

COMPARATIVE MEMORIES: WAR, DEFEAT, AND HISTORICAL MEMORY
FORMATION IN THE POST-CIVIL WAR AMERICAN SOUTH AND POST-WORLD
WAR II GERMANY

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ABSTRACT

COMPARATIVE MEMORIES: WAR, DEFEAT, AND HISTORICAL MEMORY FORMATION IN THE POST-CIVIL WAR AMERICAN SOUTH AND POST-WORLD WAR II GERMANY

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Despite the vast research that already exists on historical memory of war in the American South and Germany, less is known about the inherent role that social, cultural, and political circumstances play in the creation of memory. Thus, both societies will be compared and contrasted throughout this thesis in order to flesh out those circumstances and reframe memory as a human process that can exceed national boundaries and conditioning. Obviously, this is not a perfect comparison as both societies have dynamic histories, cultures, and societal values that differ in both time and space. But when one considers some of the smaller likenesses between the defeated sides of the American Civil War and World War II (e.g. both committed acts prior to the war that modern society has deemed the pinnacles of oppression and injustice; both engaged in war to further the ideals behind such acts; and both were ultimately defeated, humiliated, and occupied by outside forces that sought to guide their progression into the future), larger generalizations can be made. By analyzing this comparison through various forms of literature (both academic and popular), political motivations, cinema, memorialization, and the suppression of counter-memories throughout the end of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this thesis determines that the American

South and Germany both tried to remember as much as they forgot about wars and societies that took place in their pasts. At first, this conclusion seems to counter the ideas of German forgetfulness and insistent Southern remembrance via the Lost Cause that have been established in a litany of prior scholarship. However, while this thesis maintains those tenets, it establishes that humiliation and the ability of the occupier (in this case the American Union and the Allies) to maintain control over memory formation brought about two specific types of myth making from the defeated side. In the South, where Southerners were able to overthrow the North both ideologically and politically, this took the form of over-romanticization of the Confederacy under the Lost Cause. In Germany, however, where the Allies controlled ideology and politics absolutely, those directly associated with the Nazis became regarded as the identifiable wrongdoers and the rest of German society romanticized, through omission in war-related memorials and cinema specifically, their own actions during the Holocaust and World War II. Thus, this work increases understanding about the role that defeat in war plays in the continued formation of historical memory.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1814, romantic poet William Wordsworth published *The Excursion: Being a portion of The Recluse, a poem*, and in six lines captured memory as it is commonly thought:

...And, when the steam
Which overflowed the soul had passed away,
A consciousness remained that it had left,
Deposited upon the silent shore
Of memory, images and precious thoughts;
That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed.¹

Today though, historians, philosophers, and thinkers from every field of the humanities have questioned the assumption that memories are artifacts that cannot be destroyed to redefine the thinking of memory and how it is studied. Now it appears “that remembering is primarily an activity of the present.”² It is an activity that is triggered consciously, but molded and driven by the subconscious to meet the needs of the surrounding social, political, and physical environment. On one hand Wordsworth is correct: memory remains after the

1. “Book VII,” lines 25-30, in William Wordsworth, *The Excursion: Being a portion of The Recluse, a poem* (London: T. Darison, Lombard-Street, Whitefriars, 1814), 310. The excerpt is also found in John B. Bowles, ed., introduction to *Shapers of Southern History* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004), vii.

2. Quote from Bowles, *Shapers of Southern History*, vii. In the introduction of *Shapers of Southern History*, editor John B. Bowles makes the same argument about Wordsworth’s connotation of memory vis a vis the autobiographical histories recalled by the subjects of his book (influential Southern historians of the twentieth and twenty first centuries). For the purposes of this writing, Bowles’ anthology is of little relevance. However, his use of Wordsworth’s poetic excerpt and subsequent argument about memory being an “activity of the present” are duplicated here as his ideas surrounding the nature of memory are invaluable to understanding collective memory in this thesis.

passing of generations. However, the act of remembering needs to be thought of as a historical process that, when left behind, is further molded, and built upon, as new facts come to light and others are omitted. Memories delve into the souls of society; they are part of a fluid process, but they are also solid representations of dominant societal values, motivations, and actions that form human identities. On a collective level, memory of a particular event or time period becomes part of a zeitgeist, or, as French social theorist Michel Foucault would argue, a strong societal discourse.

According to Foucault, discourse is a social structure comprised of systems of thought—ideas, beliefs, attitudes, rituals, and courses of action—that systematically construct the experiences, subjects, and society that a person experiences. The role of discourse in wider social processes is to construct current information that legitimates and maintains power through the subjects that speak on its behalf. More specifically, it produces, represents, and constrains truth through use of objects (what can be spoken of), ritual (where and how one may speak), and privilege (who may speak).³ Interpretations of past events and time periods—whether analyzed critically or casually recollected—then too are indicative of the “truths” that discourse creates. On a collective level, they represent and subsequently further the norms and values of a society as an object of discourse. Historical interpretations are nothing more than “nodes within a network,” Foucault would argue. Much like a book is not made up of individual words on a page, but rather “is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences,” historical memory is connected to a larger, overarching web of knowledge and the ideas to which it relates.⁴

3. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971), 21-29.

4. *Ibid.*, 26.

A problem with collective memory then becomes apparent: since memories create, destroy, and embed themselves within the values, norms, and governing structures of a society and culture, their recollection and resulting hypocrisies are hidden by their casual acceptance as truths. For the individuals participating most closely within those structures, specifically those with power, this is especially true as they are not only representing the “truth,” but driving its creation and dispersing it to those below them on the power hierarchy. Romanticization, myth making, and outright forgetfulness are common results that too often go unconsidered and work in contrast to reality. But even though what is remembered is often quite different from what actually happened, what is remembered is important in and of itself as it is an insight into the common sentiments of a given society. Thus, students and teachers of history must not only think critically about where and when people have used history to create negative societal constructs, but must also force themselves to understand why those memories were used and what purpose they served—no matter how ahistorical or hypocritical they may be.

Recollection of the Nazis and World War II in Germany and the Confederacy and the Civil War in the American South are pertinent examples of popular memory embedded within societal discourse. And, due to some deep similarities, the two seemingly unrelated memories illuminate the construction, and possible pitfalls of, romantic memory as a part of national identity. This is due to the fact that both societies, in their antebellum forms, held sets of values and beliefs that were immediately challenged in the post-war years as injustices and oppression. For the American South, which previously had no concern with memorialization and Southern tradition due to a lack of homogenized ideology before the war, this meant that Southerners would have to confront the humiliation, damaged self-

image, and loss of honor that they suffered at the hands of the North.⁵ Anguish coupled with a devastated economy to create the anti-North attitude and the Lost Cause myth prevalent among Virginia's elite in the years immediately following the war.⁶ Reconciliation with the North was immediately rendered virtually impossible as elitist sentiments changed the opinions of even Southern whites pushed to poverty by the destruction of the war who would have benefitted from national unity and government intervention. However, those who were able to maintain ideological power forced their Lost Cause ideology down the power hierarchy in such a way that it assuaged the psychological burden of the South's damaged masculinity.⁷ In other words, it appealed to a society that was already "defensive about [its] public image and more than a little anxious for reassurance" and subsequently ushered in the most notable era in American history for erecting monuments in honor of "heroic soldiers, martyrs, and battlefield glories."⁸ Especially after a more dynamic market economy, urbanization, and a burgeoning railroad and communication network brought more prosperity to the South during Reconstruction, sentiments of the Southern elite united the South from

5. Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York, Knopf, 1991), 115.

6. Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 35.

7. In *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), historian Jackson Lears provides an intriguing look at the masculinity that gave rise to the Lost Cause movement. After the Civil War, argues Lears, the violence and masculinity of war could not be recreated. Thus, as Southerners looked to fill this void, memorialization of the grand exploits of the Confederacy's heroes became a coping mechanism as a new American character of rebirth emerged. Southerners regenerated their images in the glory, violence, and masculine heroics of the Civil War in order to overcome their recent defeat and the immense loss of American lives.

8. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 35; quote from Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 115.

the top down. The Lost Cause caught like a “contagion” of Confederate glory and has persisted in American memory for well over a century.⁹

The collective memory of World War II and the Nazis in Germany however, despite its more broad likeness to the American South, differs greatly. Unlike in the South, Germany was unable to repel their Allied occupiers and was pressured, largely by those occupiers, into a type of amnesia that overlooked the historical formation of recent German society and politics. This is also highly contrasted with the years prior to the war. Historian Rudy Koshar argues that the Weimar Republic participated in an overt decentralization and dynamic distancing from war memory after World War I while the Nazis, once they had seized power, recentralized war memory around existing war memorials, literature, and military cemeteries to promote their militaristic and nationalistic agenda of racial conquest. Cemetery and monument guidebooks and a Heroes Commemoration Day all became commonplace as the Nazis sought national unity just as many Southerners did after the conclusion of the Civil War.¹⁰ However, once Berlin fell to the Soviets and Germans all over Europe surrendered, all questionable aspects of German history quickly became taboo subjects, making Hitler and the Nazis the paradigm of evil in the modern world ever since.

The ability of the occupier to maintain ideological, political, and social power over the defeated society is the key difference between the paths that German and Southern historical memory took in the years immediately following the wars. But as time passed in

9. Use of the word “contagion” comes from Michael Kammen’s *Mystic Chords of Memory* where he gives discussion to the memorialization movement in the South that “marked the most notable period in all of American history” for remembering soldiers, martyrs, and battlefield glories following the American Civil War. Here the word is used to talk not only of memorialization, but also of the larger Lost Cause movement itself. Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 115.

10. Rudy Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces: Artifacts of German Memory, 1870-1990* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 116-117, 154.

both the United States and Germany, memory was constantly challenged by new generations thus altering both societies' outlook on their troubled past through a dynamic process of competing recollections. This varied regionally to a large degree and different demographics remained highly selective on what was retained and what was reconstructed, but support for the Lost Cause waned and more German nationals sought to confront their troubled past. This is in fact due to the time that had elapsed since the actual conflicts as the war generations in both the American South and Germany had declined in numbers. Also, a series of wars (the Spanish American War and World War I for the South and the Cold War for Germany) and new international political aspirations helped focus members of each society on common enemies and future aspirations that left World War II and the Civil War in the past. However, Lost Cause memory of the Confederacy and German forgetfulness among many nationals continued as intense racism and anti-Semitism remained in both societies. Romantic war films and novelizations also propagandized the United States and Germany as popular culture swiftly became the leader in the memory-making process with the high influence of the film industry during the mid-twentieth century. Undeniably, the Lost Cause and German forgetfulness have remained strong sentiments in both the South and Germany—unfortunately the myths that were created about each society's role in the major wars persist to this day.

Not until recently have both the American South and Germany taken more seriously the debate about how to best remember their previous societies. However, this time both focus heavily on memorials. The argument centers on both sides' understanding that there are perpetrators, victims, as well as reasons to understand the feelings that certain monuments will foster. Thus a battle rages over who should be remembered and how, and one cannot

help but notice similar arguments presented in both the South and Germany, despite their geographical distance. On one hand, the perpetrators must be memorialized so that history and its atrocities can be confronted, while on the other, the victims' suffering merits documentation to provide a source of empowerment for the descendants. But this too, is very convoluted. In the South for instance, memorials still remain from the Lost Cause memorialization movement that glorify Confederate soldiers and engender feelings of disgust within many African Americans. While this largely remains a problem that Germany does not face—outside of vague neo-Nazi movements and a weak National Socialist party of government—enough Southerners still stand behind the representation of “heritage” that those memorials denote as to not allow their removal—no matter how romantic the historical interpretation. Both societies' modern memorialization movements thus contain certain aspects that must be reconsidered to point out the historical significance of the events and the resulting hypocrisy, no matter how far in the past those events took place. The process of memory has reshaped, but also carried the Lost Cause and forgetfulness into the modern era in such a way that it is becoming more difficult for the average citizen to separate fact from fiction within their own recollections and values. Sympathy, understanding, and progress all need to be striven for as members of the United States and Germany confront the horrific offenses from their pasts.

Confronting those offenses, however, can take place in many mediums. First, both the American South and Germany need to look to the occupations of outside governments that immediately took place on their lands following defeat. Examining the thoroughness of Union and Allied control over reconstruction, politics, and discourse will illuminate the opportunities that Southerners and Germans had to control the construction of war memory.

In this comparison, the options afforded by the occupiers were starkly different. The South, for instance, was able to overthrow centralized Reconstruction by the Union and regain control of memory through memorialization, intellectual scholarship, and supplanting Republican politicians with Southern Democrats. Germany, however, did not have such an opportunity based on the Allies' ability to assume total control over the state.

Memorialization campaigns, scholarship, and politics all favored the opinions of Germany's occupiers in a way that diminished the "average German's" role in the Holocaust and World War II. But even though Germans tended to omit their dealings with the Nazis while Southerners clung to their Confederate roots, mythicization of Southern and German righteousness was commonplace despite the historical differences. Eventually the interpretations forged in the years following the war were solidified by popular culture. Therefore, by examining those cultural structures that indicate historical memory—memorials, politics, literature, and cinema—one can begin to flesh out the similarities and differences between the memory making process of two defeated nations that most would agree have very dark pasts.

Examining these similarities and differences therefore can increase the understanding of memory in the human experience as well as reveal the damning effects of lost perspectives. However, when making such a comparison there are certain preconditions that must be kept in mind at all times: first, it is necessary that the entities in question be considered within their own unique historical contexts and time periods. Otherwise, the cultural intricacies, events, and processes that led to their development will be skewed. Remember, different histories always contain very important differences. Second, one must keep in mind that this study focuses on the American South when it was part of the United

States and Germany when it was split into separate nations and only recently unified. In other words, Germany has had multiple forms of government whereas the U.S. has only had one. And third, as when comparing metaphorical apples to oranges, one cannot help but notice that the two are still fruits. Significant historical generalizations can be drawn from the similarities, and the varying degrees to which violent atrocities and social injustices are remembered in the human condition can be critically assessed—an important notion that the litany of previous scholarship on memory in the American South and Germany has not addressed.

HISTORICAL MEMORY OF THE CIVIL WAR AND ANTEBELLUM SOCIETY IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH

W.J. Cash has been touted as what many would call a disturbed genius. Growing up in the Piedmont of North Carolina during the early twentieth century, he was raised by deeply religious parents while also struggling with constant bouts of neurasthenia, depression, and alcohol addiction. Always a scholar, Cash learned to fight through his disabilities at an early age and went on to attend the liberal-leaning Wake Forest College before traveling through Europe and pursuing a writing career at several different newspapers. His big break came after H.L. Mencken, founder of the Baltimore based *American Mercury*, read one of Cash's biting articles about the Democratic leadership of North Carolina and encouraged the twenty-nine-year-old to write a grand history of the American South. The project took Cash five years to finish, and upon completion, acclaim for *The Mind of the South* was high. Hailed by the likes of the N.A.A.C.P., *Time*, and *The New York Times*, Cash's life appeared to have taken a positive turn as he subsequently married and received a Guggenheim Fellowship to write a novel in Mexico City. But once in the public eye, Cash could not escape criticism. Native Southerners scolded Cash for his disparaging interpretation of their culture, violence, racism, religiosity, and blind pride—a

devastating blow to a man of troubled mentality that resulted in the return of his mental unrest, violent mood fluctuations, and eventual suicide by hanging.¹

Even though Cash clearly had problems that merited clinical help, his life story illustrates an important dichotomy that exists within the Southern experience. On one hand, he was highly critical and often scathing of Southern culture as he established what subsequent historians have called the “Savage Ideal”: “an assortment of half-digested truths” that, during Reconstruction, saturated Southern memory with notions of intense individualism, puritanism, and romanticism that cemented a firm belief in antebellum hierarchical values in the “Southern Way of Life.”² So deeply ingrained were these beliefs, Cash believed, that “dissent and variety [were] completely suppressed, and men became, in all their attitudes, professions and actions, virtual replicas of one another.”³ But on the other hand, as a native son of North Carolina, he was still a product of the exact Southern culture that he spoke against. And despite his differing opinion, Cash could not escape “The South” that was created in resentment and defeat in the Civil War, nor did he want to. Instead, he wrote with “love and desperation” in an attempt to educate the region on its mythical histories and senseless white pride.⁴ Only when his Southern peers rejected his message was Cash mortally wounded. Thus, is the duality of Southern memory as it can be inferred by his life: a dynamic combination of narratives and identities that compete for acceptance, often

1. Joseph L. Morrison, *W.J. Cash: Southern Prophet-A Biography and Reader* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 3-60. For a closer look at the life and impact of W.J. Cash consult Bruce Clayton’s, *W.J. Cash: A Life* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991).

2. Bruce Clayton, *The Savage Ideal: Intolerance and Intellectual Leadership in the South, 1890-1914* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 2.

3. Wilbur J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Knopf, 1941; New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 90.

4. Fred Hobson, *Tell About the South: The Southern Rage to Explain* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 185-186.

failing, but are yet still part of the same honorable, overarching culture that superseded the individual state pride of 1861.

