

Ethics, Left and Right

The Moral Issues that Divide Us



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Removing Historical Monuments

A CASE FOR REMOVING CONFEDERATE MONUMENTS TRAVIS TIMMERMAN

1. Introduction

On August 21, 2017, white supremacist protestors marched in Charlottesville, Virginia, purportedly to protest the city's planned removal of a statue of Confederate general Robert E. Lee. On that day, white supremacist James Fields drove into a crowd of counter-protesters, severely injuring many and killing one, Heather Heyer. As of this writing, the Confederate statues in Charlottesville haven't been removed, although they were covered with tarps for about six months.¹ In the wake of the violent protests and public outcry, many other cities began removing Confederate statues from public display.²

This, of course, raises the philosophical question of whether Confederate monuments *ought* to be removed. I'll focus on the ethical question of whether a certain group, viz. the relevant government officials and members of the public who together can remove the Confederate monuments, are *morally obligated* to (of their own volition) remove them. I'll not be discussing the closely related question of whether it ought to be *legally obligatory* to remove Confederate monuments. Even if people are morally obligated to remove them, it doesn't follow that it should be illegal to preserve the monuments.³ Figuring out the correct answer to related questions, however, likely necessitates first answering the moral question on which I focus.

In this essay, I argue that people have a moral obligation to remove most, if not all, public Confederate monuments because of the unavoidable harm they inflict on undeserving persons. This essay is structured as follows. In the next section, I provide some relevant historical context. I then make my harm-based argument for the removal of Confederate monuments. After that, I consider and rebut five objections.

2. A Brief History of Confederate Monuments

Without having first looked into their history, one may naturally assume that, while perhaps not created for entirely innocuous reasons, Confederate monuments at least weren't created for explicitly racist reasons. Unfortunately, that does not seem to be the case. There are a minimum of 1,728 publicly sponsored Confederate symbols in the United States.⁴ Most of them were created long after the Civil War ended to, at least in part, further subjugate African Americans.⁵

Of course, plenty of Confederate monuments were created in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War. During the "Reconciliation" period between the North and the South, white Southerners used the Confederacy to promote white cultural unity.⁶ Historian Fitzhugh Brundage argues that the "pursuit of white cultural unity through the Confederate commemoration went hand-in-hand with the promotion of white supremacy."⁷ An immediate consequence of promoting *white* cultural unity meant excluding, "othering," non-whites.⁸ Moreover, as Brundage notes, some of the early Confederate monuments were further inextricably linked to white supremacy because white supremacists were chosen to speak at their dedication.⁹ So, a non-trivial number of Confederate monuments created in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War are unquestionably racist.¹⁰

What is particularly surprising (and depressing), however, is that the majority of Confederate monuments appear to have been created long after the Civil War for distinct, explicitly racist reasons. The majority of Confederate monuments were erected in one of two periods: the portion of the Jim Crow era between the early 1900s and 1920s and the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s.¹¹ During the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, Jim Crow voting laws were passed to disenfranchise African American voters. A number of advocates in Southern towns erected Confederate statues because the Confederate mythologies seemingly helped justify the Jim Crow laws.¹² Historian Jane Dailey argued that erecting public Confederate monuments near government buildings (e.g., in front of courthouses) was a "power play" aimed at intimidating African Americans.¹³

Interestingly, statues were often the monument of choice because technological innovations allowed companies to mass produce statues quite cheaply. Original bronze statues cost thousands of dollars, which was cost prohibitive for small towns with limited financial resources. Yet, mass-produced zinc statues, made by the company Monumental Bronze, sold for a mere \$450. Some popular models (e.g., the "Silent Sentinel" soldier) were even sold as both Northern and Southern soldiers.¹⁴ Many of these statues were purchased by private citizens, most notably the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), to be displayed on public land and preserved with public funds.¹⁵

Although the majority of public Confederate monuments were created before 1950, there was a noticeable spike in Confederate memorials during the 1950s. More than forty-five Confederate monuments were dedicated or rededicated "between the U.S. Supreme Court's school desegregation decision in 1954 and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968."¹⁶ These actions were

examples of the same power play tactics that were used during the Jim Crow era. The rise in Confederate monuments at this time was, at least in part, the product of a backlash among segregationists.¹⁷ So, the majority of Confederate monuments, which were created long after the Civil War had ended, are also unquestionably racist.

Even this brief overview should suffice to demonstrate that typical Confederate monuments were created by racist people with racist motivations. These facts are no secret, and this is necessary to keep in mind when considering the nature of the harm that the continued existence of public Confederate monuments causes to many.

3. A Harm-Based Argument for Removing Confederate Monuments

In this section, I'll make a straightforward harm-based argument for the removal of Confederate monuments. My harm-based argument is not exclusive to those who know the relevant history. I'll explain why Confederate monuments can also wrongfully harm those completely unaware of the racist reasons most Confederate monuments were created. In short, Confederate monuments unavoidably harm people who don't deserve to be harmed and, as such, we should remove them unless there's as strong or stronger countervailing reason to preserve them. The first part of my argument can be formalized as follows.

- (1) If the existence of a monument M unavoidably harms an undeserving group, then there's strong moral reason to end the existence of M .
- (2) Public Confederate monuments unavoidably harm an undeserving group, which include *at least* those who suffer¹⁸ as a result of (I) knowing the racist motivation behind the existence of most Confederate monuments or as a result of (II) having the horrors of the Civil War and the racist history of the United States made salient when they see public Confederate monuments.
- (3) Therefore, there's strong moral reason to remove public Confederate monuments.

This argument is valid, which means that if both premises (1) and (2) are true, then the conclusion (3) must also be true. Thus, if one wants to reject the conclusion, then as a matter of logic, one must also reject at least one of the premises. Notice that the conclusion only states that there's *strong moral reason* to remove the monuments, stopping short of stating that there's a *moral obligation* to remove the monuments. This is because, theoretically, there could be countervailing moral reason to preserve the monuments that's stronger than the moral reason to take them down. For instance, if an evil genius were going to destroy the entire world unless we preserve the monuments, then we would be obligated to preserve them. In the next section, I consider the most viable candidates for such countervailing reasons and argue that they don't outweigh the moral reason to remove the monuments. Before I do that, however, it's necessary to formalize the remainder of my argument.

- (4) If there's strong moral reason to remove public Confederate monuments, then absent equally strong or stronger countervailing reasons to preserve them, people are morally obligated to (of their own volition) remove public Confederate monuments.
- (5) There are no countervailing reasons to preserve public Confederate monuments that are equally strong or stronger than the moral reasons to remove them.
- (6) Therefore, people are morally obligated to (of their own volition) remove public Confederate monuments.

Propositions (3)–(6) are also a valid argument. So, (1)–(2) entail (3) and (3)–(5) entail (6). This means that if one wishes to reject my conclusion (6), they'll have to reject premise(s) (1), (2), (4), or (5). I take (1) to be uncontroversial and obviously true. It can be derived from an exceedingly plausible moral axiom that if x unavoidably harms morally considerable beings who don't deserve to be harmed, then there's strong moral reason to prevent x .¹⁹

Premise (2) is also clearly true and, I believe, at least the first disjunct (I) is rather uncontroversial. People have been opposed to Confederate monuments as long as they've existed. The motivations behind the creation of Confederate monuments were transparent to those alive at the time of their creation. Countless people who lived through the civil rights era are alive today, seeing the same Confederate monuments created to further the oppression of African Americans. The millions of people who've read the relevant news stories and history texts know the history behind the Confederate monuments. Knowledge of this history factors into the manner in which people²⁰ suffer as a result of seeing the monuments, or even simply knowing that they are still standing.²¹ One can find ample testimony from those protesting the Confederate monuments explaining how they find the continued existence of the monuments offensive and harmful.²²

The second disjunct (II) of premise (2) should be rather uncontroversial. However, it appears to often be overlooked in the debate. Consider someone who is unaware of the racist motivations for creating (most) Confederate monuments and who has the typical cursory knowledge of the Civil War. Suppose, hypothetically, that the Confederate monument they happen to see was created for entirely innocuous reasons. Does *this* Confederate monument still unavoidably harm them? Yes; at least, it will for some people. Seeing the monument can non-voluntarily make salient America's racist past and the horrors of one of the darkest periods in American history. Having these facts made salient can clearly cause one to suffer *even if* we grant that the monument itself is not racist and was not created for racist reasons.

To further understand the nature of this harm, consider another historical example. In the mid-1970s, transgressing social norms for shock value was part of the punk ethos. Toward this end, a number of prominent punk musicians (e.g., Johnny Rotten and Sid Vicious of the Sex Pistols and Siouxsie of Siouxsie and the Banshees) wore swastika armbands or clothing on which

swastikas were prominently displayed. This trend may have been started by the Sex Pistols manager Malcolm McLaren, who was himself Jewish, and who sold clothes with swastikas on them.²³ These particular punks weren't wearing swastikas because they were prejudiced, yet I contend that it was nevertheless morally wrong for them to do so. Those who saw punks donning swastikas in public (many of whom were survivors of World War II) were harmed because seeing them unavoidably made salient the horrors of anti-Semitism, World War II, and the Holocaust. This, in turn, caused them to suffer. Crucially, it could cause them to suffer *even if* they knew that the reasons behind these punks' actions weren't prejudice. The same is true in the analogous case of Confederate monuments.

As already noted, premises (1)–(2) entail (3). If one accepts (1)–(3), this leaves premises (4) or (5) for opponents to reject. Premise (4) should be as uncontroversial as (1) and can just be derived from a moral axiom that holds that if you have strong moral reason²⁴ to x , then absent equally strong or stronger reason to not x , you're morally obligated to x . This only leaves premise (5), which is perhaps the most contentious premise of my argument. But critics will need to identify reasons to preserve the monuments that supposedly outweigh the harm-based moral reasons to take them down. In the remaining space, I'll consider what I take to be the most popular and plausible reasons that can be used to argue against premise (5).

4. Objections

Historical Significance and Aesthetic Value

Those wishing to preserve Confederate monuments may argue that they are great works of art that have a great deal of aesthetic value. They may also claim that the monuments are historically significant and that removing them will result in a loss of historical value. If these considerations warrant rejecting premise (5), preventing the loss of the historical and aesthetic value would have to be more important than preventing the harm the Confederate monuments cause.

