

May 2021

Performance, Representation, Reception, and the Lost Cause: Re-Framing the History of Confederate Monuments Through Embodied Assemblies

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PERFORMANCE, REPRESENTATION, RECEPTION, AND THE LOST CAUSE:
RE-FRAMING THE HISTORY OF CONFEDERATE MONUMENTS THROUGH
EMBODIED ASSEMBLIES

by

Joshua Rutherford

A Thesis Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Degree of

Master of Arts
in Art History

at

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

May 2021

ABSTRACT

PERFORMANCE, REPRESENTATION, RECEPTION, AND THE LOST CAUSE: RE-FRAMING THE HISTORY OF CONFEDERATE MONUMENTS THROUGH EMBODIED ASSEMBLIES

by

Joshua Rutherford

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2021
Under the Supervision of Professor Jennifer Johung

Discussion of Confederate monuments has been invigorated in academic, social, and political debates during the twenty-first century. As these monuments became entangled with police brutality following the George Floyd protests, scholars have tried to understand how this history connects with the systemic injustices faced by black Americans. Because financial inequities limited the ability of black Americans to erect monuments and photograph demonstrations during Reconstruction the archive is riddled with gaps in representation, which I close by following Diana Taylor's suggestion that we turn to the "repertoire" of performance. My thesis turns away the monuments themselves by investigating the forms of assembly related to both their construction, and their removal in the twenty-first century. Following emancipation, processions gave black Americans a means of representing themselves socially and politically when capital to procure representation was unavailable and have continually been used to provide black citizens to amplify the voice they lack in social and political spaces. Former Confederates received support from wealthy political leaders and influencers, so organizers succeeded in erecting many monuments, each one accompanied by a spectacular unveiling ceremony, at which thousands of Americans would rally, bolstering popular support of the Lost Cause historical agenda. As actions like topplings have also become more prominent in the

twenty-first century, my research explores how the organizers of rallies and processions have intended for their actions to be received by audiences, and how their strategies have evolved over time. By analyzing how these actions are both performative and theatrical, my thesis reveals how police brutality and Confederate memorialization have become increasingly entangled with American politics and media since the end of the Civil War. Understanding the organizers' intentions regarding reception reveals how lingering traces of Confederate rituals continue to impact black American representation in politics and media. My intervention provides a theoretically driven framework which opens the history of Confederate monuments to areas of research foreclosed by gaps in the archive.

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For Magnus,
And Jes

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Introduction

In the summer of 2020, following the death of George Floyd in the custody of four members of the Minneapolis Police Department, a number of confederate monuments were toppled in actions of resistance stemming from the cumulative injustices of police brutality against black Americans throughout the United States' brief history. While outrage culminated in these actions, the controversy over Confederate monuments had been rearing its head since 2015, when Dylann Roof entered a black church in South Carolina and murdered nine congregants. In 2017, the Charlottesville “Unite the Right” rally made national headlines as a participant drove into a crowd of counter-protestors, killing Heather Hayer and injuring several others. In the context of these acts of violence, discussion of Confederate monuments had already been invigorated in both social and political discourse. There were topplings leading up to the George Floyd protests, as well, such as the Confederate monument on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which students toppled in 2018 (Figure 1.1).



Figure 1. 1: A crowd of protesters pull down the Confederate statue known as Silent Sam on the campus of the University of North Carolina, Photo by Julia Wall, *The News & Observer*. Aug. 20, 2018.

But the topplings during the George Floyd protests more directly connected the problem of Confederate memory to the current structures governing American politics (Figure 1.2). This thesis emerged from my desire to understand how and where the history of Confederate monuments connects with the history of police brutality. I was not alone on this journey. Over the course of this year discussion of Confederate monuments has continued to escalate, but while there are many scholars exploring why such statues are problematic, political fervor in the United States has also escalated, and media pundits taking the opposition continue to represent these monuments as a means of honoring our founding fathers. As I've followed coverage of police brutality alongside that of politicians and pundits upholding the value of Confederate memorialization while researching the origins of these monuments, the parallels between political and social commentary today, and the agendas of the Confederate organizers who constructed these monuments beginning in the nineteenth century suggest that these issues connect to existing structures of representation in the United States. While these parallels between Confederate organizers and twenty-first century conservative media strategies will be expounded upon in the discussion that follows, reviewing the historiography of Confederate monuments revealed how these parallels have been foreclosed in many approaches to Confederate monuments by a lack of comparable objects. Despite the efforts of black American organizers to erect a similar monument to a black Union soldier, no monuments to black Americans were erected in the period during which Confederate monuments were being installed throughout the South. With no real reparations paid to recently emancipated slaves, few could contribute to these efforts to monumentalize the contributions of black soldiers during the Civil War. Despite financial inequities, however, black Americans organized large emancipation processions to establish collective representation in the South. While these demonstrations are

commonly referenced in relation to the development of commemorative traditions during Reconstruction, I propose that using these processions as a frame can provide valuable clarifications through which we can better understand how events like monument topplings during the George Floyd protests relate with the history of Confederate monuments. This thesis approaches the history of Confederate monuments through their relation to forms of assembly used to generate social and political representation, both in the decades following the Civil War, and in the twenty-first century.



Figure 1. 2: An unidentified man walks past a toppled statue of Charles Linn, a city founder who was in the Confederate navy, in Birmingham, Alabama. Photo by Reeves, *The Atlantic*, June 1, 2020.

Many scholars have argued that there was a significant crisis of identity during the Reconstruction Period.¹ Newly emancipated slaves struggled to find their place in society with no substantial form of reparations.² Union soldiers were celebrating their victory in the Civil War, but also finding ways to mourn their losses and reconcile the division between the Union and Confederacy.³ Former Confederates, having lost the Civil War, were likewise attempting to maintain their pre-war status and mourn their losses. While their land had been absorbed into the Union, the rights of former Confederates were limited during Reconstruction because the Union required a pledge of allegiance before the defectors were to be readmitted to the Union.⁴ While cemeteries for Union soldiers were being funded by the federal government, and bodies relocated from battle side trench graves, former Confederates received no help in commemorating their dead.⁵ Most black Americans sympathized with the Union, which had essentially fought for their

1. W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*, New York: The Free Press, 1935. Kathleen Ann Clark. *Defining Moments: Black American Commemoration & Political Culture in the South, 1863-1913*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005. Karen L. Cox. *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2019. Gaines M. Foster. *Ghosts of the Confederacy Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987. Henry Louis Gates. *Stony the Road: Reconstruction, white Supremacy, and the Rise of Jim Crow*. Penguin Press, 2019. Saidiya V. Hartman. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. Caroline E. Janney. *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012. Cynthia Mills and Pamela H Simpson. *monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*. Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 2003. Kirk Savage and Frank and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolnia (Mississippi State University Libraries). *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and monument in Nineteenth Century America*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997. LeeAnn whites and Frank and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolnia (Mississippi State University Libraries). *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860-1890*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995. Zinn, Howard, and Anthony Arnove. *A People's History of the United States*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2017.

2. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, in "The Black Worker," Pp.3-16. Kathleen Clark. *Defining Moments*, in "Language that Cannot be Misunderstood: *Black American Commemoration 1863-1913*," Pp.1-12.

3. Catherine W. Zipf. "Marking Union Victory in the South: The Construction of the National Cemetery System," in Mills and Simpson, Pp.27-45.

4. Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*. in "Chapter Two: After Appomattox: The Scars of Defeat," Pp.22-35.

5. Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*. in "Chapter Two: After Appomattox: The Scars of Defeat," Pp.22-35. Catherine W. Zipf. "Marking Union Victory in the South," in Mills and Simpson, Pp.27-45.

freedom, and black Americans could take part in the commemorative events on the Union side.⁶ But while Union organizers allowed black American participation, they did not give participants central roles in organizing or speaking in most circumstances, and so black Americans still struggled to find representation through their alliances with white abolitionists.⁷ Processions celebrating emancipation, organized exclusively by black Americans, emerged as a distinct means of black representation which asserted black rights to public spaces, freedom of expression, and political participation.⁸ Because the financial inequities of slavery had not been ameliorated, Confederate sympathizers still held financial power in the South, and we can see how this tension manifested in the construction of Confederate monuments.⁹ Although the same drive to erect monuments existed within the black communities, because of financial inequalities funds raised by collaborating white abolitionists outweighed those collected from former slaves, so each drive to install a monument of a black union soldier was usurped, and instead the monument commissioned would represent Lincoln or Grant (Figure 1.3), leaving a distinct lack of African American representation in the form of monuments.¹⁰ The same narrative is emphasized by most writing on Confederate monuments and on African American representation during Reconstruction, scholars seem to suggest that because of their lack of capital, black Americans could not secure a similar form of representation for themselves, in the way that

6. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in Chapter 4: "Has Emancipation Been a Failure? The end of Reconstruction," p.95-133. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "Vindication and Reconciliation," p.141-158. Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, in "Freedom's Memorial," p.89-129.

7. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in Chapter 4: "Has Emancipation Been a Failure? The end of Reconstruction," p.95-133. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "Vindication and Reconciliation," p.141-158. Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, in "Freedom's Memorial," p.89-129.

8. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in Chapter 4: "Has Emancipation Been a Failure? The end of Reconstruction," p.95-133.

9. Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2019. Mills and Simpson.

10. Kirk Savage, and Frank and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana (Mississippi State University Libraries). *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and monument in Nineteenth Century America*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997. in "Freedom's Memorial," p.89-129.

Confederate organizations had done by erecting monuments. Still, several scholars — Cynthia Becker, William Blair, Karen Cox and Kathleen Clark for instance — allude to the significance of processions in recounting the history of Confederate monuments.¹¹



Figure 1. 3: Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln. Sculpture by Thomas Ball, dedicated on 14 April 1876. ARTSTOR: SSID: 1471834.

Through Emancipation processions, African American communities throughout the South found a means of representing themselves in the public sphere by seizing the power to enact their freedom.¹² Black Republican politicians and local African Methodist Episcopal Church branches organized these events.¹³ Because freedom came in waves as the Civil War grew to a close, processions did not take place on a specific day nationally, but were organized

11. Cynthia J. Becker, "Confederate Soldiers, Voodoo Queens, and black Indians: monuments and Counter-monuments in New Orleans." *De Arte: Troubling Histories: Public Art and Prejudice*, Vol 2 54, no. 2 (2019): 41–64. Clark, *Defining Moments*.

12. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in Chapter 2: "The Vanguard of Liberty Must Look into the Past: Celebrations of Freedom." p.13-55.

13. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in "Making Progress in the Post-Reconstruction South," Pp.142-3.

on dates significant to the extension of freedom to former slaves - such as January 1st (when emancipation went into effect), the Fourth of July (Figures 1.4 and 1.5), September 22nd (the date the proclamation was signed by Lincoln), and April 2nd (also known as “Surrender Day”) — these processions aimed to create a momentary “break” in the social construction of blackness.¹⁴

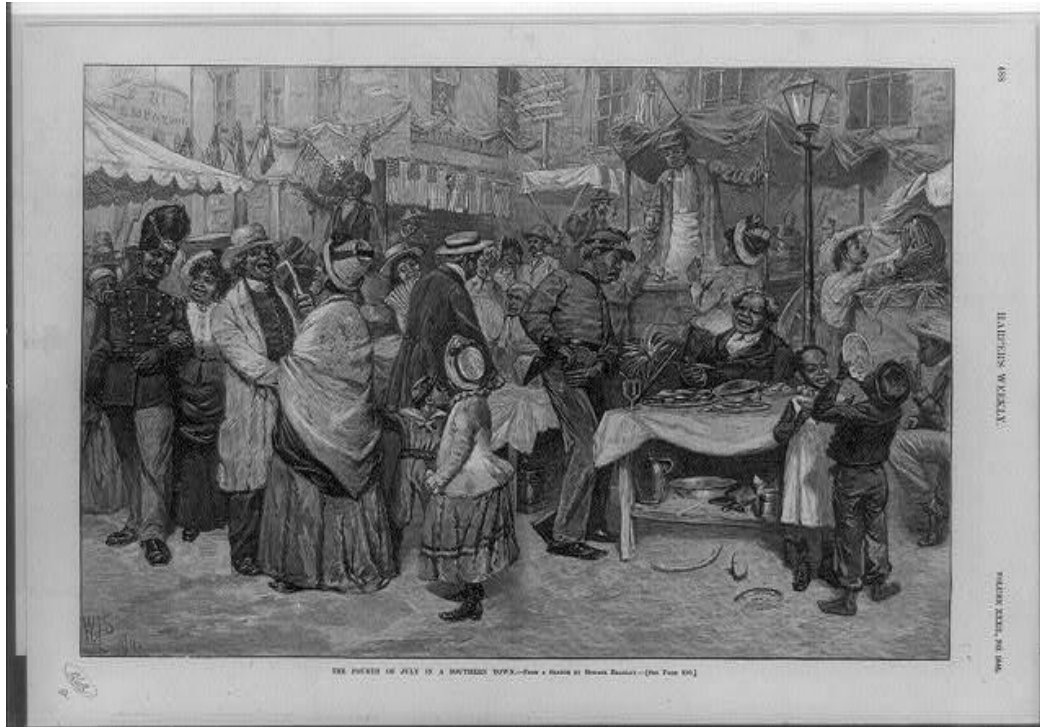


Figure 1. 4: The Fourth of July in a southern town. Print by William Ludwell Sheppard, *Harper's Weekly*, 1888. Library of Congress: 89708529.

It is important to note some details of the organization before we look at the form of assembly itself. These events were organized predominately by more affluent members of the African American community and intended to include wide participation.¹⁵ The organizers concerned themselves with the presentation and conduct of processions by encouraging participants to dress

14. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in “Language that Cannot be Misunderstood: *Black American Commemoration 1863-1913*,” Pp.1-12.

15. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in “Language that Cannot be Misunderstood: *Black American Commemoration 1863-1913*,” Pp.1-12.

well and to avoid rowdy conduct.¹⁶ In the years immediately following emancipation, black militiamen, armed with rifles they received for joining the Union effort during the war, played a significant role in processions. While their presence asserted the willingness of black Americans to defend themselves, they also asserted the contributions made by black Americans during the war, and their loyalty to the Union.¹⁷ The structure of processions varied widely depending on the region, especially as southern Democrats seized control of state and municipal governments throughout the south and fought to restrict the rights of black Americans. Organizers' chief concerns in attire and conduct reflected their desire to seize power over the stereotypes projected onto black Americans throughout slavery as they continued into the twentieth century. While the legacy of slavery had normalized the inferiority of black Americans in the will of many Americans, they organized processions in efforts to correct these misconceptions and to incorporate the notions of freedom and political participation into the social representation of blackness.

16. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in "Language that Cannot be Misunderstood: *Black American Commemoration 1863-1913*," Pp.1-12.

17. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in "Celebrations of Freedom," Pp.35-6.

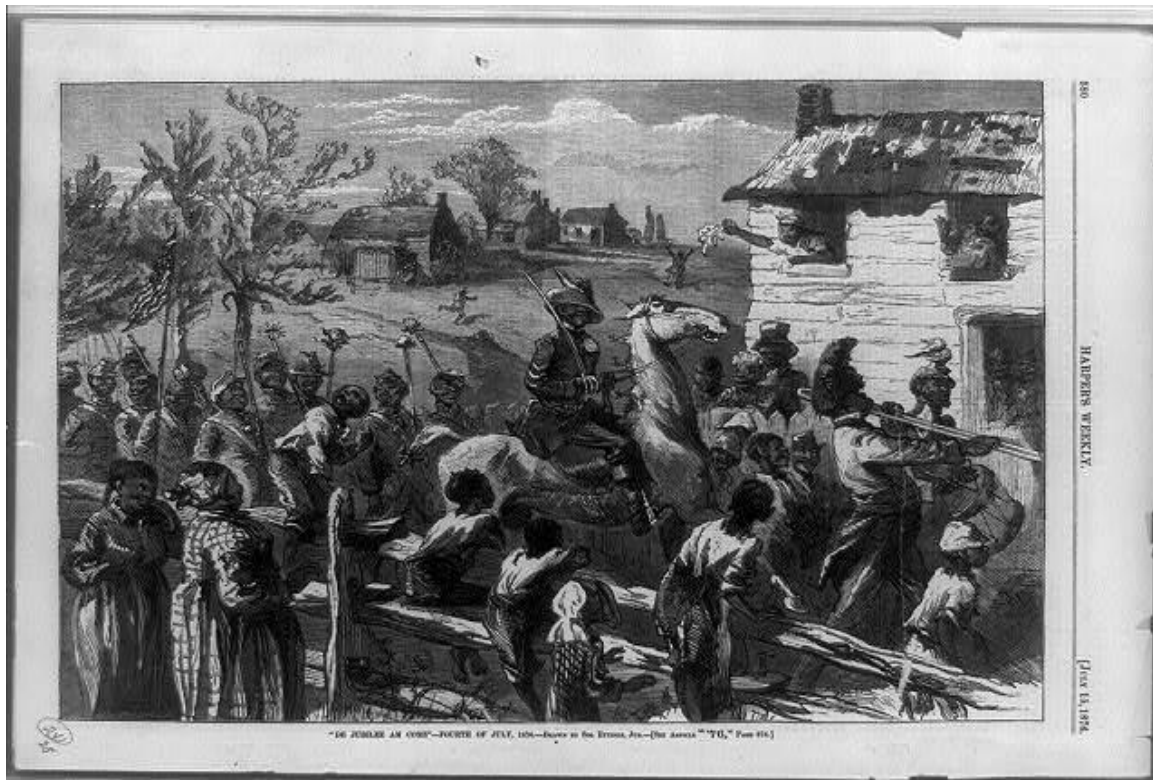


Figure 1. 5: "De jubilee am come"--Fourth of July." Drawn by Sol Eytinge, Engraving by W. H. Redding, *Harper's Weekly*, June 1876. *Library of Congress*: 89706302.

Accounts like those written by Kathleen Clark and William Blair reveal the problems historians face when recounting this history. Although they have been able to compile histories based on primary sources, most of the information comes from newspaper articles, often from opposing viewpoints. The visual archive, likewise, reveals gaps in the representation of Emancipation processions which are glaring in contrast to the prevalence of images of Confederate events, which were reproduced not only in newspapers but also as postcards. Because of travel restrictions during the Coronavirus pandemic, a majority of my figures come from the Library of Congress's online catalogue, which contains only one photograph of an Emancipation procession, from 1905 in Richmond, Virginia (Figure 1.6). In my research, I've been able to find a couple of other examples, but compared to Confederate monument unveilings and Union military parades, this gap in the archive might help explain why some scholars have

overlooked the significance of processions in their accounts of the history of Confederate monuments. While the lack of physical evidence is an obstacle, scholars in performance studies, like Diana Taylor, have turned to the “repertoire” of performance to fill these gaps in the archive.¹⁸ “The Rift,” Diana Taylor argues, “does not lie between the written and spoken word, but between the *archive* of supposedly enduring materials (i.e. texts, documents, buildings, bones) and the so-called *repertoire* of embodied practice/knowledge (i.e. spoken language, dance, sports, ritual).”¹⁹ The first section of my thesis will frame the entanglement of Confederate monuments and Emancipation processions through embodied practices and structures of support. Using theories of performance introduced by Fred Moten, Saidiya V. Hartman, and Judith Butler, the first section of my thesis frames the procession as a means of filling this gap in archival representation. Because of the lack of archival material, I turn to embodied practices from civil rights protests and performance art in an effort at better understanding the significance of the procession in relation to the history of Confederate monuments.

18. Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2003.

19. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*. P.19.



Figure 1. 6: Emancipation Day, Richmond, Virginia. Photograph, *Detroit Publishing Co.*, ca. 1905. *Library of Congress*: 2016804723.

In *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?*, Judith Butler investigates how government and media share a “frame” when representing war and violence to the general population. Butler suggests that these “frames” serve as a “strategy of containment, selectively producing and

enforcing what will count as reality.”²⁰ The danger of this point of view, as Butler sees it, is that “when versions of reality are excluded or jettisoned to a domain of unreality, then specters are produced that haunt the ratified version of reality.”²¹ In positioning the procession as a frame through which we can view the history of Confederate monuments, my intention is in understanding what is “contained” by the frames currently being used to investigate the history of Confederate monuments. While the efforts of many scholars have elaborated on the ways Confederate ideology has affected national memory of the Civil War in the decades following the Confederacy’s surrender, my interest here is in understanding the inter-related processes and structures as they relate to both black American and Confederate representation in forms of assembly originating during reconstruction. My intervention seeks to address the gaps in representation in the history of Confederate monuments by focusing on embodied assemblies in relation to the history of Confederate monuments, rather than on the monuments themselves. Following Taylor, I look at the “interdependency” of performances occurring “*within* a specific society” in order to reveal the social and political structures, which promoted and deterred different modes of collective representation.²² To accomplish this, the second section of my thesis establishes the rally as a second frame through which we can better understand this history; a counterpart to the procession. This section looks to the origins of the post-Civil-war Confederate tradition to understand how efforts at memorialization evolved into efforts of indoctrination near the end of the nineteenth century. Butler suggests that “frames of war” serve as an “interdiction on mourning” in which there is “no destruction” and “no loss”; “Even as the frames are actively engaged in redoubling the destruction of war, they are only polishing the

20. Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* New York: Verso Books, 2016. in “Introduction to the Paperback,” Pp. xiii

21. Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* in “Introduction to the Paperback,” Pp. xiii

22. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*. P.9.

surface of a melancholia whose rage must be contained, and often cannot."²³ As Butler sees it, these frames are instrumental to maintaining the “conscription of the public” to establish a hierarchy of grievability.²⁴ In developing frames centered on the procession and the rally, I look at how such performances engaged with mourning, outrage, and public acceptance following the Civil War, before moving on to identify traces of the same in twenty-first century examples in conclusion.

While my frame of the rally poses Confederate monument unveilings as a precursor to controversial rallies in the twenty-first century, like the 2017 Unite the Right rally, I begin by analyzing how the Confederate tradition emerged from memorial practices. Many former Confederates and their families had not yet been re-admitted to the Union in the early days of Reconstruction, so that black Americans could share public funerary spaces and commemorate the army that had defeated the Confederacy was salt in the wound of the Confederacy’s surrender.²⁵ Confederate cemeteries and monuments arose from the tension surrounding which lives were grievable in the wake of the Civil War. While Union soldiers were memorialized and monuments to Lincoln were erected within the former Confederacy, organizers began raising funds to build cemeteries for their dead. Because the wealth of plantation owners carried over to their families — in contrast to black Americans who were struggling to represent themselves — these fundraising campaigns were successful from the start.²⁶ Though so far I have referred to those responsible for the construction of cemeteries and monuments as Confederate organizers,

23. Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* in “Introduction to the Paperback,” Pp. xiii

24. Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* in “Introduction to the Paperback,” Pp. xiii-xiv.

25. Kathleen Clark. *Defining Moments*, in “Language that Cannot be Misunderstood: *black American Commemoration 1863-1913*,” Pp.1-12. Catherine W. Zipf. “Marking Union Victory in the South,” in Mills and Simpson, Pp.27-45. Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*. in “Freedom’s Memorial,” Pp.89-129.

26. Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*. in “Freedom’s Memorial,” Pp.89-129. and “Slavery’s Memorial,” Pp.129-161.

at this point in the conversation it is important to acknowledge that the organizers who best succeeded in their fundraising campaigns were Confederate women.²⁷ Having been disenfranchised by the Union Government in the wake of the Civil War, elite former-Confederates formed many exclusive clubs and associations.²⁸ Men's groups like the United Confederate Veterans and Sons of Confederate Veterans met privately, published magazines and newspapers, and held reunions for former Confederates to gather.²⁹ While these organizations found success in their events and publications, their fundraising capabilities were no match for Confederate women who organized into Ladies Memorial Associations and raised funds for the construction of cemeteries and re-internment of the bodies of Confederate dead between 1865-90, so the men's groups relied on the women's' to help complete their aspirations.³⁰ While these monument associations were run independently prior to the establishment of the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1894 (Figure 1.7), after that most monument campaigns aligned on a national level under the umbrella of the Daughters.³¹ It is important to note that while many of these groups formed between the end of the Civil War and of Reconstruction (1865-1877), their drives to erect monuments in public spaces outside of cemeteries, mostly, did not come to

27. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past*. whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender*.

28. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The Rise of the UDC," Pp.28-48. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past*, in "The Influence and Zeal of Women: Ladies Memorial Associations during Radical Reconstruction, 1867-1870," Pp.123-179.

29. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The Rise of the UDC," Pp.28-48. whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender*, in "The Domestic Reconstruction of Southern white Men," Pp.132-159.

30. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The Rise of the UDC," Pp.28-48, and in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past*, in "The Influence and Zeal of Women: Ladies Memorial Associations during Radical Reconstruction, 1867-1870," Pp.123-179, and in "A Rather Hard Headed Set: Challenges for the Ladies Memorial Associations, 1870-1883," Pp.179-223. whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender*, in "The Domestic Reconstruction of Southern white Men," Pp.132-159, and "The Politics of Domestic Loss: The Ladies Memorial Association and the Confederate Dead," Pp.160-198.

31. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The Rise of the UDC," Pp.28-48, and in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past*, in "Lest We Forget: United Daughters and Confederated Ladies, 1894-1915," Pp.278-323.

fruition until the 1890s.³² During Reconstruction, Confederate groups primarily funded cemeteries and published writings through sympathetic media corporations because the presence of federal troops throughout the South limited the possibility of Confederate assemblies.³³ It was not until after 1877, when Rutherford B. Hayes took the office of president and the Compromise of 1877 was signed that federal troops withdrew from the South and Reconstruction was declared over by Congress, allowing former Confederates to expand their political power.³⁴ Southern Democrats took back congressional seats once federal troops were no longer protecting the voting rights of black Americans.³⁵ While that responsibility fell to local law enforcement, Confederate-sympathies led many southern police departments to ignore the violence from groups like the Ku Klux Klan.³⁶ We will dive into more detail than is contained in this brief history, but here it is important to note how the success of Ladies Memorial Associations in constructing cemeteries for the Confederate dead helped legitimate the revival of Southern Identity by providing a space of appearance for mourning the Confederate Dead, but agreements like the Compromise of 1877 were likewise instrumental in enacting their goals on the national

32. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The Rise of the UDC," Pp.28-48, and in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, in "Ceremonial Bereavement: Memorial Activities," Pp.36-46. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past*, in "The Influence and Zeal of Women: Ladies Memorial Associations during Radical Reconstruction, 1867-1870," Pp.123-179, and in "A Rather Hard Headed Set: Challenges for the Ladies Memorial Associations, 1870-1883," Pp.179-223. whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender*, in "The Domestic Reconstruction of Southern white Men," Pp.132-159, and "The Politics of Domestic Loss: The Ladies Memorial Association and the Confederate Dead," Pp.160-198.

33. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The Rise of the UDC," Pp.28-48, and in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72. whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender*, in "The Domestic Reconstruction of Southern white Men," Pp.132-159, and "The Politics of Domestic Loss: The Ladies Memorial Association and the Confederate Dead," Pp.160-198.

34. Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, in "Slavery Without Submission, Emancipation without Freedom," Pp.171-210.

35. Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, in "Slavery Without Submission, Emancipation without Freedom," Pp.171-210.

36. Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, in "Slavery Without Submission, Emancipation without Freedom," Pp.171-210.

level.³⁷ While capital was key to rebuilding social representations for the former Confederates during Reconstruction, access to political power enabled Confederate organizers to legitimize their ideology in legislation and opened opportunities for funding.³⁸



Figure 1. 7: Monument to Gen. John H. Morgan and his men, and some members of the U.D.C. Committee that built it, Lexington Kentucky. Photograph by R.L. McClure, ca. 1911. *Library of Congress*: 91787584.

