BREAKING THE WHITE NATION: Or a Tour of the Red and Blue States

ABSTRACT: The Neo-Confederate historical narrative supports, creates, defines, and constructs a white nationalist nation composed of the former Confederate states within the United States of America. The logical consequences of white nationalism is a politics of hierarchy and patriarchy supporting a reactionary anti-democratic politics.  The Confederate-constructed South being a white nationalist nation, is thus a reactionary nation. There have been sets of Red and Blue states in the past and the latest set is but one of a series of such sets. One example of Neo-Confederacy shaping major national political issues I outline here is the history of the geography of the politics of women’s issues

The Neo-Confederate narratives which are the underpinnings of the Neo-Confederate constructed nation are extensively accommodated, largely unchallenged, and not recognized as white nationalist. This is due to multiple factors.  One is the public stereotypes of what white nationalism looks like and a general unawareness of white banal nationalism.  The second is that Neo-Confederacy has largely been able to represent itself as banal and not explicit nationalism. Third, Neo-Confederacy is accommodated by banal white nationalism in the general public.

The failure to see the Neo-Confederate narrative as white nationalist, and the failure to understand its consequences: internal secession, the reactionary politics derived from the Neo-Confederate nationalism; the formation of an internal reactionary fortress nation, has meant no effective counter measures to reactionary politics. It means that national politics have a built in tilt towards reaction and that *any*effective progressive and democratic politics is always at risk.

INTRODUCTION:

The difficulty in writing an essay such as *Breaking the White Nation* is that my ideas and arguments arise from a very different perception of what American society is and how it is constructed than from what I perceive to be generally held. It also faces the difficulties of people’s prejudgments about what the issues are in relation to my research into the Neo-Confederate movement and American historical memory. It is a plan to break the white nation and substitute for it a multiracial or should I say a non-racial nation. It is a proposed plan of action.

I am going to ask the reader to allow me to construct my universe of ideas in which my arguments take residence and forgo judgments until then. However, to eliminate some of these preconceptions, I will make these statements about what this essay isn’t about and what it is about. It is about the everyday banal white nationalism of ordinary white people and a plan to confront this banal white nationalism. It isn’t about debating the Civil War or reviewing the details of 19th century American history, though it will discuss the use of historical narratives to construct banal white nationalism and the vulnerabilities of banal white nationalism constructed by Neo-Confederacy.

The essay comes out of what I have discovered in my years of research and my continuing surprise in regards to the widespread willingness to indulge, apologize for, tolerate, be indifferent to, or support a white nationalist historical narrative and neo-Confederacy, by persons across the political spectrum. It also comes from my readings in cultural geography, in particular nationalism, and about geographical spaces and race. I do believe that there is a different and powerful avenue to take to confront banal white nationalism in the United States.

MEANINGLESS ANTI-KKK ACTIVITES: WHO IS A RACIST?

The public’s concept of a racist is a stereotype. They think of some belligerent person, perhaps wearing strange or unusual clothing, screaming hostile slogans of white supremacy and anti-African American hostility, some uneducated lower-income Halloween character lacking good middle class decorum.

There are self-labeled anti-racist groups whose primary if not only objective is to oppose these type groups. They hold counter demonstrations when the colorful racist group has a demonstration. There often will be well over a hundred demonstrators to counter protest a dozen or less members of the racist group.

The members of the racist group will often be persons marginal in society and of no political influence or any other type of influence. Their racist organization often has few or negligible resources. They may be protesting in an area where it can be expected that the local criminal justice system will take every measure against them if they commit a crime. There is little prospect for any of these organizations that they will be able to mount a successful campaign to achieve any of their objectives or create a viable movement.

Often the counter-demonstrators have an ideology which directs them to get into physical confrontations with the racist group. This necessitates the presence of the police in large numbers making the protest a governmental issue and a more media worthy event. The demonstrations and counter demonstrations are almost always given extensive media coverage on television and in print media.

The question that needs to be asked is what is the output or result of these counter protests. There are at least two major negative aspects of these anti-racist group activities.

First, these counter-protests are enablers of these racist groups.  The small group gets a tremendous psychological boost. If no one showed up, they would be just a few losers standing on the street to the amusement of those walking by. They would have to confront the fact that they and their movement are pathetic.

Instead they are the central actors in a major drama with a cast of hundreds carried on major media. These racist persons, who are otherwise invisible, are for a day, the center of attention. They can feel that what they are doing is important, otherwise why would these counter-demonstrators show up and be willing to break the law to oppose them. The racist group is given the resources of the media to publicize themselves that they otherwise would never get and that most small local private groups could only dream of obtaining.

What do the anti-racist groups get out of this activity? I think it is thrills. They get to be the good crusaders against a clearly defined evil. They get to be in a melodrama of good versus evil. Their racist opponents are without allies, political strength, and position in society. They are not anyone the counter-demonstrators will encounter in their social set when they go home after the protest. These racists are nearly universally loathed. The public loves to hate them. There couldn’t be a safer and less problematic set of racists to oppose.  It is a risk free drama. There is an almost fetishtic fascination with these racists.

These explicit racists and their counter-protestors are symbiots. Their activities are mutually supporting.

Finally, there are anti-racist groups with a political agenda. They won’t work with police, and they get into conflicts with the police at these protests. They have some illusions that their activities are fighting racist “Amerika.”

However, the anti-racist groups enabling of these racist groups is not the worst outcome of these counter-demonstrations. Their enabling of these racist organizations may help them to persist but these racist groups are still marginal and one of their major activities is getting together with the anti-racist groups to produce these theater productions.

The second and really pernicious output of these protests and these activities is the stereotype placed in the public’s mind what type of individual is a racist. The stereotype is that the racist is a screamer, a marginal member in society if not a failure, lacks good middle class decorum, is not educated, lower economic class, possibly living in a trailer park.  The racist will make things simple by stating that he or she is a racist in the bluntest, simple direct terms and slogans such as “rohowa” (**Ra**cial **Ho**ly **Wa**r). They totally lack charm. They don’t deny that they are racist either. They don’t deny their hostility to non-whites. The promotion of this stereotype of who a racist often panders to class prejudices allowing many indulge in feelings of class superiority cloaked in anti-racist self-righteousness.

The public has the concept that the racist is someone outside normal society, someone they wouldn’t like anyways, and not someone they would know. Emphasis is placed on the racists as being psychological in origin and disconnected from sane society. It has to be asked whether many people who think they are anti-racist are really just hostile to persons who disturb the peace. Is the public abhorrence of these explicit racists based on anti-racism, or does the public instinctively fear that they might disturb the existing status quo of race?

Michael Billig in his landmark book, “Banal Nationalism” discusses the fact that the discussion of nationalism usually resolves around extremists to the exclusion of seeing the banal nationalism in everyday life. Billig contrasts the focus of the usual analyst of national to the analyst of banal nationalism as follows:

The analyst of banal nationalism does not have the theoretical luxury of exposing the nationalism of others. The analyst cannot place exotic nationalists under the microscope as specimens, in order to stain the tissues of repressed sexuality, or turn the magnifying lens on to the unreasonable stereotypes, which ooze from the mouth of the specimen. In presenting the psychology of a Le Pen or Zhirinovsky, ‘we’ might experience a shiver of fear as ‘we’ contemplate ‘them’, the nationalists, with their violent emotions and ‘their’ crude stereotyping of the Other. And ‘we’ will recognize ‘ourselves’ among the objects of this stereotyping. Alongside the ‘foreigners’ and the ‘racial inferiors’, there ‘we” will be – the ‘liberal degenerates’, with ‘our’ international broadmindedness. ‘We’ will be reassured to have confirmed ‘ourselves’ as the Other of ‘our’ Other.

By extending the concept of nationalism, the analyst is not safely removed from the scope of investigation. We might imagine that we possess a cosmopolitan broadness of spirit. But, if nationalism is a wider ideology, whose familiar commonplaces catch us unawares, then this is too reassuring. We will not remain unaffected. If the thesis is correct, then nationalism has seeped into the corners of our consciousness; it is present in the very words which we might try to use for analysis. It is naïve to think that a text of exposure can escape from the times and place of its formulation. It can attempt, instead, to do something more modest: it can draw attention to the powers of an ideology which is so familiar that it hardly seems noticeable. [1]

Likewise these stereotypes of who a racist is, has multiple significant negative effects. The first of which is that people can avoid confronting their own attitudes on race because they see the racist as their “other,” an alien type individual which they don’t share any characteristics with. They can believe that they themselves aren’t racists since they don’t shout and they are educated and they have good middle class decorum. The second of which is that they don’t recognize, let alone challenge, racism in people they know. Since their friends, spouse, relative, co-worker, boss, subordinate, neighbor doesn’t fit the stereotype. I have repeatedly gotten the outraged reply, when I find an individual involved with neo-Confederacy that someone knows personally, on how could I have thought so and so is racist since the person that knows them personally and has had dinner with this person and this person is “nice” and “charming.”  If you don’t foam at the mouth it is believed, you couldn’t possibly be racist.

The stereotype of what a racist is gives a cloak of invisibility to other racist groups that don’t fit the stereotype, as Tony Horowitz makes clear in this April 28, 1995, *Wall Street Journal* article, other racist groups are overlooked as the media chases the KKK.

The breakfast crowd at the Capitol Restaurant looked about as rabid as the Rotary Club.

Two business men in business suits swapped embossed business cards. An engineer with a Mickey Mouse watch bragged about his birthplace, a setting for Thorton Wilder’s “Our Town.” Another man had the long curls and jaunty beret of a painter in Montmarte.

“I’m Walt,” he said, amiably thrusting his hand across a clutter of eggs and coffee. “I’m here to defend my race against the government and Jewish-controlled media.”

Ostensibly, he and 40 others were there to march in support of the Confederate flag that flew atop the nearby statehouse. But as Walt and his cohorts … quickly made clear, the rebel flag was simply a symbol of resistance against a tyrannical government and its co-conspirators: blacks, the liberal media, feminists, gays, immigrants, Jews, …

In the four months since, traveling across eight Southern states, I’ve repeatedly encountered similar groups, and strikingly similar views. Now in the wake of the Oklahoma bombing, Midwestern militiamen are spouting, almost verbatim, many of the conspiratorial notions I’ve heard at venues as varied as a Kentucky church, a Tennessee biker bar, a North Carolina wedding reception and a kitchen table in Mississippi where a mother home-schools her children.