Despite his book's success, Southern memory of the Old South in the early twentieth century, and the pride that stemmed from it, destroyed Cash—just as dominant Southern memory had been doing to every derisive interpretation of the South for several decades to that point. First, defeated and embarrassed white Southerners fashioned the Lost Cause—a mythical interpretation of the Old South and the war years that defined the South as a geographically and culturally superior region populated by chivalrous cavaliers and “happy darkies” and that was ultimately defeated in a war prompted by a Constitutional debate over states' rights and Northern aggression—to fill the void that was left among the rubble and economic ruin following the Civil War. This then resulted in the touchy pride, racism, and paternalism that downplayed the severity of institutionalized slavery, depicted African Americans as ignorant and barbarous, and ultimately led to the egregious Jim Crow laws (despite white supremacy being considered the “cornerstone” of Southern society prior to the war). The Lost Cause then continued as it dominated popular memory by heralding heroic defenders of their homeland (such as Robert E. Lee, “Stonewall Jackson,” and the multitudes of common soldiers) while silencing alternate interpretations in academia, politics and popular culture.⁵

5. Edward L. Ayers, “Review of Bruce Clayton’s *W.J. Cash: A Life*, *The Journal of American History* 78 (1992): 1493; W.J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Vintage, 1991), 66; Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War* (Winnipeg: Bison Books, 1998), 15; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, “W.J. Cash and Southern Culture,” in Walter J. Fraser and Winfred B. Moore, eds., *From the Old South to the New: Essays on the Transitional South* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1981), 199; James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 62-63, 212; Alexander H. Stephens, “The Confederate Cornerstone Speech,” March 21, 1861; quoted in Kenneth Stampp, ed., *The Causes of the Civil War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991). Since the Lost Cause focused mainly on the eastern theater of the war, it cites Gettysburg as the turning point and does not view Lieutenant General James Longstreet’s skepticism of General Lee at Gettysburg and Major General George Pickett’s charge with particular fondness. Instead, those dedicated to the Cause believed that those generals’ ineptitude led to the disastrous result at

Origins of the Lost Cause:

The Lost Cause myth that has dominated Southern memory can be traced back to the end of the Civil War when the South's economy and infrastructure lay in ruin. According to Catherine Bishir and W. Fitzhugh Brundage, this began with a period of memorialization that first consisted of simple decorations and monuments in local cemeteries—a process hastened largely by white upper-class women and their exploitation of “conventions” of “feminine deference.” Subsequently, this popular practice among prominent females evolved into a full-fledged memorial movement. Southern women such as Mary Dunbar Williams of Winchester, Virginia—the first female to fund a Confederate cemetery in 1865—battled, manipulated, and cunningly operated within the masculine, Victorian values of her time to assume curatorial authority over monument building, historical archives, museums, and almost all other space needed to accommodate Southern memorialization campaigns throughout the South.⁶

On the heels of these initial successes, Southern women organized highly influential Ladies Memorial Associations, and, as word spread, emotional pleas by historical societies

Gettysburg and the South's eventual demise. As an example of the excitement that Robert E. Lee generated in the South, take this excerpt from a Charleston, South Carolina, newspaper article titled with his name: “The gallant soldier and distinguished patriot whose name heads this article, arrived in the city yesterday afternoon. Charleston may well be proud of the honor of having in her midst so brave a defender of the cause she loved so well... We shall never forget the cause in behalf of which he struggled so manfully, and as long as the memory of the dark and gloomy days of war lingers in our hearts we shall always cherish the memory of Robert E. Lee.” Robert E. Lee vignette taken from “General Robert E. Lee,” *Charleston Courier, Tri-Weekly*, April 28, 1870, Col. B.

6. Catherine W. Bishir, “A Strong Force of Ladies: Women, Politics, and Confederate Memorial Associations in Nineteenth-Century Raleigh,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 77 (2000): 456; W. Fitzhugh Brundage, “Woman's Hands and Heart and Deathless Love: White Women and the Commemorative Impulse in the New South,” in *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*, by Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson, eds. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003), 64-78; Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 39-40.

and newspapers began to declare that all women in the South should seek similar endeavors. Within a year, seventy such organizations functioned throughout the South—from Virginia to Alabama—creating not only a consolidated womanhood among Southern white women, but also the impetus for the larger Confederate Memorial Movement that incorporated powerful female organizations such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy with male-dominated organizations such as the North Carolina Monumental Association and the Southern Historical Society. Take for example the rhetorical question posed by the memorial association of Emory & Henry College (located in Emory, Virginia) in 1869: “Would you cherish the memory of the Confederate dead? Then please remit some small contribution, *one dollar or more*...for the purpose of adorning and taking care of their graves.”⁷ White Southern solidarity swept across the region further polarizing the North and South via a new cause of nobility and emotional character. But as the business of memorial associations focused on memorializing Southern leaders and the many fallen private soldiers who served in defense of their homelands, the origins of the Lost Cause movement were simultaneously receiving support from other, more direct, outlets.⁸

Virginia natives Edward Pollard, editor of the *Richmond Examiner*, and Lieutenant General Jubal A. Early, a former general in the Army of Northern Virginia, served to provide the voice of the young Lost Cause movement and its romantic memorialization campaigns by aligning themselves directly with their recent past. While the two had similar views, Pollard

7. Marylou Anderson Cory, *The Ladies' Memorial Association of Montgomery, Alabama: Its Origin and Organization 1860-1870* (Montgomery: Alabama Printing Company, 1902), 47; “Record of Confederate Dead Emory Cemetery,” Emory & Henry College, Washington Co., VA, May, 1869, Kelly Library of Emory & Henry College Archives.

8. Confederated Southern Memorial Association, *History of the Confederated Memorial Associations of the South* (New Orleans: The Graham Press, 1904), 290. A brief note on the memorialization of the Confederacy's common soldiers: one, so long as they have spent significant time in the South, need only to consult their own memories as they have surely glimpsed the ubiquitous bronze sculpture of “Johnny Reb” with his rifle, lightly filled haversack, and valorous resolve that adorns countless town squares.

became the first to pen the Lost Cause ideals in the *Southern History of the War* (1866). His Southern history established what historians Gary Gallagher and Alan Nolan believe to be the cornerstone of the Confederate point of view under the Lost Cause:

The occasion of that conflict was what the Yankees called—by one of their convenient libels in political nomenclature—slavery; but what was in fact nothing more than a system of Negro servitude in the South...one of the mildest and most beneficent systems of servitude in the world.⁹

Only two years later, however, Pollard's language became undeniably more political and provided the first "full-blown, argumentative statement...with respect to all aspects of the Civil War" from the white Southern perspective in *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War* and *The Lost Cause Regained*.¹⁰

Pollard's *Lost Cause* also marked the first usage of the phrase "the Lost Cause" (thereby providing the historical memory's name) and, according to the author, was the first "full and authentic account of the rise and progress of the late Southern Confederate" that was authenticated by the former leaders of the Confederacy. However, only a year earlier in 1867, Jubal Early—who had previously fled to Mexico, Cuba, and finally Canada—published *A Memoir of the Last Year of the War for Independence: In the Confederate States of America*.¹¹ The central messages of the two books, despite Early's focus on the

9. Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan, *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), 13; Block quote from Edward A. Pollard, *Southern History of the War* (New York: C.B. Richardson, 1866), 562.

10. Ibid.

11. David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 1221; Edward A. Pollard, *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates* (New York: E.B. Treat & Co., 1866), 753; Jubal Anderson Early, *Lieutenant Jubal Anderson Early, C.S.A. Autobiographical Sketch and Narrative of the War Between the States*, ed., Ruth Hairston Early (Philadelphia and London: J.B. Lippincot Company, 1912), 464.

Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1864 (his most important campaign and noted failure), were eerily similar: both claimed to oppose secession at the outset of the war. They blamed Lincoln and his cabinet for aggressively overthrowing the Constitution and recognized the “right of resistance and revolution” as proclaimed by the founding fathers.¹²

The first chapter of Pollard’s *Lost Cause* actually summarizes what both he and Early believed regarding Northern despotism and Southern secession in a discussion about the merits of the Magna Carta’s limitations on central authority in the government. Pollard argues: the civil institutions of the States were “already perfect and satisfactory.” The “Union was nothing more than a convenience of the States”—created out of mutual liberty and equality—that had no mission apart from them.¹³ In other words, Pollard espouses that secession was a long-standing and common-sense right of the states granted by the Constitution (assertions that were supported with a discussion of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions authored by James Madison and Thomas Jefferson). Thus, Pollard and Early played a large role in framing Southerners as victims of the North and Washington D.C. and successfully shifted the discussion regarding the cause of the Civil war from slavery to states’ rights.

And while Pollard furthered this notion by writing that the North had misrepresented a benign system of servitude as a harsh institution of slavery, it was Early who was the most

12. Jubal A. Early, *A Memoir of the Last Year of the War for Independence: In the Confederate States of America* (Lynchburg: Charles W. Button, 1867), iii-v. Historian Anne Sarah Rubin speculates that many white Southerners identified themselves with the founding fathers and the Revolutionary War to meet their Lost Cause agendas around the turn of the century. This rhetoric “consciously drew on a ‘ready-made’ myth of national origin” that rejected recent American historiography stressing centralization over sectionalism, and aligned white southerners with patriotism, inalienable rights, and mythic heroes like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Anne Sarah Rubin, *A Shattered Nation: The Rise and Fall of the Confederacy: 1861-1868* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 9; Anne Sarah Rubin, “Seventy-six and Sixty-one: Confederates Remember the American Revolution,” in *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity*, by W. Fitzhugh Brundage, ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 85-86, 101.

13. Pollard, *The Lost Cause*, 40.

passionate white supremacist. He believed that under slavery the “ignorant and barbarous natives of Africa” lived in a “civilized and Christianized condition” that was not only humane, but beneficial to their race, thus justifying the peculiar institution and separating its protection from Southern motivations during the war.¹⁴ In his opinion, as would become the accepted interpretation under the Lost Cause, “slavery was the mere occasion of the development of the antagonism between the two sections.” The North was the aggressor and used the term as a “catchword to arouse the passions of a fanatical mob.” The South, instead, was forced to fight in order to uphold the Constitution and to preserve their right to self-government—a right that, along with slavery, was “violently abolished” at the war’s end.¹⁵

Similarly, Pollard’s recounting of South Carolina Senator John Calhoun’s 1831 response to Massachusetts Senator Daniel Webster (Massachusetts) amid the Nullification Crisis only further epitomized what was becoming the post-war stance of the South. “If the General Government and a State come into conflict”—as was the case when tensions surrounding the “Abomination Tariffs” of 1828 and 1832 that hampered the South’s ability to buy and trade goods compounded the national division over slavery—“...the power which called the General Government into existence, which gave it all of its authority... may be invoked.” The states themselves must then vote on the constitutionality of the source of

14. R.E. Lee to Jubal A. Early, March 30, 1865, referenced in Early, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 468-469; R.E. Lee to Jubal A. Early, March 15, 1866, referenced in Early, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 473; R.E. Lee, General Order No. 9, April 10, 1865, referenced in Douglas S. Freeman, *R.E. Lee A Biography*, Vol. 4 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1936), 154-155; Gallagher and Nolan, *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 39. Gallagher and Nolan contend that Early’s beliefs may have been influenced by Robert E. Lee himself. In Lee’s farewell order to the Army of Northern Virginia and a series of letters addressed to Early (the first was dated March, 1865), General Lee conveyed his interest in writing a history of the Army of Northern Virginia, and thus the need for “all statistics as regards numbers [and] destruction of private property by the Federal troops, &c.” Lee wanted the “world to understand the odds against which [the Confederacy] fought,” and to reveal “the overwhelming resources and numbers” that the North possessed. His final letter from March, 1866, reads as a summary of Early’s memoir: both covered the eastern theater during the final year of the war, stressed the South’s insufficient numbers, and emphasized Federal depredations in the Valley Campaigns.

15. Early, *Memoir of the Lost Year of the War for Independence*, vii-viii.

tension thereby determining a victor by a three-fourths majority. This appeal to the “only solid foundation” of the Union—by a pro-slavery South Carolina Senator no less—was the hyperbolic tool that Pollard used to demonstrate statesmanship and the belief that the South attempted to elude secession. Only the shallow pages of Northern books could have skewed Senator Calhoun’s attempt to save the Union as “Nullification” and labeled the war of 1861 as a “Southern Rebellion.” Instead, as Pollard and Early espoused, the Civil War was “brought on by Northern insurgents against the authority of the Constitution;” a fact, as they believed, it would take the world long to realize.¹⁶

But the two men were wrong; it would not take long for the messages of their lengthy treatises to be realized as the South waged a “war of ideas” against North and the “Black Republican Party.”¹⁷ Despite the disfranchisement of the Southern class, black suffrage being forced on the region, and the governing “of the Southern states as conquered and subjugated territories,” the social and intellectual South must unite, with a firmer resolve, in a renewed “struggle against the North,” Pollard declared.¹⁸ This clarion call coincided with, and was partly answered by, the memorialization movement that Early greatly influenced during the 1870s via the Southern Historical Society Papers. As similar journals were therefore engendered throughout the South to combat Early’s strict Virginia-centric interpretation of the war and to give voice to former Confederates outside of the eastern theater, the movement was consolidated under this message in 1900:

16. *Ibid.*, 40-44.

17. Jubal A. Early, *A Memoir of the Last Year of the War for Independence: In the Confederate States of America* (Lynchburg: Charles W. Button, 1867), iii-v

18. Pollard, *The Lost Cause.*, iii, 750-751, 74, 746, 729.

To future generations of the people of the South and to the sons and daughters of the women of the Confederacy, who first banded themselves together in memorial work, may this Confederation carry its messages and legacy of devotion to the memory of a Cause and the heroes who fought for it, the Deathless Dead of the Southern Confederacy.¹⁹

As Gary Gallagher writes, “[Early] understood almost immediately...that there would be a struggle to control the public memory of war.” And for the white South, there were still “noble victories to be won, memorable services to be performed, and grand results to be achieved” as Pollard added.²⁰ But in combination with the memorial movement, these two native sons of Virginia helped engender and preserve a positive memory of the Confederacy that ran opposite Northern and African American interpretations and took the first steps to ensure that their version of events became the official one for years to come.²¹

Despite the influence of the Virginia writers and ability of the Memorialization movement to provide ex-Confederates with the public opportunity to valorize the greater sacrifice that their culture and heritage endured during the Civil War, the Lost Cause was solidified in Southern memory by a far more overt means: political insurrection.²² The Red

19. Confederated Southern Memorial Association, *History of the Confederated Memorial Associations of the South*, 31.

20. Gallagher and Nolan, *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 43, 36.

21. Janney, *Burying the Dead but not the Past*, 167-194; Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 45. For a good record of the Confederate memorial movement from 1866 until 1900, refer again to the Confederated Southern Memorial Association’s *History of the Confederated Memorial Associations of the South*. The book contains an analysis of sixty-six memorial associations from thirteen different states (Kentucky and Missouri included) and pictures of more than forty Confederate monuments, cemeteries, and memorial buildings.

22. LeeAnn Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860-1890* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 167; Caroline E. Janney, “The Right to Love and Mourn’: The Origins of the Virginia Ladies’ Associations: 1865-1867,” in *Crucible of the Civil War: Virginia from Secession to Commemoration*, by Edward L. Ayers et al., eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 184. The best known

Shirts, as they became known for their attire, were a politically minded, paramilitary group that arose during Reconstruction with the goals of supplanting all Republican politicians in the South and repressing the civil rights of African Americans through terrorism and political pressure.²³ The violence associated with the group became legendary throughout the South, but, according to historian Bruce E. Baker, the Red Shirt's greatest victory was won during South Carolina's 1876 gubernatorial election—when their exploits resulted in the election of former Confederate cavalry leader Wade Hampton.²⁴

“Hurrah for Hampton!” supporters cried as the former Confederate was declared a statesman (though he did have to fight significant political opposition from other ex-Confederates throughout his political career).²⁵ But Wade Hampton was more than a

example of Confederate organized bereavement was Decoration Day (known today as Memorial Day). Adopted as a national holiday in ten states by 1916, Memorial Day began as a freedmen celebration in Charleston, South Carolina, during 1865, and was adapted by white Southerners one year later as a day of remembrance and decorating the graves of fallen Confederates. The most notable Memorial Day celebration in reference to the Lost Cause was held by the United Daughters of the Confederacy as their organization grew to over 100,000 members by 1920. David W. Blight, “Decoration Days,” in *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Confederated Southern Memorial Association, *History of the Confederated Memorial Associations of the South*, 180-184.

23. For further reading on paramilitary organizations in the Reconstruction South refer to Ellis Merter Coulter, *The South During Reconstruction 1865-1877* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1975). The Red Shirts began in 1875 Mississippi and were likely influenced by a similar organization founded in Louisiana one year earlier, the White League.

24. “‘Red Shirt’ Rule,” *Inter Ocean*, October 15, 1878, 5. The violence associated with the Red Shirts was legendary. The following Georgetown, South Carolina, occurrence reported in an 1878 issue of the *Inter Ocean* is by no means the most horrific example, but it is indicative of the nature of the Red Shirt group: “Exterminate Republican leaders! Beat them out! Kill them! [sic]” proclaimed a South Carolina Democrat and ex-judge just before a row of enthused supporters assailed a Republican rally. As tensions mounted, so too did a physical confrontation: a Republican man was shot and the rest of “the Democratic cavalry soon came dashing up with drawn swords and pistols...[ordering] the meeting to disperse at the point of the sword. After the crowd scattered, the insurrectionists then proceeded to tear down the stage, cut down the United States flag with their sabers, trample it, and tear it to shreds.”

25. Quote below from Charles F. Holden, “Is Our Love for Wade Hampton Foolish: South Carolina and the Lost Cause,” in Gallagher and Nolan, *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 60-81; Bruce E. Baker, *What Reconstruction Meant: Historical Memory in the American South* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 13-21; Eric Foner, *America's Unfinished Revolution: 1863-1877* (New York: Perennial Classics, 2002), 572-573; Nicholas Lemann, *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2007), 174. The 1876 gubernatorial election was “the most tumultuous in South Carolina history.” The Red Shirts were

politician that sought to empower white Democrats and their laissez-faire economic policies; he was South Carolina's first Democratic governor since the end of the war and a symbol of Southern "Redemption." Despite Hampton's constant assurance that he saw his "colored friends" as equals and his assertions that he would put an end to violence throughout the state, make a motion toward better education for all, and welcome his brethren from the North for the "perpetuity of the Union," he operated on the ticket of the Southern cause and was backed by an organization that was more than willing to go to great lengths to firmly establish the paternal and racial social hierarchies that it, and the Lost Cause, believed were destroyed by Northern intervention.²⁶ Thus, once Hampton was in place, the Lost Cause myth garnered influence over public policy and discourse, and South Carolina was able to mirror the voter registration reforms (such as Mississippi and Alabama's literacy tests, poll taxes, and vagrancy laws) that had already stripped African Americans and poor whites of their voting privileges throughout the rest of the South. One of the only remaining Southern states that had not yet been taken over by Democratic party-rule, and one of the final hopes for the Republican Party in the South, was therefore redeemed in the ways of antebellum social hierarchies.²⁷

As a result, the Red Shirts were revered throughout the South as the saviors of South Carolina and gained momentum as they spread into neighboring states (specifically North

not shy about raiding Republican rallies, barring blacks from voting, and using assassination as an intimidation technique. An estimated 150 African Americans were murdered in South Carolina during the campaign.

26. "Gen. Wade Hampton on Free Speech," *Daily Arkansas Gazette*, September 26, 1876, Col. A; "Wade Hampton at Aiken," *Georgia Weekly Telegraph and Georgia Journal and Messenger*, October 31, 1876, Col. C.