Before moving on to examine the monuments and unveilings it is also necessary to understand the significance of Lost Cause mythology to these Confederate organizations. We can define the Lost Cause as a revisionist historical agenda, which sought to undermine Union centric histories of the Civil War; proponents emphasized the importance of states' rights rather

37. Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, in "Slavery Without Submission, Emancipation without Freedom," Pp.171-210.

38. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "Vindication and Reconciliation," Pp.141-158.

than slavery as the impetus for the Civil war, argued in favor of the civilizing effects of slavery, and desired to adapt the hierarchical structure of the Antebellum South within the Union.³⁹

Because the agenda of Confederate-sympathizers was shaped by demographics of surviving Confederate Veterans and their families, as the nineteenth-century was coming to a close, and fewer Confederate Veterans remained alive these organizers shifted their focus from the burial of the Confederate dead to controlling the representation of the Confederacy.⁴⁰ In the transition between the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries, Confederate Men's organizations published articles and opinion pieces arguing in favor of the Lost Cause narrative of the Civil War posed by authors like Edward A. Pollard and former President of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis.⁴¹ Confederate women focused their efforts on monuments to Confederate heroes and started children's' offshoots of the predominant Confederate organizations (Figure 1.8).⁴²

39. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*. Mills and Simpson, *monuments to the Lost Cause*. Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*.

40. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "Combatting 'Wicked Falsehoods'," Pp.93-117.

41. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, in "The Confederate Celebration: Its Interpretation of the War," Pp.115-126.

42. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "Confederate Progressives," Pp.73-92. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, in "Academic Missionaries: The Challenge of the Professionals," Pp.180-192.



Figure 1. 8: Children of Confederacy. *National Photo Company Collection*, January 19, 1924. *Library of Congress*: 2016848591.

Though the monuments were pitched as memorials, many had inscriptions decrying the values of the Lost Cause.⁴³ The unveiling ceremonies, which accompanied monument placement, likewise, became outlets for Confederate-organizations to promote Lost Cause mythology in the public sphere (Figure 1.9).⁴⁴ Proponents of the Lost Cause understood the media environment and — because of their distribution of capital under slavery — more white Americans had accumulated wealth, which they were willing to contribute to monument campaigns, celebratory events, and newspaper exposure.⁴⁵

43. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72.

44. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, in "The Confederate Celebration: Its Ritual Activities," Pp.127-144.

45. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*. in "Chapter Three: Ceremonial Bereavement: Memorial Activities," Pp.36-46.



Figure 1. 9: The Unveiling of the Jefferson Davis Monument in New Orleans, Louisiana. Photograph, *The Times Democrat*, 1907.

As southern Democrats increased their political representation moving into the twentieth-century, many of these monuments received funding from state and federal government, which further legitimated the Lost Cause in the public sphere and attached the aspect of reconciliation between the former Union and Confederacy.⁴⁶ That the Daughters received funding from the federal government to build Confederate monuments while black Americans failed to fund a single monument to black Union soldiers is, again, testament to the ways in which representation was tied to economic variables at the turn of the century (Figure 1.10).⁴⁷

46. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, in "Toward a Reunited Nation: Signs of Reconciliation," Pp.63-76.

47. Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*. in "Freedom's Memorial," Pp.89-129. and "Slavery's Memorial," Pp.129-161.

67TH CONGRESS,
4TH SESSION.

S. 4119.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

DECEMBER 8, 1922.

Mr. WILLIAMS introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Library.

A BILL

Authorizing the erection in the city of Washington of a monument in memory of the faithful colored mammies of the South.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
3 That the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, be, and he
4 is hereby authorized and directed to select a suitable site
5 and to grant permission to the Jefferson Davis Chapter No.
6 1650, United Daughters of the Confederacy, for the erection
7 as a gift to the people of the United States on public grounds
8 of the United States in the city of Washington, District of
9 Columbia, other than those of the Capitol, the Library of
10 Congress, Potomac Park, and the White House, a monu-
11 ment in memory of the faithful colored mammies of the

Figure 1. 10: The first page of the bill to sponsor the monument to colored "mammies." NAID 4685889.

Since the 1980s, a number of scholars have published books about Confederate monuments and Lost Cause ideology.⁴⁸ While these approaches have revealed how the iconography of these monuments communicated power, how the monuments themselves altered social geography throughout the South, and how these monuments tied into the historiography of the Lost Cause, I am interested in elaborating on the structure of the rallies, which accompanied Confederate monument unveilings, to understand how these demonstrations responded to emancipation. Accounts elaborating on how Confederate women were able to gain political power are the most common approach to the history of Confederate monuments and explore how groups like Ladies monument Associations and the United Daughters of the Confederacy used their wealth, womanhood, and proximity to Southern Democrats to influence American understanding of tradition in the South.⁴⁹ Karen L. Cox, LeAnn whites, and Caroline Janney have all written books on this subject, and emphasize that the performance of “southern womanhood” served as a means of influencing social distinctions.⁵⁰ While these accounts focus on gender normativity in recounting this history, this approach limits the scope to understanding how Confederate women employed the trope of tradition in order to promote the re-instatement of Antebellum gender and racial distinctions in post-Emancipation society. It is on the side of racial distinction, which I find the historiography of Confederate monuments to be lacking in its current state, which Karen L. Cox supports in concluding the preface to the second printing of her book *Dixie’s Daughters*.⁵¹ While Cox’s 2021 book sheds light on this issue, her approach

48. Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters*. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past*. Mills and Simpson, *monuments to the Lost Cause*. Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*. whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender*.

49. Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters*. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past*. Mills and Simpson, *monuments to the Lost Cause*. whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender*.

50. Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters*. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past*. Mills and Simpson, *monuments to the Lost Cause*. whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender*.

51. Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters*, in “Preface (2019),” Pp. xxv-xxvi.

remains historical and tied to archival sources. My approach, in contrast, looks to embodied practices to close the gaps in this history. While I look at processions as a theatrical inversion, I suggest that the efforts of Confederate organizers remained performative, not only in their enactment of traditional values but also in relation to the infrastructure, which supported the construction of Confederate monuments.

In concluding, we will turn to the reception of Confederate monuments. After understanding how the operation of unveiling ceremonies intended to affect the acceptability of Confederate ideology, I follow the traces of Confederate organizers' practices through political structures leading into the twenty-first century. The connections between nineteenth-century white supremacist vigilantism and twenty-first-century police brutality and extremism emerge from studying how these lingering traces re-emerge in the representation of victims of police brutality. We'll look at how this relates to Donald Trump's commentary on Confederate monuments during his presidency, and how his narrative connects with that of the Lost Cause (Figure 1.11). In these analyses, I attempt to reveal how structures of representation have attempted to conceal the ways the legacy of slavery continues to affect black Americans today.



Figure 1. 11: Audience attending Trump's speech from the White House before the Capitol Insurrection. Photo by Evan Vucci, *AP Photo*, January 6, 2021.

While conventionally embodied actions are looked at in relation to their historic context, I aim to reveal how performances evolve and adapt over time. A performative can only be repeated once before it is constative, which suggests that performances adapt over time based on how past performances have become constative. By looking at monument unveilings in conversation with twenty-first century actions, which seek to provide a counter-narrative to the Lost Cause agenda, this section seeks to clarify how public demonstrations have affected the history of both Confederate monuments, and emancipation processions. As Diana Taylor suggests:

Multiple forms of embodied acts are always present, though in a constant state of againness. They reconstitute themselves, transmitting communal memories, histories, and values from one group/generation to the next. Embodied and performed acts generate, record, and transmit knowledge.⁵²

By placing the procession and rally in conversation with one another, both during Reconstruction and in the twenty-first century, I intend to reveal some of the ways performances like Confederate monument unveilings and emancipation processions have changed over time, adapting to political and social structures which mediate the public's acceptance and rejection of certain norms. I employ Sara Ahmed's positing of the will — in relation to willfulness — to these actions in hopes of establishing a better understanding of how these variables are interconnected through performance, rather than the archive.

By developing the frames of the procession and the rally, continuities emerge, which reveal lingering elements of the impact Confederate monuments have had on civil rights in the United States. From the rally, themes of fabrication, concealment, and interpellation become apparent. We can recognize these variables as continuous with the Lost Cause agenda in relation to the representation of the black body. As we come to understand how Confederate organizers leveraged social anxiety to generate fear and suspicion of black bodies, parallels emerge, which connect these tactics to those used to criminalize the victims of police brutality. While I suggest that the performativity of the rally attempts to legitimate the acceptability of norms, which disenfranchised black Americans, I argue that the theatricality of processions attempts to override the barrier of representation faced by black Americans. Because acts of white supremacist violence emerge as a common variable between performances during Reconstruction and those of today, my discussion of acceptability and rejection is structured

52. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, in "Acts of Transfer," P.21.

through their relation to violent opposition. Although my analysis of the procession focuses on acts of non-violent resistance, I turn to the *willful* actions of black Americans both during reconstruction and in twenty-first century encounters with Confederate symbols. My intention is in understanding how the toppling of Confederate monuments connects with my understanding of the procession. To maintain continuity with the repertoire of performance, I frame this argument through Bree Newsome Bass's 2015 action removing a Confederate flag from outside of South Carolina's state capitol (Figure 1.12). In responding to an act of white supremacist violence — Dylann Roof's massacre of black AME church members in 2015 — Newsome's action reveals itself as a rejection of Confederate iconography, which disputes the acceptability of white supremacist symbols continuing to be bolstered by government infrastructure in the twenty-first century.



Figure 1. 12: Activist Bree Newsome Bass at the top of the Capitol flagpole in Columbia, South Carolina. Photo by Adam Anderson, *Reuters*, June 27, 2015.

Procession: Black Representation, Precarity, and Performance since Reconstruction

In the wake of George Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis Law Enforcement on May 25, 2020, video footage of the murder was released and became a moment of national outrage. Incensed, thousands took to the streets in cities around the United States, protesting the ongoing issue of police brutality. In effect, protesting the precarious conditions of living in America while being black (Figure 2.1). During the first few weeks of protests, demonstrators toppled Confederate monuments, and monuments to other slave owners to express their frustration with the racist systems that remain today, the remnants of the institution of slavery that continue to represent black bodies as more injurable than white bodies. As much as toppling monuments is an exciting performative gesture of its own, what stood out to me amidst this backdrop of racial injustices was the power of marches to proceed. The notion of the procession, and how it represented the struggles of black Americans to achieve equality. Indeed, live streaming made it possible to watch protests in multiple cities simultaneously, and no matter how much they were tear gassed, pepper sprayed, or shot with rubber bullets, the protestors continued to put their bodies on the line. They continued to encounter and proceed, exposing themselves to violence. But why? Because the violence was a failure of the system. And by allowing the enactment of violence at the hands of law enforcement to be seen by millions around the world, demonstrators revealed that the violence of the Jim Crow south was not a thing of the past but remains inscribed in our systems of justice.



Figure 2. 1: Protesters gathered at Chicago Ave. and East 38th Street in South Minneapolis after the death of George Floyd. Photo by Carlos Gonzalez, *Star Tribune*, May 27, 2020.

Every time they withstood another round of abuse from law enforcement, followers on social media applauded the protestors for proceeding against such obstacles. While many cheered the same at the toppling of monuments, the monuments were also a breaking point for many moderate Americans, who saw the destruction of public property as criminal action. The Trump administration leapt at the opportunity to legislate vandalism of a monument a felony offense, and the far-right launched campaigns against even peaceful processions, smearing them as riots intent to destroy their cities and erase history. In many respects, the discussion of Confederate monuments flourished in the public sphere in the weeks following George Floyd's death, but it also diverted attention and funding away from the communities who need it the most. But what does it mean to proceed, despite these compounding obstacles? How is the form of the

procession tied to both the history of Confederate monuments and to the ongoing protests? What can we learn from the history of the procession as a mode of black representation, here? How does the idea of the procession relate to the notion of proceeding?

While the history of Confederate monuments does not reveal examples of topplings made by black demonstrators in the Reconstruction period, understanding the affective economy out of which these monuments arose helped me understand the significance of the procession as a form of aesthetic intervention linked to black representation. Emancipation processions, as Kathleen Clark suggests, “became critical forums for enacting and projecting black-authored visions of progress, with the aim of injecting black American interests into local, regional, and national debates.”⁵³ While there were variations in the form of processions regionally, before moving on we can acknowledge some commonalities throughout the south.⁵⁴ Emancipation processions generally began with a reading of the “Emancipation Proclamation” and a prayer led by an organizer from the AME Church, after which the procession would take to the streets, choosing paths through prominent public spaces.⁵⁵ Participants took many different roles in these events. Black militiamen usually led with a procession of arms — a means of showcasing black contributions to the Civil War, and commemorating heroes that lacked monumental veneration.⁵⁶ Church, school, social, and political groups organized separate groupings; the procession provided these groups a means of reaching a wider audience on issues like education, women’s

53. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in “Language that Cannot be Misunderstood: *Black American Commemoration 1863-1913*,” Pp.1-12.

54. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in “Language that Cannot be Misunderstood: *Black American Commemoration 1863-1913*,” Pp.1-12.

55. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in “Language that Cannot be Misunderstood: *Black American Commemoration 1863-1913*,” Pp.1-12.

56. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in “Language that Cannot be Misunderstood: *Black American Commemoration 1863-1913*,” Pp.1-12.

suffrage, and religion.⁵⁷ While men were the lead organizers of these events, women played a significant role in the organization, and male organizers made specific efforts to ensure their voices were represented.⁵⁸ They encouraged people to join the procession along the way, and group renditions of songs like “John Brown’s Body” spontaneously erupted from participants.⁵⁹ While organized to represent “emancipation, black identity, and the future of the nation,” white participants were warmly received into processions; a reflection of solidarity which reinforced the patriotism of black soldiers who fought by the side of white Union soldiers during the Civil War.⁶⁰ Many participants brought Union flags and proudly waved them as they proceeded through town.⁶¹ The events usually led into a town square for a few brief speeches before reversing the route to return to a church for a barbecue.⁶² While this general understanding of the procession gives us a glimpse, these events were heterogenous, and throughout the rest of this section, we will look at some of the discrete actions of participants in hopes of better understanding how these demonstrations reflected the willingness of black Americans to proceed, against all resistance.

Understanding how black Americans lacked capital and resources to help them gain control of their social and political representation, how can the procession help us overcome this gap? How were processions a means of exercising power for black Americans during

57. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in “Language that Cannot be Misunderstood: *Black American Commemoration 1863-1913*,” Pp.1-12.

58. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in “Language that Cannot be Misunderstood: *Black American Commemoration 1863-1913*,” Pp.1-12.

59. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in “Language that Cannot be Misunderstood: *Black American Commemoration 1863-1913*,” Pp.1-12.

60. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in “Language that Cannot be Misunderstood: *Black American Commemoration 1863-1913*,” Pp.1-12.

61. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in “Language that Cannot be Misunderstood: *Black American Commemoration 1863-1913*,” Pp.1-12.

62. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in “Language that Cannot be Misunderstood: *Black American Commemoration 1863-1913*,” Pp.1-12.

Reconstruction? How can the procession help affect the process of social transformation? How has it failed in the past? While the field of performance studies and the theory of performativity were not part of academia in the time of Reconstruction, I propose that using the theoretical foundations of this field to re-contextualize early black American processions as a form of aesthetic intervention might help us answer these questions. To begin, I propose using Fred Moten's understanding of the "black radical aesthetic" from *In the Break* as a means of understanding how the procession relates with other forms of black American aesthetic interventions.⁶³

As Fred Moten sees it, what's worth "lingering on" is in the "break" or "cut"; he is interested in what exists between the word and the meaning. Using Frederick Douglass's narrative of Aunt Hester, and how her scream made him recognize his own subjectivity as a slave, Moten looks to Jazz, arguing that the "breaks" in Free Jazz - specifically referencing Miles Davis's "So What?" - reproduce the same aural effect of Aunt Hester's scream.⁶⁴ He suggests that the "vocalization" has a generative effect which "lingers in," and opens up the meaning of the utterance.⁶⁵ Whether the utterance is the growl of Miles Davis's horn, the crack in Billy Holiday's voice, of the arrhythmia of Max Roach's percussion - Moten finds that Jazz opens up the same space in which his writing seeks to "linger" in.⁶⁶ For Moten though, this space has a significance that deserves to be considered as central to the "black radical aesthetic." What happens in this "in-between" space that's opened up both by Hester's shrieking, and in the performance of Jazz music? Beyond that, how is this space opened up in the first place? His

63. Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

64. Moten, *In the Break*. in "The Resistance of the Object: Aunt Hester's Scream," p.1-24.

65. Moten, *In the Break*. in "The Sentimental Avant Garde," p.31-40.

66. Moten, *In the Break*. in "The Sentimental Avant Garde," p.25-31.

argument, here, echoes Roland Barthes, insofar as he denies the significance of the artist or performer, arguing instead that “in the break” there is a re-enactment of the “terror and violation” for the beholder which signifies something beyond its linguistic and visual meaning.⁶⁷ The power of the black aesthetic, for Moten, lies in the way that these “aural” moments can disrupt normative frameworks, by adding sensations that occupy the space between word and meaning.⁶⁸

While Moten starts with Jazz, he suggests this same “aurality” extends from other modes of the “black radical aesthetic.” He extends his understanding of “aurality” to include encounters with the visual in his analysis of the photograph of Emmett Till, and in his conclusion shifts to focus on the performance art of Adrian Piper.⁶⁹ In each example, Moten addresses how the piece communicates something between word and meaning by borrowing bits and pieces of theoretical frameworks established in philosophy, psychoanalysis, and performance studies. Moten suggests that what is missing in Heidegger’s phenomenology and Lacan’s mirror phase is that they fail to address the “double consciousness” of blackness.⁷⁰ While he acknowledges that the “gender cut” still plays a role, Moten invokes James Baldwin to suggest that black Americans also go through a “racial cut.” The quote Moten refers to is well known, in it Baldwin addresses the moment black children look in a mirror and recognize their being as different from their white peers — around 5 or 6 years old — in which they acknowledge the construct of race, in addition to that of gender.⁷¹ For Moten, this marks a double-imposition through which black bodies are expected to enact norms of both whiteness and heterosexuality. Aurality emerges as something which exceeds the normative understanding of whiteness or heterosexuality by re-enacting with the

67. Moten, *In the Break*, in “The Sentimental Avant Garde,” p.31-40.

68. Moten, *In the Break*, in “The Sentimental Avant Garde,” p.31-40.

69. Moten, *In the Break*, in “Visible Music,” p.192-211. and in “Resistance of the Object: Adrian Piper’s Theatricality,” p.233-255.

70. Moten, *In the Break*, in “Visible Music,” p.171-192.

71. Moten, *In the Break*, in “Visible Music,” p.171-192.

intention of re-contextualizing. The intention of this aesthetic is generative, it aims to produce a surplus of sensory information to overwhelm the beholder's past understanding of a representational construct, as well as their understanding of the primacy of the visual and the linguistic. Black performance, for Moten, is all about re-enactment and re-contextualization — by creating this generative space to “linger on” meaning, the “black radical aesthetic,” even in its failures, succeeds at calling into question the structures that led to its failure. It is this notion of failure, and its ability to represent the failure of institutional structures, that I see the potential in Moten's theory to be applied to our understanding of the procession as a manifestation of the “black radical aesthetic,” and in looking at the ongoing black Lives Matter protests, we can see that use of the procession as a form of black representation continues to be central to activists today.

Following Moten's theory, what can we learn from the origins of the procession as a form of black representation in the United States? What systemic failures were represented by early black American processions? Can we consider these early performances to be successful, even in their failures? In *Scenes of Subjection*, Saidiya V. Hartman highlights the coffle — in which they would shackle slaves to one another to be marched into town and auctioned off to new owners — as a pre-emancipation form of the procession (Figure 2.2).⁷² “Jollification” was practiced by slaveholders for these events; they encouraged slaves to sing, dance, and play games to appear as happy, willing laborers.⁷³ Hartman argues these performances carried a double meaning: of enjoyment for white citizens, and heartbreak for slaves, who were likely to be permanently

72. Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. in “Chapter I: *Innocent Amusements: The Stage of Sufferance*,” Pp.17-48.

73. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in “Chapter I: *Innocent Amusements: The Stage of Sufferance*,” Pp.17-48.

separated from their families following this procession.⁷⁴ While slaves were forced to sing by their masters in the coffle, Hartman suggests slaves coded their own meaning into the aurality of these songs — a means of saying goodbye to their loved ones, while being objectified and demeaned.⁷⁵ Aurality, as Moten describes it, emerged from such painful infractions on human life. In a similar point, William Blair suggests that during slavery many “contracts” ended on January 1st, after which slaves would be sent to another location.⁷⁶ Similar to the coffle, slaveholders would lead those being sold to their next contract shackled together in another form of procession.⁷⁷ While after 1863 January 1st became celebrated in many regions as “Emancipation Day,” this history reveals another way in which these processions carried a double meaning; while these ceremonies express joy for emancipation, they also carry some of the same terror and violation that Moten identifies in Aunt Hester’s shriek.⁷⁸

74. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in “Chapter I: *Innocent Amusements*: The Stage of Sufferance,” Pp.17-48.

75. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in “Chapter I: *Innocent Amusements*: The Stage of Sufferance,” Pp.17-48.

76. William Alan Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the south, 1865-1914*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004. in “Chapter 1: The Commemorative Landscape before the Civil War,” Pp.11-22.

77. Blair, *Cities of the Dead*, in “Chapter 1: The Commemorative Landscape before the Civil War,” Pp.11-22.

78. Blair, *Cities of the Dead*, in “Chapter 1: The Commemorative Landscape before the Civil War,” Pp.11-22.

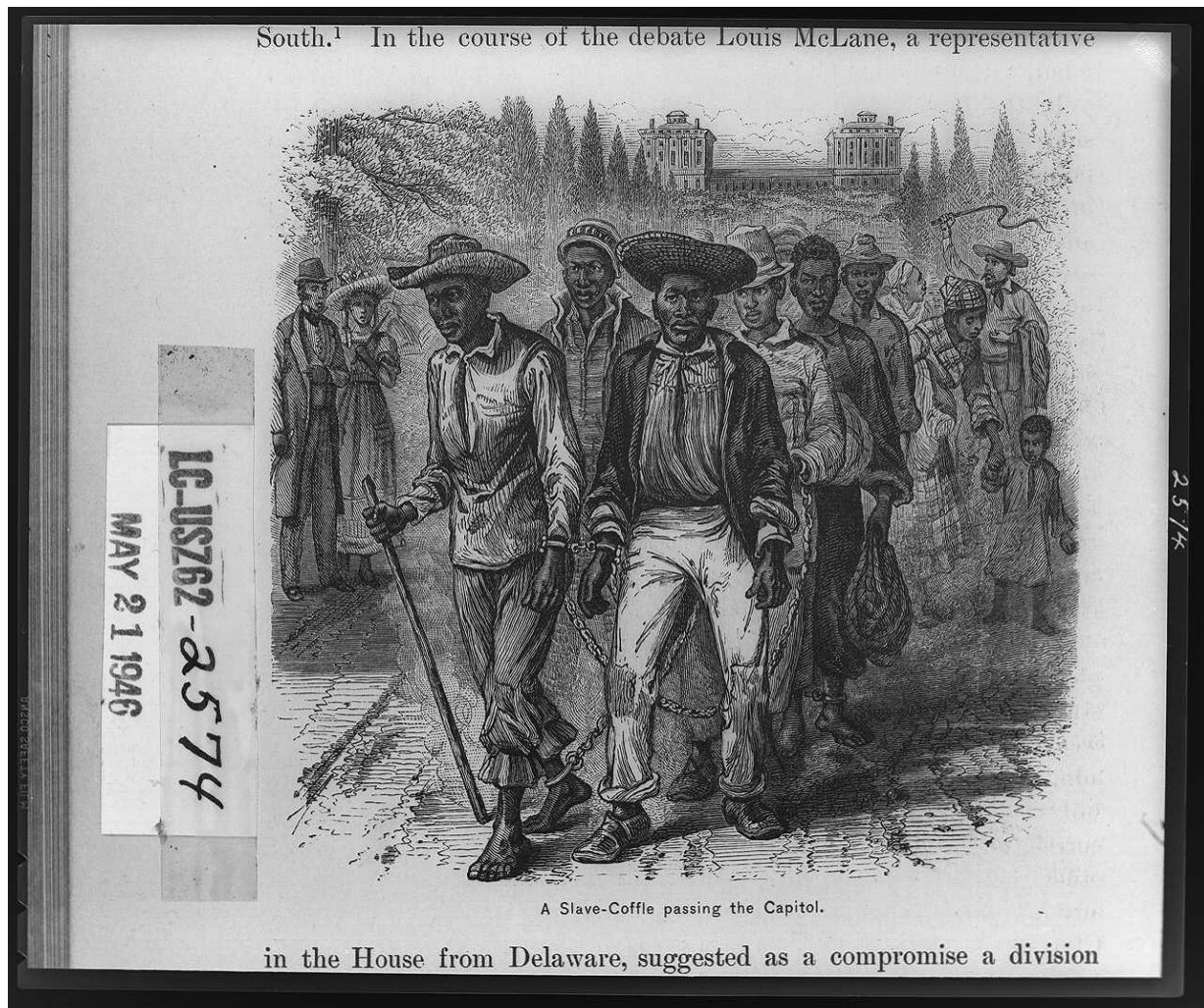


Figure 2. 2: A slave-coffle passing through Washington D.C. Engraving, ca. 1876-1881. *Library of Congress*: 98510280.

In his book *Cities of the Dead*, Joseph Roach likewise suggests that the black American procession had roots prior to Emancipation in New Orleans by telling the history of slave funerals, which featured large processions of other slaves.⁷⁹ While, Roach addresses the fact that Louisiana's history of being colonized by the French prior to the Americans allowed some structural loopholes, which gave slaves some freedoms (Sundays as sabbath, and Funeral

79. Joseph Roach. *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*. New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1996. in "Carnival and the Law," Pp.239-77.

Processions) which they would not have had in other states, he does not discount how black Americans made use of their limited mobility as a means of collective representation.⁸⁰ While it was not until emancipation had passed that black Americans were free to exercise the right to public assembly legally, these accounts reveal that black agency was being expressed in the form of the procession, even prior to emancipation. Still, we can see how the form of the procession has retained some of this terror and violation following Emancipation in examples like chain gangs (Figure 2.3).



Figure 2. 3: The chain gang, Thomasville, Georgia. Photograph by Joseph John Kirkbride, ca.1884-1891. *Library of Congress*: 00652806.

80. Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, in "Carnival and the Law," Pp.239-77.

We can also look to the “great migration” or “Nadir,” through which many black Americans fled the south in the wake of Emancipation, and understand the procession as a means of black mobility, of proceeding to safer ground (Figure 2.4). With this understanding of the effects of slavery on black expression, how does our understanding of processions during reconstruction change? And how do these processions connect with the history of Confederate monuments?

