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abstract:

In 2015, an armed young white man entered the church in Charleston and killed nine African-Americans. He was guided by racist motives, modeled on Confederate soldiers and had previously been willing to photograph himself with the Confederate flag. This event once again triggered a discussion in the United States not only about the ideological but also material heritage of the Confederacy states, including the monuments ubiquitous in the cities of the South: memorials to Confederacy leaders, but also to anonymous soldiers. These monuments have become the subject of stormy disputes. Some of them were removed by the authorities (New York, New Orleans), some were overthrown in grassroots actions by activists (including Durham and Chapel Hill, referred to in the article); however, a large group was defended by the Republican state authorities.

The article - written from the perspective of visual culture studies - aims to recognize the specificity of the monument's medium in the context of these disputes. It argues that the most important characteristic of the medium considered obsolete today (static, unchangeable, heavy, physical, public, etc.) is its ability to present itself as natural, eternal, "historical". These monuments do not only serve to distort the history of civil war in the states of the South (particularly by erasing slavery from it). At the time of their creation - several decades after the war - they were tools of an aggressive policy of segregation and were intended to emphasize the domination of whites and the permanence of pre-war racial divisions.

The analysis of a contemporary artistic "monumental" intervention - Kehinde Wiley's Rumors of War, unveiled in December 2019 - will help in recognizing the specificity of the monument's medium. This work, from the perspective of art criticism falling into the traps of politics of representation, from the

perspective of visual culture studies turns out to be an important guide, entering into a complicated dialogue with the monuments of five Confederate leaders still present at the Monument Avenue in Richmond, the capital of the secessionists.

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Statues and Status Quo. Time of Monuments in the United States

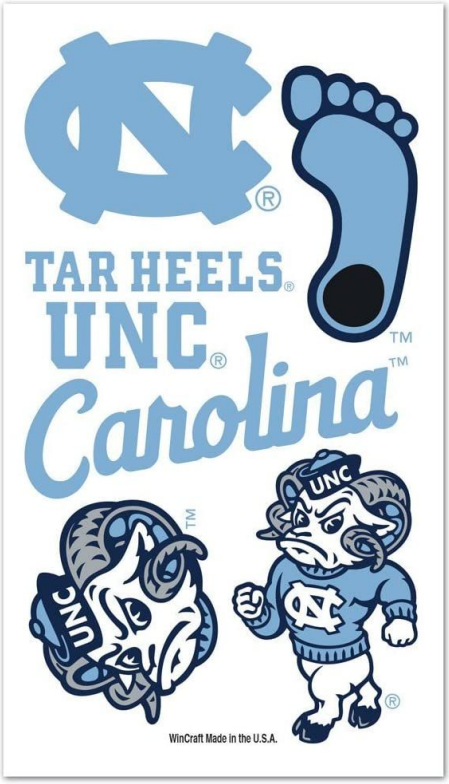
> The most terrible thing about [the Civil] War, I am convinced,
> is its monuments [...].
> W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Perfect Vacation," 1931[1]

The Location

As I prepared for my trip to Durham, it was the subject of basketball that excited me the most. True, the actual purpose of my visit was to study Confederate monuments and the heated debate surrounding them, but I had yet to precisely pinpoint the details on the map. Durham, North Carolina, seemed just as good a location for my research as any other southern U.S. city with a good university, a proper history department and library. What I knew from the very start, however, was that this region held a unique appeal for fans of basketball. Rather than rooting for the Duke Blue Devils (the number two team in the United States at the time), as per local convention, I sided with the University of North Carolina's Tar Heels from nearby Chapel Hill (then still number eight in the country, prior to Cole Anthony's knee injury). I attempted to justify this decision—one guided in part by my memories of UNC's most famous alumnus, Michael Jordan—in political terms. As Will Blythe says: "While the two schools are geographically close [about ten miles—Ł.Z.], they're a world apart in just about every other way."[2] UNC Chapel Hill is an excellent public university, the oldest institution of its kind in America, having opened in 1795, and offers relatively affordable in-state tuition to North Carolina residents (about seven thousand dollars per year). By contrast, Duke, the "Harvard of the South" or an "Ivy-League Wannabe" (depending on one's

perspective), is a private school founded in 1924 by a tobacco mogul. Tuition is currently $58,000 per year. Mike Krzyzewski, Duke's legendary basketball coach, is an avowed Republican, while Dean Smith, the famous UNC coach who died in 2015, spoke out "on behalf of liberal causes from the start of his career [...] and was [even] at times touted as a possible Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate."[3] It's no coincidence that Bernie Sanders held a campaign rally last fall at the Chapel Hill campus, where students arrive on buses emblazoned with either "Go Tar Heels!" or "Beat Duke!"

What does the name "Tar Heels" mean, however? A quick Google search produces disquieting results: Tar Heels was a nickname for North Carolinian soldiers who fought in the Confederate army (the label was used as a slur by others, but it was also proudly borne by the soldiers themselves). Is there any way to salvage this name and the ubiquitous team flags and t-shirts sporting the image of a tar-covered heel? Tar, along with turpentine, had been one of North Carolina's chief exports since long before the Civil War. In the 1820s the region became the country's main supplier of these two goods, which were used to seal ships and barrels, making the substances indispensable to transatlantic shipping.[4] Further historicization only worsens the problem.[5] The standard story about North Carolina typically opens with a disclaimer that that the state wasn't part of the "Deep South," and that slavery was not as important to the state's economy as it was in Alabama,



Mississippi, or neighboring South Carolina. One legend about the source of the name Tar Heels goes as far as to depict North Carolina as having been "tarred onto" the heel of the South by Confederate president Jefferson Davis, emphasizing that the state was reluctant to secede and was only the second-to-last to do so, in late May of 1861. Stories such as these are not entirely unfounded – twenty-five thousand men from North Carolina joined the Union army, after all, and an equal number deserted the Confederacy to enlist in the North – but slick rhetorical tropes of this type fail to acknowledge the people who worked at the 1,600 turpentine distilleries and who harvested the state's pine tar: black slaves and poor, white, unskilled laborers. At the onset of the Civil War, slaves comprised one third of North Carolina's population of nearly one million (free black people with limited rights made up another thirty thousand). As identities, the ubiquitous athletic totem of the black-heeled foot and the proud celebration of the state's historical industries are problematic, to say the least.

In these parts, traces of slavery are as pervasive as the team logos. Their presence is not limited to the innumerable and diverse s t r u c t u r a l consequences, both social and economic, of the plantation complex. In fact, many of these traces are visible to the naked eye: undisguised, tangible, present, and active here and now. These are "inconspicuous surface-level expressions," as Siegfried Kracauer called them, arguing that the study of particular time periods ought to be based on s u r f a c e - l e v e l expressions – meaning both superficial and located on the surface – rather than on "that epoch's judgments about itself."[6] The matter is only seemingly complicated by the fact that in place of the typically modern objects/expressions analyzed by Kracauer – that is to say, popular modern attractions (Tiller Girl performances, or the landscapes that form the backdrops of amusement parks, for example) – we find objects that are in many ways "outdated": monuments. Heavy, static, obstructive

monuments. Not only are they unhidden, they are practically unavoidable. Monuments themselves tell a slightly different story about modern-day America than the currently dominant (according to our era's understanding of itself) manifestations of the "visual turn" do: ephemeral, unstable, and easily modified images (from the "Chinese" app TikTok, to moral-panic-provoking deepfakes, whose divergence from the truth, when compared to the manipulations perpetrated by monuments, is neither unique nor particularly subtle).

