Meaning and Monuments: Morality, Racial Ideology, and Nationalism in Confederate

Monument Removal Storytelling

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

In this thesis I examine the reproduction of nationalism and white supremacy within Confederate monument removal (CMR) storytelling, and the ways collective identity and emotions are implicated within these reproductions. Using reader generated CMR narratives published in a Southern newspaper, *the Augusta Chronicle,* I conduct narrative analysis in order to identify key story elements, moral arguments, and cultural codes present in the public CMR debate. Findings indicate that two sharply contested narratives emerge during this debate, one calling for the protection of Confederate monuments and one calling for the removal of Confederate monuments. Further, though these contested stories produce opposing moral value judgements of Confederate monuments, they rely on similar cultural and emotion codes, frames, and rhetorical moves which reproduce nationalism and white supremacy. Through reifying national mythologies, constructing individuals as citizens, rhetorically isolating racism and slavery, and reproducing racialized capitalism, CMR narratives on both sides of the debate become sites where nationalism and white supremacy are perpetuated. These findings indicate that there is an important relationship between collective memory and cultural meaning-making processes related to identity and emotions. Further, findings also suggest that collective memory narratives, particularly contested or oppositional narratives, are important sites facilitating continuity in hegemonic systems. Because of their key role in perpetuating nationalism and white supremacy, it is possible that collective memory narratives may also be spaces where the interruption of hegemonic systems can also be facilitated.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

Some of the most distinctive landmarks in the American South are those that commemorate the unique history of the region, not the least of which are monuments to the Confederacy that are dotted throughout cemeteries, town squares, and government buildings in the South (Winberry 1983). These monuments—like most iconography associated with the South—have been widely contested and praised throughout the years, defended to the point of violence and decried to the same degree. Recently the debate on the continued existence of Confederate monuments has ramped up again. These debates stem from a series of events, including the 2015 Charleston Church Massacre in Charleston, South Carolina in which nine African American church goers were murdered by a white supremacist associated with Confederate imagery. Two years later, the Unite the Right rally—which was organized to protest the removal of a statue of Robert E. Lee—took place in Charlottesville, Virginia and culminated in the death of one counter-protestor by vehicular homicide. This climate and the resulting debates present an opportunity to explore meaning-making processes within collective memory narratives in interesting and important ways. Specifically, this project will seek to answer (1) How are Confederate monuments and the narratives surrounding threats of their removal used in ways that construct and transform identity? (2) To what extent and in what ways are emotions

implicated in producing moral value judgements of Confederate monuments? and (3) How are hegemonic systems like nationalism and white supremacy (re)produced within CMR narratives?

While debates and conflict centered on Confederate monument removal are certainly not new to the South, the removal debate in the last five years has garnered more widespread recognition than in years past. This is evidenced, in part, by the sheer number of Confederate monuments being removed from Southern townscapes and cities, which represents a surge in actual or threatened Confederate monument removal the likes of which the South has not seen in recent history (*The New York Times*, August 28, 2017). Resulting from threats of Confederate monument removal is the circulation of stories, testimonials, and arguments on behalf of or against the continued existence of Confederate monuments. I will refer to these as Confederate Monument Removal (CMR) narratives. Many CMR narratives exist online in the form of electronic news articles, opinion editorials, and other testimonials posted by newspapers covering the threat of monument removal. It is important to note that CMR narratives, in being framed as debates between two sides advocating for the removal or protection of Confederate monuments, are assumed by many to represent opposing political and ideological camps. Because of the contested nature of CMR narratives, and this assumed political and ideological divide, I believe studying CMR narratives is all the more important, as it within opposing narratives that deeply entrenched and hegemonic systems may hide in plain sight.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Narrative

Narratives, being rhetorical "cultural structures" (Alexander 2003:3), act as powerful vessels for shared meanings and cultural understandings that form the foundation of organizations, communities, and societies. These rhetorical structures produce real world

consequences for people in their proximity. This is due to the ability of narratives to influence identity formation, both individual and collective (Loseke 2007), to act as "yardsticks by which to morally evaluate the self and others" (Baker 1996; Wood & Rennie 1994), and act as a "means of studying" various processes and characteristics of the social world (Ewick and Silbey 1995). On a macro scale, narratives can perpetuate or challenge existing power structures and forces of domination (Ewick and Silbey 1995), making them important sites for those studying continuities or disruptions in systems of power. In this project I am interested in examining collective memory narratives, specifically Confederate monument removal narratives, as sites of identity construction and negotiation, as well as places where hegemonic systems of power like nationalism and white supremacy might be reproduced or interrupted.

Stories play a role in the organization of relationships between groups of people in lieu of direct experience, particularly when those stories are about "types of people" or when stories feature characters with whom direct experience is impossible (Loseke 2012:252). Since collective memory narratives typically feature people from the past, "types of people" that living social actors cannot directly engage with, these stories are the only forms of interaction between historical figures and living people. Similarly, because processes of identity construction and continuities in racial ideologies and nationalism are dependent on defining the other—a nebulous category of people who are not always part of a coherent identity, nationality, or racial category—narratives about "types of people" become crucial these processes are concerned. As we are all "embedded in…a narrative identity system" (118) that is influenced by our engagement with power, processes of identity construction are inherently rooted in power relations (Eakin 2007). Narrative inquiry allows researchers to examine story elements in ways that extract meaning and facilitate power analysis.

3

Narratives come in many forms and can be told through countless mediums. Though we typically think of fiction as the primary story-telling device, painting, dance, oral histories, poetry, and song are all ways to tell stories, and many more besides these exist and are used regularly by people to create shared meaning and make sense of the worlds around them. The stories I am concerned with here are publicly circulating collective memory narratives which center the potential removal of Confederate monuments. Confederate monuments themselves represent another form of story-telling: a form of narrative that is both objectivized and conservative, stories of war, history, and nation told in stone to stand forever unchanged (Savage 2018). Confederate monument removal narratives, alternatively, are fluid, contested stories that arise when the moral value of Confederate monuments is called into question and thus monument removal looms. Due to the social and historical location of these monuments, embedded in all CMR stories are shared understandings of race and nation. By exploring these shared understandings, where they maintain continuity and where they are challenged or fragmented, I hope to work towards the "political commitment" of narrative analysis, in which hegemonic systems are located within widely circulated stories told on public platforms. This political commitment becomes all the more important in the face of contested narratives such as CMR stories, which are often understood as being politically opposed, and thus inherently falling to one side of a socially regressive or progressive ideological divide. In later sections, I will argue that this false political dichotomy which emerges in the CMR debate contributes to the obfuscation of systems of power, resulting in the reproduction of nationalism and white supremacy becoming more hegemonic by virtue of "both sides" aiding in their continuity.

Particularly relevant to this project are symbolic and emotion codes, and strategic frames. Symbolic codes are "systems of ideas about how the world does work, how the world should

4

work, and about the rights and responsibilities among people of this world", while emotion codes are "systems of ideas about when and where and toward whom or what emotions should be inwardly experienced, outwardly displayed, and morally evaluated" (Loseke 2012:253). Though symbolic and emotion codes are underpinned by general shared cultural understandings, the "perceived importance of codes and understandings of their specific contents are historically and socially situated" (Loseke 2012:254). Frames, related but distinct tools, are strategic, conscious constructions of meaning that claimsmakers use to designate problems, attribute blame, and propose solutions (Hunt, Benford, and Snow 1994). Though framing is a meaning making process most often housed in the social movements literature (Benford and Snow 2000), the concept can be applied to much of the storytelling work taking place in the CMR debate. It is through the deployment of widely circulating stories, frames, and codes that CMR narratives mobilize the emotions, identities, and ideologies of audience members; as such these narrative components are of utmost importance to this work.

Collective Memory

With this project I am in part concerned with the ways Confederate monuments aid in the accomplishment of identity work and maintain systems of white supremacy and nationalism through collective memory narratives. A key feature of collective memory, in fact, "what makes collective memory collective…is that the same narrative tools are shared by members of a group" (Wertsch 2008:139); in other words, the cultural elements of collective memory are constructed by narrative tools, or templates, within which individuals are not only engaged outright in authoring stories about history, but are also "coauthoring accounts about the past…especially events that occurred beyond living memory" (Wertsch 2008:141). Collective memory narratives carry the same characteristics as any other narrative, deriving their power to

influence our emotional processes "in part from the fact that their abstract nature typically leads to their being unnoticed and especially 'transparent' to those employing them" (Wertsch 2008:142). This taken-for-granted nature makes the study of collective memory narratives all the more important to questions related to power and hegemony. As "an active process of sense making through time" (Olick and Levy 1997:928), the concept of collective memory can be used to nuance an understanding of meaning making processes, including processes of identity construction and the maintenance or subversion of hegemonic power relations. Further, collective memory itself can become a powerful tool in which political, ethnic, and racial myths are constructed and sustained (Moses 2005). Thus, collective memory provides a uniquely essential framework that lends itself well to studying the intersection of nationalism, white supremacy, identity, and meaning-making surrounding monuments to the Confederacy.

Not to be confused with biological or cognitive approaches to remembering, collective memory is a field that takes up the "social memory" of a people (Assmann & Czaplicka 1995:125). Within the scope of the collective memory project is, in part, contextualizing "the specific character that a person derives from belonging to a distinct society and culture," and the references to past generations and memories within that character (Assmann & Czaplicka 1995:125). Collective memory is, in the most traditional sense, concerned with living oral histories in which every day communication provides a vehicle for memories that are "(a) socially mediated and (b) relate to a group" (Assmann & Czaplicka 1995:127). As the field developed so too did the subject matter under the purview of collective memory researchers. Now, objectivized culture— "texts, images, rites, buildings, monuments, cities, or even landscapes" (Assmann & Czaplicka 1995:128)—falls within that purview. Clearly the relationship between collective memory and collective identity is strong. In fact, objectivized

6

culture proves to be a site in which the "concretion of identity," or the process in which a group forms "its consciousness of unity and specificity…and derives formative and normative impulses" takes place, allowing identity to be constructed and reproduced over time (Assmann & Czaplicka 1995:128). Cultural collective memory, in contrast to communicative collective memory, is trademarked by is transcendence of the everyday, and is based in fixed points throughout time, or "fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance)" (Assmann & Czaplicka 1995:129).

A primary function of collective memory is the nurturing of "social cohesion through the representation of national narratives in symbolic places, monumental forms, and performance" (Osborne 2001:40). This representation is facilitated in large part through symbolic and emotion codes that reference and reproduce mythologies of race and nation. In projects centered on the South, attention to collective memory becomes imperative since "the remembered past and debates about it have a deep significance for both public life and regional identity in the American South" (Brundage 2000). One of the ways collective memory can help in the pursuit of identity questions is by exploring the nurturing of identity inherent in collective memory narratives or the production of symbolic places (Osborne 2001; Brundage 2000). The South as it exists today, for example, is the product of decades of conscious work enacted by "individuals who have imagined themselves as 'southerners'" (Brundage 2000:3). This work is evidenced by the thousands of Confederate monuments which dot the Southern landscape, monuments which emerge(d) from a continued and often contested negotiation of meaning related to the Civil War, race, and the nation itself (Savage 2018:5). Exploring the contested meanings behind those

7

decades of work and the fruits of that labor is vital to understanding identity construction and reproductions of nationalism and racial ideology in the South.

The South as a symbolic place and meaning-making processes in the South should not be confined to a vacuum, however. Southern collective memory projects exist within and reflect broader national concerns, and as such should be conceptualized as parts of wider national collective memory processes. Further, Confederate monuments, as well as reproductions of nationalism and white supremacy do not cease to exist outside of the South. Examining how meaning-making process in Southern collective memory narratives echo or disrupt broader narratives related to race and nation is key to analyzing the continuity of wider systems of hegemonic power like nationalism and white supremacy. Collective memory scholars take the position that "remembering is as much social as it is personal," thus remembering becomes a group activity, deeply important to the maintenance of identity over time and across generations (Assmann & Czaplicka 1995; Ayers 1995; Griffin 2004:546; Quandt & Zerubavel 1996). While many CMR narratives reference seemingly personal details related to family involvement in the Civil War, there are undeniably collective elements to these narratives as well, elements which resonate outside of the confines of the Southern United States. Ultimately, collective memory has the power to breakdown a dichotomy of individual and collective by exploring the ways identities, be them national, organizational, regional, or cultural, are reinforced and continually maintained (Misztal 2010; Assmann & Czaplicka 1995). This connection between individual and collective is best evidenced through the relationship between collective memory, collective identity, and continuities in hegemonic stories.