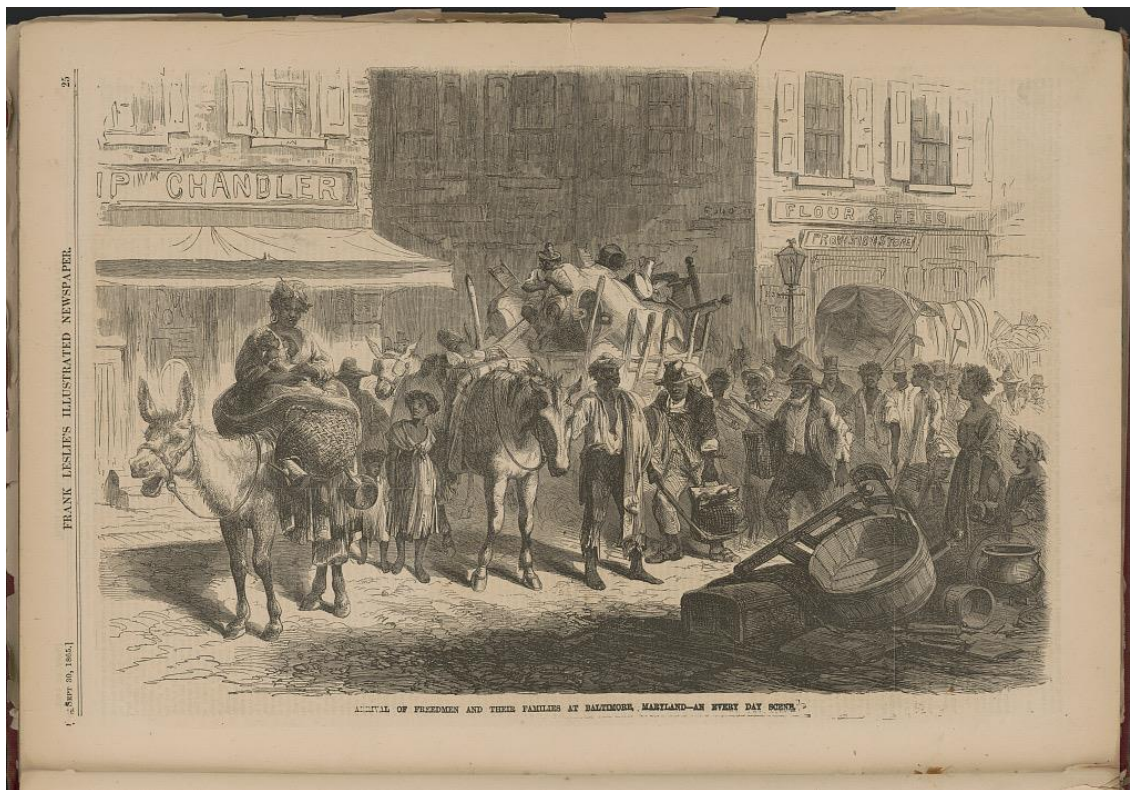


Figure 2. 4: Arrival of freedmen and their families at Baltimore, Maryland - an everyday scene. Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, September 30, 1865. *Library of Congress*: 2001697357.

For this, we can turn to Judith Butler, who makes this argument in relation to gender performativity in *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*.⁸¹ Butler suggests that act of public assembly is a performative expression of freedom in itself, as it both enacts the freedom

81. Judith Butler. *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018.

of expression and reveals how this freedom establishes the condition of precarity associated with protest movements.⁸² While Butler's book focuses specifically on those who are constituted as disposable or injurable in relation to their non-conforming gender presentation, we can see how the same performativity extends to racial difference by reading theorists like Moten. Butler argues that there is a need for solidarity between all minority communities and poses public assembly as a means of amalgamating the distinct minority groups of the world into a united "we" through the act of assembling.⁸³ What Butler's theory is missing in terms of racial performativity, for me, is elucidated in the example of second line marching bands associated with New Orleans (Figure 2.5). That second line marching bands incorporate the black tradition of Jazz music into the form of the procession, here, underscores Moten's point - just as the moan of a mother in mourning conveys something "in the break" - Moten sees the growl of the Jazz trumpet as a manifestation of this same aurality.

82. Butler. *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*.

83. It is important to note, here, that this works both ways - just as minority groups who have been dispossessed can exercise the right to public assembly, so can those enforcing that dispossession. This point is significant to this discussion because of my intention to contrast modes of assembly employed by the organizers of Confederate monuments with those employed by dispossessed populations. For this reason, I have opted to focus on the procession in this essay, rather than assembly in general. Butler. *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*.



Figure 2. 5: Johnny Fischer's Marching Band, Photograph, Hogan Jazz Archive, 1910.

While second lines were regionally tied to New Orleans, Kathleen Clark notes similar demonstrations taking place in Richmond's processions. Clark details the "most vivid" aspect of Charleston, South Carolina's 1864 Fourth of July procession:

A mule-drawn cart bearing the announcement "a number of negroes for sale" carried a cast of men, women, and children who portrayed the events of a slave auction: An auctioneer appealed to crowds that lined the street, calling out his goods for sale, while a group of women and children enacted a slave family's separation. Behind the slave cart came a hearse bearing a coffin inscribed with the statement "Slavery is dead." Fifty female mourners, dressed in black, "but with joyous faces" followed.⁸⁴

84. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in "Celebrations of Freedom," P.37.

These processions re-appropriate the history of the funeral procession as a means of parody by staging funerary marches ironically mourning the death of slavery, or of white supremacy.⁸⁵

Where Butler's notion of assembly addresses the act in terms of shared precarity, Moten's notion of mourning, (or "*mo'nin*" as he refers to it) is essential to accessing this Aural dimension of assembly, which I argue situates these processions within the "black radical aesthetic."

Moten suggests that rather than mourning, what black folks go through is *mo'nin* - a situation in which the mourning is rehearsed, so that it might be publicly performed.⁸⁶ While Moten argues that under the consciousness of the sexual cut there may be one conception of mourning, in which part of the deceased is taken into the identity of their loved ones, with "black death" there is something more going on.⁸⁷ With Emmett Till's mother, Moten argues that her decision to publicize the open-casket funeral of her son — as he was found after being lynched — created a scenario in which the flaws of the system that allowed his death to go unchecked were a glaring example of social inequities.⁸⁸ In effect, the revulsion of the image, and the maternal identification with a son, endowed Till's photograph with a generative content.⁸⁹ It created a space within which individuals could recognize that the death of Till did not reflect the appropriate punishment to the actions of a child, but the dangers of a system of racial violence left unchecked. The very failure that resulted in Till's death was amplified through the process of *mo'nin* in such a way that it called the structures of justice into question (Figure 2.6).⁹⁰ So here, we can see how the idea of mourning was tied to the idea of the procession both through its

85. Becker, "Confederate Soldiers, Voodoo Queens, and black Indians." Clark, *Defining Moments*, in Chapter 2: "The Vanguard of Liberty Must Look into the Past: Celebrations of Freedom." p.13-55.

86. Moten, *In the Break*, in "Visible Music," p.192-211.

87. Moten, *In the Break*, in "Visible Music," p.192-211.

88. Moten, *In the Break*, in "Visible Music," p.192-211.

89. Moten, *In the Break*, in "Visible Music," p.192-211.

90. Moten, *In the Break*, in "Visible Music," p.211-233.

origins in slave funerals, and through parody, but also that the notion of mourning here is connected to systemic failures which create more precarious conditions for some than for others.



Figure 2. 6: Crowd of around 50,000 outside of the viewing for Emmett Till's body at Roberts Temple Church of God, Chicago, IL. Photograph, *Bettmann/Corbis*, 1955.

Indeed, the very idea of the procession bears a notion of precarity. While we can see how Moten and Butler elucidate this aspect by analyzing philosophy dealing with interpellation, performance, and structuralism, we can turn to a subset of the procession, the procession of arms, in order to better understand the role of precarity and vulnerability in this history (Figures 2.7 and 2.8).



Figure 2. 7: Officers 4th U.S. Colored Infantry, Fort Slocum, United States, April 1865. Photograph, April 1865. Library of Congress: 93505852.

Because four centuries of slavery had imprinted racist biases deep within social, political, and economic structures, after the emancipation of slaves, racism and racial violence remained commonplace in the United States throughout Reconstruction.⁹¹

91. Howard Zinn, and Anthony Arnove. *A People's History of the United States*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2017. in "Slavery Without Submission, Emancipation without Freedom," p.171-210.



Figure 2. 8: "Marching on!"--The Fifty-fifth Massachusetts Colored Regiment singing John Brown's March in the streets of Charleston, South Carolina on February 21, 1865. Engraving, *Harper's Weekly*, 1865. *Library of Congress*: 92515015.

The objectification of black bodies through their commodification as slaves compounded with their subservient placement in the structural hierarchy of the United States, so the normative expectations of white southerners reinserted the dehumanization of black Americans in the establishment of the post-emancipation structures (Figures 2.9 and 2.10).⁹²

92. Clark, *Defining Moments*. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in Chapter 4: "Has Emancipation Been a Failure? The end of Reconstruction," p.95-133. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "Vindication and Reconciliation," p.141-158. Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, in "Freedom's Memorial," p.89-129.

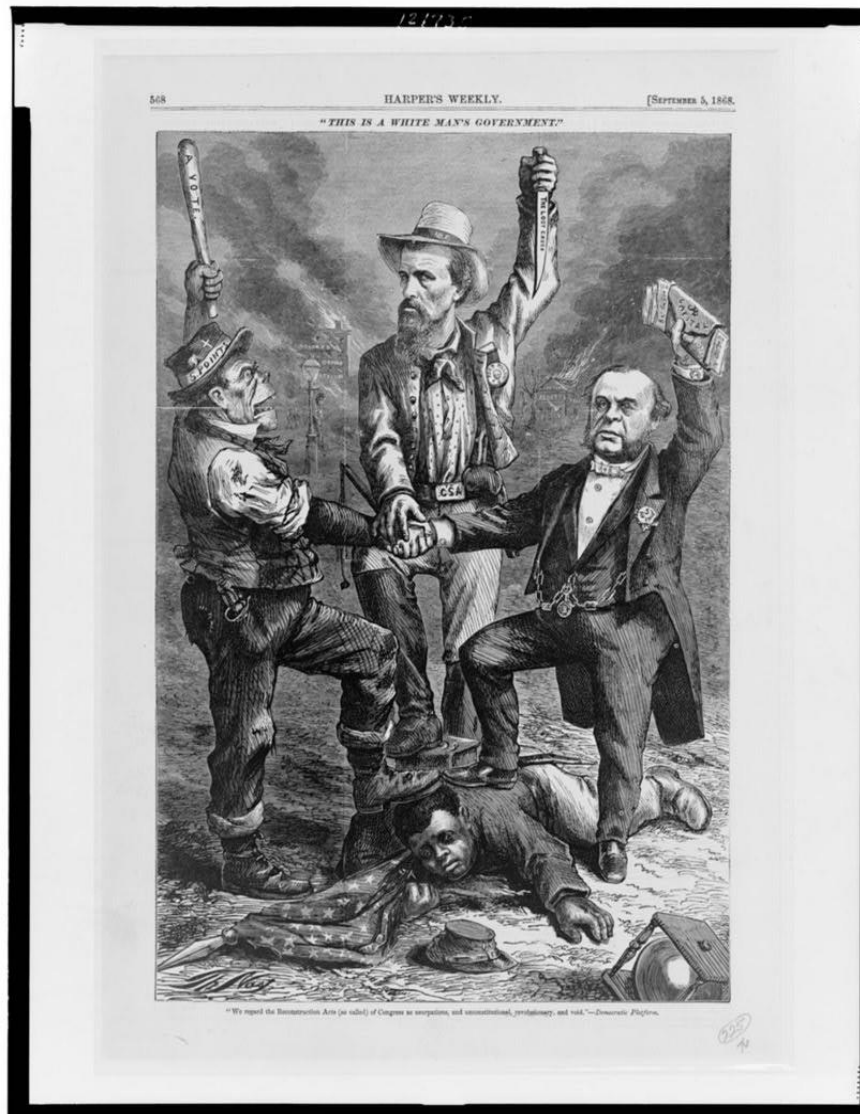


Figure 2. 9: "This is a white man's government. We regard the Reconstruction Acts so called of Congress as usurpations, and unconstitutional, revolutionary, and void" - Democratic Platform. Engraving by Thomas Nast, *harper's Weekly*, September 5, 1868. *Library of Congress*: 98513794.

Because media outlets in southern cities were controlled predominately by white citizens, there were common efforts to criminalize the black male; suggesting that black men were trying to rape white women and that former slaves were plotting their revenge on the planters.⁹³ Amidst their own crisis of identity, many white southerners saw black Americans as a threat.

93. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in Chapter 4: "Has Emancipation Been a Failure? The end of Reconstruction," p.95-133.

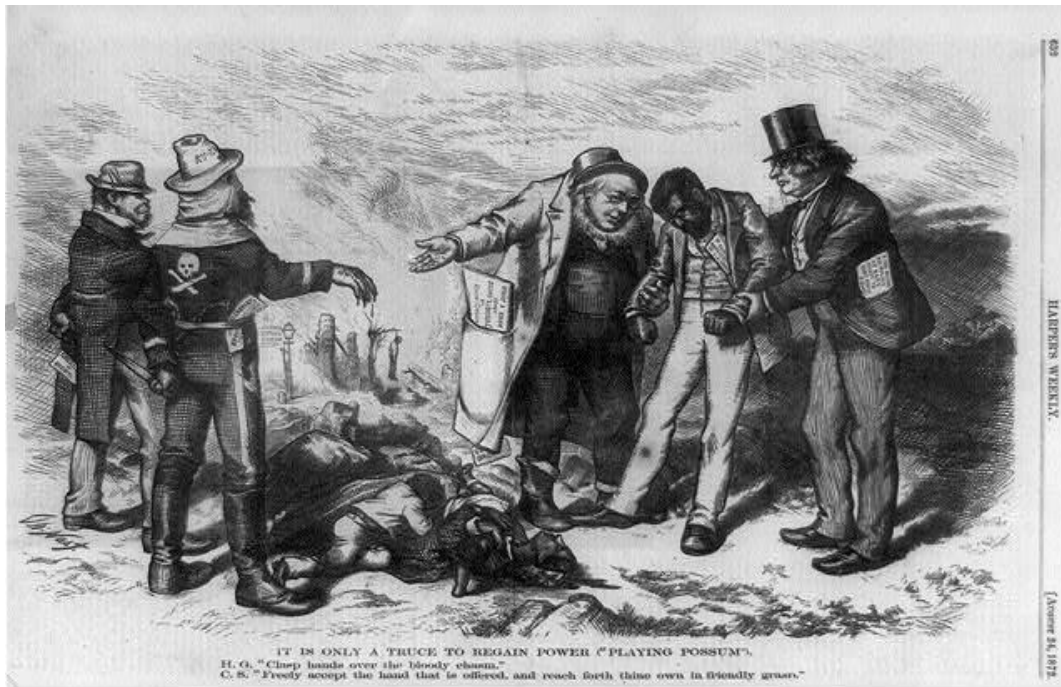


Figure 2. 10: It is only a truce to regain power "playing possum." Engraving by Thomas Nast, *Harper's Weekly*, August 24, 1872. *Library of Congress*: 89712269.

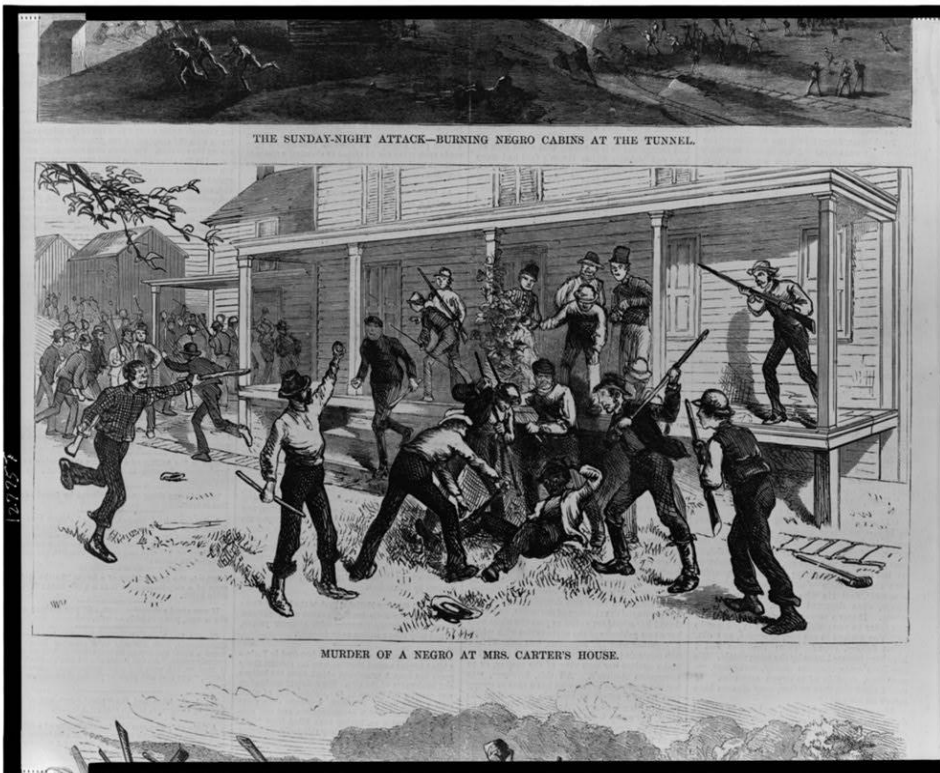


Figure 2. 11: Murder of a Negro at Mrs. Carter's house. New Jersey. Engraving by Theodore R. Davis, *Harper's Weekly*, October 12, 1872. *Library of Congress*: 2001695526.

When this fear was validated by newspapers and politicians, it generated an affective economy in which the black body was valued less than the white body (Figure 2.11).⁹⁴ Despite their freedom, vigilante groups like the Ku Klux Klan rose to prominence, abetted by local law enforcement, and initiated efforts to prevent black Americans from political or social participation in southern cities (Figure 2.12).⁹⁵ It was within this affective economy that Emancipation Day processions were initially organized, and so we can see how the threat of white supremacist violence, here, marks the very nature of the procession as one of precarity. By putting their bodies into public spaces, participants in these processions were exposing themselves to the violence and racism that “lingered” in their own communities. Knowing that they would be met with violence, in the early years the procession of arms took on a distinct significance; asserting black equality by revealing their ability to defend themselves, many armed with weapons from fighting for the Union.⁹⁶ That said, while the right to bear arms was part of the federal constitution, state and municipal governments still held the authority to limit the rights of their constituencies how they saw fit, and so over the course of Reconstruction laws were changed to prohibit black Americans from openly carrying arms in public.⁹⁷ Something we can see reflected in twenty-first century legal inconsistencies; murderers like Kyle Rittenhouse, and the capitol insurrectionists from January 2021 are commonly left unharmed by police, while Black Lives Matter protestors are being assaulted with tear gas and pepper spray.

94. Sara Ahmed. “Affective Economies.” *Social Text* 22, no. 2 (May 14, 2004): 117–39.

95. Clark, *Defining Moments*. in Chapter 4: “Has Emancipation Been a Failure? The end of Reconstruction,” p.95-133. Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters*, in “Vindication and Reconciliation,” p.141-158. Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States*, in “Slavery Without Submission, Emancipation without Freedom,” p.171-210.

96. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in Chapter 4: “Has Emancipation Been a Failure? The end of Reconstruction,” p.95-133.

97. It is important to note that while some of these laws did affect white populations, they were differentially enforced. The same offense that a black man would be put to death for, a white man might have received a small fine. Clark, *Defining Moments*. in Chapter 4: “Has Emancipation Been a Failure? The end of Reconstruction,” p.95-133.



How easily wicked and treasonable organizations may gain the control over the peaceable and the industrious members of society has always been signally apparent at the South. A

Tennessee, venture even to denounce the murderers or the violators of the laws; or if any Northern journal, roused to a proper indignation by the wrongs inflicted upon peaceable settlers

Figure 2. 12: The Union as it was the lost cause, worse than slavery. Engraving by Thomas Nast, *Harper's Weekly*, October 24, 1874. Library of Congress: 2001696840.

While some abolitionists took part in Emancipation Day celebrations, even media outlets with Union sympathies often represented the processions as a negative event; if they didn't suggest that the risk of violence was at issue for them, they would instead use a strategy of abjection, which generated a similar affective economy even within communities who might otherwise have supported the rights of black Americans.⁹⁸ These sources, instead of reiterating the myth of the black rapist, might comment on the noise and odor of the events; aspects which revealed their inability to acknowledge the structures that resulted in the precarious living conditions of former slaves (Figure 2.13).⁹⁹

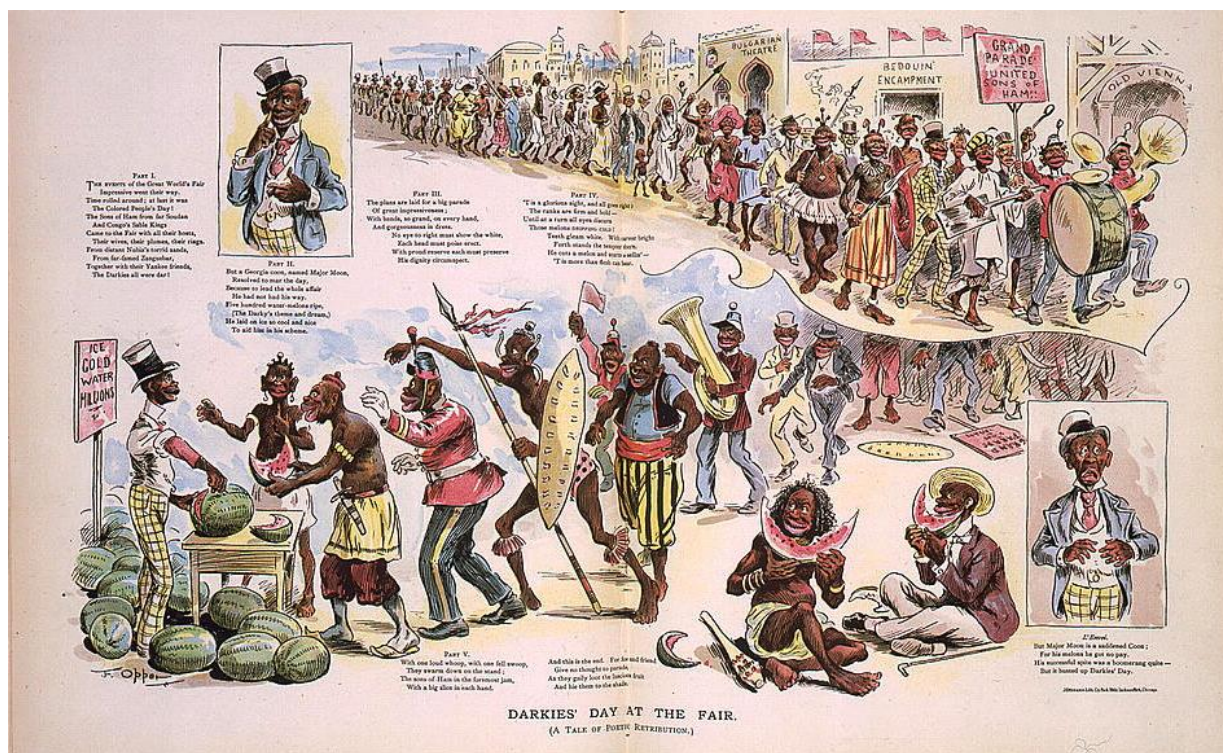


Figure 2. 13: Darkies' day at the fair – World's Columbian Exhibition, Chicago, IL. Illustration by Frederick Burr Oppen, *Puck*, August 21, 1893. Library of Congress: 93500084.

98. Clark, *Defining Moments*. in Chapter 4: "Has Emancipation Been a Failure? The end of Reconstruction," p.95-133. Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, in "Freedom's Memorial," p.89-129.

99. Clark, *Defining Moments*. in Chapter 4: "Has Emancipation Been a Failure? The end of Reconstruction," p.95-133.

Just as Moten, extending the traditions of Douglass and DuBois, has posed that there was a double-consciousness associated with blackness, I read this as a sort of white double-consciousness at play here. One of ambivalence in which the “white moderate,” un-affected by this vulnerability, prefers not to take a position (though most would argue, not taking a position is a position all its own).¹⁰⁰ The mediation of fear through the performative constitution of racist tropes gives us some understanding of the response of white southerners to these demonstrations. While perhaps, looking for context in the way these representations have lingered and adapted to the twenty-first century seems unconventional as a historical approach, the gaps in representation during Reconstruction have led to the marginalization of demonstrations like these in the archive. While the photograph of protestors in Richmond in 1905 (Figure 1.6) is one of few representations of these events in the Library of Congress catalogue, there are significantly more photographs documenting Confederate monument unveilings.¹⁰¹ Moten’s assertion that the “black radical aesthetic” lies “in the break” attests to the importance of these lingering traces.

Some scholars are contextualizing civil rights demonstrations as performances; Lara Shalson, for instance, frames the Woolworth’s Lunch Counter Sit-Ins — which occurred in Greensboro, North Carolina in February 1960 — as “Endurance Artworks” (Figure 2.14).¹⁰²

100. Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail [King, Jr.].” Accessed September 5, 2020. https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html.

101. LOC.gov.

102. Lara Shalson. *Performing Endurance: Art and Politics since 1960*, 2018. in “Chapter 2: Enduring Protests,” Pp.78-108.



Figure 2. 14: African American students (from left: Joseph McNeil, Franklin McCain, William Smith, and Clarence Henderson) holding a sit-in at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. Photograph by Jack Moebes, *News & Record*, February 2, 1960.

By analyzing how the demonstrators “explicitly engaged with problems of objectification and with questions of how bodies occupy space and the ambivalences that circle around them,” Shalson looks at these sit-ins alongside works like Yoko Ono’s *Cut Piece* (1964, Figure 2.15) and Marina Abramovic’s *Rhythm 0* (1974, Figure 2.16) in order to draw attention to these demonstrators’ willingness to endure acts of degradation.¹⁰³

103. Shalson, *Performing Endurance*, in “Chapter 2: Enduring Protests,” p.81.



Figure 2. 15: Ono, Yoko. *Cut Piece*. 1964. Performance by Yoko Ono, *MOMA*, 1964.

Shalson's frame of endurance emphasizes both the vulnerability of black bodies attempting to occupy space and how proceeding, against such obstacles, operates by inverting the situation; their willingness to remain passive. Despite being met with the "violence of racist white opposition demonstrators who heckled them and assaulted them... throughout it all, they remained calm, refusing both verbal and physical retaliation" (Figure 2.17).¹⁰⁴



Figure 2. 16: *Rhythm 0*. Performance by Marina Abramovic, 1974.

104. Shalson, *Performing Endurance*, in "Chapter 2: Enduring Protests," p.81.

While Shalson argues these demonstrators held “authorship” for these events, insofar as they planned, organized, and occupied the lunch counter intentionally, she also notes the significance of the ways in which racism was “dramatized” through these demonstrations: they planned to occupy the space, the demonstrators had no control over the actions of others in the space, but by “enduring with dignity” the acts perpetrated against them the demonstrators were enacting their patience, perseverance, and readiness to be seen as full American citizens.¹⁰⁵ The racist tropes which portrayed black men as violent predators were theatrically inverted in the Woolworth Lunch Counter Sit-Ins by the relative willingness of white citizens to injure and demean black bodies in public spaces. Shalson uses the term “theatricality,” rather than performativity, to describe performances which depend on the audience to complete the work.¹⁰⁶ Connecting this debate to Michael Fried’s landmark essay “Art and Objecthood,” Shalson suggests that endurance artists like Ono and Abramovic “literalized the dynamics that Fried identified in minimalist sculpture by replacing the anthropomorphic object that appeared *like* another person with an actual person.”¹⁰⁷ She suggests that Fried’s discomfort results from “the object that *subjects* in a manner that unsettles the viewer’s sense of autonomy and control,” the “enduring object.”¹⁰⁸ Because of the ways tropes and representations are widely broadcast to the public in the United States, people develop affective expectations, or biases, which are then projected onto objects encountered in reality.