I deny that removing these monuments need result in the loss of any historical or aesthetic value. Plenty of philosophers have argued that works of art (including monuments) can be intrinsically valuable for historical or aesthetic reasons.²⁵ Yet, none would think that there's much aesthetic or historical value in the mass-produced Confederate monuments created for racist reasons. Moreover, any aesthetic value there is would be easily replaceable with other works of art.²⁶ This needn't be true of all Confederate monuments, of course. For instance, some may think that the Robert E. Lee statue in Charlottesville has great aesthetic and historical value. Granting this, if only for the sake of argument, I am quite confident that preserving the collective aesthetic and historical value is less important than preventing the undeserved suffering caused by the statue. To see why, consider the following. Plausibly, the *collective* amount of harm the Lee statue caused amounts to a single lifetime worth of suffering or, at least, many years' worth of suffering. Now, imagine that you find yourself in the following situation:

Steve or a Statue: A comet is falling from the sky toward an innocent person, Steve. If you do nothing, it will injure Steve so badly that he will suffer for decades before dying. If you push Steve out of the way, the comet will strike the Robert E. Lee statue and permanently destroy it.²⁷

What should you do? It seems clear to me that you should save Steve instead of the statue. If this is right, then we should believe that whatever reason there is to preserve Confederate monuments for their (supposed) historical or aesthetic value, that reason is outweighed by the reasons we have to prevent the undeserved, unavoidable suffering such monuments cause.

Even if one believes there is more reason to preserve the historical or aesthetic value than there is to prevent people from suffering undeservedly, this preservationist argument fails. The reason why is that it's possible to remove the Confederate monuments without the loss of any historical or aesthetic value. This could be done, as some have argued, by placing the monuments in a museum where they can be put in the proper historical context.²⁸ Because monuments are reverential in nature, placing them in a museum in the proper historical context may cause them to cease to be *monuments* and, consequently, so harmful.²⁹ But it would not cause them to lose any of their aesthetic or historical value.

Removing Statues Erases History

A closely related response given by preservationists is that removing Confederate monuments erases history, and the consequences of erasing history can be bad. As the old saying goes, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made this sort of argument when asked about whether Confederate statues should be preserved. She replied, "Nobody is alive today who remembers the Civil War, but by looking at [a Confederate monument] you can trigger what it meant and what it was like. You don't need to honor the purposes of people [who] were on the other side of history, but you better be able to remind people."³⁰

I am extremely skeptical that Confederate monuments themselves impart much in the way of historical knowledge or lend insight into what it was like to exist during the Civil War. Any information one gains from looking at a statue or reading a plaque on a monument could be found by going on Wikipedia.³¹ More importantly, however, even granting (for the sake of argument) that there would be a non-trivial loss of historical knowledge if the monuments are removed, it doesn't follow that there need be a net decrease in historical knowledge. Whatever knowledge would be lost by removing the monuments could be compensated for by the creation of additional educational resources³² that impart the same relevant knowledge, but are not harmful in the way reverential Confederate monuments are. Finally, even if removing the monuments led to some unavoidable loss of historical knowledge, preventing the loss of that value is just less important than preventing the amount of suffering Confederate monuments cause undeserving individuals to experience.

Selective Honor

Some preservationists have argued that we can continue to preserve Confederate monuments to honor the noble accomplishments of the people they valorize without also honoring the morally heinous aspects of the people in question.³³ This claim is not obviously implausible. A statue of Thomas Jefferson, for instance, may be thought to honor him for such accomplishments as being the primary author of the Declaration of Independence without thereby, in any way, honoring him for being a vicious slaveholder.

This argument won't help the preservationist, however. Granting that it's *possible* for Confederate monuments to only honor the honorable, it does not follow that it's morally permissible to preserve them in the hopes that will happen. First, this is unlikely to be what would actually happen. As the Charlottesville protest helped demonstrate, there is a substantial number of white nationalists (a.k.a., neo-Nazis) who wish to preserve and honor morally atrocious aspects of the Confederacy. Second, would any good that comes from honoring whatever is good about the Confederacy outweigh the harm the monument inflicts on undeserving people? I think the answer is quite clearly "no" for reasons illustrated by my *Steve or a Statue* case.³⁴ Few would think it morally permissible to create a statue of Bill Cosby to honor him for his contribution to comedy even under the assumption that people would only be honoring Cosby for his honorable accomplishments. A good explanation for *why* this is wrong is because it's simply more important to prevent the pain that a Cosby statue would cause survivors of sexual abuse than it is to benefit people desiring to honor Cosby. The same is true with respect to Confederate monuments, and so the mere fact that it's possible to selectively honor the Confederacy does not suffice to demonstrate that premise (5) is false.

Harm-Based Reasons to Preserve Confederate Monuments

If we have strong moral reason to remove Confederate monuments because of the harm that preserving them causes, don't we also have strong moral reason to preserve the monuments because of the harm removing them would cause? After all, there's no shortage of preservationists who claim they would suffer if the monuments were removed.³⁵

Much, though certainly not all, of the harm from which preservationists would suffer if Confederate monuments were removed crucially depends on them holding certain irrational beliefs or contemptible attitudes. For instance, the white nationalists chanting "Blood and Soil" in Charlottesville might lament the Robert E. Lee statue being taken down because they would view that as a hindrance to their goal of preserving the "superior" Aryan race. Were they to rid themselves of their racism, they would no longer suffer so much from the removal of the Lee statue. Assuming these white nationalists have the rational capacity to rid themselves of their irrational beliefs and contemptible attitudes, any suffering they endure that depends on them holding such attitudes and beliefs matters less than the suffering endured by people whose suffering is predicated upon rational beliefs and fitting attitudes, such as those who suffer from the preservation of Confederate monuments.³⁶

Moreover, it's quite likely that the suffering that would result from the continued existence of Confederate monuments would be greater than the suffering that would result from removing them. This is largely because the continued existence of Confederate monuments would continue to cause people to suffer because of certain facts that the monuments make salient. However, were the monuments removed, their being removed would not similarly make harmful facts salient. Perhaps seeing the space where the monuments once stood would make the fact that the monuments were removed salient to some people, and having that fact made salient might cause some preservationists to suffer. But it seems highly unlikely that this would occur with much frequency. Moreover, the extent to which it would happen presumably would diminish with each generation.³⁷ After all, future people who grow up without having ever seen a Confederate monument wouldn't suddenly think about the absence of Confederate monuments when they're in the areas where the monuments once stood.³⁸ On the other hand, the continued existence of Confederate monuments would continue to make salient the horrors of the Civil War and the racist history of the United States.³⁹

Slippery Slope Arguments

Finally, one may object that my argument leads to an absurd conclusion, and as such, it's reasonable to infer that there's something wrong with my argument even if one cannot identify which premise(s) is/are false. The *reductio ad absurdum* runs as follows. "If we have to remove Confederate monuments because they honor people who acted in ways that were gravely morally wrong, then wouldn't we get the absurd conclusion that we have to remove almost all monuments?" George Washington and Thomas Jefferson both owned slaves, yet few object to monuments of them. The young Mahatma Gandhi notoriously expressed racist attitudes toward black people and was an unrepentant misogynist, yet few object to monuments of him.⁴⁰ Almost every contemporary person who has been honored with a monument is someone who routinely consumed factory-farmed meat, a fact that future generations will almost certainly regard as morally monstrous. Yet no one raises this as an objection to honoring anyone with reverential monuments.

If we remove all statues of people who've committed grave moral wrongs, wouldn't we have to remove almost all statues? The answer to this question is probably "Yes." Is that absurd? Not necessarily. But, more importantly, my argument does not entail that we have to remove the statues of everyone who has committed grave moral wrongs for a few reasons. First, it's worth noting that there's a potentially morally relevant difference between people like Thomas Jefferson or Mahatma Gandhi and people like Robert E. Lee or Nathan Bedford Forrest. While all of them committed grave moral wrongs, the former group also accomplished a great deal of good and were, with respect to some issues, morally prescient. The same cannot truthfully be said of the Confederate generals.

Second, statues of people in the former camp don't cause the same amount of unavoidable harm as people in the latter camp. The motivations behind the creation of Gandhi or Jefferson monuments were not racist. They were not erected to further the oppression of anyone. Moreover, the facts that such statues make salient are generally not harmful because they concern the good that such people have done. When most people think of Gandhi, for instance, they think of his non-violent struggle for Indian independence.⁴¹ They don't think of (or generally even know) about his racism or sexism, but they may know about his noble fight for civil rights in South Africa or his fight for the emancipation of women and public declarations of the equality of the sexes. Since these monuments are not harmful in the way, or to the degree, that Confederate monuments are, it's plausible that the moral reasons to preserve them currently outweigh the moral reason to remove them. Of course, times change and cultures continue to evolve. It's quite conceivable that, in the future, a majority of people will oppose monuments of Washington, Jefferson, Gandhi, and the like because of these people's gravely morally wrong actions. Their moral shortcomings may even become the facts that are salient when people see such monuments, and so these monuments may come to harm as many people as Confederate monuments currently do. If that time comes, and the harm-based moral reasons to remove these statues outweigh the moral reasons to keep them up, then I grant that people at that time would be morally obligated to remove them. This is not an absurd conclusion, though. On the contrary, it seems to be exactly what we should do in that situation.⁴²

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What's the takeaway from Timmerman's brief history of Confederate monuments?
2. Why think that Confederate monuments harm some people?
3. What does it mean to say that Confederate monuments have aesthetic value?
4. How does Timmerman respond to the "Don't erase history" objection?
5. What is a "slippery slope" objection in general? What's the specific slippery slope objection that Timmerman considers? How does he reply?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Timmerman's argument is based on the claim that Confederate statues cause harm, not offense. What's the difference? Does it matter? Why or why not?
2. Imagine some distant future when people are deeply horrified by the way that we currently treat animals in factory farms. When they look at statues of our recent politicians who did nothing to end factory farming—George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump—they are deeply upset by them. On Timmerman's view, it could work out that the statues of Bush, Obama, and Trump ought to be taken down; it would be a moral mistake to leave them up. Does this seem like the right result to you? Why or why not?

Case 1

One of the difficult questions is: What's the way forward after we recognize the divisions in a society over various monuments? Consider what one city has done:

Vancouver, where I live, offers an unlikely example of what that approach might look like. Today the city is known for its easygoing charm and expensive real estate. 150 years ago, and for millennia before that, the area was the hunting and fishing grounds of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh peoples. Their settlements dotted the shores of the Burrard inlet and Fraser and Capilano rivers. The arrival of Europeans and founding of Vancouver precipitated their almost total erasure over the next 150 years.