8

Collective Identity

As mentioned previously, the construction and maintenance of identity is a process in constructing an 'other,' in defining difference, and in creating distinction (Benhabib 2014). Particularly relevant to this project is the construction and manifestation of white racial identity, Southern identity, and American identity, as these identities are salient throughout CMR narratives and are sites which reproduce nationalism and white supremacy. Southern identity emerges through comparisons against the North and the nation as a whole (Cobb 2007; McPherson 2003), while racial identity is constructed through a process of "politicization of the social" in which racial categories and barriers between races are stringently defined and enforced (Omi and Winant 2008:1565). National identity is similarly constructed against the other, whether that other be ideological, ethno-racial, geographical, religious, linguistic, etc. (Benhabib 2014). National identity has been conceptualized broadly across disciplines, but core characteristics include the centralization of a political community with "at least some common institutions and a single code of rights and duties" for citizens (Smith 1993:9), and defined and bounded space within which a sense of belonging and shared history is fostered (Smith 1993:9; Nikiforov 2017).

American identity is both more specific and more difficult to define as compared to national identity broadly, partly because of perceived shifts in American identity that have taken place over time (Beasley 2011). Generally speaking, there are certain values, symbols, and narratives that have become incorporated into a broad American identity, which some argue are summarized in the American Dream myth (Samuel 2012). The American Dream myth centralizes cultural codes of democracy, equality, civic duty, individualism, protestant work ethic, capitalism, and meritocracy (Loseke 2017). Along with these symbolic codes come

9

emotion codes of pride and patriotism, both pillars of modern national projects (Bart-tal & Staub 1997). These codes are reproduced within memory narratives related to national heroes and villains, stories about the role of America as an international peace-keeper, and cultural memories of war and catastrophe. Thus, collective memory aides in the centralization of these codes within American mythology and culture, indicating that relationships between collective memory and collective identity are important sites where national identity is built, maintained, or changed.

One key way that American identity has been constructed both in terms of identity and ideology is through the construction of Southern identity, which has become sort of a domestic "other" which serves as a point of broad national comparison. Southern identity is complex and fragmented, evidenced by regional discontinuities between, for example, Appalachian mountaineers, Lowcountry coastal whites, Creole and Cajun peoples of Louisiana, the Gullah and Geechee nation of the Georgia and Carolina coasts, and Deep South cotton belt residents (McPherson 2003; Watts 2008; Griffin 2004). An even more obvious and potentially fraught divide exists between white and Black Southerners whose shared history is marked by (often contested) legacies of violence and oppression, power struggles, and generational trauma due to brand of white supremacy enacted in the South. Despite this fragmentation, however, there remains a mutual understanding among those who study the South and those who embody a Southern identity that there is *something*, some undercurrent of shared imagery, experience, or history that ties each of these disparate identities together on a broad level.

Part of this common thread woven throughout various iterations of Southern identity is related to the role of the South as a point of comparison for other regions of the country, and the country as a whole. Southern identity and the South have been and continue to be theorized in

10

contrast with the "Non-South" (McPherson 2003). The most obvious foil for Southern identity has traditionally been the North, a place that, in its historical proximity to the South, has also become more than simply a geographical region or collection of states (Cobb 2007). The North, as a counterpoint to the South, represents "an 'emotional idea' of the reminder of a triumphantly superior America both literally and figuratively beyond and without the ever-problematic South" (Cobb 2007:2). Of course, this characterization of the North is no less fantastical and rooted in mythology than the characterization of antebellum life in *Gone with the Wind;* it is a functional characterization, however, in the task of consigning the ills of American history to the South. Whereas the North was characterized by urban growth, relative wealth, ethnic diversity, and freedom of opportunity, the South, and the Southerner by extension, came to be characterized by the trauma of slavery and Jim Crow era brutality, as well as economic and ideological stagnancy, a place antithetical to progress and innovation (Cobb 2007:2). In this way, Southern identity is integral to the construction of an American identity; identity is defined in relation to the other, and a Southern identity became an internal "other," the "negative reference point" against which a progressive national identity was constructed (Cobb 2007:3). The hypocrisy of a nation built on foundations of both liberty and bondage was reframed with the scapegoating of the South as a malignant region uniquely bankrolled by a bloody, brutal industry of slavery and segregation (Cobb 2007). Thus, the ills of the South were to be overcome by the South and Southerners exclusively, and were not the problem of or representative of the nation at large, no matter how much the nation profited from and co-constructed those ills.

It is not enough to note that Southern identity exists as a broad, expansive entity growing from common roots while having the mere potential to be fragmented on racial lines. A profound truth of Southern identity is that even in its broadest, most universal iterations, it remains

11

racialized. In fact, key components of the duality that is characteristic of Southern identity includes the omnipresent divide between experiences, memories, and the identity of white and Black Southerners, and the racial hierarchy upon which that identity was founded (Griffin 2004; Killian 1985; McPherson 2003; Watts 2008; Zinn 1963). A key feature of white Southern identity, historically, has been an adherence to and staunch defense of social relations organized by race, with whiteness at the top of the hierarchy, upholding beliefs in white Southern exceptionalism (Griffin 2004, Killian 1985; Watts 2008). The defining characteristics of Southern society that a booming nostalgia industry is now built on—the gentile, the grandeur, the thriving agricultural industry—were the products of a centuries long and blood-soaked slave industry organized by race (McPherson 2003; Watts 2008). The Civil War, the Reconstruction period, and the Jim Crow era are each representative of the organized political struggle white Southerners engaged in to maintain the racial hierarchy that defined the region, and are each crucial events that shaped the history and experiences of all Southerners across race and regional location (Cobb 2007:4). The brutality and violence inherent in this hierarchy, and the degree to which white Southerners enthusiastically defend(ed) it and its many iterations over the generations has become deeply incorporated into the canon of American consciousness (Zinn 1963:51). Thus, race at the least, and white supremacy at the most have, too, been incorporated into the broadest understandings of Southern identity.

Part of the racialization of Southern identity is related to the association between Southern identity and Confederate imagery (Reed 1994; Watts 2008:4). Confederate symbols, from the Battle Flag itself to towering marble obelisks standing as monuments to the Lost

12

Cause[1], are contested cultural icons that have come to define the South (Webster & Leib 2002; Watts 2008; Winberry 1983). Fierce debates over the continued existence of Confederate iconography on public and government property have plagued the South since the end of the Civil War, and have ebbed and flowed in the subsequent decades. In the eighties and nineties, calls for the removal of the Confederate Battle Flag from the Georgia, South Carolina, and Alabama state flags were heard around the country, as was the resounding pushback those calls met (Webster & Leib 2002; Reingold & Wike 1998). More recently, a rash of Confederate monument and Battle Flag removals has swept the South following a series of violent attacks by white supremacists who have acted in close proximity to Confederate imagery, or have acted explicitly in defense of that imagery (McCammon 2017). Despite the South being embattled in nearly constant debate related to these images and monuments, they remain emblematic of the region and of Southern identity (Webster & Leib 2002; Watts 2008; Winberry 1983); they also remain steeped in racial tension due to their historic roles in the Confederacy and the opposition to the Civil Rights movement, as well as their continued proximity to Southern white supremacist violence (Cobb 2007; Watts 2008). Nonetheless, meaning making processes in the South, no matter how unique they may seem, are situated within broader contexts of nationalism and white supremacy which both produce and are reproduced within CMR narratives.

Nationalism and Racial Ideology

CMR stories are told within and reflect a racialized social system in which "economic, political, social, and ideological levels are partially structured by the placement of actors in racial

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[1] The "Lost Cause" of the Confederacy is an ideology that situates the Confederate cause as just and honorable, those who fought for the Confederacy as heroic, and ultimately describes the Confederacy as having been engaged in a struggle to uphold a morally sound Southern way of life in the face of Northern aggression (See also Fred Arthur Bailey, "The Textbooks of the 'Lost Cause': Censorship and the Creation of Southern State Histories," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly,* 75 (Fall 1991):507-533; Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lose Cause, and the Emergence of the New South*, 1987.

13

categories or races" (Bonilla-Silva 2001:37). These categories, according to the widely accepted social constructivist perspective, are always socially and historically situated rather than biologically innate (Fleming 2017; Bonilla-Silva 2001). Inherent in a racialized social system is a hierarchy in which economic, occupational, political, and social barriers between races are established, with one race in the superior position maintaining power and domination over those in subordinate positions (Bonilla-Silva 2011:37; Feagin 2013). America, established and maintained as a white nation-sate, is organized by a white supremacist social system in which the current mechanisms of domination are hegemonic, or taken-for-granted, covert, and unquestioned by most (Bonilla Silva 2011; Bonilla-Silva 2017). Examples of racism in America, which is systemic and pervasive (Myers and Williamson 2001:2), are embedded in the institutions that are foundational to American society, including educational, political, and judicial systems, religious organizations, and families (Bonilla-Silva 2018; Myers and Williamson 2001:2). White supremacy as an organizing system is held together, in part, by racial ideologies, comprised of "common frames, style, and racial stories" (Bonilla-Silva 2018:9), which serve as a political instrument maintaining racial hierarchies and existing social organization.

A consequence of the othering process referenced in previous sections in which the South is sharply contrasted with the North and the nation as a whole, a white supremacist racial hierarchy has become particularly salient in broad cultural understandings of the South, specifically in relation to white Southern exceptionalism during slavery, and in the framing of the South during and after the Civil War (Griffin 2004:7). In relaying the importance of race in the organization of the South I am not denying its importance elsewhere, but rather I am noting that in the eyes of the nation at large there exists a sort of racially-informed, "invisible mist over

14

the entire Deep South, distorting justice, blurring perspective, and, most of all, indissoluble by reason" (Zinn 1963). This "mist" informs cultural understandings of race, racism, and the South, often resulting in the South being scapegoated as uniquely racist in comparison to a racially progressive American whole. As mentioned earlier, framing the South as particular in its racial barbarism and thus fundamentally different than the North and other regions of the United States was functional in the construction of a national identity rooted in freedom and justice (Killian 1985; Reed 1994). Overt and passionate racism were attributed to the South and the Southerner, and consequently racism remained a defining characteristic of social organization in the South even as its influence in other regions was being ignored or erased (Killian 1985, Reed 1994, Zinn 1963). Further, though grief is central to Southern identity in a broad sense, there is an iteration of white Southern identity rooted in the grief of the common soldier, the Lost Cause of the Confederacy, and the perceived decline of the white man (Killian 1985:5). At the center of this grief is whiteness, and a feeling that the white Southerner is a minority in the broader context of the United States (Killian 1985:5). Race, then, inevitably has a unique relationship with the South.

Despite cultural understandings of a unique relationship between racism and the South, there are of course patterns related to race and racism that are not bounded by region. One of those patterns is the development of new racial ideologies that maintain hegemonic power structures while reframing race and racism to be "softer" and less overt in influence (Bonilla-Silva 2018). As hierarchies previously considered to be "good race relations," namely segregation and white supremacy (Killian 1985:5), were increasingly framed as barbaric and antiquated, indicative of the morally corrupt South rather than a nation valuing freedom and liberty, color-blind racism became "the dominant racial ideology" marginalizing people of color

15

in the United States. This ideology sits in sharp contrast to overt racial hierarchies organizing the South during slavery, reconstruction, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights era. Color-blind racism is characterized by covert maneuvers designed to "keep blacks and other racial minorities 'at the bottom of the well'" without betraying the continued material realities of inequality across racial lines (Bonilla-Silva 2018:3). These maneuvers range from rhetorical strategies such as employing coded language rather than implicating race outright in conversation all the way to systematically disenfranchising people of color in the housing market through advertising strategies that target whites or exclude people of color (Bonilla-Silva 2018). Understanding color-blind racism and how it manifests in CMR narratives is an essential part of understanding how white supremacy has adapted to social and political changes in a post-Civil Rights era, and how those adaptations manifest in identity construction processes. However, white supremacy is not the only system being reproduced within CMR narratives.

White supremacy intersects with other hegemonic systems, like nationalism, which can be loosely defined as an "ideological consciousness of nationhood" that "embraces a complex set of themes about 'us,' 'our homeland,' 'nations' ('ours' and 'theirs'), the 'world', as well as the morality of national duty and honor" (Billig 2018:4). The "strategic rhetoric" of nationalism (Prividera and Howard 2006:30), like that of white supremacist ideology, draws on familiar images, clichés, and narratives which aid in the continual reproduction of nations and citizens as nationals (Billig 1995). White supremacy and nationalism both have historically been conceptualized as radical, passionate expressions of fringe extremists operating on the periphery of political and social life (Billig 1995:5; Feagin 2013). These conceptualizations ignore the ways established nations and racial hierarchies are reproduced and maintained over time in innocuous ways. Banal nationalism, or the everyday habits and beliefs that allow America and

16

other Western states to be constantly reproduced as nations (Billig 1995), and color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2018) represent two of the covert, taken-for-granted, hegemonic manifestations of nationalism and white supremacy that aid in continuities of a White Supremacist America.