In North Carolina, new events in the "monument wars" have been occuring on a near-weekly basis.[7] In early December, for example, it was revealed that UNC paid the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) $2.5 million to "take custody" of a Confederate monument toppled by protesters during a large on-campus demonstration. In practice, the subsidy amounted to hush money and was intended to prevent any future demands for the statue's reinstatement ("What we have accomplished is something that I never dreamed we could accomplish in a thousand years [...] and all at the expense of the University itself," the SCV leader wrote in a letter to the group's members[8]). University faculty have launched a protest letter campaign, while the school's alumni have lent their support to students who have filed a class-action lawsuit against UNC. Three months earlier, a court convicted two people for vandalizing a small memorial to the Unsung Founders in March 2018. It had been erected on the same campus in 2005, one of the few monuments in the United States to explicitly commemorate slavery (among the slogans scrawled by the

"Silent Sam", Chapel Hill (before liquidation), photo: Yellowspacehopper, CC B.Y. 3.0, Wikipedia.

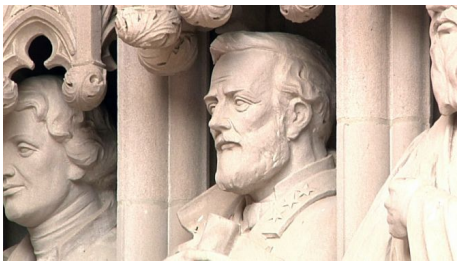
vandals were "Confederate lives matter" and "Yankee go home, antifa sucks"[9]).

In 2017 residents of Durham knocked the Confederate Soldiers Monument (popularly known as "The Boys Who Wore Gray") off its plinth, and were found innocent one year later on the grounds of insufficient evidence, even though images and video footage of the topplings in both Durham and Chapel Hill can be found online.

Confederate Soldiers Monument ("The Boys Who Wore Gray"), Durham (before partial liquidation). Photo: Hanneorla, public domain.

Also in 2017, Duke University administrators removed a statue of General Robert E. Lee from the campus's neo-Gothic chapel after the monument commemorating the Confederate leader was "defaced." It was later decided that the space would remain vacant, and the statue would be moved to a museum. Minor conflicts over the names of streets and university buildings, or over court rulings on attacks against monuments and the behavior of police in the monument wars, are everyday occurrences in university towns across North Carolina.

"Universities present perhaps maximum conjunction of both motive and opportunity to become aware of the problems attached to public recognition," writes Sanford Levinson.[10] The unusual concentration of memorials (dormitories, sports facilities, and libraries bearing the names of countless disreputable individuals, among them alumni and sponsors[11]) coincides, in the university environment, with a large population of socially active and critical youths (and sometimes faculty). Let us not forget,



Rober E. Lee Sculpture at Duke University Campus (original view, dafeced view, and current view).

furthermore, that the wealth of many American universities, from Harvard to UNC, was built up directly or indirectly by slaves, many of whom erected the very buildings in which "scientific" justifications for the American version of white supremacy were later developed.[12] In terms of historical injustices and the contemporary revision thereof, the academic world is clearly no exception, and the discussions that are at times more audibly and lucidly articulated on college campuses are in fact taking place throughout the country.

According to a report called "Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy," fifty-one confederate monuments were removed in the United States between 2015 and early 2019 (including four in North Carolina; the number currently, however, stands at six[13]). These statues are part of a longer list of 123 Confederate symbols removed during the same period, a list that includes the names of colleges and universities, parks, public institutions, schools, roads, and even scholarships.[14] Events such as one in New Orleans, where in 2015 Mayor Mitch Landrieu ordered the removal of the statues of three Confederate leaders and one monument associated with the White League (a racist paramilitary organization active in the 1870s) are among the exceptions. When, after a lengthy court battle, the symbols were finally removed in 2017, Landrieu delivered a fiery speech in which he recalled New Orleans' history as a slave trading port, described the Confederacy as a force that, in its struggle to preserve slavery, had been "on the wrong side of history and humanity," and called Confederate monuments objects that actively imbued spaces with racist ideology.[15]

Toppling of the Confederate Soldiers Monument in Durham, 2017.

However, the disappearance of such monuments is much more often the result of grassroots efforts launched by more or less formalized groups of iconoclasts. In Durham, these include members of the left-wing Workers World Party, while in Chapel Hill they are individuals who identify with Black Lives Matter or antifascist and anarchist movements, who march under the slogan "Do it like Durham." But more often than not, the removal and disposal of these symbols is driven by a combination of various forms of civic activism and decisions made by authorities who have been forced to respond to the situation on the ground, as happened in the case of Duke University chapel. In fact, authorities are sometimes relieved to find that a monument has been spontaneously removed by local residents, or that the threat of its toppling can provide cover for protective removal.[16] It is also worth noting that protests and direct action against monuments are often accompanied by counter-protests and, as in the case of New Orleans, sophisticated PR campaigns to preserve these symbols. Sometimes, as in Pittsboro (population less than four thousand, a mere twenty-eight miles from Durham), it ends up with confrontations taking place between both groups of protesters on a weekly basis, every Saturday, for months on end; the Pittsboro demonstrations ended November 20, 2019, when the local monument was finally removed.

Toppling of the Confederate Monument ("Silent Sam") in Chapel Hill, 2018.

The conflicts in question revolve around bearers of memory that are connected to values and traditions anchored in relatively d i s t a n t history: the Confederacy, the Civil War (1861–1865), and slavery in the United States. It follows that if we recognize in America the social life of monuments (and actions aimed at them) as examples of Kracauer's "surface-level expression" – sections of m o d e r n reality that help us understand reality, then a fundamental quality of the objects around which these heated debates revolve, a characteristic that demands further examination, is their capacity to perform extraordinary operations with time. This multi-threaded, intertwined relationship between the past, the present, and the future is a phenomenon that should be recognized as m o n u m e n t t i m e. To elucidate this concept, let us turn to the example of a certain anachronistic contemporary monument.

The Medium

> A world compartmentalized, Manichaean and petrified, a world of statues: the statue of the general who led the conquest, the statue of the engineer who built the bridge. A world cock-sure of itself, crushing with its stoniness the backbones of those scarred by the whip. That is the colonial world.
>
> Frantz Fanon[17]

Kehinde Wiley, *Rumors of War*, 2019

In late summer of 2019, a twenty-seven-foot equestrian statue was unveiled in New York's Times Square. The piece's creator, Kehinde Wiley – better known to wider audiences for his portrait of Barack Obama – inscribed the stone plinth bearing the horse and its rider, a contemporary African-American man, with his signature, the date, and, more importantly, the title. *Rumors of War*: to be interpreted as tentative, indirect, or at best fragmentary "whispers of war"; "news of war," distant but within the realm of reliable information; or, perhaps more precisely, "news from wars" or "war news," or even "news from the battlefield"; or finally, the imminent, audible "rumblings of war," lacking any metaphorical detachment.[18] For four months the monument shared the square with, among other things, the U.S. Army's prominent recruitment office, a conspicuous testimony to, and shameless advertisement for, the American military-industrial complex.[19] The "monumental" front of this conflict – one that flies in the face of the common-sense idea that monuments are erected once conflicts have been resolved – may turn out to be older than Times Square itself.[20] The urban plaza is the site of a battle

over America's public memory in the most literal sense: history that is won and lost in the contemporary landscape.

