

JCR MANUSCRIPT REVIEW HISTORY 002-2 (REVISION NOTES FROM AUTHORS)

At the outset, we extend our sincerest appreciation for the supportive and very constructive comments we received from the three reviewers, the AE, and the editor. We are quite pleased with the development of our analysis and integrative theorization. The review commentary has been instrumental in helping us accomplish this advance.

We have significantly reworked this manuscript to redress the major reservation raised in the review. We use “reservation” in the singular because the overarching concern regarding the manuscript’s broader theoretical contribution framed many of the subsidiary criticisms. By redressing this big picture issue, we believe that most of the other noted problems have been handled as a matter of course. Some specific reviewer comments, however, raise questions about the particularities of the genealogical analysis and the comparative cases. We will discuss these points of clarification after summarizing the big picture changes.

The Big Picture Transformation

Our genealogical analysis of New South mythmaking does have implications for broader questions concerning the commercial uses of cultural myths. In developing these implications, our revision integrates two parallel options that were respectively put forth by the Editor and AE: “If the authors think that there is some extension of the theory of the production of mythic meaning in this work then it may be as simple as articulating that extension more clearly” (Editor comments); “There may be others [revision directions] that focus more on how various strategies of mythic production seek to defeat, ignore, confront, embellish, rehabilitate, or change counter-narratives that, in the present case, involve race, class, gender, and region” (AE comments).

Our first ten pages build a case that consumer researchers need to give greater consideration to the ways in which the identity value of commercially inflected cultural myths are negotiated among cultural producers at the market system level. Our argument is premised on the largely overlooked transformative relationships between commercial myths, their concomitant representations of collective memories, and the ideological dilemmas posed by contradictory counter-memories. The specific rationales and key definitions pertaining to this revised positioning are explained in the paper’s introduction and so we will not reiterate them here.

The genealogical analysis (pages 10-27) is necessary to show how a prior history of commercially inflected myths and counter-memories influences the objectives and ideological orientations of contemporary cultural producers. Reviewer B notes that our two key informants are also consumers of these myths and we fully concur with that observation. Their editorial decisions and ideological beliefs about how the South should (and should not) be represented in their publications are governed by their perceptions of the South’s mythic representations in popular culture and the counter-memories that ensue from this legacy.

We have revised the comparative cases to better highlight the ways in which a common system of historically linked cultural myths and counter-memories are inflected through the prism of different commercial and ideological aims. Through this comparison, we are able to show how meanings and idealizations that are promoted as a venerated identity myth in one commercial context can function as ideologically contradictory counter-memories in another. The relevant theoretical implication is that commercial myths are not just structured by their explicit narratives and images but also by the counter-memories that are tacitly effaced by these representations. Furthermore, myths and counter-memories are dialectically related and their respective ideological implications and functions shift across these interlinked commercial fields. To the best of our knowledge, no study in the CCT canon has explicated these relationships in its conceptualization of identity myths.

Our concluding discussion (47-49) develops a conceptual model that maps out some key generative processes through which commercial myths compete for identity value at the market system level. These transformative dynamics—which operate through horizontal flows, rather than the vertical flows profiled by McCracken (1986)—have not been represented by prior theorizations of the meaning transfer process.

More Specific Concerns

1. Per the AE's recommendation, we have added a discussion about Southern Gothic writers, such as Tennessee Williams, William Faulkner, and Eudora Welty, who took a self-reflexive and melancholy stance toward the lost cause legacy (see footnote 4 on page 20). We have also added, per Reviewer C's recommendation, some discussion about the Turner media empire and Turner's own iconic and controversial cultural standing (pages 19& 25-26). Both of these discussions added cultural depth to our discussion but one problem posed by these exemplars and many others, is that each exhibit a degree of historical complexity that considerably more could be written about them. To keep the manuscript, to a reasonable length we have confined our discussions only to the specific points we are seeking to illustrate.

Similarly, we also note that many other historically consequential, commercial inflections of Southern myths could have also been brought to bear. For example, we do not mention D.W. Griffith's landmark (and inflammatory) film *The Birth of a Nation*, which in its day probably rivaled *Gone With the Wind*'s influence in terms of shaping public perceptions of the South (and popularizing the lost cause myth).

