness. Because the war arises out of the self’s national sin, enemy nations can be quickly converted back into friends. Like fear, humiliation has two sides: it is not just destructive of difference (i.e., humiliating). It also can be salutary for a complex practice of (humble) national identity that “thanks to introspection, open[s] treasures locked deep within ourselves” in what Button calls democratic humility (Delumeau 1990:555; Button 2005). In this way, national humiliation texts show that humility can be a political virtue that resists the homogenizing effects of pastoral governance. Yet even in their resistance to particular wars, these critical national humiliation sermons still stress the nation as the sacred political community.

Conclusion: Governance, Time, and Identity

This detailed examination of the pastoral governance of national humiliation days provides an alternative way of tracing the emergence of national identity in international society; rather than focusing on the issues of space and the territorial state in the Westphalian system, these curious holidays show how time and national identity are also key issues. Although humiliation holidays at first might seem to be an odd exception to the rule of the gradual secularization of the state, on closer examination they are evidence of a continuity between church-centric and state-centric regimes in the production of the nation. Through an analysis of a cache of national humiliation day texts, the essay has argued that the production of the nation is not just a creative act in domestic space; it emerges through timely festivals that celebrate negativity in wartime. National humiliation day is very much a religious practice; but this essay has shown how it is also a timely event that marks the very worldly concerns of contemporary foreign policy crises; the state and church both expended considerable material and symbolic resources to proclaim, celebrate and police these special days. National humiliation days thus share not just an invocation of God in politics, but the continual invocation of the nation as the sacred political community. This pastoral governance is interesting because it was part of an emerging logic of sovereignty that addressed the tension between the power of the church and that of the state. America’s national day of humility, fasting and prayer in 2003 thus is not the exception to the rule of secular statehood, as much as a confirmation of the rule of pastoral governance in twenty-first century politics. Pastoral governance is active beyond Protestant politics of the Church of England and its offshoots: it is part of the modernity more generally in the sense that (national) security joins the sacred and the secular in the pursuit of (national) salvation.

National humiliation day is one of the important events in the calendar of endless self-examination and pastoral governance that continually produces the nation as

the hegemonic community (see Ozouf 1988). The concept of national sin and the practice of national humiliation emerged during the English Civil War, where both sides took the already existing ritual of the fast day of humiliation and prayer and reinterpreted it to address the national fate. This practice then flourished for two centuries through sermons that were both pro- and antimonarchy, pro- and antiwar, and pro- and anti-Union, and continues into the twenty-first century through National Prayer Day. The proclamation and celebration of national humiliation day thus was not instrumentally used as the tool of any specific ideology—other than the ideology of nationalism itself. The oddness of national humiliation day confirms the contingency of the nation: states and peoples have to work very hard to maintain this unstable community, recalling not just a heritage of past glories but also the humiliations that need to be overcome for national salvation.

National humiliation sermons can help us chart how political identity shifted first from a central focus on the Monarch representing the people to the populous representing the nation, and secondly from nations defined as people (i.e., Israelites), to nations produced through the structures and institutions of the nation-state (i.e., the established church). Indeed, these sermons show how history itself shifted from Biblical to national. In England this was very much a state-led process of cultural governance. During the English Civil War, Parliament used its monthly fast-sermons for very partisan purposes, where “political parsons” spread propaganda through the most effective news media of the time, the pulpit.

In America, the pulpit was more of a decentralized popular forum of debate. National humiliation days were more participatory, with sermons coming more from the periphery than from the center. As Robert Bellah (1992:53–56) argues, the sermon has a “deep American tradition” as a popular form of expression that informs both local communities and national consciousness; this continued into the late twentieth century through Protestant preachers such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. While most English national humiliation sermons continued to be centralized activities up to 1857, in America the discourse demonstrated a tension between official presidential decrees from the center and the critical commentary of sermons from the periphery. In this way, national humiliation days were political events that sanctioned a critical consideration of the national soul in a public arena. Sermons were among the first political texts and rituals directed at the masses; they were produced by local intellectuals, and published by local presses for a local audience. Indeed, as oral texts sermons were precursors of the postliterate age of the electronic media. National humiliation thus was part of the production of popular politics as well as the modern nation.

Humiliation holidays also complicate our understanding of the relation of self/Other and domestic/foreign. The canonical view stresses the interstate tolerance of the Westphalian model, and critical views argue that the Westphalian system instituted a new and more radical mode of intolerance. Yet, the national humiliation texts demonstrate a more subtle and complex relation of self and Other. Instead of nationalizing Otherness and locating it as an enemy on the outside, a close examination of the sermons shows that they also serve to resist the conversion of difference into Otherness through productive self-criticism.

Lastly, this essay has argued that it is important to examine how the imagined community of the nation emerges not just through grand events and founding documents, but through the pastoral governance of public rituals in localities that are joined together in simultaneous national time. These rituals may be initiated in the center, as part of pastoral governance, but the national humiliation day sermons clearly demonstrate how pastoral governance also generates local resistance, even in times of war and national crisis. This resistance arises through courageous and timely reinterpretations of just what the “nation” and the “humiliation” mean, and so aids in the production of a more contingent and ambiguous community.

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