

# “I Fought the Law and the Law Won”

by Kristen A. Williams

**This essay considers the political personas of figures historicized by their own anti-governmental and decidedly excremental performances of civic and political engagement. Tracing a winding path of Confederate spies’ ideological formation and performance of Southern citizenship during the period of American disunion and the Civil War, the paper argues that these individuals self-consciously framed and justified their performances of outlaw citizenship by relying heavily on both rhetorical and aesthetic performances of the mythologized civic republicanism long-associated in popular consciousness with the founding of the American republic.**

In one of his more recent works, political and cultural critic Garry Wills considers the role played by myth in the shaping of accepted mainstream attitudes, rhetorical tropes and beliefs regarding American national pasts, as well as the ways in which historical retellings of those pasts have contributed to the American body politic’s interpretation of government generally (and, in particular, the federal government of United States) as “a necessary evil” rather than a positive institutional good responsible for the organization of the American nation-state, its attendant socio-political processes, and of course its body politic.<sup>1</sup> The central tenant of Wills’ 1999 book *A Necessary Evil: A History of American Distrust of Government* is that Americans as individuals and groups have relied on false and mythologized histories of America’s pasts which have led them to believe that the American political constitution is in fact based on an essentially anti-governmental theoretical foundation. Wills argues,

...the historical and constitutional evidence constantly used in these debates [over whether any and all governmental formations must necessarily be understood to subtract from the rights of individuals] is largely bogus. But that just raises another question. Whence comes this determination to distort the history of our legal system? The distortion began very early, when the arguments of Antifederalists *against* the Constitution were said, only a decade or so after the document’s ratification, to be embodied *in* the Constitution. People could stay loyal to the Constitution only if they felt it was disloyal to itself.<sup>2</sup> [italics in original]

To support this argument, Wills conducts a whirlwind tour of events in American history involving the material and rhetorical challenges posed to the establishment of the federal government. He begins by attempting to set the proverbial record straight regarding the founding of the American republic and its attendant mythologies relating to Minutemen and the supposedly voluntary and universal military service of the American colonial period, arguing that a more historically accurate version of the events of America’s pasts undercuts the ways in which national mythology can be called on in contemporary contexts to support, for example, the National Rifle Association’s essentially anti- or extra-governmental interpretation of the second amendment of the Bill of Rights (i.e., the NRA’s argument that since universal gun ownership—at least among males—was supposedly used as a colonial defense against the British, present-day gun ownership is therefore nothing more or less than an act of responsible citizenship).<sup>3</sup> Wills dispatches such “revolutionary myths” and their most recent political applications before proceeding on to account for the manifestation of anti-governmental attitudes and behaviors of individuals he refers to as “nullifiers” (individuals who have used their positions within government to advocate nullification of the federal government), “seceders” (the nineteenth century South and the Confederate government), “insurrectionists” (individuals who have led either armed or rhetorical rebellions against the government), “vigilantes” (those who act according to a sense of moral authority and willfully break the law using violence or violent rhetoric), “withdrawers” (nonviolent separatist individuals and communities), and, finally, “disobeyers” (those who, as Wills’ moniker suggests, willfully but nonviolently engage in acts of civil disobedience). Wills concludes this historical exegesis with his own argument in favor of government as “a necessary good” and a discussion of who really loses when Thoreau’s tenet that “the government is best which governs not at all” is actually applied to the scope of contemporary American social and political life.<sup>4</sup>

Whether or not one accepts Wills’ historiographical interpretation and narrative re-organization of the events and

political ideologies of the United States' constitutional history (and indeed, a number of historians have presented valuable work which controverts or at least complicates Wills' arguments and conclusions), his acknowledgement of Americans' historical distrust of bureaucracy and governmental structures and his attempt to discover the origins of such anti-governmental values is both admirable and timely, especially given the reorganization throughout the 1990s of domestic paramilitary groups, state militias and other homegrown militaristic cells often linked to far right-wing hate groups and acts of domestic terrorism such as the Oklahoma City bombing of April 19, 1995. The above description of Wills' premise, assumptions and project, then, is meant to act as a frame to my own exploration of American political style and the ways in which a close look at only one category from Wills' litany of anti-governmentalists (Civil War-era Southern secessionists) can be understood to illustrate the existence of a defiantly postcolonial, iconic and decidedly mainstream "outlaw" American political performative. This performative style, I argue, draws heavily on iconographic portraits of both historical personas and their attendant political ideologies to establish a performance of citizenship which, although based on and steeped in American mythologies of anti- or extra-governmentality (i.e., "outlaw" behaviors and performances), nevertheless also serves, depending on its application in inter/transnational and domestic contexts, as a kind of quintessential performance of American patriotism. While I rely on Wills' work in *A Necessary Evil* for the extensive historical documentation used to support his interpretation of anti-governmentality as a cornerstone of both historical and contemporary American political and cultural life, I apply his work to my own subject in ways he, in all likelihood, would not appreciate. Wills' argument rests largely on the positivist premise that there exists a singular, knowable (and documented) American past which, if it could simply be revealed and made available to the American body politic, would demonstrate once and for all that the federal government is both meant to be and can be effectively used as a mechanism for positive change in the everyday lives of Americans without becoming an invasive and tyrannical force. While Garry Wills argues that only a misreading or misinterpretation of the events of America's pasts could support the contention that the American constitutional system is indeed based on a theoretical premise of anti-governmentality, I draw on recent work by both historians and scholars of political communication to suggest that it matters less whether or not such a fundamentally anti-governmental foundation actually exists than it does whether Americans, based on the historiographical technologies of heritage sites, museums, reenactments and other contemporary presentations of the events of American pasts, *believe* that it exists and have engaged in political behaviors which reflect that belief.

In my own work in this essay, then, I am appropriating Wills' ideas as a *theory* (rather than a diagnosis) of anti-governmentality which can be used to interrogate the ways that national myth and American outlaw iconography (as manifested and performed in narratives, museums, reenactments and other cultural products) is not simply a misappropriation or a malfunctioning of history or historiographical discourse. As made clear by British scholar of nationalism Anthony Smith, myth can and does function as a vibrant way for people to both experience and help construct a usable past which frames and contextualizes the lives of individuals and collectivities alike, helping people to create and establish communities based on systems of shared beliefs drawn from a (supposedly) shared past.<sup>5</sup> In what follows, I understand anti-governmentality and the iconographic American outlaw performative as a value manifested through *political style* that is not merely counter- or sub-cultural, but indeed central to the practice of American politics in both historical and contemporary contexts.<sup>6</sup> Toward this end, I consider the co-constitutive roles played by anti-governmentality and the historical legacies of those individuals who have performed and/or continue to perform such a style, taking as a case study several female spies for the Confederacy and their narrative as well as embodied performances of Southern and Confederate nationalism. The use of these female spies as a case study draws attention to the ways in which gender can be used as a category of analysis of iconographic outlaw practices of American citizenship generally, especially since American outlaw figures have traditionally appeared in folk histories and other cultural representations as cowboys, roughriders, motorcyclists, and other biologically male pistol-wielding felons on the lam from the long arm of the law. An analysis of the myth-making outlaw performatives of pro-secession women who spied for the Confederacy offers not only a chance to revision the iconography of the American outlaw with a critical eye trained on women and the ways in which they have traditionally been under-represented in American histories (particularly histories of violence and conflict), but also an opportunity to understand how outlaws and anti- or extra-governmental activities, behaviors and ideologies are constructed in mainstream historical narratives in opposition to a federal American government eager to gender itself as male in the eyes not only of its own body politic, but also the larger global community.<sup>7</sup> The personas and performances of allegiance to the Confederacy turned in by these female spies are also particularly fruitful for an analysis of outlaw performances of American citizenship given the sheer

number of both male and female outlaws and folk heroes temporally and geographically connected to Civil War-era secession, the Confederacy and the Lost Cause.<sup>8</sup>