What this suggests is not only that antigovernment extremism represents a vast subculture, but that it comes in many guises, and usually not jungle fatigues. Its typical camouflage is the ordinary appearance and occupations of most far-right adherents.

On the other hand, no one ever misses groups like the Ku Klux Klan. Soon after the flag march in South Carolina, I watched a rally by the Knights of the KKK. The “grand dragon” for the “realm of Kentucky” led 10 others down the street, with twice that number of police and TV cameras looking on. …

In March, there was another right-wing rally 10 miles down the road. This time the Klan didn’t come, but the scene was far more menacing, with several skinheads in the crowd and speakers who spewed venom at the state and its presumed agents among liberal and minority groups. Michael Hill, a professor who teaches history part time at the University of Alabama told several hundred cheering onlookers:

“In remembering Randy Weaver in Idaho and the Branch Davidians in Waco, we must understand on thing above all else. Our enemies are willing to kill us. It is open season on anyone who has the audacity to question the dictates of an all-powerful federal government or the illicit rights bestowed on a deadly underclass that now fulfills a role similar to that of Hitler’s brown-shirted street thugs in the 1930s.” [2]

Such thinking seems eerily resonant in the wake of the Oklahoma bombing; if the state and its brownshirts are after you, better to strike first. And if the source of the nation’s law is tyrannical, then lawlessness is justified. Yet this speech and others even more inflammatory didn’t make the nightly news.

One reason: Mr. Hill wore a tie instead of a hood and took the podium as head of the blandly-named Southern League. [3]

In this article Horowitz details how other extremist Neo-Confederate groups have bland sounding names.

Another negative impact is that if someone is anti-KKK they are assumed to be anti-racist. They merely may have a different strategy for racism and they feel that the KKK undermines it. You are told that so and so was anti-KKK as if that proves that person isn’t or wasn’t racist. The 1950s White Citizens Councils in their publication very emphatically told their members not to engage in violence and called the KKK lunatics – while simultaneously offering members a racist agenda that was more genteel. [4]

Finally, the consciously racist groups are quite well aware of this stereotype and the reluctance of labeling anyone racist who doesn’t fit it. These middle class racist groups exploit these stereotypes to give themselves protective coloration.  These are excerpts from a column by Stanley Crouch, an African American Republican, and columnist for the *New York Daily News*, in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 5, 2004, page A-15, when Trent Lott’s and Bob Barr’s ties to the Council of Conservative Citizens [www.cofcc.org](http://www.cofcc.org/) became general news.

Somewhere in the material of the of the Council of Conservative Citizens the statement is made that one should be a nazi – but never use the word.

That seems to be the approach the council is taking now that more and more light is being cast on its white supremacist doctrine, its vision of Negroes as “monkeys,” its belief there was no such thing as the holocaust.

… What appears before us now is clear: Neo-Confederates with a disguised racial policy have risen to the top of the GOP.

But this rise is something that has to remain under wraps, because in the era of Michael Jordan, one cannot just come out and be hardcore racist. That would be impolitic.

… The racist of old would come right out and call an insulting name at those who raised his paranoia. But these guys are cagier. Or more cowardly.

…. There is a very sophisticated kind of bigot among us who doesn’t want to be stopped along the way by his opinions. This one wants power. He is far more dangerous.

Crouch sees that these groups make sure they don’t fit the popular stereotype of what a racist is. On the other hand Crouch is wrong about this being the difference between old racism and new racism, or that these racists are sophisticated.

David Duke in Louisiana got endless news coverage in 1991 when he ran for governor of that state and still does because he was with the KKK at some time in his past. People remarked that Fordice, governor in neighboring Mississippi had very similar views but it got no coverage. Fordice was involved with the Council of Conservative Citizens. Had there been any effort at investigation it would have uncovered that Fordice was involved with them, but there wouldn’t be any funny clothes, no screamers or burning crosses for the cameras, so it wasn’t news and even the entire Council of Conservative Citizens didn’t become news until much later in 1998. The disguise wasn’t that sophisticated, the media didn’t want to know.

After I had discovered the Council of Conservative Citizens, I tried to get journalists to report the story for years. The Council of Conservative Citizens isn’t that clever. Reporters just didn’t want to report it. The Council of Conservative Citizens’ publication is shocking and has been around for years and is fairly easily available. The website was very frank with their views. The simple fact is that the media didn’t want to know.

What got the media attention to Trent Lott and Bob Barr in regards to the CofCC was the impeachment of Clinton. Driven to extremity, white people break ranks and I got my first chance to bring the existence of the Council of Conservative Citizens to the public’s attention. The sophistication of these new racists is only a willingness to not provide any insurmountable difficulties in the way of those who want to pretend they don’t exist or give them a free pass.

I also suggest that the old/new racist idea is flawed. In reading the history of the South you come across endless racists who proclaim their concern for the “negro.”  William D. McCain, a leading figure of the Sons of Confederate Veterans for decades in the middle 20th century, and president of the University of Southern Mississippi made speeches for the segregationist Mississippi Sovereignty Commission outside Mississippi opposing civil rights during the Civil Rights Era. In one speech he expresses his concerns for the welfare of the “negro” though he fought to make sure African Americans couldn’t be admitted to his university and in the same speech opposes civil rights. This is a common theme in anti-civil rights writing in the 19th and early 20th century “Confederate Veteran” magazine to express concern for the welfare of African Americans in writing against civil rights.

I am not saying that there should be no activity opposing groups like the Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations, Nazi groups and the like. There should be groups that track them and provide information about them and thwart them. However, counter-protests simply aren’t a viable strategy.  The Southern Poverty Law Center has a very able legal strategy which has brought down a lot of these groups through the civil courts. There are probably areas in the country that the local law enforcement is lax and needs prodding.  The passage of Hate Crime legislation is one avenue of action. It might be useful to have a protest at a political rally of a legislator opposed to hate crime legislation. Of course this type of action and other anti-racist actions not involving explicit racists involves being ready to debate issues and opposing a white person who has political power and friends. It might upset a neighbor or co-workers.

This is another attraction of opposing these explicit groups. You really don’t have to do much thinking, reflection, or hard work of research; the racist groups willingly and enthusiastically adopts their role. They don’t ever deny they are racist. They help make this type of anti-racist activity a convenient and therefore a truly modern consumer product. It is anti-racism for the microwave oven.

Most anti-racist activists do not go after other types of racism. The big exception is the Southern Poverty Law Center which has added the Neo-Confederate movement to its research topics and done some excellent research. They also have gone after other less explicit racist organizations such as “The American Enterprise” magazine.

I would say that there is a great surplus of persons tracking the openly racist right. I wonder if certain anti-racist groups end up having to “share” a local KKK group. The *Onion*, a comedy newspaper, had a spoof where the KKK demonstration was mostly undercover reporters interviewing each other for sensationalistic material. There is no shortage of persons ready to oppose these groups and do research on them.  There must be many other avenues of opposing racism which are understaffed.

This leads to the final topic, the popularity with the media of these type demonstrations and news stories. It is news that people want to watch. It is comforting to have reaffirmation that you aren’t racist, and neither are the people you know. There is a sort of fascination with these racists, and the photogenic strange clothing and burning crosses adds to the coverage. Everyone can wallow in their moral superiority.

The whole system of this type of anti-racist activity and news coverage must be one of the major pillars supporting racism in America. This single focus and the public stereotype of what a racist is, has been one of the major obstacles I have faced in my campaign against the Neo-Confederates.

WHAT IS BANAL WHITE NATIONALISM?

Who is a white nationalist? What is white nationalism? The first thought comes to mind is of persons living in a compound in Idaho or perhaps Northwestern Arkansas, the explicit racists, as discussed above. The white nationalist is simultaneously a racist and violent and hostile to African Americans and has a white supremacist political program.

However, not all white nationalists fit this narrow stereotype.  This is to some extent already recognized. The White Citizens Councils of the 1950s are explained as the “uptown Klan.” “Uptown” in this case means upscale and middle class persons with community respectability. However, this term “uptown Klan” is somewhat a problem.  It implies that the KKK is the reference standard for defining racism, and sees the White Citizens Councils as nothing more than a socially upscale and less candid Klan. Reporters working within the context of the stereotypes of our society on what racism is can be excused for taking this short hand.  However, white nationalism comes in a variety of forms, beliefs, practices and no one manifestation should be seen as the reference standard. In this particular case

The problem with both these types of overt white nationalisms are that they eclipse the other forms that white nationalism could take, and we don’t see these other forms of white nationalism. We don’t see that we ourselves or others might be one of these other types of white nationalists.

I think there are other forms of white nationalism and white nationalists who don’t recognize themselves as white nationalists. These are the most powerful forms of white nationalism, since they are exercised without opposition or even recognition that they are such. Finally, to make it clear in which direction this exposition is head, it is undeniable that those who label themselves as white nationalists are racists, as those who are generally recognized as white nationalists.

If there can be a banal nationalism, could not there be a banal white nationalism? Would we be able to see it? As with banal nationalism, could there not be such ordinary, so familiar and routine words, actions, symbols, objects, that we can’t see them for the white banal nationalism that they are?

The white nationalists that I think make up the white nation are those who have in many cases no concept at all of being white nationalists and would be simply furious if labeled so. I think also that this form of white nationalism is fairly extensive, though I don’t think it will be fully excavated until there is a politics challenging it. I don’t think it is just a few percent, but instead it is more widely diffused in the general white population.

In discussing white nationalism it is import to understand that its output can be more than and not only simple direct discriminatory behavior against non-whites or hostility against them. White nationalism can work in subtle, indirect, and unrecognized ways. This unacknowledged and unlabeled white nationalism has the potential to have a greater impact because it is unrecognized. The channels through which it works, and its resulting impacts are very important to discover and map out.

The white nationalists, of which I wish to discuss, could possibly even think that Martin Luther King is a hero, express support for February Black History month, and are supportive of the civil rights revolution. Does this seem like an outrageous thing to say? If so, does it seem to be outrageous because you are thinking of some white nationalists holed up in Idaho? Could not a person have a concept of a white nation but want to see that a space is created for non-whites in the white nation. Couldn’t a person, not consciously a white nationalist, but having an idea of the white nation, want to accommodate non-whites? Wouldn’t that keep peace and stability for the white nation and legitimatize the white nation? For some, doesn’t a February Black history month allow January, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, and December to be essentially the white history months? A strategy for civil rights could merely assure stability for a white nation as a strategy to pacify non-whites and affirm what a morally good white nation we have?