Alas, the biblical reference contained in the work's title was lost on the media, including the art press. What appears, from the art critic's point of view, to be an impermissible omission makes perfect sense when considered from the perspective of monuments. In fact, it is hinted at by the artwork itself. After all, monuments typically bear inscriptions, not titles, and the reading of these texts is at best secondary to one's encounter with the looming, silent object. And yet, during its several-month-long stint at Times Square, Wiley's rider not only failed to dominate its surroundings, but it remained glued to the spot, pinched on all sides by the towering skyscrapers. The temporary exhibition of the monument in New York – a PR strategy devised by Wiley with the goal of achieving a spectacular effect – managed to garner some press coverage, but ultimately backfired, thus weakening the significance of the artwork. The fault lay in the monumental sculpture's "expanded field." The piece lacked any points of reference, both in the sense of a literal anchoring in the landscape and – with no roots in the city or its history – in the symbolic sense.

Rumors of War in New York, 2019.

The situation changed radically in December of 2019, when the object was shipped to its final destination, Richmond, Virginia (taking us 160 miles to the north of Durham and Chapel Hill). It was then that the artwork, transported and displayed in a variety of contexts, gave way to the monument.

Kehinde Wiley, *Rumors of War*, 2019. © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Photo: Travis Fullerton

As Wiley explained in a press release:

> The story begins with me seeing the Confederate monuments [in Richmond in 2016, while working on a solo exhibition at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts]. What does it feel like if you are black and walking beneath this? We come from a b e a u t i f u l , f r a c t u r e d s i t u a t i o n. Let's take these f r a c t u r e d p i e c e s and put them back together. [Emphasis mine – Ł.Z.]

The site of this first impression was Monument Avenue, a pretty typical thoroughfare in the former Confederate capital. A mile-long walk takes one past prominently displayed sculpted memorials: an equestrian monument of Confederate General J.E.B. "Jeb" Stuart; an equestrian monument depicting Robert E. Lee, mounted on a massive marble plinth; a statue of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, whose seat of office was Richmond, atop a pillar standing before a semi-circular enfilade; an equestrian monument to General "Stonewall" Jackson, who earned his fame and monumental nickname at Manassas, the first serious battle

Robert E. Lee Monument in Richmond, Va.

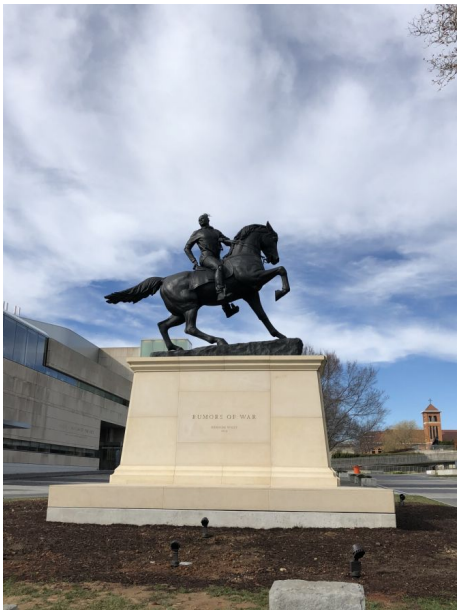
of the Civil War; an unusual monument to Matthew Fontaine Maury, depicting the oceanographer and meteorologist in civilian garb (Maury was tasked during the Civil War with guarding the coast, purchasing ships, and manufacturing naval weapons for the Confederacy); and, finally, a monument to the Richmond-born tennis player Arthur Ashe, the first African American to represent the United States in tennis, and the first black winner of the singles title at Wimbledon, the U.S. Open, and the Australian Open. This last monument was added to the avenue in 1996, three year's after the athlete's death.

Challenging Robert Musil's famous claim that monuments "are impregnated with something that repels attention, causing the glance to roll right off, like water droplets off an oilcloth, without even pausing for a moment,"[21] Wiley proves that overlooking monuments is a luxury afforded to a chosen few. To others, these objects cast an ominous shadow. It is precisely the Confederate monuments that form the material framework of what Wiley calls a "beautiful, fractured situation" and the "expanded field" of the artist's monumental intervention. The most expensive item in the history of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA), *Rumors of War* was not unveiled on Monument Avenue itself – though the street remains its main point of reference – but several hundred yards away, in front of the very museum, on Arthur Ashe Boulevard, a location no less imbued with symbolism. The conspicuously displayed monument is anchored between the galleries of the VMFA and the grand headquarters of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC),

Matthew Fontaine Maury Monument, Richmond, Va.

an organization responsible for erecting dozens of Confederate memorials across the United States; from a slightly broader viewpoint, the piece is located between the Virginia Museum of History and Culture and the Confederate Memorial Chapel, built in 1887. "Rumors of the War" can be heard with much greater clarity here than in the din of New York City. In Richmond, they resonate not with the detemporalized postmodern collage typified by Robery Venturi's monumental 1984 design of an enormous apple that was to be placed in Times Square, which never came to fruition,[22] but with the rumble of artillery fire, orders barked by Confederate commanders, and above all else, the memory of these things, now dating back over 150 years.

At the same time, in contrast to the possibly conciliatory tone of the phrase "putting reality back together again," the subtlety of Wiley's intervention defeats the tactic of simulated harmony and inclusiveness represented by the gesture of adding a black tennis player to the five Confederate leaders memorialized on Monument Avenue. *Rumors of War* fills in the gaps in the Civil War narrative as told through monuments, without sealing the cracks in this "fractured situation"; instead, it pulls them open. By introducing another monument, the artist adds movement to Fanon's "A world compartmentalized, Manichaean and petrified, a world of statues. [...] A world cock-sure of itself, crushing with its stoniness the backbones of those scarred by the whip,"[23] and in doing so creates a point of reference for the petrified Southern army. This idea is



Kehinde Wiley, *Rumors of War*, 2019, Richmond, Va. Photos: Łukasz Zaremba.

wonderfully expressed in the artist's - surely unintentional but nevertheless remarkably pregnant - reference to words written by President Donald Trump. Wiley's "b e a u t i f u l, f r a c t u r e d situation" contains, after all, ironic echoes of a 2017 tweet by the American president:

> Sad to see the history and culture of our great country ripped apart with the removal of our b e a u t i f u l s t a t u e s and monuments [...] Also the beauty that is being taken out of our cities, towns and parks will be greatly missed and never able to be comparably replaced.

In "beautiful statues" – a phrase penned by a man who has, for years, studded the landscape with monumental buildings bearing his own name – a number of argumentative strategies for keeping the monuments intact reverberate with varying intensity: the aesthetic argument, which can be distilled into the statement "(they may be racist, but) they're works of art"; the conservative argument, which boils down to the declaration "(we don't want to talk about whether or not they're racist, but) they're our historical legacy"; and the liberal-conservative argument, which draws a connection between the removal of monuments and the erasure of history ("Who's next? Washington? Jefferson?" Trump's tweets continue). This is the "colonial world" described by Fanon.[24] A world in which aesthetic categories determine the dominant regime, depicting it as natural, neutral, and proper. Or, as Rancière might say: aesthetic, meaning beautiful.[25]

J.E.B. Stuart Monument, Richmond, Va.