In 2014, Vancouver declared itself a "city of reconciliation," formally recognising its occupation of the unceded territories and embarking with local First Nations governments on a long-term plan to decolonise and indigenise the city. To begin with, some streets, parks, schools and landmarks will be renamed, including Siwash Rock, a well-known sea stack near Stanley Park whose name (derived from the French word for "savage") is seen as an offensive slur against indigenous people.

The new names will be specific to the group whose territory the landmark or sign is on—for example, Sir William Macdonald elementary school, which sits on Musqueam territory, recently became Xpey' elementary school, meaning "cedar" in the local hə́n̓qə́miṇ̓ə́n̓ (Halkomelem) language. The University of British Columbia, which also sits on Musqueam territory, has replaced all of the street signs on campus with bilingual English–hə́n̓qə́miṇ̓ə́n̓ ones. The sites of historical villages will be reinscribed with signs and interpretive displays, and other artistic interventions. "The point is to make sure Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh are reflected and visible everywhere in Vancouver," Ginger Gosnell-Myers, the city's aboriginal relations manager, tells me.

Renaming and monumentalisation are only the most obvious aspect of the process. "Colonial structures permeate every part of the city, from the place names to the architecture and the use of space, even the way city departments are organised," Gosnell-Myers says. "So for reconciliation to actually work, the plan needed to be comprehensive, too." Inspired by a similar exercise in New Zealand, the partners have together created a set of indigenous design principles that will inform the design of all future public space in Vancouver—including sightlines and building materials, the ways structures relate to the natural environment, and how they are used. There will be greater emphasis on communal, intergenerational public spaces, for example, because in the local indigenous cultures, all buildings are meant to be used by all people.*

Is this a model to follow generally? What sort of principles seem to guide the decisions that Vancouver is making? What would it look like if implemented in the United States? What are some of the limitations of this approach? Is there any reason to think that it isn't radical enough?

*<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/sep/26/statue-wars-what-should-we-do-with-troublesome-monuments>.

ASHES OF OUR FATHERS: RACIST MONUMENTS AND THE TRIBAL RIGHT

DAN DEMETRIOU

1. Introduction

At least for now, a statue of Paul Kruger still stands in Pretoria, South Africa's Church Square, though it's surrounded by protective fencing and concrete barriers. Kruger embodied the Afrikaner experience: As a child, he was a Voortrekker who fought Zulus for control of the Transvaal; as a young man, he led Boer forces against British colonialists; later in life, he served as president of the South African Republic. Over the past few years, the Church Square monument honoring "Oom" (Uncle) Paul has been repeatedly defaced and threatened with destruction, through legal and illegal means, by black nationalists (chiefly Economic Freedom Fighters [EFF] representatives and supporters) and anti-colonialist #RhodesMustFall activists. "There is a national mandate to all the EFF branches to remove all the apartheid statues and symbols," one EFF councilman has said. "One day people are going to wake up and find the statue not being there."⁴³ Counter-protests, including one by an Afrikaner singer who chained herself to the monument, have made international news.⁴⁴ Plans are underway to add items to the square that celebrate the freedom struggle of non-white South Africans, but debate still rages over whether to remove Kruger's statue completely.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, in the United States, a Charlottesville, Virginia circuit court judge has just ordered that tarps covering a monument of iconic Confederate general Robert E. Lee be removed.⁴⁶ Lee's loyalty to his people (Virginians), brilliant generalship, and quiet dignity inspire millions of devotees today, despite the fact that Lee himself wished not to be memorialized for the sake of reunification.⁴⁷ In February 2017, the Charlottesville city council voted to have the statue in Emancipation Park—until recently, Lee Park—taken down, but the process has been halted by legal challenges, as, like many places in the South, state laws protect Confederate monuments.⁴⁸ In response to the city council's vote, the 26-foot-tall equestrian statue was the scene of a "Unite the Right" rally that descended on Emancipation Park to protest the statue's removal with white nationalist and anti-Semitic chants. The right-wing protestors were met by crowds of "antifascist" counter-protesters, and state police shut down the rally. In the chaos that ensued, a right-wing activist plowed his car into a group of counter-protesters, resulting in the death of one person.⁴⁹

These are just two of many cases of monuments jeopardized or already dismantled because of their alleged racist or (racially motivated) colonialist significance. Elsewhere, philosopher of political aesthetics Ajume Wingo and I have sought to catalogue the principal sorts of preservationist and removalist arguments one hears in the "racist monument" debate, and there are broadly leftist and rightist rationales for both positions.⁵⁰ As I cannot discuss here even all the rightist considerations relevant to this issue,⁵¹ I'll focus only on what I see as the fundamental one, which is social cohesion, both across time and across the relevant races or ethnicities. Specifically, in this chapter I sketch a rightist approach

to monumetary policy in a diverse polity beleaguered by old ethnic grievances. I begin by noting the importance of tribalism, memorialization, and social trust, and then provide policy guidance based on these concerns to the racist monument debate as it stands in the English-speaking world today.

A word on terminology: I use the phrase “racist monument” to refer to any monument seriously controversial because of its alleged racist significance. This definition entails that the above statues to Kruger, Lee, and hundreds more are indisputably “racist monuments” for the purposes of this chapter. This nomenclature is necessary shorthand because phrases such as “Confederate statues” or “colonialist monuments” are too narrow, as I want to discuss any monument thought problematic for reasons of racism, while “controversial monuments” and the like are too broad, as I wish to exclude monuments contentious because of other political or religious associations, such as the Buddhas of Bamiyan dynamited by the Taliban in 2001. I don’t necessarily concede with this term that the monuments in question are “in fact” racist—indeed, there may be no sense to saying a monument is “in fact” racist beyond its seeming racist to enough people. Nor should this terminology prejudice the issue for the removalist position, for the mere fact that a monument is thought by many to be racist simply doesn’t entail that it ought to be removed.

2. Tribal Assumptions

As this volume reveals, there are many conceptions of what it means to be on the political “right” or “conservative.” Since the moral perspective I appeal to is older than Christianity and more properly considered “global” than “Western,” some of my fellow travelers will disagree with parts of what I’m about to say.⁵² Be that as it may, anyone espousing the following principles will be considered on the political right today, especially if they believe these principles apply to whites or white ethnicities as well as for other races or ethnicities.

The first principle I’ll forward is that *humans are a tribal species, and political structures failing to accommodate this fact are doomed to fail*. Unlike tigers and sea turtles, humans don’t go through life alone.⁵³ We are a highly social species that seeks the comfort and protection of clans and tribes. Tribes gobble up loners. So as long as there are significant numbers of tribalists in the world (and there always will be), even (largely hypothetical) “individualists” and “cosmopolitans” must rely on tribal loyalty for their security, property, freedoms, and dignity, since these good things are secured only by a willingness of tribemates to sacrifice for and defend the territories individualists and cosmopolitans flit between.

If you don’t understand what “tribe” is, think of your family and proven friends. Think, in short, of who “has your back”: who would leap to your defense if you were in trouble before even asking if you were in the wrong, who would find space for you in their homes if you had nowhere else to go, who feels an obligation to feed you if you were hungry. Tribal affiliation isn’t *that* strong, usually (except in war, this level of sacrifice is typically reserved for family, clan, or gang), but nonetheless, tribemates will do these things to some degree—especially if they are thrown together in a strange land, as the behavior of expats will testify.

If you're a citizen or denizen of a high-trust Western country, you should know that the people who built that society worked hard to create institutions reliable enough for tribalism to be unnecessary below the level of the state itself. Their success at this was so spectacular that all this talk of "tribalism" may seem unsettlingly primitive. To this, all I can say here is that complacency about tribalism is as foolish as thinking that lights must turn on when you flip a switch, or that water must flow from the faucet when you turn the knob. A sense of tribal affiliation is the psychological infrastructure of any sustainable free society: If it goes, authoritarianism becomes necessary to maintain law and order.⁵⁴

Second, *memorialization is essential to maintaining tribal identity and cohesion over time*. Humans evolved language and culture to transmit adaptive memes (units of information), and not just genes, to the next generation.⁵⁵ Populations pass on their cultures in large part by memorialization, which includes not only monuments but also *inter alia* museums (e.g., Cape Town's District 6 museum), historical sites (e.g., as the Gettysburg battlefield), temporary installations (e.g., New York City's Tribute in Light, representing the fallen Twin Towers), or one-off events (e.g., Nelson Mandela's state funeral). Memorials bend our artistic and dramatic creativity to the tasks not of making money or entertaining, but of expressing our values, remembering our tragedies, celebrating our victories, honoring our heroes, and affirming a shared identity, and thus memorialization is increasingly acknowledged as a human right.⁵⁶ If we were to use a domestic analogy, memorials wouldn't be mere decorations or microwave dinners, but family portraits, heirlooms, trophy displays, household altars, and Christmas dinners.

Is tribalism illiberal? Certainly, the liberalism committed to the primacy of the individual or hostile to borders and nationalism will be anti-tribalist. Yet liberal thinkers formerly appreciated that individual rights are secure only within a tribal shell. For instance, John Stuart Mill himself seemed concerned about tribal cohesion even for free societies (he didn't endorse liberalism for cultures still mired in "barbarism").⁵⁷ In fact, Mill was explicit in cautioning against combining various "nations" into one polity precisely because sub-state tribal loyalties either tear multicultural states apart or force their governments to become authoritarian in their struggle to maintain order: "Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. Among a people without fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion, necessary to the working of representative government, cannot exist."⁵⁸

By "nation," Mill means

[a population] united among themselves by common sympathies which don't exist between them and any others—which make them co-operate with each other more willingly than with other people, desire to be under the same government, and desire that it should be government by themselves or a portion of themselves exclusively. . . . [Nationality is sometimes] the effect of identity of race and descent. Community of language, and community of religion, greatly contribute to it. Geographical limits are one of its causes. But the strongest of

all is identity of political antecedents; the possession of a national history, and consequent community of recollections; collective pride and humiliation, pleasure and regret, connected with the same incidents in the past.⁵⁹

In other words, a “nation” for Mill is a “people,” or a big tribe. Mill realized that a functional polity requires citizens who are more willing to sacrifice for, and cooperate with, each other than they would with mere strangers. In contemporary sociological terms, what Mill was worried about is social cohesion. And just as Mill hypothesized, sociological research suggests that diversity decreases social trust, an important element in social cohesion.⁶⁰ These declines can be counteracted only, it’s hoped by researchers, if the diverse peoples constituting the polity buy into a new, overarching cultural identity—a new tribe.⁶¹

The conservatism of this essay, then, is a traditionalism that acknowledges tribalism as an obvious fact and sees piety toward one’s ancestors, traditions, and holy places as not only a *prima facie* moral obligation for individuals but an important civic virtue. Tribal folkways are so typical across the world that they are better categorized as the human psychological default than an ideology.⁶² For instance, these lines, written by a Victorian poet about an ancient Roman hero who fought for his people’s city and holy places, are something any traditional Yoruba, Jew, Sikh, or Maori would accept as a matter of course:

Then out spake brave Horatius,
The Captain of the Gate:
To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late.
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his gods?⁶³

Noble thoughts and feelings to be sure, but also utterly *normal*. It’s the contemporary Western liberal ethos that discourages tribal identification that is unusual—or, as social psychologists have recently euphemized it, “WEIRD” (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic).⁶⁴

Rightists (and, apparently, even liberals of the past) are not opposed to tribes mapping onto religious or ethnic lines. But even if the polity in question is for whatever reason committed to diversity on these dimensions, the solution isn’t to eradicate tribal sentiment, but to replace the tribe of religion or ethnicity with some form of civic or populist nationalism.