Confederate spies Rose O'Neal Greenhow, Belle Boyd and "sister act" Ginnie (Virginia) and Lottie (Charlotte) Moon continue, long after their deaths, to perform as cultural signifiers and icons of Confederate political style in historical narratives as well as at local fairs, reenactments and other events commemorating the Civil War and the Confederacy.<sup>9</sup> In this essay I consider the purpose these women serve as historical "imaginings" that might explain the frequency with which they are referenced and re-enacted in popular narratives and entertainments.<sup>10</sup> Drawing on the work of scholars of nationalism, political communication and gender performance as well as performance studies scholars and feminist historians of Southern and Confederate women<sup>11</sup>, I argue that these female spies for the Confederacy have become a part of mainstream historical narratives and contemporary entertainments relating to the Civil War for several reasons, the first and most obvious of which is the availability of primary documentation pertaining to their interactions with both the United States military and the federal government (i.e., their illegal actions as spies and resulting arrests, imprisonments and trials). Additionally, several of the most famous of these spies acted as their own literary agents, seeking out and securing publishers for their memoirs. While the Moon sisters have left behind no published narratives, Rose Greenhow and Belle Boyd have most certainly written themselves into history, often recording in their published texts not only the events of their lives but also their personal correspondence and even transcriptions of the press coverage they received during their respective periods of arrest and imprisonment. Their careful transcription of newspaper and magazine articles not only leaves a valuable trail for historians and other scholars to trace, but also points to the ways in which these women were aware that they had entered the annals of history and sought to control the context and content of their representation much as a contemporary politician seeks to control his/her image.

Also accounted for here are the ways in which these spies' embodied performances (including vituperative anti-Union rhetoric as well as the brandishing of firearms and the securing of financial assistance, medical supplies and armaments for Confederate forces), though they transgress the *idyllic* antebellum and war-era conceptions of gender performance referred to as Confederate Womanhood, are nevertheless justified in the spies' own memoirs and in mainstream historical narratives as both appropriate and constitutive actions for female Confederate nationalists.<sup>12</sup> I suggest, then, that these female spies stand in contemporary contexts as exponents of anti-governmental Confederate political style not *despite* their supposedly gender-bending performances of Confederate nationalism, but *because* those performances were justified as appropriately patriotic via the spies' construction of themselves as "ladies," (a nineteenth century epithet connoting social, educational, economic and racial privilege) and their biological sex making them more acceptable than cross-dressing female soldiers and more interesting (given their rhetorically attributed and personally claimed acts of derring-do) than civilian women on the home front. Because their performances as spies were enabled by their performances as socially acceptable, if pro-secession, *ladies*, Greenhow, Boyd and the Moons are allowed (and, in fact, desired) to stand as representatives of the South and the Confederacy because their historical personas help to maintain and continually revitalize a Southern regional ideological performative which simultaneously re-imagines and redeems not only the South as a nation, but also the Confederacy as a still-salient political body through the aestheticization of that (imagined) Confederate body as female. Just as feminist scholar of nationalism Nira Yuval-Davis makes clear the desire of governments to establish both international and domestic political legitimacy by gendering themselves male (thereby creating an essentially domestic and heterosexist union between the state as administrative male patriarch and the governed body politic as dutiful and dependent wife/child), I argue that this case study and the analysis it occasions throw into relief the cultural intersection of outlaw iconography and performances of citizenship from which emerges an itinerant outlaw performative that can be (and has been) applied both to resist and to reify contemporary American performances of patriotism and acceptable citizenship.

### **"Thinking Makes it So":<sup>13</sup> The Ideological Constitution of the Southern Nation and the Outlaw Performance of Southern National Identity**

The issues associated with the Civil War, including states' rights and the interdiction of slavery, are by now well

known and well-documented, and it is not my project to enumerate or explore them in great detail here. Instead, I am particularly interested in the ways these issues were framed, shaped and applied in hegemonic Southern discourse, as well as in the narrative performances authored by and associated with female spies Rose O'Neal Greenhow and Belle Boyd, both of whom left behind written records of their views and experiences. Not surprisingly, the rhetoric of the most influential pro-slavery Southern statesmen of the antebellum era, including Rose Greenhow's friend and political mentor South Carolina Senator John C. Calhoun, folded slavery into their discourse on states' rights, arguing that individual states should be allowed to determine their own cultural and economic practices. The real problem with slavery, however, contend a number of historians and constitutional scholars, actually had more to do with the electoral math which resulted from the Northern concession to count each slave as 3/5 of a person, an agreement that effectively ceded the electoral edge to the densely populated South.<sup>14</sup> Whether it was an issue of the implications of electoral math and/or the South's ideological belief that the federal government was betraying the spirit of individual liberties and states' rights Calhoun and others believed could be found in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution (as the Confederacy too adopted these as their foundational documents), Confederate spy Rose O'Neal Greenhow had much to say regarding the glory of independent states, the virtues of a federal government that would honor the hands-off policy she believed the Constitution guaranteed, and the supposedly tyrannical and invasive rule of the Lincoln Administration in and over her home state of Maryland. Greenhow's 1863 narrative *My Imprisonment and the First Year of Abolition Rule at Washington* (hereafter referred to as simply *My Imprisonment*) is filled to bursting with anti-Union, anti-Lincoln, pro-secession and pro-states' rights rhetoric, concluding with a article pronouncing "Man Incapable of Self-Government," which Greenhow herself describes as pertaining to nothing less than "the downfall of the American Republic."<sup>15</sup> Long before that concluding article, however, Greenhow makes clear her interpretation of states' rights when she catalogs the abuses suffered by the South, particularly the border states of Maryland and Virginia, and likens the pro-secessionist South to European nation-states struggling for independence during the second half of the nineteenth century. Greenhow states,

After repeated and intolerable aggression upon the rights of those [Southern] States—accompanied and aggravated by an insulting tone of moral superiority, until a union with such communities was no longer to be endured by any high-spirited people—[the North and the Union] at length stirred up a furious and desolating war. For two years a torrent of blood has flowed between their people and my people. The noble State of Virginia, with which I am most nearly connected, has been devastated by hosts of barbarous invaders—always overthrown indeed in the field before Southern valour, but always destroying and plundering where they found the country unprotected; whilst my own dear native State of Maryland has been subject to a still more stinging and maddening oppression, in the utter destruction of all her liberties, and in the establishment of a brutal and vulgar military despotism which has reduced the gallant old State to the debased condition of Poland or Venetia; and such 'order reigns in Baltimore,' as that moral death which tyrants call 'order' in Warsaw or in the beautiful City of the Sea.<sup>16</sup>

Adopting here (and throughout much of her narrative) what Superintendent Wood, the warden of Washington, D.C.'s Old Capitol Prison, described as her "God and Liberty style," Greenhow conforms her narrative to the expectations of nineteenth century prosody, the dramatic flair of her words more characteristic of the heroine in a melodrama or a novel by Sir Walter Scott than the narrative tone dominating the numerous other spy memoirs offered by operatives for both the North and the South, and particularly contrasting the tone taken by Greenhow's fellow Confederate Belle Boyd.<sup>17</sup>