27. South Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida were the last three Southern states to be "redeemed" by white Southern Democrats. Louisiana's government was taken over by the Democratic Party the same year as South Carolina (1876) and Florida one year later in a process hastened by the removal of Federal troops from the state by President Grant and the Compromise of 1877.

Carolina). African American and Northern interpretations of the Civil War and old South were then drowned out by tales of Confederate glory, and two notorious political issues came once again to dominate each state in the Southern polity: states' rights and race. As Baker contends, Lost Cause advocates claimed the political sphere in the South with Hampton's victory in South Carolina, and the memory of Northern despotism and black incompetence they infused became "as close to hegemonic as any part of American historical memory had ever been." It is no accident that Jim Crow, the institutionalized system of racial inferiority based on African American disfranchisement and public segregation, came to exist the very year Hampton was elected. So strong were the ideas of the Southern redeemers, that institutionalized racism lasted nearly a century before being deemed unconstitutional. Therefore, Jim Crow—and the civil rights movement that sought to overturn it—owes much to the racial and political components of the Lost Cause and their solidification in Southern, single-party politics during the latter half of the nineteenth century.²⁸

Perpetuating the Myth of the Lost Cause:

It is no secret among academics that memory creation in the South following the Civil War was not a simple process. In fact, as W. Fitzhugh Brundage's *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity* brings to light, the South contained numerous memories and identities that competed for acceptance: white and black, male and female, gays and straights, Hispanic, Anglo, Appalachian, Cajun, and Native American. For instance, Kathleen Clark describes how African Americans used Emancipation Day celebrations during Reconstruction to "promote their own interpretations of history...that variously stressed both the memory of slavery and the evolution of black progress" while at the turn of

28. Baker, *What Reconstruction Meant*, 69.

the twentieth century a new class of black leaders was forming behind the NAACP and intellectuals such as W.E.B. Dubois and Booker T. Washington.²⁹ Even later in the twentieth century—after such major events as the Progressive movement, the Spanish-American War, and World War I had shifted memory in the United States to a less polarized, more nationalistic focus—intellectuals such as U.B. Phillips, Kenneth Stamp, Stanley Elkins, Eugene Genovese, and Herbert Gutman consistently challenged the states’ rights interpretation of the war, reframed the benignity of the peculiar institution and romanticism of the South, and worked diligently to redefine white supremacy and race relations as the “central theme of Southern history” (an academic trend that has its roots in the new breed of Southern historian that emerged in the South during the 1890s).³⁰ Thus, Americans of all

29. Kathleen Clark, “Celebrating Freedom: Emancipation Day Celebrations and African American Memory in the Early Reconstruction South,” in *Where These Memories Grow*, 125; Kathleen Clark, “Making History: African American Commemorative Celebrations in Augusta, Georgia, 1865-1913,” in *Monuments to the Lost Cause*, 46-60, 125; Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, “Redeeming Southern Memory: The Negro Race History, 1874-1915,” in *Where These Memories Grow*, 184. For primary sources written by Booker T. Washington—in which he argues for Southern economic regeneration through industry, reconciliation with the North, and racial harmony via segregation—refer to *The Future of the American Negro* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1899) and *Up From Slavery* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1901). For primary sources covering the effects of white supremacy on African Americans written by W.E.B. Dubois refer to “The Study of the Negro Problems,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 11 (1898): 1-23, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1903), and Dubois’s extensive Atlanta University studies on the Southern Negro conducted between 1897 and 1910. For an extensive account of the founding of the NAACP in 1909—which W.E.B. Dubois was key—and the association’s role in promoting the interests of African Americans through vigorous anti-lynching campaigns at the turn of the century, refer to Charles Flint Kellogg, *NAACP: A History of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1909-1920*, vol. 1 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

30. For a good reference to the anti-romantic interpretations of the Civil War and the Old South that began with the South’s first full-fledged intelligentsia in the 1890s refer to Bruce Clayton’s *The Savage Ideal: Intolerance and Intellectual Leadership in the South, 1890-1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972). He argues that the Lost Cause was ultimately perpetuated by this historiography due to the overtly racist way that the historians went about their writing; For U.B. Phillips’ challenge to the Lost Cause’s assertion that slavery an efficient institution in the early twentieth century refer to “The Decadence of the Plantation System,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 35 (1910) and “The Central Theme of Southern History,” *American Historical Review* 34 (1928). For Kenneth Stamp’s challenge to the Lost Cause’s assertion that slavery was ultimately benign and welcomed by passive slaves refer to *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989). For Eugene D. Genovese’s studies on the inefficiency of slavery, the damaging effects of paternalism in slavery and the slaves ability to mold a unique culture in order to hold on to their humanity refer to *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and the Society of the Slave South* (Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 1965) and *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976). For Herbert Gutman’s anti-Lost Cause assessment

types proclaimed distinct versions of themselves, their nation, and of liberty that differed from the Lost Cause myth while, in the case of African Americans, occupying previously prohibited public spaces within a society that predominantly looked at blacks as incompetent savages. For instance, a racially charged article from 1868 clearly depicts African American derision of the Lost Cause by means of a “grand parade” that contained speeches, salutes to the Lincoln Memorial, and female dress that was meant to represent the “Goddess of Liberty” that all seemed to irritate the article’s white author.³¹ But despite the multitudes of what Bruce Baker calls “countermemories,” the Lost Cause antithesis created by African Americans, other minority groups, and many notable Southern historians was not able “to mount a credible challenge” to Lost Cause white supremacy until at least the 1950s, and even then did not prove truly redemptive as much of their message struggled to gain popular support.

The strength of the Lost Cause was possible for many reasons, especially through child socialization as the educational initiatives of the newly founded Southern Educational Board made the public schools of the early twentieth century more readily available to Southern families. But despite increased student attendance and teacher regulations, the curriculum initiatives were largely seized by whites after the 1896 ruling in *Plessy v.*

Ferguson, thereby making the content of the school curriculum heavily weighted toward a

that slaves resisted the institution of slavery and, in many ways, “beneficial” western values refer to *Slavery and the Numbers Game: A Critique of ‘Time on the Cross’* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2003) and *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New Jersey: Blackwell, 1976). For Stanley Elkins’ assertions to the damaging effects of slavery on the quality of life for Africans and African Americans refer to *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1959). Quote on U.B. Phillips found in John David Smith and John C. Inscoe, eds., *Ulrich Bonnell Phillips: A Southern Historian and His Critics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 10.

31. “Emancipation Day—The Grand Parade of the Coloured Population,” from the *Daily National Intelligencer*, April 17, 1868.

Lost Cause agenda. For instance, rudimentary children's story books and academic history books alike were commissioned by former Confederates to perpetuate old master-slave stereotypes that they saw as "true to the South" as Northern resources were cast aside. A Lost Cause dichotomy—portraying the Old South as a place where white men were the high-status social group relative to African Americans and women—was forced on a new generation of Southerners as it was relegated to their childhood curriculums.³² But the socialization of the South's children was by no means the only stronghold that the Lost Cause maintained. Radical groups such as the Red Shirts and KKK retained political and symbolic power, New South universities such as Sewanee and Washington & Lee became indoctrination centers for Lost Cause thought in the South, and many African American authorities maintained similar assertions to those of whites in several instances.³³ In other words, through those means and well into the twentieth century, white Southerners were more successful in labeling "incendiary" and "conciliatory" African American

32. Kristina DuRocher, *Raising Racists: The Socialization of White Children in the Jim Crow South* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2011). For evidence concerning how pervasive Lost Cause ideals (such as white supremacy, white paternalism, and the benefits of slavery to the African American race) were in Southern textbooks consult National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, *Anti-Negro Propaganda in School Textbooks* (New York: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1939); Lawrence D. Reddick, "Racial Attitudes in American History Textbooks of the South," *Journal of Negro History* 19 (1934), 237; Robert Burns Eleazer, *School Books and Racial Antagonism: A Study of Omissions and Inclusions That Make for Misunderstanding* (Atlanta: Executive Committee Conference on Education and Race Relations, 1937); Mary Elizabeth Carpenter, *The Treatment of the American Negro in American History School Textbooks: A Comparison of Changing Textbook Content, 1826 to 1939, With Developing Scholarship in the History of the Negro in the United States* (Menasha: Banta, 1941). And for an example of the states' rights interpretation of the Civil War refer to Lawton Bryan Evans, *The Essential Facts of American History* (New York: Benj. H. Sanborn & Co., 1920), 349, 364, 367-369. The above sources were used in DuRocher, *Raising Racists*, 35-60.

33. Baker, *What Reconstruction Meant*, 21, 44-64, 95; Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 139-160. The most notable former Confederate to serve at Washington and Lee University was General Robert E. Lee himself. He served as president of the university from 1865 until his death, in 1870, prompting the name change from Washington University. Concerning Booker T. Washington, he is the most notable African American authority who promoted such ideas as he supported the New South Creed on the basis of Southern economic regeneration through industry, reconciliation with the North, and racial harmony and advancement built on segregation. Though he was not sympathetic to white ideology, he was a realist and believed that segregation provided the best avenue for African Americans to achieve independence and equality.

authorities—marginalizing the former and acknowledging the latter—thus shaping popular memory of the Civil War, the South, and Emancipation Day to the white advantage.³⁴ Even if this was as simple as former Confederates staffing the journalism and law departments at Washington & Lee University, or authoring books expressing Lost Cause viewpoints that became readily available for children before they were ready for higher education, historian David Blight’s contention remains: “those who can create the dominant historical narrative, [and] those who can own the public memory, will achieve political and cultural power” and the right to forge historical discourse—which was accomplished by the dominant Southern white class.³⁵

But by far the most pervasive accelerator of the Lost Cause myth in Southern memory was popular culture—due to the fact that many Southern people lacked significant access to intellectual and political outlets such as institutions of higher education and local government. As early as the 1870s, Southern antebellum and postbellum writers alike were elevated under the glory of the Lost Cause—for example, Paul Hamilton Hayne (“the last literary Cavalier”) and Sidney Lanier’s poems about fallen Confederates and Southern beauty.³⁶ However, most important, is poet Henry Timrod (often referred to as the Poet Laureate of the Confederacy in his home state of South Carolina). Even though he died in 1867, Timrod’s close friend and fellow poet, Hayne, posthumously edited and published a collection of Timrod’s most famous poems in 1873. Included was “Ode, Sung on the Occasion of Decorating the Graves of the Confederate Dead at Magnolia Cemetery,

34. Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 58, 74, 85, 114.

35. Baker, *What Reconstruction Meant*, 88; David Blight, “Epilogue,” in *Where These Memories Grow*, 349; Clark, “Making History,” 46-60.

36. Information heralding Paul Hamilton Hayne and Sidney Lanier found in John Calvin Metcalf, *American Literature* (Richmond: B.F. Johnson Publishing Company, 1914), 273-282, 289-294, quote on 294.

Charleston, South Carolina, 1867” and “The Cotton Boll.” Referred to more commonly as “Ode,” the former is Timrod’s most direct link to the Lost Cause as it is charged with emotion and served as one of the first eulogies for dead Confederates.³⁷ “Sleep sweetly in your humble graves; / Sleep, Martyrs of a fallen cause,” the poem reads. “Stoop, angels, hither from the skies! / There is no holier spot of ground / Than where defeated valor lies...”³⁸ That, however, is not to diminish the romance and nostalgia of “The Cotton Boll” that also appealed to advocates of the Cause. In it, Timrod wrote in fear that the South’s “seas of billowy gold” and “sacred fields of peace” would be destroyed by the encroaching war. Not even “Carolina”—adopted as the South Carolina state song in 1911 and discussed the exulting of Confederate dead and Northern despotism—could equal the imagery and anti-Northern opinion of “The Cotton Boll”:

“Oh, help us Lord! To Roll the Crimson Flood

Back on its course...

Northward, strike with us! till the Goth shall cling

To his own blasted alter-stones, and crave

37. *Ibid.*, 283-289. Hayne’s and Timrod’s friendship and Timrod’s Southern legacy is well documented in Metchalf’s *American Literature*, but “Ode, Sung on the Occasion of Decorating the Graves of the Confederate Dead at Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston, South Carolina, 1867,” inspired numerous adaptations that carry legacies of their own. For instance, Mary Ashley Townsend’s 1874 “Ode to the Confederate Dead, Buried in Greenwood Cemetery” was dedicated to the Women’s Benevolent Association of Louisiana and read: “Meet here to tell the story / Of heroes’ lives, that passed from earth / On Southern fields of glory... So would it seem the noble hearts / That wrought this work of love, / Required no earthly change to fit / Them for the realms above... Oh, Marble Sentry! Guard them well, / These Children of a nation,— / We leave them to the stars and thee, / Grand in their desolation.” The above poem is found in The Confederated Southern Memorial Association, *History of the Confederated Memorial Associations of the South*, 178-180.

38. Henry Timrod, “Ode, Sung on the Occasion of Decorating the Graves of the Confederate Dead at Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston, South Carolina, 1867,” in Paul H. Payne, ed., *The Poems of Henry Timrod* (New York: E.J. Hale & Son, 1873), 210-211.

Mercy; and we shall grant it...³⁹

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, poets like Timrod and Hayne would join color writer Thomas Nelson Page, “the exalter nonpareil of the Old South” and alumnus of Washington & Lee University, as major purveyors of Lost Cause tenets to the larger Southern audience.⁴⁰ But while Page wrote mostly of old distinguished Southern families, plantation life, and the kind relations between master and slave, he also found an ally and friend in the most heralded proponent of the New South—journalist Henry Woodfin Grady—due to Grady’s anti-apologetic attitude regarding the Confederacy. Together the two spoke not only of the glorious antebellum years and the sacrifices that the South was forced to make during war, but also used the Lost Cause to look forward as a region separate from the socioeconomic paradigm of the plantation system that was built on slave and plantation labor. As Grady and Page both declared, the New South “was simply the Old South with its energies directed into new lines.”⁴¹ But unlike slavery, writes Grady, white supremacy “must be maintained forever, and the domination of the negro race resisted at all points and at all hazards.”⁴² The New South under these popular writers was a revival of the Old South, a simple adaptation of the Lost Cause that enabled it to further cement itself in popular memory well into the twentieth century. Grady and Page, like many Southerners living

39. Henry Timrod, “The Cotton Boll,” in Hayne, *The Poems of Henry Timrod*, 125-131. Timrod’s negative opinion of the Union is evident in the last lines of the poem. By associating them with Goths and alter stones, Timrod is correlating the North with pagans that will corrupt Southern culture and the landscape. The South, however, will find it in their hearts to grant mercy once their enemies have been defeated (a notion that it can be assumed that Timrod did not believe a Northern value).

40. Metcalf, *American Literature*, 333.

41. Thomas Nelson Page, *The Old South: Essays Social and Political* (New York: Charles Scribner’s and Sons, 1892), 6.

42. Henry W. Grady, “The New South” delivered to the New England Club of New York on December 22, 1886, in Joel Chandler Harris, ed., *The Life of Henry Grady, Including his Writing and Speeches* (New York: 1890,) 91, 83.

during their time, represented a new generation that had “inherited the spirit of the old” to which they were loyal and eager servants.⁴³

The writings and the orations of Thomas Nelson and Henry Grady were influential and had longevity as their themes are still visible in literature during the 1930s. The most noticeable in popular histories was undoubtedly that by Douglas Southall Freeman, his highly acclaimed and exhaustively researched biography of Robert E. Lee. Many critics and historians referred to this 1936 work as a Lost Cause interpretation of the war and the General. This is due entirely to the Lost Cause tenets that he follows: the lauding of Lee; criticism of his subordinates, especially General James Longstreet for losing the war at Gettysburg due to his incompetence; and cementing Pollard and Early’s top-down, Virginia-centric interpretation of the war in the twentieth century. But the biography’s crowning achievement was to create a bridge between academic and popular culture in the mid-twentieth century that overshadowed every Civil War biography that followed.⁴⁴

43. Quote from “Henry W. Grady Dead,” *Albany News and Advertiser*, in Harris, *The Life of Henry Grady*, 552. For additional information on the role of Grady and Nelson in perpetuating the Lost Cause into the New South refer to Metcalf, *American Literature*, 331-335, 307-308 and Paul M. Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking* (Montgomery: New South Books, 2002), 27, 173. For primary sources by Henry W. Grady refer to his speeches “The South and Her Problem” delivered at the Dallas, Texas, State Fair on October 26, 1867, in Harris, *The Life of Henry Grady*, 100 and “Before the Bay State Club—1889,” in Harris, *The Life of Henry Grady*, 200. For color writings by Thomas Nelson Page refer to *Marse Chan: A Tale of Old Virginia* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1892) and *Meh Lady* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1884).

44. Douglas S. Freeman, *R.E. Lee A Biography*, 4 Vols., (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1936); Douglas Southall Freeman, *Lee’s Lieutenants*, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1942-44). Douglas Southall Freeman was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, 1866. As he grew up just down the street from the residence of former Confederate General Jubal Early, he was highly influenced by his surroundings and took an abounding interest in Confederate history before obtaining his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University. His first major success was a book titled *Lee’s Dispatches*—published after he found lost wartime communications between Robert E. Lee and Confederate president Jefferson Davis while working for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*—that resulted in his becoming an overnight sensation and landing a deal with New York publisher Charles Scribner’s Sons to write a series of pieces, including the four volume biography, on General Lee. But despite *R. E. Lee: A Biography* winning a Pulitzer Prize, many of his critics still regarded his scholarship as a Lost Cause interpretation of the Civil War. For more information regarding the life of Douglas Southall Freeman and his impact on the Lost Cause refer to David E. Johnson, *Douglas Southall Freeman* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 2002);; Richard Harwell, *Lee: An Abridgement in One Volume of the Four-Volume R.E. LEE by Douglas Southall Freeman* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1961).

