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Postprint / Postprint

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

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### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Armstrong, K. (2005). Rhetorical nationalisms. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 8(1), 84-100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549405049494>

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# Rhetorical nationalisms

## *Internal and external relations*

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**ABSTRACT** The international news during the summer of 2004 was full of ethnic fighting and a 'war on terrorism' that reached around the world. These events raise again the topic of nationalism. Using examples of rhetorical nationalism from two cases, Finland and the United States, this article examines these two distinct expressions of nationalism, how they are based on differing systems of valuation and on whether the message is directed to internal or external relations. Internally-directed nationalism may result in ethnic fighting but it is usually territorial, while externally-directed nationalism has global repercussions.

**KEYWORDS** *Finland, nationalism, political rhetoric, USA*

**During the summer** of 2004, the international news was full of ethnic fighting and a 'war on terrorism' that reached around the world. More locally, people in Finland were remembering a war that ended 60 years ago (in June 1944) with the loss of the territory of Finnish Karelia to the Soviet Union. All this talk of war raises the topic of nationalism and how it is presented in political rhetoric. In recent years, ethnic nationalism has been the focus of critical attention, especially because of ethnic cleansing and genocide in such places as Rwanda, Bosnia and now the Sudan. Here, I look at how the language about homeland in two cases, Finland and the United States, opens questions about current expressions of nationalism. By contrasting two distinct expressions of nationalism and their differing systems of valuation, my intention is to highlight the importance of the direction of the respective messages.

Looking at talk about one's home and homeland provides an opportunity for thinking about nationalism.<sup>1</sup> In particular, I will look at the direction of the nationalist message, following an old but still relevant classification made by Aira Kemiläinen (1964). Kemiläinen studied the origins of the concept of nationalism and changes in thinking about



nationalism, particularly in Europe. She pointed out that there were two basic views of nationalism in the early 20th century (1964: Chapter VI). In both cases, nationalism is linked to ideas about territory and sovereignty. According to one view, the nation is a group of people who form a state by social contract and usually this is a democracy. In the other view, a group of people – a *Volk* – defines itself as being similar, with a common origin and usually a common language. The first type – often associated with England, France and the US – often has been seen as more positive and democratic, whereas the second – often identified with Germany, Eastern Europe and non-Western places – has been seen in a more negative light as the source of conflict between ethnic groups and even totalitarianism (Kemiläinen, 1964). More importantly, Kemiläinen argues that, whichever types of nationalism and classifications are used, nationalisms differ in one essential way: whether they are directed *inward* or *outward* (Kemiläinen, 1964). When nationalism is directed inward, it is about the internal relations of the nation, developing national consciousness and territorial sovereignty. When nationalism is directed outward, it is attached to a sense of mission that leads to external policies, such as the ‘white man’s burden’ in the 19th century (Kemiläinen, 1964) and, following a later distinction made by Louis Dumont (1994), to notions of universal sovereignty.<sup>2</sup> Kemiläinen concludes that to be nationalistic is not unusual, but one has to make careful distinctions between different kinds of nationalism. The rise of national consciousness was a common phenomenon all over Europe. In some sense, then, nationalism can be rather normal. But when nationalism is associated with mission, it defines an ‘other’ and works to reform or make that other into its own image. In this case, nationalism moves out of the national community and this, of course, has repercussions for other national communities, ranging from development to war.

In the two cases used here, a national tragedy occurred (the evacuation and loss of Finnish Karelia and the death and destruction resulting from the September 11 attacks), but the tragedies led to distinctively different circulating narratives about the homeland after the event. The cases are used to contrast the construction of these circulating narratives;<sup>3</sup> they are not intended to be definitive statements about nationalism in either country.

## Two ‘we’ groups

The narratives about Karelia from Finland, my first example, are from a small country with a history of emphasizing national culture, where Karelia was a significant region within that discourse.<sup>4</sup> These narratives about home are inward – about Karelia, Finland and the experience of being Finnish – and are constructed through metonym and metaphor. Here, the homeland is a place that is connected to a social structure and a

known, referential 'we' group (cf. Armstrong, 2004). The emphasis is on a claim to place, on belonging, especially in light of the forced diaspora from Karelia. Although Karelia is a special circumstance, the style of the narratives is typical of the nation-building nationalism that characterized Finland in the early 20th century.<sup>5</sup> A similar focus on place can probably be found in other countries, especially those which emphasize their cultural traditions.

