

Deliberate Heritage

Difference and Disagreement After Charlottesville

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ABSTRACT: Cultural heritage is often seen as a tool for managing social change, as a mirror that society holds up to itself to make sense of change. In this paper I examine how heritage also *mobilizes* social change, framing cultural heritage as a persuasive tool in a public sphere of competing interests and claims. Rather than taking the circulation of heritage in the public sphere—across media outlets, social media, and expert networks—as epiphenomenal to its value, I suggest deliberation composes a critical function of cultural heritage, especially under social conditions of deep pluralism, divisive politics, and mass democracy that mark our contemporary era. The public discussions about Confederate commemorations that erupted following the events in Charlottesville in 2017 demonstrate the contests over meaning and proposed actions that reveal the persuasive character of heritage.

KEY WORDS: cultural heritage, public sphere, democratic practice, rhetoric, Charlottesville

On the evening of August 11, 2017, an assorted group of far right, alt right, white nationalist, white supremacist, Klan-affiliated, and neo-Nazi protestors—these groups are not mutually exclusive—descended on the statue of Robert E. Lee in Emancipation Park in Charlottesville, Virginia, for a Unite the Right Rally. The rally was organized to protest the proposed removal of the statue from a park, formerly known as Lee Park, that just two months earlier had been renamed as Emancipation Park. The rally was met with counterprotests from community members and University of Virginia (UVA) students, and continued into the next day when James Alex Fields, a white supremacist and Nazi sympathizer, violently rammed his car into the counterprotest crowd and other vehicles, killing one person and injuring nineteen others. Two police officers also died while responding to the protests and counterprotests. The statue of Lee that prompted these events was commissioned in 1917 by Paul Goodloe McIntire and dedicated in 1924 as part of a gift of four statues to the city of Charlottesville and the University of Virginia. The group of statues was added to the National Register of Historic

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Places in 1997.¹ Following the events of August 11–12, the Lee statue and the statue of Stonewall Jackson in downtown Charlottesville were placed under shrouds to mourn the loss of the three individuals.

The public discussions following Charlottesville on “what to do” with the statue and similar commemorations illuminate several points that are relevant to theoretical understandings of heritage under debate by heritage scholars and practitioners. Firstly, the fallout following Charlottesville provides a lens on the importance of the “cultural” modifier of “cultural heritage,” and secondly, argues for the importance of the public sphere to understandings of what it is that this idea of “heritage” does—what its function is—in modern society. The following paper offers a meditation on both the “cultural” and “heritage” components of “cultural heritage,” given that cultural heritage is an analytical and practical framework of increasing relevance to historically inflected disciplines and social issues. The cultural and public functions of heritage are mutually constitutive, following on long anthropological interest in the public character of culture. In essence, culture is distinguished as fundamentally a public phenomenon, which is a perspective that draws back to the work of Clifford Geertz, and has been developed more extensively through the years from the anthropological work on “public culture,” to the work of Michael Carrithers who argued for the “rhetorical edge of culture.”²

Public Spheres in Cultural Heritage

Of course, the public dimensions of dealing with “the past” are well-known to public historians. The same is true for archaeological practice in the United States, which for the last several decades has been invested in public archaeology: in thinking about the public benefits of managing cultural resources, of heritage as a public good, and engaging with the “many publics”

¹ Betsy Gohdes-Baten, *National Register for Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form (NPS 10-900-b): Four Monumental Figurative Outdoor Sculptures in Charlottesville, VA* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1996). The valorization of Lee runs throughout the nomination file. According to the document, the Lee statue was historically significant “as an important art object that exhibits the figurative style of outdoor sculpture produced by members of the National Sculpture Society, a group of masters whose origins are associated with the City Beautiful movement,” 61. The National Sculpture Society and City Beautiful movement “espoused figurative public sculpture of historical and allegorical subjects as a means of familiarizing people with the best and most fundamental values of past and present cultures,” 5. The Lee statue is described as “an heroic-sized equestrian figure of the eminent Confederate general in bronze. A solemn and dignified Lee rides his horse, Traveller, atop an oval pedestal of pink granite,” 11. The document cites a comment made at the statue’s dedication during a “gala Confederate reunion” (69), in which the speaker noted of the statue “It has been said the pedestal is too small for this massive figure . . . Let it stay that way. The planet as a pedestal would be too small for Robert Edward Lee,” 61. Finally, the nomination file notes that the Lee statue remains in its original location, and “Sentiment in Charlottesville will undoubtedly keep it there, for the monument is a unique memorial to the most eminent Confederate hero of all and an outstanding example of the figurative outdoor sculpture of the late City Beautiful movement,” 70.

² Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Michael Carrithers, “Anthropology as a Moral Science of Possibilities,” *Current Anthropology* 46, no. 3 (2005): 442.

of heritage resources.³ Less theorized has been the role of the public sphere, which I argue is not epiphenomenal to the functions of heritage, a secondary effect or byproduct, but instead integral to it. We tend to treat the circulations of heritage through the public sphere—whether in public debates, news media, social media, popular culture, or artistic productions—as a symptom of the social value of heritage, with these circulations bubbling over into the public sphere on account of the social importance ascribed to them. Rather, I suggest that the public sphere is vitally necessary to understanding heritage, particularly in approaching heritage as a cultural phenomenon, in other words, as “cultural heritage.”

Laurajane Smith famously said “there is no such thing as ‘heritage.’”⁴ While her point was more nuanced and pointed to the constructed nature of heritage, the argument has been picked up and flattened to a more simplistic meaning that heritage is “made up”; that is, a category invented by heritage experts, with no basis in the “real” world. Effectively, this view sees heritage itself is an “invented” tradition, an argument with all the attendant reductionism of the “invention of tradition” literature.⁵ Heritage experts who ascribed to this allegedly made up category were deemed heritage believers.⁶ My own position is that these religious metaphors obscure more than they support productive analysis, and that we need to move the conversations from concerns about cults to concerns about culture. What I mean is that in response to the idea that there is no such thing as heritage, a cultural perspective counters that heritage exists in everyday contexts as people—not just experts—talk about heritage, think about it, and act on it, especially in public contexts. Heritage has moved into common parlance and practice in a way that exceeds expert determinations about it. Though the idea of heritage may have originated in expert practice, it is now a phenomenon of cultural production with widespread circulation through local, national, and transnational public spheres.

Two currents feed into this assertion that the public sphere is critical to understanding heritage as a cultural practice. The first comes from anthropological perspectives on folklore, chiefly in the work of Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, who theorized heritage through its functions—through what it *did* in contemporary life.⁷ And what heritage does is serve as a “metacultural” tool, as a mirror that society holds up to itself, to understand itself, but especially to understand and manage

3 On “many publics” see Francis P. McManamon, “The Many Publics for Archaeology,” *American Antiquity* 56, no. 1 (2001): 121–130.

4 Laurajane Smith, *The Uses of Heritage* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 13.

5 Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

6 David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996); Christoph Brumann, “Heritage Agnosticism: A Third Path for the Study of Cultural Heritage,” *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale* 22, no. 2 (2014): 173–188.

7 Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Intangible Heritage as Metacultural Production,” *Museum International* 56, no. 1–2 (2004): 52–65.

social change. My own work builds on this understanding of heritage to assert that heritage also *mobilizes* social change.⁸ It mobilizes through rhetorical means of persuasion; heritage provides a persuasive tool for enacting change, for moving situations and conditions from one state to another.

The second current flows from the increasing globalization of heritage resources and heritage practice. The publics of heritage no longer reduce to the neat boundaries of nation-states, if they ever did, nor the imagined communities of Benedict Anderson's nationalism.⁹ We need other frames for theorizing the socialities involved in heritage as it crosses national borders and increasingly encompasses social difference and diversity. Thinking about heritage through the public sphere allows a more elastic and dynamic analytical frame for tracing social action and accountability. This second current mirrors the move towards "public culture," which further refined Geertz's definition of culture as public, by recognizing and framing publics as fragmented, conflicted, bound up in the power dynamics of representation, and also circulating through transnational networks.¹⁰ Public culture is "a terrain of contest and debate" involving "trans-local and self-conscious forms of cultural production (and consumption)" in "interactional contexts formed by media, market and travel dynamics."¹¹

Further, scholars working on defining and better understanding transnational public spheres are also helpful for theorizing heritage publics in ways that transcend statist or national framings. Kate Nash has described public as "a kind of placeholder to allow consideration of the moral dimension of democratic politics," while Nancy Fraser variously identified transnational publics as those "all-affected" or "all-subjected" by a given institution, event, decision, or action.¹² Other scholars have offered even broader definitions, such as Michael Warner's assertion that publics exist "by virtue of being addressed," and Didier Fassin's rejoinder that publics also exist "by virtue of being concerned."¹³ Fassin emphasizes that a public

8 Kathryn Lafrenz Samuels, *Mobilizing Heritage: Anthropological Practice and Transnational Prospects* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2018); Kathryn Lafrenz Samuels, "Introduction: Heritage as Persuasion," in *Heritage Keywords, Rhetoric and Redescription in Cultural Heritage*, ed. Kathryn Lafrenz Samuels and Trinidad Rico (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2015), 3–28.