Wiley's monumental intervention, which seeks to disrupt a beautiful order or instill order on a beautiful mess (depending on one's point of view), is not easy to classify. It attempts to be at once iconoclastic – toward Richmond's commemorative landscape in general – and iconophilic, permanently expanding the collection of symbols with a new image, as if fearing that "to simply remove the monuments allows us to dream that white supremacy can itself be toppled – overnight! – and also that it exists as something alien to us."[26] It does not annihilate, disfigure, or directly conceal existing monuments – the three basic iconoclastic strategies listed by W.J.T. Mitchell[27] and remaining in use today in the United States; concealment is employed mainly by authorities and courts to weather the storm under polyvinyl tarps. Nor does it ignore the persuasive mechanisms of monuments and settle for at best naïve attempts at recontextualization, such as the explanatory placards sometimes installed near controversial memorials by municipalities ("Does anyone really believe that putting a plaque near a sculpture, or even leaving a niche empty, will convey 'historical complexity'?"[28]).

The power of this particular monument is limited: it is a top-down gesture that not only fails to prompt local residents to take action (protests, coalition building, and collective civil disobedience), it actually deprives them of the right to decide about their own surroundings. It provides the city with an excuse to leave existing monuments in place and Monument Avenue itself intact. Furthermore, it falls into the numerous traps inherent in the politics of representation, veering perilously close to recreating an alternative version of a "Manichaean world." Still, Wiley's equestrian is worth following, if only because, by using a new monument to perform actions vis-à-vis existing monuments, the artist is forced to address the distinctive characteristic of the medium – even if he fails repeatedly in the process.

Kehinde Wiley, *Rumors of War*, 2019, Richmond, Va.
© Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Photo: Travis Fullerton.

*

The phrase Rumors of War is more than just the "title of a monument" (which sounds weird in itself). It also refers to a series of artworks, begun in 2005, that had thus far comprised only large-format paintings containing updated versions of the likenesses of military leaders from the European art canon: canvases by Rubens, Le Brun, Velázquez, and Jacques-Louis David. At first glance, the 2019 monument adheres to the general model established by this series and many of Wiley's other pieces: the rider is a contemporary African American depicted according to

Kehinde Wiley, *Napoleon Leading the Army Over the Alps, oil on canvas © Kehinde Wiley, Brooklyn Museum, Nowy Jork*

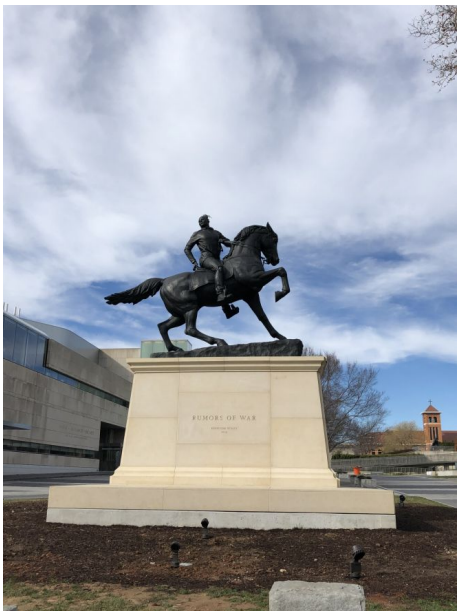
the principles of modern triumphal portraits or, in this instance, a hero represented in m o n u m e n t a l form. In the artist's large-format canvases, the figure and the background are usually juxtaposed. While the foreground contains a hyperrealistic depiction of a contemporary, anonymous black man (whom the artist scouted on the street and invited into his studio), portrayed in a "hyperblack vernacular style,"[29] the background is filled with flat floral patterns resembling Baroque or Rococo tapestries that "undermine the sense of illusion"[30] contained in the original canonical works of modern Western art. The staffage entwining the figure, in the lower part of the image, produces a playful 3D effect; it is an exercise in the self-referential language of painterly representation. For this reason, Kobena Mercer describes Wiley's figures as existing in "an intensified realm of purely pictorial space."[31] Their depictions provoke reflection on the subject of representation and image, conducted in the language of the resurrected genre of the imperial portrait in the absolutist era, which, as Nicholas Mirzoeff reminds us, was intended to capture not just the ruler themself, but also the surfeit of power (the body of Dignity), the "power of representation itself."[32]

The equation is roughly as follows: the portrait is a tool of status, while the image is a privilege and mode of power. Replacing a white ruler or military commander with a black American does not automatically transfer the power wielded by the old originals to the contemporary figures. This is precluded by the discrepancy in time and genre, and by the double and doubly reinforced costume and pose, to list but two reasons. The artist's tactic "sets off interruptive discrepancies that question the codes through which male power is portrayed."[33] At the same time, there is an absence of strong arguments to support the claim that these works significantly challenge stereotypes: they depict strong young black men. Even if they do emphasize the performative dimension of contemporary black masculinity,

they also reiterate dominant notions of it while putting on display (and exposing to danger) young male bodies. Their intense performances of power and confidence, in the words of Ta-Nehisi Coates, assure them, "against all evidence and odds, that they [are] masters of their own lives, their own streets, and their own bodies."[34]

While, for the medium of painting, this took place within the relatively secure realm of experiments with representation (and inside art galleries), in the case of the monument – a public object – the bronze-cast body of a black man in torn jeans, Air Max sneakers, fashionably coiffed dreadlocks, and a hoodie (like the one Trayvon Martin and many other black boys and men were wearing when they were killed) is literally put on public display.[35] *This time, it plays out in the complex syntax of a monumental sentence, one that not so much abolishes as much as shuffles the numerous problems involved in representation.*

Kehinde Wiley, Willem van Heythuysen, 2006, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Fund Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Va.



Kehinde Wiley, Rumors of War, 2019, Richmond, Va. Photo: Łukasz Zaremba

In place of the unrealization effect produced by the backgrounds in the painting series, the three-dimensional figure in Richmond is bestowed with matter, heft, and presence. The statue adheres to the overarching formula of Rumors of War in that it has a direct and legible precursor, this time borrowed only indirectly from the canon of ancient European art, and directly from its local model: the monument of J.E.B. Stuart on Monument Avenue. The pose of the muscular horse, the scene taking on a sculptural scale, and even the arrangement of the mane and tail - are identical in both statues; the Confederate general is replaced by an anonymous African American whose body is twisted into the same spiral shape as the "original." Wiley again refers to the stereotype of the strong black body – so often feared by white America – through the medium of the sculpture, which "more than any of the other arts [...] was embedded in the theoretical foundation of racism that supported American slavery": be that as a the source for the model of the white body (a prime example being the Apollo Belvedere) or as a form of three-dimensional representation used for racist anthropometric comparisons.[36] *By building an anachronistic monument (with a figurative statue, tall plinth, durable materials, etc.), the artist condemns himself to recreating a vision of history that ascribes agency to individual heroes (and dooms his artwork to be seen through the comic-book lens of Tarantino's Django, who achieves self-emancipation and exacts vengeance as an individual). He also dooms himself to imitate the traditional relationship between the bronze hero and his viewers, who occupy*

a physically and symbolically subordinate position. In this regard, Rumors of War is no different from the memorials on Monument Avenue.

