Political myth: the political uses of history, tradition and memory

Peter Ricketson

University of Wollongong

Follow this and additional works at: https://ro.uow.edu.au/theses

Copyright Warning

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site.

You are reminded of the following: This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part of this work may be reproduced by any process, nor may any other exclusive right be exercised, without the permission of the author. Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material.

Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

Unless otherwise indicated, the views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the University of Wollongong.

Recommended Citation


Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au
NOTE

This online version of the thesis may have different page formatting and pagination from the paper copy held in the University of Wollongong Library.

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

COPYRIGHT WARNING

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site. You are reminded of the following:

Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material. Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.
POLITICAL MYTH

The Political Uses of History, Tradition and Memory

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements
For the award of the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

From

University of Wollongong

by

Peter Ricketson

Department of History and Politics
2001
Contents

Introduction

Chapter 1 Cassirer : The Concept of Political Myth

1. Introduction 15
2. Georges Sorel 22
3. Cassirer’s Rationale for Studying Political Myth 31
4. Origins of Cassirer’s Concept of Political Myth 39
5. Cassirer’s Concept of Mythic Consciousness 43
6. The Nature of Modern Political Myths 52
   6.1 Impact of Romanticism 54
   6.2 ‘Myth of the Twentieth Century’ 57
      6.2.1 Hero Worship 59
      6.2.2 Race Worship 62
      6.2.3 State Worship 64
   6.3 Cultural Failure 66
7. The Technique of Myth 68
   7.1 Manipulation of Language 69
   7.2 Use of Ritual 70
   7.3 Imposition of a Supreme Value 72
   7.4 Uses and Abuses of History 73
8. Conclusion 76

Chapter 2 The Kosovo Myth

1. Introduction 79
2. The Battle of Kosovo : The 600th Anniversary 84
3. Kosovo and the Culture of Fear 87
4. Kosovo and Legitimacy 95
5. Kosovo and Serbian Collective Memory 105
   5.1 Serbian Epic and Oral Tradition 106
   5.2 Church and Nation 111
   5.3 The Relics of Lazar 113
   5.4 The Relics of Stefan 117
   5.5 The Relics of Genocide 118
6. Kosovo as Sacred Site 125
Chapter 3 Collective Memory

1. Introduction 172
2. Collective Memory 173
   2.1 Conceptualising Collective Memory 173
   2.2 Memory and History 187
3. Representations of the Past 201
   3.1 A Useable Past 202
   3.2 Competing Memories 208
   3.3 Memory and Identity 214
   3.4 Heritage and Nostalgia 223
   3.5 Media and Memory 231
4. Conclusion 237

Chapter 4 Memory Sites

1. Introduction 242
2. Monuments and Memory 245
3. Monuments to National Memory and the National Dead 263
4. Primal Memories 274
5. Relics and Memory 284
6. Museums as Memory Sites 393
7. Conclusion 301
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2.2 Scientific Theory</td>
<td>447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.3 Tradition</td>
<td>448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.4 Popular Sovereignty</td>
<td>449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.5 The Past</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Shared Beliefs</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.1 Ideology and Political Myth</td>
<td>459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.2 National Identity</td>
<td>463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.3 Foundation Myths</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Consent</td>
<td>477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Conclusion</td>
<td>479</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**  
Page 482

**Appendix 1**: The Katyn Massacre as Collective Memory  
Page 491

**Appendix 2**: Masada as ‘Invented’ Tradition  
Page 507

**Appendix 3**: Commemoration of the Columbus Quincentennial  
Page 528

**Bibliography**  
Page 541
DECLARATION

I, Peter Ricketson, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor in Philosophy, in the Department of History and Politics, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution

Peter Ricketson
Special thanks to my supervisor Stephen Reglar who guided me through the whole process of researching, writing and editing a thesis.

My personal thanks to Pamela Ricketson who encouraged and supported me to keep going, acted as my intellectual 'sounding board' and was invaluable in the difficult task of editing.