The second example is from the US, chosen because it is my homeland by birth and a central actor in world events at the moment. The US, of course, has a very different history. Here, one contemporary version of nationalist talk is meant to unify an ethnically diverse group and to spread a message. The sample campaign speech by President George W. Bush (2004)<sup>6</sup> about the homeland is an outward message that depicts the homeland not as a place, but as an acting subject in the world with values that are assumed to be universally shared.

Analyses of place or nation (and nationalism) often ignore, in Roman Jakobson's (Jakobson and Halle, 1956: 61) phrase, the 'bipolarity' of language found in contiguity and substitution. Jakobson writes that in speech one topic may lead to another through their contiguity or similarity. He finds that different styles are preferred for different genres,<sup>7</sup> for example, in poetry metaphor predominates while in realistic prose the metonymic (synecdochic details) is predominant. Further, he argues, a researcher handles metaphor more easily because research itself is interpretative, whereas metonymy 'easily defies interpretation' (1956: 81). Jakobson's distinction is relevant for Karelia because memory is at heart a metonymic system, based as it is on loci (see Yates, 1966), but it is also relevant to current political language. Using a related notion of complexes to look at how one topic may lead to another, Michael Silverstein (2003: 21) analyses political language in the US as a process whereby issues are turned into 'message'. As in advertising, a product is being sold and the message should be simple and direct, constructed with catchphrases, so that a maximum number of people can accept it. Much of what President Bush says, therefore, is aimed at producing a clear message and he is not too concerned with talking about the specific details of his programme. As a result, Silverstein argues, the audience overlooks Bush's ignorance of the facts, his improper use of language and confusing statements because the message is 'I'm trying', and that message overrides the mistakes.

In both the Karelian stories and the president's speech the goal is to attract the audience through their own experience with the effect, as Silverstein (2003: 23) says, of encouraging the response: 'That reminds me of . . .'. In the Finnish case, where sameness (all Karelians, all Finns) is assumed, the need to build an imagined community through nationalist rhetoric is minimized. By contrast, in the US, where sameness cannot be assumed, nationalist rhetoric is maximized to build a national community out of diversity. In this case, 'otherness' and metonymic units are impor-



tant: the family being the basic unit, moving to institutions, communities, states, the nation and finally to the nation in the world. Processes of connecting through metaphor and metonym are at work in both types of nationalist talk, but the valuation is different.

## Homeland and shared interest

As Benedict Anderson (1983) recognized, the ability to shift easily from 'home' to 'homeland' often joins an individual to an imagined national community. This is possible because there is a metonymic chain of associations commonly associated with the concept of home: a particular house, birthplace, homeland, identity (ethnicity) and political activity (nationalism). However, while home may be a link in a nearly infinite symbolic series, it is not linked in a clear causal relationship to other units in a given series. Because home includes practices and social relations, it is an open concept to which others can join their own experience. The open nature of home means that, although it is loaded with meaning, the particular aspect of home that is given meaning is not universal.<sup>8</sup> In both examples analysed here, there is an attempt to create a group 'we' around the concept of homeland, although it is done in quite different ways.

The Karelian narratives about place are a good example of Anderson's theory of how 'home' comes to mean 'homeland'. The process happens in two fundamental ways. First, there is an emphasis on named people who signify a group. As Maurice Halbwachs points out, in family memoirs the recollection of a particular person by name is also the recollection of his relative position to other family members and *that* depicts a kinship system. Therefore, 'names symbolize beyond the material sign' (1992 [1941]: 72), meaning that names specify a person and a kinship position, possibly a region, class, religion and so forth. The name of a person generates many impressions by all who know or knew him, and that group itself is a changing entity as some members die and new people enter. For this reason, a particular person is never recollected with the same totality of personal characteristics (Halbwachs, 1992[1941]), while some characteristics of the person can be recognized by people who never knew him.