In comparison to Greenhow's notorious narrative style, Boyd's writing is plain and to the point, and her memoirs focus more closely on her own experiences as an "activist" spy famed for her casual interactions with Confederate soldiers and officers alike as well as for placing herself repeatedly in harm's way to deliver information or avenge the honor of the South in civilian interactions with Union troops.<sup>18</sup> The subject of a number of post-Civil War novels and plays, including one by famed melodramatic playwright Dion Boucicault, Boyd was only seventeen when the war broke out in 1861 and just twenty-one when her memoirs were published in England in 1865 as the war drew to a close.<sup>19</sup> While she is acknowledged as far less ideological than Greenhow in her narrative of the events and personages associated with the Civil War, focusing more closely on her own adventures and the experiences of her family, Boyd too, like Greenhow, frames her memoirs within Confederate nationalist rhetoric which constructs the North as an imperial power and the Lincoln government as tyrannically repressive. Considering her arrest and imprisonment in first the Old Capitol Prison and then the Carroll Prison unwarranted, though she openly

acknowledges her work as a spy, Boyd too references contemporaneous nationalist struggles in Europe, citing particularly the persecution of political prisoners and referring to Abraham Lincoln as “Napoleonic,” a characterization congruous to Greenhow’s own appellation of the revered war-era president as “Abraham the First.”<sup>20</sup>

Both Greenhow and Boyd also clearly express another of the principle tenets of Confederate nationalism when they help to establish through their rhetoric the myth of a hallowed Southern national past.<sup>21</sup> Boyd and Greenhow both insist that the South’s aristocratic past stretches back to the European peerage, a claim also made by Southern intellectuals hoping to bind white Southerners together across social and economic class divides.<sup>22</sup> Writing of her father’s military outfit, the Stonewall Brigade, for example, Boyd explains that both the brigade and its commanding general, Stonewall Jackson, took their shared nickname from a glorious British military past. Boyd states,

it is with pride we Confederates acknowledge that our heroes caught their inspiration from the example of their English ancestors. When our descendants shall read the story of General Jackson and his men, they will be insensibly attracted to those earlier pages of history which record the exploits of Wellington’s Light Division.<sup>23</sup>

While Greenhow similarly references Maryland’s own historical relationship with England in an attempt to connect British cavaliers with pro-secessionist Southern patriots, she helps to identify the South as not only differentiated from the North through its representative state power, the Confederacy, but also argues that Southerners are literally a “race” apart from their Northern counterparts.<sup>24</sup> In a letter dated December 27, 1861, Greenhow defines the South as a discrete entity from the Union when she writes to former social acquaintance and Lincoln-administration Secretary of State William Seward, “You cannot conquer us, Sir. *A nation* armed in the defence [sic] of *her* rights is under the protection of God” (italics added).<sup>25</sup> She goes on to classify the Southern nation as unified by belief and style when, in the same letter, she warns Seward, “you cannot subdue a people endowed with such a spirit of resistance...”<sup>26</sup>

Such rhetorical constructions of the South as a nation unified by shared beliefs and practices as well as by “race” or ethnicity are noteworthy not only for their representation of Confederate nationalist ideology, but also for the significant role such discourse played in determining the policies of the Confederacy. Drawing as heavily on a rhetoric of shared beliefs and geographic unity as on the notion that white Southerners themselves constituted a separate “race” than that of Northerners, states such as Virginia, North Carolina and Alabama considered enacting legislation limiting their respective state citizenships only to those individuals born in the state or who had lived there for a specific number of years (Faust, *Confederate Nationalism* 36). While this legislation was ultimately opposed, seen as divisive of the Southern community and potentially disruptive of racial unity among white Southerners (as well as the maintenance of racial hierarchy), such conceptions of citizenship demonstrate not only the power Southerners invested in exclusive notions of community, but also the importance of the symbols used to represent that imagined community and the ideologies which helped to constitute the South as a nation.

## **Steel (and) Magnolias: Gender, Outlaw Iconography, and the Power of “Pastpresents”**

Even a cursory overview of the small body of literature available on female spies for the Confederacy makes clear the association of Rose Greenhow, Belle Boyd and Ginnie and Lottie Moon (all women located geographically outside the Confederacy at the war’s beginning in 1861) with flags, music, and firearms, the potent symbols of the ideologies used to constitute Confederate nationalism during the nineteenth century. In his frequently referenced collection of profiles of spies for both North and South, historian and novelist Harnett T. Kane pays particular attention to Greenhow, Boyd and the Moons, emphasizing their use of these symbols of Confederate nationalism. Published in 1954, the same year biographer Ishbel Ross issued the first comprehensive study of Greenhow’s life, Kane’s book appears extraordinarily well-researched, despite the fact that its author constructs his narrative of each woman’s service out of romantic, action-packed anecdotes and accounts of outlandish escapades that seem more akin to the theatrical melodrama popular during the nineteenth century than to traditional historical texts.<sup>27</sup>

Writing of Ginnie and Lottie Moon, for example, Kane focuses on the young women's romantic attachments as their major contribution to the war effort, citing especially the patriotism of younger sister Ginnie Moon (who, like Boyd, was only 17 years old when the war began) in becoming engaged to sixteen boys at one time. "If they'd die in battle," he quotes her as saying, "they'd have died happy, wouldn't they?" Apparently a spunky girl, she supposedly added, "And if they lived, I didn't give a damn."<sup>28</sup> Yet another, more ideologically and symbolically germane story associated with Ohio-born Ginnie Moon has to do with her performed choice to join the Confederacy. While attending a girl's school in Ohio over which the Union flag was raised, she requested to be sent south to live with her mother, who had relocated to Memphis, Tennessee. When her request was denied based on her youth and the danger involved in such a journey, Ginnie Moon promptly removed from her pocket the small pistol she carried with her and shot out each of the stars in the objectionable Union flag before packing her bags and joining her mother in the South.<sup>29</sup>

Similar incidents recounted in the lives of other spies include Belle Boyd's notoriously excused fatal shooting of a Union officer. Described by Kane as "zestful," "overwhelmingly feminine," and the possessor of "the best pair of legs in the Confederacy," the teenaged Boyd gained notoriety when she shot a Union soldier for shoving her mother aside as Mrs. Boyd attempted to prevent him from raising the United States flag over their home in Martinsburg, Virginia (now West Virginia).<sup>30</sup> Kane marvels at the fact that Boyd faced no punishment and concludes that "tears and smiles" must have helped the Federal investigators to reach their decision that the dead officer had indeed behaved in an ungentlemanly manner.<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, Kane's accounts of Belle Boyd's and Ginnie Moon's willingness to brandish firearms not only against Union forces but also against Union flags as symbols of the United States federal government, are thrown into sharp relief by the fact that he makes no mention of the numerous occasions on which Rose Greenhow is supposed to have drawn her pistol on her Union captors when they violated her expectations of privacy during her period of house arrest.<sup>32</sup> Recalling the Union detectives' thorough search of her home (and her equally thorough attempt to destroy all immediately available evidence), Greenhow makes clear that she was willing to shoot for her privacy, as well as to make sure that her private papers would not be confiscated. She writes:

The search still went on...I was then allowed to go to my chamber, and then resolved to accomplish the destruction of some important papers which I had in my pocket, even at the expense of my life...Happily, I succeeded without such a fearful sacrifice. The detective...rapped at my door, calling 'Madam! Madam!' and afterwards opened it, but seeing me apparently legitimately employed, he withdrew. Had he advanced one step, I should have killed him, as I raised my revolver with that intent; and so steady were my nerves, that I could have balanced a glass of water on my finger without spilling a drop.<sup>33</sup>

Though Greenhow goes on to state that her revolver was taken from her shortly after this incident, leaving her "no means of defence [sic]" and "for the first time in [her] life...exposed to the dread of personal violence," she later writes that she threatened to wield a "very admirable pistol" against a guard at the Old Capitol Prison, despite the fact that she had no ammunition.<sup>34</sup> Interestingly, no mention is made in the narrative of how she either regained her own weapon or acquired another.