Banal nationalism and color-blind racism are readily observable in CMR narratives through symbolic and emotion codes deployed by story authors. It is through these codes, which reference the common frames, stories, familiar images, and clichés housing white supremacy and nationalism, that the morality of key characters are defined and value judgements of Confederate monuments are legitimized or challenged. Of key importance to this project is understanding the ways these ideologies and systems of power are deployed similarly across contested narratives. Since "struggles over the meaning of racial history are, of course, informed by contemporary politics of race" (Fleming 2017:5), CMR stories are sites in which continuities in white supremacist and nationalist ideologies might be identified and potentially interrupted or challenged.

METHODS

The intensification of the CMR debate in recent years, the actual removal of numerous Confederate monuments in iconic Southern cities, and the vehement response by American citizens to these removals, whether in support or opposition, all point to CMR as being a culturally significant meaning-making process. In order to examine the collective memory narratives produced during this debate, I conducted a content analysis of reader generated texts related to CMR published in a local newspaper in Augusta, Georgia. Augusta was chosen as the site for this project for a number of reasons, the first being that it is home to one of the most elaborate Confederate monuments in the South (Winberry 1983). The Augusta Confederate Monument stands 76 ft. tall in the heart of downtown Augusta, where it has been a fixture on

17

Broad Street since 1878. It features life-size statues of four Confederate Generals on each corner of the base of a tall marble obelisk topped by a statue of Barry Benson, a Civil War veteran from Augusta who represents all the common soldiers who fought for the Confederate cause. Those immortalized on the statue include Thomas R. R. Cobb, Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee, and William H. T. Walker.

Of further interest is the *Augusta Chronicle* itself; established in 1785 as the Augusta Gazette, it lauds itself as "the oldest newspaper in the South," making it an interesting host for the CMR debate this project analyzes. According to a March 2012 report by the Audit Bureau, the *Chronicle* has a weekly circulation average of 56,985 and an average Sunday circulation of 73,273, with monthly reach of 218,503 among adults. The readership of the *Chronicle* spans a number of counties and towns within the Central Savannah River Area, or the CSRA, and is not limited to Augustans, or even Georgians. As Augusta is a border city located on the southern edge of South Carolina, many of the *Chronicle* readers are South Carolinians. One thing most, if not all *Chronicle* readers have in common is that they reside in the South, and either subscribe to or regularly electronically browse The *Chronicle* to consume and share stories and news. As one of the oldest local newspapers in the country still in production, a paper specifically branded as the 'Oldest Newspaper in the South', and as a primary site in which the CMR debate in Augusta has manifested, The *Augusta Chronicle* is a rich and important site for this project.

In addition to the qualities listed above, I have a personal connection with Augusta and its Confederate monument that made me eager to examine related meaning making processes. While I lived with my father in the rural, unincorporated town of Appling for most of my life, over the years I spent countless days and nights in Downtown Augusta. As a child I remember walking with my grandma for hours up and down Broad Street, with her often taking breaks on

one of the benches surrounding the Augusta Confederate monument while I played at its base. As a teenager I recall driving myself and friends to music venues Downtown, frequently parking by the Confederate monument. My optometrist is located across the street from the monument, which can be seen clearly from the shop window. These accounts may give the impression that the Confederate monument is salient in my memories of Augusta, but the exact opposite is true. The Augusta Confederate monument, despite it being an imposing fixture of the landscape I grew up in, was virtually invisible to me for most of my life; I knew it was there, and knew what it was, but as soon as it was out of my sightlines it was forgotten, fading into the background of the city. It was only after slowly realizing that the landmarks, streets, and artefacts which comprised the backdrop of my life in the South were directly connected to racism and white supremacy that I became interested in examining public negotiations of meaning related to the landscape of Augusta.

As I began paying attention to broader Confederate monument removal debates in the country during the last five years, I wondered how citizens of Augusta would negotiate the meaning of our own monument, or whether such a debate would ever spark in my city. Despite sharing the same history of white supremacy as the rest of the South (and nation, for that matter), the existence of well documented instances of contemporary racist violence, and being home to the most elaborate Confederate monument in the Southern United States, Augusta managed to avoid widely publicized critique or controversy related to Confederate iconography and racism that some other Southern cities have experienced. That Augusta's Confederate monument failed to receive national attention does not mean that local debates on the topic of its removal do not exist. On the contrary, *the Augusta Chronicle* became a sounding board for local residents to state their claims on the removal of the Augusta Confederate monument, with stories centered on

19

the topic published with regularity between 2016 and 2018. Thus, in an effort to centralize the Confederate monument which faded into the background of my own consciousness, and to understand how hegemonic systems are maintained outside of public scrutiny and through every day meaning making processes, I chose to examine the CMR debate in Augusta for this project. My relationship with Augusta directly informed my relationship to the data, and as I have recently begun to do with my own personal history, I worked to uncover hidden or obscure reproductions of white supremacy and nationalism within my data.

Sample and Methodology

Mass media in general and newspapers specifically have long been considered sites where debate and dialogue enter the public sphere and are disseminated to wide audiences (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2008). For this reason, newspapers, as both public spaces and as hosts of mediated dialogue between claimsmakers, are a logical source of data for the questions being explored in this study. Since the central focus of this project is examining meaning making processes within publicly circulated collective memory narratives, I use data that are generated by community members and distributed on a public platform. Specifically, I analyze reader generated content, including opinion editorials, letters to the editor, guest columns, and any other community submissions published by the paper. This content is ultimately curated by editors who pick, sort, and arrange these documents in the paper for a particular audience, and as a result are not organic conversations or generalizable. These pieces do, however, draw on and reproduce broad cultural narratives built on foundations of shared collective memory, identity, and ideology.

In order to be considered for this study, pieces needed to be centered on Confederate monument removal and published any time between August 2017 and August 2018. In focusing

20

on content published during this time frame I centered narratives that emerged after critical events which have reinvigorated the CMR debate, including the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville in 2017. Data were collected electronically via searching keywords in the search function of newspaper websites. Terms used in this search included combinations of the following words and phrases: "confederacy," "confederate monument," "monument," "statue," "protest," and "removal." These terms were combined and arranged in relevant ways. Further, through the *Augusta Chronicle* internal search engine, an "opinion" filter was applied, meaning all content returned through my searches using the terms above were classified as opinion pieces, and were reader generated. Articles returned through this search were electronically stored in a word document in which pieces were organized chronologically by date. Information saved in this document included a hyperlink to the article on the *Chronicle* website, titles, authors (when available), publication dates, and body text. Most pieces were written by *Augusta Chronicle* readers, though seven were by the *Augusta Chronicle* Editorial Staff. These were included in the final sample because of their classification on the *Chronicle's* website as "opinion pieces," and represent the subjective views of Editorial Staff members rather than an official position by the *Augusta Chronicle* itself. Pieces ranged from 3-4 pages (these were most often opinion editorials) to 1-2 sentences (short reader-generated quips posted in the recurring "rants and raves" section of the paper). The final word count of the document which held all 92 pieces collected was 31,160 words.

During analysis, I synthesized a number of qualitative techniques from traditions in both narrative and document analysis. Initial coding methods included concept and narrative coding, which I used (a) to note abstract concepts, symbols, and systems of meaning in CMR stories and (b) to identify key story elements (plots, characters, settings) in data (Saldaña 2015:292). I

followed this with affective coding methods, including emotion and values coding wherein I isolated and categorized key beliefs, attitudes, values, and emotions which emerged in the data (Saldaña 2015:293). In keeping with traditions of narrative analysis, data were not decontextualized from broad story elements; rather those story elements, their manifestation and development throughout the data, and their strategic deployment by story authors were consciously and holistically explored (Riessman 2003). In keeping with traditions of document analysis, I explored data that circulates within the public sphere, engaging in a "conceptually informed conversation" (Altheide et al. 2008:127) with documents retrieved from the newspapers described above. Throughout these processes I kept in mind my desire to preserve story elements within narratives while also being open to the emergence of nuance, irregularity, and complexity within data.

Because my data were comprised of contested narratives, I paid special attention to symbolic and emotion codes within CMR stories. Symbolic and emotion codes, as mentioned earlier, are part of how stories remain meaningful despite difference in perspective and positionality of audience members, making them an essential component of understanding how white supremacist and nationalist ideologies transcend apparent political or moral divides. These codes are imbued with meaning and circulate widely throughout culture, and though they may be deployed in different ways, they retain an underlying meaning that is generally shared across individuals in communities or groups. I also observed and considered "rhetorical moves" deployed by story authors constructing CMR narratives (Tippen 2014:556). Rhetorical moves, or the "choosing of the details, the arrangement of the narrative, the selection of evidence" (556), are all important steps in constructing moral arguments, which is central to CMR storytelling. In examining both symbolic and emotion codes as well as rhetorical moves I was able to observe

22

not only the substance of CMR narratives, but also how story authors strategically influenced the reception and resonance of claims within their narratives.

CHAPTER TWO:

A TALE OF TWO STORIES—THE BRAVE SOUTH AND THE BACKWARDS SOUTH

The CMR narratives published in the *Augusta Chronicle* manifested as a contentious debate between people on two opposing "sides," those advocating for the removal of Confederate monuments, and those advocating for the protection or continued existence of Confederate monuments. Both sides constructed stories that produced moral value judgements of Confederate monuments, which in turn helped authors argue for or against CMR. As outlined above, debates of Confederate iconography are not unique, and have ebbed and flowed throughout the public imaginary for decades, so it was unsurprising that these stories manifested in such a way. In the sections that follow, I analyze the CMR narratives published in the *Chronicle,* paying attention to story elements (characters and plots), and reproductions of nationalism and white supremacy. Because of the contested nature of CMR narratives, I classified the data collected for this project into two categories: Brave South narratives and Backwards South narratives. These categories were organized according to the general construction and moral position of the Confederacy and Confederate monuments in each narrative. In the section that follows, I will describe the narrative structure and key moral arguments of both stories. The goal of this section is to familiarize my readers with the two competing narratives which emerged during data analysis and lay out the strategies for producing moral value judgements of CMR.

Arguments advocating for the continued existence or protection of Confederate monuments were dubbed "Brave South" CMR narratives. In these narratives, story authors deploy rhetorical devices and construct story elements in a way that produces moral justifications for Confederate commemorations, which in turn prompt readers to think and feel about Confederate monuments in certain ways. Though multiple strategies are used to accomplish the production of these moral judgements, the primary tactic used across nearly all Brave South narratives is the victimization of the Confederacy. Through the construction and negotiation of key story elements, Brave South authors produce an image of the Confederacy steeped in complex victimhood. This image is meant to evoke sympathy and respect for Confederate characters and to demonstrate the moral warrant for Confederate commemoration. The focus of this subsection that follows will be to define the victimization of the Confederacy as a key organizing mechanism of Brave South narratives.

Soldiers, not Slave Owners

A key step in the process of victimizing the Confederacy and producing the moral justification for Confederate monuments was to establish the Brave South protagonist, the Confederate Soldier, as a sympathetic character. First Brave South authors needed to distance their protagonist from unsympathetic characters and legacies that are often associated with the Confederacy and the South, which required addressing the relationship between Confederate Soldiers and slavery. Throughout Brave South narratives, slavery is rhetorically negotiated in such a way that its association with key story elements is restricted and controlled by authors in order to construct a morally pure protagonist, absolve the Confederate Soldier from associations with racism, and ultimately justify Confederate monuments. Frequently, Brave South story

25

authors mitigated the association of slavery and the Confederacy by explicitly separating the Confederacy as an organization from the goal of preserving slavery, as exemplified by the following excerpt:

> I studied the Civil War through books and documentaries growing up in Virginia. It was a sense of pride that the South stood up to the North, more over states' rights than slavery is what I was taught. I have looked across many battlefields where thousands of young men on both sides lost their lives. I have been to Appomattox, to the McLean House where the surrender of General Lee was negotiated to Grant. (*The Augusta Chronicle*, September 16, 2017)

In this narrative, preserving slavery was not the primary motivating factor for the Confederacy's participation in the Civil War; rather it was a dedication to local government and state's rights that defined the Confederate Cause. Not only does this story distance the Confederacy from the present-day stigma associated with slavery, it also establishes a much more honorable cause for which Confederate Soldiers proudly died for: autonomy and self-determination. Confederate Soldiers are described as representing the interests of the South—interests explicitly unrelated to slavery— making them no different from any other servicemen who feel pride in their duties.