Second, the Karelian family stories are models, examples and elements for teaching about the group. In order to do this, they contain stories about certain events that are landmarks. Typically, these landmarks summarize an entire period or the idea of a particular type of life (Halbwachs, 1992 [1941]). They are symbolically important because they are the intersection of a number of reflections. As such, 'they attract to themselves more reality' (Halbwachs, 1992[1941]: 61); they contain images that generate other images. As with individuals remembered, the recollection of home never contains the same totality of characteristics. It depends on who remembers and in what context. And the significance of what is said depends on the audience and their interpretation. Narratives about the

Karelian homeland generate a political response, both for and against, because the Karelian diaspora is part of Finnish national history and politics.

So, in order for 'home' or 'homeland' to have resonance, the rhetoric must engage with the interest of an audience. The Karelian stories appeal especially to those who have lost their homeland, while President Bush's speech tries to appeal to the security interests of an American audience. But interest is not simply benefit or advantage, as is often assumed. I mean something closer to the rhetorical question posed by Pierre Bourdieu (1998: chapter 4) when he asks: 'Is a disinterested act possible?' His answer is that disinterest is possible only when disinterest is defined as important, such as in bureaucratic positions where one should not have a personal interest. Both the Karelian and American materials reveal an interest that is more than material;<sup>9</sup> interest here means a way of knowing the world, a system of meanings with which an actor enters into an event. Marshall Sahlins argues that interest, meaning 'it makes a difference' (1985: 150), is the key for understanding the instrumental value to an acting subject. The way in which home segues into homeland and forms a group 'we' happens only within a particular system of meaning, a particular valuation.

The notion of interest applies as well to the use of history in political situations. When discussing the legitimacy claims of Hawaiian kings, Valerio Valeri (1990) argues that it is too simple to assume that present-day actors distort the past for a common interest because different interests always make different experiences possible. Rather, there is a complex relationship between past and present where analogical thinking about the past provides a set of possible choices for action in the present, according to one's interest. In both the Finnish and American examples, past experience is invoked to underline the continuity of the homeland, an important message in both circulating discourses.

The metonymic details in the Karelian stories attract other stories, but not any story will work. Type stories are more successful at allowing others to conjoin their experiences. The following two narratives create a group 'we' through belonging. They position the referential 'we' in the nation differently because of the interest of the writer, but both assume a collectivity based on similarity.

## **A Karelian home**

Typically, the Finnish Karelian stories focus on 'our house' and 'our place' to make the claim that Karelia should not be forgotten or left behind. This first example is a description of the home of the writer in the now lost Karelian village of Inkilä. It is a typical Karelian example of how a collective 'we' is constructed and maintained through stories about particular places and named individuals. The description of young girls and



horses in the *tupa*<sup>10</sup> is an assembled summation of a type of life as much as it is about the named girls, mother, father, Samuli and the house itself. As in spoken language, the written description is intelligible only through an understanding of the social organization, although this is not intended to be a description of social organization (Hanks, 1996). The kinship structure described, the extended family, is, however, an important aspect of knowing where one belongs. While the story recollects individuals, each individual is understood through his or her relative position to other individuals, that is, through kinship relationships. Such family stories are not intended to be national and, in fact, national events are peripheral to the main story, although the story is strongly regional (i.e. Karelian).

I was born on the 5th day of June in Inkilä, Kirvu parish. More exactly, in Kuismala village, but nowadays it is called Inkilä for the whole railway station region. Inkilä village, according to the church records, is about one kilometre from the station on either side of the lake. Our home was there at the time of the evacuation journey. It was our last home, Päivölä, in Karelia.

My mother gave birth to me in my home's sauna at the time of making whisks [early summer], as my mother used to say. Then it was said the children were found under the benches in the sauna. I don't remember if it was believed or not. In those times the mother would live with her child in the sauna as long as three to four weeks before they came to the *tupa*; even then they weren't allowed to come to the same table to eat with others before the child was baptized and the mother was 'churched'.

I am from an old Karelian farm *suku* [family, lineage]. My father is Tuomas Matinpoika Rantalainen, whose mother was born in Kirvu at Rätynkylä. My mother Anna Aatamintytär Wornio, whose mother was Mari, was born in Kirvu's Worniola. I do not know the year of the birth. My father Tuomas Rantalainen came to Inkilä as a *kotivävy* [son-in-law] for Samuli Inkinen's daughter Wappo. After her death my father brought another wife, my mother Anna Wornio from Wornio village. Four daughters were born to them: Helena, Katri, Wappo and Anni (the youngest died when she was small).