Confederate nationalist symbols of rugged outdoor sportsmanship and the independent, agrarian lifestyle that both rhetorically and performatively characterized the South and Southern culture, the pistols and other firearms associated with female spies for the Confederacy help to summarize the ways in which Greenhow, Boyd and the Moons acted and continue to act in present contexts (during reenactments and other commemorative and spectacular historical events) as effective representatives of not only Confederate nationalist ideology and its attendant symbols, but also as proponents of outlaw American citizenship and anti-governmental political style (especially given the symbolic importance of pistols, rifles, and other weaponry in both folk and mainstream academic narratives of the events of America's pasts). Garry Wills contends that besides being characterized by an active distrust of a strong centralized American government, anti-governmentalisms of all times and places have traditionally characterized as authentic all things populist and constructed (either self-consciously or not) in opposition to the bureaucratic infrastructure associated with governmental bodies. He argues that entities or practices which could be (and/or have been) characterized as "provincial, amateur, spontaneous, candid, homogeneous, traditional, populist, organic, rights-oriented, religious, voluntary, participatory" and dependent on "rotating labor" are privileged by anti-governmentalists over those entities or practices which are characterized as

“cosmopolitan, expert, efficient, confidential, articulated, progressive, elite, mechanical, duties-oriented, secular, regulatory, delegative” and characterized by “dividing labor.”<sup>35</sup>

Wills, a political and cultural critic, is hardly alone in his recognition of such characteristics as clearly aligned with anti- or extra-governmental performances of American citizenship. Indeed, scholars of political science and American cultural studies have long suggested that fringe and minority political groups rely on such authenticating characteristics to assert the validity and political efficacy of their ideological positions and/or the performances of citizenship occasioned (or at least rhetorically justified) by those systems of belief. Just as Wills asserts that anti-governmentalists of all stripes have privileged the rural and agrarian over the urban and industrial, scholar of American history and American Studies Catherine McNichol Stock suggests that incidents of vigilante violence in the United States (especially those associated with non-hierarchically structured paramilitary groups) have much to do with both historical and contemporary tensions between regional economic interests and systems.<sup>36</sup> While I disagree with McNichol Stock’s ultimate conclusion (that most vigilante violence has historically been located in rural as opposed to urban areas and that this phenomenon can be explained by privileging an economic analysis over that of culture or ideology), her observations do lend significant support to Wills’ contention that there exists a long history of American political performance and rhetoric which takes as its central tenant the irreconcilable differences between the ideologies, cultures and economies of disparate regions of the United States—itsself a claim that is born out by nineteenth century maps detailing both the topographies and industries associated with not only North and South, but also the states and territories forming the politically contested borderlands between these two regions.<sup>37</sup>

Indeed, Wills’ litany of those values and political characteristics used by anti-governmentalists to validate both their ideologies and political styles, when considered alongside McNichol Stock’s careful tracing of economic histories of rural violence, make clear the conformity of the Confederacy and its proponents to the traditional rhetorical tenants of anti-governmentality and performances of an iconographic outlaw styling of American citizenship. By constructing themselves as connected to specific Southern geographic areas such as Maryland, Virginia and Tennessee rather than the border territories in which they had actually lived most of their lives such as Washington, D.C. and Ohio, Greenhow, Boyd and the Moons rhetorically and performatively privilege the provincial, rural and agrarian over the cosmopolitan, urban and industrial, even as their abilities and service as spies relied on their knowledge of and access to both kinds of regions and economies. Similarly, the spies and their actions are constructed in not only their own narratives but also in biographical materials chronicling their exploits as decidedly amateur and organic (they serve as unpaid and untrained spies rather than sometimes-paid soldiers), candid (none hid their Southern sympathies or denied their espionage efforts in the face of arrest or incarceration), traditional and homogeneous (they identified with the South via ethnicity as well as shared beliefs), and rights-oriented (both their narrative and embodied performances clearly reference the right to independence and privacy for both individuals and collectives such as states). While mainstream scholars as far apart on the American political spectrum as Garry Wills and political theorist Richard Hofstadter identify anti-governmentality as a problem and a threat to the American state, then, the Confederate body politic and the women who spied on its behalf exhibit pride in what Wills refers to as their anti-governmental characteristics, and express the belief that anti-governmentality, *because* it is a threat to the state and hegemonic state power, is constitutive of a responsible and appropriate paradigm of U.S. citizenship.<sup>38</sup> In this way, then, these Confederates acknowledge their nebulous connection to the Union by not only constructing themselves in opposition to it (thereby implicitly recognizing the legitimacy of the federal government even as they disclaim it, since to be a citizen of the Confederacy was also to be an outlaw citizen of the Union and the United States government), but also by suggesting that they adhere more closely to the fundamental tenants of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution than the (supposedly) despotic Lincoln administration. In working to construct and represent, via nationalist symbols and ideologies, the Southern nation and the Confederate government, these female spies for the Confederacy recognized (as did the founders of the American republic) that “image is everything” and that the performance of nationhood is inextricably bound up with the nation’s attempt to establish political legitimacy.<sup>39</sup> What they would not have been able to foretell, however, is the ways in which their Civil War-era performances of outlaw political style and Confederate citizenship would be used in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to reify not only stereotypes having to do with gender performance, but also with the gendered political binary of the governing body (gendered male) and the governed body (gendered female) used to define the parameters of acceptable performances of

American citizenship.<sup>40</sup>

Traditional historical scholars of the Civil War South Harnett T. Kane, John Bakeless, and numerous others, through the patronizing tone and melodramatic content of their narrative associations of female spies with firearms, flags, and adventurous escapades replete with danger, intrigue, and light-hearted sacrifice have framed and defined female spies for the Confederacy according to their gender performances and the degree to which those performances either adhered to or resisted gender expectations of Southern middle-class white women in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>41</sup> While such scholars have suggested that women were natural spies because of their propensity for gossip and their inability to keep secrets, Kane perhaps expresses this sentiment best when he writes:

The ladies were terrific. In this war they made their American debut in espionage, and never since have the nation's women taken such an active part as spies. No matter how raging a partisan a man might be, his wife or sister was probably still more impassioned. They became the best recruiting sergeants; they were "not at home" to those who lagged in enlisting, and they sent such friends white feathers or boxes containing dresses. They connived endlessly, they took great risks, and they pushed through to success in ways impossible to simple males. They showed again and again that the female is not only the deadlier of the sexes, but also the livelier.<sup>42</sup>

While his research is, for the most part, sound, Kane's tone and description here (and throughout his narrative) reduces the significance of the risks taken and the punishments suffered by the female spies who were arrested and imprisoned. Kane joins a host of other (predominantly male) historians when he suggests that the Civil War was the last "romantic" conflict, in which "the generation that thrilled in admiration of Sir Walter Scott usually observed the 'rules' of knightly, or at least gentlemanly, conduct." Kane continues on to argue, "had [civilians, enlisted men and military officers] not played *Ivanhoe* on endless occasions, scores of undercover agents would never have survived to tell their stories."<sup>43</sup>

While such a romantic description of the events of the Civil War has been disrupted by revisionist historians of the 1980s and 1990s, especially scholars such as Michael Fellman, who chronicles the guerilla warfare of border states such as Missouri and challenges the interpretation of the war between the states as a largely rhetorical and 'low rape' war, even feminist scholars who have recovered, archived and republished the narratives and papers of Southern civilian women and female spies for the Confederacy have been too busy challenging the sexist assumptions of earlier scholars to explore the impact these female spies have had on contemporary outlaw iconography and political culture via their representation at populist entertainments associated with the Civil War.<sup>44</sup> Instead of concluding my own study with the acknowledgement that Rose Greenhow, Belle Boyd and Ginnie and Lottie Moon were not nearly as transgressive in their gender performances as suggested by early historians such as Kane, and that in fact they wielded those performances deftly in their self-representation as Confederate nationalists and loyal Southern ladies, I suggest that these female spies, because of their biological sex and because they framed themselves as gendered subjects have served as suitable ideological stand-ins for the South and the Confederacy, and, like those regional and bureaucratic entities, been characterized as hysterical, excrescent/over the top, and distinctly feminine in opposition to a United States federal government explicitly gendered as male patriarch in relation, during the Civil War, to the South and the Confederacy, and in more historically overarching contexts, in relation to the governed body politic of the United States.<sup>45</sup>