An even more direct approach to the disassociation of the Confederacy and slavery can be observed in the pattern of constructing the Confederate Soldier character in sharp contrast with the character of the Slave Owner. An example of this strategy, and a succinct summary of the plot of the Brave South narrative, can be found in the following excerpt:

> I have always looked at the war more from the standpoint that most of the soldiers involved in the war were not of the class to own slaves; many were just young boys. So I always saw the Civil War as a fight against oppression on both sides. The South fought against the government and the control that would be lost; the North fought for ultimate control and to end slavery. I think of how ill equipped the South was compared to the North, and how hard they fought, for a way of life that they didn't even have access to. (*The Augusta Chronicle*, September 16, 2017).

26

This passage accomplishes several maneuvers that are key to producing a moral justification for Confederate monuments. Perhaps the most important of these is done in the first sentence, where the image of the Confederate Soldier is constructed as a young, poor boy in explicit contrast with the wealthy, elite Slave Owner. In establishing that Confederate Soldiers "are not of the class to own slaves," another category of person, the Slave Owner, is implicitly constructed. This character becomes a vessel for the legacy, responsibility, and moral consequences of slavery within Brave South narratives. The Slave Owner, operating as a foil for the protagonist, helps the Confederate Soldier appear innocent and benign by virtue of severing his association with a racist history and freeing him from the moral stigma of slavery. Moreover, this narrative mitigates the stigma and negative emotions Brave South readers might feel in supporting the protection of Confederate monuments.

In addition to confining the legacy of slavery to the Slave Owner, a character who essentially serves as a racist boogeyman, the construction of the Confederate Soldier is advantageous in justifying Confederate monuments in other important ways. As previously stated, the Brave South author establishes another key characteristic of the protagonist: his class status. In the passage above, the Confederate Soldier is associated with symbolic codes of youth and poverty explicitly, and innocence and hard work implicitly. No longer a faceless silhouette of a man, the Confederate Soldier is now constructed as a young (innocent) and working class (self-sufficient) boy who likely witnessed the horror of war after being conscripted to fight for a cause he had no true stake in; thus beginning the victimization of the Confederate Soldier. In deploying symbolic codes of poverty and youth explicitly, and innocence and hard work implicitly, readers are implored to feel sympathy for a "boy" who witnessed the horrors of war despite his lack of stakes in the conflict. An air of exclusivity is now associated with the Slave

27

Owner and thus participation in the slave system. In the Brave South story, most Southerners (the 'white' is implied), did not own slaves because the slave industry was the sole province of the wealthy Southern aristocracy.

Hearth and Home Discourse

Though a crucial first step, contrasting the Confederate Soldier with the Slave Owner is not the only way Brave South story authors garner sympathy for their protagonist or produce moral justifications for Confederate monuments. Further, sympathy is only one part of the emotional and moral formula necessary to justify Confederate monuments. Through the introduction of protectionist rhetoric, which claims that the main goal of the Confederacy was to safeguard the South against Northern invaders, Brave South authors introduce complexity to the victimization narrative, along with key emotional components of relatability and respect. No longer are Confederate Soldiers framed as pure victims, simply as young men of low socioeconomic status being conscripted into war to protect an industry they have no stake in. By centering the desire to protect hearth and home as a key motivation for Confederate Soldiers, the Brave South author constructs a martyred protagonist who stood up to protect his own in the face of dire circumstances and against all odds. This strategy is on display in the following excerpt:

> Thousands of citizens in the CSRA and millions worldwide respect those monuments and memorials to the nearly 1 million Southern soldiers who went off to war to protect their homes and farms from a much larger invading army that practiced a policy of destruction of Southern homes, farms and towns. (*The Augusta Chronicle*, September 19, 2017).

Here, Southern forces, and the Confederate Solider by extension, are described as underdogs in an uphill battle against an experienced and provisioned invading army bent on the destruction of the South. Framing Union troops as villains is important insofar as it allows Brave South authors to construct Confederate Soldiers, and the South in general, as victims and martyrs. Despite the

28

victim status of the protagonists, hearth and home discourse helps to make Confederate Soldiers relatable and respectable to a broad audience. Drawing on protectionist rhetoric, the South is framed as a land and people under siege by a tyrannical invading force, and young, poor Confederate Soldiers were the unlikely last hope to protect the freedom and sovereignty of their people. This story has the potential to resonate with a larger audience because it draws on key themes which have been incorporated into national narratives about the United States of America as a force for democracy. In the passage above there are allusions to symbolic codes of a fight for independence and self-determination, which have both been incorporated into American cultural identity.

Another Brave South author was even more explicit in constructing the South as an oppressed people fighting for their freedom and drawing on references to independence.

> A full 483,026 Confederate soldiers fell on the battlefields of their war, which they called the War for Southern Independence. Many are buried in unmarked mass graves while gleaming white stone markers for Union soldiers are laid in straight lines and rows across mown green fields and surrounded by elaborate monuments to their sacrifice. Confederate monuments on these same battlefields are sparse and austere in comparison. We must resolve to remember that these young men were merely the distillate of their times, not ours. We are ill-served if we insist upon harshly judging their hearts and souls through the lens of modernity, for in the end we can never step into their shoes. Not only is it cavalier and arrogant to do so, but by virtue of their ultimate sacrifice compared to our own blessings, we do not have the right! (*The Augusta Chronicle*, November 18, 2017).

Here the complex victimhood of the Confederate Soldier is on full display. He is not a pure victim or ignorant pawn, rather he is a man who, despite his circumstances and lack of stake in the industry of slavery, felt moved to stand up to those who would take away the independence of his people and burn his cities and towns. The motivation of the Confederate Soldier, regardless of the "true" Confederate Cause, was noble. Further, despite the nobility of his "ultimate sacrifice" for the sake of his kin and home, he continues to be subjugated even in

29

death, suffering the indignity of mass burial and, in comparison to his Union counterparts, "austere" and inadequate memorialization. In this narrative, the Confederate monument is not only owed to the Confederate Soldier, it is a small consolation for what has been taken from him: both his life and his honor. Passing judgement on Confederate Soldiers and denying them the same respect given to Union soldiers is framed as arrogant, an affront to the eternal quest of freedom and independence. This framing is in line with traditional iterations of white Southern identity in which white grief is centered and the marginality of white Southerners in relation to their Northern counterparts is emphasized. In framing the Civil War as a "War for Southern Independence" it becomes clear who is considered a Southerner, and whose crusades for independence are considered noble. Whiteness is key to the brand of Southern grief and identity present in Brave South narratives, though it is never explicitly stated in the story. However, not all Brave South authors frame the Civil War in this way.

Some Brave South authors acknowledge the "biases" of the Confederacy while maintaining the moral purity of the Confederate Soldier. This is accomplished by contrasting a class of people responsible for the "biases" of the Confederate Cause and the soldiers who, despite being pawns in a political scheme, gave their lives to protect their homes. This strategy can be observed in the following excerpt:

> Isn't it time to quit the "blame game" and simply honor our war dead, no matter how right or how wrong the cause? We need to separate the politicians who, armed with extreme biases, play on a chess board far removed from the battlefield where soldiers gave their "last full measure of devotion" for the only home and hearth they ever knew. (*The Augusta Chronicle*, November 18, 2017).

Here, the Confederate Soldier is being constructed as both a pawn of elite politicians, and as an honorable soldier who fought for his people. Importantly, the Confederate Soldier is decontextualized from the Confederate cause and regarded simply as "War dead," and his

30

motivations of protecting "hearth and home" are framed as outweighing the political agenda of politicians who view soldiers as nothing more than chess pieces on a board. Not only does this establish the relative moral purity of the Confederate Soldier, it also distances him from unsympathetic character archetypes and firmly situates the responsibility for "biases" and political motivation squarely on the shoulders of politicians. This is similar, of course, to the use of the Slave Owner character as a foil; however the focus here is less on the narrative quarantine of slavery and much more on establishing the altruism of the Confederate Soldier and the honor of his sacrifice, though allusions to "biases" are likely covert references to racism.

Just as important as creating narrative distance between unsympathetic characters and the protagonist was humanizing the Confederate Soldier by emphasizing his familial and regional bonds. In the excerpt above this is accomplished through the emphasis of his struggle to protect "home and hearth" which ultimately led to his altruistic death. A few things of note are happening here. First, this rhetorical maneuver draws on imagery commonly associated with American soldiers—discourses of devotion to hearth and home, protectionism, and altruistic sacrifice—which implores readers to think and feel about Confederate Soldiers the same way any "good American" might about American soldiers. Namely, this claim enforces the idea that Confederate Soldiers are worthy of respect, honor, and commemoration just like any other American soldier. Further, the strategy of humanizing Confederate Soldiers makes them relatable to readers, increasing their emotional connection to the character, thus increasing sympathy.

In the Brave South CMR story, two key strategies aided authors in constructing the Confederate Soldier as both the protagonist and victim of the CMR narrative. Rather than producing a pure victim, these strategies worked together to create a protagonist who was simultaneously constructed as victimized, a pawn in the political games of Slave Owners and

31

Southern lawmakers, and relatable and respectable due to his devotion to his people and home. The first of these strategies, outlined in the section *Soldiers, not Slave Owners*, was to contrast the Confederate Soldier with the Slave Owner character in order to mitigate the moral stigma of slavery and its association with the Confederate cause. The second strategy, outlined in the *Hearth and Home Discourse* section, used protectionist rhetoric to establish the Confederate Soldier as an altruistic hero, an underdog who rose to the challenge of protecting his home despite the ultimate sacrifice it would surely cost him. Combined, these strategies accomplished three main things that are crucial to establishing a moral warrant for Confederate monuments.

First, Brave South authors established the class status and moral character of the Confederate Soldier by introducing a foil character, the Slave Owner, to whom the moral responsibility for slavery was confined. The type of person referenced by the Slave Owner character is one who was markedly wealthy, and whose wealth was built on the backs of enslaved people who were violently denied freedom and humanity. By definition, the Confederate Soldier is the opposite: poor, yet self-made and hard-working. In American society, despite increasing moral fragmentation, the type of person implicit in the Slave Owner characterization is regarded by many to be irreconcilable with American values of freedom and liberty, thus he will receive little sympathy from readers of CMR narratives. In distancing the Confederate Soldier from the Slave Owner, the Soldier is free from the burden of symbolic and emotion codes related to slavery and racism. This enables Brave South story authors to decontextualize the Confederacy and Confederate monuments from the institutions of slavery and white supremacy, and thus produce the value judgement that Confederate monuments need not be removed on the basis of anti-racism or broad notions of racial progress.

32

Second, in deploying the symbolic codes of poverty and youth explicitly, and innocence implicitly, the story author begins the process of evoking sympathy for the Confederate Soldier, a process that is key to the complex victimization process. These "young boys," perhaps due to their youthful naïveté and certainly in spite of their own economic anxiety and hardship, responded to the call of duty. Added to this was the introduction of protectionist rhetoric which situates the Confederate Solider as an unsung hero who gave his life for the independence and sovereignty of his people. Implicit in this construction is a selflessness deserving of respect and an allusion to meta-narratives of innocence lost, both of which evoke sympathy and admiration for the Confederate Soldier. The final accomplishment of two strategies above is connecting the Confederate Soldier to legacies of freedom and cultural emotions of pride that have long been associated with American cultural narratives related to independence. The Brave South author evokes symbolic codes of freedom explicitly and bravery implicitly, establishing the Confederate Soldier as the type of person who, despite his unfortunate circumstances, bravely answered a call to arms and defended to his death the liberty and sovereignty of the South. The characterization of Confederate Soldiers as brave freedom fighters, or at the very least as martyrs to the dual cause of liberty and autonomy, is a crucial element of the Brave South narrative, as it is through this framing that story authors evoke pride, an essential emotion code present in nearly all CMR narratives. These strategies work together to construct a narrative which situations Confederate monuments as moral obligations.

BACKWARDS SOUTH: (RE)CONTEXTUALIZING THE CONFEDERACY

In direct conflict with the Brave South CMR narrative is the Backwards South narrative, which produces moral value judgements calling for the removal of Confederate monuments. Where the Brave South narrative was largely centered on a sympathetic, relatable protagonist

who helped mitigate stigma associated with racism and slavery, Backwards South narratives construct plots and characters which contextualize the Confederacy as directly linked to the industry of slavery, racial hierarchies, and racist violence in the South. Rather than centering an explicit sympathetic protagonist, the key organizing principle of Backwards South narratives is to make visible connections between the Confederacy and racism. Backwards South authors accomplish this through two key strategies which (re)contextualize the Confederacy in relation to historical instances of racial and political violence: centering the men being commemorated in CMR stories, and highlighting the racist violence of the Confederacy.