My natal home, Eskola, was quite close to Inkilä station, by the road leading to Räisälä. My last memory of my natal home was sad. One boy from the village had taken a picture while the area was reclaimed [from the Russians], in which my old home was a smoking ruin.

I remember once when we four small girls sat on top of the oven of the *tupa* quietly giggling and chirping like a crowd of grey finches in the bush. As the oldest one I had to take care that the younger sisters – Katri, Wappo and Anni – did not fall when everybody eagerly tried to peep down at the floor. This was around 1890. I was eight years old, the others younger than that and Anni almost a baby. We were waiting for an exciting drama and soon a nice clopping was heard from the doorway and father led the horses into the *tupa* to be shod.



At that time it was common that during the winter the horses were shod in the *tupa*. The horse was tied by the reins to a ring in the wall. During the procedure we girls had climbed up on top of the oven, where one could get a good view of this 'fun' event. Anyway, the horse scared us small girls. Father shod the horse and brother Samuli held the burning shingle because the small light in the ceiling didn't give enough light.

In Inkilä in Tuomas and Anna Rantalainen's [*Yliojan mummo*]<sup>11</sup> house at Eskola, in the house there were two living *tupas*, a *porstupa* [enclosed entry hallway] in between, but one *tupa* at a time was lived in. The other [diminutive *tupa* was a storage area] in which the food and the dishes needed in the house were stored. Occasionally the *tupa* was changed. Older generations were also living with the same family. There were El'ämmä and Mar'ämmä who were already in their eighties when I was a small girl. Their husbands, brothers Antti and Hemmi Kuisma were former *isäntäs* [male heads of household] and already dead. Antti's and Mari's only daughter, Katri, lived with her husband, Samuli Inkinen, who had come as *kotivävy*. Their only daughter, Wappo, with Tuomas Rantalainen also taken in as a *kotivävy*, continued running the house. To them a son was born, Samuli, but Wappo died after a couple of years. In the house there had to be a young *emäntä* [female head of household], so Tuomas brought Anna Wornio from Wornio village to be his new *emäntä*. These . . . were our parents. Samuli who held the shingle was a stepbrother. Our family of 10 people lived in a single *tupa* which during the winter was so wet that the corners were quite mouldy. (Helena Kuisma in Pärssinen, 1996: 46–8; my translation)

This story of home refers to particular people and their roles (as father, mother, etc.) from a particular perspective. It also contains references to two features of Karelian house society: the *suurperhe* (extended family) and the position of the *kotivävy* (the son-in-law who comes to live with his wife and whose own son inherits the house through his mother, not his father). It is a landmark story, in Halbwachs' words, because it is not about one particular day or event; it summarizes a house style and the way of life of an entire period. As a mnemonic device, it recalls Karelian social structure and society from the past and emphasizes continuity by using the narrative 'I', which connects it to the present of the writer. In this narrative, home as a category contains a physical house, named characters, the continuity of generations in one family, Karelian social structure and marriage practices, men and their horses, the positions of *isäntä* and *emäntä* and the activities of small girls. Each one of these is, in turn, a loci for others to identify with when they read these stories. Not everyone or everything is remembered, but some individuals and events mark the social time (Ricoeur, 1991). In all these ways, the story attracts stories to it although it remains an internal story. As such, it is part of Finnish national history about who 'we' are and it claims, or holds onto, Karelia as an ongoing part of the Finnish nation.





## The individual as national actor

The previous example used analogy and metonym to make the Karelian world 'mine' for the audience, whereas this second example explicitly joins the Karelian experience with Finnish national experience. Both stories work in slightly different ways to join individuals to the national project. The possibilities in syntagmatic/metonymic (we are part of the same series) and paradigmatic/analogical messages (this is how it should be) open various channels for how the past can be instituted in the present (Valeri, 1990). With distance from the events, analogical messages are likely to be more dominant and, accordingly, afford the possibility for nationalist rhetoric. With time, local stories can become expressions of national pride.