Feminist sociologist and scholar of nationalism Nira Yuval-Davis, in her book *Gender and Nation*, argues that despite the fact that they have seldom enjoyed the same rights of citizenship status as have their male counterparts, women are traditionally called to stand in as representatives of the nation in its nationalist performance because of their ability to reproduce the nation both biologically and culturally. Just as historians Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelan suggest in their analysis and presentation of statistical data entitled *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*, that women are more likely than men to archive, preserve and analyze the past either professionally or in their everyday lives (largely because they have been taught that such a project falls within their purview as women), so too does Yuval-Davis argue that women serve the nation (via a complex web of both oppression and agency) as bearers of both children and culture: women serve the present by remembering the past and ensuring the future of their communities, nations and/or cultures.<sup>46</sup>

Given Yuval-Davis's premise that women as a category (left largely untroubled by differences of class, "race," ethnicity, color, sexuality, etc. by nations preferring to rely primarily on clear boundaries between male and female, "masculine" performance and "feminine" performance) are used "in the service of the nation" in nationalist representations, it is not surprising that Greenhow, Boyd and the Moons have served as famed representatives of the Southern nation and the Confederacy both during the Civil War and in present-day commemorative spectacles.<sup>47</sup> Because these women, having the means to do so, wrote themselves into history through either their famed narratives or their embodied performances, female spies Greenhow, Boyd and the Moons have survived as historical personas. But it is because they wrote themselves (and have been written about) as *gendered subjects* that enables them to solve the historiographical problem of Confederate nationalism in contemporary popular cultural contexts. These female spies may represent the legacy and continuing political salience of the Confederacy because they can be framed in contemporary contexts as amusing, non-threatening and essentially entertaining personas, despite the fact that Greenhow alone is believed to have caused the deaths of well over one hundred Union soldiers when she warned Confederates of the Union army's advance on Bull Run. Indeed, the use of attractive, interesting, adventurous, and already famous female icons to represent the Southern nation makes possible the reimagining of the South as a distinct cultural nation characterized by anti-governmental Confederate political style because, gendered female, neither the Southern nation nor the Confederate government are rendered "serious" or "legitimate" as political entities.<sup>48</sup> Instead, the modernist dislike and distrust of national myth and notions of socially constructed meaning such as that expressed by Garry Wills "reduces" the Southern nation and the Confederacy to an outlaw, anti-governmental cultural and political *style* rather than an officially recognized historical phenomenon.<sup>49</sup> While such an approach appears to solve the problem of Confederate nationalism from a popular and academic historiographical perspective (since neither historians nor the United States government risk losing face by conferring legitimacy on the South or the Confederacy or seeming to condone the policies protected and practiced by the Southern government), it nevertheless ignores the powerful material implications of heritage culture and the "pastpresents" embodied every time Rose Greenhow, Belle Boyd or Ginnie and/or Lottie Moon are reenacted, commemorated, or celebrated in a museum exhibit (as they are at the International Spy Museum in Washington, D.C.) or in a live entertainment such as an encampment. Coined by theorist Katie King, the term "pastpresents" is meant to denote "the visible evidences that the past and the present cannot be purified each from the other."<sup>50</sup> Inextricably bound up together, then, the past and the present converge in cultural heritage sites such as Plymouth Plantation and Colonial Williamsburg just as they do in the bodies of reenactors portraying female spies for the Confederacy or in filmic and other cultural representations of outlaw and anti-governmental performance. Brought back to life to stand in for the Confederacy and the Southern nation, these spies make the past live again through the materiality of the present, and both shape and suggest the myths and memories that will be used in the future. Just as Rose Greenhow, Belle Boyd and Ginnie and Lottie Moon are kept "alive" via commemoration and reenactments, so too does the Confederacy and the Southern nation re-assert itself as a powerful "pastpresent," that has clearly made an impact on contemporary American interpretations of the nineteenth century political past and some of its most significant historical personas.

## **Above The Law:**

### **Celebrity Citizenship and the Gendering of Outlaw Political Style**

I would like to conclude by suggesting the contemporary cultural implications of the outlaw political style I have advanced in this case study of female spies for the Confederacy, particularly regarding the ways in which such a style relies on "pastpresents," or references to historical personas and their attendant ideologies. Just as it has taken numerous full-length works by historians and scholars of Southern history to establish the validity of Confederate nationalism as an ideological and political product of Civil War-era culture, so too have large numbers of edited volumes and monographs been authored which suggest the continuing relevance of the Civil War and war-era ideologies in contemporary social and political culture and memory.<sup>51</sup> One particularly useful study of the ways in which Southern and Confederate nationalism has maintained cultural relevance in contemporary political life is journalist Anatol Lieven's 2004 text *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism*. Lieven persuasively suggests that a specifically Southern regional performative (steeped in Confederate nationalist

mythologies as well as a subject identity crafted out of the South's defeat and the continued salience of the Lost Cause) not only continues to exist, but also that this performative, like the Confederate flag itself, has been largely transmuted into a generic antiauthoritarian symbol—an anti-governmental outlaw performance all its own.<sup>52</sup> Particularly interested in understanding the Southeast's post-1960s swing toward the right of the partisan political spectrum, Lieven cites not only published work, but also his own experience as a college professor in the American southeast when he argues that white hegemonic Southern culture has responded to its political and ideological defeat during the Civil War, to the chaos and turmoil of Reconstruction and to its relegation to the margins of American political life by reframing its identity as proudly defiant and gleefully reveling in not only its status as an international political embarrassment and relic of the Lost Cause, but also its depiction (especially in the urban Northeast) as a region populated by inbred, uneducated “rednecks.”<sup>53</sup> Perhaps the most cogent assertion Lieven makes, however, is one articulated by few historians or theorists of nationalism within the American academy: he argues that the combination of Confederate nationalism, Southern ethno-cultural identity, and mainstream American mockery of the South has resulted in a particularly dangerous and chauvinistic brand of American patriotism-turned-nationalist performance which has been both encouraged and adopted by George H.W. Bush's administration in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

While Lieven's argument is a persuasive one, it accounts only for the performance of American nationalism in opposition to a foreign enemy or another nation-state, noting the effect of such nationalist performances on domestic political life only insofar as nationalism can be understood to bind an imagined community together, producing a kind of submissive political quiescence as the body politic falls unquestioningly in line behind its leaders and the legislation they pass.<sup>54</sup> When such a nationalist performance is enacted by the American body politic as a nation and an imagined community, it is the United States government itself, Lieven argues, which is enabled to act the part of the outlaw (world) citizen, engaging (rightly or wrongly) in preemptive and unilateral military maneuvers in the name of securing the “homeland,” toppling foreign dictators and exporting the civic republican virtues of American style democracy. But what happens to such fundamentally anti-governmental outlaw performances of über-patriotism when they are embodied by private citizens within a domestic context? I contend that the political performatives of female spies for the Confederacy make clear, through their references to and citations of the anti-governmental political acts and styles of the past (especially given that the Confederacy, like the Union, justified its own ideologies by harkening back to the founding fathers and the establishment of the United States as an entity independent of British colonial rule) that a long American history of defiantly post-colonial, anti-governmental attitudes, and behaviors which express those attitudes, exists. Just as Confederates cited the words and personas that came before them, so too are such Confederates (and their mythological representations in and by female spies and other iconic personas associated with the Civil War-era South) referenced by contemporary political outlaws fascinated not only by Confederate interpretations of states' rights, but also the supposedly rugged, rural, and agrarian individualism of the mid-nineteenth-century Southeast as a region.