9 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

10 Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," *Public Culture* 2, no. 2 (1990): 1–24; Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1996).

11 Arjun Appadurai and Carol A. Breckenridge, "Why Public Culture?," *Public Culture* 1, no. 1 (1988): 7–8.

12 Kate Nash, "Introduction," in *Transnationalizing the Public Sphere*, ed. Kate Nash (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 1; Nancy Fraser, "Transnationalizing the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 24, no. 4 (2007): 7–30; Nancy Fraser, *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008); Nancy Fraser, "Who Counts? Dilemmas of Justice in a Postwestphalian World," *Antipode* 41, suppl. 1 (2009): 281–97.

13 Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (2002): 50; Didier Fassin, "The Public Afterlife of Ethnography," *American Ethnologist* 42, no. 4 (2015): 600.

is not a pre-existing entity, but is brought into existence “after an injury or via a claim,” and becomes “constituted through objects, which become matters of discussion . . . [and] needs places, like cafés, and mediation, like the press.”¹⁴

Following on these two points—the persuasive and public nature of heritage—we see heritage working as a rhetorical tool for mobilizing social change, and Fassin’s point highlights the deliberative nature of this sphere of public action. Deliberative democracy is a closely related approach to participatory democracy and often is employed as a supplement, given that participatory approaches tend to focus on cooperation and dialogue, whereas deliberative approaches often draw out difference and plurality.¹⁵ Deliberative practice has the potential to reach a broader base, or more decentralized or geographically dispersed relations, all of which are necessary to enter into given the conditions of globalization, mobility, mass communications, and mass democracy that characterize our present era. Matters of heritage that reach beyond face-to-face interactions require additional tools in order to foster broad engagement representing diverse perspectives. I suggest that following the deliberative trajectories of heritage in the public sphere is a valuable exercise for understanding the work of heritage in the world, but more importantly for deepening democratic practice in society and diversifying our toolkit for public engagement in heritage practice. We can look to the public deliberations following Charlottesville to study one example, and learn from the public character of heritage to sharpen our tools for public engagement.¹⁶

Public Deliberation Following Charlottesville

The events in Charlottesville on August 11 and 12, 2017, and their aftermath did not begin with Charlottesville, and need to be understood as part of a longer conversation in the city and more broadly at the national level. The Unite the Right Rally followed a series of similar rallies held at the statue. In May 2017, the white nationalist Richard Spencer led a protest against the removal of the statues, which included chants of “Jews will not replace us” and “Russia is our friend.” A few months later, in July 2017, the Ku Klux Klan led a rally for the statue of Stonewall Jackson in downtown Charlottesville. These rallies were in response to the Charlottesville town council’s decision to remove and sell the statue, a decision

¹⁴ Fassin, “The Public Afterlife of Ethnography,” 599–600.

¹⁵ On the relationships between participatory and deliberative democratic practice, see for example Diana C. Mutz, *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Scott Welsh, “Deliberative Democracy and the Rhetorical Production of Political Culture,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5, no. 4 (2002): 679–707.

¹⁶ In the following I summarize national media coverage on Charlottesville shortly after the events, from print and online journalism, focusing on the major outlets. The role and integrity of media in society is a fast developing subject with the rise of “fake news” as well as the influence of social media filters and algorithms to create “filter bubbles.” Future research on the public production and circulation of heritage would usefully explore these phenomena further. It would also be interesting to compare national coverage with smaller scale circulations, for example in the editorials of local newspapers.

that had been met with a lawsuit and six-month injunction from removing the statue, which expired in November 2017. Other opinions, in favor of removal, had been voiced in paint: the base of the statue had been smeared in red paint just before the KKK rally, and in June 2015 the statue had been spray painted with the slogan “Black Lives Matter.”