Of course the degree and behavior of banal white nationalism and the self-awareness of white nationalism is not likely to fall into discreet categories but instead exist in a continuum from persons who would be members of the Council of Conservative Citizens whose racism is fairly obvious but attempt some dissimulation and have good middle class decorum and don’t wear funny clothes to those as just mentioned above who would applaud civil rights.

A white nationalism which creates a historical narrative which constructs a heroic white nation obscuring the history of race in the nation is the most powerful form of white nationalism. It constructs the white nation with non-whites accommodated in the guest room. It is a consciousness in which non-whites are ‘them,’ but not part of ‘we’ however solicitous ‘we’ might think of ‘them.’

CONSTRUCTING THE WHITE NATION

What ways could you construct a white nation? Probably the most powerful would be to build historical narratives which value whites over others and directly or indirectly negates the value of non-whites as human beings. It could be historical narratives which obscure the racism in the American national story to give whites a more heroic role, or deny the historical narrative which could provide the basis of claims for social justice for non-whites. It could be historical narratives which obscure elements from which a challenge to the white nation could be made or narratives that might discredit the white nation. It could be toleration for historical narratives that are supportive of white nationalism. White nationalism could be opposing historical narratives which undermine or oppose white nationalism. In this case historical narratives are the focus, but similarly white nationalism could operate in other spheres. I focus on it here for a purpose which I hope to make clear later. Historical narratives are key to defining nations, and a nation does not come into existence or continue without its supporting historical narratives.

These historical narratives supporting white nationalism can be in multiple venues from the high school history textbooks, book reviews, news reporting, magazines, movies, and where ever a historical narrative is presented.

Also, white nationalism can be activities to mark the nation as a white nation and mark the landscape as a white landscape, to make the nation’s territory a white geographical space and do activities on the landscape to support historical narratives of white nationalism.

EXPLICIT AND BANAL WHITE NATIONALISM

One question would be what hopes do explicit white nationalists have for their agenda? They have very small organizations, a miniscule fraction of the public, reviled in the media, with overwhelming public opinion against them, what might give them hope? Explicit white nationalists constantly assert that the discussion of race is repressed and that they are frank uninhibited voices. The idea being that without this repression the public would accept their ideas.

It doesn’t appear that explicit white nationalists have heard of the concept of banal nationalism or thought of banal white nationalism. This paper presents the concept for the first time. However, they, along with everyone else, are recipients of the messages of banal white nationalism in our society.  It can be argued that they are just acting on these messages without filtering themselves or being restrained by middle class decorum. Explicit white nationalism is the activation of banal white nationalism.

Explicit white nationalists in sensing these banal messages, also have the idea that they aren’t really so marginalized or a miniscule fraction of the public. That there is a great majority of white people out there to support their agenda, that this majority is there to be activated. If Strom Thurmond is hailed as some great person on his 100th birthday, how deep can the commitment to Civil Rights be? With Confederate monuments, memorials and symbols in the National Cathedral, Statuary Hall of Congress, Arlington National cemetery, and the state flags of Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, again, how deep can the commitment to Civil Rights be? The language and writings of the explicit white nationalists reveal this in a multitude of ways.

A constant theme from the Civil Rights Era onward is the claimed hypocrisy of white supporters of civil Rights. They held that those civil rights supporters were really racist, but had ulterior motives for civil rights legislation, but personally hoped to avoid association with African Americans. One issue of “The Citizens’ Councils,” newspaper of the White Citizens Council, saw as a solution to what they thought was the problem of support of civil rights, the dispersal of African Americans across the nation. That support for civil rights by persons outside the South would evaporate with the presence of African Americans outside the South. The article had elaborate maps and each non-southern state was assigned a number of African Americans they were deficient in to be allocated from the South. [5]

It is not surprising that explicit white supremacist groups seem to be endlessly popping up like mushrooms. From the larger body of banal white nationalism it should not be surprising that individuals are likely to drift to explicit white nationalism, activated by events. Explicit white nationalists can hope for some major event which will activate this larger population of banal white nationalists to explicit white nationalism or at least shift them to some type of support of their agenda. An example would be the “backlash” to civil rights after the race riots in major cities during the1960s leading to national support for George Wallace’s presidential campaigns and the southern strategy of the Republican Party in the late and early 1960s enlisting Strom Thurmond to create a Republican South.

Explicit white nationalists are often proposed as resulting from psychological pathology. Psychological pathology may be a factor in the origin of explicit white nationalism for some individuals in the break down of their socialization of banal white nationalism. This is very convenient for some. If these racists are crazy, it is an individual case, a subject for psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers contained in their academic disciplines. These racists’ origins are not connected to factors in society and they are comfortingly not like us, who are not crazy, and so can’t be racist. As crazies, they can’t be a real threat to society. The whole subject of the abuse of psychiatry and psychology to stigmatize marginal groups is not considered. What is not asked is why psychological pathology necessarily results in racism.

BANAL WHITE NATIONALISM IN ACTION

Banal white nationalism is not difficult to excavate and sometimes accidentally reveals itself on its own, caught out as it were. An great example of both is the comments of Tom Daschle regarding Trent Lott’s commentary at the 100th birthday of Strom Thurmond, as reported by Derrick Z. Jackson in the *Boston Globe* newspaper in 2002 titled “Daschle’s role as Lott’s enabler.” Jackson reported in his editorial the following:

Daschle, the Democratic leader in the Senate, initially bought the story of Lott, who honored Thurmond’s 100th birthday by saying if the nation had elected Strom Thurmon, “we wouldn’t have had all these problems over all these years.”

Lott said his remarks were part of a “lighthearted celebration.” Daschle chose to give him cover. “Senator Lott, in my conversations with him this morning, explained that that wasn’t how he meant them to be interpreted. I accept that. There are a lot of times when he and I go to the microphones, would like to say things we meant to say differently, and I’m sure this is one of those cases for him as well.”

… As Lott’s self-inflicted wounds became more and more mortal, Daschle had to do some damage control of his own. After Representative Maxine Waters of California said Daschle “moved too quickly” to give Lott a pass. …

… As Daschle wallowed in angst, Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, a probably presidential contender in 2004, became the first senator to say Lott should resign as incoming majority leader. But it took Kerry nearly a week to come to his conclusion. He was beaten to the punch by several conservative commentators and strategists who feared that Lott would sabotage their agenda.

Kerry and many other Democrats were asleep at the wheel of history, participating in the revisionist hoopla of Thurmond’s birthday. They filled the air with plenty of praise without any reference to the fact that Thurmond for decades espoused politics that often had deadly consequences for many African-Americans and some white civil rights workers in the Deep South.

Kerry said, “The Senate will lose a man who has seen the arc of the 20th century with his very eyes, from fighting in some of the greatest battles in world history to bearing witness to the Great Depression and the Great Society.” Notice that Kerry managed to omit the civil rights movement.

Jackson goes on to detail the praise for Thurmond of democratic senators Joseph Biden and Chris Dodd.

… Lott’s associations with racist groups should have earned him a permanent disdain from the Democrats. It did not. Those associations, plus his most recent Thurmond comment, should have resulted in an instant calling for his resignation by the Democrats. It did not.

… People might be leery of the Republicans, but they can also see right through the Democrats, whose incessant appeals to so-called centrism have left them without the stomach for fighting racism. Daschle claimed that Lott’s words were unacceptable. By doing business with Lott all these years, the Democrats proved how acceptable Lott really was. [6]

In short, despite all the pious statements of the Senate Democrats about civil rights, they were ultimately members of the white club with Strom Thurmond and Trent Lott.

Another case should have been former U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft who praised Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee and the Confederacy in the Neo-Confederate magazine, *Southern Partisan*, [7] but vigorously prosecuted Johnny Walker Lindh as an traitor for being with the Taliban in Afghanistan. Did Lind actually kill or wound a single American soldier? Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis headed an army and government whose actions resulted in the deaths of over 300,000 American soldiers. [8] Yet this contradiction was never brought up in the press. What is the conceptual framework of Ashcroft that Lee and Davis are heroes and Lind a villain? It is the conceptual framework seeing the Civil War being a brothers’ war, a quarrel within the white fraternity, and Lind’s actions being an attack on the white fraternity itself. It is banal white nationalism which wasn’t brought before the public, but could have been.

THE NEO-CONFEDERATE HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Neo-Confederate historical narrative has problems existing as a banal white nationalist historical narrative, even though it has often attempted to be one. A problem is that the historical record is known through other historical narratives, including what might be called the abolitionist or civil rights review of history to a great many people in this country. For example, often mentioned is Alexander H. Stephen’s infamous “Cornerstone Speech” quoted as follows:

Our new Government is founded upon exactly the opposite ideas; its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and moral condition. This, our newer Government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth. [9]

Also, in the Civil Rights era opponents of civil rights, such as the Dixiecrats, the White Citizens Councils, and George W. Wallace used Confederate symbols in their campaigns against Civil Rights.

The Confederate and Neo-Confederate historical record is incredibly racist and the documentation of this is extensive. Unfortunately it is largely unknown except to persons digging in the historical records and as such is not known to the general public. If the Confederate historical narrative doesn’t seem to be racist , it would likely because you have incorporated the dominating historical narrative. One task that needs to be done is to collect the documentation concerning the white supremacist values of the Confederacy and Neo-Confederacy and make it easily and widely available. However, it will not be done in this paper. [10]

The dominating U.S. historical narrative is like a braid of various historical narratives woven together. When it is not incorporating the Neo-Confederate historical narrative the dominant U.S. historical narrative accommodates it. The Neo-Confederate historical narratives and its monuments, symbols, and holidays, is the least defensible historical narrative. Yet, it is widely pandered to by the Federal government, school text books, institutions, and media. It is maintained to a great extent by so-called heritage groups which endlessly have campaigns against journalists, reporters, legislators, professors, and others who dissent from the Confederate historical narrative to pressure them to change their positions or apologize or attempt to have them lose their job, or silence them. James McPherson of Princeton University on Pacifica Radio says that he agrees with me “100%” that the agenda of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy is white supremacy. However, after a storm of protest he crumples and says that the statement was just a tactic to defend the Museum of the Confederacy. [11]

The Neo-Confederate historical narrative has a fractured hegemony. It has cracks in its superstructure, it has weak points. There are prominent persons, institutions that reject it quite publicly who they can’t silence. The Neo-Confederate groups’ influence is somewhat limited geographically. As mentioned it lacks credibility with a significant fraction of the public. It is at great variance with the historical record. A lot of its power derives from the fact that many persons in various positions in institutions go along with it to avoid conflict. They have some other agenda and they aren’t willing to challenge the Neo-Confederate narrative and be a target. They also know that they are likely to be on their own if they do so since it isn’t on the agenda of their peers who also don’t want to be a target. However, this plan of inaction and avoidance reveals what their real agenda or priorities are. It isn’t challenging racism. What ever fine statements they may make in regards to civil rights, they aren’t going to challenge the Neo-Confederate narrative and get into a fight with angry white people.