Popular histories, however, were only a small fraction of the Lost Cause rhetoric that permeated twentieth century popular culture. As the cinema industry grew, short stories, novels, and popular histories such as Freeman's were no longer the only outlets for memory building in the South. No longer were written words the preeminent perpetuators of memory, as any person who had the means could sit in front of a movie screen and watch effortlessly as films displayed the romance and stunning imagery of the Lost Cause's Old South and Civil War. Nowhere was this more pertinent, with regard to the South, than the legacy of nobility created by *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Gone with the Wind* (1939). According to Thomas Dixon Jr., his novels *Leopard's Spots* (1903) and *The Clansman* (1905) were attempts to "teach the north" about the depredations suffered in the South both before and after the war. But it was not until he met up with the young, ambitious filmmaker D.W. Griffith, in New York, that the two men's similar visions of a fallen antebellum South—comprised of chivalrous men, genteel Southern damsels, and contented slaves—could become a cultural reality imprinted on the historical conscience of the nation.⁴⁵

The Birth of a Nation is the result of Dixon and Griffith's landmark collaboration (based on Dixon's *The Clansman*) and was acclaimed as a cinematic and historical masterpiece by movie critics of the early-twentieth century—which implies that if the Lost Cause interpretation of the Civil War had not yet been accepted throughout the nation, it was after the movie. "Piedmont, South Carolina," the opening credits read, "where life runs in a quaintly way that is to be no more" as the old South was destroyed under the heel of the

45. D.W. Griffith made scores of melodramas during the early 1900s. Most, if not all, pertaining to the Civil War followed the same structure: nostalgic reminisces of the old South with brave Confederate soldiers spurred on by Northern advances and loyal, well cared for slaves willing to lay down their lives for their masters. In one such drama noted by David Blight, an older slave goes so far as to hide his master's will in a tree because he cannot face its manumission clause.

North's "millions of sturdy people and their exhaustless resources."⁴⁶ The movie then leads viewers to believe that battered Southern soldiers were then forced to return to their homes and faithful slaves, while Northerners, scalawags, and freedmen tore down their immaculate society in ignorant bliss. By the end of *The Birth of a Nation*, however, Dixon and Griffith had captured the sentiment of thousands as they either portrayed blacks as submissive and loyal while under the guidance of their white masters or beastly and animalistic while free. But whether slaves or freedmen, all blacks were less intelligent and inferior to whites in every way. Only former Confederates, who had been "baptized in glory," could band together and save the South from "Negro Rule" and keep antebellum white supremacy intact.⁴⁷ Eventually, as Dixon's book and film suggest, the "Invisible Empire" of the Ku Klux Klan rose from "the field of Death" to save "the life of a people" by removing African Americans from politics. This was the Lost Cause that had been achieved politically by the Red Shirts decades earlier, but now, with the help of massive endorsements and advertising campaigns, *The Birth of a Nation* imprinted it the historical memory of the American populace.⁴⁸

However, carrying a longer legacy than *The Birth of a Nation*—due to the fact that its less overt racism made it more redeemable in the years after—is Margaret Mitchell's 1936 publication *Gone with the Wind* and the 1939 film of the same name. The widely popular and critically acclaimed novel and motion picture chronicle the story of Scarlett O'Hara, the well-to-do daughter of a large plantation owner in Clayton County, Georgia, and her experiences

46. D.W. Griffith and Thomas Dixon Jr., *The Birth of a Nation*, DVD (New York: Epoch Producing Co., 1998) [orig. rel. 1915].

47. Thomas Dixon Jr., "Personal Message to the Reader," in *The Clansman*, page not numbered.

48. Ibid.; Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 111, 394-396; Thomas Dixon Jr., *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1905), 4.

at the onset of the Civil War, Sherman's March to the Sea, and attempts at regaining her wealth during Reconstruction. And like *The Birth of a Nation*, Howard's film (in which Mitchell was deeply involved), which Alan Nolan refers to essentially as a statement of the Lost Cause, wastes no time conveying its memory as opening images display pristine Southern landscapes, plantation homes, lush crops and livestock, and the Confederate flag being flown over the statehouse in Atlanta as the following words scroll the screen:

There was a land of Cavaliers and Cotton Fields called the Old South... Here in this pretty world Gallantry took its last bow... Here was the last ever to be seen of the Knights and their Ladies Fair, of Master and of Slave... Look for it only in books, for it is no more than a dream remembered. A Civilization gone with the wind...⁴⁹

Lost Cause depictions of Confederate soldiers, the paternal power of men, dainty Southern belles, and the resource superiority of the North also do not elude *Gone with the Wind*. At first, soon-to-be Confederate warriors resonate bravery and excitement as they prepare for the oncoming war, but after returning from battling an enemy that was better equipped with "factories, ship yards, coal mines, and a fleet [that could] bottle up [Southern] harbors," as Rhett Butler asserts in the movie, the brave men of the South were left ragged, forlorn, wounded, and in few numbers. The North simply would not allow the South "to secede in peace," the text reads, "and grimly they returned to the desolation that was once a land of grace and plenty."⁵⁰

49. Gallagher and Nolan, *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 30-31. Block quote from Sidney Howard and Victor Fleming, *Gone with the Wind*, DVD (Burbank: Warner Bros. Entertainment, 2009) [orig. rel. 1939]. The images of antebellum Southern beauty at the beginning of part one are used by the film as a contrast to the beginning of part two that depicts Georgia as a hellish inferno after the North invaded.

50. Howard and Fleming, *Gone with the Wind*, DVD.

Gone with the Wind's portrayal of African Americans and slavery is again the most controversial as it, like the Lost Cause of what initiated the Civil War, only uses the peculiar institution as the backdrop to a story about other things. In this setting, like in *The Birth of a Nation*, slavery is essentially portrayed as a benign institution, and the slaves themselves are seen as less-intelligent and submissive to their white masters.⁵¹ Aside from the stereotype of slaves being content and indebted to their master-slave relationship, the most obvious stereotype in all of Mitchell's and Dixon's novels and movies is the Mammy—an old, rotund, and aggressive house maid—as she plays on a sense of nostalgia that was already prevalent in Southern fiction. In other words, the memory of Mammy was a pleasant one. A memory that a 1915 children's book titled *My Old Black Mammy* said only “lived on in the tales that are told of those ‘dear dread days beyond recall,’” and in faithfulness and devotion, “left a lasting imprint on human service” that would be lauded by the sons of former masters and “the old negroes” themselves—“endless and absolute.”⁵² Mammy, as well as field slaves, was utterly devoted to her master and seemingly shunned the idea of freedom to remain subservient and content as a lesser individual of a “natural order” in the memory of the South.⁵³

51. Female slaves were especially stereotyped with Lost Cause concepts. Not only were they submissive to Scarlett (and she was allowed to hit them), but male characters often looked down upon them with inferiority as if they were cute children attempting to understand the larger world around them. At one point in the movie, Scarlett's father is addressing the way in which she treats Mammy: “You must be firm with inferiors, but you must be gentle; especially with darkies.” Ibid.

52. Ibid., Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936), 844; James W. Elliot, *My Old Black Mammy* (New York: The Man Message Corporation, 1915), page not numbered.

53. James Elliot's 1915 children's book writes the following of the Mammy stereotype: “Way back in the dark days of the Early Sixties, regrettable tho it was—men fought, bled, and died for the freedom of the negro—her freedom!—and she stood by and did her *duty* to the last ditch—It was and is her life to *serve*, and she has done it well. While shot and shell thundered to release the shackles of slavery from her body and her soul—she loved, fought for, and *protected*—Us who held her in bondage, her ‘Marster’ and her ‘Missus!’” Page of above quote not numbered.

Despite NAACP protests surrounding both movies, most white Southerners turned to these films and books for their educations on the Old South and the Civil War. Famous playwright Larry L. King (best known for the Broadway hit “The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas”) recalls that he had never heard of African American leaders such as W.E.B. Dubois or their achievements during his childhood in the 1930s. “Nowhere was it hinted that black people had played sustaining roles in our national history or made significant contributions to our culture,” wrote King. Instead, he and his white peers “marched to the Yucca Theater to be educated by *Gone with the Wind*” during an American history class.⁵⁴ This is evidence of Carolyn Perry’s and Mary Louise Weaks’ contention that *The Birth of a Nation* and *Gone with the Wind* were the best reference points for subsequent writers (both white and black) of the American South during the twentieth century.⁵⁵ The impact of those two movies can even be seen in almost every subsequent depiction of the Civil War in movies and novels (see Mackinlay Kantor’s *Lee and Grant at Appomattox*, Michael Shaara’s *The Killer Angels*, and the films *Shenandoah* and *Gettysburg*), popular biographies and histories, 1950s and 1960s Rock and Roll (such as Elvis Presley’s *Love Me Tender*, a derivative of Civil War era song *Aura Lea*) and modern-day reenactments. Those two movies have created a “usable past” which Americans can employ over and over to reflect the biases that exist in their own memories and agendas. For instance, as historian Gary Gallagher argues, nearly every interpretation of the Civil War during the twentieth century has reused Dixon’s and Mitchell’s historical interpretation by treating Lee and Southern patriarchs more fairly than Grant and the North. Appearances of President Grant on screen are minimal compared to

54. Larry L. King, *Confessions of a White Racist* (New York: Viking Press, 1971), 14-17.

55. Carolyn Perry and Mary Louise Weaks, *The History of Southern Women’s Literature* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), 261.

Lee, and, if not being portrayed poorly as a haggard drunk, then his character is merely a background figure.⁵⁶ The Civil War in particular, writes historian Jim Cullen, has become “a banner in which millions of Americans can rally, a point of reference” that can be recreated and participated in like a “form of communion” that is best served from a Southern perspective.⁵⁷

And while there are examples of popular culture that have derided *Gone with the Wind*'s interpretation of the Old South and the war (see Alex Haley's 1976 publication *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*, the subsequent T.V. miniseries of the same name, and the 1989 Civil War epic *Glory*), the Lost Cause has remained vigilant in Southern memory.⁵⁸ In fact, one might argue as historians Gaines Foster and Alan Nolan, that “[t]he

56. For interpretations of President Grant in film see Griffith and Dixon, *The Birth of a Nation*; D.W. Griffith et al., *Abraham Lincoln*, DVD (Los Angeles: Miracle Pictures, 2002) [orig. rel. 1930]; John Ford et al. *The Horse Soldiers*, DVD (Los Angeles: MGM, 2001) [orig. rel. 1959]; William A. Fraker and Ivan Goff, *The Legend of the Lone Ranger*, DVD (Los Angeles: Lions Gate, 2008) [orig. rel. 1981]; Cecil B. DeMille, Walter DeLeon, et al., *Union Pacific*, VHS (Los Angeles: Universal Studios, 1995) [orig. rel. 1939]. President Grant's realistic sobriety, reluctance to use firearms, and aversion to profanity remains a subject of another study, but his mythic depiction on film is scarce (especially compared to Robert E. Lee) and wrongfully negative, as espoused by the films listed above. For instance, in *The Birth of a Nation*, Grant appears in only one scene puffing a cigar and walking arrogantly around a grim, yet dignified, General Lee. In D.W. Griffith's first sound film, *Abraham Lincoln*, Grant is shown in more than one scene puffing cigars and drinking whiskey, much to the chagrin of Mary Todd Lincoln. He also takes on the role as a heartless warmonger that issues a call of severe punishment for General Lee and Jefferson Davis. Even as late as the 1981 film *The Lone Ranger*, Grant was cast as a rugged, swearing, ornery individual that has seemed to enjoy guns and explosions. As a drunk, Grant has been depicted as the chief architect of Southern destruction during the war throughout twentieth century film. Also, he appears as a corrupt president that aided Robber Barons in crooked deals regarding the railroad in a 1939 film *Union Pacific*.

57. Jim Cullen, *The Civil War in Popular Culture: A Reusable Past* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1995), 199; Gallagher, “Jubal A. Early,” 51. In fact, no novel or film, like the litany that the topic of Gen. Lee has accrued, has been made about the Union General Grant. Historian Gary Gallagher attributes this lack of significant Grant novels and films to the fact that no market existed for it. This is probably due to his reputation as a drunkard and pre-war failure that was contrasted against with the self-made, Christian image of Robert E. Lee. The scandals during his presidency also probably served to diminish his positive legacy.

58. Alex Haley and James Lee, *Roots*, 30th Anniversary Edition DVD (Burbank, Warner Home Video, 2007) [orig. rel. 1977]; Kevin Jarre and Edward Zwick, *Glory*, Special Edition DVD (Culver City: TriStar Home Video, 2000) [orig. rel. 1989]; Herman Gray, *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for Blackness* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 78-79; John Gray, *Blacks in Film and Television, a Pan-African Bibliography of Films, Filmmakers, and Performers* (New York: Greenwood, 1990). *Roots*—a multi-generational T.V. miniseries about the horrors faced by African and African American slaves in the South—and *Glory*—an epic about the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, the first all-African American regiment—

Lost Cause represents the national memory of the Civil War, [and has] been substituted for the [official] history of the war.”⁵⁹ Perhaps Rhett Butler said it best when Scarlett pleads for him not to join the Confederate army after the fall of Atlanta, a defining point of *Gone with the Wind*. He replies, “Maybe [I join] because I have a weakness for lost causes once they’re really lost.”⁶⁰ Perhaps so too does the United States. For it is surely true, that during the twentieth century’s Civil Rights Movement and via popular Southern Civil War reenactments, Americans used the Lost Cause to recollect a mythic version of the Old South and slavery that perpetuated the ideas behind the horrific social hierarchies that existed in the days before the Civil War.

But how unique was the South’s response? As has been noted, post-war Germany remains its most appropriate comparison despite the vast differences between cultures, nations, and circumstances. But the fact is, both responded politically (though under very different circumstances), artistically, and socially in ways that overtly portrayed themselves in the best light possible with romantic interpretations of dark histories and human atrocities. Thus both can be compared on the grounds that they maintained pride in their regions and cultures by either omitting, or remembering fondly, the ways in which they had previously lived and the wars that were brought on them by an outside force. These comparisons can be seen on both the landscape as well as in books, movies, and political statements and will be referred to accordingly. Both societies’ historical memories, taken conjunctively, can reveal

provide the most notable popular culture derisions of the Lost Cause. Neither piece portrays the Old South or the institutional slavery as positive, and instead represents the most pervasive attempts to provide a Northern or African American perspective in modern years. The impact of these movies becomes especially clear when considering the amount of acclaim they received: *Roots* alone boasted around 140 million viewers, nine Emmy Awards, and one Golden Globe, and still ranks in the 100 most watched television shows of all-time; whereas, *Glory* racked up twelve awards (three of which were Oscars).

59. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 89; Gallagher and Nolan, *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 13.

60. Howard and Fleming, *Gone with the Wind*, DVD.

desperately important lessons for Germany, the United States, and the world as modern countries seek to move progressively into the twenty-first century and reconcile the notorious events in human history.

HISTORICAL MEMORY OF WORLD WAR II AND THE NAZIS IN GERMAN SOCIETY AND LANDSCAPE

“My biography politicized me, forcibly, sometimes almost against my will.” These are the words of Heinrich Böll, one of Germany’s most widely read authors and Nobel Prize winner. Born in December of 1917, Böll claimed that his earliest memory was watching, from his mother’s arms, defeated German soldiers return to their homes in Cologne at the end of World War I. And after the war’s resolution, he watched Germany’s democratic Weimar Republic eventually succumb to Adolph Hitler and the National Socialist party (Nazi party) following political and economic instability within the Republic and an anti-democratic process that never saw Hitler win the popular vote.¹ Unlike the Weimar Republic, the Nazi era focused heavily on national unity and the needs of a strong dictatorship as it sought to navigate the onset of the worldwide Great Depression and Germany’s immense debt ordered by the Treaty of Versailles’ reparation clauses to the Allies. War, defeat, hyperinflation of the German Mark, a brief respite during the *Goldene Zwanziger* (Golden Twenties) when the German economy grew, and the economic crisis during the 1930s were the conditions under which Böll grew up—and they influenced him heavily. He understood well the national embarrassment that losing a war could engender and, through observation of the Weimar Republic, the need for a strong commitment to democracy at an early age. As a result of his

1. Hitler’s anti-democratic ascendance as Chancellor is complicated however. He never staged a coup, but instead relied on the Nazi party holding enough seats in Parliament (288 seats or 43.9% of the vote), negotiations with smaller right-wing parties, and the prevention of communists and twenty-one social democrats from attending the March 23, 1933, vote that passed the Enabling Act that ensured Hitler power to pass any law without parliamentary approval. Mary Fulbrook; *A Concise History of Germany*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 179-180.

life experiences and insightfulness molded by his deeply religious parents, Böll opted for a different path than most of his peers by despising Nazism and refusing to join the Hitler Youth during the 1930s. But this reality was quickly shattered when he was conscripted into the *Wehrmacht* (German armed forces) in late 1939 where he served dutifully—while being wounded four times—in France, Romania, Hungary, and the Soviet Union until his capture by American forces in 1945.²

Like virtually all German men of his generation, Heinrich Böll was forced to fight for the Nazi cause. But his life after being released from an Allied prisoner of war camp was far from the norm. He picked up writing at a time when the German language was under intense scrutiny due to the connotations stirred up by common words such as *Vaterland* (fatherland), *loyalität* (loyalty), *lager* (camp), and *gas*; and produced a litany of stories that engaged the catastrophe of World War II and captured the emotions and motivations of common German soldiers. But unlike most German writers of the mid-twentieth century who overlooked the ordinary German's dealings with the Nazis, Heinrich Böll was more in tune with Southern authors of the late nineteenth century that directly aligned their characters with their recent history. However, even though Böll did not separate all of his main characters from the Nazis, he did not romanticize them either: instead he used them as an outlet to hold himself and all of his fellow countrymen accountable for the depredations against humanity in which they took part.³ In fact, memory is a common theme that saturates Böll's entire body of work

2. Robert C. Conard, *Understanding Heinrich Böll* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 1-3, xvi-xvii.

3. In Heinrich Böll's novel *A Soldier's Legacy*, trans. Leila Vennewitz (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1994), written in 1948 but first published in 1982, common German soldiers are held accountable for their actions during the war. The story revolves a cold, ambitious murderer named Schnecker who left a wake of bodies as he relentlessly pursued a higher rank and status during the war (the analogy is to the trail a slug, which is the translation of his name, leaves as it traverses an area), and uses the same ambition to quickly acquire a law degree in the years after. This process happens much to the chagrin of a few of his former compatriots, who

(either by the protagonist's firm grasp of it or the antagonist's lack thereof) and can be seen in one of the most poignant moments in *A Soldier's Legacy*: "[U]nderstand that we are not born to forget... We are born to remember. To remember rather than forget is our job."⁴

Böll's novels (*A Soldier's Legacy*, *Billiards at Half-past Nine*, and *The Unguarded House*) indicate that he, even during the late 1940s, fought the predominant tendency to forget Hitler and the Nazis. Instead, his war novels juxtaposed "good" Germans (those who were forced to fight in the war to evade capture by the Allies yet maintained "decency" and despised the Nazis) with "bad" Germans (opportunistic soldiers who used ambition, ruthlessness, and murder to further their personal glory and the Nazi cause) and placed the evils committed by both the Nazi regime and all ordinary Germans at the forefront of his writing.⁵ As a result, he has received as much criticism as acclaim, and Böll's work can now be read as an early corrective to the Bitburg sentiment that has maintained some popularity since the 1980s. The idea behind the Bitburg sentiment is mostly propagated by German conservatives and revisionist historians that focus solely on future achievements while overlooking past wrongs, namely the Holocaust, based on the notion that most people of the Nazi generation are dead and most current Germans were born after war. Böll's writing conversely argues, contends German literary historian Robert Conard, "that a nation, like an

like most of Böll's heroes, still contain a sense of decency that many lost during the war. This is Böll's political message to the German public: that the same opportunistic people who ruthlessly used violence and murder in WWII to ascend to higher ranks in the military will be the same people who will go largely unpunished and become lawyers, doctors, and politicians in the post-war era.