Stories of Karelia are easily attached to the national experience of war in Finland, the generalized 'we' of the nation state.<sup>12</sup> The two chronologically related events put together different communities: Karelia (some Finns) and war (all Finns). Through metaphor, local stories become national, as in this story about a local man, the soldier Toivo Kempas. It was written in the 1990s by a family member when he edited the family memoirs. The narrator's distance from the events allows him to make the shift to metaphor quite easily.

As the Winter War threatened, Toivo joined the YH [army unit] with the others. Toivo left his few possessions, his axes, frame saws and good suit, at his uncle Heikki's house and put on the Finnish Greys. His regiment was JR: 34, where axes were traded for rifles and pointy ears. Because his home parish was threatened, Toivo was disciplined and tough in battle. No one has counted how many of the enemy Toivo cut down before this small, depleted JR: 34 got some new recruits. Toivo refused a rest, staying alive as the new recruits were killed, but finally he was tired and disappointed, because after all the struggle to preserve his home parish, Soanlahti [Karelia], it went to the enemy since it had not been won on the battlefield by the Kollaa [a famous battle in the war] heroes. The axes and frame saws were gone. All Toivo had were his army clothes and that which he carried in his pockets. [The] Kollaa had left him tired and weaker against the opposition and now Toivo became sick. Uncle Heikki, who had moved to the Tuupovaara military hospital, offered a small bed to the sick Kollaa hero . . .

Toivo Kempas is an example of the harvest, the thousands of Finnish foot soldiers in the army, a Finnish war example, strong and peaceful, probably slightly simple, but with a warm heart, who made the ultimate sacrifice. He did not speak foreign languages, he did not understand high culture, he lived here and now, loved this country where he was born, found foreigners strange, avoided the strange, was Finnish, a patriot and nothing more. That was Toivo Kempas; a Finnish man. (Pärssinen, 1992: 105–6)

This story of one Karelian soldier is linked to the metanarrative of 91

Finnish war history and therefore to a circulating discourse about the nation. His story becomes part of the national myth about 'the Finnish men' who saved the nation when it was severely threatened. The national myth is grounded in empirical fact; the nation's independence was severely threatened and Finland was the only state along the Soviet border that did not end up behind the Iron Curtain of postwar Europe. The communal 'we' often depends on crisis points for defining itself (Carr, 1986), allowing a perfect opportunity for one personal story to become part of national(ist) history. Metaphoric references map one domain in terms of another; Toivo Kempas, the individual, thus becomes a Finnish man and a national hero. Put together, these are Finnish stories about the loss of Karelia and the history of the homeland. They are part of the circulating discourse in Finland today about events that have made the nation what it is. Nationalist rhetoric was evident in the summer of 2004, when the war and the losses were remembered, but the message remained directed inward.

### **Homeland: the president's speech in York, Pennsylvania**

The Karelian narratives extend home to homeland through common experience and by projecting local people into national events. By contrast, in President George W. Bush's speech at a political rally in York, Pennsylvania,<sup>15</sup> the homeland is not an extension of the local to the national in the same way. First, there is no assumed collectivity as in the Finnish narratives. When President Bush talks about family, the speech emphasizes the likeness of units more than the likeness of individuals. Second, through verbs and by constructing the homeland as an acting subject, the speech builds a task-oriented group 'we'. In the speech, the patriotism of individuals, not named individuals, is linked to the national mission of salvation accompanied by an idea of immortality (cf. Kemiläinen, 1964).

President Bush begins the speech by introducing a few named people, mostly from Pennsylvania or in the president's family, to set a local tone. One of these is Joe Paterno, a successful football coach at Penn State University, who is cited as a good American and a good father, linking family to nation in one individual example:

I want to thank you, Joe. Thank you very much for being here. I'm proud of the example you set. You're a fine, fine, fine *American*. And you raised a fine *son* in Scott. (2004: 1)

As the speech continues, the family is connected to the nation through sacrifice and war. This is a common way to build nationalist images, but here national safety is linked to universal freedom when President Bush speaks about those who have sacrificed 'to keep this country safe and to



*bring freedom to others'* (2004: 4). Individuals are positioned by their roles within the family and, through action (serving), a connection is made between 'the loved one' and the 'we' of America:

I thank the families, the wives and husbands, the moms and the dads and the sons and daughters of those whose loved one is overseas serving our nation. *We stand with your loved one. America* honors their service. [applause] (2004: 4)

Later in the speech, the metonymic connection of family to other institutions (school, religion) is made explicit, first in reference to his job (repeating 'my solemn duty/obligation' three times) and then through 'our' moral values:

*My most solemn duty – my most solemn duty* is the security of American families. It's *my solemn obligation*. [applause] (2004: 5)

*We* stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of *our* society. [applause]

We're strong because of the institutions that help us give direction and purpose – our families and our schools, our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives. (2004: 6)

The speech builds continuity by moving from past to present to future. He begins with a reference to the past, to the origins of the nation:

You probably know this, but for nine months in 1777 and 1778, York was the capital of the United States. [applause] (2004: 1)

The text is built through action (we are doing) and ends in looking to the future: 'the best days lie ahead' (2004: 6). During the speech, he builds a message of 'I'm leading', to paraphrase Silverstein's concept.

Although there are references to the domestic economy, much of the rhetoric looks outward and stresses action. The homeland ('America') is a transcendental historical agent, which also implies unity. The group 'we' is made up of co-actors in current events. Half the speech refers to terrorists and their danger to the homeland:

*We* pursued the *terrorist enemy* across the world.

*We* will stay on the hunt until *justice* is served and *America* is safe from attack. [applause]

This is followed a few lines later by the theme of mission:

The world is better off; *America* is once again proud to *lead* the armies of *liberation*. [applause] (2004: 2)

and later:

If *America* shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, *the world* will drift toward tragedy. (2004: 4)

This last statement is followed by four paragraphs that emphasize the present and action through the verbs used: ‘terrorists *continue to attack* in Afghanistan and Iraq’; ‘Americans are *serving* and *sacrificing* to keep this country safe and to *bring freedom* to others’; ‘they *serve*’; and ‘this nation *resolved to fight* the terrorists where they dwell’ (2004: 4). The phrase ‘because *we acted*’ is repeated four times to show that ‘America is more secure’ and ‘Iraq is free and a sovereign nation’ [applause] (2004: 4). However, this present time is difficult and special. A collective ‘we’ is built with the words ‘you and I’:

You and I are living in a period when the stakes are high and the challenges are difficult – a time when resolve is needed. [applause] (2004: 6)

There are two times when patriotism is apparent during the speech, although there is applause for particular statements all the way through. A patriotic chant follows two references to American involvement with other places, the first concerning markets, the second concerning defence (where ‘I’ as an acting subject, the leader, is emphasized):

Our market is open; let’s get other countries to open up theirs. Give us a level playing field and *America* can compete with anybody, anyplace, anywhere, anytime.

[Audience:] USA! USA! USA!

So *I* had a choice to make. Either take the word of a madman, or defend America. Given that choice, *I* will defend America every time.

[Audience:] USA! USA! USA! (2004: 4)

Moving into the future, the nation – the generalized ‘we’ – has hard work ahead:

*We’ve* got tough work to do [in order to] . . . *capture or kill the terrorists* and foreign fighters. Every terrorist *we deal with abroad* is one who will never do harm to an innocent American or anyone else. [applause] (2004: 5)

And finally, to protect the homeland:

*We* must engage these people in Afghanistan, Iraq and *around the world*, so that *we* do not have to face them *here at home*. [applause] (2004: 5)

In this presentation, the homeland is a good place that is threatened by (unspecified) terrorists around the world. The threat of the other is



emphasized and repeated in phrase after phrase when 'you' [and I = 'we'] cannot talk to 'these people', and by implication they are different from 'us', from how 'we' are:

*You can't talk sense to these people. You can't negotiate with these people. They're cold-blooded. They are – they've hijacked a great religion. They're not religious people.* (2004: 5)

In the following, the 'we' is ambiguous; the first 'we' seems to include the president and the audience who share a way of life, whereas the second 'we' refers primarily to the president's administration and to his leadership:

We know the terrorists want to strike us again because they want to spread fear and disrupt our way of life. We've reorganized our government to protect the homeland. (2004: 5)

Again, the past is linked to the future, giving the homeland and this struggle against evil continuity and immortality:

*We've seen their kind before, in death camps and gulags. And as before, America will persevere, we will fear no evil and we will prevail.* [applause] (2004: 5)

The speech is not about social relations but about abstract concepts of good and evil. The message of the speech ('I'm leading') then blends into 'America' leading and ends with an emphasis on 'moral clarity': '*America is leading the world with confidence and moral clarity*' (2004: 5). This is connected to universal values. He repeats the phrase 'by serving the ideal of liberty' twice and links liberty to universal individualism and a higher order, immortal, outside the material world:

*We know that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.* [applause] (2004: 5)

This universal individualism parallels the American individualism earlier in the speech:

I'm seeking the vote to rally the compassionate spirit of this country so that every citizen can realize their full, *God-given* potential. [applause] (2004: 5)

Thus, the world is made in the model of American values, which are assumed to be universal values. In both cases the source is 'God-given'. He ends with an emphasis on the mission and the future:

*We* have a war to win and the world is counting on *us* to lead the cause of freedom and peace ... This is the work that *history* has set before *us*. *We* welcome it. And *we* know that for *our blessed country*, the best days *lie ahead*. God bless. Thank you all. [applause] (2004: 6).

These are only some lines from a six-page speech, but the point should be clear: the speaker emphasizes a mission for the homeland and this mission – in other parts of the world – is a central part of his nationalist agenda. Patriotism is not expressed about internal local issues, but about external relations. President Bush talks to a referential ‘we’ (‘you and I’, his political partisans) about values that the audience can connect to a circulating discourse about the ‘we’ of the homeland and its mission in the world.

## Conclusion: valuation and nationalism

Louis Dumont argued that German and French cultures are both individualistic but they have different valuations; they place the individual differently. According to Dumont, the Frenchman considers himself a man by nature who just happens to be French, whereas the German is a man to the extent that he is first a German (1994: 45). Similarly, these examples of rhetoric about homeland have different valuations as seen in the circulating discourse. The Karelian material focuses on ‘our home’ and ‘who we are’. The talk relies on metonym and metaphor to draw in others to form a picture of similarity. It is strongly rooted in place and has resonance among a defined ‘we’ group. It does not present Karelia or Finland as an acting subject, but focuses on known people, their relation to local and national entities and issues of territorial sovereignty. Perhaps because the rhetoric is directed inward, nothing much has come of a political issue that could lead to aggressive, outward-directed nationalism.<sup>14</sup> The basic frame for this circulating discourse operates at all levels; that is, political speeches in Finland must build also on the circulating notion of ‘who we are’. In fact, I am not aware of any public circulating discourse about Finland as a global actor with a historical mission.

In President Bush’s speech, the homeland has a task to be done elsewhere; the ‘we’ is created through ‘our duty’, ‘our calling’ and ‘our lifestyle’. Because the US is a multi-ethnic society, nationalist discourse in the US has always emphasized the general over the particular. If we had the personal memoirs of people who experienced September 11, for example, we would have a different view, one that emphasizes known people. But that, too, would be framed by the circulating discourse that is common in the US. In the past, nationalist rhetoric in the US focused on internal relations, characterized by the need for unity among the loosely-federated states (Kemiläinen, 1964).<sup>15</sup> Today, President Bush’s form of nationalism is based on a mission to save the homeland and to change the world in its



own image, supported by references to universal values and higher causes (e.g. liberty, God, history). The language assumes universal sovereignty, which can easily lead to ideas of universal domination.

How the messages are received depends on the audience, on the ability to join one's personal experience to the ideas presented. Not everyone will subscribe to the 'we' group in either case. Much depends, as Jakobson recognized, on the process of contiguity and substitution, combined with the ability of the speaker to connect to the interests of the audience. The intended message in the two cases is quite different, however. Listening to the words of each, it is impossible to imagine the American speech occurring in Finland or the Finnish narratives having purchase in the US. In each case the valuations differ in what is maximized and minimized – how the group 'we' is formed – along with the direction of the nationalist message.