The Men on the Monuments

Rather than being constructed as a protagonist, Backwards South stories featured Confederate characters who were antagonists and villains. The main Confederate characters in Backwards South narratives were actual historical actors featured on monuments and road signs. In centering the men on the monuments—tangible historical figures that left recoverable records and specific legacies behind—Backwards South authors were able to (re)contextualize the Confederacy, framing it in relation to the various political and racial hierarchies these men were invested in. By focusing on specific historical figures, and in centering those men who are explicitly being commemorated on Confederate monuments, the monument itself and the moral value of its removal becomes inextricably linked to the political and racial ideologies these men embodied.

Forging a connection between the politics and racial ideologies of commemorated Confederates and the morality of Confederate monuments was an important strategy for Backwards South authors in establishing a warrant for CMR. This strategy can be observed in the following excerpt by a Backwards South author who is referencing the debate to rename the

34

Calhoun Expressway, a highway that leads into Downtown Augusta, where the Augusta

Confederate Monument is located:

> Even a casual student of American history has to associate John C. Calhoun
> with the antebellum South. Indeed, for two decades, the 1830s and '40s,
> Calhoun was the nation's most prominent and vocal defender of the elite
> slaveholders' vision of the South. He led the counteroffensive against the
> abolitionist movement. To counter abolitionists, who said unequivocally
> that slavery was an inherently cruel, unjust system, Calhoun argued that
> Southern slavery was in fact a "positive good" because it put a superior race
> and an inferior race in proper relation to each other. Calhoun also theorized
> how Southern states could protect the interests of their slaveholders if they
> felt threatened by national politics. In Calhoun's vision, the USA was a
> compact in which sovereign states had granted power to a federal
> government. If any state came to feel that its interests were being hurt by a
> federal policy, it could "nullify" that policy within its own borders. If this
> drastic political act failed to get the attention of other states and persuade
> them to reconsider the policy, the state could then "secede" from the USA
> and return to its status as a sovereign entity. In 1860-61, 10 years after
> Calhoun's death, elite slaveholders acted out Calhoun's script. They led
> their states out of the USA, seceding because they believed slavery was
> threatened by the rise of the Republican Party to national power. This was
> Calhoun's key legacy. (*The Augusta Chronicle*, February 4, 2018).

This passage accomplishes a number of things important for the Backwards South narrative, the

first being that it (re)contextualizes the Confederacy into a broader system of political

machinations and racial hierarchies. Here the individual Confederate Soldier is not the narrative

focal point; rather the actual historical figure being memorialized is centered. Further, that

character, in this case John Calhoun, is explicitly linked to the slave owning elite, racism, and the

Confederacy's secession strategy. This framing of Calhoun provides a link between slavery,

racism, political strategy, and the Confederate cause; a framing in direct conflict with the Brave

South narrative which individualizes and decontextualizes the Confederacy from broader

systems of power and the historical figures on monuments. Here, the "elite slaveholders" who

were carefully disentangled from the Confederacy in the previous section are framed as the

architects of the Confederate cause. Not only does this prevent the Confederacy from being

35

meaningfully separated from the industry of slavery or from racist hierarchies, it also explicitly establishes the preservation of that industry and those hierarchies as the impetus for the formation and mobilization of the Confederate army.

Though important connections are made between the Confederacy and broader racist hierarchies through centering Calhoun and his legacy, the passage above still does not directly implicate Confederate monuments on a broad scale. This same strategy was used by many other Backwards South authors who were able to implicate the practice of Confederate commemoration widely, however. The following excerpt is from a Backwards South narrative in which the author discusses one of the Generals immortalized in stone on the Augusta Confederate monument, Thomas R. R. Cobb:

> The monument was doing much more than commemorating the Confederate dead; memorials in Magnolia Cemetery could accomplish that. Rather, it was making a claim about public space, about who should wield power. It was invoking history - recent history - to make an assertive political statement. The keynote speaker at the monument's dedication made this point. Scion of the planter elite, a secessionist and Confederate officer, Charles Jones spoke unambiguously. "For the past we have no apologies to offer," he said; "even now the fundamental claims" of the Confederacy "are, in a moral point of view, unaffected by the result of the contest." The Confederacy had lost the war, but the "holy cause" would live on. What was "the cause"? A clear answer comes from one of the men commemorated in statuary on the monument, Thomas R.R. Cobb, a planter, secessionist, principal author of the Confederate Constitution, and general killed in battle. In a passionate speech in November 1860, Cobb argued that the newly triumphant national Republicans were the political form of the "fanatical" abolitionist movement. Their victory at the polls posed a dire threat to the property rights of slaveholders and to the hierarchy of white over black. "Let me die," Cobb insisted, "before I shall bow before such fanatics as these." (*The Augusta Chronicle*, August 26, 2017).

In the very first sentence a blow is made to Brave South narrative which claims Confederate monuments merely commemorate Confederate dead. Instead, the Backwards South author above explains that the Augusta Confederate monument was a political claim intentionally staked in

public space, evidenced by the legacy of one of the men featured on the monument: Thomas R.

R. Cobb. In highlighting the political legacy and racist ideology held by Cobb, the monument

commemorating him also becomes beholden to and emblematic of that legacy and ideology. Not

only is the Confederacy recontextualized into broader racist hierarchies and political processes,

but it is explicitly framed as reflecting the beliefs of those men whom it commemorates. The

strength of this strategy lies in the inability of anyone, Brave South authors and CMR story

readers included, to separate the Confederate monument from the men being memorialized on it.

While it is possible through various rhetorical maneuvers to claim that the Confederacy as an

organization is different in principle than the Confederate Soldiers conscripted to fight (as the

Brave South story does), it is much different to claim that the Augusta Confederate monument

has nothing to do with the men carved into its face; thus when the men on the monument are

implicated, so too are the monuments themselves.

Confederate Crimes and Racist Violence

Exposing racist legacies of the men on the monuments was only one part of the

(re)contextualization process Backwards South authors engaged in during CMR storytelling. A

second strategy that was also crucial to the construction of a moral argument in favor of CMR

involved tracing racist violence in the South back to Confederate origins. This strategy was

enacted by Backwards South authors in two key ways: (1) through centering documented racist

violence carried out by Confederate leadership and soldiers, and (2) through tracing the origins

of racist hate groups and racist political legacies back to the Confederacy. Many times these were

deployed simultaneously, as evidenced by the following excerpt from a guest column in which a

Backwards South author references racist violence experienced by Black Union soldiers:

37

> …a National Archives website article, "Black Soldiers in the U.S. Military during the Civil War," stated, "In perhaps the most heinous known example of abuse, Confederate soldiers shot to death black Union soldiers captured at the Fort Pillow, TN, engagement of 1864. Confederate General Nathan B. Forrest witnessed the massacre and did nothing to stop it." Regrettably, because Confederate traitors were not executed, Nathan Bedford Forrest would become a founding member and "Grand Wizard" of the Ku Klux Klan. Not only that, Confederate traitors would enact Jim Crow laws negating the Civil Rights Act of 1866 which had extended to black Americans many of the rights previously enjoyed exclusively by whites. Not only that, Confederate traitors, their descendants, and sympathizers would lynch thousands of blacks, erect racist monuments, murder black activists, and make it difficult for blacks to enjoy life, liberty, or pursue happiness. (*The Augusta Chronicle*, September 25, 2017).

Here, the documented massacre of Black Union troops by Confederate soldiers is the focal point of the narrative. In centering this massacre, the author not only provides a tangible link to racism and the Confederate Soldier, or at least *some* Confederate Soldiers, but also by extension prevents Confederate monuments from being separated from Confederate crimes. Further, the author explicitly links this act of racist violence and the subsequent judicial benevolence Confederate Soldiers experienced to the emergence of the Klu Klux Klan (KKK). The inclusion of this connection helps lift the narrative from specificity and suggests a broad relationship between the Confederacy and organized anti-Black hate groups like the KKK. The author goes even farther, suggesting that the Confederacy produced a long line of "descendants" and "sympathizers" who, while perhaps not directly affiliated with an organized hate group, engaged in or enabled the violent oppression of Black Southerners for decades after the Confederacy dissolved. The strategies demonstrated here—centering Confederate crimes and identifying continuities in racist violence over decades—are crucial to the moral judgement of Confederate monuments produced in Backwards South narratives because they firmly situate the monument in broader racial and political contexts throughout time. In making these connections across time

38

explicit, Backwards South authors uproot the Confederate Monument from a single point in history and instead analyze it in a continuum of racial violence and political struggle.

In another guest column, a Backwards South author similarly links the Confederacy to the KKK during a discussion about backlash to a brief period of racial and political progress following the Civil War:

> In the middle of Broad Street is a massive monument to the Confederacy, formally dedicated in 1878. Ten years earlier, when the campaign for the monument began, Georgia had just entered a remarkable new political stage: a coalition of former slaves and free blacks, dissenting whites, and Northerners who had moved south joined together as the state's new Republican Party and triumphed in state and local elections that spring. For former Confederate leaders, this newly-ascendant, homegrown Republican Party represented a political apocalypse. Determined to destroy it by any means necessary, they organized as the Ku Klux Klan and used calculated acts of violence to create a climate of fear. Led by former Confederate Gen. John B. Gordon, the Klan made it dangerous to be a Republican…The monument was about history, but it was never just about history. It drew on history to make an unambiguous political claim in a very public place. In our own time, as we ruminate on public monuments and what they commemorate, we're engaging with the past, but we don't have to be prisoners of it. Like those who once installed them did, we too can make a political choice - in this case, to take them down. (*The Augusta Chronicle*, August 26, 2017).

This passage echoes the first, linking the Confederacy to the KKK and broader manifestations of racial and political repression. However, it goes farther in implicating the Augusta Confederate monument specifically. While the first passage makes claims about continuities in racist violence in the South via Confederate descendants and sympathizers, this author claims that the monument itself is a powerful tool, not merely *emblematic* of racist hierarchies and the struggle of white Southerners to maintain those hierarchies, but also itself a political tool used to preserve power through claimsmaking in public space. Now not only is the Confederate monument (re)contextualized into broader landscapes of political and racial struggle, it is also implicated as an active, working part of that struggle.

39

The process of (re)contextualizing the Confederate monument was key to producing moral value judgements warranting CMR in Backwards South stories. In the section above, I have outlined the major strategies Backwards South authors employed to accomplish this, including (1) centering the racist legacies of the specific men being commemorated on monuments, (2) centering racist violence carried out by Confederate soldiers, and (3) connecting racist violence and political struggle in the South to Confederate origins. These strategies work together to situate the Confederate monument in a broader context of racism and political struggle, an outcome that provides the moral warrant for CMR.

CHAPTER THREE:

TRANSCENDING THE DICHOTOMY—HEGEMONIC SYSTEMS ACROSS THE BRAVE/BACKWARDS DIVIDE

Establishing a moral warrant for the protection or removal of Confederate monuments is one key function of CMR narratives; however this is not all these stories accomplish. The second section of this paper will examine how CMR narratives, through their negotiations of the past and framing of story elements, tell stories about the present. Namely, I will explore reproductions of nationalism and white supremacy within CMR stories. In the previous sections I have spent time outlining key differences between the Backwards South and Brave South narratives; in the following sections I will work to complicate that divide and illustrate how, despite producing opposing moral value judgements of Confederate monuments, both Brave and Backwards South narratives reproduce similar stories and frames important to the maintenance of nationalism and white supremacy.

BANAL NATIONALISM

While it would be easy to focus on overt expressions of nationalism present in CMR narratives, here I will examine the habitual, taken-for-granted ways that nation-hood, national identity, and national memory are reproduced in CMR narratives across the Brave/Backward

41

South divide. In focusing on these more hegemonic reproductions of nationalism, also referred to as banal nationalism (Billig 1995), I hope to emphasize that meaning making processes in the South, like the CMR debate, are part of broader national meaning making processes which reach far beyond individual regions of the country. Banal nationalism manifests in CMR narratives largely through references to widespread stories, mythologies, and memories that have become essential to the character and construction of America to the point that they comprise a sort of taken-for-granted backstory of the nation. Embedded within these essential national memories and stories are systems of emotions and symbols which evoke distinct thoughts and feelings from audiences. In the sections that follow, two key strategies employed by both Brave and Backwards South authors in the moral negotiation of Confederate monuments will be examined for the role they play in reproducing banal nationalism.