Nevertheless, Wiley's monument avoids many of the other pitfalls of representation. As Erika Doss writes in her book Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America, "Freedom remains the dominant trope in today's commemoration of slavery, and freedom typically trumps slavery, against which it is pitted, not paired in American historical memory."[37] By focusing on the aspect of freedom in representations of the history of slavery, one encourages narratives in which the institution is portrayed as an aberration or an exception, rather than a naturalized, established, and almost universally accepted principle. The process of rewriting this history has gone so far that Kirk Savage, in his study Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves, describes black Americans as having been erased from late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century memorials to the abolition of slavery. It was then that abolition entered the American public space (exclusively in the victorious Union) and was commemorated with monuments, solely as the crowning achievement of Abraham Lincoln, transforming "the idea of emancipation into a personalized narrative of racial uplift orchestrated by the white hero."[38] In practice, African Americans were depicted as the titular "kneeling slaves" at Lincoln's feet, visibly subordinate to their white liberator.

Wiley's rider stirs Richmond's "immobile world of monuments" into movement. Taking advantage of the insolubility that is inherent in representations of this type – ones frozen in time, like a freeze-frame of a film – the piece evokes uncertainty as to the relationship between the black rider and the white generals.

Our gaze travels from one monument to the next and back, unable to resolve beyond all doubt whether the contemporary unarmed rider is leading his army into battle, or whether he is looking back as he is followed by J.E.B. Stuart (who faces north, naturally). The motif of freedom makes an appearance, but it is neither certain nor a given. At the same time, the true stakes of the Civil War are stated with no room for ambiguity.

The anachronistic monument Rumors of War, ceremonially unveiled December 10, 2019, in Richmond, prompts yet another type of circular movement in the Confederate capital's commemorative landscape. By displaying, on a pedestal, a contemporary African American – rather than the likeness of an (escaped) slave, for example, or of one of the 180,000 black soldiers who fought on the Union side – it does more than just threaten the cohesiveness of the nation's memory of the Civil War, from which the history of black slavery has been erased. It also poses questions about the space occupied today by African-Americans in the public sphere and memory, and, more significantly, it reminds us that the monuments to the five Confederate leaders have not stood on Richmond's main avenue forever. If Rumors of War truly succeeds in recontextualizing local memory, in some dimension, it does so by challenging the unequivocal nature of "monument time." Even the use of traditional materials and traditional forms in a contemporary, modern-day monument effectively casts doubts on the timelessness, permanence, and confidence of the Monument Avenue memorials. They, too, were placed there, ceremonially unveiled, commissioned, and paid for (mostly with funds raised by the public) – back in their day.

Time

> *While many worry that removing [Confederate] monuments erases history, [...] monuments themselves erase history, particularly their own histories.*
>
> *Kirk Savage*[39]

In 1931 W.E.B. Du Bois embarked on a winter trip through the southern states, recounting his voyage in the essay "The Perfect Vacation." One of the stops on his itinerary was Durham.

As he traveled from Atlanta to Charleston, Du Bois experienced legally sanctioned racial segregation, enshrined in the Jim Crow laws, but he also observed white poverty, ubiquitous violence, exploitation, and vast social inequality. Still, having witnessed all of this, he could not overlook the monuments.

> The most terrible thing about War, I am convinced, is its monuments, – the awful things we are compelled to build in order to remember the victims. In the South, particularly, human ingenuity has been put to it to explain on its war monuments, the Confederacy. Of course, the plain truth of the matter would be an inscription something like this: "Sacred to the memory of those who fought to Perpetuate Human Slavery." But that reads with increasing difficulty as time goes on. It does, however, seem to be overdoing the matter to read on a North Carolina Confederate monument: "Died Fighting for Liberty!"[40]

I have yet to locate the monument Du Bois mentions,[41] *but my reading of over two hundred inscriptions on stone and bronze Civil War memorials scattered across North Carolina*[42] *allows me to reconstruct the ideological framework that would make the existence of such a monument entirely likely and a logical consequence of the work put into transforming the collective memory. Above all else, the soldiers in Civil War monuments are*

loyal — they obey conscription orders — and bravely serve in the new country's full-fledged army (no mention is made of high treason or who caused the Civil War). Their sacrifices on the battlefield are to be a source of pride, a model to follow, and events to be commemorated ("They gave us a story / A story to live," read one monument in Winston-Salem, eighty miles from Durham, removed in March 2019). What they fought for, after all, was freedom. They fought for their states, for the rule of law, for the rule of the constitution, for the broad set of values and ideas that defined the South, for the Southern way of life, but once again and more importantly, for freedom. Their only defeat was a military one. They achieved a moral victory. And in the end, they perhaps achieved total victory.

In 1931, the same year that Du Bois took his perfect vacation, Duncan Fletcher, the Democratic senator from Florida, delivered a speech before the United Daughters of the Confederacy, in which he stated:

> The South fought to preserve race integrity. Did we lose that? We fought to maintain free white dominion. Did we lose that? The States are in control of the people. Local self-government, democratic government, obtains. That was not lost. The rights of the sovereign States, under the Constitution, are recognized. We did not lose that. I submit that what is called "the Lost Cause" was not so much "lost" as is sometimes supposed.[43]

Speaking in front of a trusted audience with a stake in the narrative, Fletcher allowed himself to go one step too far in his work with history. He said out loud partly what the monuments erected by the UDC were supposed to conceal and at once uphold: the reestablishment and reinforcement of racial segregation and white supremacy in the United States after the abolition of slavery.

What monuments did Du Bois encounter on his travels through Durham and other areas? How did they come to be

there? And when did Richmond erect the statues which Rumors of War, unveiled in 2019, clashes with?

Unveiling of "Silent Sam" Monument in Chapel Hill, 1913.

The North Carolina college towns discussed at the beginning of this essay share a connection to the United Daughters of the Confederacy and to "General" Julian Carr, a Klansman, wealthy industrialist, unabashed white supremacist, and, in his youth, a private in the Confederate army. In 1913 in Chapel Hill, Carr unveiled Silent Sam, the likeness of an unnamed Confederate soldier (toppled in 2018). Addressing the large crowd that had gathered for the ceremony, Carr praised the Confederate army and told the story of how, upon returning from the lost Battle of Appomattox in 1865, he had whipped a black woman almost on that very site, "until her skirts hung in shreds." The woman, whose name we do not know, was alleged to have "publicly insulted and maligned a Southern lady."[44] That same Carr (who gave his name to the neighboring town of Carrboro) was laid to rest five days before the unveiling, in May 1924, of the previously mentioned Confederate Soldiers Monument in Durham (removed in 2017). A farewell speech was given in his honor at the dedication ceremony. Had Du Bois seen the two monuments, he would have found them to be recent additions and certainly not remnants of, or historical testaments to, the Civil War, which had ended seventy years earlier.

Unveiling of Robert E. Lee Monument in Richmond, Va, 1890.

A similar degree of temporal removal can be observed in several other memorials – unveiled with great pomp and ceremony – to the leaders of the unusually numerous bronze army of nameless soldiers besieging the towns and cities of the South, the very leaders displayed on the plinths lining Monument Avenue in Richmond: Robert E. Lee, 1880; J.E.B. Stuart, 1907; Jefferson Davis, 1907; Stonewall Jackson, 1919; Matthew Fontaine Maury, 1929. In no way do any of these memorials constitute traces of the Civil War or even the Reconstruction era. Rather, they are a delayed reaction to the defeat of the Confederacy (Union armies remained in the South until the late 1870s), the abolition of slavery, and attempted post-war reforms that aimed to grant full rights to black citizens.