Such contemporary outlaws include individuals such as Timothy McVeigh and the Nichols brothers, Randy Weaver, Waco cult leader David Koresh and the numerous anonymous individuals who belong to local paramilitary groups and state militias across the nation. While such organizations were officially disbanded late in the nineteenth century after the conclusion of the Civil War, the 1980s and 1990s saw a significant increase in these kinds of non-hierarchical associations of survivalists and others usually located on the far-right political fringe. How and why are such individuals, even if they never blow up a federal building or harm their fellow Americans, constructed in the mainstream media as crackpots and vigilantes, characterized by the feminizing qualities of hysteria and unfounded paranoia—and how is this treatment altered when those same paramilitary groups can be of use to the federal government by serving, in one recent example, as border patrol forces? While political theorist Richard Hofstadter has labeled such groups, their rhetoric and their performative political style as “paranoid” because, like clinically paranoid individuals, their political styling is, by his estimation, “overheated, oversuspicious, overaggressive, grandiose, and apocalyptic in expression,” the now-canonical essay in which this designation appears was originally penned in 1965, well before feminist analysis had exposed such evaluative criteria as reflective of a sense of political decorum based on decidedly masculine civic “*virtue*,” a word itself taken from the root “vir,” meaning “man.”<sup>55</sup>

Just as women make the best stand-in for a feminized (read: vanquished) Confederacy and Southern nation,

outlaw political ideologues of all times have been and continue to be feminized under the gaze of a mainstream political culture governed by a sense of decorum based on a white, male, middle-class performance of moderation and rationality. Indeed, one need only look at the press coverage of individuals such as McVeigh, Nichols and Ruby Ridge icon Randy Weaver to note the ways in which much is made of their failures as military personnel. Despite being awarded the Bronze Star for his service in the 1991 Gulf War (an honor he was stripped of after his conviction), McVeigh was largely depicted as an unsuccessful soldier, desiring vengeance against the United States and its citizens because of his own inability to pass the physical endurance test required for entrance to the elite Green Berets.<sup>56</sup> What a study of gender and the construction and performance of outlaw political style, whether the case study is of female spies for the Confederacy or activist/terrorist members of contemporary paramilitary groups, is the fact of bureaucratic hegemony and gendered nationalist discourse. Whether the political causes of the loser is or has ever been attractive (as it most surely is not in the case of the Confederacy), what is exceedingly clear is that as long as the winner writes history for the bureaucratic state to teach to its body politic, only those entities already imbued with political validity get the privilege of interpreting the Constitution and other founding documents and, accordingly, evaluating the legitimacy of the actions of individuals and groups whose political beliefs and behaviors reference those documents for justification. Any other groups attempting to justify their (illegal) actions via their interpretation of these documents as a higher authority than extant political structures are and will continue to be contained by a governmentally-sponsored rhetoric which constructs such groups and individuals as excrescent and out of control—just as crazy, treacherous and unpredictable as Harnett T. Kane regarded female spies for the Confederacy.

## Notes

1 While some would define the American body politic based on citizenship, naturalization status or voting rights, I find it more useful, as I hope will become apparent, to consider the intellectual life of the United States as informed by all those individuals who define themselves as American and/or who live in U.S. territory. Obviously, such a definition includes populations such as refugees and illegal “aliens,” who contribute to the intellectual and cultural life of the U.S. Accordingly, I also refer to the American pasts as a plural phenomenon as a means of recognizing that the events of the past can only be known via historiographical techniques such as story-telling or narrative, both objects of social construction subject to a variety of perspectives and senses of truth and fact.

2 Gary Wills, *A Necessary Evil: A History of American Distrust of Government* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 16–17.

3 Wills takes on this myth as he does those of later periods—by consulting primary and secondary sources. In the case of the “revolutionary myths” regarding Minutemen, universal (but voluntary) male military service and the omnipresence of guns in colonial homes, Wills cites statistics regarding the number of men who paid other, less affluent individuals to fight in their places, as well as noting the inefficiency and prohibitory expense associated with colonial firearms. See Wills, *A Necessary Evil*, 25–55.

4 Thoreau, qtd. in Wills, *A Necessary Evil*, 15.

5 Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Historians Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen also administered a survey of Americans regarding their uses of history or the past in everyday life and found that among the most trusted sources for historical information were first hand accounts, museums and historical sites, as opposed to nonfiction monographs by either popular or academic presses. See Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

6 When I use the phrase “political style,” I am referencing the work of qualitative communication scholars who argue that style and substance cannot be separated in political performance, itself constituted by media, party politics, popular ideologies, etc. While this is a tenant governing a large amount of communication work on the subject of politics, I particularly draw from Robert Hariman’s study on types of political style, as his work implicitly invokes notions of embodied and aestheticized performance. See Robert Hariman, *Political Style: The Artistry of Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). For discussions regarding the performative communication of political discourse, see Shawn J. and Trevor Parry-Giles, *Constructing Clinton: Hyperreality and Presidential*

*Image-Making in Postmodern Politics* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002). It is also important to note that my own treatment and frequent references to performance and performativity are drawn from the work of theatre and performance studies scholars. For an informative introduction to this body of knowledge, see Marvin Carlson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 1996) and Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2002). For a particularly helpful discussion of performativity in daily life, see Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Double Day, 1959).

7 Feminist sociologist Nira Yuval-Davis particularly addresses the intersections of gender roles and nationalist projects in her text *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage, 1997).

8 Journalist and scholar Anatol Lieven has connected the secessionist cause and the goals of the Confederate States of America to the mythology of the American frontier, as many displaced Confederates moved westward to settle in the plains of Missouri and other territories located on the borders of the American southeast. See Anatol Lieven, *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). For more on the connection between the American South and the culture of violence in the border and plains states of what has since become known as the American “heartland,” see Thomas Frank, *What’s the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004). Finally, for a particularly good documentation of the connection between ex-Confederates and the violent activities of famous outlaws of the American frontier, see T.J. Stiles, *Jesse James: Last Rebel of the Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002). Stiles particularly makes clear the connection between the post-war banditry of the James brothers and other ex-Confederates and the continued cultural salience of the Lost Cause, or the reverence for the attempt made at regional sovereignty by the Confederate government.

9 I understand Confederate political style as the performance of Confederate ideology and Southern national identity. While the origins of this style are arguably found in the anti-governmental and anti-Federalist performatives of the eighteenth century, I am using this term specifically to refer to political performances of the nineteenth century during the secessionist crisis as well as to account for a present-day gesture referencing that past at/in fairs, commemorative entertainments, reenactments, museums, novels, plays, etc.

10 Benedict Anderson’s notion of nations as “imagined communities” is well known in many disciplines by now. His use of “imaginings” as a noun is less frequently referenced, but refers to entities created by and for the nation—or the symbolic structures created, established and utilized by the nation in its nationalist discourse. For more on this use of the term, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991), 9. Besides having their exploits recorded and exhibited at the International Spy Museum in Washington, D.C., female spies Boyd and Greenhow have also been the subject of numerous works of historical fiction, plays and films, as well as being featured in re-enactments at battlefield dedications, encampments and other commemorative Civil War entertainments. Boyd has even had a teddy bear made in her likeness by the Internet vendor Toni Todd and the Moon sisters have been featured recently as entertainment at southern Maryland’s October celebrations of Civil War events called Haymarket Days.