What we are Not: Enemies as Foils

Myths and stories that are essential to the national identity of the United States are observable in the association of key CMR story characters with infamous American enemies, both historic and contemporary. In positioning key American enemies as diametrically opposed to American values of freedom, democracy, and civil discourse, and then comparing key CMR story character to those enemies, story authors can draw from an established, widely accepted "vocabulary of values" (Spector and Kitsuse 2009:93) to legitimate their moral justifications related to the removal of Confederate monuments. Further, in associating these enemies with prominent CMR characters, story authors deploy symbolic and emotions codes in ways that tell readers how to think and feel about Confederate monuments. Comparisons between CMR characters and American enemies were present in both Backwards South and Brave South narratives, suggesting that national narratives featuring these enemies have been widely

42

incorporated into a cultural imagination. A prime example of this strategy can be found in the following excerpt of a Brave South story in the form of a Letter to the Editor:

> I, personally, am against removing monuments, plaques and other symbols of our history. We are not the Taliban or ISIS, who have been smashing statues and trashing ancient temples and mosques. We are not Nazis burning books and beating up people who do not look like us or believe what we believe. (*The Augusta Chronicle*, August 29, 2017).

In this statement, the moral position of both the United States of America as a benevolent power committed to freedom and the moral position of CMR as repressive and anti-American is illustrated through a comparison to infamous American enemies. A new character is being implied—the monument protestor— who, along with key American enemies like Nazi Germany, the Taliban, and ISIS, engages in smashing statues and erasing history in order to silence those who are "different." Here, the monument protestor is no different than a prototypical fascist or terrorist who, through destruction of property and the censure of history, will attempt to silence those who harbor opposing perspectives. This, according to the author, is not representative of who "we" Americans are, a people who, as per widely circulating narratives about American values of freedom and liberty, respect history and the representation of diverse perspectives. In invoking a common "we," and through establishing what "we" are not, an American identity that centralizes the preservation of history, respect of diverse perspectives, and disdain for censorship and property destruction is constructed and reinforced.

The use of American enemies as a basis of comparison for establishing the moral value of CMR was a strategy echoed throughout Backwards South narratives as well, with some important adjustments as exemplified by the two Backwards South Rants and Raves below:

> Yes, our conflict with the Confederacy was part of our history. So were our conflict with the USSR, our conflict with Nazi Germany and our conflict with ISIS. Why does the Confederacy alone among our enemies get monuments? (*The Augusta Chronicle*, August 19, 2017).

43

These are documented, irrefutable historical facts: The Nazis fought against the United States and lost. The Southern Confederacy fought against the United States of America and lost. There are no statues commemorating the Nazis, who fought against us; therefore, there is no logical reason to display statues of Confederates, traitors to the USA. (*The Augusta Chronicle*, August 25, 2017).

In the above statements, rather than the destruction of history being problematized, Confederate monuments themselves are framed as social problems warranting removal due to the immorality of commemorating enemies of the nation. Instead of monument protestors being compared to those enemies, it is the Confederacy who is compared to fascists and terrorists who take up arms against the United States. Here the Confederacy is no different from any other foreign nation who took up arms against the United States, and as such should not be awarded any honor or commemoration that other American enemies are denied. Despite the construction of two different moral problems, one being the destruction of history and the other being Confederate commemoration, both CMR narratives rely on similar understandings of American values and American enemies, and all three authors are making claims that present readers with a choice: support this claim as legitimate and sympathize with an American identity, or challenge this claim and sympathize with American enemies.

That references to these key American enemies manifests across assumed ideological/political divides in CMR narratives is important and points to the vitality of these characters as folk enemies in a broad national mythology, and to the hegemonic nature of the moral position of the United States within these stories. As strategic elements within CMR narratives, comparisons to infamous enemies accomplish a number of things worth reviewing. First, whether or not they appear in Brave or Backward South narratives, the reference to past conflicts and defeated enemies serves to reinforce America as a powerful force for good, order, and freedom in the global community. In strategically recalling historic conflicts between Nazi

44

Germany, Soviet Russia, and the Taliban—conflicts in which the United States has claimed moral superiority and military victory over enemies characterized as fascist, violent, totalitarian, fundamentalist, and/or extremist—the United States is positioned as heroic, powerful, rational, and just. Even when referencing an enemy that has not yet been defeated, like ISIS, the moral claim is the same: ISIS is immoral, violent, and extremist, and since tearing down statues and erasing history is part of their agenda, CMR characters that are compared to ISIS must be equally immoral, violent, and extremist. Reinforcing the moral integrity and superiority of the United States and establishing the moral depravity of key CMR story characters through comparisons to equally morally bereft enemies are being accomplished simultaneously.

Second, making comparisons to conflicts which have been widely incorporated in the national memory takes advantage of a culture of national grief and military worship that exists within the United States. As mentioned earlier in this report, within these stories and myths exists a complex system of emotions. In explicitly referencing Nazi Germany, for instance, a story author implicitly taps into the grief and mourning associated with the loss of life during WWII, the righteous indignation at the injustices perpetrated by Nazi Germany, and the sense of pride cultivated within the United States surrounding our role "ending" the war. A similar field of cultural emotions exists around the memory of the Cold War and the "War on Terror," both of which are also referenced in the passages above. Story authors use these emotion fields to help audiences connect with the moral argument they make concerning CMR. It is significant that both sides of the debate deploy the same infamous enemies as this points to (1) the embeddedness of this system of emotions in culture broadly, (2) the power of widely circulated collective memory narratives related to war and national identity, and (3) the power of nationalism and military worship to transcend moral and political boundaries.

45

While both Brave South and Backwards South CMR story authors referenced familiar American enemies to legitimate their moral value judgements of monument removal, sometimes broader categories of enemies were referenced instead. One of those categories was the "traitor," which emerged when CMR characters were problematized by way of accusations of treason or disloyalty to the United States. Unlike the strategy of referencing infamous enemies, which allowed authors to call upon a vast canon of past conflict with foreign nations and a virtual rolodex of morally corrupt foils who are decidedly anti-American, this strategy centers Americans who betrayed their own nation and communities: traitors. This method similarly allows authors to draw on systems of emotions related to American identity, collective war memory, and military worship like above, albeit in markedly different ways. Here, the moral downfall of key CMR characters is that they failed to be loyal citizens of the United States, and in doing so turned their back on their communities, values, and American identity. As Americans themselves, traitors have access to all that is promised within the American dream and benefit from the sacrifices of American military personnel and the legacy of freedom and liberty that has undergirded the mythology of the United States since the American revolution. Because of this, it becomes even more egregious that they would turn their backs on their own nation, which has afforded them opportunities like no other due to the sacrifice of its most loyal and altruistic citizens, veterans.

In Backwards South narratives, it was Confederate leadership who were labeled traitors, resulting in the villainization of the Generals commemorated on the Augusta Confederate monument. In one Backwards South Rant and Rave, an individual wrote "So, you can erase history by taking down statues? Can we rewrite it with statues of Lee, Davis and the other

Confederate traitors swinging from the gallows?" Statements like this were hardly unique within the Backwards South stories; below is an excerpt from a staff piece in which one individual constructing Backwards South narratives references treason when discussing CMR.

> Former Commissioner Moses Todd spoke out strongly against the monument. He said that he is a combat veteran, and "those Confederate generals were traitors to the USA" and ought not "be there in my face in the public space. Society doesn't honor individuals that lose wars." (*The Augusta Chronicle*, August 19, 2017).

A few days later, another Rant and Rave was published that read "Tearing down these monuments to treason isn't enough. It's time for Augusta to build a monument to Gen. William Sherman, a brave American who purged this land of slavery with cleansing fire and saved the South from itself" (*The Augusta Chronicle*, August 28, 2017). In each excerpt, Confederate monuments are problematized as commemorations of traitors who turned their backs on their own nation, values, and communities. Rather than drawing on infamous foreign American enemies to legitimize the moral warrant to remove Confederate monuments, these storytellers describe Confederate leadership as people who not only took up arms against the United States, but also as former citizens of the United States who betrayed their own country, turning their backs on both American values and membership in an American identity.

Constructions of the "traitor" in Backwards South narratives subtly reproduce nationalist mythology by explicitly problematizing disloyalty to the nation in and of itself. In establishing Confederate leadership as beneficiaries of the American legacy of freedom and justice and as (former) members in an American identity, story authors make the claim that disloyalty to the nation is on its own grounds for denouncement, shame, and CMR. Here, commemoration is an honor reserved for those who remain devoted to the nation above all else, and those who fail or betray their country are unworthy of honor or formalized remembrance. In deploying terms like

47

"traitor" and "treason," story authors are operating in an emotional system in which disloyalty provokes emotional responses of disgust and shame. Embedded in this emotional system are narratives of the fallen soldier, of the altruism and sacrifice of American veterans, and of the moral position of the United States as a champion of democracy. Readers are urged to feel disgust and affront at the idea of memorializing people who betrayed the United States, betrayed the sacrifices of those who came before them, and should thus come to the conclusion CMR not only morally justified, but absolutely necessary.

Importantly, in two of the statements above accusations of treason are by themselves enough to justify the removal of Confederate monuments; however the third story author makes a note about a "brave American" who confronted the Confederate-backed enterprise of slavery in the South that should not be ignored. In juxtaposing Confederate leadership with Union General William Sherman, and characterizing his historic and fiery March to the Sea as literally cleansing the South of slavery, the author reinforces a mythology of the United States rooted in legacies of the racial benevolence of the American North, and the South as anti-American due to its racist barbarism. Here, General Sherman is the epitome of a Brave American, the foil for treasonous Confederates, who "cleansed" the South of its unique condition of slavery, bringing it closer in line with broader American values. This is, of course, an example of colorblind racial ideology, and will be examined in more depth in subsequent sections; however it is important to mention here that this is a crucial aspect of the reproduction of nationalism in Backwards South stories.

Alternatively, in Brave South narratives it was the monument protestors or CMR advocates who were problematized and labeled traitors and fundamentally antithetical to American values, albeit sometimes in more subtle ways than the explicit labeling of Confederate leadership in Backwards South narratives. Two excerpts below, each from different Letters to the

Editor, reflect this subtler association between monument protestors and broad understandings of betrayal or treason.

> Old animosities 'madness.'…Taking down the monument will not erase the painful past, nor will it erase hate in some people's hearts, but will only cause further division. Rather than shouting and fighting, we should join our voices together in forgiveness and healing, and look to the future. (*The Augusta Chronicle*, September 2, 2017)

> Don't let agitators win. We seem to be on the verge of a tremendous growth spurt, and more to come in the near future. It's so wonderful for all of us. Please don't wreck the whole thing by letting these agitator groups step in and take control the way they have in other places. Our cities have lived with and loved these historical monuments for so many years and been proud of them…Please don't pay attention to the hatemongers from other sections of the country trying to create hate and discord in our community. (*The Augusta Chronicle*, September 28, 2017).

In both excerpts, protestors are described as "agitators," "hatemongers," and are framed as responsible for instigating violence. This characterization, while not necessarily specific to understandings of treason, does present the protestor as fundamentally opposed to American values of civil discourse and community, and as actively impeding economic growth and opportunity due to their organizing methods. Particularly important here is the label "divisive." Despite individual responsibility being central to American values and identity, there is also an understanding that this individualism should operate alongside a broader sense of community, comradery, and unity between fellow Americans. By describing monument protestors as divisive agitators inciting violence and sowing seeds of hatred, Brave South authors argue that they intentionally disrupt that community, comradery, and unity for no reason other than to fragment the American people. These protestors are, of course, doing this "agitating" as Americans themselves, which Brave South authors (at times begrudgingly) admit. Thus protestors within Brave South narratives occupy the role of traitor, dividing their own country for the purpose of spreading hatred.

49

This does not mean that explicit framing of protestors as traitors did not occur within Brave South narratives, however. See a Brave South Rant and Rave below:

> Every now and again barbarians try to destroy the civilization that supports them. These groups have destroyed their family values and blame others for their failures. Those not willing to put forth any positive effort (but) would rather tear down what others have built up. Ignorance is not bliss, but might be dangerously foolish. (*The Augusta Chronicle*, August 24, 2017).

These statements, like many within CMR narratives, are racially coded. Rhetoric alluding to the degradation of family values and protestant work ethic, as well as language like "barbarian" and other dehumanizing terms has long been racialized, specifically targeting Black Americans. In claiming that protestors are trying to "destroy the civilization that supports them," the author is presenting protestors explicitly and Black Americans implicitly as being indebted to American society in some way. This claim is rooted in widely circulated racist stories related to white saviorism, American opportunity, and historical revisionism. Here, the stories being referenced are dehumanizing narratives of American life and opportunity being a gift that has been bestowed on uncivilized, barbaric people (usually people of color), and American society subsequently supporting individuals through social initiatives (welfare or affirmative action, for example). Further, the author claims that protestors (and implicitly Black Americans) are unwilling to repay the debt they owe American society through putting forth "positive effort" and instead choose to "tear down what others have built up." In doing this, the author presents protestors and Black Americans as traitors to the nation that has supported them and actively working to destroy the country from the inside.