The American example links the homeland to universal values (freedom, democracy) and categories (citizens, terrorists). These universal values, based on a particular cultural system, are assumed to be valid and desirable for all societies although we are seeing evidence of resistance. With all the recent talk about the war against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, one should remember Hannah Arendt's (1951) argument that terror may be experienced as arbitrary, but it is not arbitrary and it is not lawless. Nationalism with a universal mission and the patriotic and religious references that accompany it, ultimately involves a hostile attitude toward some other nation(s) and, in turn, their resistance. This is bound to happen in any attempt to create the world in one's own image by using a 'one size fits all' logic, whether it be well-meaning development projects or outward-directed nationalism.

Unbridled nationalist movements of any kind usually result in warfare and destruction. However, the global consequences are different. In its worst form, as ethnic cleansing and ongoing violence, inward-directed nationalism tends to remain limited to a territory or region. By contrast, outward-directed nationalism, as we are witnessing, leads to unlimited global conflict and violence, where it is impossible to measure how and when the 'war on terrorism' will actually be over. The contrast of valuation in these two cases of circulating discourse, combined with Aira Kemiläinen's distinction between inward and outward-directed nationalisms, opens new possibilities for critical thinking about nationalism, universal values and conflict in the world today.

## Notes

1. Benedict Anderson (1983) highlighted the relationship of 'home' to 'homeland' in his classic study of imagined communities. This is an attempt to extend and elaborate on that discussion in the context of current events.
2. Universal sovereignty shares the values of universal religion, whereas territorial sovereignty transfers values from religion to particular states and territories (cf. Dumont, 1994).



3. Greg Urban (1991), for example, finds that among the Shokleng there is no mythic discourse that shows consistent agent-centricity, such as found among the Bella Coola Indians, and that this lack of agent-centred discourse characterizes much of the discourse in Shokleng culture. Urban points out that this is quite different from discourse in Western cultures.
4. Kemiläinen (1964) argues that both forms of nationalism were apparent in Finland. Part of Finnish nationalism was concerned with independence from Russia and statehood, while part was concerned with establishing Finnish, rather than Swedish, as a national language. This second type stressed the 'folk' and folk traditions.
5. Karelia is not a central issue in Finland although it remains problematic (e.g. Loima, 2004) and therefore part of the circulating discourse about the Finnish nation state. As part of this, Karelian memory books, family memoirs and small museums of Karelian memorabilia can be found throughout Finland.
6. Presumably he is talking to an audience that already supports the Republican Party, if not his administration.
7. 'In Russian lyrical songs, for example, metaphoric constructions predominate, while in the heroic epics the metonymic way is preponderant' (Jakobson and Halle, 1956: 77).
8. For example, in American popular thinking, one's home is one's 'castle': private, the site of the family and separate from the rest of society. This distinction is repeated in related oppositions between work/home, criminal/family court, public/private and for a certain time in history, male/female. A connection is often made between family and nation in American society. David Schneider (1970) speculated that feelings of 'diffuse, enduring solidarity' characterized kinship, nationalism and religion in American culture and that there might be, therefore, connections between the domains, although he did not do further research on this. An application of Schneider's ideas about kinship and nationalism in the US has been done by John Borneman (1998).
9. As Sahlins has pointed out in much of his recent writing, bourgeois western thinking tends to turn 'culture into the hidden a priori of a calculus of pragmatic action' (2000[1982]: 278).
10. The *tupa* was the main living space of the house: a large room for eating, sleeping and working, kept warm by the oven-style fireplace.
11. This was her nickname: Ylioja's (place name) grandmother, or old woman.
12. Two wars were fought with the Soviet Union and each time the Karelians had to evacuate Karelia at the end of the war. The first is called the Winter War (1939–40); the second is called the Continuation War (1941–4).
13. I have added italics to certain words for emphasis; the page numbers refer to the version printed from the webpage.
14. The Karelian homeland is not forgotten, however. There are political alliances to petition for the return of Karelia and there was an expansionist movement into Karelia during the Continuation War, but aggressive language directed toward Russia is muted. The political message is built through notions of 'our home'; it is not expressed in nationalist speeches about the 'other' as President Bush does.



15. Silverstein's (2003) analysis of political speech contrasts President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address – a speech to unify the nation after the Civil War – with the 'corporate model' rhetorical style of George W. Bush. The corporate model is, of course, appropriate for global capitalism.

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