This spray painting was likely in response to the shooting massacre of nine individuals on June 17, 2015, at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, a historically black church in downtown Charleston, South Carolina. Because of the shooter’s identification with the Confederate flag and white supremacist sentiments on his social media accounts, the nation quickly became engulfed in debates over the meaning of the Confederate flag, as calls were raised to remove the flag from the South Carolina statehouse and other public contexts. The idea of “heritage,” in this instance, was quite publicly held up to scrutiny, not only in terms of the specific history of the Confederate flag and its palimpsest of meanings over the years, but more directly as an examination of what “heritage” means and the terms of argumentation and rhetoric under which it could be used.¹⁷ Although the focal point of public debate following the events in Charleston and Charlottesville were different (flags and statues, respectively), and therefore carried nuance about the specific material forms of Confederate commemoration, in both instances the public conversations extended to consider all such relics of “Lost Cause” nostalgia, and what the proper place was for them in American society.¹⁸ At one level, national deliberation was polarized as to whether these material forms of Confederate apologia represented “heritage” or “hate.” This polarization was amenable to quick soundbites and the bumper-sticker quality of the “heritage not hate” defense that had been circulating for some time since state legislatures have been removing the Confederate flag from public buildings.

However, as discussions continued commentators found more nuanced framings, which demonstrates the deliberative process at work. Deliberation can be understood as a process through which “public reasons” emerge through dialogue, a process “in which citizens attempt to convince others to adopt certain policies on the basis of public reasons as they emerge in the give and take of deliberative dialogue.”¹⁹ Participants need not reach agreement, so sharing the same outlooks or beliefs is not necessary, but some level of cooperation is necessary to motivate action, even if they disagree on the reasons or values for doing so. Therefore, public reason can encompass a diversity of perspectives. Moreover, rather than understanding public reason as a matter of reason-giving, “as if public reasons were handed over like presents to be opened and admired at our leisure,” public reasoning instead “is

¹⁷ Lafrenz Samuels, *Mobilizing Heritage*, 120–23.

¹⁸ Although the conversations following Charleston and Charlottesville share similarities, the different material characteristics of flags and statues allow or constrain the deliberative field of what can be said about heritage through them.

¹⁹ James Bohman, *Public Deliberation: Pluralism, Complexity, and Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996), 15.

more like a contest for attention and allegiance.”²⁰ In this contest for attention and attempts to persuade, various reasons were put forward and gained public traction, such as, for example, collapsing the dialectic between “heritage not hate” to argue that the Confederate symbols celebrated a “heritage of hate.”²¹

Overall, public deliberations after Charlottesville are best understood as following from those after Charleston, with long term and shifting changes in the interpretation of the public meaning of Confederate nostalgia symbols, flags, and commemorative statues, and in addition buildings, schools, streets, cities, and counties named after Confederate icons. This unfolding process highlights the rhetorical function of heritage resources.²² Importantly, cultural resources such as heritage have been theorized to compose the heart of deliberative activity. Scott Welsh takes cultural resources to be the source and goal of effective political speech, because it is from these that new vocabularies, meanings, and narratives may be mobilized for the construction of alternative political visions.²³ As such, the goal of persuasion is not to change the minds of individual fellow citizens as much as it is to shift “prevailing relationships between the meanings of key cultural-political terms, events, or narratives,” by “creatively interpreting and modifying commonly referenced or understood ways of speaking.”²⁴ As Charlottesville’s mayor, Mike Signer, put it “We want to change the narrative by telling the true story of race through public spaces. That has made us a target for groups that hate that change and want to stay in the past, but we will not be intimidated.”²⁵

Welsh’s observations map onto what Bryan Garsten has called a “rhetoric revival” in deliberative democracy circles.²⁶ This turn to rhetoric draws from Aristotle, who considered rhetoric “the faculty of observing in a given case the available

20 Bernard Yack, “Rhetoric and Public Reasoning: An Aristotelian Understanding of Political Deliberation,” *Political Theory* 34, no. 4 (2006): 427.

21 For example see Roberto A. Ferdman, “What the Confederate Flag Really Means to America Today, According to a Race Historian,” *The Washington Post*, June 19 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/06/19/what-the-confederate-flag-really-means-to-america-today-according-to-a-race-historian/>.