Most “tribal rightists” who think along these lines will be skeptical about the sustainability of any free yet significantly multicultural state.⁶⁵ Their skepticism is increasingly justified. At the time of this writing, moderates are converting to identitarian politics in North America and Western Europe: Rightist politics appear to be more and more popular among whites,⁶⁶ while new, ethnic/religious parties (e.g., the Turkish DENK in the Netherlands or Partij Islam in Belgium) emerge from nominally leftist parties, such as Greens.⁶⁷ Violence on campuses

over “hate speech” by invited speakers has flared in recent years.⁶⁸ Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Sweden, and Germany are enforcing hate speech laws ever more rigorously in an effort to stifle rising anti-Islamic and anti-immigrant sentiment.⁶⁹ The South African government’s current plans to seize white farms may prove to be the tipping point for ethnic cleansing there.⁷⁰ So there are grounds for tribal rightist skepticism about the sustainability of seriously multicultural states.

But it doesn’t follow that skeptics about the feasibility of maintaining or rescuing something are a bad source of wisdom in a crisis. Indeed, skeptics may understand the dangers best, and therefore honest and well-meaning skeptics might provide valuable insight on how to avoid them. In particular, tribal rightists, not liberals, leftists, or (least of all) cosmopolitans, are likely to have the best instincts on matters of building social cohesion in ethnically divided polities.⁷¹ That instinct tells us that forcibly destroying old tribal identities to encourage a new multiethnic tribal identity is self-defeating and unacceptably authoritarian. Widening tribal affiliation may be encouraged by the state, yes, but the process has to be far subtler than the measures called for by even many academic removalists.⁷² As best I can tell, a tribal rightist committed to the long-term stability and freedom of a multicultural state with old ethnic grievances, when considering the monument controversy as it stands today in places such as the United States or South Africa, will urge an honorable compromise on monument policy that (1) gradually narrows the gap between peoples in the heritage landscape, (2) conserves all but the most offensive of the least beloved racist monuments, (3) avoids recrimination (i.e., “keeps it positive”) and eschews ideological commentary in new monuments or revisions to old ones, (4) as much as politically feasible, recognizes only the offense of willing tribesmates, and (5) responds to aesthetic and other “irrational” offenses more than to “objective” historical or philosophical critiques.

3. Honorable Compromises

On the assumptions above, the multicultural state isn’t worth saving unless there’s going to be a real sense of tribal fellow-feeling at the other end of reform. So although a tribe isn’t as tightly knit as a family, it may behoove us to revisit the domestic analogy.

Imagine an interracial couple deciding how to decorate their home. In an interracial household, we would expect mementos and pictures from both sides of the family. If, for some reason, the black spouse’s family didn’t take many pictures or lost all their heirlooms in a fire, we would expect the white spouse to find ways to represent the black spouse’s family in other ways, and to be alert to opportunities to put up new pictures of them. Likewise, although a high-trust relationship doesn’t keep strict track of the numbers—we don’t need to limit monuments to African Americans to exactly 13%, and we don’t need exactly 10% of monuments in South Africa to be of whites—the monumentary gap between whites and blacks is impossible to ignore in the places under discussion and should gradually be closed. It would be undignified to close that gap

too quickly, by erecting monuments honoring sub-par figures or unremarkable events just to even things out. But gradually, as historical research into ignored or preliterate cultures improves, and as new outstanding citizens arise, the formerly underrepresented peoples should be suitably showcased in the national household.

What about existing, or even future, racist monuments? Just as every married person knows it's possible to place on the same mantle pictures of in-laws who abused each other, we can tolerate monuments to figures who were enemies. A healthy, racially diverse citizenry will *want* their fellow citizens to feel free to honor their ancestors and draw pride in their heritage. This means that white South Africans or white Americans can appreciate that their black countrymen may not personally advocate for radical political solutions today, but still wish to honor black nationalists or separatists who struggled on behalf of their people. And black Americans or black South Africans can recognize that a white fellow citizen may not condone all that her ancestors did, but still take pride in their sacrifices or heroism. The many Native American monuments in the United States, and to a much greater degree many democratic South African monuments, demonstrate that it's perfectly possible to memorialize culture heroes for their sacrifices for their peoples, even if they were at war with the ancestors of fellow citizens and completely opposed to the creation of the modern states that now memorialize them. For example, the statues of African royal captives recently installed at their former prison, Cape Town's Castle of Good Hope, harmoniously contribute to a more complete picture of the peoples whose history shaped the Castle and South Africa itself.⁷³

Nonetheless, some racist monuments, whose designs are highly ideological, leave little room for interpretation, deliberately provoke, and carry little meaning to anyone but hardened ethno-tribalists uninterested in a shared future, are good candidates for removal, *only if* they are *actually* offensive to a significant number of citizens, especially if those citizens have given costly signals of interest in a multiethnic tribal future. For example, the 2017 removal of the New Orleans' Battle of Liberty Place (BLP) monument was consistent with a tribal rightist approach.⁷⁴ But if, quite contrary to the facts, the BLP monument were not controversial, even it should have remained absent some good reason to remove it, and mere (ignored) ideological inconsistency with our legal and political aims today is not one such reason. For instance, if the people of New Orleans overwhelmingly interpreted it as a living symbol of a shameful past and/or a sort of trophy of a defeated regime, then it would be as strange to remove the BLP monument as to remove a public museum's installation about segregated drinking fountains.

For in matters of trust-building, we must remember that offense often isn't rational.⁷⁵ Insofar as we are concerned about being good tribemates, the historical context of a monument's installation or the momentousness of the historical figure or event's actual racism (e.g., that this general killed thousands for an apartheid state, that this statue was erected to bolster the Cult of the Lost Cause, etc.) is less important than the offense it actually causes fellow citizens of good will for

whatever odd reason. Returning to our interracial household, a picture of a slave-owning Confederate ancestor may be perfectly acceptable, whereas a meaningless racist tchotchke, such as a minstrel show poster picked up at a garage sale, may not. The black partner knows that unlike the poster, the picture is meaningful to the white partner, and this is what matters, even though slave owning is far worse than minstrelsy. Likewise, a gracious or beloved monument to a Confederate general may be much less offensive to well-meaning black citizens than one to a figure thought to be much less racist: Washington, DC's Lincoln Park statue of Lincoln, portraying the president emancipating a kneeling black slave with arm outstretched in way thought demeaning to many, may be illustrative in this regard.⁷⁶

That said, even conscientious tribemates shouldn't be morally concerned about everyone's offense, but only the offense of those who signal they are genuinely interested in being tribemates with the rest of us. For example, activist and commentator Angela Rye opined in one interview that "George Washington was a slaveowner. . . . [W]hether we think he was protecting freedom or not, he wasn't protecting my freedom. My ancestors weren't deemed human beings to him. So to me, I don't care if it's a George Washington statue, or a Thomas Jefferson statue, or a Robert E. Lee statue, they all need to come down."⁷⁷ Whatever Rye's reflective judgments might be, this is the language of someone uninterested in a tribal future with not only Southern whites who feel special attachment to Confederate figures, but Americans. Nor, in my view, should the conscientious tribal rightist be concerned about the offense of citizens, such as white liberals, offended on behalf of other peoples. Nor should the offense of moralistic iconoclasts, who relish scrubbing heritage landscapes and traditions, weigh upon our conscience. Tribal continuity is impossible without memorializing, and memorializing is impossible if we are constantly razing our monuments because of the moral inadequacies of our ancestors: their racism today, their sexism after that, their crimes against non-believers next, their transphobia after that. A heritage policy that dwells on historical injustices serves only to wedge apart peoples otherwise interested in a close-knit future.

Although not all offense matters morally, all offense does matter politically. And that means that the more ideological the monument, the more likely our descendants will find it morally repugnant. Here, again, it's helpful to contrast Charlottesville's Lee statue and New Orleans' BLP monument: The Lee statue was designed, and successfully so, to honor Southern valor while ignoring the question of who they fought against and what they fought for. The BLP monument, on the other hand, was explicit about the value of resisting Northern "usurpers" and called for "white supremacy." This distinction is instructive not only for monuments already around, but monuments being contemplated. Monuments can avoid being ideological without being anodyne if their message is about us, *these peoples*, not *these ideas*.⁷⁸ This means we need monuments that deftly leave unsaid who vanquished or was vanquished, who triumphed or was humiliated, whenever those facts touch upon the honor of the ancestors of those we would have as tribemates.

To sum up, heterogeneous societies interested in overcoming their divisions must adopt memorial policies that promote social cohesion and do not betray tribal trust. In the case of monuments, this principle would suggest policies, some of which I have articulated, that would say not only which future monuments should go up, but also which present monuments should come down. I argue that although some racist monuments fail this standard, many do not. Furthermore, because it is possible and usually beneficial to honor your ancestors even if they opposed the heterogeneous tribe you are part of, monuments to such figures do not *ipso facto* betray tribal trust, although they may for various—often aesthetic—reasons.