Though the traitor is constructed differently in Brave South narratives versus Backwards South, there exists a common underlying theme of loyalty as paramount, and disloyalty as morally corrupt. This suggests that collective understandings of betrayal, disloyalty, and treason

50

exist in broadly circulated cultural narratives about nationhood and national identity which are reflected in CMR stories. Thus, the construction of the traitor is an important step in the reproduction of nationalism across Brave/Backwards South divides, and accomplishes three things. First, in continually constructing people in relation to nation states (as loyal or disloyal citizens), CMR authors participate in framing a "world of nations" (Billig 1995:37) as natural and inherent. This is a characteristic of banal nationalism in that it reproduces national identity in a routinized, habitual, taken-for-granted way. That a human being possesses (or is possessed by) a nationality is assumed to the point that the fact of national identity need not be explicitly stated, just the failure of an individual to live up to their duties as a citizen. Second, in framing loyalty to the nation as the foremost moral obligation of citizens, the morality of individual is explicitly tied to their conduct in relation to nation states. Not only must citizens serve their own nation without question, but they must also oppose any enemy nation-state or disloyal citizens. Finally, in centering the nation-state in these stories, CMR authors engage in the erasure of systemic white supremacy as a key moral concern in regards to CMR. Even when racism or "bigotry" are characteristics of traitors in Backwards South stories, antagonists are not described as having betrayed humanity in their enactment of racist violence, rather they are framed as having betrayed their country for attempting to secede from the Union in order to *preserve* the racist system being attributed to them.

WHITE SUPREMACY AND COLORBLIND RACIAL IDEOLOGY: MITIGATING THE MORAL STIGMA OF SLAVERY

Unsurprisingly, one of the primary ways CMR story authors on both sides of the debate negotiated race and racism in their storytelling was through the strategic deployment of rhetoric related to slavery and historical instances of racist violence. Though there were key differences

51

in the content and moral outcomes of these negotiations depending on which side of the CMR debate a story fell, the strategies used by both Brave and Backwards South authors reproduced key frames and stories rooted in colorblind racial ideology. That colorblind racial ideology is similarly reproduced across the Brave/Backwards South divide despite apparent moral opposition produced by these competing narratives is unsurprising given that we (1) live in a white supremacist social system and (2) that the nature of white supremacist ideology is "loose" enough to allow to for conflict and contradictions (Bonilla-Silva 2018:10). Despite the predictability of the emergence of white supremacy and colorblind ideology in competing CMR stories, it is important to analyze how exactly these conflicting narratives are reproducing key racist stories and frames given that Brave and Backwards South stories are likely to be labeled as either politically regressive or progressive by audiences and authors alike. By analyzing the reproduction of white supremacist ideology in *both* narratives, I hope to illuminate the ways that labeling competing narratives as inherently progressive or regressive further contributes to the invisible, hegemonic nature of white supremacy and colorblind racial ideology. In the subsections that follow, I will point to a number of tactics and negotiations CMR story authors engaged in to mitigate the moral stigma of racism and produce moral value judgements of either the removal or protection of Confederate monuments.

The Narrative Quarantine of Slavery and Racial Violence

As mentioned in a previous section, a key strategy of Brave South authors was the use of a foil character, the Slave Owner, as a sort of narrative quarantine for the responsibility and stigma of slavery. This simultaneously freed the Confederate Soldier—the Brave South protagonist—from any meaningful association with slavery, and helped in the construction of the Confederate Soldier as sympathetic. There was very little explicit reference to race or racism in

52

Brave South narratives outside of references to slavery or Slave Owners. In Backwards South narratives, on the other hand, racism was a central component of the moral argument against the commemoration of the Confederacy. As detailed in previous sections, Backwards South authors (re)contextualized the Confederate monument by centering the racism of commemorated men and highlighting Confederate origins of organized racist violence in the South. Both of these strategies resulted in racism being confined to relatively small, decontextualized story elements rather than being analyzed as a system impacting the country and world as a whole.

To demonstrate this phenomenon, I will return to a passage referenced in a previous section in which a Backwards South author rhetorically isolates slavery and racism to the South during a discussion of John C. Calhoun:

> Even a casual student of American history has to associate John C. Calhoun with the antebellum South. Indeed, for two decades, the 1830s and '40s, Calhoun was the nation's most prominent and vocal defender of the elite slaveholders' vision of the South. He led the counteroffensive against the abolitionist movement. To counter abolitionists, who said unequivocally that slavery was an inherently cruel, unjust system, Calhoun argued that Southern slavery was in fact a "positive good" because it put a superior race and an inferior race in proper relation to each other. Calhoun also theorized how Southern states could protect the interests of their slaveholders if they felt threatened by national politics. (*The Augusta Chronicle*, February 4, 2017).

In the opening sentence, it is not racism that Calhoun is explicitly said to be associated with, but the "antebellum South." Nor is it "slavery" that Calhoun advocated for, but "Southern slavery" specifically. Finally, it was the interests of "slaveholders" in Southern states that Calhoun thought needed to be defended against national politics. Each of these statements may seem benign, but they are predicated on and reproduce a narrative that frames slavery and racism as a condition of the South rather than an industry established in a racialized social system which every region of the United States was invested in and from which white people as a class have

and continue to systematically benefit from. I make this observation not to argue that racism and slavery in the South did or does not manifest in unique ways, but rather to point to the broader connections that are ignored when racism and slavery are framed explicitly as "Southern" problems. When slavery and resulting legacies of racism are confined to the South, or to specific historical actors, what becomes more and more invisible is the relationship between slavery the ascension of America as a nation-state (Baptist 2016), the growth of racialized capitalism, the generational impacts of wealth accumulation and poverty, the well documented examples of systematic racism in the North, and an understanding of the slave industry as a far reaching social system which required the participation of multiple classes of people from all over the United States.

Brave South stories also rhetorically isolated slavery through the construction of the Slave Owner character, as I pointed out in previous sections. I believe returning to this strategy is important and will attempt to avoid redundancy by focusing on an analysis of how these passages reproduce white supremacist frames and stories rather than how they produce moral arguments advocating for Confederate monuments. Below is an open letter to Donald Trump which I referenced in the Brave South section at the beginning of the paper:

> I studied the Civil War through books and documentaries growing up in Virginia. It was a sense of pride that the South stood up to the North, more over states' rights than slavery is what I was taught. I have looked across many battlefields where thousands of young men on both sides lost their lives…I have always looked at the war more from the standpoint that most of the soldiers involved in the war were not of the class to own slaves; many were just young boys. So I always saw the Civil War as a fight against oppression on both sides. The South fought against the government and the control that would be lost; the North fought for ultimate control and to end slavery. I think of how ill equipped the South was compared to the North, and how hard they fought, for a way of life that they didn't even have access to. (*The Augusta Chronicle*, September 16, 2017)

54

Here, there is no explicit mention of race or racism, however in many Brave South narratives, talk of slavery acts as a sort of proxy for discussing racism indirectly. In constructing the Confederate Soldier in sharp contrast to the Slave Owner, the Confederate Soldier is absolved from associations to slavery and racism. As mentioned previously, this provides audiences with a sympathetic Confederate character, which in turn helps construct the moral argument that Confederate commemorations are at least not inherently racist and at best warranted due to the sacrifice of innocent conscripted freedom fighters. This comparison is not only functional in creating sympathetic characters, however. In rhetorically confining slavery to the Slave Owner, the ways the slave industry systematically benefited all white Americans and the indirect ways non-slave owning white Americans participated in the system are obfuscated. This rhetoric is based in existing myths and narratives about slavery which simultaneously deny its deeply abiding impact on American institutions, America as a "world power," and on the social location of white Americans today. Not only that, but in the above passage slavery is framed as a luxury, a "way of life" that Confederate Soldiers had no access to. This narrative confines slavery as a condition of extreme wealth, rather than a systemic issue of a racialized social system that required participation at multiple levels and from multiple classes of people. In concealing the ways slavery thrived on the participation of low income or impoverished white farmers in the slave economy and the racialized social system which produced American slavery, the reality of American slavery as an industry which required cooperation across socioeconomic lines is erased.

The passages above demonstrate how Backwards and Brave South authors both rhetorically isolated slavery and racism to the South or to individual historical characters, resulting in the concealment of broad participation in the slave industry and the racialized social

system it was produced in. An even more pointed example of this can be found in the following passage of a Brave South story, which demonstrates clearly an emotional dimension of the narrative quarantine of slavery:

> Slavery has been around since God created man. Did you know that only 25 percent of the entire South owned slaves? That would be the planters, the men who owned the huge plantations. Have you ever taken the time to read the documents of the slaves and how they felt? Don't get me wrong - I hate slavery with a passion. It actually still exists, and right here in the USA. Does anyone care about them? I can't do anything to change the past, but I can about the future. (*The Augusta Chronicle*, September 2, 2017).

The case above is interesting for a number of reasons, but what I will focus on is the centrality of "I" statements and the discursive negotiation of slavery. Here we see, more than in other stories sampled in this paper, the centrality of the author as a character within the CMR narrative. This Brave South author uses "I" three times in the passage above, which indicates that the author sees themselves as implicated in CMR narratives to some extent. Thus, while CMR storytelling is primarily about the moral negotiation of Confederate monuments, this CMR story is also about the moral negotiation of the author in relation to Confederate commemoration. It seems to be very important for this author to separate themselves from the moral stigma or responsibility for slavery, with the author detailing their personal feelings towards slavery as part of their Brave South narrative. In establishing that they "hate slavery with a passion," the author creates distance between not only themselves and Slave Owners in CMR narratives, but also between themselves and racism implicitly. In establishing this emotional and moral position on slavery, the argument the author presents on Confederate commemoration, namely that it should be preserved, cannot be linked to racism. Further, in claiming that racism still exists in the U.S. today and calling into question whether or not anyone "cares about them," the author offers an implicit moral critique of CMR protestors, who in this story would advocate for the removal of Confederate commemoration before advocating on behalf of enslaved Americans today.

Both of these strategies are exercises in the negotiation of emotions, the authors as well as the audience members. The author offers explicitly their emotional and moral position on slavery in order to separate their judgement of CMR from accusations of racism, but also because to some extent they must have considered their own moral character as implicated in the CMR debate. Thus, clearly defining their disgust and hatred for slavery presents a seemingly unambiguous picture of their moral character. Further, the emotions of audience members are also being managed in the deployment of rhetorical questions about present day enslaved Americans. In posing the question "does anyone care about the enslaved Americans of today" in the context of the CMR debate, monument removal advocates are subtly chastised for focusing on Confederate commemoration rather than fighting actual slavery. Finally, the first sentence points to the universality of slavery, while the second accomplishes the narrative confinement of slavery in the South to the wealthy Slave Owner character. Here the isolation of slavery to the wealthy elite that characterizes other Brave South stories is mirrored, but only after the claim that slavery was universal is made. This absolves the South of the stigma of being "unique" in its development of slavery while maintaining the moral position that slavery was "wrong."

The narrative quarantine of slavery and racism, whether they are confined to the South or confined to specific historical figures, obscure the material reality of what the slave industry did for America, the enduring impact of American slavery on the racialized social system in this country, and how deeply entrenched white Americans of all classes and socio-economic positions were to its maintenance and survival. In failing to contextualize slavery and racism in relation to the nation as a whole and to the continued domination of white supremacy as a "social reality" (Bonilla-Silva 2018:8) both sides of the CMR debate reproduced colorblind racial ideology in their storytelling. This reproduction, since it manifests in a debate that many label as

57

being between politically progressive and regressive camps, becomes more and more invisible and hegemonic, and thus all the more important to highlight.

Narratives of Progress and Racial Capitalism

Though more prominent in Brave South stories, both sides of the CMR divide were hosts to narratives of American exceptionalism in terms of racial progress. Like most color-blind stories deployed in CMR narratives, narratives of progress served to obscure deeply entrenched and enduring conditions, hierarchies, and structures (re)producing racism and white supremacy in America today. All narratives of progress shared a temporal element, of course—we have *come so far*, we are so much better *than we have been in the past*—however there was an additional theme found in both Brave South and Backwards South narratives of progress which I believe is significant: economic opportunity. In centering economic opportunity in their narratives of progress, I argue that CMR authors use a "language of liberalism" (Bonilla-Silva 2018:56) which obscures the racialized impacts of capitalism, decontextualizes the military and federal surveillance from the practice of racism, and reproduces colorblind narratives of American exceptionalism and racial progress.