The Neo-Confederate historical narrative is problematic in its acceptance within the national historical narrative and local narrative. No matter how it is attempted to have it sanitized as not being white nationalist it still reveals its white nationalism. Yet, it does get sanitized enough so it is not summarily rejected. It lies there half in and half out and always disruptive.

The power of challenging the Neo-Confederate narrative is that it is the indefensible but it will be defended. It has the potential of revealing the banal white nationalism of its supporters, including that of institutions and governments. Also, very importantly, maybe more importantly, it reveals the banal white nationalism of those who are willing to go along with it. It reveals the priority of white solidarity when confronted with a challenge to this racist historical narrative.  In particular this prioritization of white solidarity is manifested whenever a white person chooses to not act against the Neo-Confederate narrative, or even defend it or go along with it, though knowing it is racist, for no other reason than merely to avoid hostility from another white person who is both a supporter of this narrative and in their social environment whether church, work, club, organization. It is revealed when I hear the angry wail of protest that their neighbor or co-worker or fellow committee member is so nice, had so many laudable traits, and that I am so wicked to raise any question about this person’s idolization of the Confederacy.

The complicity of so many institutions and individuals with the Neo-Confederate narrative shows the wide spread banal white nationalism in America.

CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVES AS A PRIORITY

Why would the issue of cultural geography and historical narrative be a priority in fighting white nationalism? Why choose cultural geography’s study of nationalism and historical narratives to assault white nationalism? What would challenging these issues result in? How does this provide an activist path to success in confronting white nationalism?

If the answer to all these questions is not clear, I would ask that it be considered that it seems like this avenue isn’t a priority, isn’t a path because we have largely adopted historical narratives and ways of viewing things defined by a banal white nationalist culture. The very ordinariness of banal white nationalism makes it invisible to us. This makes it difficult to see paths to action.

People form concepts of who they are out of stories, historical narratives, in which they define their identity. The historical narratives are about defining who we are and what the ideals of our society are, and who composes the “we” in the national life.

The importance of historical narratives is often not apparent to many. In construction, concrete is poured into wooden preforms. After it hardens, the lumber is removed, and the concrete is in the form of what was the interior of the wooden structure, hence preform. Popular historical memory is a preform for the individuals' beliefs and the societies they compose. However, we tend not to be immediately aware of history, if at all as a shaping element. We observe the great "concrete" structure of society and analyze its forces, stresses, tensions, compressions, strains, but don't see the preform’s lumber which has been removed.

Our governments, religions, nationality, identity draw upon stories, stories of what happened in the past. These historical narratives shape identity, meaning, purpose and activity. Historical narratives can be subtle, indirect, but they are very powerful.

How exactly does history act, as a preform, to shape society? Often people will say that history is not important to them. However, if you ask, everyone has strongly felt ideas how things should be on a wide variety of topics. Yet many, if not all, of their strongly felt beliefs come from historical ideas which normally are not in the forefront of their thought. If you ask them, “Should there be religious freedom,” they will almost always say yes. Yet, where or when the Thirty Years War was, they do not know. Who the Huguenots were, and when and where they were persecuted, they probably don't know. If they know of the Spanish Inquisition, it is only because it is used in the language as an expression as we use the expression “witch hunt” without really knowing much of the history. Everyone is aware that there were horrors in the past, tortures, wars, and persecutions over religious intolerance and wish to avoid this for themselves and the future, even if they do not know the history’s details.

Historical narratives are not old stuff. Historical remembrance exists in our minds in the present. What would the Christian faith be without the Bible, and what is the Bible except historical narratives? On Easter Sunday the Resurrection is not distant, but immediate. Other religions also use historical narratives. The past is present when we choose it to be. Religion is a powerful element in society and it rests on historical narratives.

Monuments, flags, government symbols are the means by which these historical narratives claim the landscape, geographical space and define a place as having an identity. Holidays give time itself an identity. It is how governments and institutions attempt to shape the values and identify of society.

The real importance of historical narratives and symbols to the public can also be seen in the strong reaction when they are challenged.

When the History Standards were proposed a few years back, which didn’t teach the usual American historical narrative, a torrent of denunciation poured forth in the conservative press. The U.S. Senate voted 99 to 1 against the History Standards with opposition to them across the political spectrum. Even if a politician thought the history standards were good, they recognized the tremendous force in the opposition. They didn’t want to stand in the way of a locomotive. [12]

Another demonstration of the importance of symbols and historical narratives is the furious controversy over the burning of American flags. A large fraction of the public is willing to amend the constitution and truncate the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights to restrict freedom of speech.

Yet, another demonstration of the importance of historical narratives at the grass roots level is the selection of school history books for the public schools. They are laughable as histories and widely known as such. However, school boards everywhere, watched over by organizations, select these books to indoctrinate the next generation with the dominate historical narrative.

The cost of memorials and their continuing construction also demonstrate the importance of historical narratives and the attempt to assert the authority of the dominate historical narrative.

Finally, my personal experience is that Confederate enthusiasts often get visibly angry when the Neo-Confederate interpretation is challenged.

Don’t let arguments that are dismissive of the importance of historical narratives and symbols deceive you. One of the favorite phrases in reporting the news on the Confederate flag in public life is to use the phrase, "flag flap." This needs to be recognized as the editorial comment it is in reporting the news. The phrase is a comment that the topic of controversy is trivial. This dismissive tone is never taken in reporting controversies over burning the American flag. If a reporter used the term “flag flap” in reporting a controversy over the American flag, assuming that the editor would let it slip by, there would be a storm of protest. This dismissive tone is never taken in reporting holocaust deniers. You won't see an article titled or using the belittling phrases, "holocaust hassle," "history hiccup," "history hissyfit," or "holocaust hallabaloo."

Consider all the rationalizations regarding Confederate symbols being used by government. Endlessly it is argued it isn’t a priority, it isn’t important. Consider if German cities started to erect statues to Nazis and German states started to incorporate swastikas in their flags, and a Bavarian amusement park started to call itself, 12 Flags Over Bavaria with a Nazi flag among them, we would feel great unease. We would feel something was terribly wrong, despite all the arguments about German heritage, not erasing history, assertions about victors writing history, discussions that Americans also had anti-Semitism in the 1930's and 1940's, and accusations that we were bigoted against Germans. People would have a fit.

Historical narratives are considered either trivial, “flaps” or burning issues of national importance largely in relation to the dominating historical narrative. Those which challenge the dominating historical narrative are dismissed as trivial or nitpicking with the term “politically correct.” The best and first argument in defense of the white nationalist historical narrative is to try to convince the challengers that it isn’t worth their time to challenge it so they might desist, and to convince others it isn’t important so they can avoid having to take a position on the narrative.

Nations, and the national identities of individuals exist through historical narratives produced by what is formally taught in the schools, entertainment, and media. This historical narrative establishes why a group of people are members of a nation, have a culture, have a claim to a territory. Claims to a national culture reference a series of cultural items which necessarily exist along the timeline. White nationalism, banal or otherwise, is no different, it uses historical narratives.

The historical narratives connect to the major issues. If the theater’s stage is set up for “Gone With the Wind,” you are not going produce “Raisin in the Sun.” If we teach the public and our children a white nationalist view, will it be surprising we will replicate it in our lives?

THE POLITICS OF WHITE NATIONALISM

White nationalism in the presence of a substantial non-white population is more than the policy and politics of white supremacy. White nationalism has requirements for its existence and the maintenance which drive a wider political agenda than the policy of racism.

One requirement is to subordinate non-whites. This requires the acceptance of hierarchy and the rejection of equality as a general principal of political life and philosophy. Once you subordinate one class for alleged inferiority you tend to find other groups that need to be superordinate or subordinate relative to each other. Some whites can be whiter than others. For example, if you subordinate one group of people based on a supposed intelligence quotient (IQ), why not subordinate others? People do not score all the same on these tests. The logical conclusion of ranking persons based on IQ, is to have a hierarchal system ranking all members of society.

Until the Civil Rights era, the history of most of the former Confederate States was that a great many poor whites were excluded from voting by the poll tax as well as African Americans. [13] In some of them more poor whites were excluded than African Americans. White supremacy means the supremacy of some whites over most of the other whites. Older ideologies of hierarchy from the pre-modern world and newer similar ideologies are quick to see how race can be an instrument to achieve power or further goals of inequality.

Another requirement of white supremacy is that it maintains subordination. Since subordinate groups, particularly on the basis of race, are not going to accept this subordination willingly nor recognize such a social order and its laws as legitimate, there is the necessity for violence to maintain white nationalism. This violence is nearly all performed by men, whether Ku Klux Klan, slaver patrollers, in certain cases police, militias, or Red Shirts as examples of such groups. White nationalism requires men who have specific gender roles to be able to support violence and subordinate non-whites and also to threaten dissenters. Homosexuality will be seen as a threat to a masculine role necessary to be violent.

White nationalism also needs to create the next generation of white men. This requires the control of white women. If non-white men have sexual relations with white women, there will not be a generation of white men, since white nationalism only counts as white those with all white parentage. Feminism consequently is a threat to white nationalism. The following are excerpts from the chapter on “Woman suffrage and White Supremacy” in “The Power of Femininity in the New South” by Anastatia Sims.