4. Conclusion

Any marriage worth having allows each spouse to maintain their family honor and their ties to the family they left behind. And as the interracial marriage case shows, people can navigate landscapes with memorials to people who were racists or fought for ethnocentric causes.⁷⁹ Granted, interracial relations in places such as the United States or South Africa are nothing like a high-trust marriage. But then again, the five policy guidelines on monuments suggested above hardly paint a rosy picture: If anything, they seem more apt for a marriage where the spouses are trying their best to avoid divorce over racial animosity, and in fact, these guidelines echo the heritage policies of Mandela-era South Africa.⁸⁰ Nonetheless, to repair or build trust, each spouse must gradually make themselves more and more vulnerable to the memorial expressions of the other, assuming each concession is reciprocated and not abused. Analogously, aggressive assaults on a people's monuments and, thus, the continuity of their ethnic tribe are bound to decrease their faith in the proposed multiethnic upgrade. Cowed peoples may be compliant, but they are not trustworthy, and they typically become so degraded as to be a burden even as subjects. Of course, alienating and intimidating the relevant populations is not a problem for those who deep down don't wish to be co-tribalists with anyone who would support maintaining a monument to Robert E. Lee or "Oom" Kruger. Casting down the monuments of your enemies is a time-honored practice of demoralization and establishing supremacy, and removalists may be gambling that the Horatiuses who rise up to defend the ashes of their fathers will be put down easily enough. They may be correct, but we should be under no illusions that the polity on the other side of such an endeavor would be both multicultural and free.⁸¹

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Demetriou mean by "social cohesion"?
2. Why doesn't Demetriou want to talk about "Confederate monuments" specifically?
3. What follows from our being a tribal species?
4. Why is memorialization important?
5. What's the point of the marriage analogy?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Demetriou asks us to imagine an interracial couple whose ancestors hated each other, and analogizes this to the current situation in multiracial states with a slave-holding, colonialist, or apartheid past. But isn't the actual history more akin to one family abusing the other? And since couples can divorce, does Demetriou's analogy only work if racial groups can "divorce" from each other?
2. Demetriou tests the claims against "racist" monuments against a "tribal" standard. What do you think he means by this? Do you agree that this is the right standard? More generally, do you think tribal loyalty is a civic virtue or a civic (moral?) vice?

Case 2

In 2019, a committee in the Texas House of Representatives proposed a bill according to which:

the state, all cities in Texas and all counties in Texas would be banned from removing any monument or memorial that honors "an event or person of historic significance," if that monument or memorial was put in place more than 40 years ago. Younger monuments and memorials would be a bit more vulnerable. Changing anything on one between 20 and 40 years old would require a two-thirds vote of the House and Senate for tributes on state property, and local election to get rid of or modify any monument or memorial on municipal grounds.

State Rep. James White told the *Austin American-Statesman* that it's his goal to bring order to the ongoing debate over public monuments in Texas. "I believe all Texans take their history very seriously," White said. "Just because you have the majority doesn't mean you always should do things the way you want to do it. It doesn't mean the minority voices don't have at least some ability to weigh in on the issue in a meaningful way."

During debate of the watered-down version of the bill in the Senate, Houston's Borris Miles and Dallas' Royce West, the upper chamber's only black members, blasted the bill for promoting racism and hate. "The bill that you're carrying on the Senate floor today is disgraceful," Miles said. "I ask that you consider some of the pain and heartache that we have to go through—myself and some of the brothers and sisters on this floor of color—and what we've had to go through as it relates to our Texas history."

What do you think about the bill that White supports? In what respects is it an attempt to find a compromise between different constituencies? How well does this approach fit with the way that Demetriou thinks we should approach the problem of Confederate monuments?

¹<https://www.dallasobserver.com/news/texas-religious-refusal-bill-gets-a-second-chance-11663919>.

REPLY TO DEMETRIOU
TRAVIS TIMMERMAN

In his essay, Demetriou makes a novel tribalist case for the preservation of racist monuments. He and I arrived at radically different conclusions in our respective essays, and we may be further apart on this issue than most “opponents” in this textbook. For this reason, I want to first emphasize some points where our positions overlap.

First, while I find tribalism (as Demetriou conceives of it) objectionable, I don’t necessarily deny that humans are a tribal species or that political structures should, in some ways, accommodate this fact. However, we no doubt disagree about how best to take these facts into account, and we may also disagree about the precise way(s) in which humans are, and are not, tribal species.

Second, Demetriou suggests a number of “honorable compromises” that the “tribal rightist” should endorse, including “narrowing the gap between peoples in the heritage landscape” by creating additional monuments for people in historically underrepresented groups. We agree this should be done.

Third, Demetriou and I agree that it can be permissible to, in certain conditions, selectively honor people who have performed grossly morally wrong acts in the past. Again, denying this would prohibit honoring pretty much anyone. Still, Demetriou and I certainly disagree about the exact conditions under which this is permissible.

Finally, Demetriou concedes that we should remove monuments “whose designs are highly ideological, leave little room for interpretation, deliberately provoke, and carry little meaning to anyone but hardened ethno-tribalists” when such monuments are offensive to a significant number of citizens. He and I agree that these criteria apply to many monuments, including numerous Confederate monuments, and we agree that such monuments should be removed.

Demetriou rejects premises (1) and (5) of my argument. Our disagreement over (1) concerns a technical debate about the nature of reasons, one that I believe is ultimately inconsequential to the Confederate monument debate. Our fundamental disagreement concerns (5). More specifically, Demetriou believes that preserving most Confederate monuments is necessary for maintaining tribal identity and cohesion over time, which is supposedly more important than preventing the harm such monuments cause. Much of our disagreement can be traced to two points of contention:

- (A) I deny that removing Confederate monuments need result in the loss of tribal identity and social cohesion.
- (B) Even supposing I’m wrong about (A), I believe that it is more important to prevent the harm Confederate monuments would cause than the loss of tribal identity and social cohesion supposedly at stake.

With respect to (A), Demetriou claims that “memorialization is essential to maintaining tribal identity and cohesion over time.” He also grants that memorialization can take many forms, including museums, historical sites, temporary

installations, one-off events, and the like. As I explained in my chapter, it's quite possible to take down public Confederate monuments yet preserve them in private museums or historical sites. Doing so could remove the objectionable features of the monuments (e.g., their reverential nature, a lack of proper historical context, their state-funded preservation, and the racist reasons behind their current location). Yet, preserving Confederate monuments in museums or historical sites can allow for memorialization while removing these objectionable elements. So, it seems possible to grant Demetriou's claim about the importance of memorialization yet still hold that we should remove public Confederate monuments.

There's another issue in the background here. Even assuming that it would be socially disastrous if tribes were always prevented from engaging in memorialization, it doesn't follow that it would be socially disastrous to prevent certain particular instances, or types, of memorialization. This is true in the same way it would be socially disastrous to completely deny freedom of speech to all citizens, but *not* socially disastrous to prevent the Westboro Baptist Church from protesting at a fallen soldier's funeral. Generally, memorialization *may* be essential to maintaining tribal identity and cohesion over time, but preserving public Confederate monuments needn't be.

Now consider (B). Suppose, with Demetriou, that removing most Confederate monuments would result in some loss of tribal identity or social cohesion. Nevertheless, preventing the suffering such monuments cause is, all else equal, more important than preventing the suffering their removal would cause when that suffering is predicated on irrational beliefs or contemptable attitudes. Removing Confederate monuments for harm-based reasons shouldn't be construed as a threat to social cohesion. That fact that some people would (irrationally) interpret it that way doesn't preclude them from having an obligation to remove the Confederate monuments, assuming that they're part of the relevant group. Of course, the diminished social cohesion *could* be bad for everyone, including the marginalized groups that would be affected by this supposed change. But, for reasons given in my essay, I believe that removing Confederate monuments would minimize undeserved suffering.

Thus far, I have responded to the "consequentialist" component of Demetriou's argument against (5). In reply, he might fall back on the claim that people have a moral right to this sort of memorialization independent of the consequences of such memorialization. He may appeal to his marriage analogy to capture commonsense intuitions on this point. I am personally skeptical that there is a general right to memorialize. But even granting that there is one, I see no reason to believe that this right extends to cases where memorialization is harmful in the way public Confederate monuments are harmful. To motivate this claim, consider Demetriou's own marriage analogy. Even supposing that one has a right to memorialize their slave-owning ancestor, it doesn't follow that one has a right to memorialize their slave-owning ancestor *in ways that harm their partner* (e.g., by placing their picture on a mantle). This isn't to suggest that one must destroy the picture of the ancestor, only that one should find a non-harmful way to memorialize this person. Ditto for Confederate monuments.

Questions about the ethics of Confederate monuments are complex. The chapters in this text do not cover everything there is to be written on the subject. Hopefully, however, they can serve as one possible entry point into this important, difficult, debate.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What do Timmerman and Demetriou agree about?
2. Given the choice between (a) preventing harm from Confederate monuments and (b) sacrificing social cohesion, Timmerman goes for the former. Why?
3. Timmerman claims that there's an ethical constraint on memorializing your ancestors. What is it?

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. Timmerman thinks that we can have our cake and eat it too: We can get memorialization without having Confederate monuments erected in prominent public places. Do you think he's right about this? Or do we have to make a choice between honoring certain historical figures and minimizing harms to current people?

REPLY TO TIMMERMAN

DAN DEMETRIOU

Travis Timmerman presents an admirably clear argument for removing Confederate monuments. In this rebuttal, I deny its first and fifth premises.

Timmerman sees his first premise,

(1) If the existence of a monument *M* unavoidably harms an undeserving group, then there's strong moral reason to end the existence of *M*,

as an application of a more general, "exceedingly plausible" principle:

If *x* unavoidably harms morally considerable beings who don't deserve to be harmed, then there's strong moral reason to prevent *x*.

Timmerman sees causing undeserved harm as a strong, although defeasible, reason not to do something. Counterexamples to this principle are abundant, however. Suppose you're basking in the glory that comes with being the starting point guard, but a young Stephen Curry transfers to your school and tries out for your team. Curry's displacing you as point guard makes your life worse, and you didn't deserve that harm, but obviously, he has no moral reason not to do so. Or imagine some classmates were distressed by your political opinions—this fact alone wouldn't give you a strong reason to abandon your views or censor yourself. In these counterexamples, the innocent parties have been harmed, but not wronged, since they had no moral claim against the harming parties not to be harmed by them in these ways.

The point holds with monuments. Surely some Chinese people feel bad when considering Mongolia's massive, recently erected monument to Genghis Khan, whose dynasty killed about half of all Chinese (60 million).⁸² But hurt Chinese feelings wouldn't justify removing the Khan monument, for Chinese offense has no moral claim on Mongolia's heritage landscape. The University of Ghana recently removed a statue of (the racist?) Mahatma Gandhi, which may have insulted some Indians, but that hypothetical offense would be irrelevant to Ghana's monumentary rights, too.⁸³ So whether we're talking about erecting or removing monuments, a bare appeal to the harm of racial offense is insufficient.

