

Editorial

The connections between early modern culture and nationalism have been under forceful scrutiny in the recent past. Postcolonial movements, the emergence of regional identities, postmodern thought, and forces of globalization have likely weakened the image of nations as a necessity, and as the most perfect political organization for human society. Besides, early modern studies have increasingly contested and nuanced the belief that nations mostly sprang from the Enlightenment: nationalism manifests itself in a wide range of manners in early modern literature, culture, and institutions. The imposed occupation of the Low Countries had as an outcome the creation of a national sentiment. Monarchic plays, which have been considered part of the institutional propaganda, could harbor humanistic ideas that foresaw the nations-to-be. Captivity accounts reflect upon complex processes of acceptance of the weakness of the Crown, and the ambivalences of social reinsertion after slavery, apostasy, and sexual abuse. In colonial accounts, the myth of the Amazonian warriors was often represented as lurking within the borders of the Empire; nowadays the Amazonians travel through the United States' political symbols, changing meanings and clothes. These are just some of the many manifestations of the influences that early modern Iberian literatures had, and have today, on the discussions about the nation's representations, symbols, and ideology.

Kimberly C. Borchard, from the point of view of colonial literature, makes a compelling study of Amazonian symbols and representations in today's political climate of the United States. She connects political statements, websites, official seals, etc. with the colonial representations of the Amazons in a number of early modern colonial texts from different traditions that conformed the beginnings of the history of North America.

George A. Thomas, departing from the idea that books and presses have a political bearing in the creation of nations, explains how Dutch fashion books encrypted both a nationalistic ferment against Spanish despotism and military intervention. The long confrontation between the Habsburgs and the Low Countries, which has been very well documented in many history books, shaped to surprising limits the national sentiment, propaganda, and discourse. If in the *comedia* concerned with *Flandes* wars and occupation this can be attested, as Tracy C. Morey, Veronika Ryjik, and

many others have defended in recent books, George A. Thomas shows us that on the other side of the war the situation was similar.

Matthew Stroud analyzes the question of negative representations of royal figures in the *Comedia* and their meaning in the construction of individuals and nations. Stroud's conclusion is that humanistic thinking is bred through the so-called monarchic plays, as much as Erasmus's ideas paved the way for eighteenth century revolutionary ideas about the nation, democracy and the individual.

For Gregory Baum, Platonic concepts and commentaries on metamorphosis can be linked to the representation of amity and enmity between nations. The representations of the national projects in Spain and England—in opposition as history and philosophy are going to show during the seventeenth century and the Enlightenment—are very pertinent in the inquiry into nationalism in early modern culture. Gregory Baum examines the meaning of *Harmonia*, *discordia*, as well as *discordia concors*, in the representations of Spanish and British individuals in “La española inglesa.”

Julien J. Simon brings us a discussion about genre's limits and fluidities in literary formats such as la *novela dialogada* in the *picaresca* and *celestinesca*, two genres profoundly linked to the Spanish image and criticism.

The four books reviewed in this volume complement as many perspectives on early modern nationalism and culture. These books reflect on women's power in terms of intellectual creativity during the rein of Juan II, which, incidentally, was the environment in which queen Isabella—creator of many aspects of the early modern national institutions—was educated. Captivity accounts are studied as a literary genre that connects with today's massive migration movement that shakes the European Community, and the United States' borders, and territorial claims. The anthology on material objects in literature reminds us of the imposing presence of objects and their markets in our literatures, and therefore in the creation of imagined communities that sustain nations, as well as transform and destroy them.

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