105. Shalson, *Performing Endurance*, in “Chapter 2: Enduring Protests,” p.89.

106. Shalson, *Performing Endurance*, in “Chapter 1: Enduring Objecthood,” Pp.40-77.

107. Shalson, *Performing Endurance*, in “Chapter 1: Enduring Objecthood,” Pp.53-57.

108. Shalson, *Performing Endurance*, in “Chapter 1: Enduring Objecthood,” Pp.53-57.



Figure 2. 17: A sit-in demonstration at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Jackson, Miss., turned violent when whites poured sugar, ketchup and mustard over the heads of demonstrators, from left, John Salter, Joan Trumpauer and Anne Moody. Photograph by Fred Blackwell, *Associated Press*, May 28, 1963.

Mediation reveals how easily racist stereotypes and tropes can be circulated through repetition, as we've discussed in relation to the myth of the black rapist has been used to interpellate black men as criminals, but when demonstrators accept their status as an object while refusing to conform to the stereotypes, beholders are pushed to confront that reality does not align with mediated representations. So if we understand the procession, in this respect, as a relational artwork, then we can use these accounts detailing white southerners' aversion and fear of black processions as an angle to understand how the beholder of the procession plays into this

history, and how these performances re-appropriated such misrepresentations in enacting their right to exist in a shared geographical space. In the same way that events like the Woolsworth Lunch Counter Sit-Ins triggered the sensibilities of beholders, accounts from white southerners who experienced the Emancipation processions reflect a similar aversion in their testimonials. Kathleen Clark's book *Defining Moments* suggests that in many cities that held these processions, white citizens elected to leave town for the weekend, rather than even witness the event.¹⁰⁹ This complicates the dynamics of relationality, as the participation of white beholders was crucial to inverting representations broadcast to the public through various forms of media. Without actual people to encounter the procession, the media holds control of the narrative, which enters public consciousness. In exercising their freedom to speak, occupy space, and exist as equal citizens, these performances seek to reveal the social tensions which have "lingered" since the days prior to emancipation, and continue to this day. Despite white supremacist violence, rejection, and dehumanization, black demonstrators have continued to use the form of the procession to challenge how structures of representation contribute to the disenfranchisement of black Americans. We can see the procession as a request to be included as Americans. "Please receive us as your equals." The procession reveals the obstacles to equality simply by enacting the rights of black Americans; the unwillingness of white southerners to encounter processions peacefully revealed that while black Americans were now "free," they had not been accepted as equals by their fellow Americans.

So let's linger in this space a moment longer, and see what understanding the operation of public assembly as performative (as Butler has suggested) means when we're also trying to consider the "black radical aesthetic" which emerges from the space in-between this double-

109. Clark, *Defining Moments*. in Chapter 4: "Has Emancipation Been a Failure? The end of Reconstruction," p.95-133.

consciousness, which we can now associate with both the beholder and the participant. How do the processions of the Reconstruction period leverage this in-between space in their efforts to re-contextualize the social understanding of what it means to be black *and* free? Keeping the idea of revulsion to sound and odor, as discussed above in relation to white southerners, let's try to understand how abjection has been incorporated into the "black radical aesthetic" in the *Catalysis* series (1970, Figures 2.18 and 2.19) of works by Adrian Piper, who Moten focuses on in his conclusion to *In the Break*. As Moten reads them, Piper's performances break the boundary of the frame while still operating within a Kantian aesthetics.¹¹⁰



Figure 2. 18: *Catalysis III*. Performance by Adrian Piper, Photo by Rosemary Mayer, Vienna, 1970. Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation.

110. Moten, *In the Break*. in "Resistance of the Object: Adrian Piper's Theatricality," p.233-255.

Moten frames Piper as the *Parergon*, she serves as the boundary of experience for her performances.¹¹¹ By abjectifying her behaviors, Piper subverts the experience of viewing art from one in which the frame contains the experience, to one in which the frame *is* the experience of the artwork. While with a painting the frame marks departure from the sensory experience of the artwork, the Kantian *Parergon*, as Moten interprets it, is that which withdraws from the object, and also makes withdrawal possible.¹¹² He suggests that Piper's decision to withdraw both from the artwork and from the world operates as a reversal of Kant's suggestion that the aesthetic and ethical are distinct from one another; in becoming the *Parergon*, Piper augments the stereotypical representations of black Americans by enacting them herself, affectively reducing herself to an object to be encountered.¹¹³ Piper's work reveals that the ethical does not need to be elevated over the aesthetic "if the aesthetic serves as the condition of possibility of the ethical in art."¹¹⁴ Repetitions of stereotypes are performative, which means that they are constituted through repetition - but also that they are constituted through language and speech acts. Just as repetition is required to constitute a trope, though, repetition is also necessary in order to confront it. This is the paradox. But by establishing the notion of double consciousness as central to the core of black radical aesthetics, Moten has given us a clue how this reversal operates — by "enacting the senses as theoreticians" — in re-enacting stereotypes as encounters, Piper seizes the power of repetition, and uses it to discredit racism by turning her body into an object to be encountered. Piper takes power away from racist ideology in producing a sensory experience in

111. Moten establishes the notions of *Parergon* and *Ergon* from Kantian aesthetics by citing Derrida's recounting of the concept. The *Ergon*, essentially, is the artwork, while the *Parergon* is the frame - the boundary of the object. Moten, *In the Break*. in "Resistance of the Object: Adrian Piper's Theatricality," p.233-255.

112. Moten, *In the Break*. in "Resistance of the Object: Adrian Piper's Theatricality," p.233-255.

113. Moten, *In the Break*. in "Resistance of the Object: Adrian Piper's Theatricality," p.233-255.

114. Moten, *In the Break*. in "Resistance of the Object: Adrian Piper's Theatricality," p.233-255.

surplus of the visual and linguistic dimension, generating a “real” experience to debunk the constructed-ness of the trope.



Figure 2. 19: *Catalysis IV*. Performance by Adrian Piper, Photo by Rosemary Mayer, Vienna, 1970. Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation.

Moten’s notion of aurality suggests that the activation of other senses in the beholder is generative, and we can see the relational aspect of this work in the intention to call into question the construction of racism over time, to challenge the beholder’s ambivalence.¹¹⁵ While Piper’s performance, like the Woolsworth Lunch Counter Sit-Ins, operates performatively in Butler’s terms of public assembly, the means of forming a “we” in these situations is achieved through a “dramatization” of abjection and objectification. As white observers became participants in the sit-ins, a larger we was formed as a means of rejecting the white supremacist violence enacted by others. Perhaps performativity is something which operates in line with the norms of the “sexual

115. Moten, *In the Break*. in “Resistance of the Object: Adrian Piper’s Theatricality,” p.233-255.

cut," but what Moten seems to argue, is that because of this second cut, the "racial cut," black performances are operating on two levels, compliance and inversion. The encounter is significant to the "black radical aesthetic" because it has this power to invert and reverse stereotypes that are performatively constituted. While I agree with Butler's assertion that public assembly remains a performative means of forming a "we," the performances examined here reflect Shalson's reading of theatricality because they work around the dramatization of the beholders' actions. Beholders can become participants, but they can also become the opposition. Here, we can come to understand how the procession, like these demonstrations, is premised on the willingness to endure. A willingness to proceed against all odds, just to be received as equals. These performances operate in the "break" between the "racial" and "sexual" cut because of the infrastructure of the United States, and in doing so reveal that the process of recognizing our "shared interdependency" depends on social and relational norms.¹¹⁶ While these situations draw attention to the vulnerability of bodies in shared spaces, we continually depend on one another to not act violently in order for our bodies to remain safe.

Watching protestors be beaten, shot with rubber bullets, teargassed, and pepper sprayed while exercising their constitutional rights to assemble and march peacefully during the George Floyd protests in the Summer of 2020, many of us can see how the form of the procession remains tied to this acknowledgement of mutual vulnerability and dependency, even to this day. Like during reconstruction, news stations regularly cast the 2020 demonstrations as violent riots to publicly deter any expression of solidarity. Regardless of how they are mediated, however, I argue that all the enactments discussed here reflect Moten's "black radical aesthetic" insofar as their mode of intervention relies on the relational experience of the beholder. The experience of

116. Moten, *In the Break*. in "Resistance of the Object: Adrian Piper's Theatricality," p.233-255. Shalson, *Performing Endurance*, in "Chapter 1: Enduring Objecthood," Pp.53-57.

“aurality” within this context is intended to over-ride the normative trope, in favor of recognizing mutual interdependence on the structures of our governance. When the beholder is able to understand that the structures of racism precede their understanding of difference — and that the symptoms which are now seen as tropaic are not symptoms of an inherent difference, but symptoms of the failure of the American system to fulfill its promise of equality to all inhabitants — that is when the “black radical aesthetic” succeeds; in producing, even for an instant, a “break” in which the racial cut is no longer visible, and black bodies are no longer disposable. Until then, Moten’s work shows us that it’s important to revisit the failures, but with the intention of highlighting what these interventions intended to represent. The American system of governance was originally built around a racial hierarchy, and until that structure of discrimination — which has been extended into the current American systems of justice and political representation — has been “lingered on,” acknowledged and addressed, will we begin to see how the failures of the past can help us better understand the way to proceed.

To Rally: Grievability, Dispossession, and Performativity in the history of Confederate Monuments

To rally is to rebound from grief; to arise from depression; to assemble for a common purpose; to re-establish a past effort.¹¹⁷ The verb contains a multitude of meaning which can perhaps best be linked to the cycle of grief. How do we continue after losing someone? How do we continue after losing a part of our identity? The process of mourning has been widely explored in performance theory and in psychoanalysis, but there is a separate distinction in our association with the word rally when deployed as a noun, especially in recent years. Events like the 2017 “Unite the Right Rally” in Charlottesville, which made headlines as white supremacists marched in efforts to prevent the State of Virginia from removing a Confederate monument to Robert E. Lee, lead us to an understanding of violence in relation to the word rally (Figure 3.1).



Figure 3. 1: White nationalists take part in a torch-lit march on the grounds of the University of Virginia ahead of the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville, Virginia Photograph by Stephanie Keith, *Reuters*, Aug. 11, 2017.

117. “Definition of RALLY.” Accessed December 5, 2020. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rally>.

Likewise, since 2015, Donald Trump's presidential rallies have been widely publicized and criticized for their racialized rhetoric and dehumanization of Muslims and immigrants. While my intention here is not etymological so much as affective, my aim is to investigate the correlation between the word rally as a verb, and these examples of the word being deployed as a noun by the far right in the twenty-first century. The connection to Charlottesville is significant, as the history of Confederate rallies in relation to these monuments emerged in the wake of the Civil War through the efforts of former Confederates to memorialize their losses from the war. The installation of Confederate monuments was celebrated with an unveiling ceremony, which I will pose as a precursor to the examples of twenty-first century rallies discussed above. With the added context of the toppling of Confederate monuments that occurred during the George Floyd protests in the summer of 2020, I am interested in investigating not only the link between mourning and Confederate monuments but also how mourning was employed to establish a field of Confederate tradition which proselytized racial separation, and helped unite Americans in favor of segregation. While several scholars have investigated the performative gender politics exercised by the Confederate women who raised funds to erect Confederate monuments, I am interested in understanding how the forms of assembly used by former Confederates have played a performative role in establishing and maintaining the racial divisions in American society which have made lives like George Floyd's more precarious than those of white supremacists in the twenty-first century. While, undeniably, speeches play a significant role in rallies — and in Confederate unveiling ceremonies — my interest in this section is in understanding the mode of assembly itself. We will return to the speeches in the following section. Why was it important to gather crowds in order to unveil Confederate monuments? How did these ceremonies affect the social understanding of these monuments? How were these monuments intended to be

understood? And how did these ceremonies amplify the meaning of these monuments? While these are the primary questions I seek to address here, before understanding how Confederate monument unveilings connect with contemporary political demonstrations from the far right, I must first introduce the environment out of which these monuments arose.

Preceding the unveiling ceremonies for Confederate monuments, as cemeteries were constructed and bodies transferred, the organizers used their financial power to publicize "Confederate Memorial Day" events hosted in the cemeteries.¹¹⁸ It was only after the Confederate dead had been properly buried that the same organizers began new campaigns to erect monuments to Confederate heroes, and the unveiling ceremonies extended their memorial activities beyond cemeteries and into the public sphere.¹¹⁹ This portion of the history reveals some points that are crucial to understanding the significance of mourning in relation to rallies. How did the "grievability" of lives lost during the Civil War impact the identity of former Confederates? While not all Confederates had been re-admitted to the Union, how did the establishment of cemeteries change this? How did former-Confederates leverage their capital in order to reclaim their Antebellum identities in the post-bellum South? Judith Butler has written extensively on the notion of whose death is "grievable" within the context of late-twentieth century capitalism and militarism.¹²⁰ While Butler's discussion focuses on the way victims of the "war on terror" become unrepresentable through structures of discourse and

118. Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "Journey into the Lost Cause," P.4. Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*. in "Chapter Three: Ceremonial Bereavement: Memorial Activities," Pp.36-46.

119. Catherine W. Bishir, "A Strong Force of Ladies: Women, Politics, and Confederate Memorial Associations in Nineteenth Century Raleigh," in Mills and Simpson, Pp.3-26. Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The Sacred Trust" 8-27. Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*. in "Chapter Three: Ceremonial Bereavement: Memorial Activities," Pp.36-46.

120. Judith Butler and Athēna Athanasiou. *Dispossession The Performative in the Political*, Polity, 2013. Judith Butler. *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018. Judith Butler. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. Verso, 2020. Judith Butler. "Precariousness and Grievability—When Is Life Grievable?" Versobooks.com. Accessed December 5, 2020. <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/2339-judith-butler-preciousness-and-grievability-when-is-life-grievable>.

representation, the notion of “grievability” is prescient to the history of Reconstruction, and I believe there is an opportunity to better understand the context out of which Confederate monuments arose by adapting this theoretical framework.¹²¹ We can see in this history that there were attempts at making Confederate deaths un-grievable during reconstruction, but also that access to capital could remedy the grievability of the Confederate dead. So, what does it mean to make these deaths grievable? What role did capital play in affecting social understanding of grievability? And how did these spaces help open the possibility of assembly for disavowed Confederates? Butler, extending a line of thought from Hannah Arendt, suggests that for the un-grievable to become grievable requires a “space of appearance” for public mourning.¹²² While the federal government made Union deaths publicly grievable by constructing National cemeteries, the lack of funding for Confederate reburials served as a structural assertion that those lives were not grievable (Figure 3.2). Regardless, however, the distribution of wealth made it possible for Confederates to procure land and rebury their veterans despite lack of support from the Union. In constructing these cemeteries, not only were Confederate organizers establishing a “space of appearance” for mourning their dead, but they were employing the capitalist structure of the United States to work around the limitations placed by the Union Government. This is where we can start to how the concept of the “rally” is connected here: to rally, to rise from depression or weakness.¹²³ By creating a space of appearance, not only were Confederates making their loss grievable, they were creating a space to rise from repression. Because they were able to buy the property rights to these spaces, and thus the rights of free

121. Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*. Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Butler, *Precarious Life*. Butler, “Precariousness and Grievability—When Is Life Grievable?”

122. Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*. Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Butler, *Precarious Life*. Butler, “Precariousness and Grievability—When Is Life Grievable?”

123. “Definition of RALLY.”

speech and assembly which accompany property rights in this country, the Union efforts to make Confederate deaths less grievable ultimately failed. The effort to suppress commemoration in the early years of Reconstruction only amplified the drives of Confederate organizers to vindicate the Confederate dead, resulting in the erection of monuments and the legitimization of Lost Cause historical propaganda over time. Here we can also begin to understand the role capital played in the establishment of identity during Reconstruction. With this context in mind, let's look at how the agenda of these organizers expanded beyond the notion of grievability once Confederate-sympathizers had established means of appearing and representing themselves.



Figure 3. 2: Graves of Confederate soldiers in Oakwood Cemetery, Richmond, Virginia. Photograph by John Reekle, April 1865. *Library of Congress*: 2018671700.

My intention thus far has been to establish the relation between mourning and the social and political processes underlying the history of Confederate monuments, but now we will move on to investigate how the trope of tradition was employed to divert attention to racial stereotypes

in the mode of assembly used to consecrate these monuments. The Unveiling Ceremonies, besides honoring Confederate heroes, also intended to celebrate the south and to call the nation to order under Antebellum hierarchies (Figures 3.3 and 3.4).¹²⁴

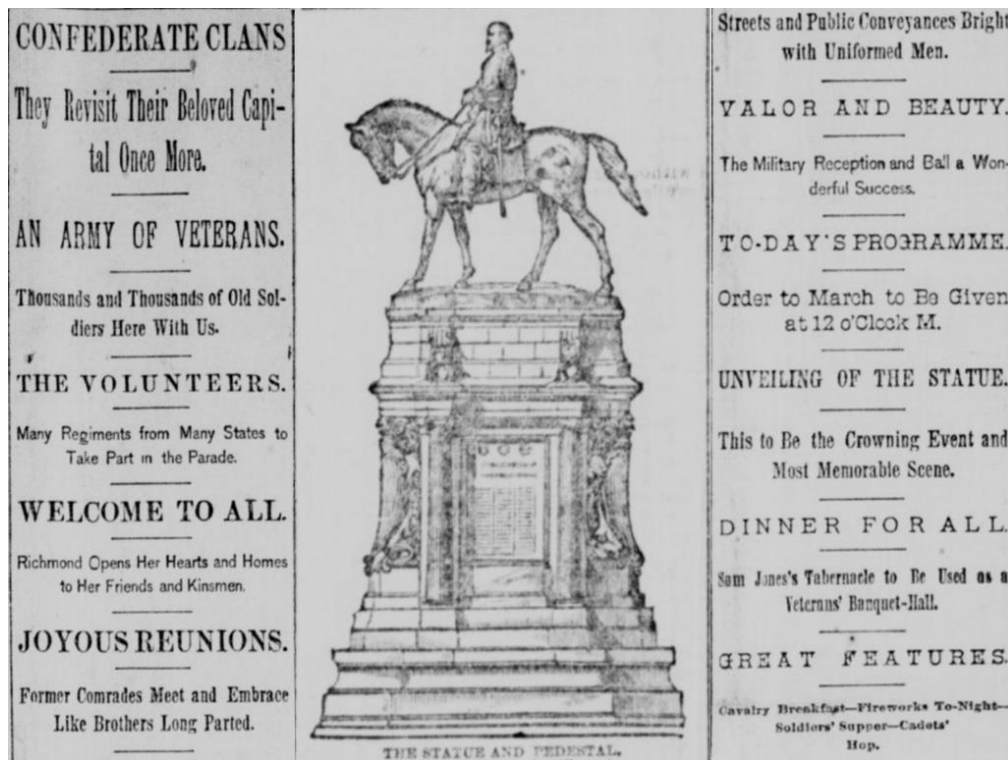


Figure 3. 3: Advertisement for the Robert E. Lee Monument from the *Richmond Dispatch*, 1890.

My intention of reviewing these ceremonies is to better understand how the rally as a mode of public assembly connects with both the history of Confederate monuments, and with the contemporary racial division in the United States. As scholars like Karen L. Cox and Gaines Foster describe them, these ceremonies were crucial to the success of the Lost Cause, and Confederate organizers had guidelines which regional chapters were expected to follow for

124. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, in "The Confederate Celebration: Its Ritual Activities," Pp.127-144.

unveiling ceremonies.¹²⁵ The events started the evening before the unveiling with a ball to entertain spectators as the organizers decorated the town.¹²⁶



Figure 3. 4: Unveiling of the Robert E. Lee Monument, Richmond, Virginia, Photograph by E. Benjamin Andrews, May 29, 1890.

125. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, in "The Confederate Celebration: Its Ritual Activities," Pp.127-144.

126. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, in "The Confederate Celebration: Its Ritual Activities," Pp.127-144.

The day of the unveiling, festivities started with a parade featuring surviving Confederate soldiers and their families, for which the area central to the unveiling was lavishly decorated (Figure 3.5).¹²⁷ After the parade, event organizers would introduce speeches, predominately from Confederate family members, but also contemporary politicians.¹²⁸



Figure 3. 5: Confederate Procession preceding the unveiling of the JEB Stuart Monument, Richmond, Virginia. Photograph. *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 30, 1907.

In between speeches, it was common for the organizers to have children create “living Confederate flags,” and the unveiling itself was always performed by children descended from Confederate Veterans (Figure 3.6).¹²⁹ While we will look at some specific examples, this

127. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in “The monument Builders,” Pp.49-72. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, in “The Confederate Celebration: Its Ritual Activities,” Pp.127-144.

128. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in “The monument Builders,” Pp.49-72. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, in “The Confederate Celebration: Its Ritual Activities,” Pp.127-144.

129. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in “The monument Builders,” Pp.49-72.

formulaic construction was followed more or less for each unveiling ceremony, and smaller ceremonies with similar constructions were held for other events related to the monuments, such as the groundbreaking, laying of the cornerstone, and installation of the pedestal (Figure 3.7).¹³⁰



Figure 3. 6: Living Confederate Flag at the JEB Stuart Monument Unveiling, Richmond Virginia. Photograph, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 30, 1907.

Entertainment and communications standards were different in the years following the Civil War. Without television and radio in every American home, events like the Confederate monument unveilings drew enormous crowds, and the tertiary ceremonies along the way only emphasized the impact of the unveiling itself.¹³¹ Thinking about this structure in relation to J. L. Austin's conception of the “conventional procedure” of performatives can help us better understand how the rituals surrounding Confederate monuments worked to create an anticipatory

130. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in “The monument Builders,” Pp.49-72.

131. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in “The monument Builders,” Pp.49-72. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, in “The Confederate Celebration: Its Ritual Activities,” Pp.127-144.

affective environment, in which the crowd's response amplified the responses of each spectator. Like in a sporting event, understanding that the energy of a crowd carries over and invigorates the response of others was essential to event planning.¹³² So, how did these unveiling ceremonies operate performatively? How did these ceremonies affect the cultural significance of Confederate monuments? Why was it so important for organizers to leverage the crowd's anticipation and amplification in these events? And, perhaps most importantly, how can understanding the performative dynamics underlying these events help us better understand the racial distinctions which are linked to these monuments in the twenty-first century?

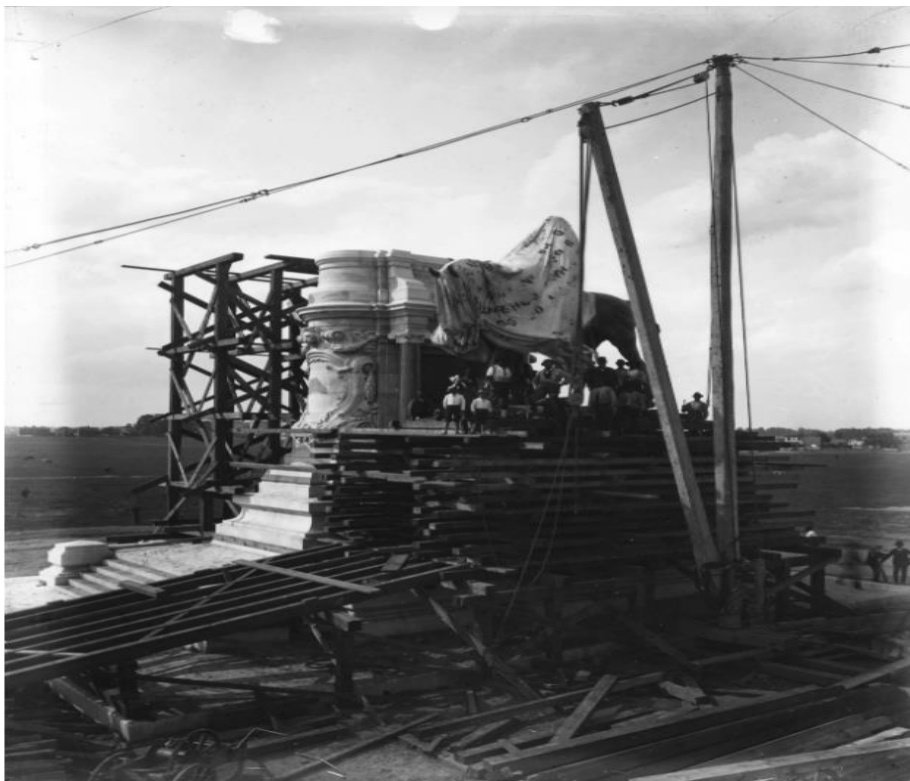


Figure 3. 7: Pedestal installation of the Robert E. Lee Monument, 1890. Photograph. *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 1890.

132. While I am thinking about this in relation to affect - I find it important to note that scholars like V.S. Ramachandran and Vittorio Gallese are connecting the idea of racial recognition to neurology through the Mirror Neuron System, which effectively causes us to mimic the faces we encounter in effort to better relate with others on an affective level. Affect and disposition have a significant relation to reception, and this neurological research asserts that there may be a neurological precedent that needs to be considered in situations where the face is involved.

In Lecture II of *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), J. L. Austin establishes a performative must follow a conventional procedure, and elaborates on the structural requirements for a performative to be “successful,” the formula he provides is below:

- (A.1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances and, further,
- (A.2) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.
- (B.1) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and
- (B.2) completely.
- (T.1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further
- (T.2) Must actually conduct themselves subsequently.¹³³

While Austin implies that there must be an established convention which upholds the power of words to *do* things, because proponents of the Lost Cause were most interested in reinstalling conventions and hierarchical values, which were in place prior to reconstruction, the conventions still lingered at the social level, but were in a liminal state in the decades following the Civil War. The insistence of the United Daughters that unveiling ceremonies follow a strict protocol and that those in participant roles belong to Confederate families, for these events established both the particular circumstances and persons. Likewise, the sequence of events and the speeches themselves were intended to generate an affective atmosphere which legitimated Confederate ideology. Austin's implication with points (T.1) and (T.2) is two-fold. The performative becomes constative through the successful completion of the procedure; whether or not the illocutionary effect is happy or unhappy depends not only on the utterance but also on how it is received by

133. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, p.14-16.

the audience.¹³⁴ Man and wife cannot complete the performative “I do,” without witnesses who support the ceremony’s execution. With rallies, however, the performative function is more rooted in the likelihood of witnesses to repeat what they hear at the event, and their representability as the popular will. With the context of Austin's formula, we can begin to understand how these rallies were structured in order to give the hosts as much control as possible over the affective response of the audience. Their understanding of mediation was crucial to the success of these events in instilling Lost Cause ideology in witnesses. Likewise, the elite status of the organizers generated an affective air of celebrity around these events, especially for Southerners. By using both their social status and understanding of media to strategize, Confederate monument unveilings became monumental events which were regionally attended by thousands of citizens, further legitimating their platform.

Because the Daughters had been successful in their campaigns to fundraise for cemeteries, publicity through newspapers increasingly became a part of their promotion for unveiling rallies.¹³⁵ That many Southern presses were owned by Confederate-sympathizers helped them better circulate announcements for events like this.¹³⁶ Confederate women believed it was essential to maintain a cleanly, outwardly wealth appearance, and so encouraged the guests of unveiling ceremonies to wear their finest clothing.¹³⁷ While membership to Confederate organizations was exclusive to those of Confederate descent, the unveilings were more inclusive and gave individuals whose wealth or status prohibited them from joining these

134. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, p.14-16.

135. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in “The Rise of the UDC,” Pp.28-48, and in “Combatting ‘Wicked Falsehoods’,” Pp.93-117. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, in “Ceremonial Bereavement: Mourning Activities,” Pp.36-46.

136. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, in “Ceremonial Bereavement: Mourning Activities,” Pp.36-46, and in “The Confederate Celebration: Its Ritual Activities,” Pp.127-144.

137. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in “The monument Builders,” Pp.49-72. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past*, in “The Old Spirit is Not Dying Out: The Memorial Associations’ Renaissance, 1883-1893,” Pp.224-277.

groups a means of participating in their cause.¹³⁸ I argue that this intention of formally announcing the event, and dress code, was in establishing a sort of universal subjectivity in the audience. While unspoken details of tradition like dress may seem trite, the effect of a large assembly dressed nicely and celebrating together enacted the representation of the white classes as civilized and civilizing. It also established a sense of liminality, as the boundary between lower- and upper-class white citizens was temporarily lifted by the structure of these events. Because the Lost Cause narrative was rooted in upholding norms that most white Americans had been raised on (prior to Emancipation), arguments in favor of traditional social roles were effective in both the private and public sphere. White southerners wanted to preserve the reputations of their ancestors and to maintain the privileges that their skin color granted them. While it's easy to understand how the Lost Cause appealed to former Confederates, how were they able to mobilize the support of abolitionists required for their ideology to be legitimated on the federal level?

138. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The Rise of the UDC," Pp.28-48, and in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72.

slavery and into the time of emancipation amplified the affective atmosphere. The plantation class was anxious because their production process had been overturned, the white working class was anxious about job competition, and the white middle class eager to maintain their privilege (Figure 3.8).¹³⁹ While it was recognized that slaves were now free, there was reluctance to change from all tiers of white society, which were only amplified by the media, as well as science (Figure 3.9).¹⁴⁰ Under slavery, all black Americans were seen as less than or inferior to whites; even freedmen were expected to retain a disposition of submission toward white citizens.¹⁴¹ As the abolitionist agenda had picked up steam, scholars in a number of different fields attempted to validate the inferiority of black Americans through science.¹⁴² Biologists, anthropologists, epidemiologists and psychologists pathologized the black body in attempts to “explain” why black Americans had higher pain thresholds, why they were so submissive; all to justify the assertion that black citizens were more valuable as labor force than as human beings.¹⁴³ These studies only picked up steam as times grew closer to the Civil War, and carried into the Reconstruction period invigorated by a social drive to maintain the racial hierarchy of the antebellum south.¹⁴⁴ The affective landscape generated by scientific studies, media

139. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, in “The white Worker,” Pp.17-31, and in “The Planter,” Pp.33-54.

140. Gates, *Stony the Road*, in “The Old Negro: Race, Science, and the Birth of Jim Crow. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in “Instinct and Injury: Bodily Integrity, Natural Affinities, and the Constitution of Equality,” Pp.164-207.

141. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, in “The Black Worker,” Pp.3-16. Gates, *Stony the Road*, in “The Old Negro: Race, Science, and the Birth of Jim Crow. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in “Instinct and Injury: Bodily Integrity, Natural Affinities, and the Constitution of Equality,” Pp.164-207.

142. Gates, *Stony the Road*, in “The Old Negro: Race, Science, and the Birth of Jim Crow. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in “Instinct and Injury: Bodily Integrity, Natural Affinities, and the Constitution of Equality,” Pp.164-207.

143. Gates, *Stony the Road*, in “The Old Negro: Race, Science, and the Birth of Jim Crow. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in “Instinct and Injury: Bodily Integrity, Natural Affinities, and the Constitution of Equality,” Pp.164-207.

144. Gates, *Stony the Road*, in “The Old Negro: Race, Science, and the Birth of Jim Crow. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in “Instinct and Injury: Bodily Integrity, Natural Affinities, and the Constitution of Equality,” Pp.164-207.

representations and stereotypical sambo art was one of dispossession. The intention was in drawing distinctions as to who has a right to exist in public spaces, and in who had a right to political and self-representation. With the moves toward reconciliation and segregation following the brief period of Reconstruction, we can start to understand how the Confederate monuments served to re-possess public spaces in the name of white supremacy, while dispossessing black Americans in the name of public safety. So how did the organizations responsible for constructing Confederate monuments leverage the structures of racial subordination from antebellum society in order to reinvigorate the identity of the “old south” within the Union? How did the scientific understanding of black Americans affect the efforts of former Confederates at re-unification?

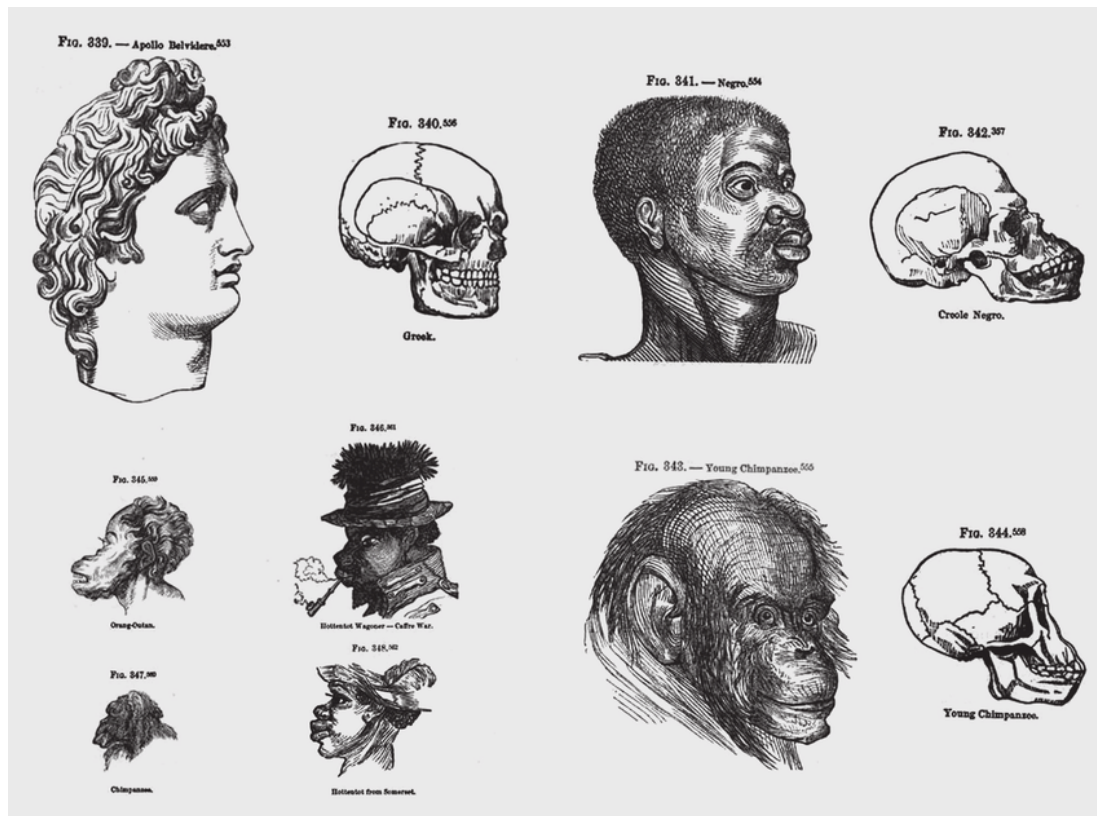


Figure 3. 9: Illustration published in “Types of mankind or ethnological researches, based upon the ancient monuments, paintings, sculptures, and crania of races, and upon their natural, geographical, philological, and biblical history.” Gliddon Nott, 1854.

While one may not immediately connect the stereotypes projected in sambo art, minstrelsy, and blackface performance with the history of Confederate monuments, understanding the Lost Cause narrative clarifies how representations of the “happy slave” were essential to maintaining the narrative of benevolent slave masters and familial relations with slaves.¹⁴⁵ While most forcefully asserted by Confederate Sympathizers — the attempt by the United Daughters of the Confederacy to erect a “mammy monument” is telling, here — racial stereotypes were also perpetuated by many abolitionists (Figures 1.10 and 3.10).¹⁴⁶ Henry Louis Gates looks at the impact of Sambo Art, blackface performance and literary tropes on black identity in *Stony the road: Reconstruction, white supremacy, and the rise of Jim Crow*.¹⁴⁷ By reviewing the history of blackface performance, sambo art, and other forms of political satire during reconstruction, Gates re-contextualizes the period of reconstruction to explain how white-controlled representations of black Americans engrained racist tropes in the re-production of identities following the Civil War.¹⁴⁸ While many Union troops had fought for the freedom of black Americans, because of the projection of stereotypes through sambo art — which appeared on everything from newspaper advertisements and billboards to product wrappers — many white Americans still believed that black Americans were inferior to them.¹⁴⁹ Because there were no real reparations in the wake of the Civil War, many black Americans were financially destitute,

145. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in “Combatting ‘Wicked Falsehoods’,” Pp.93-117. Gates, *Stony the Road*, in “The Old Negro: Race, Science, and the Birth of Jim Crow. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in “Instinct and Injury: Bodily Integrity, Natural Affinities, and the Constitution of Equality,” Pp.164-207.

146. Gates, *Stony the Road*, in “Framing Blackness: sambo art and the Visual Rhetoric of white Supremacy,” Pp.125-186. Micki McElya, “Commemorating the Color Line: The National Mammy Monument Controversy of the 1920s,” in Mills and Simpson, Pp.203-218.

147. Gates, *Stony the Road*, 2020.

148. Gates, *Stony the Road*, in “Framing Blackness: sambo art and the Visual Rhetoric of white Supremacy,” Pp.125-186.

149. Gates, *Stony the Road*, in “Framing Blackness: sambo art and the Visual Rhetoric of white Supremacy,” Pp.125-186. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in “Instinct and Injury: Bodily Integrity, Natural Affinities, and the Constitution of Equality,” Pp.164-207.

and so their living conditions effectively enacted the stereotypes propagated in these illustrations, advertisements, and cartoons.¹⁵⁰ Rather than recognizing that the issue was systemic, most white Americans assumed it was biological inferiority, poor habits of self-maintenance, and lack of proper conduct that caused the poor living conditions of black Americans.¹⁵¹ While Confederate sympathizers used racial distinctions to dehumanize black Americans, abolitionists used them to educate them on how to appropriately conduct themselves in white society.¹⁵² Saidiya V. Hartman reviews a series of conduct manuals, written by white Americans and published through the National Freedmen's Organization to help black Americans adjust to their freedom after emancipation.¹⁵³ Hartman emphasizes that while their intention was different, the abolitionist understanding of black Americans was limited by the stereotypes that had persisted through slavery and were being circulated like propaganda in the wake of the Civil War.¹⁵⁴

150. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, in "The Black Worker," Pp.3-16. Gates, *Stony the Road*, in "The Old Negro: Race, Science, and the Birth of Jim Crow.," Pp.55-124. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in "Instinct and Injury: Bodily Integrity, Natural Affinities, and the Constitution of Equality," Pp.164-207.

151. Gates, *Stony the Road*, in "The Old Negro: Race, Science, and the Birth of Jim Crow.," Pp.55-124. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in "Instinct and Injury: Bodily Integrity, Natural Affinities, and the Constitution of Equality," Pp.164-207.

152. Gates, *Stony the Road*, in "The Old Negro: Race, Science, and the Birth of Jim Crow.," Pp.55-124. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in "Instinct and Injury: Bodily Integrity, Natural Affinities, and the Constitution of Equality," Pp.164-207.

153. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in "Instinct and Injury: Bodily Integrity, Natural Affinities, and the Constitution of Equality," Pp.164-207.

154. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in "Instinct and Injury: Bodily Integrity, Natural Affinities, and the Constitution of Equality," Pp.164-207.



Figure 3. 10: Photograph of the model for the United Daughters of the Confederacy's Mammy monument by Ulric S. J. Dunbar. NAID: 4685889.

It is important to note that Abolitionists and Confederate-Sympathizers held similar racial biases against black Americans because ultimately, this shared inclination toward white supremacy succeeded in the formation of Jim Crow segregation laws in which the racial sentiment, rather than being eradicated, expanded to become more normalized in the North and

south alike.¹⁵⁵ Because they shared racist inclinations, Northern and Southern whites came together politically to ensure the continued subjection of black Americans, and Confederate monument unveilings played a role in how the media represented the narrative of reconciliation surrounding these monuments (Figure 3.11). A newspaper article from the *St. Louis Globe Democrat* published in June 1891 details the construction of the *Jefferson Davis Memorial* in Jackson, Mississippi; the article boasts a crowd of 25,000 Americans who came together to “justify” and “glorify” their “cause which was loved, but not lost.”¹⁵⁶ By declaring the event a “universal outpouring of southern sentiment” articles like this helped to normalize the rhetoric of the Lost Cause in terms that denied its racial discrimination.¹⁵⁷ Northern and southern media outlets alike helped perpetuate negative representations of black Americans in order to justify their efforts to adapt slavery into a caste system and clear the way for Jim Crow segregation laws.¹⁵⁸ This intention grew beyond the monuments following the expansion of segregation practices in the late 1890s.¹⁵⁹ As parts of their agenda became legislated, Women’s confederate organizations focused more steadily on history education in elementary school classrooms in a series of campaigns at the state level to push states to use pro-Confederate histories of Slavery

155. Gates, *Stony the Road*, in “The Old Negro: Race, Science, and the Birth of Jim Crow.,” Pp.55-124. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in “Instinct and Injury: Bodily Integrity, Natural Affinities, and the Constitution of Equality,” Pp.164-207.

156. “A Great Day for the South,” *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 4 June 1891. Accessed October 10, 2020: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Newspaper_clipping_and_image_about_Jackson_MS_Confederate_monument_1891.jpg

157. “A Great Day for the South,” *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 4 June 1891

158. Gates, *Stony the Road*, in “The Old Negro: Race, Science, and the Birth of Jim Crow.,” Pp.55-124, and in “Framing Blackness: sambo art and the Visual Rhetoric of white Supremacy,” Pp.125-186. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in “Fashioning Obligation: Indebted Servitude and the Fetters of Society,” Pp.125-163, and in “Instinct and Injury: Bodily Integrity, Natural Affinities, and the Constitution of Equality,” Pp.164-207.

159. Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters*, in “Confederate Progressives,” Pp.73-92. Gates, *Stony the Road*, in “Framing Blackness: sambo art and the Visual Rhetoric of white Supremacy,” Pp.125-186. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in “Fashioning Obligation: Indebted Servitude and the Fetters of Society,” Pp.125-163, and in “Instinct and Injury: Bodily Integrity, Natural Affinities, and the Constitution of Equality,” Pp.164-207.

and the Civil War in public schools.¹⁶⁰ These efforts were most successful in southern states, many of whom also agreed to teach the history of the Ku Klux Klan promoted by Confederate women; members of the Ku Klux Klan were promoted as the righteous defenders of Southern Traditional Values, and praised for their success in suppressing black votes and maintaining safety in public spaces.¹⁶¹ So how were these intentions, in excess of the monuments, reflected in the rallies accompanying unveilings? How is the dispossession of black Americans connected to the history of Confederate monuments?

160. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "Combatting 'Wicked Falsehoods'," Pp.93-117. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, in "The Confederate Celebration: Its Organizational Structure," Pp.104-114. Janney, *burying the Dead but Not the Past*, in "Lest We Forget: United Daughters and Confederated Ladies, 1894-1915," Pp.279-324.

161. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "Combatting 'Wicked Falsehoods'," Pp.93-117. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, in "The Confederate Celebration: Its Organizational Structure," Pp.104-114. Janney, *burying the Dead but Not the Past*, in "Lest We Forget: United Daughters and Confederated Ladies, 1894-1915," Pp.279-324.

A GREAT DAY FOR THE SOUTH.

The Confederate Monument at Jackson,
Miss., Unveiled.

The Greatest Gathering of Southern
Veterans Since the War.

Unanimous Outpouring of Southern Sen-
timent—The Lost Cause Justified
and Glorified in Speech, Prayer
and Poem—Adoration of
"Little Jeff" Davis.

Special Dispatch to the Globe-Democrat.

JACKSON, Miss., June 3.—"Jeff Davis Day" has gone into Mississippi's history. It has been all that the most ardent lover of the lost cause hoped it would be. The people came—25,000 of them—so many that there was not room in the houses for them. They slept in tents and on the grass; they fed under the booths; they yelled the genuine rebel yell until they were tired; they carried the Confederate flag; in oration, in poem and in prayer they justified and glorified the cause which was loved but lost. Not since the war has there been such a glorious, unanimous outpouring of Southern sentiment, and to-night they seem to feel the better for it and say they are just as good American citizens as there are in the country. Usually there is some restraint upon these celebrations.

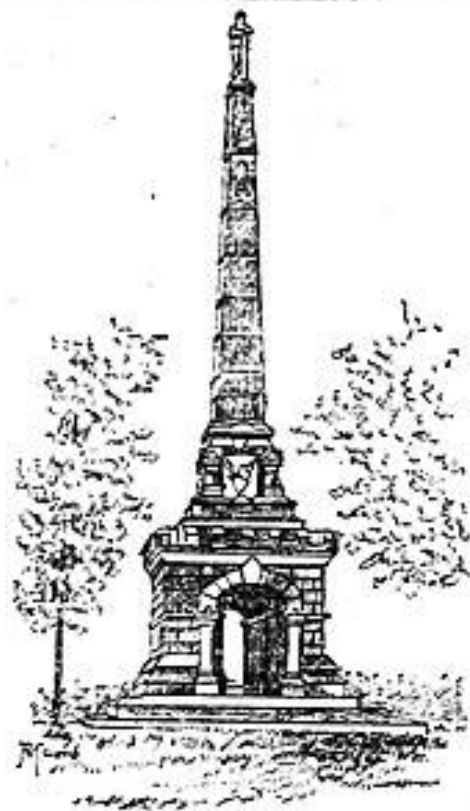


Figure 3. 11: Article and drawing of a Confederate monument in Jackson, Mississippi, with headline mentioning unveiling ceremony and lost cause. St. Louis Globe-Democrat, June 4, 1891.

In the essay, "Precarious Life," Judith Butler suggests that "No one controls the terms by which one is addressed, at least not in the most fundamental way. To be addressed is to be, from the start, deprived of will, and to have that deprivation exist as the basis of one's situation in discourse," suggesting that the act of being addressed constitutes the subject in relation to the discourse.¹⁶² The unveiling ceremonies established an anticipatory environment in which the subjects were simultaneously constituted by being addressed and made responsive to the address through the performative structure of the event itself. Butler elaborates on modes of address and the constitution of precarity in relation to the idea of dispossession with Athena Athanasiou; in elaborating the notion of the "double valence of dispossession" they argue that there is an underlying sense of human relationality which is one form of dispossession, but that there is another mode of dispossession which forcibly removes people from their livelihood.¹⁶³ While the latter is enacted through governmentality, the former is realized through individual acts.¹⁶⁴ Though Butler and Athanasiou acknowledge the possibility of a positive mode of dispossession in recognizing the universality of human relations, they also suggest that the infrastructure of social relations causes many to adopt "dispossession as a disposition" instead; meaning that they choose to uphold the norms which legitimate the dispossession of marginalized groups rather than challenge them.¹⁶⁵ Athanasiou expands on the notion of "dispossession as disposition" in relation to social representations:

Those in need of social services are represented as incompetent, lazy, and above all, shamefully irresponsible. Eviscerated of social responsibility, dispossession is figured in this context as a failure of the calculus of willful sovereignty and self-mastery.¹⁶⁶

162. Butler, *Precarious Life*, in "Precarious Life," p.139.

163. Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*, in "Aporetic dispossession, or the trouble with dispossession," Pp.1-9.

164. Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*, in "Aporetic dispossession, or the trouble with dispossession," Pp.1-9, and in "The governmentality of 'crisis' and its resistances," Pp.149-157.

165. Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*, in "Aporetic dispossession, or the trouble with dispossession," Pp.1-9.

166. Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*, in "Responsiveness as responsibility," Pp.104-125.

Thinking about this in relation to racial distinctions following the end of the Civil War, we can think of the police's willingness to overlook the terrorism of groups like the Ku Klux Klan as a means of dispossessing black Americans through governmentality, but we can also understand the unveiling ceremonies of Confederate monuments as a means of enacting "dispossession as disposition." We can understand this better, perhaps, with an example of how Confederate monuments altered the spatial geography of the areas in which they were installed. Kathleen Clark draws attention to the emancipation celebrations in Augusta, Georgia in an article which tracks the deterioration of such celebrations between 1865 and 1913.¹⁶⁷ While in 1865, emancipation celebrations were grand events featuring large processions down Broad Street, Clark notes that the success of these events was severely affected when the *Four Poets* was installed on Broad Street in 1913.¹⁶⁸ While Clark suggests black Americans were forced to adapt their celebrations to avoid the threat of violence, following the installation of this Confederate monument white supremacist violence ultimately suppressed the size of these events and caused traditions to lean toward smaller, family-based celebrations in the home.¹⁶⁹ It wasn't so much the visual impact of this rather unassuming four-sided-granite rectangle that dispossessed black citizens of Augusta, but that this monument served as a rallying point for Confederate organizers who promoted white supremacy and vigilantism. Once this monument was installed in Augusta, black American citizens were able to continue celebrations privately but had effectively been dispossessed from the public sphere.¹⁷⁰

167. Clark, "Making History: black American Commemorative celebrations in Augusts, Georgia, 1865-1913," in Mills and Simpson, Pp.46-63.

168. Clark, "Making History: black American Commemorative celebrations in Augusts, Georgia, 1865-1913," in Mills and Simpson, Pp.46-63.

169. Clark, "Making History: black American Commemorative celebrations in Augusts, Georgia, 1865-1913," in Mills and Simpson, Pp.46-63.

170. Clark, "Making History: black American Commemorative celebrations in Augusts, Georgia, 1865-1913," in Mills and Simpson, Pp.46-63.



Figure 3. 12: President Wilson at unveiling of Confederate monument, Arlington Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia. Photograph, June 4, 1914. *Library of Congress*: 2016851141.

In gathering to celebrate traditional hierarchical roles of the “Old South,” unveiling ceremonies intended to legitimate structures of dispossession within post-emancipation society. Because racial stereotypes were posed by media and validated by science prior to the Civil War, these views were normalized within the framework of the post-emancipation south by temporal proximity. For those who may have been on the fence, the heightened affective environment of the unveiling ceremonies intended to leverage the enthusiasm of other spectators in arousing the excitement of those on the fence. While the unveiling was the finale, the events along the way built anticipation leading up to the speeches, and the speeches were an opportunity to provide a

platform for Lost Cause ideology.¹⁷¹ While my intention is not to focus on the rhetoric of these speeches so much as the mode of assembly, I do feel that the drive to bring in authority figures to validate pro-Confederate platforms deserves further reflection. The example of the Arlington Confederate monument, here, reflects how the inclusion of figures of national authority in unveiling ceremonies helped the drive for reconciliation come to fruition.¹⁷² In attempts to reconcile the north and south following Reconstruction, presidents recognized the need to acknowledge former Confederates as American citizens.¹⁷³ That Arlington National Cemetery had belonged to the estate of Robert E. Lee before being taken over by the Federal Government, undoubtedly, gave this site a symbolic reverence for proponents of the Lost Cause.¹⁷⁴ Suggesting that a National Cemetery should reflect the constituency of the Union, President William McKinley allowed Confederate bodies to be transferred to the Arlington Cemetery and supported the United Daughters' campaign to build a Confederate monument in Arlington National Cemetery.¹⁷⁵ Congress authorized this bill.¹⁷⁶ As Secretary of War under Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft helped organize the monument campaign with the United Daughters, and also took part in the Cornerstone laying while he was president.¹⁷⁷ Woodrow Wilson had become President at the time of its unveiling in June 1914; at which he spoke and received the monument

171. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72. Karen L. Cox, "The Confederate monument at Arlington: A Token of Reconciliation," in Mills and Simpson, Pp.149-162.

172. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72. Karen L. Cox, "The Confederate monument at Arlington: A Token of Reconciliation," in Mills and Simpson, Pp.149-162.

173. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72. Karen L. Cox, "The Confederate monument at Arlington: A Token of Reconciliation," in Mills and Simpson, Pp.149-162.

174. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72. Karen L. Cox, "The Confederate monument at Arlington: A Token of Reconciliation," in Mills and Simpson, Pp.149-162.

175. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72. Karen L. Cox, "The Confederate monument at Arlington: A Token of Reconciliation," in Mills and Simpson, Pp.149-162.

176. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72. Karen L. Cox, "The Confederate monument at Arlington: A Token of Reconciliation," in Mills and Simpson, Pp.149-162.

177. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "The monument Builders," Pp.49-72. Karen L. Cox, "The Confederate monument at Arlington: A Token of Reconciliation," in Mills and Simpson, Pp.149-162.

as a gift to the country, while simultaneously acknowledging that federal contributions had helped make it possible (Figures 3.12 and 3.13).¹⁷⁸



Figure 3. 13: Unveiling Confederate monument, Arlington Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia. Photograph, June 4, 1914. Library of Congress: 2016851144.

He used the opportunity to assert that the monument reflected the united state of the country.¹⁷⁹

The inclusion of a mammy figure in the frieze of the Arlington Confederate monument was now invigorated now by presidential approval in addition to that of the senate (Figure 3.14). So we can see here how the federal commitment to reunification embraced Confederate monuments as a means of “including” all Americans, but the underlying motive, as I’ve discussed above, was rooted in racial divisions. We can also see that the duration of the construction also played a

178. Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters*, in “The monument Builders,” Pp.49-72. Karen L. Cox, “The Confederate monument at Arlington: A Token of Reconciliation,” in Mills and Simpson, Pp.149-162.

179. Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters*, in “The monument Builders,” Pp.49-72. Karen L. Cox, “The Confederate monument at Arlington: A Token of Reconciliation,” in Mills and Simpson, Pp.149-162.

structural role, as this project endured through four presidential administrations before coming to fruition. So what does it mean for a president's seal of approval to be imprinted on these monuments? How did the moral authority of the Office of the President affect the public response to these monuments?



Figure 3. 14: Frieze of the Arlington Confederate Monument, featuring a “Mammy” figure, Photograph, *Smithsonian Magazine*, 2017.

Two essays from Judith Butler's *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Justice* explore how “presidential addresses” carry a force in excess of the speech itself because of the “symbolic authority” of their title.¹⁸⁰ With the seal of approval from four presidents supporting its construction, the Arlington Confederate monument can be seen as the moment when the narrative of Confederate monuments became most closely tied to the idea of reunification at the

180. Butler, *Precarious Life*, in “The Charge of anti-semitism: Jews, Israel, and the Risks of Public Critique,” Pp.101-127, and in “Precarious Life,” Pp.128-152.

level of the national press.¹⁸¹ While Democratic presses had been publishing articles praising the Confederate monument builders for years, the presidential authority spectacularized this unveiling ceremony, and it received national media attention.¹⁸² When art historians look at objects, our role is in identifying not only the significance of the iconography related to the object, but also how the object has been received by the public. While the current historiography makes clear, these monuments were successfully funded and admired by many southerners who had been disenfranchised by the Union in the wake of the Civil War, at this point in our discussion of Confederate monument Unveilings, I have attempted to clarify that while the iconography of these monuments has been tied to a narrative of mourning and restructuring identity in the wake of the Civil War, the reason that these monuments succeeded on the national level was because they provided an opportunity for enjoyment that allowed whites from the north and south to recognize their shared biases, but to cloak them in rhetoric that had been accepted by federal conventions.¹⁸³ It is on this point that we can see how the rhetorical strategies used by proponents of the Lost Cause became legitimated within the Federal Infrastructure of the United States, and how that normalized the acceptability of mourning and celebrating the Confederacy. What is important here, is that the expanded media coverage provided by the Presidential support of Confederate monuments helped to normalize this among the average white American, like the “white moderate,” whom Martin Luther King Jr. addressed in his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.”¹⁸⁴ When trying to understand the intentions behind the reception of these monuments, I feel

181. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in “The monument Builders,” Pp.49-72. Karen L. Cox, “The Confederate monument at Arlington: A Token of Reconciliation,” in Mills and Simpson, Pp.149-162.

182. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in “The monument Builders,” Pp.49-72. Karen L. Cox, “The Confederate monument at Arlington: A Token of Reconciliation,” in Mills and Simpson, Pp.149-162.

183. The notion of Enjoyment is distinctly linked to the history of racial discrimination in the United States, Hartman discusses this extensively in *Scenes of Subjection*. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in “Innocent Amusements: The Stage of Sufferance,” Pp.17-48.

184. Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” Accessed September 5, 2020: https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html

this is a factor that is commonly overlooked. After all, it is not extremists like the Ku Klux Klan, or these Confederate Associations, who normalize ideas, but the public. The intentions behind the Confederate organizers responsible for these monuments were no longer rooted in finding a “space of appearance” in the early years of the twentieth century, they now focused on national representation which could positively affect the representation of the Confederacy. With this context from the unveilings, I suggest that receiving the presidential seal of approval is an opportunity to move our discussion to the present. While we can see what the presidential seal of approval did to legitimate Lost Cause ideology in the early twentieth century, how do the president’s comments on conversations like this steer public support in the twenty-first century? How do the twenty-first century rallies discussed in my introduction connect with the history of Confederate monument unveilings?

We can see now how Confederate monuments emerged from a need to mourn the Confederate dead, but also how white supremacist rhetoric became linked to these monuments through their performative unveiling ceremonies. We can also understand how the media environment of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries abetted this process through the legitimization of racial stereotypes, and that the narrative of reconciliation and reunification arose from a common goal of re-subordinating black Americans and maintaining Antebellum privileges for white citizens. So, while the drive to erect monuments stemmed from a desire to mourn the dead, by the early twentieth century we can also see that the narrative of mourning and honoring the Confederate dead had expanded to legitimating the norms of the Antebellum south within the post-bellum society — which was expedited when Confederate organizers could receive national support for their agenda through Presidential approval. To rally is to mourn but also to rise from depression; it is to recover and to rebound, to recall a past order; to rally is to

come together, to unite for a common purpose.¹⁸⁵ While the notion of “rallying” pulls its context from mourning, its meaning implies that one has already mourned, and moved toward rebounding, toward reconciling and coming together for a joint purpose. Rallying also reflects a desire to reflect backwards, to bring back ideas from the past. It is on this point, which I believe we can come to see the commonality between Confederate monument unveilings and the rallies attempting to “save” them in the twenty-first century. Just as the unveiling ceremonies reflected a strong desire to rehabilitate the racial hierarchy of the Antebellum South, the Confederate-sympathizers responsible for hosting the “Unite the Right Rally” in 2017 were interested in re-inciting racial separatism; chanting things like “Jews will not replace us” as they marched through Charlottesville to rally around the Robert E. Lee Monument for a speech from David Duke, president of the Ku Klux Klan (Figure 3.1).¹⁸⁶ The event already had national press, as it was the largest, nationally organized white supremacist rally to have taken place in the twenty-first century; so when a vehicle sped into a crowd of counter-protestors, killing Heather Hayer and injuring eight others, video quickly circulated through media platforms, and it was a moment of national outrage.¹⁸⁷ While the stage was set to disavow white supremacist violence, when Donald Trump decided to address the nation, he suggested there were “very fine people on both sides.”¹⁸⁸

I remember that day so well. I was staying with my father-in-law in Colorado, and we had the news on all day. My father-in-law is Jewish, and having grown up in the wake of World

185. “Definition of RALLY.”

186. “White Nationalist David Duke Attends ‘Unite the Right’ Rally in Charlottesville.” Accessed December 5, 2020. <https://www.indystar.com/videos/news/2017/08/12/white-nationalist-david-duke-attends-unite-right-rally-charlottesville/104526610/>.

187. “Scenes From the Deadly Unrest in Charlottesville.” TIME.com. Accessed December 5, 2020. <https://time.com/charlottesville-white-nationalist-rally-clashes/>.

188. “Trump and Unite the Right: Trump’s New Defense of His Charlottesville Comments Is Incredibly False” Vox. Accessed December 5, 2020. <https://www.vox.com/2019/4/26/18517980/trump-unite-the-right-racism-defense-charlottesville>.

War II, he remembers how anti-semitism has been normalized through media platforms, and resents politicians who use rhetoric to conceal white supremacist beliefs. My father-in-law saw LBJ sign the Civil Rights Act into law and believes the government's authority plays a role in eradicating racism. His grandparents had migrated from Europe, and he was raised to view America as a land of acceptance and opportunity. The Obama administration rendered him hopeful about the status of a post-racial America. He understands the power of authority in times of crisis; the power of a president's word to control the affective environment in times of heightened tension. While it did not surprise me when Donald Trump refused to condemn the white supremacist rally, my father-in-law was aghast. Throughout the day he'd mentioned that he saw a reflection of Wallace and Nixon supporters from 1968 in the videos of the rallies, but it was not until the president refused to outwardly condemn white supremacy that he became outraged. He recognized that in that moment, anti-semitism and white supremacy had been acknowledged as an acceptable practice on the national level, and he understood the performative power of Trump's refusal in a way which my cynicism had disavowed. While I had focused on the idea of eradicating extremism, this is the moment I truly recognized how racism becomes legitimated by gestures of acknowledgement and disavowal and thrives by lingering beneath the surface of conversations like these. We have seen significant Civil Rights victories since the times these monuments were erected, and the government-backed initiatives to remove Confederate monuments tell us that the tides have shifted toward an anti-racist America. Yet we can also look back on the political campaigns of Nixon, Reagan, Clinton, and the Bushes to see that the racial rhetoric espoused by Confederate organizers has become coded into American politics through "Dog Whistles" which use the shield of "color-blindness" to avoid mention of

race in political discourse, but still propose policies which intentionally maintain social status.¹⁸⁹ What changed with Trump was that these codes were more legible at the surface level in his rhetoric. His campaign rallies both made these codes legible to the less educated, but also validated the existence of racist views within the public sphere. Incidents like the mass shooting in El Paso on August 3, 2019 — which targeted immigrants and whose perpetrator wrote about how the president had motivated him — are the extremes, here, but we can also see this reflected in social anxiety.¹⁹⁰ During the summer of 2020, the social media trope of the “Karen” was used to confront the tendency of white women to call the police if they witnessed a black person in their, otherwise white, neighborhood.¹⁹¹ The “Karen” trope was used to draw attention to police brutality, as affectively any such call could result in another victim.¹⁹² This is, perhaps, the reflection of the white moderate’s reception of racialized rhetoric like Trump espouses. While the normalization of racial biases is most forcefully asserted by the media in events like the Charlottesville vehicle ramming or the El Paso shooting, when it legitimates violence, we can also see that such rhetoric legitimates anxieties and that these specific anxieties are connected to making the lives of minority communities more precarious than those of white communities. Reception depends on a wide network of social and economic variables, and performances often reveal the underlying relational structure of reception in a way which objects themselves do not.

189. Ian Haney-Lopez. *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

190. “El Paso Shooting Suspect’s Manifesto Echoes Trump’s Language - The New York Times.” Accessed December 5, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/04/us/politics/trump-mass-shootings.html>.

191. Henry Goldblatt. “A Brief History of ‘Karen.’” *The New York Times*, July 31, 2020, sec. Style. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/31/style/karen-name-meme-history.html>.

192. Goldblatt. “A Brief History of ‘Karen.’”

Reception: Willing Acceptance and Willful Rejection in the Controversy over Confederate Monuments

Reception is a difficult concept. While it can mean something as simple as receiving a message or signal, it also encompasses responses and reactions to Art, performance, and other forms of media. When we think about reception as a noun, we also come to understand the concept as a process of admission, such as a wedding reception. When thinking about reception in relation to the forms of collective representation present in the history of Confederate monuments, all of these meanings play a role in the process of forming a particular “we.” In *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, Judith Butler argues that all forms of assembly enact a formation of “we,” but also reminds us that assemblies can have multiple, affective interpretations:

Though sometimes bodies assembled on the street are clearly cause for joy and even hope — and surging crowds sometimes do become the occasion for revolutionary hopefulness — let us remember that the phrase “bodies on the street” can refer equally to right-wing demonstrations, to military demonstrations assembled to quell demonstrations or seize power, to lynch mobs or anti-immigrant movements taking over public space. So they are neither intrinsically good nor intrinsically bad; they assume differing values depending on what they are assembled for, and how that assembly works.¹⁹³

As we have discussed, both processions and rallies serve as a performative means of assembling a “we,” yet the values broadcast to those observing and taking part in assemblies are distinct and in some places polemically opposed to one another. My intention here is to understand how the “differing values” projected by these assemblies were received into the social will through embodied enactments, like Confederate monument unveilings, and how they’ve been validated in the general will through legislation. Sara Ahmed looks at the affective meaning of willfulness throughout history in her book *Willful Subjects*: “If the problem of willfulness cannot be

193. Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p.124.

separated from the problem of will, then willfulness returns us to the will."¹⁹⁴ Ahmed's understanding of the will suggests that the process of reception is tied to one's willingness to "put themselves behind" the ideas represented by that group; being *accepted* into a group depends on one's willingness to accept the structures supporting that "we."¹⁹⁵ Willfulness, in contrast, Ahmed reads as a "dismissal" — a desire "to make something apart," to identify existing norms, conventions, and structures as problematic and restrictive.¹⁹⁶ Ahmed poses willingness as a form of obedience or complicity, and willfulness of civil disobedience and rejection.¹⁹⁷ Ahmed frames her "history of the will" by establishing a "willfulness archive."¹⁹⁸ In contrast to determinist arguments which eliminate the possibility of free will, Ahmed looks at willful acts as an expression of free will, following Therese Berman's understanding of "'free will' as 'the ability to not go with the flow'".¹⁹⁹ Ahmed suggests willful actions reflect a "swerve" away from the norm: "The swerve is just enough *not* to travel straightly; *not* to travel straightly; *not* to stay on course. Oh the potential of this *not*."²⁰⁰ Willfulness as a group action, then, presents itself ironically as a willingness to deviate, a willingness to disobey conventions and structures which restrict the possibility of freedom. In this respect, even willful actions depend upon willingness in order to establish a "we," but here willingness is driven by rejection, rather than acceptance. Diana Taylor suggests that "embodied expression has participated and will probably continue to participate in the transmission of social knowledge, memory, and identity pre- and post-writing."²⁰¹ Here, I hope to explore how extensions of performance

194. Sara Ahmed, *Willful Subjects*, in "Introduction," p.5.

195. Sara Ahmed, *Willful Subjects*, p.133-134.

196. Sara Ahmed, *Willful Subjects*, p.133-134.

197. Sara Ahmed, *Willful Subjects*.

198. Sara Ahmed, *Willful Subjects*, in "Introduction," p.5.

199. Sara Ahmed, *Willful Subjects*, in "Introduction," p.11.

200. Sara Ahmed, *Willful Subjects*, in "Introduction," p.10.

201. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, in "Acts of Transfer," P.16.

continue to influence how constructions of knowledge have been accepted and rejected in relation to the strategies used by both Confederate organizers, and by black demonstrators.

I've used the models of the procession and the rally as frames through which to better understand how the operations of these assemblies sought to alter the conventions of the south. In concluding my discussion, I intend to look at how the operations employed in the form of the procession and the rally as they've evolved in relation to Ahmed's understanding of the will. We've looked at how rallies affected the acceptability of particular ideologies during reconstruction. Here we trace that line of thought into the twenty-first century, to see how the controversy of Confederate monuments has changed over time. I have suggested that the operations employed by rallies were performative, and here I will extend that to encompass the ways propagandistic strategies like the Lost Cause continue to be adapted and structurally validated in the twenty-first century. Because infrastructure was developed to support the memorialization of Confederate leaders, stereotypes projected onto black bodies were received into the social will, and these representations have continually evolved for political use. We've seen how during reconstruction southern Democrats benefitted from this polarization of the masses and used their power to restrict the mobility of black Americans, here we will try to understand how this tactic has been leveraged by conservative politicians leading into the twenty-first century. As politicians have been elected on racially divisive platforms, such as welfare and immigration, stereotypes which negatively represent black Americans continue to be reinforced in the general will, not only through the authority of the office but also through legislation. Reviewing how these tactics have adapted over time reveals a shared agenda between Confederate organizers and twenty-first-century conservatism; both have succeeded in winning over large portions of the American population based on strategies which seek to affect their

audiences' willingness to accept the ideas and policies being proposed. The second half of this section looks at how the operations employed by processions have adapted to the twenty-first century by studying the more *willful* actions of processions. As we come to understand the ways in which opposing actors have used negative representations, tropes and stereotypes, to increase their impact on black Americans through widespread repetition, we can understand these willful actions as acts of rejection. By willfully rejecting Confederate symbols, black demonstrators have questioned how Confederate monuments mediate history to deny the impact of slavery on social relations despite tensions which continue to escalate in the twenty-first century. I hope that by revealing how these assemblies adapt over time, we can bring the vagaries of these lingering tensions to the surface of this debate.

*** *** ***

As Kathleen Clark argues, “the legal status of African Americans remained ambiguous during Federal occupation.”²⁰² I suggest that investigating how the restriction of black rights connects with the operation of the rally may help us connect the history of Confederate monuments with that of police brutality. Judith Butler’s most recent work, *The Force of Nonviolence*, approaches the mediation of violence through the lens of Foucauldian biopolitics — a “regulatory power to ‘make live’ or ‘let die’” — in order to argue that government and media corporations share a national frame in representing the effects of state violence.²⁰³ Butler suggests that the “right” to live is shrouded in ambiguity because “power manages *populations* rather than distinct *subjects*”; in these situations, race enters the conversation because “life and death are regulated through other kinds of managerial and institutional logics” which strive to

202. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in “Introduction,” P.15.

203. Judith Butler, *The Force of Nonviolence*, in “The Ethics and Politics of Nonviolence,” Pp.108-109.

make their power transparent to the public.²⁰⁴ Rather than recognizing universal equality, Butler suggests that such exercises in demography bear responsibility in contributing to the unequal distribution of both grievability and precarity.²⁰⁵ By engaging the historical-racial schema of Frantz Fanon — who famously refers to the subjects of his book *Black Skin, White Masks* as the “black man” and the “white man” — Butler highlights the ways “racism precedes and informs policies” based on demographic articulations of difference.²⁰⁶ In looking at the rights of recently emancipated slaves at the close of the Civil War, I suggest that American History also presents us with populations who were not yet “constituted as subjects of rights.”²⁰⁷ The sections preceding this have explored how Confederate organizers benefitted from Union structures of support, such as funding the erection of monuments, while black American organizers, despite multiple efforts, were unable to receive the same support for their efforts to memorialize the black soldiers who fought for the Union. This section traces this line of thought through Reconstruction and into twenty-first-century examples to consider how structural inequalities of representation, precarity and grievability remain entangled with the history of Confederate monuments.

204. Butler, *The Force of Nonviolence*, in “The Ethics and Politics of Nonviolence,” Pp.110.

205. Butler, *The Force of Nonviolence*, in “The Ethics and Politics of Nonviolence,” Pp.110-1145.

206. Butler, *The Force of Nonviolence*, in “The Ethics and Politics of Nonviolence,” Pp.114. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*.

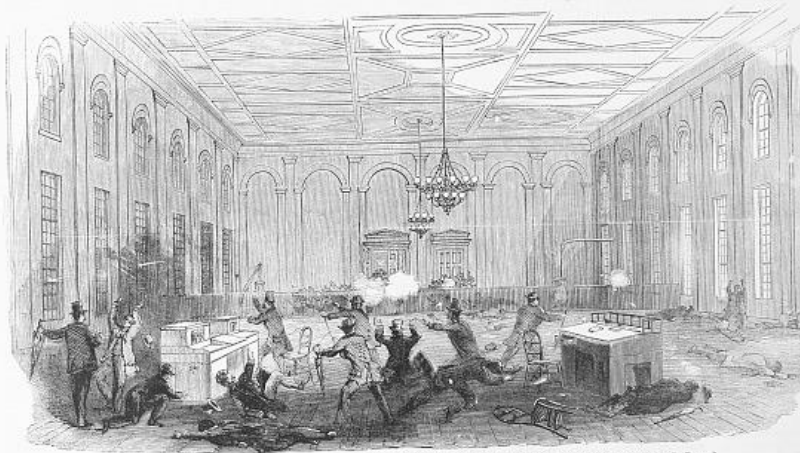
207. Butler, *The Force of Nonviolence*, in “The Ethics and Politics of Nonviolence,” Pp.115. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*.



THE RIOT IN NEW ORLEANS—WRECKED MEN IN THE REAR OF MECHANIC INSTITUTE.
[SKETCHED BY THEODORE R. DAVIS.]



THE RIOT IN NEW ORLEANS—PLAZA IN MECHANIC INSTITUTE AFTER THE RIOT.
[SKETCHED BY THEODORE R. DAVIS.]



THE RIOT IN NEW ORLEANS—INTERIOR OF MECHANIC INSTITUTE DURING THE RIOT.—[SKETCHED BY THEODORE R. DAVIS.]



THE RIOT IN NEW ORLEANS—CARRYING OFF THE DEAD AND WOUNDED—INHUMAN CONDUCT OF THE POLICE.
[SEE PAGE 495.]

13553

Figure 4. 1: The riot in New Orleans, Louisiana, 1866. Engraving by Theodore R. Davis, *Harper's Weekly*, August 25, 1866. Library of Congress: 2008680259.

Following the Civil War, black American citizens in many areas were left without even the basic protection of the law; events like the New Orleans Massacre in 1866, the Wilmington insurrection of 1898, and the Tulsa Massacre of 1921 reveal the ways in which structures of power were willing to *let* black Americans *die* (Figures 4.1, 4.2, 4.3).²⁰⁸ Perhaps it is because events such as these have been intentionally excluded from many history textbooks that so many white Americans struggle to recognize the violence associated with racism.

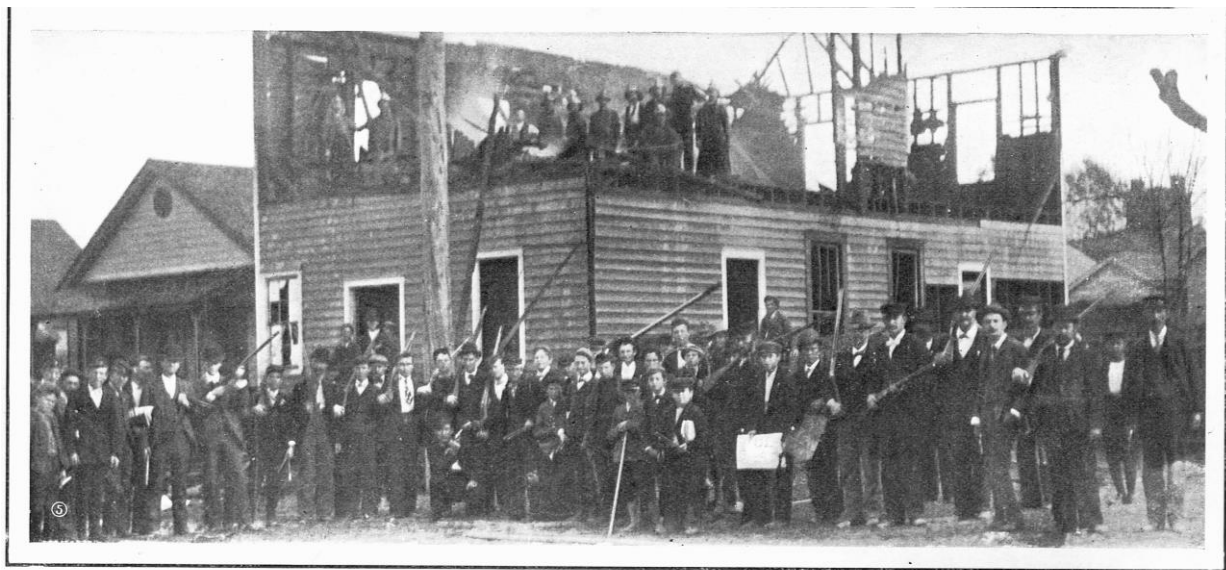


Figure 4. 2: Wilmington, N.C. race riot, the wrecked "Record" building and group of vigilantes. Photograph, 1898. Library of Congress: 2006680061.

This failure to teach the forms of terror and violation that black Americans have been subjected to in not-so-distant past contributes to the willingness of many white Americans to deny or ignore the racial violence connected to American history.²⁰⁹ Perhaps this is why the form of the

208. Blair, *Cities of the Dead*,

209. Daniella Silva, "Did You Learn about Juneteenth in School? Many Americans Don't. Educators Explain Why," NBC News. Accessed January 13, 2021. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/juneteenth-tulsa-massacre-what-isn-t-taught-classrooms-has-profound-n1231442>. *The Guardian*. "Killed by Police, Then Vilified: How America's Prosecutors Blame Victims," March 21, 2019. <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/mar/20/us-police-killings-district-attorney-prosecutor-reports>.

procession, as we discussed earlier, depends upon theatrical inversions which might correct misrepresentations. Reviewing how pundits on the far-right have employed interpellations when recounting the narratives of black victims of police brutality, Butler suggests that the “phantasm of racism” “inverts” individuals, actions and movements in order to “justify in advance any lethal action he may take.”²¹⁰ Just as black Americans could not control their visual representation in the decades following the Civil War, the families of such victims continue to fight systems of representation which have prevented them from receiving justice for their loss. The problem, Butler suggests, is that such efforts “negate the life claim of the person whose life is at stake.” Understanding the fabrications of the Lost Cause narrative reveals the ways such inversions have been employed as a political tool since the end of the Civil War. Through an agenda which painted the Confederacy as honorable alleviated some of the guilt and shame facing former Confederates, narratives like that of the benevolent slaveholder and the states’ rights assessment of the war’s justification denied the horrors of slavery by concealing them. Narratives such as these are easily debunked when reviewed against accounts of slavery written by former slaves and the Confederate states’ letters of succession, but this has not prevented such tropes from entering the social will.²¹¹ We can see the extension of efforts to criminalize the black body since emancipation has been linked to the willingness of white Americans to accept justifications of violence and inequity based on stereotypes projected onto African Americans.

210. Butler, *The Force of Nonviolence*, in “The Ethics and Politics of Nonviolence,” Pp.110.

211. Jeffrey Robinson and ACLU of Washington. “When Heritage = Hate: The Truth About the Confederacy in America,” August 21, 2017. <https://www.aclu-wa.org/events/when-heritage-hate-truth-about-confederacy-america>. Video taken down due to copyright issue related to the descendants of Robert E. Lee, accessed via <https://youtu.be/K8aXk-kVXLQ>.



Figure 4. 3: Ruins after the race riots, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Photograph, *Red Cross Disaster Relief*, June 1921. *Library of Congress*: 2017679760.

Outright violence against black Americans has commonly been justified in mediated narratives like the black rapist myth, yet the actual history of sexual violence in the post-Civil War south reveals that most victims were black women, and most perpetrators white men.²¹² Figures connected to the history of Confederate monuments have commonly deployed efforts to criminalize the black body. Understanding that Woodrow Wilson helped unveil the Confederate Monument at Arlington only a year prior to screening *Birth of a Nation* in the White House (1915) is revealing in this respect. In *Defining Moments*, Kathleen Clark convincingly argues:

212. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in "Seduction and the Ruses of Power," Pp. 79-112. McGuire, Danielle. *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance -- a New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010.

By the turn of the century, white supremacists had largely succeeded in spreading their particular gospel of the past and putting their version of history to the service of racial apartheid. These efforts found their ultimate expression in the release of the movie *Birth of a Nation* in 1915, with its depiction of the noble southern family devastated by war, bravely fighting back (by raising the Ku Klux Klan) against the still more terrible ravages of black savages — and their equally culpable white abolitionist sponsors — during Reconstruction.²¹³

Just as Wilson's participation in the unveiling helped to legitimate Confederate ideology in popular consciousness, this screening bolstered the already successful film and helped implant the black rapist myth in the general will of the country.²¹⁴ The danger, here, is that validating this mythology into public consciousness has severe ramifications for the object of such rhetoric. When such fabrications become part of the general will, they are commonly used as a justification for acts of violence. In the early twentieth-century, Emmett Till was not alone in being sentenced to death by members of the general population, countless lynchings were justified by the myth of the black rapist. Now, in the twenty-first century, pundits on the right have adapted a similar strategy in vilifying the deaths of black Americans at the hands of law enforcement. Victims like George Floyd, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, and Tamir Rice have been interpellated as drug addicts and armed robbers despite evidence to the contrary (Figure 4.4).²¹⁵ In a 2016 study, Calvin John Smiley and David Fakunle suggest that the “docile and manageable” representations of black bodies — such as the narrative of the happy slave and benevolent slave master in Lost Cause mythology — asserted that servitude was the proper place for African-Americans; and so willful acts of black Americans became “criminalized” as “black

213. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in “Introduction,” p.10.

214. Mark E. Benbow. “Birth of a Quotation: Woodrow Wilson and ‘Like Writing History with Lightning.’” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 9, no. 4 (2010): 509–33.

215. Calvin John Smiley, and David Fakunle. “From ‘Brute’ to ‘Thug’: The Demonization and Criminalization of Unarmed Black Male Victims in America.” *Journal Of Human Behavior In The Social Environment* 26, no. 3–4 (2016): 350–66. “Tucker Carlson: Everything the Media Didn’t Tell You about the Death of George Floyd | Fox News.” Accessed March 15, 2021. <https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/tucker-carlson-george-floyd-death-what-media-didnt-tell-you>.

savagery”; the stereotype of the “uncontrollable desires” of black Americans was asserted to justify vigilante acts of racial violence by groups like the KKK.²¹⁶



Figure 4. 4: Tucker Carlson discussing the cause of George Floyd’s Death, Still from video segment, *Fox News*, August 4, 2020.

While I’ve avoided doing so thus far, perhaps now is an appropriate time to bring in a snippet of what spectators may have heard in a speech at a Confederate monument unveiling. At the unveiling of the “Silent Sam” Confederate monument on the campus of the University of North Carolina in 1913 former-Confederate Julian Carr spoke to a crowd of spectators:

One hundred yards from where we stand, less than ninety days perhaps after my return from Appomattox, I horse-whipped a negro-wench, until her skirts hung in shreds, because upon the streets of this quiet village she had publicly insulted and maligned a Southern lady, and then rushed for protection to these University buildings where was stationed 100 Federal soldiers. I performed the pleasing duty in the immediate presence of the entire garrison, and for thirty nights afterwards slept with a double-barreled shotgun under my head.²¹⁷

216. Smiley and Fakunle, “From Brute to Thug.”

217. Adam H. Domby, *The False Cause: Fraud, Fabrication, and White Supremacy in Confederate Memory*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020. in “Rewriting the Past in Stone,” p.20.