In my essay, I supplied a "tribal rightist" standard for racist monuments generally. Unlike the Mongolian/Chinese and Ghanaian/Indian cases, black and Southern white Americans should (unless preferring a civic divorce) seriously attempt to forge a new people, analogous to how an interracial married couple from racist families should (unless they prefer to divorce) try to forge a new family. So it's not racism or racist offense as such that makes a Confederate monument problematic, but its potential faithlessness to American blacks, or at least the subset of American blacks invested in being compatriots with Southern whites.

Are Confederate monuments faithless in this way? Remove race from the equation for a moment. At least 647,000 Northerners were killed or injured in the Civil War.⁸⁴ Do, or did, Confederate monuments wrong the descendants or communities of Northern whites by betraying tribal good faith? Maybe. If the monument in question specifically gloried in Union casualties (imagine a statue of Lee sitting atop a pile of Yankee skulls), or if the monument was used only to reinvigorate the Confederacy, then the said monument would be a good candidate for Northern complaint: The aforementioned BLP monument, which referred to reconstructionist forces as "usurpers," is a plausible real-life example. Many Confederate monuments passed this test, however, and managed to honor Confederate figures and soldiers without antagonizing Northerners harmed by the war. Reciprocally, Northerners generally countenanced Confederate monuments because they were seen as beneficial for rehabilitating Southern pride, which they saw as essential to healing a divided nation.

By the same rationale, it is consistent with being a good compatriot to black Americans to preserve Confederate monuments as long as the monuments in question do not demand an anti-black interpretation (as the Battle of Libert Place monument once did, by explicitly calling for "white supremacy") and are reasonably thought to be used to venerate white Southern culture heroes. For again, monuments, like books and family portraits, can have multiple meanings or uses, some wrongly harmful and some not, and the fact that there is a mainstream anti-black interpretation or use does not morally trump other interpretations or uses.⁸⁵ (As leftists remind rightists whenever accused of being un-American for critiquing America,⁸⁶ the mere fact that a compatriot interprets an act *you* see as loyal as disloyal doesn't entail that you are betraying trust.⁸⁷)

Finally, Timmerman's premise (5),

There are no countervailing reasons to preserve public Confederate monuments that are equally strong or stronger than the moral reasons to remove them,

is answered by recognizing at least two reasons to maintain monuments (assign books at public schools,⁸⁸ display art in public museums,⁸⁹ etc.) that precipitate racial offense. The first concerns cultural continuity. Monuments are an important form of memorialization, which in the civic case is like a people hanging family photos on the national walls. A multiracial state's peoples use memorials to build cohesion, inspire pride, and pass down a sense of their history, just as parents do through photos not just of their present families, but the *families they came from*. Given the facts about American itinerancy and (geographic or racial) interbreeding, in time there will be few people left who feel any attachment to Confederate monuments, at which point their removal will be unproblematic.⁹⁰ That point has not arrived. This leads us to our second reason for maintaining the Confederate monuments that pass the tribal rightist standard. The more interracial social distrust, the more likely Confederate monuments will irritate black Americans. But it's just as obvious that removalism in such a context is likely to be taken as provocative in the other direction: The more culture heroes of Southern whites are equated with Nazis, and the more their monuments are torn down in the manner done to conquered peoples, the less interest they will have in a multiracial future (which, arguably, explains the Charlottesville rally).⁹¹ That's why Nelson Mandela's strategy of adding monuments to black culture heroes to the South African heritage landscape, rather than removing monuments to whites, seems advisable for Americans whether interracial trust is running high *or* low.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What's the point of the Stephen Curry example?
2. Why, according to Demetriou, did Northerners tolerate Confederate monuments after the Civil War?
3. Demetriou thinks that we'll eventually be able to take down Confederate monuments; we just aren't there yet. When will that be?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Demetriou gives examples of cases where people "had no moral claim against the harming parties not to be harmed by them in these ways." When *would* someone have a claim against a harming party not to be harmed? Is there any reason to think that black Americans *do* have this kind of claim? Against whom?
2. Unlike Timmerman, Demetriou holds that the prospect of causing merely undeserved offense or harm does not present us with a strong reason not to do something. Do you find his counterexamples persuasive?

FURTHER READINGS

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NOTES

1. Matthew Haag, "Judge Orders Tarps Removed From Confederate Statues in Charlottesville," *New York Times*, February 27, 2018, accessed April 16, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/27/us/charlottesville-confederate-monuments.html>.
2. Jesse Holland, "Deadly Rally Accelerates Ongoing Removal of Confederate Statues Across U.S.," *Chicago Tribune*, August 15, 2018, accessed April 16, 2018, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-confederate-statue-removal-20170815-story.html>. See also Mitch Landrieu, *In the Shadows of Statues: A White Southerner Confronts History* (New York: Penguin, 2018).
3. It's generally immoral, but shouldn't be illegal, to cheat on one's partner. Or, more closely related to this issue, most people grant that the right to free speech entails legally permitting some speech that's immoral. Alfred Brophy has surprisingly argued that preserving Confederate monuments ought to be illegal because they supposedly violate the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment ("Flying the Confederate Flag on Public Property May Violate America's 14th Amendment," Quartz, June 25, 2015, <https://qz.com/437136/flying-the-confederate-flag-on-public-property-may-violate-americas-14th-amendment/>).
4. A little less than half of them are public monuments, and not all of them are statues.
5. Booth Gunter and Jamie Kizzire, *Whose Heritage: Public Symbols of the Confederacy* (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2018), 8. Accessed August 16, 2018, https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/whoseheritage_splc.pdf.
6. Fitzhugh Brundage, "I've Studied the History of Confederate Memorials. Here's What to Do About Them," *Vox*, August 18, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/the-big-idea/2017/8/18/16165160/confederate-monuments-history-charlottesville-white-supremacy>. For a more comprehensive history of this and related issues, see Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (New York: Harvard University Press, 2008).
7. Brundage, "I've Studied."
8. For more on "othering," see Lajos Brons, "Othering, An Analysis," *Transcience, A Journal of Global Studies* 6, no. 1 (2015): 69–90. See also Fred Dervin, "Cultural Identity, Representation and Othering," in *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication*, edited by Jane Jackson (New York: Routledge, 2012).
9. Brundage, "I've Studied."
10. Or, if one wants to deny that the monuments *themselves* are racist, they were still created by racists often, at least in part, for racist reasons. Dan Demetriou and Ajume Wingo helpfully distinguish between three ways monuments can have racist significance. They

can be racist because of who they represent, because it honors someone or something racist, or because of the racist intentions of those who brought it into existence. See Dan Demetriou and Ajume Wingo. "The Ethics of Racist Monuments," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Philosophy and Public Policy*, edited by David Boonin (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018).

11. Gunter and Kizzire, *Whose Heritage*. See also Miles Parks, "Confederate Statues Were Built to Further a 'White Supremacist Future,'" NPR, August 20, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2017/08/20/544266880/confederate-statues-were-built-to-further-a-white-supremacist-future>. Jim Crow laws refer to the set of laws in the South between the Reconstruction period (1877) and the civil rights movement (1950s) that enforced racial segregation. The civil rights movement that sought to end racial segregation gained national momentum in the mid-1950s and culminated in 1964 when the Civil Rights Act became federal law.
12. Marc Bain, "'You Can't Change History': Read Donald Trump's Defense of Confederate Statues," Quartz, August 15, 2017, <https://qz.com/1054062/statues-of-confederate-soldiers-across-the-south-were-cheaply-mass-produced-in-the-north/>.
13. Parks, "Confederate Statues." Considered in an ahistorical context, one may not fully appreciate how harmful these Confederate monuments are. Here Marilyn Frye's bird-cage analogy of oppression is instructive. She writes, "Consider a birdcage. If you look very closely at just one wire in the case, you cannot see the other wires. If your conception of what is before you is determined by this myopic focus, you could look at that one wire . . . and be unable to see why a bird would not just fly around the wire any time it wanted to go somewhere . . . It is only when you take a step back . . . and take a macroscopic view of the whole cage, that you can see why the bird does not go anywhere" (*The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory* [New York: Crossing Press, 1983], 4–5). The Confederate statues, considered in isolation, are but one wire in the cage.
14. The only difference between the two models were the letters on the soldier's belt buckle. Marc Fisher, "Why Those Confederate Soldier Statues Look a Lot Like Their Union Counterparts," *Washington Post*, August 18, 2017, accessed March 5, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/why-those-confederate-soldier-statues-look-a-lot-like-their-union-counterparts/2017/08/18/cefcc1bc-8394-11e7-ab27-1a21a8e006ab_story.html?utm_term=.296cbb7938ba.
15. The UDC is still an active organization and is, as of this writing, suing cities over their attempts to remove Confederate statues the UDC funded during the Jim Crow era. See, for instance, Guillermo Contreras, "Group Sues San Antonio over Removal of Confederate Statue," *My San Antonio*, October 25, 2017, accessed November 13, 2017, <https://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local/article/Group-sues-San-Antonio-over-removal-of-12306414.php>, and Jeff Gauger, "UDC: We Had to Sue to Stop Illegal Removal of Caddo Confederate Monument," *Shreveport Times*, October 20, 2017, accessed November 13, 2017, <https://www.shreveporttimes.com/story/news/2017/10/20/lawsuit-filed-block-removal-caddo-confederate-monument/783966001/>.
16. Gunter and Kizzire, *Whose Heritage*, 8.
17. Gunter and Kizzire, *Whose Heritage*; see, in particular, 8–10.
18. While my argument focuses on the experiential harms Confederate monuments cause people in (I) and (II), I deliberately leave open the possibility that they may cause non-experiential harms to people outside of these groups. In fact, I think that possibility is not implausible, although I don't have space to argue for it in this short essay.
19. This is assuming, of course, that x is preventable.