11 As much recent work by Women’s Studies scholars and feminist historians has demonstrated, “woman” or “women” is no longer an identitarian category that can afford to go undifferentiated or uncomplicated. While this essay focuses on women enjoying both economic and white skin privilege, the work I have consulted to understand such individuals in context of the antebellum and war-era South has examined the lives of free white women, free black women and enslaved black women, as well as white women differentiated by their experiences as impoverished or wealthy, rural or urban, agrarian or industrial.

12 Explicated by scholars of nineteenth century Southern women such as Drew Gilpin Faust and Elizabeth Varon, *Confederate Womanhood*, like Linda Kerber’s *Republican Motherhood*, is a descriptive term for a largely idyllic and rhetorical tool used to prescribe war-era roles for women in the South. See Drew Gilpin Faust, “Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War,” in *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War*, Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992): 171–99; and George C. Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Elizabeth R. Varon, *We Mean to Be Counted: White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

13 William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Norton edition (New York: Norton, 1997), 2.2.244–45.

14 Indeed, the South was, in some areas, most densely populated not by white farmers, but by black slaves, a population which outnumbered whites exponentially in areas such as Calhoun's South Carolina.

15 Rose O'Neal Greenhow, *My Imprisonment and the First Year of Abolition Rule at Washington*, Electronic Edition, 1998, 127, <http://docssouth.unc.edu/greenhow/greenhow.html> (accessed on July 30, 2003).

16 Greenhow, *My Imprisonment*, 8. Given the geography of Maryland and its proximity to Washington City, Greenhow's home state was of great strategic significance to Union forces and to the Lincoln Administration. Accordingly, habeas corpus was suspended in Maryland by President Lincoln (and that suspension enforced against the decision of the Supreme Court, the chief justice of which was Roger Taney, a native of Maryland and secessionist sympathizer), allowing citizens and newspaper editors expressing pro-Southern sentiments to be detained and held without a statement of charged against them or an official arrest. A large number of the Maryland legislature and its staff were detained and arrested in September of 1861 to prevent the legislature from meeting and voting to secede. Additionally, Maryland, and pro-secession Baltimore were occupied by federal forces, creating tension which erupted in the Baltimore Riot of April 19, 1861, in which the first shots of the Civil War were fired and a number of Maryland civilians were killed. These riots inspired the lyrics of "Maryland, My Maryland," the state anthem of Maryland—which also enjoys the dubious distinction of being the only official state song to advocate the violent overthrow of the federal government. For more on the Maryland history of the Civil War generally, or specific events such as the suspension of habeas corpus, see Talbert, *Maryland*, 1995. For excellent profiles of Taney and the impact of his judicial decisions see Alfred H. Kelly, Winifred A. Harbison and Herman Belz, *The American Constitution, its Origins and Development: Volume I*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Norton, 1991).

17 Greenhow, *My Imprisonment*, 122. Greenhow's narrative contains a copy of the letters that went back and forth between herself and Superintendent Wood. Scholar Judith Scheffler has also suggested that Greenhow's memoirs depict a woman "always on stage" and ready to turn in an eloquent verbal/textual performance. See Judith Scheffler, "'Uncommon, bad and dangerous': Personal Narratives of Imprisoned Confederate Women, 1861–1865," in *Women's Life-Writing: Finding Voice/Building Community*, ed. Linda S. Coleman (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1997), 132. Also worth noting is the fact that women writing commentary on the ideological issues bound up with the war, or simply about their experiences during the secession crisis, was not uncommon. Faust suggests that women were the authors of song lyrics, letters, articles and short stories appearing in newspapers. In short, Civil War women both understood and took advantage of the power of print culture to make their voices heard. See Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War," in *Divided Houses*, 177.

18 Boyd was famous for her interactions with actual troops, as she is supposed to have visited her father's and other camps as well as making several appearances during battles to provide strategic information. She is also known to have considered General Stonewall Jackson a trusted friend and mentor. Several letters from Jackson to Boyd are transcribed in her narrative. See Belle Boyd, *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison*, ed. Sharon Kennedy-Nolle (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998): 100, 147. Writing on female spies for the Union, Lyde Cullen Sizer distinguishes between lady spies and women spies. She supports such a distinction by citing what could be explained as a class difference between the spies, arguing that while women spies cross-dressed and otherwise transgressed traditional gender roles, lady spies "used their femininity to acquire power usually considered in the domain of men." While Sizer's distinction is certainly useful when considering the different performances of women spies, her categories still assume the validity of classifying women and their gender performances in relation to largely rhetorical prescriptions of "femininity." See Cullen, "Acting Her Part: Narratives of Union Spies," *Divided Houses*, 114–33.

19 Later an actor on the New York stage as well as regionally in a one-woman show based on her memoirs, Boyd was and is one of the youngest spies associated in popular memory with the Civil War. For more biographical or professional information on Boyd, see Kennedy-Nolle's introduction to the 1998 edition of Boyd's memoirs, as well as Louis A. Sigaud, *Belle Boyd* (Richmond, VA: Dietz, 1944).

20 Boyd, *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison*, 130; Greenhow, *My Imprisonment*, 102. It is worthwhile to note that

there exists a long and vibrant history in American political rhetoric of individuals and groups positioning themselves oppositionally to a given Presidential administration by labeling that President not only tyrannical, but also akin to the royal despotism of Old Europe. In 1832, Andrew Jackson was colloquially referred to in some political circles as King Andrew the first, and contemporary leftist activists have certainly leveled the same appellations against George H.W. Bush (“George I”) and George W. Bush (“George II”) for supposedly making the presidency into a divine right hereditary post irrespective of qualifications. For a discussion of such claims against Andrew Jackson (as well as a cartoon depicting King Andrew in 1832), see Allgors, *Parlor Politics*, 2000.

21 Anthony Smith argues in his work on nationalism that myths of national pasts are fundamental to establishing nations and communities. Paying particular attention to what he refers to as “myths of ethnic descent,” Smith argues that nations create and mobilize myths relating to past greatness and ancestry to establish legitimacy as a nation. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 63–68.

22 Drew Faust argues that Confederate nationalist rhetoric was heavily informed by European Romanticism and the Revolutions of 1848. Identifying with both aristocratic heritage and nationalist struggle emphasized the racial unity of white Southerners. See Faust, *Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South*, 10–11. In his work on contemporary American nationalism and its origins in nineteenth century Southern identity, Anatol Lieven also provides persuasive evidence suggesting that the Scots-Irish heritage of Southerners has much to do with what I refer to in this essay as Confederate political style and its time-tested corollary American outlaw political style. For more on the Celtic roots of Southern and Confederate nationalism, see Lieven. Also interesting to note is the contemporary cultural salience of such Celtic roots. For a popular culture treatment of this subject, see Anthony Minghella’s film adaptation of Charles Frazier’s novel *Cold Mountain*, which particularly uses folk music to make connections between the Civil War-era American South and the Irish and Scottish cultures from whence many Southern families traced their heritage.

23 Boyd, *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison*, 75.

24 In Greenhow’s construction of the association between Britain and Maryland, she conveniently ignores the anti-British and anti-Tory sentiments of colonial-era Maryland, made clear by the renaming of counties and towns originally referencing the British peerage during the War of 1812. See the “Boundary History of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania,” in *Historical Atlas and Chronology of County Boundaries 1788–1980: Volume 1: Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania* (Boston: GK Hall, 1984), 3–8, 31–37.

25 Greenhow, *My Imprisonment*, 188. This is the second letter Greenhow wrote to Seward. The first was written in November of 1861 and published in the *Richmond Whig*. The actual news clipping was available through the Duke University online archive at <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/greenhow/1861-11-17-72.gif> and was accessed March 10, 2004. Also note that Greenhow herself refers to the South as a “nation” and genders that nation female.