Understanding that unveiling ceremonies built up an affective environment in which messages like this were received, we can see how pride in the Confederacy took on an additional meaning with statements like this. Carr's implication was that the racial hierarchy could be preserved, and that violence was a means of accomplishing this end. In his book, *The False Cause: Fraud, Fabrication, and White Supremacy in Confederate Memory*, Adam H. Dombey suggests that "For Carr, the Ku Klux Klan, vigilante justice, and the repression of blacks was a continuation of the war, one that was justified by the cause of preserving white supremacy."²¹⁸ That the United Daughters of the Confederacy actively promoted teaching the history of the Ku Klux Klan in addition to their campaigns to erect Confederate monuments reveals that Confederate organizers shared this motivation at the national level.²¹⁹ Because the Ku Klux Klan's violence stemmed from efforts to prevent black Americans from voting, it is on this point that we can come to understand the legitimization of white supremacist violence in the social sphere helped lead to the validation of such acts in the general will. The extra legality of lynching, for instance, stands as an example of the validation of violence in the general will. For organizers, the unveilings served as a means of broadcasting Confederate ideology onto the social will, but in doing so they provided momentum to strategies which would allow white supremacists to regain political control of the south. By creating an affectively uplifting environment within which spectators could enjoy themselves, the excitement of the crowd built in anticipation of speeches like Carr's which sought to legitimate such acts in the public sphere. While Carr's words in 1913 may seem like an outlier rather than a norm, understanding how white supremacist violence inhibited Emancipation processions in the late-nineteenth century suggests that vigilantism was accepted much earlier in this history.

218. Dombey, *The False Cause*, in "Rewriting the Past in Stone," p.20.

219. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, in "Combatting 'Wicked Falsehoods'," Pp.93-117.

William Blair details some of the most extreme violence faced by African-American demonstrators at Fourth of July celebrations before the end of Reconstruction in his book *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South 1865-1914*:

Violence greeted black commemorations of the nation's birth. Black people in Vicksburg, Mississippi, gathered at the courthouse in 1875 to observe what they hoped would be a time of peace and amicable feelings on the part of northerners and southerners. A white mob entered the courthouse, demanding that the celebration end and the people disperse. They began beating members of the audience who rushed from the building. In a short time, more white people gathered, shots rang out, and two African-Americans fell dead, with several other mortally wounded. More violence came in Hamburg, South Carolina, in 1876. A July Fourth buggy had come upon a black militia company drilling in the streets on Independence Day. They became outraged that the black company blocked their passage, even though marchers claimed there was room for the buggy to go around the group. On July 8, white men marched to a meeting place of African-Americans to try to bring one of the leaders to a hearing over the incident. They were led by a former Confederate general, M.C. Butler. Shots were fired; a white man was the first to fall. The crowd grew and kept up fire on the building in a siege that lasted more than four hours. Before the night ended, six African Americans were shot down and another three were wounded. No federal reaction came, which angered black people who believed they were owed better support from their government.²²⁰

Although several of the authors cited in this bibliography have suggested that the formal ending of Reconstruction paved the way for white supremacist vigilantism, Blair's account of this history reveals that racially motivated violence was occurring prior to 1877. The act of violence Carr described at the Unveiling would have occurred just shortly after the end of the Civil War, suggesting that at that point Federal officers were not offering even the basic protection some have suggested. That Confederate monuments — such as the Liberty Place Monument in New Orleans — have been erected to commemorate acts of white supremacist vigilantism stands as evidence that promoting the acceptability of white supremacist violence was part of the agenda Confederate organizers promoted.²²¹ Though I wish I could say that times have changed, demonstrations like the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, NC and the Capitol

220. Blair, *Cities of the Dead*, in "The Era of Mixed Feelings," p.138.

221. Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, in "Carnival and the Law," Pp.255-290.

Insurrection in January 2021 suggest that the willingness to defend white supremacy by force continues to be implanted in the social will through the form of rallies (Figure 4.5).



Figure 4. 5: A rioter carries a Confederate Flag in the United States Capitol. Photograph, CNN, January 6, 2021.

As discussed above, the ambiguous response of figures of authority like Trump has continued to legitimate such extremism in the twenty-first century. Admittedly, perhaps, this is the extreme of such demonstrations rather than the norm, but the messages broadcast at these events influenced more moderate spectators as well. Organizers of rallies continue to depend on the mediated representation of the masses to amplify the acceptability of a particular ideology; even those that might reject the ideology become assets in these situations by contributing to the representation of popular will. Just as Confederate monument unveilings were bolstered by newspaper accounts boasting sizable crowds, politicians continue to boast of their large rallies to assert their approval with the general population. Rallies are a means of assembling a “we” to show popular support

for such agendas; a means of amplifying the acceptability of messages which televised news coverage continues to embrace in the twenty-first century. Rallies send a message, even when projected through media platforms: “If all these people are willing to cheer, it must be ok, right?”

While understanding the extremes of white-supremacist violence is significant to the unlearning of tropes like the black-rapist myth, more moderate Americans have continued to support political candidates and decisions that play into these tropes because of the ways they have been legitimated and adapted to remain acceptable. This is where concealment comes into the discussion. In the wake of the Civil War politicians and other organizers leveraged social fears and anxieties regarding race, but events like Confederate monument unveilings were cloaked in a shroud of honor and memorialization to represent such ceremonies as publicly acceptable. Although it was common for speakers like Carr to directly reference white-supremacist violence in their speeches, the events themselves were mediated as memorial events intent on restoring honor to Confederate families who had been absorbed into the union. Perhaps thousands would not have gathered under the heading of white supremacy, but the Civil War had profoundly affected the south and many were eager to memorialize their losses. I’m confident in suggesting that Lee Atwater understood how concealing ulterior motives had played a role in Confederate commemorations when he coined the “Southern Strategy” which helped elect Richard Nixon in 1968.²²² As Atwater himself described the strategy:

Y'all don't quote me on this. You start out in 1954 by saying, "Nigger, nigger, nigger." By 1968 you can't say "nigger"—that hurts you. Backfires. So you say stuff like forced busing, states' rights and all that stuff. You're getting so abstract now [that] you're talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you're talking about are totally economic things and a byproduct of them is [that] blacks get hurt worse than whites. And subconsciously maybe that is part of it. I'm not saying that. But I'm saying that if it is getting that abstract, and that coded, that we are doing away with the racial problem one way or the other. You follow me—because obviously sitting around saying, "We want to cut this," is

222. Haney-Lopez, *Dog Whistle Politics*, in “The Wrecking Begins: Reagan,” Pp.55-75.

much more abstract than even the busing thing, and a hell of a lot more abstract than "Nigger, nigger."²²³

By “abstracting” and “coding” racially motivated agendas into political rhetoric, strategies like this have bolstered the adoption of positions like “colorblindness” which drive conversations on race out of the halls where change could be actualized.²²⁴ Atwater’s tactical use of concealment, here, served as an adaptation of the memorial structure used by Confederate organizers in order to assemble groups while their rights were restricted during Reconstruction. Candidates like Reagan, Bush, Clinton, Romney and Trump have employed similar “dog whistles” to generate fear and economic anxiety around racial issues; examples like welfare, redlining, gerrymandering, and policing boast statistics which disproportionately affect communities of color, but have been legislated as “colorblind” to foreclose debate on racial inequalities.²²⁵ While some have recognized the underlying motive in these conversations, the concealment of controversy amplified the acceptability of policies which unevenly distribute poverty and precarity.

While rhetoric directly focused on Confederate monuments was not prescient to the political careers of Nixon, Reagan, Bush, Clinton and Romney, Donald Trump picked up where other proponents of the Lost Cause left off in many respects. I could list myriad examples of fabrications broadcast to the American public through Trump’s media platform, but here I would rather focus directly on his comments regarding Confederate monuments and his avid rejection of programs like *The 1619 Project* for use in American education. Perhaps the closest Trump

223. The Nation. *Lee Atwater’s Infamous 1981 Interview on the Southern Strategy*, 2012. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_8E3ENrKrQ.

224. Haney-Lopez, *Dog Whistle Politics*, in “The False Allure of Color Blindness,” Pp.77-104, and in “Getting Away with Racism,” Pp.127-146.

225. Haney-Lopez, *Dog Whistle Politics*, in “The False Allure of Color Blindness,” in “Getting Away with Racism,” Pp.127-146.

came to siding with an activist on this issue was in June 2015 — shortly after activist Bree Newsome (Bass) climbed a flagpole to remove the Confederate flag flying over the South Carolina State Building — Trump had recently entered the election cycle, and when asked about the flag replied: "Let it go. Respect whatever it is you have to respect because it was a point in time, and put it in a museum. But I would take it down, yes."²²⁶ We've already discussed the ambiguity of Trump's response to the Unite the Right rally in 2017, but by 2020 his stance on Confederate monuments was made clear. Following a string of toppled monuments between May and June 2020, Trump signed Executive Order 13933, declaring that such "criminal acts" — carried out by "violent extremists" and their "campaign against our country" — would be "prosecuted to the fullest extent permitted under Federal Law."²²⁷ While discussion of Confederate Monuments is conspicuously absent, Trump's refusal to rename military bases named after former Confederates in the same month suggests these were the types of monuments he sought to preserve.²²⁸ In the act, Trump asserted that:

Anarchists and left-wing extremists have sought to advance a fringe ideology that paints the United States of America as fundamentally unjust and have sought to impose that ideology on Americans through violence and mob intimidation. They have led riots in the streets, burned police vehicles, killed and assaulted government officers as well as business owners defending their property, and even seized an area within one city where law and order gave way to anarchy.²²⁹

226. "Trump's History of Defending Confederate 'heritage' despite Political Risk: ANALYSIS." ABC News. Accessed March 16, 2021. <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/trumps-history-defending-confederate-heritage-political-risk-analysis/story?id=71199968>. Vox. *Activist Bree Newsome Takes down Confederate Flag at South Carolina Statehouse*, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYgbwbmsHfw>.

227. "Executive Order 13933-Protecting American Monuments, Memorials, and Statues and Combating Recent Criminal Violence - Content Details - DCPD-202000483." Accessed March 17, 2021. <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/DCPD-202000483>.

228. Baker, Peter, and Helene Cooper. "Trump Rejects Renaming Military Bases Named After Confederate Generals." *The New York Times*, June 11, 2020, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/us/politics/trump-rejects-renaming-military-bases.html>.

229. "Executive Order 13933"

Interpellations such as these have commonly been used against activists attempting to make progress on racially divisive policies. The tactic of smearing citizens exercising their first Amendment rights not only met Emancipation processions but was also deployed against iconic civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr (Figure 4.6).



Figure 4. 6: "I Plan To Lead Another Non-Violent Protest Tomorrow." Comic by Charles Brooks, *Birmingham News*, 1967.

This clearly connects with the fabrications we've discussed above regarding the killings of men like George Floyd and Eric Garner, but attempts to negate the masses rather than the individual. Trump connected his operation of fabrication with that of concealment when introducing his

plans for “patriotic education” in a press conference on September 17, 2020, Trump revealed the “fringe ideology” his administration’s policies strove to undermine:

By viewing every issue through the lens of race, they want to impose a new segregation, and we must not allow that to happen. Critical race theory, the 1619 Project and the crusade against American history is toxic propaganda, ideological poison, that, if not removed, will dissolve the civic bonds that tie us together, will destroy our country.²³⁰

That the United Daughters of the Confederacy endorsed S.E.F. Rose’s history, *The Ku Klux Klan, or Invisible Empire* as “patriotic education” (Figure 4.7), to me, seems like no coincidence here. Like the Confederate organizers who succeeded in erecting Confederate monuments, Trump understood that the “patriotic” historical memory in the United States was most compromised when societal inequities were resulting in mass demonstrations. Just as the United Daughters of the Confederacy had pushed an agenda to regulate which history books could be used to teach the Civil War in public classrooms, Trump’s 1776 commission released a set of guidelines, encouraging educators to teach a history which ignored America’s violent origins.²³¹ Fortunately Biden nixed this commission shortly after taking office in 2021, but the fact that so many supported Trump’s position on American history suggests that there is still a deep divide in the country on racially divisive issues.²³²

230. PBS NewsHour. “What Trump Is Saying about 1619 Project, Teaching U.S. History,” September 17, 2020. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/what-trump-is-saying-about-1619-project-teaching-u-s-history>. Solender, Andrew. “Trump Launches ‘Patriotic Education’ Commission, Calls 1619 Project ‘Ideological Poison.’” Forbes. Accessed September 17, 2020. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewsolender/2020/09/17/trump-launches-patriotic-education-commission-calls-1619-project-ideological-poison/>.

231. “1776 Commission Takes Historic and Scholarly Step to Restore Understanding of the Greatness of the American Founding – The White House.” Accessed April 6, 2021. <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/1776-commission-takes-historic-scholarly-step-restore-understanding-greatness-american-founding/>. Copy of report is linked through this page, since being rescinded by Joe Biden.

232. Michael D. Shear, “On Day 1, Biden Moves to Undo Trump’s Legacy.” *The New York Times*, January 20, 2021, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/us/politics/biden-executive-action.html>. “Opinion: Biden Rescinding the 1776 Commission Doesn’t End the Fight over History - CNN.” Accessed April 6, 2021. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/20/opinions/biden-1776-commission-trump-fight-over-history-hemmer/index.html>. Rick Hess, “Biden Eliminated the 1776 Commission But Not the Need for ‘Patriotic’ Education.” *Education Week*, February 1, 2021, sec. Federal. <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/opinion-biden-eliminated-1776-commission-but-not-the-need-for-patriotic-education/2021/02>.

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Figure 4. 7: Advertisement for S.E.F. Rose's history of the Ku Klux Klan, *Invisible Empire*, funded and endorsed by the United Daughters of the Confederacy as Patriotic Education. c.1915.

While the details above have focused on how the media have adapted operations from the form of political rallies in efforts to promote the acceptability of controversial ideology, understanding the ways in which these narratives have become embedded within the history of objects like Confederate monuments asserts that the archive, like these sources, is intertwined with the structures which "sustain power."²³³ As Taylor argues, "archival memory succeeds in separating the source of "knowledge" from the knower — in time and/or space — leads to comments, such as de Certeau's, that it is "expansionist" and "immunized against alterity."²³⁴ This thesis has posed the ways in which proponents of the Lost Cause were able to leverage the shroud of memorialization as a means of "immunization" from attack. Just as Confederate

233. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, in "Acts of Transfer," P.19.

234. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, in "Acts of Transfer," P.19.

organizers leveraged the grievability of their dead to conceal their efforts to rebuild racial hierarchy post-emancipation, politicians in the twentieth century followed Atwater's lead in concealing *who* their policies impact by emphasizing the policies which would disproportionately affect people of color can also be seen as attempts at "immunizing against alterity." While none of the details in Trump's *1776 Report* were grounded in credible historical narratives, Trump had built a reality for his followers in which truth no longer mattered. Even when Biden had clearly been elected president in 2020, Trump's followers accepted that this was "vote fraud," and thousands decided that this justified the use of violence as we witnessed in the Capitol insurrection on January 6, 2021 (Figures 4.8 and 4.9).



Figure 4. 8: Demonstrators storming the Capitol on January 6, 2021. Seen here stealing a police riot shield. Photograph by Eric Lee, *Bloomberg*, January 6, 2021.

We can see in the archive how details can be mediated based on political agendas, but by studying this history through the frame of the rally, we can also come to understand how tactics employed by the media have developed in continuity with the agenda of Confederate organizers on many levels.



Figure 4. 9: Horse, Shay. Noose and Gallows erected outside the United States Capitol. Photograph, Nurphoto/Getty Images, January 6, 2021.

While the term “political theater” asserts a theatrical dimension to the types of rallies I’ve discussed, I argue that rallies are capable of “doing things”; they are performative. Rallies are embodied demonstrations which transmit forms of knowledge to spectators; they fabricate and conceal historical narratives, and interpellate people of color in ways which impart suspicion and fear in the general will of the nation. And in tracing the reception of Confederate monuments

through mediated performances in the twenty-first century, we can clearly see how twenty-first century extensions of both rallies, and their techniques of mediation, continue to bolster policies which contribute to the precarity people of color encounter in their day-to-day existence.

Austin's basic definition of the function of performatives uses the example of weddings, the "I do" being the performative, which signifies successful completion of the act.²³⁵ What's important to remember is that without the structure supporting the performative, the act can't be carried out successfully; for example, prior to recent changes, same-sex couples were incapable of executing this performative successfully.²³⁶ Butler's adaptation of Austin's model to include bodily acts of "gender performativity" amplifies the significance of investigating how our actions and words support structural norms at the social and political level.²³⁷ Because of the ways our minds as individuals accept and reject norms and conventions, we have an ethical responsibility to understand the implications of our words and actions. Events like rallies are meant to constitute the acceptability of social and political ideologies and behaviors, and I believe this analysis reveals how assemblies such as these have the power to radically alter general will when bolstered by figures of authority. Because the narratives broadcast by Confederate-organizers were accepted by both the public and politicians, structures emerged to support their construction, and figures of authority legitimated memorials to the Union's former enemy in the general will. As we've seen, politicians and media pundits have continued to use narratives which criminalize the black body, and black demonstrations, contributing to the inequities in both precariousness and grievability faced by black communities. The variables that linger, here, reflect how these fabrications and interpellations have become legitimated, not only at the social

235. Austin, *How to do things with words*.

236. Austin, *How to do things with words*.

237. Butler, *Gender Trouble*.

level of these assemblies, but in our systems of legislature and justice as well. That the topplings of Confederate monuments in 2020 were connected to the death of George Floyd suggests that communities of activists are aware of how these structures of representation have contributed to inequalities in the social, political, and justice systems of the United States.

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While, again, my research did not reveal topplings in the period in which these monuments were being installed, that is not to suggest that there weren't *willful* actions associated with Emancipation Day processions during Reconstruction. Just as the frame of the rally suggests organizers attempted to influence the social and general will through Confederate monuments, the frame of the procession reveals how willfulness lingers in this history. Willful acts exist in this history and in concluding this discussion, I'd like to turn our attention to these actions. Earlier, I posed the procession as a form of theatrical demonstration, dependent upon the relationality of human actions in order to "dramatize" the experience of racism in relation to the Woolworth Lunch Counter Sit-Ins, when opponents assaulted peaceful demonstrators, they revealed themselves to be the threat in contrast to the mediated representations which have attempted to criminalize the black body. While most of the demonstrations we've discussed so far have taken a passive approach, we've seen how the form of the rally contributed to violent extremes in the section above, so here I'd like to examine these willful actions through the frame of the procession to see how the structures targeted by willful actions line up with my analysis of the procession. My hypothesis is that by investigating these more overtly willful actions we may walk away with a more profound understanding of how and why processions "swerved" away from previously established conventions.

Even the earliest history of Emancipation processions reveals how the meaning of these events was amplified through the group exercise of willfulness. The element of defying prior

conventions played a role in these celebrations, as Kathleen Clark makes clear in her account of demonstrations in Norfolk, Virginia on May 9, 1862, the night the Union seized the town from Confederates:

After Federal troops arrived, black residents staged a day of public thanksgiving, which began with sunrise services at the black churches and concluded with a massive parade and bonfire. Father Parker, a former slave and preacher in town, later recalled the particular pleasure everyone felt as they flaunted the long-standing curfew, walking the streets well into the night under the protection of Union troops.²³⁸

The black residents of Norfolk, Virginia received their freedom with open arms, and praised the army that had secured their emancipation; they gently “swerved” away from established conventions. In *Willful Subjects*, Sara Ahmed suggests that “social spaces in extending the motility of the body are how the will becomes not only general but concrete” to argue that public spaces, effectively, serve as an “apparatus” to enact general will.²³⁹ During slavery and after, black mobility held willfulness as an affect and Confederate organizers leveraged the conventional understanding of willful actions to bolster support not only of vigilantism but also for segregation. We can see this early procession in Norfolk as performative, insofar as it enacts recently regained rights, but because of the representational legacy left after 300 years of slavery, prior conventions lived on in the social will and were eventually re-asserted as segregation laws which restricted black mobility. In order for the event to have truly been performative, and thus constative, they would have needed to rupture this barrier of tropic representations which white supremacists continued to invert tactically. Perhaps these more cathartic exercises of disobedience bear the force required to concretize black mobility in the general will?

When the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect on January 1, 1863, the citizens of Norfolk, Virginia amplified their demonstrations to reflect their outrage over the war. Kathleen

238. Clark, *Defining Moments*, in “Introduction,” p.15.

239. Sara Ahmed, *Willful Subjects*, in “The General Will,” p.109.

Clark details the event that transpired as crowds of black Americans from the surrounding rural communities “poured into Norfolk”:

A massive parade kicked off the day’s ceremonies: black soldiers led a lengthy procession through the main streets of town; behind the soldiers came a full entourage of men, women, and children, some proceeding on foot, others in wagons. In a particularly audacious performance, two African American women made a show of destroying and trampling a Confederate flag from atop the cart on which they rode. After a speech delivered by the military governor, everyone marched out to the local fairgrounds, where celebrants burned an effigy of Jefferson Davis.²⁴⁰

While newspaper accounts existed from which Clark was able to compile this account, the same sources also revealed how white citizens responded to such willfulness: after this demonstration, Clark notes that a group of white citizens broke into one of the organizers’ stables and “cut into the eyes of two of his horses so that they bled to death before morning.”²⁴¹ Regardless of the cost of celebrating their freedom, however, black Americans continued to probe the boundaries of social equality through the form of processions. Not far away in Richmond, Virginia, organizers began staging large processions on “Surrender Day” — April 3, the day the Confederacy surrendered. While celebrating on this specific day was willful insofar as it salted the recent wounds of Confederate defeat, organizers ran a broadside in the *Richmond Dispatch* (Figure 4.10) hoping to clarify their intentions.²⁴²

240. Clark, *Defining Moments*, p.17.

241. Clark, *Defining Moments*, p.17.

242. Blair, *Cities of the Dead*, in “Establishing Freedom’s Celebrations,” p.37. *Richmond Dispatch*, March 30, 1866; broadside no. 1866.13, Virginia Historical Society (VHS).

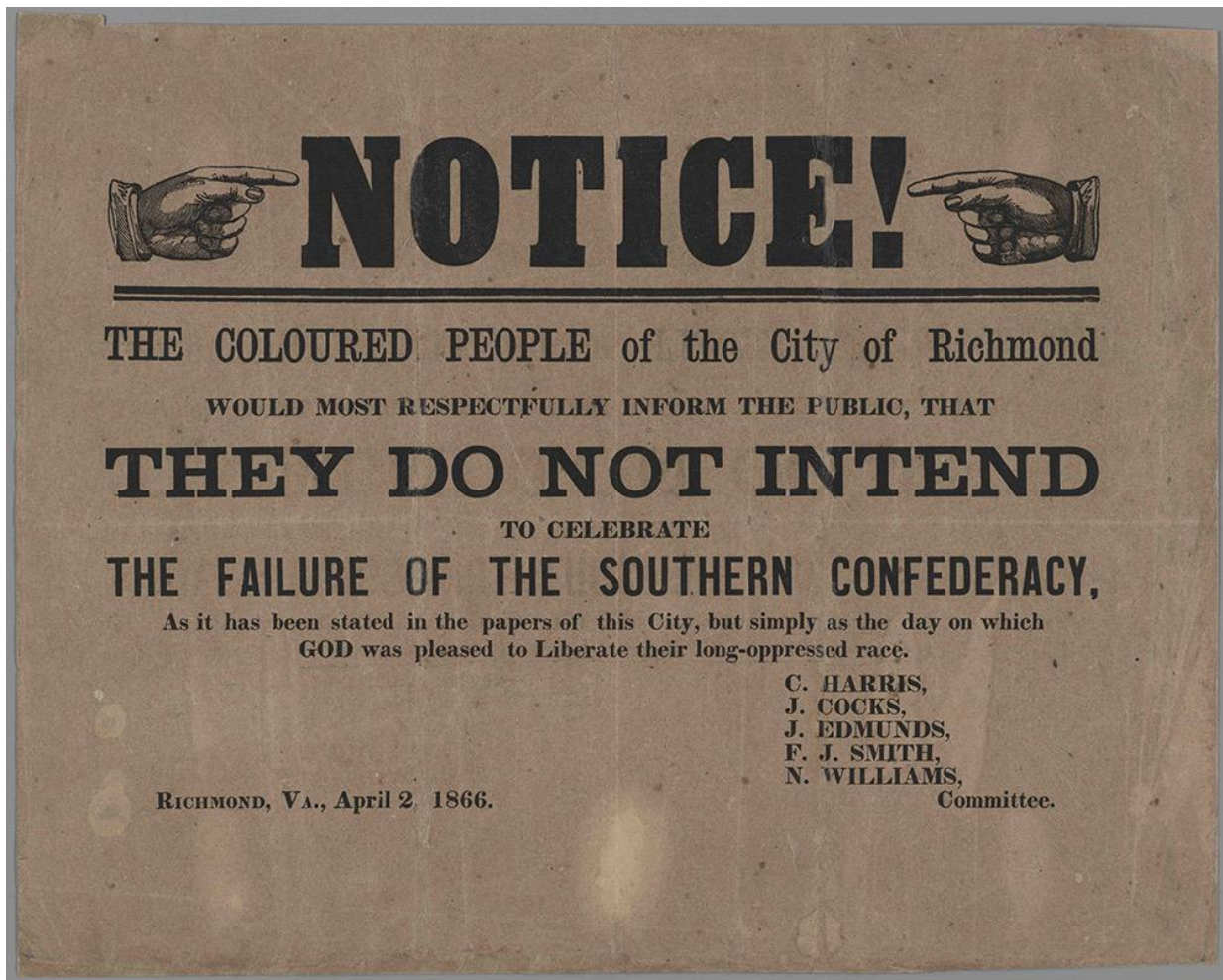


Figure 4. 10: “Notice! The Coloured People of the City of Richmond....” Presumed authors are the “Committee” listed on the broadside: C. Harris, J. Cocks, J. Edmunds, F. J. Smith, N. Williams, 1866. *Social Welfare History Image Portal*.

Expanding on this context, William Blair looks at the documentation of 1866’s “Surrender Day” procession; although the “white press” argued that demonstrators intended to trample flags and burn effigies of Confederates, Blair found no evidence of the organizers planning such activities.²⁴³ We can see here that the tactic of inversion was being employed by white presses in the years following the end of the Civil War. While it’s hard to understand how these Newspaper articles and broadsides may have affected the popular will during Reconstruction, the extensions

243. Blair, *Cities of the Dead*, in “Establishing Freedom’s Celebrations,” p.37.

of this conflict into the twenty-first century provide us a means of investigating the tensions that continue to linger in this history.



Figure 4. 11: Bree Newsome climbs a flagpole in Columbia, South Carolina. Video still. *The Tribe/YouTube*, June 2015.

Though we can't compare this directly with monument topplings, there is a 21st century corollary to this event through which we can investigate what lingers, here. On June 27, 2015, activist Bree Newsome Bass scaled the flagpole outside the South Carolina Capitol building to remove the Confederate Flag (Figure 4.11), just hours before a pro-Confederate flag rally was to be hosted on the grounds.²⁴⁴ Newsome was arrested after the event under the charge of "defacing a monument," and the flag was once again raised for the rally that afternoon.²⁴⁵ While thwarted, Newsome's action had a specific intention at its core; ten days prior, on June 17, 2015, nine

244. New York Magazine. "Woman Scales Pole to Remove Confederate Flag at South Carolina Capitol." Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2015/06/woman-removes-south-carolinas-confederate-flag.html>.