20. This especially includes those people whose oppression the monuments were meant to further.
21. For an incredibly insightful analysis of a type of oppression that leads to this harm, see Chapter 6 (especially section 2) of Ann E. Cudd, *Analyzing Oppression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
22. Baltimore mayor Catherine Pugh raises this type of consideration when discussing her decision to remove four Confederate statues. Jake Nevins, "Baltimore Mayor on Confederate Statues: Why Should People Have to Feel That Pain Every Day," *The Guardian*, August 22, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/aug/22/baltimore-roger-b-taney-confederate-statues-catherine-pugh>. In a March 19, 2018, *Daily Show* interview by Trevor Noah, Mitch Landrieu discusses how Wynton Marsalis raised this point to him, which served as a catalyst for Landrieu to change his mind about whether the statues should be removed (Mitch Landrieu, "Confronting Confederate Myths with 'In the Shadow of Statues'"). See also Marsalis's moving article, "Why New Orleans Should Take Down Robert E. Lee's Statue," in *The Times Picayune*, May 17, 2017, http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/12/confederate_monuments_new_orle_6.html. Multiple people raise this concern in *America Inside Out*: "Re-Righting History," directed by Cheryl McDonough, *National Geographic*, April 11, 2018. Countless more examples can be found by listening to interviews of counter-protesters who oppose preserving Confederate monuments.
23. Malcolm McLaren, "Punk? It Made My Day," *The Telegraph*, September 30, 2007, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/3668263/Malcolm-McLaren-Punk-it-made-my-day.html>. See also Vivien Goldman, "Never Mind the Swastikas: The Secret History of UK's 'Punky Jews,'" *The Guardian*, February 27, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2014/feb/27/never-mind-swastikas-secret-history-punky-jews>.
24. At least, this is true of moral reasons with *requiring force*.
25. The moral value of symbolic actions and, relatedly, the moral value of symbols themselves are discussed in Chapter 6 of Jeffrey M. Blustein, *Forgiveness and Remembrance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). For a good discussion of historical value in the context of historical preservation, see Erich Hatala Matthes, "The Ethics of Historic Preservation," *Philosophy Compass* 11, no. 12 (2016): 786–794.
26. Matthes convincingly argues that there's a contingent relationship between historical value and irreplaceability in "History, Value, and Irreplaceability," *Ethics* 124, no. 1 (2013): 35–64. Even if cheaply mass-produced statues have historical value, there is no reason to think that such value is entirely replaceable with harmless monuments.
27. If the reader objects to the idea that harms can be aggregated in this way, simply reimagine the thought experiment such that the comet will break into millions of tiny pieces causing non-trivial (but not life-ending) amounts of harm to millions of people unless you destroy the statue. In this case, it still seems clear to me that you should sacrifice the statue to spare millions of people harm.
28. Ta-Nehisi Coates, "Take Down the Confederate Flag—Now," *The Atlantic*, June 18, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/06/take-down-the-confederate-flag-now/396290/>. Holland Cotter, "We Need to Move, Not Destroy, Confederate Monuments," *New York Times*, August 20, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/8/20/arts/design/we-need-to-move-not-destroy-confederate-monuments.html?mtrref=https://www.google.com>. Christopher Knight, "What to Do with Confederate Monuments? Put Them in Museums as Examples of Ugly History, Not Civic Pride," *Los Angeles Times*, August 18, 2017, <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-confederate-monuments-20170818-htmlstory.html>.

29. If they're in a museum they would not be interpreted as being reverential, thereby removing one offensive aspect of the monuments that cause suffering. While they would still make salient the horrors of America's racist past and the Civil War, and while this would certainly still cause suffering, it wouldn't cause *unavoidable* suffering since anyone would be free to visit or not visit the museum(s) in question. Not everyone has that luxury when a monument is prominently displayed in a public space. Finally, being put in the proper historical context would make these monuments instrumental in acquiring historical knowledge, and the good gained from that (by willing museum patrons) could outweigh whatever suffering they may still cause.
30. Cameron Smith, "Condoleezza Rice Talks Religion, Confederate Monuments, and Energy Policy," YouTube video posted May 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HoCY69iP4fk>. Dan Demetriou and Ajume Wingo also cite this quote in their paper. Condoleezza Rice is not alone. Notably, a non-trivial number of black activists are arguing for preserving the Confederate monuments on these grounds. See Bradford Richardson, "Honoring Patriots or Traitors? Legacy of Confederate Statues in Eye of Beholder," *Washington Times*, August 15, 2017, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/aug/15/black-activists-want-confederate-statues-to-serve-/>. See also Brian B. Foster, "Confederate Monuments Are More Than Reminders of Our Racist Past. They Are Symbols of Our Racist Present," *Washington Post*, August 24, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2017/08/24/confederate-monuments-are-more-than-reminders-of-our-racist-past-they-are-symbols-of-our-racist-present/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.671ff7bce840.
31. Of course, some who bother to read plaques on monuments might not bother to acquire that information in the absence of monuments.
32. This may include, for example, certain requirements in history classes in primary schools, funding documentaries and television series focusing on the Civil War, creating a Civil War museum, as well as a plethora of other options.
33. This sort of argument is made about Confederate flags in George Shedler, *Racist Symbols and Reparations: Philosophical Reflections on Vestiges of the American Civil War* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 75–90. See also George Shedler, "Are Confederate Monuments Racist?" *International Journal of Applied Philosophy* 15, no. 2 (2001): 287–308. Preservationists make this argument in the "Re-Righting History" episode of *America Inside Out*. For a devastating reply to Shedler's book, see Alter Torin, "On Racist Symbols and Reparations," *Social Theory and Practice* 26, no. 1 (2000): 153–171.
34. This is also true because that same amount and type of good in question can be generated by choosing to honor someone better than any of the members of the Confederacy.
35. In fact, the most recent polls show that the majority of Americans oppose removing Confederate monuments. However, this does not necessarily mean that most of those people would suffer significantly if the statues are taken down. Chris Kahn, "A Majority of Americans Want to Preserve Confederate Monuments," *Reuters*, August 21, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-protests-poll/a-majority-of-americans-want-to-preserve-confederate-monuments-reuters-ipsos-poll-idUSKCN1B12EG>.
36. To be clear, I'm only claiming that much (not all) suffering that would result from removing Confederate monuments is predicated on irrational beliefs and contemptible attitudes.
37. It's also worth noting, per my discussion of Jim Crow laws, that Confederate monuments were inexorably intertwined with other injustices. Whatever pain the removal of Confederate statues would cause isn't connected to other structural injustices. Consequently, one might think that the harm their removal would cause simply wouldn't be the same in kind or degree.

38. Unless, of course, knowledge about the past Confederate monuments was widespread and their absence is visually arresting in some way. However, this too seems highly unlikely.
39. At least they would so long as people who see the monuments know they're Confederate monuments and know about the Civil War and slavery.
40. Gandhi's racism and sexism are well documented. Concerning his racism, see Rama Lakshmi, "What Did Mahatma Gandhi Think of Black People?" *Washington Post*, September 3, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/09/03/what-did-mahatma-gandhi-think-of-black-people/?utm_term=.5d924fadc6cf. Concerning his sexism, see Michael Connellan, "Women Suffer from Gandhi's Legacy," *The Guardian*, January 27, 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/jan/27/mohandas-gandhi-women-india>.
41. There are exceptions, of course, and the current exceptions may indicate what will be the norm in the future. A statue of Gandhi was "banished" at the University of Ghana because it was viewed as racist toward black South Africans. See Jason Burke, "Racist Gandhi Statue Banished from Ghana University," *The Guardian*, October 6, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/06/ghana-academics-petition-removal-mahatma-gandhi-statue-african-heroes>.
42. For helpful written and verbal feedback, I am very grateful to Kurt Blankschaen, Dan Demetriou, Bob Fischer, Jens Johansson, Adam Lerner, Vicente Medina, Amanda Timmerman, and my audience at New York University, the Central APA, and the College of New Jersey.
43. Rapula Moatshe, "Oom Paul Statue Excluded from Monument; EFF Threat [sic] to Topple It," *Pretoria News*, January 29, 2018, <https://www.iol.co.za/pretoria-news/oom-paul-statue-excluded-from-monument-eff-threat-to-topple-it-12988851>.
44. Marianne Thamm, "Afrikaner Singer Chains Herself to Vandalised South African Statue," *The Guardian*, April 10, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/10/afrikaner-singer-chains-herself-to-vandalised-south-african-statue>.
45. Sarel van der Walt, "Paul Kruger to Get New Neighbours at Pretoria's Church Square," *Netwerk24*, May 19, 2017, <https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/paul-kruger-to-get-new-neighbours-at-pretorias-church-square-20170519>.
46. Haag, "Judge Orders."
47. James C. Cobb, "How Did Robert E. Lee Become an American Icon?" *Humanities: The Magazine of the National Endowment of the Humanities* 32, no. 4 (2011), <https://www.neh.gov/humanities/2011/julyaugust/feature/how-did-robert-e-ee-become-american-icon>.
48. IellKaeliSubberwal, "Several States Have Erected Laws To Protect Confederate Monuments," August 17, 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/states-confederate-statue-laws_us_5996312be4b0e8cc855cb2ab.
49. "Unite the Right Rally," *Wikipedia*, accessed December 15, 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unite_the_Right_rally.
50. Demetriou and Wingo, "The Ethics of Racist Monuments."
51. I must ignore, for instance, the critical importance of longstanding traditions of civic honor—in which memorialization plays a key role—to combating tyranny and kleptocracy by elites, and encouraging civic sacrifice from high and low alike. Dan Demetriou, "Civic Immortality: The Problem of Civic Honor in Africa and the West," *Journal of Ethics* 19, no. 3–4 (2015): 257–276.
52. For an example of an anti-tribalist conservatism, see Jonah Goldberg, *Suicide of the West: How the Rebirth of Tribalism, Populism, Nationalism, and Identity Politics Is Destroying American Democracy* (New York: Crown Forum, 2018).