4. Conard, *Understanding Heinrich Böll*, 21-24; Böll, *A Soldier's Legacy*, 66.

5. Ibid; Heinrich Böll, *Billiards at Half-past Nine* (New York: Penguin, 1994); Heinrich Böll, *The Unguarded House* (New York: Arco, 1957).

individual, cannot live a healthy, productive life without a full memory intact. A selective memory is the disease of national amnesia.⁶

Heinrich Böll's confrontation with the role that average Germans, even those who loathed the Nazis, played in the tragedies of the Holocaust and World War II is most certainly not the norm in popular German memory during the mid-twentieth century. But it is indicative of the lesser side of a powerful dichotomy that was created in the German psyche after the war. According to historian Tony Judt, the side directly opposite Böll consisted of an "act of voluntary amnesia" that was necessary in both East and West Germany as Allied occupiers thrust, hypercritically, all blame for the death and destruction of World War II on the German people.⁷ Each German citizen, therefore, had to either forget everything they previously knew about themselves, their friends and neighbors, their nation; or they had to risk criticism and painful, emotional memories. The *Stunde Null* (Zero Hour), or the idea to start German society anew following the war, became a reasonable mission.⁸ But as Germany was occupied by Allied nations who also too conveniently ignored their own dealings with Hitler's regime, the decision to "forget" became easy—and perhaps subconscious on some level—as Germans sought to progress and move into the future under Allied governance and the idealistic *Stunde Null*.

6. Conard, *Understanding Heinrich Böll*, 23.

7. Tony Judt, "The Past is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe," *Daedalus* 121 (1992): 95.

8. The *Stunde Null*, or Zero Hour, typically refers to midnight of May 8th, 1945, the day World War II officially came to an end in Germany. However, in the years immediately following the war, the phrase became associated with the idea that the past is over and thus does not carry any influence over into the present and future. It became prominent in German politics, literature, and popular culture under the campaign to forget. Geoffrey J. Giles, ed., *Stunde Null: The End and the Beginning Fifty Years Ago* (Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1997), 5-8. At first the *Stunde Null* appears to be a comparable movement to the American South's Lost Cause. However, unlike the unquestioned ideas behind the Lost Cause that fully confronted the Civil War, *Stunde Null* was harder for most Germans to fully digest—as it is impossible to block out their history, socialization, and influence of a recent war on their psyches—and thus failed. Southerners, on the other hand, accepted the events of the Civil War but made them into myths subsequently. Regardless of the *Stunde Null*'s failure, the ideas behind it remained and helped propel insistent forgetfulness.

As each European country involved in World War II was then forced, in one way or another, to confront their positions in Nazi-era history, German remembrance became interestingly contingent on the positions chosen by other nations. European memory of the war became “that of things done to ‘us’ by Germans” during the war, or the “recollection of things done by ‘us’ to [the Germans] after the war.”⁹ Therefore, Germans were largely identified as the absolute wrong-doer, especially after the pan-European expulsion of the *Volksdeutsche* (German people) back to Germany by accord of the 1945 Potsdam Agreement and the immediate advance of the Nuremberg Trials.¹⁰ After all, if it were not for Nazi militarism and Hitler’s Final Solution there would have never been a war and no need for European cooperation with them. Total blame for the murders that took place in France, Belarus, Latvia, or any other European country for that matter, then rested on German shoulders—or at least was justified by their occupation throughout Europe—and absolved all other Nazi collaborators of their guilt.¹¹ The Germans were guilty; everyone else innocent: a memory that the Germans, too, used to build a sense of Nazi victimization that allowed them to exclude “regular Germans” from the events of their recent past.

Like in the American South, Germany’s loss in World War II caused a sense of embarrassment that engendered victimization throughout their society. Instead of the South

9. Judt, “The Past is Another Country,” 89.

10. This argument is made by Tony Judt in “The Past is Another Country.” The Potsdam Agreement was reached by the United States, United Kingdom, and Soviet Union at the Yalta Conference following World War II in order to decide how best to proceed with Germany’s future. They decided that the reconstruction of Germany would follow a tripartite occupation that would restore the nation’s borders to their pre-1937 state. The accord also included demilitarization, reparations, and the prosecution of war criminals in a series of trials that took place in the city of Nuremberg.

11. Judt, “The Past is Another Country,” 85-86. For further reading on European collaborations with the Nazis consult Hans Fredrik Dahl, *Quisling: A Study in Treachery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Michael Curtis, *Verdict on Vichy: Power and Prejudice in the Vichy France Regime* (New York: Arcade Publishers, 2002); David Gaunt, Paul Levine, and Laura Palosua, eds., *Collaboration and Resistance During the Holocaust: Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004).

overthrowing the United States Constitution and seceding from the Union, Hitler and the Nazi party superseded the Weimar Republic and started a war in which ordinary citizens were forced to take part to protect their homeland from outside invaders. But unlike the American South, Germans did not immediately resist the ideologies of their occupiers and instead chose to accept their presence and forget their recent past in lieu of glorifying it. The result was a myriad of cultural, historical, and political exposés that whitewashed German history, absolved ordinary citizens and soldiers of guilt, and hand-picked the events in which national pride should be felt. Not until years later, as was the case in the American South following the Civil War, was the romanticized German experience of World War II challenged by a new generation that believed the horrors of the Holocaust must be confronted.

Origins of Victimization:

Following World War II, the International Military Tribunal sought to prosecute the highest ranking political, military, and economic officials of Nazi Germany at Nuremberg in 1946. The tribunal intended to punish the leadership that significantly took part in furthering the National Socialist agenda through death or imprisonment. However, clear distinctions had to be made about who committed such crimes and a hierarchy developed that punished those most closely linked. So, were common soldiers, the *Wehrmacht* high command, and the *Schutzstaffel* (the SS, or, by direct translation, the German “defense corps”) equal in guilt, or did individuals with central roles in the Nazi regime make them more deserving of a harsher punishment? To provide some structure, and provide an answer to those difficult questions, the tribunal declared in 1946 that the Gestapo, SS, and *Sicherheitsdienst* (the SS’s “intelligence agency”; SD by abbreviation) to be inherently criminal organizations of the

Nazi party and guilty of “crimes against humanity” while absolving the *Wehrmacht* of such central responsibility. The official ruling on the *Wehrmacht*, along with the Allied Armies, was that they had merely committed “war crimes.” The Tribunal’s ruling is further muddied by the fact that it only managed to put twenty-one top Nazis on trial before it concluded.¹²

The implications of such a ruling, and lack of punishment, set an incredible precedent *vis-a-vis* German guilt: participation in German depredations was minimized and those that were committed were the actions of a select few that were central to Nazi organizations. Any excesses committed by the Nazi hierarchy or German army were merely the byproducts of war, national loyalty, and no different from Allied war crimes—a contention that is directly counter to Jürgen Förster’s analysis of the required reading pamphlets issued to the German army before the invasion of Poland in 1939. According to Förster, the titles of the pamphlets—“The Officer and Politics,” “The Army in the Third Reich,” and “The Battle for German Living Space” to name a few—allude to their content and the central role that the *Wehrmacht* was to play in Hitler’s Final Solution.¹³ But the actions taken by the German Army on occasions such as the 1940 Vinkt Massacre in Belgium, the August 1941 Byelaya Tserkov massacre in the Ukraine, and the routine selection of Jewish prisoners in Poland suggest that the *Wehrmacht* must have digested the anti-Semitic and anti-partisan themes of the propaganda pamphlets more completely than most German citizens cared to remember

12. The Avalon Project of Yale Law School, *Charter of the International Military Tribunal*, “Article 6,” <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/judlawre.asp> (accessed May 1, 2012).

13. Jürgen Förster, “Complicity or Entanglement? The Wehrmacht, the War and the Holocaust,” in Michael Berenbaum and Abraham Peck, *The Holocaust and History The Known, the Unknown, the Disputed and the Reexamined* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1998), 266-283.

following the war.¹⁴ One former member of the SS, August Hafner, remembered the horrendous actions of the *Wehrmacht* at Byelaya Tserkov vividly:

...Then Blobel [Haffner's superior officer] ordered me to have the children executed...The children were taken down from the tractor. They were lined up along the top of the grave and shot so that they fell into it. The wailing was indescribable. I shall never forget the scene throughout my life... I particularly remember a small fair-haired girl who took me by the hand. She too was shot later...Many children were hit four or five times before they died.¹⁵

But candid accounts such as the one above were not the norm after 1945 as *Wehrmacht* veterans viewed themselves as separate from the Nazi regime. In their memoirs, veterans claimed to have fought a “clean war” in the name of noble Prussian-German traditions, patriotism, honor and duty. National Socialism, they contended, had little influence on the army.¹⁶ Even claims of military gallantry became typical in post-war Germany, though this celebration was not quite to the levels of Confederate Civil War veterans. For example, the commander of the *Wehrmacht's* 12th Infantry Division commented that his division's “name,

14. Peter Lieb, *Conventional War or Nazi ideological war and anti-partisan warfare in France 1943/44* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2007), 19; Smuel Krakowski, “The Fate of Jewish Prisoners of War in the September 1939 Campaign,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 12 (1977): 300. Over the course of three days in 1940 in Vinkt Belgium, the *Wehrmacht* is reported to have executed 86 civilians after they looted farms, took hostages, and used them as human shields as locals attempted to revolt against them. Historian Peter Lieb estimates that around 600 civilians were executed in similar massacres throughout Belgium. Similar occurrences happened in Poland with regard to prisoners of war (POWs): 252 were executed at Sladów and an estimated 300 executions took place in Ciepiałów and Zambrów. According to Smuel Krakowski, Jewish POWs were often executed on the spot.

15. Ernst Klee, Willi Dressen and Volker Riess, eds., *The Good Old Days: The Holocaust as seen by its perpetrators and bystanders* (New York: The Free Press 1988), 154.

16. Gilad Margalit, *Guilt, Suffering, and Memory: Germany Remembers Its Dead of World War II*, trans. Haim Watzman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 3; Richard J. Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow: West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape the Nazi Past* (New York: Pantheon, 1989), 55.

its coat of arms and its weapons remained unsullied till the very last day as even the enemy conceded.”¹⁷ In other words, all battles fought by the 12th Infantry Division were always conducted fairly and morally—though gruesome and hard fought—under the rules of war.¹⁸ But perhaps a more telling source is Walter Görlitz’s 1961 biography about German Field Marshall Wilhelm Keitel, titled *Felddmarshal Wilhelm Keitel: Verbrecher oder Offizier?*, that was edited out of Keitel’s memoirs. Translated, the title reads *Field Marshall Wilhelm Keitel: Criminal or Officer?*—a phrase that, by the question it poses in the subtitle, suggests *Wehrmacht* officers and Nazi war criminals were conflicting entities and Keitel’s execution during the Nuremburg trials unwarranted. Keitel’s fulfillment of the Führer’s orders, argued Görlitz, were “necessary” acts of loyalty, patriotism, and self-preservation.¹⁹ But despite former *Wehrmacht* apologias that romanticize, and even valorize, their war exploits, most German historians and political actors became more interested in seeing themselves, rather than others, as Nazi victims (reminiscent of how Southern politicians and intellectuals claimed to be victims of the North)—especially after the onset of the Cold War replaced the need to prosecute war crimes with an urgency to remilitarize during the 1950s.

In both postwar Germany and the American South, subsequent wars helped both societies move forward from their recent pasts by bringing current issues of internal

17. Evans, *German Historians*, 55-56.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Wilhelm Keitel was head of the Supreme Command of the *Wehrmacht*, Hitler’s de facto war minister, and one of the German army’s most senior leaders during World War II. During the Nuremburg trials Keitel was convicted, sentenced to death, and quickly executed by hanging on October 16, 1946. His appeals to his own moral battles—understanding that Hitler’s Final Solution was wrong while also being a loyal soldier that followed the chain of command—were disregarded due to the damning evidence against him (his signature was found on a litany of documents that called for the execution of POWs and political prisoners). Keitel’s memoirs were written after his conviction and edited posthumously, appearing as an apologia. Walter Görlitz, *Felddmarshal Wilhelm Keitel: Verbrecher oder Offizier?* (Munich: Musterschmidt, 1961). The argument that the title of Keitel’s biography suggests he could not have been both an officer and Nazi also appears in the footnotes of Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Hitler's Foreign Policy 1933-1939: The Road to World War II* (New York: Enigma Books, 2010), 6.

importance to the forefront of their national conscience. However, rearmament was a serious hot-button issue in both East and West Germany during the Cold War due to the militaristic hangover that was still present after World War II. Questions regarding Nazi terror and the trust issues surrounding those formerly connected to World War II merited confrontation by both the German and Allied populace. As tensions increased between Western nations and the Soviet Union, both sides realized that a standing military was necessary and that formerly trained soldiers would have to be utilized. As a result, historical memory of the war was invoked in such a way to justify the *Wehrmacht's* actions during the war. For example, Soviet attacks on German civilians during the final years of the war garnered more historical attention in the years immediately following the war than did the vastly under-mentioned subject of German atrocities against Soviet civilians in the years between 1941 and 1944. However, this claim was not just popular while Nazi propaganda circulated and after defeat at the hands of the Red Army was freshly imprinted on German psyches. Operation Barbarossa (the codename of Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union) continued to be portrayed by West German historians as a necessary "preventative measure" taken by Germany in response to an alleged Soviet attack planned in July 1941, well into the 1950s—a sentiment similar to the South's assertion that the Civil War was fought as a defense against Northern aggression that threatened the Constitution and the Southern way of life.²⁰

Though there is no direct comparison to the way that the South justified the treatment of slaves, the recollection that the Nazis were solely responsible for the extermination of six million Jews did lead many Germans to absolve themselves of guilt over the violence the *Wehrmacht* inflicted on Soviet civilians and prisoners of war. Instead Soviet aggression and

20. Jürgen Förster, "The Wehrmacht and the War of Extermination Against the Soviet Union," in Michael Marrus, *The "Final Solution": The Implementation of Mass Murder, Vol. 2* (Westpoint: Meckler Press, 1989), 493.

subordinate victimization completely belittled the fact that the German military loyally fought alongside the Nazis for European conquest.²¹ Again, unlike in the postwar American South where Wade Hampton and Southern Democrats relied on political aggression to solidify notions of racial inferiority and Southern pride, the belief that ordinary Germans could not be Nazis was furthered by a much more subtle, and highly controversial, political statement in 1985 at Bitburg. The events of the Bitburg controversy center on a visit planned by United States President Ronald Reagan and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl who, since his taking office in 1982, attempted to restore the reputations of as many Germans who had served the Third Reich as possible by downplaying German guilt. In one of Kohl's more notable efforts, he removed Waffen-SS veteran organizations from a parliamentary list of right-wing extremist groups and repeatedly blocked the efforts of Social Democrats to ban their reunions.²² But Reagan's visit was more than an effort to instill national pride by Kohl; it was meant to rehabilitate history by displaying the positive relationship that existed between one-time enemies. The only problems: Reagan and Kohl originally did not plan to visit a concentration camp and were instead only going to visit the Kolmeshöhe cemetery where forty-nine members of the Waffen-SS were buried. A stop at a concentration camp was unnecessary because there were very few living veterans and such an occurrence would impose a sense of guilt on those that are too young to remember the war, claimed the two leaders.²³ Understandably, this caused outrage from the American and German Jewish

21. Ibid., 493-494.

22. Elie Wiesel, *And the Sea is Never Full: Memoirs, 1969-* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 33; Ilya Levkov, *Bitburg and Beyond: Encounters in American, German, and Jewish History* (New York: Shapolski Publishers, 1987); Bernard Weinraub, "Reagan Joins Kohl in Brief Memorial at Bitburg Graves," *New York Times*, May 6, 1985.