245. New York Magazine. "Woman Scales Pole to Remove Confederate Flag."

African American residents of Charleston, South Carolina, were murdered by a Confederate-sympathizer in the Mother Emanuel A.M.E. Church.²⁴⁶ A collaborator of Newsome's, Tamika Lewis, stated: "'We didn't see it fit to have the flag stand erect while the people who were massacred were laid to rest under it.'"²⁴⁷ On the same day of Newsome's action, state senator and Reverend Clementa Pinckney, and three other victims who were killed in the massacre, were being laid to rest in Charleston.²⁴⁸ In an interview the following Monday, Newsome provided some clues for interpreting the action:

We discussed it and decided to remove the flag immediately, both as an act of civil disobedience and as a demonstration of the power people have when we work together. Achieving this would require many roles, including someone who must volunteer to scale the pole and remove the flag. It was decided that this role should go to a black woman and that a white man should be the one to help her over the fence as a sign that our alliance transcended both racial and gender divides. We made this decision because for us, this is not simply about a flag, but rather it is about abolishing the spirit of hatred and oppression in all its forms. I removed the flag not only in defiance of those who enslaved my ancestors in the southern United States, but also in defiance of the oppression that continues against black people globally in 2015, including the ongoing ethnic cleansing in the Dominican Republic. I did it in solidarity with the South African students who toppled a statue of the white supremacist, colonialist Cecil Rhodes. I did it for all the fierce black women on the front lines of the movement and for all the little black girls who are watching us. I did it because I am free.²⁴⁹

Like the broadside from 1866 in Richmond, Virginia, Newsome's action was intended to be received as a message. The organizers in nineteenth-century Richmond attempted to protect participants by rejecting false claims. Newsome, likewise, was trying to protect the community

246. Makarechi Kia. "Obama Leads Crowd in 'Amazing Grace' at Funeral for Church Shooting Victims." Vanity Fair. Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2015/06/obama-amazing-grace-eulogy>.

247. Melissa Locker. "Activist Bree Newsome Arrested After Daring South Carolina Confederate Flag Removal." Vanity Fair. Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2015/06/activist-bree-newsome-arrested-after-daring-south-carolina-confederate-flag-removal>.

248. Elizabeth Chuck. "'They Will Not Have Died in Vain': Funerals Held for Three Charleston Victims." NBC News. Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/charleston-church-shooting/funerals-held-three-more-charleston-church-victims-n383066>.

249. New York Magazine. "Who Is Bree Newsome, the Woman Who Took Down South Carolina's Confederate Flag?" Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2015/06/who-is-bree-newsome-confederate-flag.html>.

mourning Confederacy-inspired deaths as they had extended into the twenty-first century. Newsome's action reflects a willingness to be willful: a willingness to break the law, and to exercise civil disobedience; a willingness inspired by those who have fought for and continue to fight for equality. Though coming in the form of radically rejecting a symbol, Newsome's action can be understood as an extension of black mourning, of *mo'nin*.²⁵⁰ And while we lack archival materials through which to better understand the intentions behind the flag trampling in Norfolk in 1863 or in Richmond in 1866, through the lens of Newsome's performance, we can imagine how mourning played a role in these demonstrations. As Fred Moten suggests, performances like Newsome's have an "aural dimension" which "re-enacts" the terror and violation felt by black Americans during slavery.²⁵⁰ Here, Newsome's vocalization at the top of the flagpole — "You come against me with hatred and oppression and violence. I come against you in the name of God. This flag comes down today" — like Mamie Till's crying at Emmett's wake transcended the racial barrier to expose structural injustice (Figure 4.12).²⁵¹

250. Moten, *In the Break*.

251. Moten, *In the Break*. History com. "Activist Bree Newsome Removes Confederate Flag from South Carolina State House." HISTORY. Accessed March 26, 2021. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/bree-newsome-removes-confederate-flag-south-carolina-state-house>.



Figure 4. 12: Mamie Till Mobley collapsed next to her son Emmett's body arrives at the old Illinois Central Railroad station. Photograph, *Chicago Sun-Times* library, 1955.

Understanding that after Emancipation many former slaves travelled the country to find family members that had been sold away during slavery, we can see how actions like the flag trampling in Norfolk were also connected with structural inequalities in grievability stemming from the separation of families.²⁵² Although these willful actions assert that the differential distribution of precarity in the United States is linked to structures of representation, that the flag was raised again after Newsome's arrest provides evidence of how current structures of representation are implicated in systems of discrimination.

252. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, in "Chapter I: *Innocent Amusements: The Stage of Sufferance*," Pp.17-48.

Over 150 years after the close of the Civil War, symbols of the Confederacy still litter the national landscape. That Newsome's action responded to inequities in racial violence, in the context of mourning, reflects on the same inequities which permeated the national will prior to the Civil War. The Confederacy was fighting, ultimately, for the right to hold human beings as chattel — for the right to demean black Americans as inferior. As accounts of Reconstruction like that of W.E.B. DuBois reveal, prior to the Emancipation Proclamation, black bodies were seen as disposable; something one could argue that demography extends into the twenty-first century.²⁵³ That flags representing this position have been regularly flown on government properties in the twenty-first century attests to the ways in which the willingness to remember and forgive legitimates the perpetuation of Confederate ideology at the national level. The victims in Charleston were murdered under the Confederate flag, just as thousands before them had been in the history of the United States. Newsome's gesture rejected the extension of ideology which legitimated the Confederacy within the context of grievability. Had the Confederacy not been painted as honorable through the legitimation of symbols like the Confederate flag and monuments, perhaps Dylann Roof would not have killed nine people in Charleston, but because it had been legitimated, he felt his hate crime was justified. According to a friend, Roof had become obsessed with "rescuing the white race" following George Zimmerman's murder of Trayvon Martin.²⁵⁴ That Zimmerman was found not guilty extends the conversation to include the legitimation to acts of violence in our justice system.²⁵⁵ Newsome's action can be seen as a direct aesthetic intervention on the way structures are legitimated in the

253. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*, New York: The Free Press, 1935.

254. Erik Ortiz. "Dylann Roof, Suspected Charleston Church Shooting Gunman Has Troubled Past." NBC News. Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/charleston-church-shooting/dylann-roof-suspected-charleston-church-shooting-gunman-has-troubled-past-n377686>.

255. Greg Botelho and Holly Yan. "George Zimmerman Found Not Guilty of Murder in Trayvon Martin's Death." CNN, July 13, 2013. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/07/13/justice/zimmerman-trial/index.html>.

United States. Knowing the Confederate flag would be flown during the funeral of the victims, Newsome sought to draw attention to the injustices represented by this symbol. While her efforts were not immediately fruitful, she invigorated ongoing debates, which resulted in many states changing their position on flying the Confederate flag on government property. Despite governments responding to these issues by removing such symbols, Newsome's action invigorated the debate with the *why* behind decisions to remove Confederate symbols and monuments by connecting it directly with the process of mourning and systemic inequalities in grievability. Even so, why is such a dramatic action required to generate systemic change? And why is it that so many continue to defend Confederate symbols and justify murders like that of Trayvon Martin?

This is where the individually learned nature of conventions comes to play a role in this conversation. It is through processes of education and indoctrination that myths like the Lost Cause have lived on. The opposite side of the tropes projected onto black bodies which criminalize people of color is in tropic representations of America's greatness, which foreclose the possibility of many Americans acknowledging the violence of our nation's founding. These narratives attempt to turn history into spectacle by looking at the positive and precluding the negative. Proponents of the lost cause, for instance, decried the rebellion was justified by the constitution, inverting the narrative to assert their loyalty to the constitution outweighed their violations of human rights during slavery. In one of the earliest books on the subject, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South*, Gaines M. Foster convincingly argues that by claiming loyalty to the founding fathers, Lost Cause proponents developed a convincing argument that the right to secede was constitutionally legal; regardless, Confederate organizers were forced to depend on the willingness of others to repeat their

message to portray a narrative which represented the rebellion's cause as just.²⁵⁶ Because of the way it promoted the grievability of the Confederate dead and justified the Confederacy's position in the war, many white southerners readily received and repeated the message. Successful reception, for organizers, implied that the message would be repeated, allowing Lost Cause ideology to flourish despite federal attempts at restricting communications channels. Public acceptance of this ideology legitimated narratives like the Lost Cause in the social will of the country and within a few decades support from politicians helped legitimate these myths in the general will; not only by funding Confederate memorialization, but also through segregation laws. Before television and radio, events like Confederate monument unveilings were a key component for distributing ideology, and providing points to validate conventions being challenged after emancipation. While digital media has tipped the scale to favor media narratives over in-person events, the same strategies used by proponents of the Lost Cause in Confederate ceremonies continue to be employed by media pundits on the right, in efforts to maintain prejudices which become tactical during election cycles. As this debate has continued into the twenty-first century, we can see how the validation of such ideology invigorates continued support of the "states' rights" narrative of the Civil War, even in the twenty-first century.

Shortly after Newsome's action, as debates picked up about the acceptability of Confederate flags, a history teacher at Shawnee Mission East High School in Prairie Village, Kansas — a Union state during the Civil War — recorded a debate over the Confederate Flag.²⁵⁷ While many students argued against the flag, those in favor of the flag were equally steadfast in their positions.²⁵⁸ But as much as these students tried to separate racism from the states' rights

256. Foster. *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, in "Ghost Dance: The Virginians' Failed Movement," Pp.46-50.

257. SM East Harbinger. *SME Confederate Flag Debate*, 2015.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQxM_EK5aiM.

258. *SME Confederate Flag Debate*, 2015.

argument, the debate suggested that most believed the right Confederate states were fighting for was slavery.²⁵⁹ During the summer of 2020 monuments were toppled around the world in protest of the police killing of George Floyd, yet proponents in favor of Confederate monuments echoed Trump in urging Americans to “build upon our heritage, not tear it down.”²⁶⁰ This argument deflects from the problem at hand: large masses of people are completely outraged not only by these symbols of racism which have lingered into of the twenty-first century, but by the systems which have maintained them. These narratives are learned in classrooms from history books that whitewash the American past but also from family members, through social activities, religious communities, and myriad forms of media. Efforts like the New York Times’ *1619 Project* strive to correct misconceptions generated by white-washed history books, but as we have seen, such pedagogical efforts continue to be met with resistance in the twenty-first century. While many are eager to accept these interventions in aspirations of moving forward, historians have likewise accepted the fact that these biases are deeply engrained and must be confronted in order to be accepted. Jeffrey Robinson calls reckoning with this history a “naked lunch” moment, in which individuals must reckon with “what’s on the end of their forks.”²⁶¹ Perhaps we can see this most literally in examples like the Woolworth’s Lunch-Counter Sit-Ins, in which white Americans enacted their opposition to sharing a counter with black Americans by assaulting demonstrators with whatever was available in the cafeteria. By literally putting black Americans “at the end of

259. *SME Confederate Flag Debate*, 2015.

260. Andrew O’Reilly. “Trump Says ‘we Must Build upon Our Heritage, Not Tear It down’ amid Confederate Statue Removals.” Article. Fox News. Fox News, June 16, 2020. <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-build-upon-our-heritage-not-tear-it-down>. “Tucker Carlson Compares Dismantling Confederate Monuments to Destroying Ancient Religious Statues.” The Washington Times. Accessed March 26, 2021. <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2020/jun/18/tucker-carlson-compares-dismantling-confederate-mo/>.

261. Jeffrey Robinson and ACLU of Washington. “When Heritage = Hate: The Truth About the Confederacy in America,” August 21, 2017. <https://www.aclu-wa.org/events/when-heritage-hate-truth-about-confederacy-america>. Video taken down due to copyright issue related to the descendents of Robert E. Lee, accessed via <https://youtu.be/K8aXk-kVXLQ>.

their fork," these individuals revealed that the barbaric behaviors stereotypically imparted on black Americans were more commonly enacted by whites in opposition (Figure 2.17).

Understanding the violence that greeted Emancipation processions during Reconstruction and having witnessed the brutality with which police have met Black Lives Matter protests in the twenty-first century, we can understand that these assemblies, likewise, reveal that the violence related to these demonstrations comes from both white supremacists and structures of policing. The power in such theatricality is in operationally inverting tropes. No longer is the criminalized black body the source of the threat, images which present white aggressors attacking black bodies invert such interpellations to pull the shroud of fabrication from the public eye.

Demonstrations like topplings, and like Newsome's removal of the Confederate flag, reveal the willingness of processions to proceed despite the obstacles; while the toppling of monuments caused many cities to enforce curfews against protestors, the protestors continued to put their bodies on the line to reveal how the distribution of violence is entangled with the struggle for equality. Indeed, many historians have suggested that the symbolic recognition of the Confederacy has legitimated racial discrimination in the public sphere, but others have always taken the opposition. Because of this, the advancement of civil rights has come in incremental changes; while the civil rights movement ended segregation in schools and public spaces, redlining maps reveal how urban neighborhoods remain segregated in the twenty-first century. Though *legally* segregation has been abolished, in reality social inequities have survived because of policy decisions which use colorblindness as a shield to prevent race from ever entering the conversation.²⁶² Despite statistics which reveal the unequal distribution of precarity within communities of color, because of learned biases, many are unwilling to recognize how black

262. Haney-Lopez, *Dog Whistle Politics*, in "The False Allure of Colorblindness," Pp.77-104.

Americans are differentially exposed to death because of inequities in housing, healthcare, and day-to-day existence. While the media does not consistently cover protests or political campaigns to remove Confederate symbols, topplings accomplish that goal while generating commentary on the reasons these monuments are an issue. Following a series of topplings in May and June 2020, many media organizations ran features addressing the problematic history of Confederate monuments. When communities lack the political representation to overturn such obstacles through the systems in place, acts of resistance hold a force which can reveal the shortcomings of our current systems. By presenting a means of “swerving” away from the obstacle, these actions help others understand why Confederate symbols are problematic, rather than concealing them.

Although many have praised local governments’ willingness to remove Confederate Monuments from their landscapes, others have criticized government decisions to remove monuments as performative. While the existence of these statues has legitimated sympathy for those who fought to hold human beings as chattel, quietly removing them does little to correct misrepresentations. Likewise, efforts to remove Confederate monuments usually imply that the monument will be preserved, which can cost thousands of dollars annually, diverting public funds from those most vulnerable. Confederate organizers like the United Daughters of the Confederacy were early tacticians in the strategic manipulation of public memory, and many of the agendas they initiated during Reconstruction continue to be stalemated in the twenty-first century. Even when there is no opposition to removing monuments, Confederate organizers worked with many state governments to develop monument laws and “heritage protection acts,” which Karen L. Cox suggests “prevent local redress and make petitions meaningless.”²⁶³ That

263. Cox, *No Common Ground: Confederate Monuments and the Ongoing fight for Racial Justice*, p.5.

one of the buildings destroyed during the protests was the United Daughters of the Confederacy's headquarters in Richmond, Virginia (Figure 4.13) reveals that those who are outraged by these monuments, are equally outraged by the structures that allowed them to exist in the first place.²⁶⁴



Figure 4. 13: Officer standing outside the United Daughters of the Confederacy Headquarters in Richmond, Virginia, after it was set on fire by protestors. Photograph by Sarah Vogelsong, *Virginia Mercury*, May 30, 2020.

264. Oliver, Ned, *Virginia Mercury* May 31, and 2020. "Confederate Memorial Hall Burned as Second Night of Outrage Erupts in Virginia." *Virginia Mercury* (blog), May 31, 2020. <https://www.virginiamercury.com/2020/05/31/a-second-night-of-outrage-erupts-in-virginia/>. Karen L. Cox. "Setting the Lost Cause on Fire | Perspectives on History | AHA." Accessed March 25, 2021. <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/summer-2020/setting-the-lost-cause-on-fire-protesters-target-the-united-daughters-of-the-confederacy-headquarters>.

As Karen L. Cox suggests in an essay on this event, “That it was attacked by protesters who also targeted the Lee Memorial suggests that local activists understood the building to be as offensive as a traditional monument.”²⁶⁵ Suggesting that perhaps there is an infrastructure behind these monuments that has driven social outrage. Perhaps the power of group actions like these is in revealing the willingness of others to disobey; they make rejecting such structures publicly acceptable. For those lacking representation, actions like topplings draw significant media attention, and give demonstrators a means of breaking into the conversation by enacting the outrage they carry from every day racial discrimination which lingers in American social and political structures. As Martin Luther King Jr. famously stated in a 1966 interview on *60 Minutes*, “A riot is the language of the unheard, and what is it that America has failed to hear?”²⁶⁶ For those that lack social and political representation toppling a monument, removing a Confederate flag, even burning a building like the UDC headquarters can be understood as a means of drawing public attention to the issues underlying these tensions, and publicly rejecting their perpetuation.

While the organizers of Emancipation processions sought non-violent means of making themselves heard, this history has revealed that often this wasn’t enough to propel their voices into the social will. As William Blair and Kathleen Clark’s books on the subject suggest, while some white citizens joined in Emancipation processions, many white residents chose to leave town during these events, and others violently obstructed black American locomotion. While those taking part deserve their praise, they were far from the target audience; by re-enacting the stereotypes of good black citizenship projected on them, the organizers of processions sought to

265. “Setting the Lost Cause on Fire | Perspectives on History | AHA.”

266. 60 Minutes. *September 27, 1966: MLK—A Riot Is the Language of the Unheard*, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_K0BWXjJv5s.

enact their willingness to join American society, with all citizenship's rights and responsibilities. These demonstrations sought to increase the representation of African American citizens by enacting the right to occupy and move through space. Though white supremacist violence did not meet every procession, many changed their plans and avoided shared public spaces out of fear, paving the way for "black codes" and "Jim Crow laws."²⁶⁷ In her recently published book, *No Common Ground: Confederate Monuments and the Ongoing fight for Racial Justice*, Karen L. Cox argues that:

By 1901, black men had effectively been disenfranchised in all of the states of the former Confederacy. Alongside these legal machinations, southern lawmakers were assisted in their efforts by vigilante groups like the Ku Klux Klan and other white men who used violence and attempted to keep them from voting.²⁶⁸

Like these acts of white supremacist violence, topplings and other acts of destruction stem from anxieties that already exist but were amplified through the form of assemblies. Rallies sought to weaponize such anxiety by encouraging racial separation. Messages sent to the public through Confederate monument unveilings were meant to be received and repeated. As my analysis of the procession suggests, this form of assembly served as a request for invitation into the general population; black Americans organized emancipation processions hoping to be received with equal rights as citizens. While these willful acts have involved destruction, this history suggests that such expressions of outrage stem from injustices which have yet to be reconciled in American structures.

The existence of Confederate monuments allowed organizers to promote an honorable historical memory of those who chose to fight for the right to hold human beings as chattel while helping southern democrats regain enough political power to pass segregation laws which *legally*

267. Cox, *No Common Ground*, p.20.

268. Cox, *No Common Ground*, p.20.

restricted the mobility of black bodies in the early twentieth century. To this day, Confederate monuments remain in prominent locations outside of courthouses and capitol buildings. Schools and military training bases named after Confederates have likewise helped perpetuate this fabrication. Peaceful processions have dominated a majority of this history, yet opponents tend to portray black assemblies as “mobs” of “rioters.” Despite the willingness of many participants in the Black Lives Matter protests to use nonviolent strategies of resistance, when outrage boils over and destruction occurs these acts reveal that even when current structures of representation prevent the words of many from *doing things* — in the performative sense — toppling Confederate monuments and actions like Newsome’s *do something* about it while remaining relational. When structures are developed which preserve Confederate monuments, they reveal that the words that can do things must be uttered by the appropriate individuals, otherwise they are moot. These more willful actions are not dependent on language, but on the physical existence of bodies in a shared space and the physical enactment of this reality. Newsome’s reasoning, “I did it because I’m free,” rejects what lingers in this history — the legacy of white supremacy. Newsome asserted her will by removing the flag when the state refused to listen. Following the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis Law Enforcement in May 2020, Confederate monuments were toppled during protests. Considering police brutality in relation to this history, one can see how the strategic disenfranchisement of black Americans during Reconstruction paved the way for a justice system which statistically reveals how the carceral state filled the void that slavery had left behind. That so many have protested police killings and attempted to have offending officers removed from their posts and yet in an overwhelming majority of these cases, officers that had killed a black victim were not charged by a jury. No matter the effort, inequities like this in our justice system reveal that people of color

lack the representation to overcome the projections of criminality which riddle our media landscape. While demonstrators outraged by police brutality are rarely able to *do something* with regard to the officers being charged or removed from the police force, these monument topplings succeeded both in removing symbols of the Confederacy, and in drawing attention to how these symbols connect to American social and political structures. While I don't know the answer to handling Confederate monuments at this time, because of the representational inequalities, which riddle this history, I'm certain that it will require bringing people of color into the conversation.

Concluding Remarks

To rally is something more than to rise from depression, to rally is to rise above suppression by whatever means necessary. The event of a rally, though, is a call to arms. As Butler suggests in *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, “no *one* assembly can become the basis for generalizations about *all* assemblies,” but what I hope what this account reveals is that the logic of rallies as a form of assembly rooted in portraying minority communities as a threat, but doing so through rhetorical strategies which cloak the intentions of the utterance.²⁶⁹ Butler asserts that: “Every example fails, and yet certain themes tend to recur such that we can reapproach the way the claim of “we the people” is made.”²⁷⁰ The implication between these two lines is that the performative element of assemblies is never enacted the same way twice. The impact of the utterance stems from the people that become entangled in that “we” in the process of the assembly. Though the process may fail for some, by organizing these events to amass spectators, the odds of controversial ideas being embraced and repeated increased substantially as every boisterous supporter in attendance amplified them. While assemblies can establish on a heterogenous front, as with emancipation processions and civil rights demonstrations, I argue that such rallies are performative, in their homogenizing, normative intentions. While the history of Confederate monuments has been approached by a number of scholars in recent years, many have brushed off the significance of forms of assembly in this historiography — but I believe this account reveals how forms of assembly have played a role in normalizing stereotypes which have persisted into the twenty-first century. What is important to understand, as I see it, are the ways in which the connection between rallying and

269. Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, in “‘We the People’ - Thoughts on Freedom of Assembly,” p.155.

270. Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, in “‘We the People’ - Thoughts on Freedom of Assembly,” p.156.

mourning help justify the appearance of biases while giving organizers a level of control over the response of spectators (and thus some control over the likelihood of repetition). In the history of Confederate monuments, we can clearly see that the ability to normalize a representation was tied to economic variables, and this is likewise reflected in the campaigns of the politicians espousing “dog whistle politics” and in Trumpism.

While these biases still exist in society, we are also seeing that social media provides a greater level of representation to minority communities than they have historically been allotted in America. Through the use of social media, we are starting to see terms normalized and redefined. The most significant example from 2020, perhaps, is the redefinition of racism in the Merriam-Webster dictionary.²⁷¹ While American understanding of racism has long been associated with acts of violence perpetuated against the bodies of minority others, this redefinition acknowledges the structural understanding of racism. Right-wing media proponents and politicians have long weaponized the definition of racism to render any accusations futile for lack of malevolence, and this redefinition holds the potential to restructure our understanding of racism in public discourse in a way that would counter their strategy.²⁷² Although Merriam Webster has acknowledged the change in redefining racism, efforts like Trump’s decisions to eliminate “diversity training” from the government training protocols, make vandalism of monuments a federal offense, and discredit the New York Times’s *1619 Project* as a viable educational resource reveal that there are still active attempts to limit the American understanding of racism to one of malevolence.²⁷³ Likewise, the statistics of minority deaths

271. “Merriam-Webster to Redefine ‘Racism’ after Missouri Woman’s Plea.” Accessed December 5, 2020. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/merriam-webster-redefines-racism/>.

272. Haney-Lopez, *Dog Whistle Politics*, in “The False Allure of Color Blindness,” Pp.77-104, and in “Getting Away with Racism,” Pp.127-146.

273. Haney-Lopez, *Dog Whistle Politics*, in “The False Allure of Color Blindness,” Pp.77-104, and in “Getting Away with Racism,” Pp.127-146.

related to both police brutality and the coronavirus pandemic reveal that the structures in place in our country continue to make the black lives more precarious than those of whites. So, we must be diligent in understanding the reception of racial biases, and a significant part of that, I argue, is in understanding how modes of assembly and address enable the successful reception of performative acts — even through their mediation. Visual representation is crucial to this history, but also causes many scholars to limit their scope in relation to Confederate monuments. I believe this argument reveals the benefit of expanding the boundaries of art history as a discipline to assert the significance of everyday media, performances, and gestures in analyses of Confederate monuments, as these variables bear the potential to help us better understand the structures out of which these objects emerged.

*** *** ***

This thesis provides a general framework, within which various new studies can be carried out. As mentioned here, briefly, social media extends collective representation in many ways, and has resulted in protests of monumental size, which are generally organized on short notice. While my analysis here provides a cursory examination of similarities between emancipation processions and demonstrations like the George Floyd protests, there is room for this to be expanded. Many of the emancipation processions were organized by members of regional AME churches, and I didn't expand on the significance of religion in this conversation. It remains rich for exploration not only for its connections to black mutual aid efforts, but also because the organizers have been criticized as paternalist by some accounts. That religion also connects with many of the scientific debates taking place in the nineteenth century, likewise, expands the options for approaching religious ceremonies in the context of collective representation since Reconstruction. Organizers of processions from outside of the church were

generally part of mutual aid clubs, which helped black business owners find funding when banks turned them away. Mardi Gras processions and Second Lines in New Orleans were primarily organized as mutual aid organizations and continue to be today. While they may only parade once a year, they organize within their communities consistently throughout the year. Solidarity is another significant notion in this discussion that deserve further reflection. Understanding that white audiences avoided processions during Reconstruction implicates the beholder in a relationship with these demonstrations, but the white citizens who did participate were significant. Because white voters predominate the United States, it's important to improve solidarity within our own communities in order to give people of color better representation. This mutual interdependency is elaborated on in many of Judith Butler's books but continues to be ripe for expansion. These few suggestions only cover the side of the procession.

Rallies continue to present themselves as a political tool, and often a cause for concern. That a rally organized on behalf of Donald Trump evolved into an insurrectionary effort on January 6th reveals the ways in which American extremism continues to be amplified by the form of the rally in the twenty-first century. Like with the George Floyd protests, these demonstrations are amplified by social media, and that deserves further attention in this discussion. In addition to this, here are variables from the past, like postcards, which reproduced Confederate monument unveilings, and I think these should deserve to be elaborated in within the context of lynching postcards, some of which were reproduced by the same companies that printed Confederate unveiling postcards. The relationship between postcards of the early-twentieth century and the memes broadcast through social media is not trite and focusing this discussion on how images of assemblies are circulated would undoubtedly tie into this

framework. I feel that this grounding will help scholars support future research projects, and I'm eager myself to begin on some of the case studies discussed here.

As a result of the increased visibility of police brutality provided by both cellular technology and body cameras, Derek Chauvin was convicted of murder in late April 2021. The prosecutors leveraged the evidence, clearly showed George Floyd being suffocated to death with three officers on his back enraged. While in the past, lack of evidence and vagaries in police protocols have, as we've discussed, caused many police to go free after murdering black civilians, but this, like the definition of racism, is changing in the twenty-first century. While these small victories continue to come in waves, amidst skyrocketing reports of police brutality, we can understand how the procession, by proceeding faithfully, despite resistance, has generated significant incremental changes that are beginning to effect American infrastructure. We must continue to uplift the voices of black and indigenous people of color in these conversations. While in the past the repetition of stereotypes has thrown shade on minority communities in the United States, we can remain equally steadfast in rejecting such tropes and uplifting those who aren't given proper representation by the systems in place.

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