*

The South's most important objective at the outbreak of the Civil War was to uphold the institution of slavery, because the wealth of plantation owners in most Confederate states was structurally dependent on it. They made no secret of their intentions.[45] Their defeat, which cost the lives of eighteen percent of all white men aged thirteen to forty-three,[46] ushered in a period during which the victorious, Republican-ruled North established a new order in the former breakaway states. "The great challenge of Reconstruction was to determine just how defeated the South really was, and to establish how free the emancipated slaves really were."[47] The federal government moderately supported the emancipation of the freed slaves at

the time, and blocked the defeated states' attempts to limit it. Northern armies remained conspicuously present in the Southern states well into the 1870s. Nevertheless, Confederate leaders were not tried for high treason, because for Abraham Lincoln, the ultimate goal of the war had always been to maintain the unity and cohesion of the country. Therefore, when the first sketches of the Lost Cause ideology begin to appear in the press, political proclamations, eulogies, and literature, they serve to defend the enormous human and material losses sustained by the rebels (What did they give up their lives for?) and function as a type of countermemory to the temporarily dominant vision imposed by the victors, who held holidays and parades in cities across the South, with emancipated black people in attendance.[48] *In the first few years after the war, cemeteries served as official epicenters of memory for the Confederacy. In the late 1870s, this locus began to shift from the outskirts of cities to their centers, driving out black citizens. Along with bestselling novels, monuments soon became the most important carriers of this memory – not funerary monuments, but statues erected in key urban locations that had, until recently, been captured and occupied by Northern armies.*

The fundamental need addressed by the Lost Cause – an interpretive framework rife with contradiction and omission, constructed on partial forgetting and selective memory – was to remove slavery from its role as the fundamental stake of the war, a stake that was worth giving one's life for. This, of course, necessitated that slavery be erased from memory, ignoring its existence altogether or depicting it as an aberration, often one imposed by outside forces,[49] *rather than a mainstay of the Southern economy and social relations. Alternatively, it was the terror and cruelty of slavery that would be depicted as the exception, while the institution itself was described in terms of racial supremacy and its patriarchal mission to grant the gift of civilization to the slaves*[50]*: a friendly, familial, caring, and*

educational institution (here we see the literary trope of the "loyal slave," who discards the freedom papers issued to him by the North and returns to his master). At the same time, the vacuum left by the stakes of the conflict is filled with the valiance and sacrifice of regular soldiers. Decades before the first tombs of unknown soldiers were built in Europe, hundreds of bronze statues of bearded white men in uniform were erected across the United States, primarily in the South. They show no signs of battle, fear, or dismemberment. Instead, they display white courage and valor. They are like the ones in Durham and Chapel Hill: stock statues, all similar, cheap and therefore ubiquitous, erected at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in every Southern city.[51] *It's no wonder these hollow, low-quality monuments tumble so easily today, buckling under the attacks of contemporary iconoclasts, astonished at the swiftness of their own success.*[52]

The structure and purifying power of the Lost Cause ideology were akin to a tragedy. The superior numbers, wealth, and power of the North and its army meant that the South was doomed to be defeated militarily[53] *– but not morally. The Lost Cause narrative portrayed the war as a quasi-religious sacrifice. Like the Israelites, Southerners were put to the test, and like Christ, they suffered for others.*[54] *A central role in mourning and commemoration is played by women, who in the 1880s left the cemeteries behind and moved to the city squares, establishing in 1895 the United Daughters of the Confederacy, a powerful organization that remains active today, as we have seen in the case of Richmond, Virginia. Henceforth the UDC was active in drumming up support for the Lost Cause through various efforts, which included writing history textbooks that remained in use in several states until the 1980s.*

> As Southerners began to unveil their local soldiers' monuments, and as their victory over Reconstruction became

part of their narrative of Confederate heritage, Lost Cause orators moved from mournful to more triumphant tones.[55]

Two important processes intertwine here: the building of Confederate monuments was accompanied by the gradual erosion of African Americans' rights in the South and, to a certain degree, in the North, too. In practice, both efforts were two different expressions of the same action. Known as Jim Crow, these regulations were intended to limit, to the greatest extent possible, the rights of blacks, and to partially reinstate slavery-style labor practices. Facing stiff prison sentences for all sorts of perceived infractions – from unemployment and debt to ogling a white woman – African Americans were deprived of their already scant civil rights and forced into labor, which often involved being "lent out" to private factories and plantations.[56] The ubiquitous Confederate monuments unveiled with great pomp several decades after the Civil War were intended to mark public spaces as reclaimed and dominated by white racists. They therefore functioned as aggressive signs indicating where blacks were unwelcome, markers dividing space, and tools of racial re-segregation.

The first memorial on Monument Avenue in Richmond, a statute of General Lee proudly gazing north, was unveiled twenty-five years after the war. It was then that the Lost Cause concept entered national mainstream thinking about the conflict, and affected, at least to a certain degree, the North. It also marked the moment when the period of mourning over the heroic loss finally gave way to pride and a sense of triumph. Southern values had been preserved.[57] But the whole of Monument Avenue in the former Confederate capital can be described as a project created to rewrite history. As Kirk Savage demonstrates, this was a political venture that aspired to depoliticize the city's landscape: the site selected for the monuments was located far from the former Confederate center, mansions, and government buildings. To make way for this new

avenue, new city, and new future, its builders cleared away the remains of wartime ruins and trenches.[58] *The memorials built on Monument Avenue quite literally erased history.*

What is therefore obscured by a monument's uncanny ability to compress time, to insidiously bond the moment of its creation to the time period it purports to depict, is actually not that Confederate monuments erased slavery from history, but that when they were erected, many years after slavery had been abolished, they were blatant gestures of racist violence directed at emancipated black people. They were signposts for a new/old "world compartmentalized, Manichaean and petrified, a world of statues."

In 1887 in Charleston, 300 miles south of Durham, a monument was built to a man who was not even a Confederate, but one of the greatest advocates of slavery: South Carolina senator and vice-president John C. Calhoun, who had died in 1850. In their 2018 study of memory in Charleston, one of the largest slave markets in America, Ethan J. Kytle and Blain Roberts wrote the following about the monument:

Johna C. Calhoun Monument, Charleston, NC.
Fot. Wally Gobetz, CC

> In one sense, the statue of Calhoun [...] eschewed slavery and did not explicitly address his racial beliefs at all. But, in another sense, the Calhoun Monument dealt directly with slavery. [...] Calhoun was represented as the South's iconic figure of defiance: standing up, both literally and figuratively, for his region's interests on the Senate floor. [...] While none mentioned slavery, the Calhoun Monument alone harkened back to

> a time before the war, when its precipitating cause occupied the energies of the state's politicians.[59]

In other words, the monument invoked the Antebellum South and projected it onto Charleston's present and future. "I believe white people were talking to us about Jim Crow through that statue," recalls activist Mamie Garvin Fields, a Charlestonian born one year after the monument was erected.[60] They spoke in a language that black residents could easily understand.

