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TO BE AND TO WORK AS AN ESTONIAN

Keywords: imagined communities, civic nationalism, Fridebert Tuglas

The article deals with the relevance of the idea of the nation in the contemporary Estonian public debate about language, culture and belonging. It first offers a brief overview of the most important contemporary theories of nationalism and argues that in the recent decade the critical humanities internationally have seen their role in the critical reflection and in the political critique of different ways of imagining the nation. The article then moves on to examine the current Estonian public debate which is often mistakenly framed as an opposition between nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Instead, what seems to be at stake in this debate is the question about patriotism and of the ways how to be Estonian in contemporary times of globalisation and intense migration. In going back to the example of the period of intense renewal and rethinking of Estonian culture and nation at the beginning of the 20th century, the article argues for the need to enlarge the current ethnically and culturally defined understanding of Estonian nation and to replace it with civic nationalism that enables the inclusion of people with different ethnic and cultural background living in Estonia.

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