In the highly charged political atmosphere of North Carolina in 1897, Hyatt’s advocacy of voting rights for women must have appeared to many to be lunacy indeed. After the victories of Populist-Republican fusion tickets in 1894 and 1896, Democrats had made suffrage – in particular, the question of who was fit to exercise the vote – the focal point of state politics. Determined to neutralize African American power and destroy the fusionist’s political base, Democrats wanted to reduce the electorate, not expand it. In some states, white southern reformers offered restricted woman suffrage as a solution to “the Negro problem,” arguing that if educated women of property-owning families (that is, elite white women) were enfranchised, their votes would offset those of black men. But North Carolinians never seriously considered this proposal. Instead, Democratic politicians undertook vicious campaigns to discredit and disenfranchise African American voters and to establish white *male* supremacy. [Emphasis in the original.]

In the 1890s, North Carolina Democrats not only eliminated African American men from politics; they guaranteed the exclusion of women as well. White supremacists constructed a political universe in which woman suffrage was at best an oxymoron and at worst a menace to social and political order. Their rhetoric welded masculinity and citizenship together, “manhood” became “the highest test of the right to vote.” If manhood was the test, women would automatically fail. But Democrats were not talking to women who wanted the ballot; they were addressing black men who already had it. They declared that African American men were not “real men” and therefore were unfit to exercise the franchise. Politics became the symbolic arena for sexual competition among men; women belonged on the sidelines, the spoils of the political wars that men fought.

White supremacy was predicated on the premise that women were powerless. Democratic politicians used the slogan “the protection of white womanhood” to justify the oppression of African American men. But protection entails dependence. If white women became equal participants in the political process, they might choose different protectors or reject protection entirely. Within the white supremacist scheme of things, female autonomy did not, could not exist. [14]

Finally, not every white person is going to want to support the agenda of white nationalism, a never ending anti-democratic, sexist, homophobic, violent and anti-egalitarian society. So there will needed a culture of suppressing dissent and dissenters as traitors and in the South as scalawags.

THE SOUTH, THE NORTH, SOUTHEASTERN, SOUTHWESTERN

What are the “South” and the “North.” Obviously they are more than directions on a compass, and we commonly think of both as geographical areas. We usually use these terms without questioning them or thinking about what is their meaning and assume that there is no need to do so either.

Jan Penrose and Peter Jackson in “Conclusions” the final chapter in, “Constructions of Race, Place, and Nation,” which they edited, make the following two statements.

Each of the preceding chapters confirms the importance of challenging assumptions about the “naturalness” of the categories that we use to organize and make sense of the world. The social construction perspective is valuable precisely because it allows apparently immutable categories to be dissected and critically evaluated. Such a process reveals that much of what is deemed to be “natural” or a matter of “common sense” is deeply rooted in the dominant ideologies of particular societies. By demonstrating the constructedness of these categories, dominant discourses and the interests that they serve can be called into question and radically subverted. Categories that formerly appeared immutable are shown to have assumed different shapes in different historical and geographical contexts – and hence to be amenable to further transformations. In revealing their mutability, categories that were once privileged by being taken for granted can now be questioned as just one of the many dimensions of human difference. By revealing the constructedness of the social categorizations that shape identity and difference, we expand our sensitivity to the politics that these categories engender. At the very least, the rigidity of categories is undermined and the processes which reify them can be exposed and disrupted.

Later in the conclusion.

At the broadest scale, the physical boundaries of a country give tangible expression to hegemonic conceptions of the nation. The space that a country occupies becomes a context for legitimizing and enforcing dominant ideas about “race” and about the relationship between “race” and nation. But, as immigration policies and other processes of nation-building reveal, the conceptual dimensions of place can be as important as its physical manifestations. In other circumstances, conception of space can become overtly political. In Australia, for example, Aboriginal land claims destabilize the nation’s vision of itself. In contesting the conceptions of space that define and empower the established nation, Aboriginal land claims challenge the apparent “neutrality” of the hegemonic culture. The assertion that the boundaries of widely recognized places *cannot*be drawn with precision highlights the constructedness of prevailing conceptions which view geographical spaces and places as finite and definite. Part of our research agenda, therefore, must be to understand how specific places are incorporated into specific constructions of “race” and nation and their associated assumptions about the nature and function of space.  [15]

We can critically examine “North” and “South.”

The South certainly isn’t a geophysical region of common terrain or climate. It doesn’t seem to be a regionalism like the Midwest or New England or Appalachia. Virginia and Texas or Arkansas and Florida are hard to imagine as part of a region of similar geographical spaces. These are regions with widely varying climates, economies, some on the Gulf coast and others on the Atlantic coast.  By highway from Dallas to Washington D.C. it is 2802 miles. [16] This is rather large for a region however that term may be defined, and a territory that could encompass easily one or more major nations. There are some commonalities to what has been considered the South, the Confederacy and historically the major concentrations of African Americans. However, the Confederacy is a historical political experience, the stuff of nationalism, not regionalism, a variation in an existing nation. The major concentrations of African Americans gets us closer to the origins of the “South” as a geographical region which I defer discussion to later in the paper.

There is no “North” outside the “South.” People in the South may call themselves Southerners, but in the “North” there is no one terming themselves Northerners. People might be Chicagoans, or Midwesterners, or New Englanders, but there are no Northerners, Old North Days, Old North Traditions, North recipes, etc. People in Maine and Iowa do not see themselves as having a shared Northern culture, but only a share American nationality. The region north of the “South” is a patchwork of overlapping regions of large and small regions, Great Lake and Midwest, Northeastern, New England, Praire, The Wisconsin Dells. The use of the term “North” as the hostile other to the “South,” is certainly a hallmark of a nationalist project.

There are other indicators that the “South” exists as a nationalist project. The Neo-Confederate civil religion defines the South as a nationalist concept. Civil religion is the complex of monuments, observations, commemorations, holidays, markers, signs, history texts taught in school that give a nation an identity and common values. The “South” is certainly well marked as a Confederate territory. Nine Southern states have one to three official Confederate holidays each; Alabama (3), Arkansas (1), Florida (3), Georgia (3), Mississippi, (3), North Carolina (2), South Carolina (2), Texas (1), Virginia (1). [17] The state flags of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi are Confederate flags.  Arkansas and Tennessee flags incorporate a remembrance of the Confederacy. Flags are markers and identifiers of territories and objects. Since the Confederacy was a nation, these markers are nationalistic markers. Confederate monuments and plaques abound in the “South.” Cities, towns, counties, highways, roads, are named after Confederates. Endless are the ways in which the landscape is inscribed as Confederate, an attempt at nationhood.

Over the years there have been numerous references to America’s two-party system. However, the South since Reconstruction to the Civil Rights era was largely a one-party system, and which after a brief two-party period, seems to be increasingly reforming into a new one-party Republican South.

John Shelton Reed, pre-eminent Southern writer about the South with about a half dozen books on the subject, strongly conceptualizes the South as a nation, and in opposition to the idea that it is a region of the United States.

In an article he wrote for the Neo-Confederate magazine, *Southern Partisan*, in the early 1980s under the pseudonym J.R. Vanover. It was titled, “S.O.S.: Stamp Out Southeastern,” and is in response to an article in the *Charlotte Observer* by Lew Powell on the use of Southeastern in an article, “Yankees Finally Wiping Out the South.” [18] In this article, a review of a recent article in a North Carolina paper about the term “southeastern” Reed expresses his concern that the term “southeastern” is a threat to the existence of the South.

If the growing use of the word “Southeastern” reflected only a belated recognition by Cis-Mississippians that they are not the only Southerners, it would be a healthy development. As I said, we ought to recognize the South’s diversity, and we ought to cherish it: after all we tried to set up a confederacy, not a union.

But I am afraid that, increasingly, Southeast is not being used to designate a part of the South, the eastern counterpart of the Southwest. Rather it refers to a major region of the United States – a counterpart to, say, the Northeast. There is a disturbing tendency in these parts to say and to write and even, God help us, to think *Southeastern*, where formerly we would have said and written and thought *Southern*.

Later in the article he states:

Creeping Southeasternization simply ignores the cultural and historical aspects of the South. It ignores the things that make eastern and western Southerner’s feel more at home in each other’s states than in Michigan, New York, or California.

Reed sees the Southeast as a region, but within a “South,” and fears it becoming a region within America. Southeastern threatens a key nationalist assertion that there is some over arching commonality of its members versus others.

Regarding the Southwest Reed writes:

Consequently, the Southwest has long had a sense of its distinctiveness within the South, so much so that the South risks losing the Trans-Mississippi in this century, just as it did at Vicksburg. [19] A few years ago, my close friend John Shelton Reed reported sadly (in his book One South) that far-western Southerners seldom use the word “Southern” in the names of their business enterprises. They are more likely to use “Western,” and far more likely to use “Southwestern.” As for “Dixie” – forget it: that word now has no more currency in the far-western South than it does in Iowa.

Again regionalism is a threat to Reed’s “South.” This article makes clear the purpose and title of the publication Reed later started with the University of North Carolina press, *Southern Cultures*. It is a nationalist project to keep regionalism captured within a nationalist “South.”

This developing regionalism of the Southeastern is conceptualized by Reed as alien and un-Southern, brought to the South by invaders, “*Yankees*.” Though in the article Reed says, “*Don’t get me wrong, some of my best friends are Yankees*.” The Southern Partisan has headlined over the title of the article, “*The Yankees have been trying for a long time to reconstruct Southern culture. Now, J.R. Vanover tells us that the War has spread onto the battlefield of popular language. Before its too late, then, let’s work together to …*” followed by the title, “Stamp Out Southeastern.”

In the text of the article Reed quotes Powell, “*Powell suggested that the South is going out of cognitive fashion, that “Southeast” is being popularized by Yankee migrants with no feeling (or, worse, no sympathy with) Southern distinctiveness and pride*.”

In keeping with classic nationalist policies of repressing differences that are believed to be a threat to the nation, Reed makes a proposal on how to oppose “Southeastern” which is somewhat comical where Reed wants to be Politically Confederate without being Politically Correct.

Reed states:

What can be done about this thoughtless vivisection? Well, as a rule, I don’t have much patience with people who want others to jump through linguistic hoops for the sake of their principles, as some of the more frivolous feminist do today, or with the sort of verbal hocus-pocus that turned Negroes into blacks twenty years ago. But, by God, there’s something to be said for trying to make the word “Southeast” unacceptable in polite company. Defacing posters is a start. (“Southwest” is probably too well established to mess with now: maybe later.)