23. Wiesel, *And the Sea is Never Full*, 34; Jürgen Habermas, "Kind of Settlement of Damages (Apologetic Tendencies)," *New German Critique* 44 (1988): 25-39.

communities and prominent public figures and intellectuals such as Elie Wiesel, Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, and Menachem Z. Rosensaft all responded (comparable to the outrage of counter-memories by black leaders in the NAACP and W.E.B. Dubois at the turn of the twentieth century in the American South). “Equating Nazi soldiers with Holocaust Victims,” wrote Schindler, “is a distortion of history, a perversion of language, and a callous offense for the Jewish people.”²⁴ But President Reagan stood behind his prior statement that prompted Schindler’s response:

[The SS troops] were the villains that conducted the persecutions...[T]here are 2,000 graves there, and most of those, the average age is eighteen. I think that there’s nothing wrong with visiting that cemetery where those young men are victims of Nazism also, even though they were fighting in the German uniform, drafted into service to carry out the hateful wishes of the Nazis. They were victims, just as surely as the victims of the victims in the concentration camps.²⁵

The visit to Bitburg took place on May 5, 1985, as Chancellor Kohl urged the President to continue and his words garnered support from a majority of West German citizens, though a stop at the nearby Bergen-Belsen concentration camp was added to the itinerary. Crowds and cameras gathered as Reagan and Kohl spoke about the necessity of Holocaust remembrance while standing beside the mass-graves of Bergen-Belsen and then when they took part in a wreath-laying in memory of German soldiers killed during World War II at the Kolmeshöhe cemetery. The importance of these two events at Bitburg is

24. Karyn Ball, *Disciplining the Holocaust* (Albany: State University of New York, 2008), 239.

25. Quote found in Weinraud, “Reagan Joins Kohl in Brief Memorial at Bitburg Graves,” 1985.

imperative to the study of German memory in the postwar era. According to Jürgen Habermas, the juxtaposition of the wreath laying on the Nazi graves and the speeches at the mass graves of Bergen-Belsen took away from the singularity of the Nazi crimes, especially after the handshakes of veteran *Wehrmacht* generals in the presence of President Reagan. At this point many realized what Habermas and the Bitburg sentiment both proclaim: that the Germans “had always been on the right side of the struggle” against a Bolshevik enemy and that not every German soldier needed to be equated with the Nazis.²⁶

Given the popular sentiment emanating from the 1985 events in Bitburg, there is little surprise that the German *Historikerstreit* (Historian’s Dispute)—that attempts to remove the obstacle of Nazism from German identity by placing them within a larger pan-European model of comparable state crimes—developed at about the same time.²⁷ Unlike the historiographical literature that made Nazism appear as the exception rather than the norm in the 1950-60s, the *Historikerstreit* of the late 1980s has been called an apologist movement that seeks to white-wash German history in much the same way that Lost Causers have been criticized for rewriting history to insist that slavery was not the reason for the Civil War. For

26. Habermas, “Kind of Settlement of Damages,” 27-28.

27. Most notably the *Historikerstreit* compares the crimes committed by the Nazis to the genocide of the Armenians by the Turks in 1915 and the deportation, labor camps, and class murder used by the Bolsheviks on the Gulag Archipelago in the 1920s in an attempt to revise the “negative myth” of the Third Reich. According to historian Ernst Nolte, contemporary German literature cast the Nazi era as the pinnacle of evil when their actions should be looked at as a rational, preventative response to the threats of Bolshevism. Though extremely harsh, Nolte believes that European history and social forces kept Germany from reforming Europe during the interwar period and resulted, unfortunately, in National Socialist Fascism, the sister ideology of Bolshevism. For a concise and comprehensive look at the *Historikerstreit* consult Richard J. Evans, “The New Nationalism and the Old History: Perspectives on the West German *Historikerstreit*,” *The Journal of Modern History* 59 (1987): 761-797. For a more in-depth look at the actual literature of the *Historikerstreit* consult the op-ed newspaper article that ignited the academic movement by Ernst Nolte, “The Past that will Not Pass Away,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 6, 1986; Ernst Nolte, *The European Civil War, 1917-1945: National Socialism and Bolshevism* (Munich: Herbig, 1997); Michael Stürmer, “History In a Land Without History,” in Ernst Piper, ed., *Forever In The Shadow of Hitler?* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1993); Andreas Hillgruber, *Two Kinds of Ruin: The Shattering of the German Reich and the End of European Jewry* (Berlin: W.J. Siedler, 1986); and Habermas, “Kind of Settlement of Damages,” 25-39.

instance, in the late 1980s and 1990s, historians Richard J. Evans argued that despite the historical fact of the German military's "extreme brutality and barbarism" in the war against the Soviet Union, subsequent revisionist historians in the 1980s misconstrued the *Wehrmacht* as a force for the good.²⁸ Omer Bartov continues:

...the bizarre inversion of the Wehrmacht's roles proposed by [the] exponents of the new revisionism, whereby overtly or by implication the Army is transformed from culprit to saviour, from an object of hatred and fear to one of empathy and pity, from victimizer to victim.²⁹

Evans further argued that the *Wehrmacht* was being falsely represented in academic memory contending that many German officers told their soldiers that the invasion of Poland in 1939 was provoked by "Jewish vermin" and regarded the Russians as a "Jewish Bolshevic" group of "sub-humans." According to Evans, there is substantial evidence that a significant number of German soldiers actively believed and supported the conflict against the Soviet Union as a means to cleanse Europe of the "Asiatic flood" of "Mongol Hordes" and the "red beast" along the way, but that fact was quickly forgotten in post-World War II Germany.³⁰

Revisionist historian Ernst Nolte—who still defended many of the actions of the *Wehrmacht* as rational, though extreme, "preventative measures"—was among the most significant and

28. Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow*, 58-60.

29. Omer Bartov, "Soldiers, Nazis and War in the Third Reich," in Christian Leitz, *The Third Reich: The Essential Readings* (London: Blackwell, 1999), 148.

30. Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow*, 58-60, 83.

controversial, as most historians from West Germany, and virtually all abroad, condemned his interpretation of the Holocaust, which created the *Historikerstreit*, as justification.³¹

In the end, the *Historikerstreit* remains an important insight into German memory of World War II and the Nazis. It garnered heavy media attention in West Germany and was widely read and its central question—whether the Nazis were an unequal evil in history or merely an extreme example of a larger European trend—was considered by younger generations both inside and outside of Germany. The importance of the *Historikerstreit*, however, is the national recognition of two trends—feelings of empathy toward the German military and an insistence that the genocide enacted by the Nazis was comparable to the crimes of other European nations—that leftist critics such as Israeli historian Omer Bartov say reflect the broader unwillingness of many Germans to admit what their military, government, and citizens did during the war.³² The fact remains that the *Wehrmacht* did play a key role in Nazi history and thus merited being reevaluated despite the insistence of self-serving, former soldiers and generals who framed it as a highly professional, apolitical force that was a victim of a harsh ideology.³³ It is no secret that contentions such as Michael Stürmer’s—that the German people and the Nazis were on a logical “right side” of a Bolshevik enemy from the east and that collective memory of Nazi crimes in Germany needed to be wiped clean and reevaluated in terms of a rational response to a Soviet threat—

31. Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (London: E. Arnold Publishing, 1989), 173. The prominence of such attitudes and barbarism of the *Wehrmacht* can be further proven by the severity of Soviet POWs: 3,300,000 out of 5,700,000 died in captivity. Furthermore, Ernst Nolte, one of Evans chief opponents, states that the *Einsatzgruppen* massacres of Soviet Jews was a reasonable “preventive security” response to partisan attacks.

32. Bartov, “Soldiers, Nazis and War in the Third Reich,” 148.

33. *Ibid.*, 266. In both postwar Germany and American South self-serving veterans framed themselves as victims of outside forces despite their central involvement in the conflict. For the Confederates, they fought because of Northern aggression and Republican ideology. For the Germans, they fought because they were forced to comply with Nazi ideology and imperialism.

are historically, culturally, and socially flawed.³⁴ The ramifications of ignoring the racial and ethnocentric motivations behind National Socialism and justifying the defense against of “Judeo-Bolshevism” should be clear: anti-Semitism was still a problem in the decades after the war as it was before, only this time relegated to the back of German minds.

The controversial *Historikerstreit* of the late 1980s, however, lost steam as younger generations came of age in the nineties and many of the Nazi generation had died off. Like in the mid-twentieth century American South, the German public eventually did reevaluate, and on some level came to terms with their ancestors’ troubled past. But as the overwhelming public outcry surrounding Ernst Nolte’s reception of the Konrad Adenauer Literary Prize and subsequent speeches about the “rational core” of Nazism prove, even in the year 2000 a conservative core still existed—immersed in the sentiment of Nazi victimization of regular Germans and the legitimate threat of “Judeo-Bolshevism”—that still actively opposed the open-minded, critical analysis of Nazi Germany conducted by leftist German historians and public thinkers.³⁵

Memorialization and Popular Culture in Post-Nazi Germany:

As the German public felt the burden of their recent Nazi history weigh heavily on their shoulders in the post-World War II era, a generation of forgetfulness and victimization took shape behind German guilt. This is measurable in many aspects of German society. For instance, as noted by historian Tony Judt, during the decades following the war “the teaching of modern history in West Germany did not pass beyond Bismarck [1890]” (a stark contrast to Southern textbooks that not only covered the Civil War and slavery, but justified and

34. Ibid., 148.

35. Roger Cohen, “Hitler Apologist Wins German Honor, and a Storm Breaks Out,” *New York Times*, June 21, 2000.

romanticized them).³⁶ Instead, most time was spent looking either before or beyond the Nazi era, and if National Socialism was explained at all, it only took place through a fundamentally nationalistic, conservative lens that depicted the Third Reich as a mere moral deviation from normal German high society.³⁷ But victimization and German forgetfulness can perhaps be best examined in attempts at memorialization and popular culture. The debates surrounding how fallen soldiers and Nazi bureaucratic organizations needed to be represented in memory permeated both East and West Germany following the war. On one hand, many thought their dead relatives and friends merited remembrance. But on the other, the genocide, rape, and imperial aspirations of the Nazi regime—as well as the roles that everyday Germans played therein—were best left forgotten.

Unlike in the South, where the end of the Civil War sparked the rise of an entire memorialization movement, there was little memorializing of Nazis and World War II in immediate post-war Germany. Allied influence and occupation rendered such attempts at remembrance relatively silent. However, it would be short-sighted to overlook the attempts that were made and say that Germans simply had zero interest in memorialization following the war. Historian Rudy Koshar's lengthy study on "artifacts of German memory" between

36. Judt, "The Past is Another Country," 97.

37. Evans, "The New Nationalism and the Old History," 761. For a well-rounded look at the *Sonderweg* consult Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire 1871-1918* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1985); David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Fritz Fischer, *Hitler war kein Betriebsunfall: Aufsätze* (Munich: Beck, 1998). The 1960s mark the first significant attempt by the German public to examine their Nazi past after a series of embarrassing trials held for former concentration camp administrators and new scholarship by historians Fritz Fischer and Hans-Ulrich Wehler that inspired a younger generation of academics, politicians, journalists, and students to question National Socialism. According to Fischer and Wehler, the Third Reich, and thus World War II, was an inevitable outcome of the *Sonderweg*, or "special path" of German state building, that draws a line of continuity through early modern German history, the *Kaiserreich*, and the Third Reich. This historiographical trend of German exceptionalism, and those it inspired, then garnered much media attention and public disdain as Germans began to question the roles of their nation in the Holocaust. The questioning nature of, and the guilt engendered by, the *Sonderweg* eventually resulted in its counter, the *Historikerstreit* movement of the 1980s, and a new tendency to separate common, "normal" Germans from the Nazis.

the years of 1870 and 1990 goes to great lengths to point out such attempts at Nazi remembrance. Essentially, Koshar argues that following several years of commercialization of national memory—in which the Nazis propagandized existing war memorials, literature, and the deaths of soldiers to fit their militaristic agenda and appeal to the German populace through a sense of national unity behind previous wars—the conclusion of World War II forced Germans to lay the nationalist, “collective allergy” of memory making to rest and make decisions about what was going to be reconstructed, destroyed, or built anew.³⁸ Similar to the South following the Civil War, Koshar contends that the years between 1945 and 1970 were filled with attempts, though highly contested in both East and West Germany by Allied and Jewish outlets, to remember Nazi genocide with small town memorials, cemeteries, and renovating destroyed buildings that existed during the pre-war era. For instance, some common acts of remembrance were to add the names of fallen *Wehrmacht* soldiers to pre-existing monuments—in many cases, these were World War I memorials that previously represented German sacrifice and honor during the Nazi years—and to place “memorial stones” on the grounds of churches, homes, and historic sites depicting the name of the departed, troop identification, and often the iron cross.³⁹

Perhaps the best place to look for early postwar German memorials is in cemeteries, another similarity shared between Germany and the South. The Ohlsdorf cemetery in

38. Rudy Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces: Artifacts of German Memory, 1870-1990* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 116-117, 154. Hitler and the Nazis used war memorials, military cemeteries, guidebooks, and a “Heroes Commemoration Day”—that during the 1940s began including those killed in the “new war of racial conquest”—to commercialize national memory and unity around war, conquest, and racial superiority; an overt and dynamic distancing from the decentralized memories of war that existed in the Weimar Republic.

39. Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces*, 268; Helmut Peitsch, “Discovering a Taboo: The Nazi Past in Literary-Political Discourse 1958-1967,” in David Jackson, ed., *Taboos in German Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 135-163. Koshar, along with fellow historian Helmut Peitsch, further argues that there were also cases of indigenous Germans espousing blatant anti-Semitic interpretations of the Holocaust, but these cases were drowned out as the political occupiers of both East and West Germany built negative historical precedents about the Holocaust around traumatization, fascism, and war.

Hamburg, for example, contains a wide variety of remembrance as it juxtaposes the “Monument for the Victims of Nazi Persecution” with the memorial, “The Passage Over the River Styx,” that was constructed in honor of the victims of Operation Gomorrha (the Allied firebombing of the city in 1943). The monuments were constructed only three years apart (the former in 1949 and the latter in 1952) although the monument to victims of the Nazis grew from a memorial service that took place on the spot in 1945. However, the two monuments at Ohlsdorf reveal an interesting dichotomy of victimization in early postwar Germany: the dead were the victims of either Nazi depredation or the actions of the Allies. Some plaques placed on the edge of a mass grave referred to the Allied bombings as a “terror attack” while other victims are symbolized by a crown of thorns.⁴⁰ Germans killed in Hamburg during World War II, as well as those killed in the rest of Germany, were then either remembered as victims or martyrs. Thus, according to Koshar, the construction of memory around Nazi tragedies was difficult and incomplete, not completely absent or popular.

While Koshar’s work is important, and he does show conclusively that there were immediate post-war attempts at German nationalist memorialization, a more substantial body of scholarship shows just how little Nazi remembrance there was. For instance, Helmut Peitsch and Tony Judt concur: while there were numerous German-centric memories in the immediate post-war years, concentration camps, the Holocaust, and everything particularly concerning Nazi history rapidly became a political and artistic taboo in East and West

40. James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 38; William James Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past: United Germany and the Legacy of the Third Reich* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 200-201; Margalit, *Guilt, Suffering, and Memory*, 163.

Germany following the war.⁴¹ Even the memorials erected by the Allied occupiers became more significant than German markers and continue to be among the most recognizable within the country. For instance, in Berlin, three memorials were constructed in the city districts of Tiergarten, Schönholzer Heide, and Treptower Park by the Soviet Union during the late 1940s in remembrance of fallen Soviet troops during the 1945 Battle of Berlin.⁴²

Therefore, it is the contrast between the Southern memorialization movement and the lack thereof in the early post-war era of Germany that drives home the over-arching influence of the generation that tried to forget.

Certain evidence of this contrast can be seen in the city of Dresden, where *Kristallnacht* (the Night of Broken Glass, November 9, 1938) and the British and American fire bombings of 1945 left two of the city's most vibrant religious landmarks in ruins: renowned German architect Gottfried Semper's Opera House and the *Frauenkirche* (the Lutheran Church of Our Lady). The rebuilding of the structures was either ignored, as was the case with the synagogue, or was refused, which, according to Susanne Veas-Gulani, was due to the fact that they reminded Dresden residents of "the question of German guilt, the rise of National Socialism, and the [destruction] of the war."⁴³ In fact, the late 1980s, under the German Democratic Republic (GDR), marked the first time that construction of either

41. Helmut Peitsch, "Towards a History of 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung': East and West War Novels of the 1950s," *Monatshefte* 87 (1995): 287-308; Helmut Peitsch, "Discovering a Taboo: The Nazi Past in Literary-Political Discourse 1958-67," in Jackson, *Taboos in German Literature*, 135-163.

42. Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 131, 182, 194-195. All three Soviet War memorials were constructed during the late 1940s to memorialize the 80,000 fallen Soviet soldiers of the Battle of Berlin. The oldest memorial, in Tiergarten, was constructed amidst the rubble of Berlin in 1945 using the stone from the destroyed Reich's Chancellery.

43. Susanne Veas-Gulani, "The Politics of New Beginnings: The Continued Exclusion of the Nazi Past in Dresden's Cityscape," in *Beyond Berlin: Twelve German Cities Confront the Nazi Past*, eds. Gavriel D. Rosenfeld and Paul B. Jaskot (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008), 31.

building was seriously considered. And even then, they were not completed until the early to mid-1990s as debates concerning their troubled past, guilt, and victimization circulated.⁴⁴ As a further example of “forgetfulness” in the postwar era, in Potsdam, the GDR attempted to legitimize its authority through a selective (and antifascist) reconstruction campaign that destroyed most surviving Jewish pre-war sites and bypassed Prussian buildings that were to serve as a representation of a “humane” German past, which is similar to East Germany’s removal of the iron cross from the Brandenburg Gate’s quadriga (a statue of a horse drawn chariot that sits atop the structure) and outlawing of the symbol in 1957 as a “fascist ornament.”⁴⁵ Only recently, however, have the actual persecuted victims of the Nazis come to the forefront of World War II and Nazi remembrance.⁴⁶

One of the most well-known and recent examples of Jewish victimization in German historical memory is undoubtedly the Holocaust memorial located in downtown Berlin—the 4.7 acre brainchild of German talk show host Lea Rosh. Containing 2,711 nameless concrete slabs, the memorial was completed in 2004 after sixteen years of debate. The controversy

44. Veas-Gulani, “The Politics of New Beginnings,” 31-39. While the completion of the new Gottfried Semper’s Synagogue predated that of the *Frauenkirche* by four years and did engender painful memories of National Socialist persecution, Susanne Veas-Gulani argues that being Jewish synagogue provides some insight into the discounting of its reconstruction. Jewish landmarks, as in this case, were often not considered “German” as the division of Germans (the enemy) vs. the Jews (the victims) vs. the Allies (the righteous) remained a prevalent and telling distinction in German guilt for many years. Even today the new synagogue remains distant from main tourist areas, and its odd geometric, modernist architecture leaves its meaning ambiguous for most.

45. Michael Meng, “The Politics of Antifascism: Historic Preservation, Jewish Sites, and the Rebuilding of Potsdam’s Altstadt,” in *Beyond Berlin*, pp.233-237; Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin*, 75-76.