22 In the United States, the Southern Poverty Law Center documented 718 Confederate monuments and statues, and 109 public schools, 80 counties and cities, and 10 US military bases named after Confederate icons. The digital public historian Caroline Klibanoff has also mapped the streets named after Confederate and civil rights movement leaders. See Southern Poverty Law Center, *Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy* (2016), https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/whoseheritage_splc.pdf; Caroline Klibanoff, “Public Memory and Street Names in the South: Who Gets Remembered?,” *Medium*, June 22 2017, <https://medium.com/@cklibanoff/public-memory-and-street-names-in-the-south-who-gets-remembered-de8f7cb9e1e8>.

23 Welsh, “Deliberative Democracy and the Rhetorical Production of Political Culture,” 690–91.

24 *Ibid.*, 690.

25 Megan Garber, “Why Charlottesville?,” *The Atlantic*, August 12, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2017/08/why-charlottesville/536700/>.

26 Bryan Garsten, “The Rhetoric Revival in Political Theory,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 14, no. 1 (2011): 159–80. For the rhetorical turn in deliberative democracy thinking see Yack, “Rhetoric and Public Reasoning”; Bryan Garsten, *Saving Persuasion: A Defense of Rhetoric and Judgment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); John O’Neill, “The Rhetoric of Deliberation: Some Problems in Kantian Theories of Deliberative Democracy,” *Res Publica* 8 (2002): 249–268.

means of persuasion.”²⁷ Aristotle’s account of rhetoric aimed to analyze how reasoning works in public, and one of its most influential aspects was his categorization of rhetorical moves made through logical argument (*logos*), appeals to emotions (*pathos*), or building the speaker’s character to instill trust from the audience (*ethos*).²⁸ Therefore, Aristotle offered two additional means beyond logical argumentation by which to persuade others to act, including influencing their emotions, and leading them to trust the speaker. Therefore, thinking about public deliberation through the lens of rhetoric also opens up the modes or styles of argumentation to affect and trust.

Iris Marion Young has emphasized that effectively engaging mass publics often relies on forms of argumentation and communication like slogans, humor, and irony that tap into realms of public reason other than logic such as *pathos* and *ethos*.²⁹ The various slogans such as “heritage not hate” or “heritage of hate” and their permutations are immediate examples. Other slogans suggested identification of white supremacist marchers with the statue in their rally chants of “We will not be replaced.” Many shops in the downtown shopping area displayed signs with short statements such as “Minority rights are human rights” and “Diversity makes us stronger.”³⁰ Meanwhile, humor and parody have long been a tool for political expression, and predictably followed the controversy surrounding the Lee statue in Charlottesville. For example, one commentator highlighted the toppling of Lenin statues in the former Soviet Union, where there is a fondness of word play, such as when Vilnius, Lithuania, replaced its Vladimir Lenin statue with a temporary installation of a sound-alike, John Lennon.³¹ The power of humor is its subversive capacities, but also its ability to tap into emotional states of experience.

Visceral emotional responses to Charlottesville were immediate. Emotions surrounding the statue were said to “run deep” or were “running high.”³² Shame, anger, fear, and terror were frequently mentioned affective states. In particular, white supremacists were seen to have no shame, openly marching in a public square without the usual trappings of hoods. As the *Atlantic* noted, “They drew their menace not from what is there—mostly, young white men in polos and

27 Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, 1355b25–27.

28 Garsten, “The Rhetoric Revival in Political Theory,” 169.

29 Iris Marion Young, “Activist Challenges to Deliberative Democracy,” *Political Theory* 29, no. 5 (2001): 670–90.

30 Garber, “Why Charlottesville?”

31 Tracey E. Robey, “The Long History of *Damnatio Memoriae* and the Destruction of Monuments,” *Jezebel*, August 16, 2017, <http://pictorial.jezebel.com/the-long-history-of-damnatio-memoriae-and-the-destructio-1797860410>.

32 For example see Jacey Fortin, “The Statue at the Center of Charlottesville’s Storm,” *New York Times*, August 13, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/13/us/charlottesville-rally-protest-statue.html>; Caitlin MacNeal, “Chaos Erupts at First Charlottesville City Council Meeting Since Car Attack,” *Talking Points Memo*, August 22, 2017, <https://talkingpointsmemo.com/livewire/chaos-charlottesville-city-council-meeting>; Sage Snider, “The Elephant in the Park: Nashville’s Least-Talked-About Monument,” personal blog, August 23, 2017, <http://www.sagesnider.com/confederatemonument/>.