After explaining that “east-Southern” would be correct, but be too “Germanic,” Reed explains further his plan of attacking “Southeasterners” stating:

As for “Southeasterner” – I’d like to keep the word around. We’ve always needed a term for residents of the eastern South who do not wish to be thought of as Southerners, and this will do nicely. It should always be printed with quotation marks, and pronounced with a sneer. For the rest of us, in nearly all circumstances, *Southerner* will continue to do service, and it should be insisted upon.

For Reed it was okay that the Confederate states seceded, just don’t let any former Confederate state get the idea about seceding from the South.

Reed also states his idea that the South is a nation in his chapter, “For Dixieland: The Sectionalism of *I’ll Take My Stand*,” in the book “A Band of Prophets: The Vanderbilt Agrarians After Fifty Years.” In this chapter he discusses and conceptualizes the Southern Agrarians as a nationalist movement and draws parallels with other nationalist groups, actually comparing the Agrarians to Kenyatta, Ataturk, Ho Chi Min and Gandhi.

At the end of the chapter, Reed quotes George Orwell in regards to the indestructibility of nations, and England, and closes his chapter with *“… and to close his essay with the hope that what Orwell said of England may be so for the South*.” [20]

It is not just Reed’s assertions that the South is a nation that makes it so. There are multiple things which indicate that the South has been to a great degree a nationalist project in a sort of semi-autonomous zone during its history.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF AMERICAN POLITICS AND ITS ORIGIN

Recently with the presidential election of 2004, there has been a lot of discussion of blue and red states. There is a realization that there is at least for the last election a geography of politics.

What is the geography of your politics? Can you see it on a map? Can you acknowledge it? Where are your least favorite, most favorite public figures located, from? What is the geography for or against a point of view? Does thinking about it make you uncomfortable, and why? These questions are posed reflection on the geography of politics.

The standard American historical narrative lays out a North-South Reunion after the Civil War towards the end of the 19th century cumulating in the Spanish American war. The word “reunion” has a variety of meanings, it meaning “reuniting” which has several meanings. The meaning used in the dominating American historical narrative is to again “to put or bring together as to make one.” [21]

However, the existence of the common term, “solid South” in much of American political history is an obvious contradiction to the idea of “reunion.” How can it be solid, if it is one with the rest of the nation? It could be said that there had been working relationship between the South and the rest of the nation. Reunion has been uncritically accepted as a concept in American history, though it does make for a happy American story, a working arrangement and gives the comforting idea that the Civil War and Reconstruction is part of the dead past.

The victory of the American armies in the Civil War defeated external secession. E.A. Pollard wrote the famous book, “The Lost Cause,” however, he wrote a few years later the book “The Lost Cause Regained.” In it Pollard explains that the Civil War was over white supremacy and slavery was just one system of white supremacy. The book lays out a program to overthrow racial equality and “Regain” white supremacy. [22] As Rollin G. Osterweis in his book on the Lost Cause points out, the overthrow of Reconstruction and racial equality largely followed Pollard’s plan. [23] After the Civil War, the Confederates continued the armed struggle after the Civil War during Reconstruction as Ku Klux Klan, Red Shirts, Knights of the White Camellias, the White League, and no doubt in various acts of brutality and terror in unorganized or little known groups.  The Lost Cause narrative of Neo-Confederate groups such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and others see the Civil War and Reconstruction as a single struggle. The Ku Klux Klan was held to be the great accomplishment of the Confederate soldier.

S.E.F. Rose, wrote a book, “The Ku Klux Klan Or Invisible Empire” which was received with great acclaim by the UDC and after its publication she was elected Historian General of the UDC. The book was endorsed by both the UDC and the Sons of Confederate Veterans both of which in their resolutions of endorsement urged that it be placed in the schools of the South. In the front page of the book is this dedication.

This book is dedicated by the author to the Youth of the Southland, hoping that a perusal of its pages will inspire them with respect and admiration for the Confederate soldiers, who were the real Ku Klux, and whose deeds of courage and valor, have never been surpassed, rarely equaled, in the annuals of history. [24]

The victory of the Confederates in overturning Reconstruction, “Redemption” as it is called in the history of the South, was the triumph of internal secession.  To secure internal secession it was defined in terms of states’ rights and held to be the true interpretation of the American constitution.

Another clear indicator of separate nationalism is the separate civil religions (the monuments and national observations) and the historical narratives. The South defines itself by the Confederacy and Reconstruction and Redemption. Nations exist in historical narratives, and clearly the South exists within a Neo-Confederate narrative.

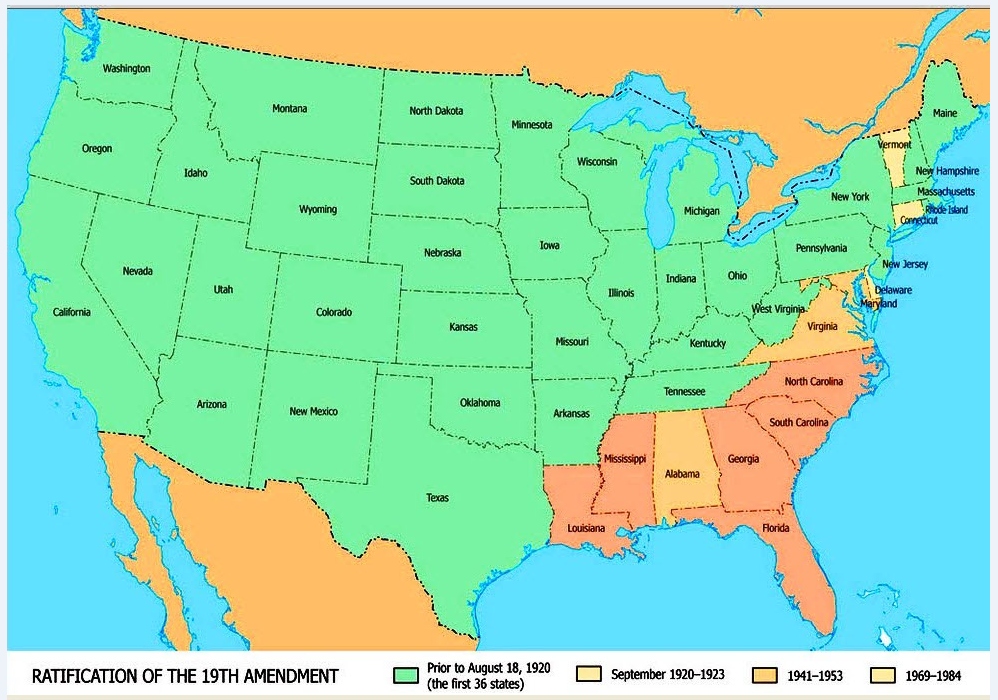
The creation of southern nationalism, and the wronged South in historical narratives serves an important function. The theme of the South being picked upon is a useful diversion from discussing a particular issue. Representing ideas as an attack on the south by alien Yankees, makes ideas unsouthern and those of Yankees who are attacking the South, precluding the discussion of these ideas on their own merits. If you resent someone or feel wronged by someone, you will not likely to be interested in their ideas. A region that feels wronged can be made to feel besieged when criticized. This makes it easier to stifle dissent. Dissent is now treason. Instead of having a dissenting viewpoint on an issue, you are now betraying Robert E. Lee and the rest of the Confederate pantheon and all the “heroic” Confederate soldiers.

The southern nationalism is and has been a reactionary nationalism which has created several different sets of Blue and Red States over time. The reactionary politics has used the historical narratives of Neo-Confederacy. The ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution giving women the right to vote and the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment is an example worth detailing to show the workings of a Neo-Confederate politics.

A CASE HISTORY OF BLUE AND RED STATES FROM THE PAST

The geographies of women’s issues is chosen here to illustrate the geography of politics and the Neo-Confederate nationalist narrative. Others major political issues could be similarly investigated and need to be.

Mapping the states which ratified and those which rejected the 19th Amendment, reveal “confederacies.”  The states that voted to reject are Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Louisiana. However, Delaware turned around and ratified it in 1923. The rest didn’t ratify and have it certified until starting in the1950s and finishing with Mississippi in 1984.



This is a link to a map and history of the ratification of the 19th Amendment.<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/anthony/ratifmap.html>

This is a link to the information on the ratification of the 19th Amendment.<http://www.nps.gov/malu/documents/amend19.htm>

Shortly after the 19th amendment was ratified in August 1920, Wisconsin and Vermont ratified the amendment in Sept. 1920 and February 1921. Outside the South the support was unanimous. In the former Confederate states and Oklahoma, only four out of twelve states supported the 19th amendment. The 19th amendment passed since outside the South the support was unanimous and in the South opposition to it wasn’t unanimous. [25] The United States was the 27th nation to give women the vote coming after much of Europe and Mexico and Uruguay. [26]

The opposition to the 19th amendment in the South was embedded in Neo-Confederate rhetoric including states’ rights. In Georgia the anti-suffrage women leaders were Dolly Blount Lamar president of the Georgia Division of the UDC and Mildred Rutherford, former Historian General of the UDC and one of the leading defenders of the Lost Cause in its history. Lamar actually traveled to North Carolina, Ohio, and Tennessee in an attempt to defeat the 19th amendment, succeeding in North Carolina. In an excellent article, “Caretakers of Southern Civilization: Georgia Women and the Anti-Suffrage Campaign, 1914-1920,” Elizabeth Gillespie McRae explains the use of southern history by the anti-suffragettes Lamar and Rutherford.