46. The persecuted have also recently come to the forefront of Southern memorialization. See Brian Black and Bryn Varley, “Contesting the Sacred: Preservation and Meaning on Richmond’s Monument Avenue,” in *Monuments to the Lost Cause*, 247-248; Richard Guy Wilson, “Monument Avenue, Richmond: A Unique American Boulevard,” in *Monuments to the Lost Cause*, 111-112; “Richmond Approves Monument to [Arthur] Ashe,” *New York Times*, July 18, 1995. It took a significant amount of time for the memorialization of African Americans to become popular in the South as well, though counter memorials that recognize slavery are highly controversial as African Americans predominantly want to avoid the stigma of victimization. This however is not the case in Germany where Jews, communists, and homosexuals do not shy away from being remembered as victims and erect monuments that directly reflect their past oppression. Conversely Southern monuments to African Americans usually display prominent African American intellectuals, politicians, and athletes.

surrounding Rosh's memorial is similar to that outlined in Natasha Goldman's article, "Marking Absence: Remembrance and Hamburg's Holocaust Memorials," and Susanne Schönborn's discussion of Frankfurt am Main's New Börneplatz memorial. In each case the memorials are dedicated to Jewish victims of the Holocaust and were only constructed after the 1980s as they were disregarded in the immediate postwar years and became subsequently challenged by proponents of the Bitburg Sentiment after a few decades had passed.⁴⁷

Another reason why Rosh's memorial engenders so much controversy is because it stands mere meters away from the former site of Hitler's Chancellery and creates a sense of uneasiness due to its close relation (both literally and figuratively) to the Nazi perpetrators. But as is the problem with such a memorial—unless one is privy to the phantom landscapes—remembrance of the perpetrators is completely lost on victim-centric memorials. Such was the case with the numerous plaques that began appearing on historic sites throughout Berlin in the 1970s that honored victims and resisters while sites like Hitler's Chancellery and the Göring's headquarters remained unmarked. This, however, is not the case with exhibits that are geared to cause direct confrontation with Germany's Nazi past that began appearing in the final years of West Berlin.⁴⁸ For instance, the most feared and powerful address in Nazi Germany, the old Prinz-Albrecht Strasse, has been transformed into the highly contested Topography of Terror exhibit that highlights most powerful Nazi organizations that used to be housed on its street.

47. Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin*, 167-173; Natasha Goldman, "Marking Absence: Remembrance and Hamburg's Holocaust Memorials," in *Beyond Berlin*, 251-271; Susanne Schönbron, "The New Börneplatz Memorial and the Nazi Past in Frankfurt am Main," in *Beyond Berlin*, 273-294.

48. Ladd, *Ghosts of Berlin*, 152-153. At first, memorials and markers that identified Nazi perpetrators were only dedicated in honor of their victims. This slowly raised new questions regarding how to best memorialize National Socialism and those they harmed, and eventually resulted in the outright confrontation with Nazi history in a few memorials.

Consisting of the renovated Prussian palace, the State School of Applied Art, the Hotel Prinz-Albrecht, and several smaller buildings that served as the headquarters for Heinrich Himmler's and Herman Göring's police organizations, Prinz-Albrecht Strasse 8 was the heart of the Nazi bureaucracy. Only the Reich's Chancellery was comparable in importance and decision-making. But Prinz-Albrecht Strasse 8 was mostly destroyed in the Soviet siege of Berlin, and the new West Germany government, relatively quickly, demolished most of the remaining ruins, changed the name of the street to Niederkirchnerstraße (in honor of a communist freedom fighter who died in a concentration camp in 1944), and made plans to transform the vacant lot into a helipad and later a new highway.⁴⁹ In other words, the generation that tried to forget looked forward and attempted to erase the horrific memories of interrogation and violence that once happened on the grounds. Only after the planned highway remained on the books for decades did Berlin's 750th anniversary Founder's Day celebration in 1987 provide the first deviation from this norm when the Gropius Bau museum proposed archeological digs and exhibitions that forced confrontation with the Nazi past of the site. After heated debate over the nature of the exhibit, the Topography of Terror gained solid footing in 1995 and became an open-ended, interpretive memorial to Nazi perpetrators that presides "indefinitely" over old Prinz-Albrecht Strasse 8 and continues to repulse and provide many with a reason to forget.⁵⁰

49. Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin*, 154-158. Only the Museum of Applied Art—that served as the Gestapo's main headquarters—escaped destruction and currently still resides on the site that is now the Topography of Terror.

50. Marc Buggeln and Inge Marszolek, "Concrete Memory: The Struggle to create a Documentation Center for the History of National Socialism," in Rosenfeld and Jaskot, *Beyond Berlin*, 185-208. The Topography of Terror exhibit debate, that still continues, was not the only time that "perpetrator" landmarks lost their connection to Nazism. In Marc Buggeln's and Inge Marszolek's essay, "Concrete Memory: The Struggle to create a Documentation Center for the History of National Socialism," the authors discuss the war time history of the Valentin U-Boat pen in Bremen, the plans to turn it into a nuclear reactor in the 1950s, and its transformation into an arms depot for the Federal Armed Forces by 1960. The authors argue that the Valentin pen and other massive, ambiguous structures—such as concrete bomb shelters—built by forced labor are now

Perhaps, as has been argued by historians, the most notable (and “paradoxically least acknowledged,” as proclaimed by historian Anton Kaes) identifier of historical memory outweighs even the impact of public memorials, schools and universities, and novels: cinema.⁵¹ According to historians Bernhard Chiari and Anton Kaes, films are “carriers of collective memory” that project a society’s beliefs, values, and interpretations of national history onto a screen that “organize[s], and, to a large degree, homogenize[s] public memory.”⁵² And in Germany during the post-war era, as in the post-Civil War American South, this was no different. There is only one caveat that American films did not have to contend with in during the twentieth century however: the Big Three (Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin) had separated Germany at the Yalta conference when determining the new national boundaries and type of government that the defeated nation would have. It was decided that West Germany would follow the Capitalist Republic model more in line with western ideologies while East Germany would become a Marxist-Leninist socialist state under the guidance of the Soviet Union. Therefore, a type of “collective amnesia” set in for twenty-five years in West Germany as they embarked with fellow Western European nations on the capitalist “European adventure” that continued to grow their economy, the U.S.S.R. driven “domestic revolution”—an action deemed necessary by

easily viewed solely as benign and their dark history lost. Thus, as the authors posit, structures of this nature need to be actively and consciously placed on history’s “maps of memory.”

51. Anton Kaes, “History and Film: Public Memory in the Age of Electronic Dissemination,” in *Framing the Past: The Historiography of German Cinema and Television*, eds., Bruce Arthur Murray and Chris Wickham (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), 309. Kaes’ 1992 article furthers the argument that millions of Germans, during the post-war era, experienced World War II and the Holocaust on the big screen by also expanding it to the small screen. Consult this essay for a look into made-for-television movies such as *Holocaust*, *Heimat*, and *The Winds of War* that also serve to project the romanticized version of the war from the German side.

52. Ibid., Bernhard Chiari, Matthias Rogg and Wolfgang Schmidt, eds., *Krieg und Militär im film des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2003), 1.

the Soviets to implement a socialist society that was fueled by an antifascist, national liberation historical imperative—hampered the East German film industry’s ability to address their recent past in the movies they produced.⁵³ In other words, in order to make sure the East German people bought into their Marxist-Leninist ideology, East German films needed to declare the fascist Nazis evil, move beyond their era in history, and celebrate the merits of socialism. However victimization and collective forgetfulness worked to drown out the historical reality of World War II from the German side in both East and West Germany on some level. Filmmakers (this tendency was certainly more pronounced in West Germany for the reasons stated above) preferred to portray the role of the *Wehrmacht* in the recent war as “palatable and sometimes heroic,” writes Temple University historian Jay Lockenour—thus rendering the films widely popular among German audiences.⁵⁴ However, the popularity of German war films took time. Lockenour continues: “[i]n a film industry tightly controlled by the Allied Military Governments, German cinemas screened virtually no war films for several years after 1945. Then [in the mid-1950s], the floodgates opened.”⁵⁵

53. Judd, “The Past is Another Country,” 95-96; Anke Pinkert, *Film and Memory in East Germany* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008). As “collective amnesia” set in in West Germany—due to their ability to either address or ignore their recent past in the 1950s—East Germany was forced under Soviet rule that was solidified by the Cold War. The ramifications of this are obvious: aside from the prominence of socialist ideologies, the Soviet imposed interpretation of World War II (a war of anti-fascism and German liberation) that was by and large illogical to the German populace affected the ability of East German films to correctly reflect their memories of World War II and the Nazis. According to Anke Pinkert, the *Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft* (DEFA), East Germany’s state owned film studio, produced movies during the 1940s (*The Murderers Are among Us*, *Somewhere in Berlin*, *Wozzeck*, and *Our Daily Bread*) focused ostensibly on exemplary male antifascist subjectivity. As she notes, in its desire to privilege Communist victims of fascism, early DEFA cinema made it more difficult to render other forms of victimization (e.g. German, Jewish, etc.) visible outside of vague references to the Holocaust. But this too, is indeed another representation of German forgetfulness.

54. Jay Lockenour, “Black and White Memories of War: Victimization and Violence in West German War Films of the 1950s,” *The Journal of Military History* 76 (2012): 161.

55. Ibid.

After several years of Allied effort to tightly monitor film production and distribution in Germany, their regulations became more lax in 1949 as about 600 war films (most of which were American) were screened in Germany over a fifteen year period. It was the German films, however, that were the most viewed, highest grossing, and generated the most heated debate.⁵⁶ Take for instance the film trilogy *08/15*—based on the novel of the same name by Hans Helmut Kirst and the most comparable in national popularity to *Gone with the Wind*—that follows a group of *Wehrmacht* recruits from their training prior to 1939 (part I), to the frigid Russian front in 1941-42 (part II), and finally to their hometown for the collapse of the Reich in 1945 (part III).⁵⁷ The protagonist of the story is a young German soldier named Asch, whose sensitivity and skill on the piano could win the sympathy any viewer, who is supplanted from a place of class and high culture and shipped off to the Eastern Front with little to no understanding as to why. The genocidal nature of Germany’s war on the eastern front goes unmentioned, and the soldiers, too, are framed as victims of an abrupt outbreak of war that they did not fully understand.⁵⁸

56. Ibid., 164. According to Heide Fehrenbach’s *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity after Hitler* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina press, 1995), the Allies used a complex and demanding licensing process to screen prospective German filmmakers. If their projects did not meet their strict demands, then they were not allowed to continue. Older movies were also subjected to a similar process that may have prohibited their rerelease.

57. Omer Bartov, “Celluloid Soldiers: Cinematic Images of the *Wehrmacht*,” in *Russia: War, Peace & Diplomacy*, by Ljubica Erickson and Mark Erickson, eds. (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2008), 323. The term “08/15” refers to a German machine gun (introduced in 1908—modified in 1915—and used during World War I) that was issued in such large quantities to the *Wehrmacht* that “08/15” became a slang term for standardized military issued materials. The implication on the movie is that Asch, his subordinates, and the *Wehrmacht* army were common, “everyman” characters that were utterly replaceable, and subjected to regular abuse by their authorities—given the issue of the type of machine gun that the title eludes too during World War II would have been very much outdated.

58. Paul May et al., *08/15: The Complete Trilogy*, DVD (Leipzig: Kinowelt Home Entertainment, 2001) [orig. rel. 1954-1955]; Bartov, “Celluloid Soldiers,” 136.

The first installment of *08/15* quickly became one of Germany's most successful movies of 1954 and continued to pack theaters with its sequels.⁵⁹ But its popularity was based on more than its handsome cast: it depicted the common *Wehrmacht* soldier and his everyday life in a way that was uniformly accepted as accurate. Quite the contrary was true however. According to Omer Bartov's article "Celluloid Soldiers," a real-life Lieutenant Asch would have undoubtedly comprehended what he was fighting for given the intense anti-Judeo-Bolshevist indoctrination within the *Wehrmacht*. Bartov argues that German films of the 1950s never portrayed the pervasiveness of National Socialism within the German military or the utterly ruthless brutality used by the *Wehrmacht* at the end of the war. Even though many German veterans denied such hatred, the reality of the massive death toll on the eastern front makes clear that they bought into Nazi propaganda and showed a deep commitment to National Socialism.⁶⁰ But instead, Asch (whose charm, wit, cunning, and loyalty are comparable to Rhett Butler's in *Gone with the Wind*) and the rest of his unit are overtly portrayed as the naïve victims of war. Only the Nazis—the antithesis of regular German high society and morality—and the occasional officer in charge of relegating basic necessities to *Wehrmacht* soldiers were portrayed negatively.⁶¹ The Nazi caricatures in *08/15* were the true victimizers of Europe and German innocence.

59. Jay Lockenour's "Black and White Memories of War" cites several sources that prove *08/15*'s popularity: "Hunderttausend Düsseldorf sahen *08/15*," *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, October 25, 1954, reported that Düsseldorf and Stuttgart had 100,000 viewers in the first month of the movie's release and as many as five million across West Germany. "Weiblicher Protest gegen Kraftausdrücke," *General-Anzeiger* (Bonn), October 26, 1954, reported 65,000 people saw the movie over twenty-five days in Bonn. Lockenour also speculates on page 167, though questionably, that as many as fifteen to twenty million people may have seen the trilogy in Germany; in some cases, paying five-fold the ticket price to scalpers.

60. Bartov, "Celluloid Soldiers," 135-136.

61. May et al., *08/15*, DVD.

Other German movies of the 1950s also ostensibly display the *Wehrmacht* as a victim of Nazism. In the 1958 film *Der Arzt von Stalingrad* (*The Doctor from Stalingrad*), the German prisoners of war that the movie focuses on are portrayed as more civilized, of sound morality, and of higher intelligence than their Soviet captors, who, for the most part, appear as a degenerate horde that berate and torture German prisoners—much like the Northern and African American savages depicted in *The Birth of a Nation* and *Gone with the Wind*. To no surprise, a recurring theme in *Der Arzt von Stalingrad* is that the German soldiers were punished for Nazi crimes that they had no part in committing.⁶² The 1959 film *Hunde, wollt ihr ewig leben?* (*Dogs, do you want to live forever?*), which follows with the Battle of Stalingrad, also contains no mention of National Socialist ideology, the Holocaust, or the German militarism that prompted the war as it hails the heroism of its protagonists in the face of battle.⁶³ Even during the 1990s, the movie *Stalingrad* still used the heroic victim framework by depicting German soldiers' noble, yet futile effort, at Stalingrad. The reconstruction of the defeat of the German 6th Army is itself victimizing, but the militaristic German political context that got the army in Russia in the first place is not once mentioned during the film. (Though, in this movie one *Wehrmacht* officer is depicted as evil for assaulting a female Russian captive.) However, the attack is suddenly thwarted by a gallant young *Wehrmacht* lieutenant who is disgusted by the actions of his commander and promptly kills him).⁶⁴ For the German war film industry, as was also the case in the United States, once

62. Werner P. Zibaso, Heinz G. Konsalik and Géza von Rad ványi, *Der Arzt von Stalingrad*, DVD (Leipzig: Kinowelt Home Entertainment, 2006) [orig. rel. 1958].

63. Frank Wisbar et al., *Stalingrad: Hunde, Wollt Ihr Ewig Leben?*, DVD (Leipzig: Kinowelt Home Entertainment, 2001) [orig. rel. 1959], in "Black and White Memories of War," 178. Rudolf Böhrner's, "Hunde wollt ihr ewig leben' ein Wort zum Stalingradfilm," *Deutsche Soldaten-Zeitung* (1959): DIF, heralds the film as a "monument" to the common German soldier.

a popular sentiment was established, deviation became increasingly harder for writers, producers, and directors.⁶⁵

The 1950s also saw a number of films based on German resistance to the Nazis. In *Des Teufels General (The Devil's General)* of 1954, a general in the German Air Force named Harras, who at first appears to be a rash, womanizing, alcoholic, untrustworthy buffoon, turns out to be a noble officer who intentionally designs defective airplanes in order to sabotage the German war effort. General Harras, persuaded to take such action by his aide, Oderbruch, ultimately represents a German patriot and martyr worthy of the highest praise and admiration, but only after he comes to see World War II for what it truly is: unnecessary, foolish, and amoral. In the end, officer Harras commits suicide as atonement for his participation in the war of abominations, which the movie never addresses, by crashing a plane into a Nazi fuel reserve.⁶⁶

Only one year later, two films took a more direct route at showing German resistance. *Es Geschah am 20. Juli (It Happened on the 20th of July)* and *Der 20. Juli (The 20th of July)*, released almost simultaneously, addressed the attempted assassination attempts on Hitler by Col. Claus von Stauffenberg in 1944. According to Lockenour and Klaus Sigl, neither movie was a box office success, but they, like *Des Teufels General*, placed German conspirators “on

64. The argument and gallant *Wehrmacht* soldier scene is also seen in Bartov, “Celluloid Soldiers,” 138-139.

65. Zibaso, Kansalik and Radványi, *Der Arzt von Stalingrad*, DVD; Wisbar et al., *Stalingrad: Hunde, Wollt Ihr Ewig Leben?*, DVD; Jürgen Büscher, Johannes Heide, and Joseph Vilsmaier, *Stalingrad*, DVD (Helsinki: Scanbox Entertainment, 2003) [orig. rel. 1993].

66. Helmut Käutner et al., *Des Teufels General*, DVD (Arthaus Filmverleih, 1999) [orig. rel. 1955]. Harras’ character is loosely based on the real life General Udet. And like Harras, Udet did design faulty planes, but not intentionally. Udet did not necessarily hate Nazism either, he was just an incompetent mechanic and engineer. Similar arguments also found in Lockenour, “Black and White Memories of War,” 171-172; Bartov, “Celluloid Soldiers,” 132-133.

a national pedestal” and *Der 20. Juli* received an award for the “film that contributes most to promoting the democratic ideal.”⁶⁷ They also successfully depicted the German officer corps as fundamentally noble and honorable men who were under the control of an evil Reich unrepresentative of normal German society. For instance, in an early scene in *Der 20. Juli* the conspirators conclude to kill Hitler immediately following the statement that “[Jews] are humans as we are... [There is no] understanding this racial hatred.”⁶⁸ The conspirators speak in such a manner that it appears they are speaking for all of the *Wehrmacht* and all of Germany—isolating themselves from the Nazis. Officers such as Harras and Stauffenberg served a criminal Nazi regime on screen, but the writing of *Des Teufels General*, *Es Geschah am 20. Juli*, and *Der 20. Juli* include a litany of exculpatory statements that suggest German soldiers were never corrupted by or conformed to the Nazis that overthrew their government in 1933.

Certainly there are other themes in these West German war films that illuminate how World War II was remembered in Germany during the 1950s. In *Hunde, Wollt ihr ewig leben?* (*Dogs, Do You Want to Live Forever?*), the narrative is yet another example of a heroic, valiant German holding out against overwhelming odds at Stalingrad—a scene akin to the Confederate troops holding out against Sherman at the Battle of Atlanta in *Gone with the Wind*.⁶⁹ But perhaps the best parallel between German and American films in the context

67. Klaus Sigl, Werner Schneider and Ingo Tornow, *Jede Menge Kohle? Kunst und Kommerz auf dem deutschen Filmmarkt der Nachkriegszeit* (Munich: Fimland Presse, 1986), 22; quoted in Lockenour, “Black and White Memories of War,” 171.