T-shirts goofily brandishing tiki torches—but from what *isn't*: the masks, the hoods, the secrecy that could at least imply a sort of shame.”³³ House Speaker Paul Ryan quickly voiced repugnance, and Virginia governor Terry McAuliffe expressed disgust.³⁴ One of the “outed” participants, a twenty-year-old student from Reno whose image circulated widely, said he hoped people would not see him as an “angry racist.”³⁵ Naming and shaming, or “doxxing” in this instance, is a classic tool for seeking justice in the public sphere.

Further, a great many black commentators spoke of the fear, terror, and anger that were elicited when seeing or walking past statues of Lee and other material glorifications of the Confederacy, and similar sentiments were expressed by Jewish voices upon seeing the Nazi symbology at the Charlottesville and hearing the Nazi slogan “blood and soil” being chanted.³⁶ One commentator argued against Lee’s exhortation to “[not keep] open the sores of war but to . . . commit to oblivion the feelings engendered,” to contend instead that “We can’t just whitewash our past so it doesn’t hurt present feelings.”³⁷ One of President Donald Trump’s much-quoted comments condemned the “egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides, on many sides.”³⁸ Finally, marking out the terms of deliberation around “heritage” versus “hate” especially highlights the pivotal importance of emotions to these public deliberations.

In addition to the appeals to emotion (*pathos*), the Charlottesville protests and ensuing public discussions also worked through *ethos*, referencing character or ethics to build trust from the public audience they were seeking to persuade. This process of building a relationship between oneself and one’s audience is recognized as an integral function of rhetoric. It shapes a sense of community “by accommodating itself to the particular, substantive, beliefs and desires of the listeners it addresses,”³⁹ which appeals to the cultural heritage that the Lee statue,

33 Matt Thompson, “The Hoods Are Off,” *The Atlantic*, August 12, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2017/08/the-hoods-are-off/536694/>.

34 Van R. Newkirk II, “When Does a Fringe Movement Stop Being Fringe?,” *The Atlantic*, August 12, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/08/whats-the-tipping-point-for-white-supremacy/536673/>.

35 Matt Ford, “The Statues of Unliberty,” *The Atlantic*, August 14, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/08/confederate-statues-congress/536760/>.

36 For example see Samuel Sinyangwe “I’m a Black Southerner. I Had to Go Abroad to See a Statue Celebrating Black Liberation,” *Vox*, August 17, 2017, <https://www.vox.com/first-person/2017/8/16/16156540/confederate-statues-charlottesville-virginia>; Jamie Raskin, “Statement of Congressman Jamie Raskin about Monuments to Confederates and White Supremacists,” *Medium*, August 15, 2017, <https://medium.com/@RepRaskin/statement-of-congressman-jamie-raskin-about-monuments-to-confederates-and-white-supremacists-ad3b068bcc06>; Emma Green, “Why the Charlottesville Marchers Were Obsessed With Jews,” *The Atlantic*, August 15, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/08/nazis-racism-charlottesville/536928/>.

37 Snider, “The Elephant in the Park.”

38 For example, cited in Jeffrey Goldberg, “Why Won’t Trump Call Out Radical White Terrorism,” *The Atlantic*, August 13, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/08/what-obama-could-teach-trump-about-charlottesville/536703/>.

39 Ronald Beiner, *Political Judgment* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1983), 101.

variously interpreted by different groups, helped achieve. For example, invoking expertise is a typical positioning in the public sphere for the purposes of persuasion. News organizations turned to scholars to provide historical perspective and interpretation of Civil War monuments based on the history of the Civil War and the Confederacy, but especially to contextualize the statues within the Jim Crow era and civil rights movement, when the great majority were erected. Many expert commentators also pointed to previous experiences in Europe, for example German efforts in *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (“mastering of the past”) to deal with the Nazi past.⁴⁰ News organizations and other commentators also cited statements put out by professional organizations such as the American Historical Association, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Council on Public History, and the Smithsonian’s African American Museum of History and Culture amongst others. Notably absent were statements from archaeological or anthropological organizations.