53. See among many sources Aristotle, *Politics, The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited by Richard McKeon, translated by Benjamin Jowett (New York: Random House, 1941); Joshua Greene, *Moral Tribes: Emotion, Reason, and the Gap Between Us and Them* (New York: Penguin, 2013); Robert Sapolsky, *Behave: The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst* (New York: Penguin, 2017); Amy Chua, *Political Tribes: Group Instinct and the Fate of Nations* (New York: Penguin, 2018).
54. Leftists typically acknowledge this dynamic in Africa especially, where political instability is often attributed to the legacy of “artificial” colonial borders that don’t reflect tribal affiliation (see, e.g., James Brook, “In Africa, Tribal Hatreds Defy the Borders of State,” *New York Times*, August 28, 1988, <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/08/28/weekinreview/the-world-in-africa-tribal-hatreds-defy-the-borders-of-state.html>). Rightists point out that there is a cautionary lesson here for Western nations as well.
55. Maciek Chudek, Wanying Zhao, and Joseph Henrich, “Culture–Gene Coevolution, Large-Scale Cooperation and the Shaping of Human Social Psychology,” in *Signaling, Commitment, and Emotion*, edited by Richard Joyce, Kim Sterelny, and Brett Calcott (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2013), 425–458.
56. “Statement by Ms. Karima Bennouna, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, at the 71st session of the General Assembly,” Office of the High Commissioner, UN, October 26, 2016, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20831&LangID=E>.
57. “Liberty, as a principle, has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind have become capable of being improved by free and equal discussion. Until then, there is nothing for them but implicit obedience to an Akbar or a Charlemagne, if they are so fortunate as to find one.” John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapter 1, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/34901/34901-h/34901-h.htm>.
58. John Stuart Mill, *Representative Government*, Chapter 16, https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/mill/john_stuart/m645r/chapter16.html.
59. Mill, *Representative Government*, Chapter 16.
60. Current research suggests that ethnic diversity either lowers social trust or lowers social trust for whites in particular, who have uniquely high social trust when they are in homogenous white areas. See especially Peter Thisted Dinesen and Kim Mannemar Sønderskov, “Ethnic Diversity and Social Trust: A Critical Review of the Literature and Suggestions for a Research Agenda,” in *Oxford Handbook of Social and Political Trust*, edited by Eric Uslaner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 175–204; Maria Abascal and Delia Baldassarri, “Love Thy Neighbor? Ethnoracial Diversity and Trust Reexamined,” *American Journal of Sociology* 121, no. 3 (2015): 722–782.
61. Robert Putnam, “E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-First Century,” *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 30 (2007): 137–174.
62. “Tribalism, it’s always worth remembering, is not one aspect of human experience. It’s the default human experience,” Andrew Sullivan, “America Wasn’t Built for Humans,” *New York Magazine*, September 19, 2017, <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2017/09/can-democracy-survive-tribalism.html>.
63. Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Lays of Ancient Rome*, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/847/847-h/847-h.htm>.
64. Joseph Henrich, Steven Heine, and Ara Norenzayan, “The Weirdest People in the World?” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 33, no. 2–3 (2010): 61–82.
65. Skepticism about the sustainability of multicultural states is not warranted merely by recent history: see *inter alia* Ross Hammond and Robert Axelrod, “The Evolution of Ethnocentrism,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50 (2006): 926–936; Max Hartshorn,

- Artem Kaznatcheev, and Thomas Shultz, “The Evolutionary Dominance of Ethnocentric Cooperation,” *Journal of Artificial Societies and Social Simulation* 16, no. 3 (2013): 7.
66. Alberto Avalos, “50k ‘Gen Z’ Students Identify as Republican,” *Hispanic Heritage Foundation*, October 27, 2016, <http://hispanicheritage.org/50000-generation-z-high-school-students-identify-republican/>; Perry Bacon, Jr., “Charlottesville and the Rise of White Identity Politics,” *FiveThirtyEight*, August 14, 2017, <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/charlottesville-and-the-rise-of-white-identity-politics/>.
 67. Christ Tomlinson, “Belgian Islamic Party Announces ‘100 Per Cent Islamic State’ as End Goal,” *Breitbart*, April 7, 2018, <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2018/04/07/belgian-islamic-party-announces-islamic-state-end-goal/>.
 68. Sumantra Maitra, “Methods Behind the Campus Madness,” *Quillette*, March 7, 2017, <http://quillette.com/2017/03/07/methods-behind-the-campus-madness/>.
 69. See, for example, David Shimer, “Germany Raids Homes of 36 People Accused of Hateful Postings Over Social Media,” *New York Times*, June 20, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/20/world/europe/germany-36-accused-of-hateful-postings-over-social-media.html>.
 70. Ahmed Areff, “‘We Are Cutting the Throat of Whiteness’—Malema on Plans to Remove Trollip,” *News24*, March 4, 2018, <https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/we-are-cutting-the-throat-of-whiteness-malema-on-plans-to-remove-trollip-20180304>.
 71. Note how the institutions that Putnam, in “E Pluribus Unum,” says overcome ethnic divisions are ones that have strong conservative ethics: sports, the military, the churches.
 72. E.g., the short recommendations published in “Tear Down the Confederate Monuments—But What Next? 12 Art Historians and Scholars on the Way Forward,” *Artnet News*, August 23, 2017, <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/confederate-monuments-experts-1058411>.
 73. Aphiwe DeKlerk, “Statues of Royal Prisoners Unveiled at Castle of Good Hope Commemoration,” *Business Day*, <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/life/2016-12-11-statues-of-royal-prisoners-unveiled-at-castle-of-good-hope-commemoration/>.
 74. “Battle of Liberty Place Monument,” *Wikipedia*, accessed April 8, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Liberty_Place_Monument.
 75. On the irrationality of political symbols, see Ajume Wingo, *Veil Politics in Liberal Democratic States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
 76. Charmaine Nelson, “Racist Monuments Don’t Belong in Public. But They Could in a Museum,” *Huffpost*, September 28, 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/charmaine-nelson/racist-monuments-dont-belong-in-public-but-they-could-in-a-museum_a_23224080/.
 77. “Rye: White Supremacist Statues Need to be Removed,” *CNN*, August 18, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/videos/politics/2017/08/18/angela-rye-statues-washington-jefferson-lee-come-down-sot-ath.cnn>.
 78. If indeed monuments should dwell on telling a story about peoples rather than ideas, then mass immigration is bound to undermine any memorializing culture, and thus culture, but this point will take us too far afield.
 79. In many current polls, about 30% of American blacks still oppose removal of Confederate monuments (while about 50% support it; support among whites is almost double that). See, e.g., Ariel Edwards-Levy, “Polls Find Little Support for Confederate Statue Removal—But How You Ask Matters,” *HuffPost*, August 23, 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/confederate-statues-removal-polls_us_599de056e4b05710aa59841c.

80. "Arts, Culture and Heritage White Paper: 'All Our Legacies, Our Common Future,'" Department of Arts and Culture, June 4, 1996, http://ocpa.irmo.hr/resources/docs/South_Africa_White_Paper_Arts_Culture-en.pdf; Annie Coombes, *History After Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Mcebisi Ndletyana and Denver A. Webb, "Social Divisions Carved in Stone or Cenotaphs to a New Identity? Policy for Memorials, Monuments and Statues in a Democratic South Africa," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 23, no. 2 (2016): 97–110. It's worth bearing in mind that Mandela—who is not considered a rightist—was the son of a traditional Xhosa kingmaker, and had great instincts for building tribal unity among old enemies.
81. This research was generously supported by UC Riverside's Templeton-funded Immortality Project and the University of Minnesota's Grant-in-Aid program.
82. *Wikipedia*, "Destruction under the Mongol Empire," accessed July 2, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Destruction_under_the_Mongol_Empire.
83. Burke, "Racist Gandhi Statue." (Gandhi apparently said some disparaging things about blacks when he was a South African.)
84. "American Civil War," *Wikipedia*, accessed June 21, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Civil_War.
85. Many black Americans appear to agree. The most recent major opinion polls on Confederate monuments were conducted in August 2017. According to a Huffpost/YouGov poll, about 47% of black Americans think that Confederate monuments are more symbolic of "racism" than "Southern pride," while 17% answered the converse, and 35% answered "not sure." About half of black Americans polled approved of removing Charlottesville's Lee statue (this poll was taken shortly after the "Unite the Right" rally discussed in both main essays), while 11% disapproved and 40% had no opinion. See Edwards-Levy, "Polls Find Little Support." In an NPR/PBS poll conducted around the same time that asked people whether Confederate statues should "remain as historical symbols" or "be removed because they are offensive to some people," black Americans responded 44% in favor of maintaining the monuments as historical symbols and 40% in favor of removing them because they are offensive (<http://maristpoll.marist.edu/nprpbs-newshourmarist-poll-results-on-charlottesville/>).
86. For instance, many on the right felt that the National Football League players who protested police violence by "taking a knee" during the national anthem were being unpatriotic, while leftists saw the same demonstration as affirming American values; e.g., Conor Friedersdorf, "Kneeling for Life and Liberty Is Patriotic," *The Atlantic*, September 25, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/09/kneeling-for-life-and-liberty-is-patriotic/540942/>.
87. I cannot delve into the question of our responsibility to accommodate irrational outrage for the sake of civic cohesion here, but I do think we must take the psychological tolerances of peoples as realistically and nonjudgmentally as we do ecological constraints on development.
88. E.g., the case of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, which many people interpret as racist or at least too racially offensive to assign in schools.
89. Antwaun Sargent, "To Fight Racism Within Museums, They Need to Stop Acting Like They're Neutral," *Vice*, May 21, 2018, https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/pavpkn/to-fight-racism-within-museums-they-need-to-stop-acting-like-theyre-neutral.
90. The average American moves eleven times in his or her lifetime, so descendants of Old South stock are likely to grow up elsewhere and lose their Southern white identities.

Adam Chandler, "Why Do Americans Move So Much More Than Europeans?" *The Atlantic*, October 21, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/10/us-geographic-mobility/504968/>.

91. Indeed, iconoclasm on these terms will serve as a cautionary example for any nation contemplating diversifying its population or its political power, for very few natives would allow in foreign populations if doing so meant losing the ability to memorialize their own ancestors and culture heroes.



Affirmative Action

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IS UNJUST, WRONG, AND BAD *STEPHEN KERSHNER*

1. Introduction

Affirmative action favors the applications of minorities and women to compensate for past injustice or to promote some valuable goal (e.g., equal opportunity). Depending on the program, minorities are from a relevant race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, etc. Here, I defend these theses:

Thesis #1: Backward-Looking. For state institutions, backward-looking reasons do not justify affirmative action.

Thesis #2: Forward-Looking. For state institutions, forward-looking reasons do not justify affirmative action.

A backward-looking reason looks as some feature of the past as justifying a policy (e.g., unjust treatment). A forward-looking reason looks at some feature in the future as justifying a policy (e.g., increasing diversity). Affirmative action is unjust and wrong if it compensates people with state dollars who aren't owed compensation. It's bad if it's inefficient—that is, if its cost outweighs its benefit.

I focus on state institutions because a private institution may give out money or positions to whomever it wants: It owns the relevant resources. While it may be irrational, imprudent, and inefficient to compensate people not owed it, it isn't unjust because it doesn't infringe on anyone's rights. It might be bad to do so, in the sense that it reduces overall well-being, but this isn't wrong-making if there's no duty to maximize the good. If there are duties of justice, then there's no such duty.

2. The Argument for Thesis #1

Consider the standard backward-looking argument for affirmative action:¹