> In light of the high illiteracy rates that plagued black communities at the time, African American leaders often employed visual and aural, rather than written, methods to reach their followers. White southerners who erected monuments followed a similar strategy. While some African Americans may not have been able to read the segregationist editorials pouring forth from newspapers across South Carolina, they could not miss the visual message the Calhoun Monument announced to them every time they passed by.[61]

In 2015 an armed man entered a church in Charleston and killed nine black people aged twenty-six to eighty-seven; another three victims survived the shooting. The perpetrator of this racially motivated attack had an admiration for Confederate soldiers and had posed for photographs with a Confederate flag. He carried out the murders shortly after the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War, in a church that housed the direct historical descendant of a congregation tied to the failed slave rebellion led in 1822 by Denmark Vesey, a free black Charlestonian (in 2014, after many years of debate, Vesey was memorialized with an inconspicuous monument in Charleston). In response to the tragedy, several states removed the Confederate flag from their government buildings. Others dug into their conservative positions; many states passed laws protecting Civil War monuments, a move that was designed to forestall efforts by activists and local city politicians to remove

the memorials. In 2017 in Charlottesville, 170 miles north of Durham, amid the conflict over the proposed removal of the local monument to Robert E. Lee (unveiled in 1924, still standing today), a white American neo-Nazi killed Heather Heyer and injured nineteen other individuals who had gathered to protest a far-right rally being held in the city. In response to this event, protesters soon toppled Confederate monuments in Durham, Chapel Hill, and several other cities across the South.

Much like monuments, Confederate flags first appeared on flagpoles in several Southern states not in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, nor even in the Jim Crow era (1880–1920/30), but a full century after the war, as a renewed reaction to the black civil rights movement in America. The 1950s and '60s marked another period – after the turn of the 20th century – of intensified commemoration of the Confederacy through the raising of monuments and the renaming of schools and institutions after Confederate figures. In just five years between 1965 and 1970, thirty new Confederate monuments were erected in the United States.[62]

A third reactionary wave, following that of 1880–1920 and the smaller (but significant) trend observed in the 1960s, is taking place today. On the one hand, since the 1990s the United States has witnessed a surge in its "obsession with memory," which Erika Doss, author of Memorial Mania, ascribes to shifting demographics in America, the enfranchisement of numerous disadvantaged groups in the public sphere, and even the popularity of public art.[63] *Kehinde Wiley's Rumors of War certainly belongs to the collection defined thusly, though it is perhaps better described as a testament to the current struggle against the enormous conservative and racist backlash against previously disenfranchised groups being granted rights in the public space. On the other hand, ten years have now passed since the publication of Michelle Alexander's widely*

discussed book The New Jim Crow, which details how the U.S. penal system deprives African Americans of their civil rights using methods commonly practiced a century ago, particularly incarceration.[64] *In the meantime, racist jokes about Barack Obama living in a White House built with slave labor, depicting the presidential residence as standing in the middle of a plantation, have given way to the racist tweets of his successor.*[65]

Today's Confederates aren't just defending their old monuments and raising money to restore them, they are building new ones. Their efforts are readily apparent in North Carolina. Local historian Fitzhugh Brundage has counted thirty-five new Confederate memorials erected since 2000. This time, battlefields are being used as safe spaces and pretexts to build new monuments.[66]

*

In the context of the complicated social transitions and complex conflicts taking place in the United States today – as well as the problems and disputes surrounding America's previous bouts of "memorial mania" at the turn of the 20th century and in the 1960s – statues must strike many as banal messages indeed. And yet it is precisely the multidimensional appearance of the monument's traditional form, its drive to disambiguate, and its refusal to brook dissent, that have made it such a powerful weapon in America for over a century. These sorts of monuments have become not just crucial tools for falsifying recent and more distant history: they have become weapons of symbolic violence. By focusing on commemorating the past, they have invariably addressed – both in the early 20th century and today – current social relations. They have been used to conquer, demonstrate, and reclaim advantages both in the public space and in the public sphere. What we can learn from the ongoing clashes over monuments in the United States, it seems, is that the form of the monument (which pretends to be immutable, immobile,

timeless, and neutral), is best challenged using variable, diverse, context-aware tactics that complicate history as well as its expressions in the public space.

Durham's Confederate Soldiers Monument - current view, photo: Łukasz Zaremba.

1 W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Perfect Vacation," The Crisis 40, no. 8 (1931): 279.

2 Will Blythe, To Hate Like This is to Be Happy Forever: A Thoroughly Obsessive, Intermittently Uplifting, and Occasionally Unbiased Account of the Duke-North Carolina Basketball Rivalry (New York: Harper, 2007), 6.

3 Blythe, To Hate Like This is to Be Happy Forever, 7–8.

4 Milton Ready, The Tar Heel State: The History of North Carolina (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 183–184.

5 *For more on this subject, see Bruce E. Baker, "Why North Carolinians are Tar Heels," Southern Cultures 21, no. 4 (2015) www.southerncultures.org/article/why-north-carolinians-are-tar-heels-a-new-explanation/, accessed February 1, 2020.*

6 *Siegfried Kracauer, "The Mass Ornament," in The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays (Cambridge: Harvard University Pres, 1995), 75.*

7 *Along with a few dozen monuments, several of which still stand in the capital of Raleigh, the state is home to approximately one hundred buildings, institutions, roads, and even a city, whose names commemorate the Confederacy. According to the DocSouth database, there are over two hundred Civil War memorials in North Carolina. https://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/15/, accessed March 26, 2020.*

8 *Cited in: David Blight, W. Fitzhugh Brundage, Kevin M. Levin, "A University's Betrayal of Historical Truth," The Atlantic, December 9, 2019, www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/12/the-university-of-north-carolinas-payout-to-the-confederate-lost-cause/603253/, accessed January 10, 2020.*

9 *Jordan Green, "Neo-Confederates Found Guilty of Vandalizing Statue Honoring Enslaved People Who Built UNC," The Indy Week, September 6, 2019, https://indyweek.com/news/orange/neo-confederates-found-guilty-of-vandalizing-statue-honoring, accessed January 15, 2020.*

10 *Sanford Levinson, Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies, Second Edition (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2018), 154.*

11 *Yale University, for example, not only dumped the name of Calhoun College (named after John C. Calhoun, vice-president of the United States and one of the leading and most influential opponents of abolition in the first half of the nineteenth century), but also formed a commission that included David W. Blight, a historian of the nineteenth century, to draw up guidelines for reviewing all memorials at Yale. See David W. Blight, Lost Causes and Causes Not Lost: Confederate Memorials Then and Now, speech at the conference Southern Symbols, Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, October 2017, https://youtu.be/rGeVI3n-EJY.*

12 *Both types of historical ties between slavery and the oldest universities in the United States are the main subject of Craig Steven Wilder's widely discussed book Ebony and Ivy. Race, Slavery and the Troubled History of America's Universities (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013). On the role of America's top universities in providing scientific legitimacy to racist anthropology before World War II (and Franz Boas's role in challenging it), see Nell Irvin Painter, The History of White People (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010).*

13 *"Removal of Confederate monuments and memorials," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Removal_of_Confederate_monuments_and_memorials#North_Carolina, accessed February 1, 2020.*