Images of Reconstruction were central to the anti-suffrage political strategy. Schooled in lessons of southern history, anti-suffragists repeatedly referred to a chaotic time in the remembered white past to address the uncertainty and insecurity of the present. Women voting, like African-American men voting during the 1860s and 1870s, would poison southern politics, disrupt southern life, and threaten southern women. “Few women of our day realize,” Dolly Lamar warned, that if woman suffrage passes “and the republicans get in control again, we will have the negroes put into office over our heads.” In additiona, “2,000,000 colored women would be added in the voting power of the South.” “Is there any doubts as the party with which they would affiliate?” she asked. No need to answer. Black voting and Republican resurgence threatened the recently established black disenfranchisement, white supremacy, and political dominance of the Democratic party. To many white Georgians, the immediate post-bellum period served as a metaphor for racial, sexual, political, and economic disorder. … Playing on the theme of Reconstruction, Dolly Lamar and the anti-suffragists tapped into a vibrant and widespread southern myth. At the turn of the century, the efforts of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Confederate memorial associations, Lost Cause theology, the rise of the Dunning school of history, the popular novels of Thomas Dixon, and the campaigns to publish pro-southern history books took a leading role. The Confederate Veterans and UDC women argued that textbooks provided a way for southern youths, born after Reconstruction, to be taught the “truths of Southern history.” These lessons spoke of the valor and chivalry of white men, the purity of white women, the corruption of Republican regimes, the bestiality and inferiority of African Americans, and the redemptive nature of white supremacy. The 1915 release of D.W. Griffith’s “Birth of a Nation” and the emblazoned rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan only reinforced these historical “truths.” This “sacred” history demanded that the region’s whites bury black southerners’ civil rights, white racial violence, and the postwar role of women, and the corruption of the Redeemer Regimes. To break with the accepted version of the Civil War and Reconstruction history was political heresy. Anti-suffragists utilized this historical memory to buttress their cause and discredit their enemies. Lamar claimed that the “foul fiend of the carpetbaggery” cloaked in women’s clothes would descend on Georgia and recruit modern day scalawags. Like the despicable Fifteenth Amendment and the Lodge bill, the proposed suffrage amendment represented the most recent attempt by the federal government to infringe on state rights. The anti-suffragists contended that white southerners must control woman suffrage or once again lose control of their region.[27,28]

Lamar wrote an autobiography, “When All is Said and Done,” published in 1952 by the University of Georgia in which, without regrets, she explains her opposition to suffrage showing its Neo-Confederate origins. The autobiography was reprinted by the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1994. Not surprisingly, *UDC Magazine* editorialized against using “Ms” in the 1970s, and working mothers in 1980s, and until the 1980s their articles were signed using their husband’s name such as Mrs. John Doe Smith. [29]

In Tennessee, the Confederacy was invoked in opposition to the 19th amendment by Mrs. James S. Pinckard who posed holding a large Confederate battleflag standing next to a seated Confederate Veteran who held a banner indicating that he was one of Nathan Bedford Forrest Scouts in photographs opposing suffrage. Mrs. Edwards W. Foster, past president of the UDC chapter No. 1 of Nashville, an influential chapter, was quoted in the Nashville Tennessean opposing suffrage.

The Neo-Confederate ideas had white supremacy triumphing over women’s suffrage for some proponents of suffrage, as reported in “The Perfect 36” a book about the ratification of the19th Amendment in Tennessee:

“A still greater coup for the Antis was the presence in Nashville of Miss Kate Gordon of New Orleans and Miss Laura Clay of Kentucky, both revered veteran suffragists and former national officers of NAWSA, who had once hobnobbed with Susan B. Anthony herself. But because they believed in suffrage through state action only, both had resigned when NAWSA endorsed the federal amendment. Now for the greater glory of states’ rights, Misses Gordon and Clay would join the Antis in distributing pamphlets that accused all suffragist of being “atheistic feminists who rewrote the Bible,” who “destroyed the home” and “blackened the honor of Robert E. Lee.” [30]

Neo-Confederate criticism of the 19th amendment continued into the latter half of the 20th century. Mississippi finally ratified the 19th amendment March 22, 1984. Prior to this ratification the Southern Partisan had an article titled “Trampled Ground,” by Ellen Campbell of Columbus, Mississippi praising the rejection of the Amendment in 1920. In this article Ellen Campbell sees the 19th amendment along with other amendments as damaging to the constitution stating:

Efforts by unknowing – or knowing, as the case may be --- persons to serve some social cause by the process of amending the Constitution has served nothing else than to damage (perhaps irreparably) the form of government created by the framers of the Constitution. Four Constitutional Amendments can be accused of doing just that: the Fifteenth Amendment (1870) prohibiting abridgment of the right to vote because of race; the Nineteenth Amendment (1920) prohibiting abridgement of the right to vote because of sex; the Twenty-Fourth Amendment (1964) taking away the voting qualifications of the poll tax; the Twenty-Sixth Amendment (1971) prohibiting the abridgment of the right to vote because of age (18 years or older). …

The cause of Women’s Suffrage would have certainly been served better on the state level. Efforts had been made even before 1920 to give women in Mississippi the right to vote. Laura Clay of Kentucky, a leader in the women’s rights movement, devised a plan to give women the vote in the Southern States, several of which were beginning a series of constitutional conventions in the 1890’s (Mississippi being the first). Laura Clay’s main problem in Mississippi was that she couldn’t find any women to back her up and take responsibility for lobbying for the cause. Many were just too busy with social and church activities. …

So it is true that Mississippi never has ratified the Woman’s Suffrage Amendment but not because of ignorance or backwardness. Rather it was that the lawmakers of Mississippi chose to stand against the blatant infringement on States’ Rights. [31]

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) launched roughly fifty years later after the 19th amendment was no so fortunate and was never ratified. Phyllis Schafly, leader of the opposition had a celebration of its defeat June 30, 1982 and Norma Russell for the *Southern Partisan* interviewed her the morning after. A question about the concentration of her support in the South is revealing, implicitly bringing up the issue of States’ Rights. Three reasons were given, one was that some of the southern state legislatures were not in session the year the ratification process started, giving her time to build up opposition in those states, and another reason was that southern states’ laws were held to privilege women, and the third states’ rights.

PARTISAN: How do you account for the concentration of opposition to the ERA in the South?

SCHAFLY: There are several reasons for opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment in the South. …

The second reason for the opposition to ERA in the South is that Southerners recognized early the tremendous shift of power to the Federal Government that was involved in Section 11 of ERA. They did not want to give the Federal Government any more power. Now I think the rest of the states in the country feel that way too, but the Southern states recognized the danger sooner. [32]

Well might Schafly appreciate the South, otherwise the ERA would have passed easily. Of the former states of the Confederacy and Oklahoma, 10 states rejected the ERA, a nearly Solid South of 84% opposition. Of the other 38 states, 33 ratified the ERA, a percentage of 87% in favor. However, for ratification ERA would need a total of 38 states. This meant that outside the South 36 states would be needed, a percentage of 94.7%. Unlike the 19th amendment, the ERA didn’t get nearly 100% support outside the South, so it died. [33]

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| --- | --- |
| http://www.equalrightsamendment.org/images/map_ratified.gif | States which ratified the ERA in Blue, states which rejected it in Red. |

The 19th amendment and women’s rights are just one example elaborated here. You could look at a map of states with Sodomy laws or right to work laws and see confederacies.

Today we can locate the great base of support and political power for the religious right in the South, and thus the great base of support and political power for the opposition to women’s rights in the South.

The engagement, with Neo-Confederacy to various levels and by various means from involvement to expression of Neo-Confederate beliefs to working with Neo-Confederates, is extensive with reactionaries in American life.  In an article on Confederate Christian nationalism, published in the Canadian Review of American Studies of the Univ. of Toronto Press, we showed how Christian Reconstructionism is Neo-Confederate in its beliefs and overlaps with much of the Neo-Confederate movement.

Both Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson interviewed with Southern Partisan, as did Dick Armey, Jesse Helms, Trent Lott, Phil Gramm, and numerous other Republicans.

The history department at Jerry Falwell’s Liberty University in 2002 had a trial of Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee finding them not guilty and vindicating the Confederacy and this year put Abraham Lincoln on trial, finding him guilty. This is put forth as merely a historical exercise, but Jefferson Davis’ and Robert E. Lee’s trial at Liberty University was the cover article for the *Southern Partisan*.  [34]

Pat Robertson’s Rutherford Institute defends Confederate flag cases. George W. Bush owes his victory in the South Carolina 2000 Presidential primary to the former associate editor of the *Southern Partisan*, Richard T. Hines, who ran a Pro-Confederate flag effort attacking John McCain as not supporting the Confederate flag. [35] An endless catalog can be listed of these things.

The *Southern Partisan* certainly conceptualizes much of the modern conservative movement as being Neo-Confederate or in alignment with its values. A recent issue had as its cover a photo of the head of Ronald Reagan saluting, with the cover title, “The Legacy of Ronald Reagan.” The article’s introduction explains, “If Bill Clinton was the first black president, as some have argued, then Ronald Reagan was the first Southern President of the 20th century.” Dismissing Woodrow Wilson as not being truly southern, the article’s introduction concludes, “That’s why we were especially moved when we learned of his death. We felt as if a direct descendant of Jefferson Davis had died. Hence the following.” [36]

Trent Lott also sees the Republican party the party of Jefferson Davis.  The following exchange was in his *Southern Partisan* interview by the same Richard T. Hines:

PARTISAN: At the convention of the Sons of Confederate Veterans in Biloxi, Mississippi you made the statement that the “spirit of Jefferson Davis lives in the 1984 Republican party platform.” What did you mean by that?

LOTT: I think that a lot of the fundamental principles that Jefferson Davis believed in are very important today to people all across the country, and they apply to the Republican Party. …

… But we have seen the Republican Party become more oriented toward the traditional family values, the religious values that we hold dear in the South. And the Democratic party has been going in the other direction. As a result of that, more and more of The South’s sons, Jefferson Davis’ descendents, direct or indirect, are becoming involved with the Republican Party. The platform we had in Dallas, the 1984 Republican platform, all the ideas we supported there – from tax policy, to foreign policy; from individual rights, to neighborhood security – are things Jefferson Davis and his people believed in. [37]

After the massive defeats of the Democratic Party in 1994, in an interview in *Civil War News*, the Commander-in-Chief of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) discussed the victory of the Republican Party:

According to Dasinger, the mood of the nation seems to have changed in recent years, as evident by the results from the national elections last November. Dasinger says that while people appear to strive for “political correctness” on the outside, they quietly vote their conscience on the inside once they step into the voting booths and are alone.

“If our politicians can’t read the results of the November elections, then there’s something wrong with them,” Dasinger says. “And if they thought last November 8th was something, I think they are in for a real shock the next time around.”