The passage below is a Brave South narrative of progress written by the Augusta Chronicle Editorial Team in which the authors have centered financial opportunity in their commentary on the CMR debate in Augusta:

> Augusta may have a greater stake in this dilemma than most. Our community has, in recent years, made a long-awaited and appropriate transition to shared power and responsibility, with the addition of a black mayor, sheriff, marshal, majority-black commission and more. We are all the better for it. We can't think of a time when relations have been better. Moreover, Augusta's future seems brighter than most, with the consolidation of the U.S. Army's Cyber Command at nearby Fort Gordon, the building of the $60 million Hull McKnight Georgia Cyber Innovation and Training Center on the river and more cyber-related industry expected

58

to descend or grow here. It's essential that unnecessary animus not get in the way - or give even one business a single moment's pause before locating here. The axis of such a decision can be razor-thin. We cannot lose the future by clinging too tightly to the past… We encourage those at the NAACP rally at the monument in the 700 block of Broad Street at 6 p.m. Thursday to express their heartfelt views. And we echo local chapter President Beulah Nash-Teachey's call for "a new and inclusive understanding of our shared history that recognizes and respects everyone's heritage" - though that would seem to conflict with the state chapter's call for blanket removal of all signs of the Confederacy. That's not how to build consensus. Preserving the past while respecting everyone's heritage? Let's show them how to do it. (*The Augusta Chronicle*, August 23, 2017).

Despite the persistence of legendary environmental racism (Checker 2005), segregation, and economic stratification in the metro-Augusta area, the Editorial Staff cites Black members of the police force and city commission as evidence of widespread racial progress. The authors go on to outline what is in jeopardy if "unnecessary animus" surrounding Confederate monuments persists, primarily citing the prospect of economic growth for the Augusta area. There are three things of note happening here that relate to racial capitalism, a key dimension of narratives of progress. First, because Augusta has been established as racially progressive in the beginning of the passage, opposition to Confederate monuments on the ground of anti-racism is written off as illogical and "unnecessary." This creates a pathway for Brave South CMR authors, like the ones above, to problematize those advocating for CMR and frame them as barriers for economic prosperity while simultaneously obscuring the ways white supremacy and racism preserve in the face of symbolic representation like Black sheriffs and city commissioners.

Secondly, the racialized impacts of capitalism and the impending economic boom are hidden in the narrative above. A prosperous cyber security industry coming to the CSRA is framed as being beneficial for Augusta as a whole, but this story does not speak to the inevitable increase in gentrification the area will see, a phenomenon only compounded by the current "revitalization" of Augusta University's downtown medical campus, which has already wiped

out huge swaths of affordable and low income housing in the Augusta area and displaced hundreds of Black residents. Further, the Editorial Team states that residents should refrain from giving any business a "single moments pause" in locating to the Augusta area, indicating that the team is both unconcerned with the longevity of established local businesses, including the many Black-owned stores and businesses which have called downtown home for generations, but also that the mere potential or specter of new business is more valuable than opposition to Confederate commemoration on the grounds of memorializing white supremacist military organizations.

Finally, it is important to pay attention to the ways white supremacy and nationalism are co-constructed within narratives of progress, which is on full display in the passage above. The Editorial Team frames a multi-million dollar expansion of military and cyber security industry in Augusta as inherently positive, which is predicated on a widespread, taken-for-granted understanding of the American military as a benevolent force for good. Left out of this narrative are the ways the federal government and military have been used to surveil and control Americans, particularly Black Americans, which not only obscures the military's legacy of violence and racism, but also obscures the ways this "business venture" may result in the disproportionate surveillance and control of Black Americans. Ultimately, the CMR authors above frame an increased military presence and new cyber security hub as wholly positive markers of economic opportunity, and state that opposition to Confederate monuments on the grounds of anti-racism is not only unnecessary due to racial progress, but is actually disruptive to this potential economic prosperity. In doing so, these story authors (1) obscure the ways white supremacy and racism endure via institutions (like policing) and the evolution of racial ideology in spite of symbolic representation (like Black police officers), (2) reproduce white supremacist

and nationalist stories about the military and federal government as a benevolent good, and (3) perpetuate racial capitalism and economic "progress" which exploits and marginalizes non-white Americans disproportionately.

Narratives of progress which reproduced white supremacist stories and racial capitalism were present in Backwards South CMR narratives as well. Below is an excerpt from the Augusta NAACP president in which a similar story as above is produced:

> There is no room for visual reminders of a past rooted in bigotry; therefore, these monuments should be removed from every facet of our city and placed in one of Georgia's historic memorial sites for viewing…This is not about race; it is about moving Augusta into a new age of positive growth through economic development and innovation. Augusta is well on its way to becoming a major leader in one of the fastest growing industries of the century. Let us put our dark past behind us, and step into a new age of innovation and upward mobility. (*The Augusta Chronicle,* August 24, 2017)

A few things of note are happening here, beginning with the author simultaneously citing the Augusta Confederate monument as a visual reminder of bigotry and stating that the removal debate is "not about race." Instead of centering race, the author claims that CMR is key to facilitating economic growth in Augusta, offering a cause to rally behind that appears more universal than issues related to race: economic opportunity. Like the Brave South passage above, this story frames industrial growth and economic development as wholly good with no commentary on how this growth might fuel the already rampant gentrification and displacement of Black Augustians and business owner's downtown. In framing economic growth as a wholly good and explicitly non-racial reason to pursue CMR, not only are the racialized impacts of capitalism are obscured, but a narrative is constructed in which naming anti-racism as a reason for CMR is at best insufficient and at worst divisive or "race-centrist." Here, economic growth is a more universal "good" behind which Augusta residents can rally than anything "about race" could be. Further, though the cyber security suite is not explicitly mentioned, it is almost

61

certainly implied in the author's discussion of Augusta's pathway to becoming a leader in "one of the fastest growing industries of the century." That increased military funding and the development of federal surveillance industries are framed as benevolent across the Brave/Backwards South divide is unsurprising given the deeply engrained nature of military veneration in America. It is important to note that the United States military is a primary contributor to racialized capitalism and environmental racism worldwide, thus any story centering the military as a producer of capital is also a story about racial capitalism.

The result of both sides of a contentious debate over CMR framing vague notions of economic growth and increased military spending and surveillance development as inherently good is that racial capitalism, nationalism, and white supremacy become more and more hegemonic and invisible. Rather than the cyber security suite being viewed in the context of federal surveillance and control of American citizens, primarily Black Americans, it is viewed through a neoliberal lens of positive economic growth. Rather than the rapid development of a federal surveillance industry in downtown Augusta being viewed in relation to the gentrification epidemic already displacing Black and low-income Augusta residents, it is viewed as a revitalization effort that will bring new and improved careers, entertainment, and economic growth to downtown Augusta. The role of racial capitalism in CMR narratives is important to highlight in a project about meaning making and collective memory. The narratives of progress above demonstrate the ways meaning making projects like debates over landmarks or public monuments can reproduce ideologies which have immediate material impacts on communities and individuals. Further, pointing out the material and ideological impacts of collective memory narratives across assumed political debates or divides is crucial in disrupting the invisible continuity of hegemonic systems.

CHAPTER FOUR:

CONCLUSION

In recent years, many have described the United States as devolving into social and political turmoil, with the American people becoming increasingly divided across political, cultural, and moral lines. Highly publicized instances of racist violence connected to Confederate imagery and increased tensions surrounding the continued existence of Confederate monuments have played no small part in the development of this sentiment. The organization of massive rallies in response to threats of CMR, that local and state governments are removing or doubling down on protecting Confederate symbols, and the continued debate in the public sphere between pundits, politicians, and citizens on the value of Confederate monuments in the American landscape all point to CMR being a vitally important part of a broad cultural meaning-making process. My concern during this project has been with the stories produced by lay citizens in the CMR debate, and how those stories, as collective memory narratives, are used in ways that construct and transform identity, how emotions are deployed within those narratives, and how nationalism and white supremacy are being reproduced within both sides of the CMR debate.

Through framing the Confederate Soldier as a complex victim, Brave South CMR authors established the moral warrant for Confederate commemoration: memorializing the altruistic sacrifices of young, poor Confederate Soldiers who fought for the freedom of the South and the preservation of their homes. Not only does this construction reference and reproduce

63

traditional iterations of white Southern identity steeped in grief and pride (Killian 1985:5), it also deploys broader cultural codes related to independence and sovereignty that appeal to a wider American identity. The Brave South protagonist is constructed in sharp contrast to the Slave Owner character, which mitigates the moral stigma of racism and slavery within CMR narratives, and also establishes the moral character and class status of the Confederate Soldier, cementing him as worthy of both sympathy and respect. Backwards South authors, on the other hand, engaged in storytelling which (re)contextualized the Confederacy in relation to broader systems of racial and political violence in order to produce a moral warrant for the removal of Confederate monuments. Through centering the racist legacies of men on Confederate monuments, connecting racist violence and organized hate groups in the South to their Confederate roots, and centering violence enacted by Confederate soldiers, Backwards South authors produced the moral argument that Confederate monuments should be removed.

Despite the perceived increase in fragmentation among American people, and particularly the oppositional nature of the CMR debate, through my research I have found that there are important similarities between contested Confederate monument removal narratives that point to the embeddedness of hegemonic systems in meaning-making processes. The underlying stories, frames, and myths reproducing banal nationalism and colorblind racial ideology found across the Brave/Backward divide help illustrate the important relationship between collective memory, identity, emotions, and hegemonic systems. As sites which both concretize cultural identity (Assmann & Czplicka 1995) and intersubjectively reproduce narratives about the past (Wertsch 2008:141), collective memory narratives are here also proven to be sites where deeply embedded ideologies are negotiated and reproduced. My findings point to the importance of the CMR debate as a "narrative template" (Wertsch 2008) being used to both negotiate contested histories

of racism and slavery while simultaneously facilitating the continuity of white supremacist and nationalist ideologies. Through the deployment of deeply embedded cultural codes, symbols, and frames related to race and nation, story authors used CMR narratives to make arguments about the present through representations of the past (Fleming 2017; Olick and Levy 1997). Because many of these codes and symbols are related to affective systems—pride and patriotism, racialized emotions (Bonilla-Silva 2018), grief and trauma (Alexander 2010)—emotions are inherently implicated in these meaning-making processes.

My findings indicate that collective memory narratives are important sites which aid in the production and negotiation of meaning, identity, memory, and emotions on a cultural level. I have also found that CMR narratives particularly are sites which help facilitate the continuity of hegemonic systems through the reproduction of nationalism and white supremacy across the Brave/Backward divide. These findings are deeply significant, because they implicate collective memory narratives as potential points of intervention in cultural processes resulting in the taken-for-granted reproduction of systems of domination. Because Brave South and Backwards South narratives are contested stories which produce opposing moral value judgements of Confederate monuments and are assumed to exist on either side of a moral, political, and ideological debate, pointing to the ways these narratives similarly reproduce hegemonic systems of power is crucial to intervening in the continuity of those systems. In focusing only on the differences between these stories, and framing the CMR storytelling process purely as a debate between completely different ideological camps, I argue that these systems being reproduced across the debate are made even more invisible and hegemonic, granting them more and more power.

Though I have provided an overview of the key moral arguments produced in both CMR stories, and compared the handling of Confederate characters across the Brave/Backwards

divide, there are many story elements central to CMR narratives which have not been accounted for in this paper. Future work should provide an in depth analysis of story elements like plot, setting, and a full cast of characters. For example, though I did not have time or space to fully analyze the construction and treatment of the Monument Protestor character across CMR narratives, I believe this would be an important step in understanding meaning-making in these stories. The Monument Protestor was often racialized implicitly by authors on both sides of the Brave/Backward divide. I would like to analyze this further and examine how exactly these characters are used in the moral argument produced by authors, and how the racialization of this character fits into the racial frames discussed in the final section of analysis.

Further, key temporal links between storying the past and present were largely ignored in this analysis, which should be tended to. Primarily I am concerned with the ways collective memory narratives tell stories about the present as much as they do about the past. Many CMR authors made connections between CMR and present day people and scenarios like Donald Trump, Colin Kaepernick and the NFL national anthem protests, and other current events. Why were CMR narratives sites where authors felt compelled to bring up these issues and how were present day character, plots, and settings negotiated within CMR narratives? What do the stories people tell about race and nation in the past say about race and nation presently, or in the future? These questions related to temporality and storytelling should be tended to in future work.

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