14 *The report "Whose Heritage?" by the Southern Poverty Law Center was published in two versions: the original, released in 2016, and the updated February 2019 edition: www.splcenter.org/20190201/whose-heritage-public-symbols-confederacy#findings, accessed February 10, 2020. According to the latter version, there are still 1,747 public memorials of the Confederacy in existence today.*

15 *In 2018 Mitch Landrieu published a memoir about the conflict over monuments in New Orleans, from which this quotation is taken. Mitch Landrieu, In the Shadow of Statues: A White Southerner Confronts History (New York: Penguin Books, 2018), 178.*

16 *Many conflicts are in fact waged over the division of power between state and local governments. Following the surge of interest in Confederate monuments in 2015, many Southern states (including North Carolina) adopted resolutions preventing the removal of monuments. A frequent factor in these conflicts is the political polarization of state and local jurisdictions: the former are often governed by Republicans, while power in many cities is held by members of the Democratic Party. "This underscores the fact that cities are not necessarily masters of their own use of public space," Sanford Levinson writes, because state governments cite a variety of heritage preservation laws to prevent war memorials from being "relocated, removed, altered, renamed, re-dedicated, or otherwise disturbed" (Levinson, Written in Stone, 148). "What they've done is taken away local control [over monuments], which is kind of an ironic thing," especially if one considers the fact that many conservatives attempt to portray the Civil War as a struggle to preserve local governance in the American South. Catherine Clinton, Confederate Statues and Memorialization (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2019), electronic edition.*

17 *Frantz Fanon, "On Violence," in The Wretched of the Earth, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 15.*

18 *Matthew 24:6.*

19 *As Kirk Savage reminds us, the Founding Fathers of the United States feared that a standing army could end up being a powerful weapon in the hands of a tyrant, and therefore kept only a small and relatively weak military prior to the Civil War. Kirk Savage, Iconoclasm and Confederacy. The Challenge of White Supremacy in the Memorial Landscape, presentation hosted by the journal Southern Spaces in October 2017; https://southernspaces.org/2017/iconoclasm-and-confederacy-challenge-white-supremacy-memorial-landscape/, accessed December 15, 2019.*

20 *The midtown Manhattan intersection was given the name Times Square in 1904.*

21 *Robert Musil, "Monuments," in: Posthumous Papers of a Living Author (New York: Archipelago Books, 64–65). Magda Szcześniak and I explore this subject in greater detail in an article that compares monumental iconoclasm in Poland and the United States: Magda Szcześniak, Łukasz Zaremba, "Paranoid Looking: On De-Communisation," Journal of Visual Culture 18 (2019).*

22 *See https://old.skyscraper.org/EXHIBITIONS/TIMES_SQUARE/venturi.php, accessed July 12, 2020. Notably, one study of Venturi and the postmodernist trend in architecture, by Aron Vinegar, opens with an illustration from Learning from Las Vegas , a drawing of a billboard bearing the words "I Am a Monument." Aron Vinegar, I Am a Monument: On "Learning from Las Vegas" (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008).*

23 *Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth*

24 *Ibid.*

25 *Jacques Rancière, The Politics of Aesthetics, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2013).*

26 *Noel W. Anderson, Andrew Weiner, "Questionnaire on Monuments," October 165 (2018): 10.*

27 *W.J.T. Mitchell, What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 132.*

28 *Lucia Allais, "Questionnaire on Monuments," October 165 (2018): 6.*

29 *Kobena Mercer, "New Practices, New Identities: Hybridity and Globalization," in: The Image of the Black in Western Art, vol. V, part 2: The Rise of Black Artists (Cambridge–London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), 268.*

30 *Eugene Tsai, "Introduction," in: Kehinde Wiley. A New Republic (New York: Brooklyn Museum, 2015), 16.*

31 *Mercer, "New Practices, New Identities," 268.*

32 *Nicholas Mirzoeff, How To See the World (New York: Basic Books, 2016), 37.*

33 *Mercer, "New Practices, New Identities," 268.*

34 *Ta-Nehisi Coates, Between the World and Me (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015), 15.*

35 *See Iben Engelhardt Andersen, "Speaking Teen in the Polis: The Tragedy of Michael Brown," Widok. Teorie i Praktyki Kultury Wizualnej 17 (2017), www.pismowidok.org/en/archive/2017/speaking-teen-in-the-polis.-the-tragedy-of-michael-brown, accessed February 1, 2020.*

36 *Kirk Savage, Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War and Monument in Nineteenth Century America (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018), 8–9.*

37 *Erica Doss, Memorial Mania. Public Feeling in America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 293.*

38 *Savage, Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves, 72.*

39 *Savage, Iconoclasm and Confederacy.*

40 *W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Perfect Vacation."*

41 *It is possible that no inscription with these exact words ever existed, but the text constitutes a synthesis of sorts and passes the test of verisimilitude.*

42 *See the database of monuments in North Carolina on the DocSouth website: https://docsouth.unc.edu/, accessed February 2, 2020.*

43 *Cited in: Ta-Nehisi Coates, "What this Cruel War Was Over," The Atlantic, June 22, 2015, www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/06/what-this-cruel-war-was-over/396482/, accessed January 1, 2020.*

44 *The full text of Carr's speech can be found at https://hgreen.people.ua.edu/transcription-carr-speech.html, accessed February 12, 2020.*

45 *For a collection of source quotations, see Coates, "What this Cruel War Was Over."*

46 David W. Blight, Race and Reunion: Civil War in American Memory (Cambridge–London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), 64.

47 Ibid, 44.

48 On the subject of the Lost Cause as countermemory, see: Ethan J. Kytle, Blain Roberts, Denmark Vesey's Garden: Slavery and Memory in the Cradle of the Confederacy (New York: The New Press, 2018), 8.

49 Kytle, Roberts, Denmark Vesey's Garden, 123.

50 Ibid.

51 Savage, Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves, 182–183.

52 It is worth noting here that the monument Rumors of War once again jumbles a simple equation, this time by combining two dominant forms of post-war monument: it introduces the everyman into what is structurally the place of the hero-leader, while also filling a gap in the memorial landscape of the North, where it is often forgotten that black soldiers fought in the Union ranks. In doing so, Wiley also responds to one of the most telling and implausible myths of the Lost Cause: the belief that black men served as rank-and-file soldiers in the Confederate army. See Kevin M. Levin, Searching for Black Confederates. The Civil War's Most Persistent Myth (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

53 Kytle, Roberts, Denmark Vesey's Garden, 81.

54 W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "Civil War Monuments and Contested Memories: North Carolina as a Case Study," presentation at the conference Southern Symbols, Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, October 2017; www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFBhQYVFLkQ, accessed February 10, 2020.

55 Blight, Race and Reunion, 265.

56 Douglas A. Blackmon, Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II (New York: Anchor Books, 2008).

57 Blight, Race and Reunion, 269.

58 Savage, Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves, 148.

59 Kytle, Roberts, Denmark Vesey's Garden, 102–103.

60 Ibid, 104.

61 *Ibid.*

62 *Catherine Clinton, Confederate Statues and Memorialization (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2019).*

63 *Doss, Memorial Mania, 19.*

64 *Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow (New York: The New Press, 2010).*

65 *See the issue of Journal of Visual Culture 8, no. 2 (2009), devoted to a portrait of Barack Obama.*

66 *Clinton, Confederate Statues and Memorialization.*

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