Of note, the public context of the unfolding deliberation on Confederate memorials was reinforced by the statement from the National Trust for Historic Preservation (issued before Charlottesville) that stated: “We cannot and should not erase our history. But we also want our public monuments, on public land and supported by public funding, to uphold our public values.”⁴¹ Meanwhile, the statement from the American Historical Association notes regarding the “emerging national debate” that “much of this public statuary was erected without such conversations, and without any public decision-making process.”⁴²

The moral language of *ethos* to build trust and connection was also evident within political circles. In commentary from the political left it was typical for the speaker to identify themselves—according to, for example, race, gender, religion—to position themselves within a politics of identity but also in terms of allyship and solidarity. They also employed a language of social justice, whereas expressions from the political right engaged in euphemisms and what are known as dog whistles, which are subtle or coded cues in language or imagery that communicate

40 For example, see Maggie Penman, “How Charlottesville Looks From Berlin,” *NPR Code Switch*, August 16, 2017, <http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/08/16/543808019/the-view-of-charlottesville-from-berlin>; Joshua Zeitz, “Why There Are No Nazi Statues in Germany: What the South Can Learn from Postwar Europe,” *Politico*, August 20, 2017, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/08/20/why-there-are-no-nazi-statues-in-germany-215510?cmpid=sf>; Leah Donella, Kat Chow, Gene Demby, and Jennifer Allen, “What Our Monuments (Don’t) Teach Us About Remembering The Past,” *NPR Code Switch*, August 23, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/08/23/545548965/what-our-monuments-don-t-teach-us-about-remembering-the-past>; Zachary Laub and David Rieff, “Why Battles Over Memory Rage On,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, August 29, 2017, <https://www.cfr.org/interview/why-battles-over-memory-rage>.

41 The National Trust for Historic Preservation, “Statement on Confederate Memorials: Confronting Difficult History,” June 19, 2017, <https://savingplaces.org/press-center/media-resources/national-trust-statement-on-confederate-memorials#.XA-KWGRKj-n>.

42 American Historical Association, “AHA Statement on Confederate Memorials,” August 28, 2017, <https://www.historians.org/news-and-advocacy/statements-and-resolutions-of-support-and-protest/aha-statement-on-confederate-monuments>.

group membership. It has been argued that appeals to “history” and “heritage” are themselves dog whistles for valorizing slave society and its military leaders, with the attention devoted to Confederate flags and monuments as the specific material-based dog whistles for expressing racist sentiments.

In everyday parlance “deliberation” typically means careful consideration before making a decision. Therefore it is important to underscore that deliberation is distinguished from “just talk” or discourse in the sense that a reasoning process leads to an action. Words—or other persuasive means such as pictures, actions, and material culture—are analytically inseparable from the deeds they actualize. Overall, the deliberative process in the aftermath of Charlottesville, as well as earlier public debates such as those surrounding the Confederate flag following Charleston, were successful in instigating social change. This is evidenced by the ripple effect it had in communities across the United States engaging in the political process to have the Confederate flag removed from other contexts, as well as expanding the discussion to Confederate monuments, and commemorations like street names and building dedications to Confederate and other racist figures. Some of these actions were taken almost immediately a few days after Charlottesville, for example when protestors in Durham, North Carolina, toppled a statue of Lee, or in the dark of night when statues of Lee and Stonewall Jackson were removed in Baltimore, and a statue of Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger B. Taney was removed in Annapolis (Taney famously wrote the Dred Scott decision stripping blacks of rights and citizenship).⁴³ Coinciding with the removal of Confederate commemorations is the call for more monuments celebrating anti-racist figures and civil rights leaders.

Besides these immediate effects, the slower more ponderous wheels of justice and public sentiment turn in dismantling the Confederate nostalgia machine, and the continuing public attention to this issue is also an indicator of the power of heritage in the public sphere. Cultural heritage becomes mobilized within a public sphere of deliberative debate to persuade and therefore enact social change. When cultural heritage becomes implicated in broader social debates, it can offer a prism to refract historical relevance to the present: what historical aspects are useful and worth holding on to, and which are a product of the time and no longer “make sense” for public reasoning. Cultural heritage becomes an exercise in tacking back and forth between past conditions and present controversies, and the long historical persistence of their interconnections.

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⁴³ Christopher Carbone, “Which Confederate Statues Were Removed? A Running List,” *Fox News*, August 31, 2017, <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/08/31/confederate-statues-that-have-been-removed.html>.

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