Given the constraints of a journal length article, however, we had to make judgments about what exemplars to include and hence omissions of some prominent cultural representations are inevitable. Fortunately, our analysis does not require a comprehensive account of the history of the South and its mythic representations. Rather, we believe that a selective historical reading, tailored to the constellations of myths and counter-memories most relevant to our comparative cases, is sufficient for our theoretical aims.

2. We were asked to clarify the reasons why Candace, via *Southern Heritage*, pursues a retro-branding strategy that appears to assume away the South's racist legacy rather than directly confront it, as in the case of Rob at *Today's South*. In the process of addressing this query, we

recognized two important ideological drivers of this difference that we had overlooked in our previous analysis. We now discuss these factors on pages 45 and 48. We have also revamped the cases with these crystallizing insights in mind. On the whole, identifying these ideological subtexts has enriched our analysis considerably and we appreciate the reviewers calling this matter to our attention.

3. In the review, a question was also raised as to whether the Celtic myth has contemporary relevance, particularly since most consumers have not read H.L. Mencken. Our argument is that once a myth becomes established in popular culture and circulates through multiple media channels, it transcends any one historical inflection point. Mencken's journalistic depictions of white Southerners as woefully parochial and backward hayseeds helped to popularize one variation of the Celtic myth. The resonance of Mencken's disparaging representations, however, had more to do with the mix of socio-cultural and economic conditions that were in play at that historical moment (and such as their timely alignment with the rise of Eugenicist thinking) than Mencken's specific influence as a media pundit. In other words, had Mencken never been born, this confluence of cultural-institutional forces would have (and did) encourage similar modes of mythic representation by other cultural producers writing at that time.

Unquestionably, the Celtic myth has dramatically changed, through its many commercial inflections, from the eugenicist portrayals of derelict Southerners that gained cultural currency during the 1920's. These kinds of commercial transfigurations are central to our theorization and genealogical analysis. As we discuss in the manuscript, the Celtic myth has morphed and diversified into a number of comical and romanticized forms, often at the behest of the Southern tourist and music industries. The once very popular syndicated television series *Hee Haw* (which some music critics see as having damaged the artistic reputation of its co-host Buck Owens) exemplifies this comical transfiguration of the Celtic myth. Media representations of poor white Southerners, whether in the context of *Snuffy Smith* cartoons, *Hee Haw*, *Deliverance*, *Songcatcher*, or comedic performances at the *Grand Ole Opry* and *Dollywood* do not arise ex nihilo. Rather, they draw from a cultural genealogy that can be traced out, particularly if one looks at the production side of consumer culture.

4. Addressing the Christian subtext in the rhetoric of the Redeemers:

As a point of clarification, the "Redeemers" and the related metaphor of "redeeming the Confederate legacy" are not our word choices per se. Rather, this redemptive frame was strategically adopted by a coterie of Southern political and civic leaders who adamantly opposed Reconstructionist reforms. The Redeemers couched their rhetorical appeals in evangelical language and used evangelical churches as sites for spreading their message and recruiting poor white Southerners to their cause. On pages 16-17, we discuss the religious subtext of the Lost Cause myth, though admittedly much more could be written about this ideological use of Christian belief and imagery (particularly its ironic contrast to the religious revivalism that arose in the North—the Second Great Awakening—that provided a moral impetus for the abolitionist movement).

This redemptive, "Christian soldier" motif, while an important genealogical thread in these mythic reconstructions of South, is situated within a broader constellation of discourses,

ideological aims, and counter-memories. Accordingly, our focus has remained on the broader network of relationships rather than exclusively and intensively focusing on this specific ideological appropriation of evangelical Christianity.

5. As pointed out in the reviews, the NAACP boycott was directed at South Carolina's "unofficial" state flag, which flew over its Statehouse from 1962-2000. We have corrected this gaffe (see page 12).

In closing, we again thank the editors and reviewers for the encouragement and insights each of you offered in helping us to enhance our contribution. We look forward to your assessments.