Dasinger says this new national mood has helped to contribute to the popularity of groups like the SCV, which appeals to those who are trying to stay focused on their heritage. In fact, Dasinger predicts that the present trend may only be the tip of the iceberg. [38]

Not surprisingly the *Southern Partisan* sold a T-shirt with the Republican Party logo on the front with a Confederate battle flag pattern with the words, “Lincoln’s Worst Nightmare,” and on the back the statement, “A States’ Rights Party from Dixie” with the “x” in Dixie a Confederate Battle flag, and the text surrounded by the flags of the states of the former Confederacy.

The modern reactionary movement is interpenetrated by the Neo-Confederate movement and derives many of its ideas from Neo-Confederacy. The current triumph of the Republican Party is a triumph of the Neo-Confederate historical narrative and the nationalism which it constructs.

FAILED OPPOSITION

Despite the enormous influence of a Neo-Confederate region on America’s history and politics, progressive, egalitarian and liberal forces seem blind to Neo-Confederacy and the geography of our politics.

Neo-Confederacy came very close to defeating the 19th amendment, and it did defeat the ERA. The states with the Confederate flags and monuments are the base of opposition to women’s rights, yet Neo-Confederacy is unknown to women’s studies and feminism. This is not unique to feminism. Any number of other progressive movements are similarly blind.

The general idea seems to be that some progressive agenda can be effected in the south, sidestepping and not confronting Neo-Confederacy. This is despite the historical record of biracial coalitions in the 1890s and the Virginia Readjusters in the 1870s being defeated by Neo-Confederacy.

Part of this is because some white progressives in the south may think they are the most advanced thing, but they never have left the plantation. The abandonment of Green Party congressional candidate, Vanderbilt University mathematics professor and African American Jonathan Farley to the Neo-Confederate wolves in Nashville, Tennessee after Farley criticized the Confederate tradition, reveals the Green Party to be the white party after all. This is not a unique event with some progressive elements in the south who time and time reveal themselves to be good sons and daughters of the Confederacy.  Being prisoners of a Confederate identity, they can not effectively advance a progressive politics. Banal white nationalism short circuits progressive politics all too often.

Outside the South this reactionary complex, the Confederate-identified South, is not comprehended as what it is. There might be some comments about conservatives in the south, but the Confederate nationalist South as the origin of these reactionary politics is not comprehended.  When the Confederacy is brought up, it is seen as an obstacle to prying few a few loose Southern electoral votes and congressional seats from the Republican party.

Given the economic status of the south and the average income, it should be the bastion of the Democratic Party, in fact the left wing of the Democratic Party, instead of the Right wing of the Republican Party. This was perceived by Howard Dean, former 2004 Democratic presidential candidate in his statement about having economic issues as the politics to get the votes of the guys with the Confederate flags. This statement both shows what Dean understands and what he doesn’t understand at all. It is the very Confederate flag which represents a view that the holder’s interests are ultimately their white skin and a privileged position in society as a white man versus gays, minorities, feminists, immigrants, and others. The Confederate tradition is the anti-democratic tradition and short circuits the politics of class.

There will not be a sustained progressive politics in the South or in the nation as a whole as long as there is a Confederate nation within the American nation. If there is to be a secure basis of democratic politics in America this must be understood.

However, we have not understood this, and so we find ourselves today in a nation rapidly becoming the Confederate States of America.

SUMMARY

The Neo-Confederate historical narrative supports, creates, defines, and constructs a white nationalist nation within the United States of America of the former Confederate states. The logical consequences of white nationalism is a politics of hierarchy and patriarchy supporting a reactionary anti-democratic politics.  So the Confederate-constructed South being a white nationalist nation, is thus a reactionary nation.

The Neo-Confederate narratives which are the underpinnings of the Neo-Confederate constructed nation are extensively accommodated, unchallenged, and not recognized as white nationalist. This is due to multiple factors.  One is the public stereotypes of what white nationalism looks like and a general unawareness of white banal nationalism.  Two is that Neo-Confederacy has largely been able to represent itself as banal and not explicit nationalism. Three, Neo-Confederacy is accommodated by banal white nationalism in the general public.

The failure to see the Neo-Confederate narrative as white nationalist, and the failure to understand its consequences, (internal secession, the reactionary politics derived from the Neo-Confederate nationalism, the formation of an internal reactionary fortress nation), has meant no effective counter measures to reactionary politics. It means that national politics have a built in tilt to reaction and any effective progressive and democratic politics is always at risk.

THE CHALLENGE AND THE OPPORTUNITY

If we undertake the challenge of opposing Neo-Confederacy and revealing its supporters and its workings, we have three great opportunities. We can free the southern regions of the United States from the prison house of the Confederacy and they can exist as regions. We can excavate banal white nationalism in American and bring to the surface its workings and how race relations work in America. We can take on the geographical reactionary fortress of Neo-Confederacy. These are not really three separate things, but different aspects of the same thing.

If we don’t choose to confront Neo-Confederacy we should not be surprised to wake up one day to find that we are living in a reactionary and anti-democratic Confederate States of America.

ACTION & RESISTANCE

In understanding banal white nationalism, historical narratives, nationalism and Neo-Confederacy we have abundant opportunities to confront the anti-democratic reaction which these factors support and promote in the United States, and in particular banal white nationalism. However, we must understand that we need to approach these issues in new and creative ways from understanding cultural geography, banal white nationalism, and historical narrative. For example, from John Shelton Reed we learn that just by thinking of ourselves as Southwesterners or Southeasterners instead of Southerners we undermine Neo-Confederacy.

Also, we need to understand that these are not the ordinary questions of politics, such as proposals for a tax policy, a proposal for roads, school bond issues, and the like. Instead it is a politics about who we are, about the entire framework in which culture, the landscape, geography, nationality, religion, and government exist. It is about not accepting anything as a given and being willing to consider the legitimacy of anything in society.  For that which is morally compromised with accommodation or collaboration with Neo-Confederacy and banal white nationalism we have to question our relation to it. We are not citizens of a white or Confederate nation, but a democratic nation. I have no obligation of citizenship or patriotism to the white nation or Confederate nation. Enlistment, jury duty, the school classroom, flags, symbols, charity, personal identities, holidays, and probably many other areas need to become areas to challenge, fight, and reject Neo-Confederacy and white nationalism.  In all the areas of society, we need to examine how individuals and institutions promote or collude with banal white nationalism and Neo-Confederacy and how they fail to act against them and protect people from them and act based on that knowledge. For example, the Neo-Confederate subculture that exists in the military should confront the military’s campaign for enlistments. For example, why don’t Public Defenders ever ask if the Judge is a member of a Neo-Confederate group, or screen the potential pool of jurors for Neo-Confederacy? Also, there is the issues of Judges who suppress the Neo-Confederate identity of those on trial for attacks against African Americans. Considering this should lead us to question the legitimacy of the criminal justice system.

Even naming and revealing white banal nationalism and its mechanisms and devices, historical narratives, etc. helps defeat it, by subverting its unquestioning acceptance. What is proposed to be the story of all of us, or the interests of all of us, or the commonsense knowledge of all of us, the definition of all of us, is revealed to be the agenda of a faction, and not all of us. The greatest strength of banal white nationalism is that it is not recognized and so is unopposed.

We can defeat banal white nationalism, Neo-Confederacy, the reactionary nation, by seeing them for what they are, refusing to assent or support them, and with understanding their workings subvert them, and defeat them.

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ENDNOTES

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**2** Hill is referring to minorities when he talks of a “deadly underclass.”

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**4**Graves, John Temple, “Observations,” a column in “The Citizen’s Council,” “lunatics” comment on page 4, November 1955, against violence, page 2, February 1956.

**5** “Relocation of Negroes Urged: Russell Plan Would Help Northern States Get Their Fair Share,” page 1,4, “The Citizens’ Council,” Vol. 4 No. 4, January 1959.

**6** Jackson, Derrick Z., “Daschle’s role as Lott’s enabler,” dated 12/25/2002, editorial, <http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/359/oped/Dashcle\_s\_role\_as\_Lott\_s\_enabler+.shtml>  printed 12/27/02.

**7**“Senator John Aschroft: Missouri’s Champion of States’ Rights and Traditional Southern Values,” interview, Southern Partisan, Vol.  18, 2nd Quarter, 1998, pages 26-29.

**8** The estimates vary, I take these from, “Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War, Patricia Faust, editor, paper back edition 1991, Harper Perennial,  page 448, which explains that estimates vary. I don’t recommend this book, except for technical details, otherwise it is a “Lost Cause” book.

**9** You can find the whole text of this speech in "Southern Pamphlets on Secession, November 1860-April 1861," Edited by Jon L. Wakelyn, pub. 1996, The University of North Carolina Press, P.O. Box 288, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-2288. It is also in "Echoes of the Confederacy," reprinted by Greenwood Press, 1970, but is no longer in print, but is in many libraries.

**10** Elsewhere I am providing the documentation of the white nationalism of the Confederacy and Neo-Confederacy, in academic articles, in a forthcoming book on Neo-Confederacy by a university press, and a book I am working on the primary historical resources.

**11** The quote of his agreement with me, and the exhortation of the members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans to mail him postcards protesting his comments, is “Forward the Colors,” page 10, Vol. 1 2000, report of McPherson claiming that he didn’t mean to say what he did, “Forward the Colors,” page 9, Vol. 3 2000, in the “Confederate Veteran.” The issues during that year were listed as volumes and not numbers.

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**16** Rand McNally 1987 Road Atlas, table of highway mileage, page 105, Rand McNally, Chicago, 1987.

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**18** Powell, Lew, “Yankees Finally Wiping Out South,” page 1E, “The Charlotte Observer,” Sunday, November, 10, 1985. From an email of the article from Lew Powell to Ed Sebesta, 12/27/04.

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**21** College Edition, Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language, page 1245 for ‘reunion’ and page 1591-2 for “unite”, World Publishing Company, 1966. The quote is from the no. 1 definition for “unite.”

**22** Pollard, E.A., “The Lost Cause Regained,” pages 13-14, published in 1968, from reprint, Books for Libraries Press, 1970, Freeport, New York.

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**27** McRae, Elizabeth Gillespie, “Caretakers of Southern Civilization: Georgia Women and the Anti-Suffrage Campaign, 1914-1920,” pages 812-13, The Georgia Historical Quarterly, Vol. 82 No. 4, Winter 1998.

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**32** Russell, Norma, “A Conversation with Phyllis Schafly,” pages 36-39, (table of contents is wrong), Southern Partisan, Vol. 2 No. 3, Summer 1982.

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