68. Falk Harnack, Werner Jörg Lüdecke and Günther Weisenborg, *Der 20. Juli*, DVD (Munich: Central Cinema Company, 1998) [orig. rel. 1955].

69. Wisbar et al., *Stalingrad: Hunde, Wollt Ihr Ewig Leben?*, DVD. In “Celluloid Soldiers,” Omer Bartov argues that the 6th Army’s last stand at Stalingrad was a favorite depiction of German heroism for filmmakers in mid-twentieth century Germany; however, no movie has so far showed the 6th Army’s overt cooperation

of the Civil War and World War II is the 1993 movie *Stalingrad* that shows Soviet tanks literally burying German soldiers in foxholes. Like in American movies about the Civil War that depict the Union's vast resources and superior numbers as the only reason the North was victorious, a common German perception is that the Soviet Union defeated them in the same manner. Only under the immense weight of Soviet tanks could the superiorly trained, more cunning German soldier be defeated.⁷⁰

Furthermore, German soldiers were not only depicted as better soldiers, they were also more masculine than their enemies, as Heide Fehrenbach's *Cinema in Democratizing Germany* and Omer Bartov's "Celluloid Soldiers" reveal. As noted by Bartov, these films portray the average German soldier in the East as an admirable hero. This then led to the tendency to remove the political context of World War II, and polarize the struggle. In other words, the few German soldiers depicted in the movie, that audiences were expected to favor, fought an immense army of vicious, nameless Russian soldiers that never appeared to run out of men. In such a plot line, war criminals had no place within the Wehrmacht—an army made up of predominantly manly war heroes that could seduce the most exotic and beautiful women—just as they had no place in the Confederate army of Hollywood's American South.⁷¹

with the *Einsatzgruppen's* (Nazi paramilitary "Operational Forces" under the SD, or more commonly referred to as "Death Squads") mass murder of Soviet Jews in the 1941 march across Ukraine. Furthermore, Bartov posits that German films dwelled on the suffering of the 6th Army at the Battle of Stalingrad, and its wake, without even slightly suggesting that the Germans were responsible for the invasion the Soviet Union. The Russians, not the *Wehrmacht*, were actually the ones fighting in defense of their homeland.

70. Büscher, Heide and Vilsmaier, *Stalingrad*, DVD; Lockenour, "Black and White Memories of War," 169.

71. Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*, 95-105; Bartov, "Celluloid Soldiers," 135-139. Masculinity also appeared in both German movies about the *Wehrmacht* and American movies about the South as a response to an identity crisis stemming from their defeat. In both cases, damsels of beauty such as Scarlett O'Hara and exotic temptresses from the eastern front of World War II were conquests of Confederates and Germans. A clear hierarchy of paternal order that stressed strength, vitality, and manliness was reestablished in

Aside from representing the German soldiers as strapping young heroes and the Soviets as savages, *08/15*'s closing moments reveal a much more critical stereotype, one that should have always been at center stage when discussing Germany's role in World War II. As Germany is being occupied, American soldiers are portrayed as moronic and utterly inferior in every way to the heroic, overly masculine German soldiers. There is, however, one exception. The intelligent, unscrupulous Jewish-American officer who, as Bartov notes, implies World War II's greatest tragedy as espoused by the film: that the Jews were not exterminated and instead had returned upon Germany's defeat to again exploit the *Volksdeutsche*.⁷² This becomes especially clear when the Jewish officer speaks German with an upper-class accent, plainly suggesting that he fled his upper-class, Jewish roots to the United States after the ascension of Hitler and the Nazis.⁷³ Returning after 1945 to engage in black market dealing the Jewish character conveyed only one message: that the moral, economic, and racial reasons behind Hitler's Final Solution still remained in the wake of Germany's defeat.⁷⁴ This is a stark contrast to the actual historical events that took place in the South, but yet is eerily similar to the ideas linked to them and that are most evidently depicted in *The Birth of a Nation* and its novelization: that a race of people could prove detrimental to a higher society that must keep such inferiors (freed African Americans and Jews) systematically in check.

the years following the wars (though definitions of American and German masculinity differed based on dynamic systems of values).

72. Bartov, "Celluloid Soldiers," 136. The return of the conniving Jewish soldier in *08/15* brings forth another parallel between cinematic memory of the Civil War in the South and World War II in Germany. *The Birth of a Nation* uses the emancipation of slaves and the presence of Northern blacks to show that their black race almost destroyed Southern society. Their freedom was a tragedy just as the return of the Jewish race was in Germany.

73. Ibid.; May et al., *08/15*, DVD.

74. Ibid.

Upon examination of German films of the mid-to-late-twentieth century, it becomes apparent that the main themes revolved around the dissimilarity of, and often the opposition between, the common soldier and the Nazis. On one hand, the heroic victim—valiant, fearless, strong, honorable and patriotic—engaged in a brutal, nonsensical war only to defend their homeland while, on the other, an evil regime plotted and thrust such victims into said war against their wishes. According to Jay Lockenour, this memory had several cultural and social implications. First, overt “importance of duty, the resistance of ‘good’ and noble Germans, and a powerful, yet passive aversion to war largely replaced memories of resignation, collaboration, complicity, patriotism, and racism that existed in the minds of many Germans in 1945.” Frustrations over Nazi depredations could therefore be vented and a “normative separation from Nazism” established.⁷⁵ Second (and that parallels the interpretation of Southern soldiers in American films) romantic interpretations of the World War II became the norm. Handsome actors engaged in action-packed battle scenes, on foreign landscapes occupied by exotically beautiful women, against an inherently evil enemy.⁷⁶ Both on the big screen and in their private lives, the German public could then construct a homogenized, coherent, and satisfying national narrative that fit social, political, and economic agendas as it proceeded into the twentieth century (which at least for West Germany was one of growth and prosperity) and the militaristic needs of the Cold War.⁷⁷

75. Lockenour, “Black and White Memories of War,” 170; Norbert Frei, *Adenauer’s Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 303, 232. In “Black and White Memories of War,” Jay Lockenour also comments that the filmmaker’s occasional depiction of Soviet soldiers as humane gave them a commonality with the Germans, thereby reframing the war as a human tragedy at large. Again, war and, more specifically, the Nazis are seen as brutal, almost demonic, victimizers.

76. Rudolf Tschirbs, “Film als Gedächtnisort,” *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 54 (2003): 578-594. Most German war films were also set in the second half of the war when they saw defeat as imminent and mere survival as the only remaining, legitimate goal. This, in turn, helped mask the historical fact that the war of 1939-40 was a war of German aggression and annihilation on the eastern front.

Germany, at least according to its collective national memory that was solidified on film, could move beyond Nazi crimes and once again assume the role of civilized, trusted society with much to give the world. The problem, however, is the romanticized “pantheon of myths and memories”—engendered by the omission of the average German’s role within Nazi history—continues.⁷⁸ A very specific identity has been crafted around the apolitical and ahistorical dichotomy of “Good” Germans and “Evil” Nazis—perhaps still as a coping mechanism—and continues to limit, though much less recently, the positive aspects of historical recognition and confrontation.

77. Lockenour, “Black and White Memories of War,” 164-165, 190; Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 17.

78. On pages 140-143 of Omer Bartov’s “Celluloid Soldiers the author notes a great example of regular German film’s omission of the average German’s roles in Nazi crimes as late as the 1991 film *Mein Krieg (My War)*. The film features the interviews of six German veterans contrasted with the amateur footage they shot during the war. The footage clearly shows that the soldiers were near, possibly involved with, war crimes as, at one point, numerous dead Russian civilians and a mass grave are glimpsed in the background. However, this point is not illuminated, or hardly recognized, by *Mein Krieg*’s production crew. Only five years later with the release of *Jenseits des Krieges (Beyond the War)*, a documentary about the German public’s reaction to the 1995 “War of Extermination” exhibition in Vienna, did German cinema ever admit to war crimes committed by the *Wehrmacht*. Such violence was finally framed correctly, as regular occurrences instead of an exception, during the mid-1990s—over fifty years after the end of the war. But still, through overt denials or statements of loyalty and responsibility to one’s nation, some German veterans in *Jenseits des Krieges* denied that the *Wehrmacht* committed war crimes and justified their brutality. Quote from Lockenour, “Black and White Memories of War,” 190.

CONCLUSION

A comparison of historical memory in the post-Civil War American South and post-World War II Germany has its difficulties: both societies are vastly different geographically, culturally, politically, and historically; the events under consideration occurred in different centuries; and, following their defeats, both societies were forced to situate their recent histories within very different national contexts. However, several broad generalizations can be drawn from their experiences. For instance, prior to the wars, both the American South and Germany committed acts that history has deemed the pinnacles of modern oppression and injustice (chattel slavery in the South and the systematic extermination of Jews, communists, homosexuals, and gypsies in German-controlled Europe), both eagerly engaged their opponents to further their oppressive ideals, and both governments were then overthrown and their lands occupied by outside forces that sought to guide German and Southern reconstruction and progression into the future. Thus, despite the litany of national and cultural variations, comparing the American South's memory of the Civil War to Germany's memory of World War II provides insight into how humans process their recent pasts and the determining role that defeat and humiliation play in the memory-making process.¹

1. Whereas post-World War II Germany was occupied by actual outside forces (The United States, United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and the BENELUX countries), the occupation of the American South by the North during Reconstruction presents an obvious problem as the North and South were technically from the same nation prior to the war. However, based on the regional variations in politics and economics, the fact that the Confederate States of American formed by states that seceded from the Union and the Southern regionalism that was solidified upon their defeat, a strong argument for outside occupation by the North is valid.

Immediately following the American Civil War and World War II, the generations that lived in the Old South and Nazi Germany developed two entirely different responses. In Germany, despite few attempts at memorialization, forgetfulness swept the national consciousness. Instead of looking to the past with nostalgia, the occupation of the Allies rendered Nazi sympathy silent and set most Germans on a path of rebuilding and national progress. However, the process of memory making in the South was a direct contrast to that of Germany as Southerners looked at the antebellum years fondly and actively resisted their Republican Northern occupiers. Active memorialization then gave rise to the Lost Cause movement that was an attempt to curb their humiliation and regain regional respect, masculinity, and racial superiority over African Americans. Memorials and bereavement ceremonies to fallen soldiers became commonplace in the South and Germany immediately following the wars, but only in the South were these predominantly in honor of the national heroes that fought valiantly for the defeated side. Popular German memorialization, however, tended to reflect the sentiments of the Allies or would honor the defeated side obliquely through memorial omission.

Nineteenth and twentieth century Southern writing also glorified the South's soldiers while justifying their secession as a constitutional right, their antebellum racial and paternal values, and the war of Northern aggression in which they took part. Conversely, writing from the German perspective remained relatively quiet for almost twenty years following World War II. Again, these two very different responses appear to not be comparable. However both responses—insistent recollection versus silence—stem from a sense of humiliation in defeat. Only through the South's ability to reclaim ideological power from their occupiers were Southern authors able to overtly pursue a romantic Confederate agenda. However,

despite these important differences, the processes of memory creation in the South and Germany furthered existing negative social constructs. In the South, this was again more overt as positive memories of slavery and white supremacy were largely accepted and helped usher in the Jim Crow era. The negative effects of remembering anti-Semitism in Germany, however, were far more indirect as the Holocaust became a large cause of German guilt and did not allow anti-Jewish sentiment to be addressed throughout the twentieth century. Anti-Semitism thus remained, with little confrontation, for many German nationals.

Forgetfulness continued in Germany throughout the twentieth century as cinema dominated both popular remembrance and popular culture alike. While the East and West German film industries began to address World War II in their movies they tended to overlook the central role that the German *Wehrmacht* played in the systematic extermination of Jews and the imperial aspirations of the Nazis. For most German filmmakers, as well as for most German nationals, the Nazis and the German military were separate entities that fought for separate goals. The Nazis may have started the war and wanted to cleanse Europe of its barbarian hordes, but the German military, and all men drafted into it, were forced to fight bravely for the preservation of their homeland. Therefore, the *Wehrmacht* and Germany can be seen as having two enemies in German cinema: the Allies and the Nazis fascist desires.

As war films helped propel German forgetfulness by overlooking the crimes committed by the German military throughout Europe, cinema also helped solidify the romantic version of the South in the Civil War throughout the twentieth century. Beginning just after the turn of the century, black and white silent films first glorified the South in American theaters by heralding ordinary Southerners' defense of their homeland while

separating them from the exploits of Confederate leaders. However, Southern leaders did not embody the characteristics of evil that German movies placed on the Nazis—General Lee, “Stonewall” Jackson, and the like were portrayed as almost God-like. After *The Birth of a Nation* and *Gone with the Wind*, those images along with the idea that the South fought bravely in face of the advancing North for their state’s rights and to protect against the pitfalls of freeing the slaves became so entrenched in American memory that no movie could challenge the idealized assertions for much of the future. Just as is the case with the German *Wehrmacht*, the South’s memory of war in film held the Confederate army in the best light possible while downplaying the role of the true injustice that they fought to uphold during the war.

However, as has been shown, counter-memories existed within both the post-bellum South and Germany as African Americans, Jews, and Germans recalled the wars differently than mainstream memory. In Germany this meant that either the Jewish community placed the *Wehrmacht* within the model of Nazi militarism or a few German nationals attempted to glorify fallen soldiers as pursuing a noble and achievable goal; whereas, in the South, intellectuals such as W.E.B. DuBois and organizations such as the NAACP actively produced literature from the black perspective and protested the romantic assertions of white Southerners. But ultimately, romanticism prevailed in both societies as Germany and the South identified themselves as the virtuous protectors of their homelands. Even similar second generations of revisionist academics, students, and journalists that questioned the idealized assertions of their forebears could not completely remove faulty remembrance from the German and American perspectives of war. The Lost Cause and German forgetfulness have remained common sentiments. Perhaps this is due to the reconciliation that took place

between the North and South behind the veil of a series of twentieth century wars abroad and between Germany and the Allies at the onset of the Cold War. In both cases, the Germans and the Americans were able to move past their divisive pasts and focus on more nationalistic events while romantic sentiments had not been fully addressed. In other words, interest of past events diminished in politics and legacies of war became stale while the ahistorical ambitions of the Lost Cause and *Stunde Null* persisted in national psyches.

Evidence exists that supports the existence of the Lost Cause and German forgetfulness in more recent history. In the South, it is not hidden that reenactments, ceremonies honoring the Confederate dead, and sons and daughters of Confederate veterans' organizations have existed for decades while, in Germany, sentiments similar to those held regarding the events of Bitburg in the 1980s are still common. Even as monument-building that honors the victims of the Civil War and World War II has become more popular in the United States and Germany, heated debates still arise surrounding the proper construction and messages of those memorials. For instance, in the South, counter-monuments to the Lost Cause have just started appearing with any frequency but often do not confront institutionalized slavery. Instead, monuments such as the Arthur Ashe statue that stands heroically among four Confederate legends on Richmond, Virginia's Monument Avenue seek to portray the positive influence that African Americans have had on American culture while not making their ancestors appear as victims, oppressed, or helpless. In Germany, however, this is vastly different: monuments that honored, yet victimized, persecuted Jews, communists, and homosexuals appeared much sooner after the conclusion of the war. And while there is controversy regarding how best to portray the perpetrators—either by directly articulating a message for the viewer to take away or by leaving the monuments open

ended—through memorials in both the South and Germany, the much older memorials to the Confederacy remain intact throughout the Southern landscape while engendering feelings of both pride, sadness, and less often remorse in their observers. Perhaps the late twentieth century brought forth more questions regarding human rights, but the fact that Jews were more eager to position themselves as victims and the Nazis as perpetrators remains a stark contrast to African Americans, who do not wish to be victimized, and the Confederacy, which is often romanticized, in the South.

Only time will determine the future of German and Southern memories of war and how they persist. However, the history of these memories can be traced. In Germany, forgetting was the coping mechanism for the embarrassment and guilt over their vulnerability to Nazi policies and genocide; whereas, the South used romantic, mythical remembrance of valiant Southern heroes and landscapes to deal with the cultural embarrassment suffered in defeat. But in doing so, both the South and Germany remembered as much about the wars and their old societies as they forgot; both portrayed themselves as victims in the hands of an oppressor (either the North or the Nazis), downplayed their own roles as an oppressor, and in turn glorified their common soldiers. But despite these important overarching and generalized similarities, the occupation that took place on the soil of the American South and Germany can be looked to in order to offer an explanation for the smaller differences. In Germany the Allies completely obtained control over the rebuilding and progression of the New Germany at the Yalta Conference. Two separate governments were then set up in East and West Germany with the intention of proceeding politically, economically, and morally as a modern nation in a new Europe. Furthermore, isolationism was almost completely abolished, at least for West Germany and other western nations, following World War II as

the Allies opened West Germany to Capitalist markets and assumed a larger role global issues. Thus, West Germany was forced to consider its national standing and how it would be perceived in the eyes of the Allies who were controlling the moral discourse of the war immediately following it. German guilt was high, and their individual dealings with the Nazis became easier to ignore than to confront.

In the American South, however, the governmental occupation by the Union during Reconstruction proved unsuccessful. Instead of the North controlling moral discourse and silencing racist sentiments, Southerners responded vehemently against the emancipation of slaves. Threats, lynchings, and mutilations became prominent as the writing of the time spoke more of the dangers of blacks to the fabric of American society. Furthermore, incendiary groups such as the Red Shirts supplanted Republican politicians in the South with Southern Democrats such as Wade Hampton. It was much easier—for reasons of global connectedness, political strength, and militaristic power—for the South to overthrow its occupiers and regain control and influence in the American political system than it would have been for postwar Germany to potentially rout the Allies. Thus, it was possible for the South to control historical memory and overtly memorialize a mythical Confederacy that viewed slavery not as oppression but as a positive social organization.

Historians must constantly study and scrutinize any mythic or romantic interpretation of war and isolate the values and ideals that the loser espoused. In both of these cases, that task is not difficult. However, it is much more difficult to recognize antebellum principles that reside quietly in popular histories of the Civil War and Lost Cause monuments. Over time the landscape and objects on it take on meaning that their builders held dear. In order to progress beyond such tragedies as American slavery or Nazi genocide, all nations, being

comprised of human beings, must work to better their rhetoric and confront the mythicization of history. Moral atrocities can happen on any soil, or to any person. Confronting how memory embeds itself within culture and society and perpetuates distorted legacies is necessary for the advancement of any nation in a world that too often allows racism, paternalism, and militarism to drive its actions.

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