26 Greenhow, *My Imprisonment*, 77. While Greenhow’s racism is well documented in her narrative when she discusses the supposed licentious sexual nature of free black women and the loudness and uncleanness of black individuals generally, Greenhow also, like many other educated Southerners, referred to abolitionists and Northerners as “black Republicans.” Such a moniker was meant to indicate not only the political party to which most abolitionists belonged, but also the idea that abolitionists and Republicans, because they were supposedly sympathetic to the plight of enslaved blacks, were somehow engaged more in a performance of blackness than the whiteness with which they had been biologically endowed. For more on the epithet “black Republican” see Emily Toth’s *Unveiling Kate Chopin* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1999), 23.

27 See Ishbel Ross, *Rebel Rose: Life of Rose O’Neal Greenhow, Confederate Spy* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1954). Ross’s biography has since been significantly updated by journalist Ann Blackman, though Ross’s text focuses more clearly on Greenhow’s political affiliations and ideological beliefs. See Ann Blackman, *Wild Rose: Rose O’Neale Greenhow, Civil War Spy: A True Story* (New York: Random, 2005).

28 Harnett T. Kane, *Spies for the Blue and Gray* (New York: Hanover House, 1954), 263. Similarly, he relates the story of Ginnie’s older sister Lottie (who, at 32 in 1861, was more a contemporary of the middle-aged Greenhow than of either her sister or Belle Boyd) and her plans to marry Ambrose Burnside, who would later enjoy the distinction of being the Union General who released and pardoned both sisters when they were apprehended.

When asked if she would take Burnside as her husband, Lottie Moon supposedly entertained second thoughts and yelled, “No-siree-bob!” before trotting out of the church. See Kane, *Spies for the Blue and Gray*, 263.

29 This incident is supposedly documented in Moon’s own unpublished memoirs, and can be found in both Kane’s article on the Moon sisters as well as Frances Butler Simkins and James Welch Patton, *The Women of the Confederacy* (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1936), 12; Kane, *Spies for the Blue and Gray*, 264. Such behavior, Kane argues, did not cease at the conclusion of the Confederate war effort. Instead, Kane indicates that the Moons occupied the margins of acceptable gender roles their whole lives, both sisters “talking about women’s rights, attacking fashionable affectation, and calling their neighbors genteel frauds.” (264). According to both Kane and Rebecca D. Larson, both sisters led exceptionally long lives. Ginnie moved to Hollywood to become an actor at age 75, then flew a plane and moved to Greenwich Village at age 76. Lottie became a journalist and covered the Franco-Prussian war. See Rebecca D. Larson, *Blue and Gray Roses of Intrigue* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1993), 45.

30 Kane, *Spies for the Blue and Gray*, 129–30. Flags are particularly associated with women, since it was predominantly women who designed and sewed them. See Drew Gilpin Faust, *Confederate Nationalism, Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 8.

31 Kane, *Spies for the Blue and Gray*, 134. For Boyd’s own rendition of the shooting, see Boyd, *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison*, 81–82.

32 Greenhow, *My Imprisonment*, 30.

33 Greenhow, *My Imprisonment*, 30.

34 Greenhow, *My Imprisonment*, 22, 123.

35 Wills, *A Necessary Evil*, 38.

36 These and other causes of American distrust of government are explored by political theorists and sociologists as well in much recent work. For one collection of essays, see Joseph S. Nye Jr., Philip D. Zelikow, and David C. King, eds. *Why People Don’t Trust Government* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

37 An 1833 map of Maryland and northern Virginia (a state which, at the start of the Civil War in 1861, also included the territory later named West Virginia) clearly demonstrates the Confederate states’ relative isolation from both industry and transportation. The location of the railways, canals and roads traveling through states such as Maryland and (northern) Virginia make clear why these border territories were of such tactical import to both the Union and Confederate forces. See the “New Map of Maryland and Delaware, with their Canals, Roads and Distances, 1833” in Edward A. Papenfuss and Joseph M. Coale, III., eds. *The Hammond-Harwood House Atlas of Historical Maps of Maryland, 1608–1908* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

38 Scholar of Communication and Sociology Michael Schudson argues that while interpretations of “good citizenship” have changed vastly throughout U.S. history, the trope of the citizen as either a “watchdog” guarding against governmental abuses or as an “informed citizen” who researches and remains knowledgeable about politics has been expressed differently over time, but has remained a salient idea since the founding of the American Republic. See Michael Schudson, *The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998). Similar interpretation of the role of the “watchdog” citizen are referenced by both individuals and groups who believe it an appropriate performance of American citizenship to answer to a higher moral authority than the federal government, justifying a paradigm of “outlaw” political style as healthy and beneficial to American political life.

39 See Richard Waterman, Robert Wright, and Gilbert St. Clair, *The Image-Is-Everything Presidency: Dilemmas in American Leadership* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999). For more on the intersections between patriotic performances and the media in early American political contexts, see David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776–1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

- 40 In an article on political representation, gender, and eighteenth century American political culture, historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg asserts that the public/ body politic becomes both actor and spectator in the republican political system. Like women, who were traditionally understood not as independent entities but rather as symbols of the leisure and wealth of their husbands, then, so too, she argues did eighteenth century American voters, robbed anew after every election of their manly civic virtue (i.e., their right to represent themselves and their interests directly rather than through an elected official), become the sign of the wealth and success of the republic. See Carol Smith-Rosenberg, "Political Camp or the Ambiguous Engendering of the American Republic," in *Gendered Nation: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*, eds. Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann, and Catherine Hall (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 286.
- 41 See for example, Kane, *Spies for the Blue and Gray*, as well as John Bakeless, *Spies of the Confederacy* (New York: Lippincott, 1970). See also William Gilmore Beymer, "Mrs. Greenhow, Confederate Spy," in *The Women's War in the South: Recollections and Reflections of the American Civil War*, eds. Charles G. Waugh and Martin H. Greenberg (Nashville: Cumberland House, 1999), 31–51.
- 42 Kane, *Spies for the Blue and Gray*, 12–13. It is important to note that besides being patently patronizing, this account is also inaccurate. As Elizabeth Leonard makes clear, women had long participated in American espionage. Elizabeth Leonard, *All the Daring of the Soldier: Women of the Civil War Armies* (New York: Penguin, 1999).
- 43 Kane, *Spies for the Blue and Gray*, 11.
- 44 See Michael Fellman, "Women and Guerilla Warfare." in *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 147–69.
- 45 Wills notes the popular conception of the Confederacy as less than legitimate when he argues that although "[s]ecessionist efforts now resemble those of a crackpot group in Texas... secession was something that *serious* people considered in the period before the Civil War." (italics added), Wills, *A Necessary Evil*, 181. While theatre scholar Jeffrey Mason joins other historians in their assertion that the Civil War was characterized as a romantic and melodramatic conflict even as it unfolded as well as in popular memory and contemporary reimaginings, he also suggests that anti-Southern rhetoric constructs the South and the Confederacy in explicitly feminine terms, just as Confederate nationalist rhetoric sought to depict the North as intellectual, industrial and effete during the war. In his discussion of the ways in which nineteenth century melodrama (the most popular theatrical form during this period) reifies idyllic images of America as an imagined community, Mason pays close attention to the 1889 play *Shenandoah*, about the social conflicts produced by the ideological issues attendant to secession and the Civil War. Mason also argues that the interpretation of the Civil War as itself a melodramatic performance constructs the relationship between the North and the South within a paradigm of Victorian domesticity, casting the South as "a tempestuous woman" to the North's virile and stern patriarch who desires nothing more than to keep his union together. For more on the melodramatic construction of gender roles in the relationship between North and south, see Jeffrey D. Mason, *Melodrama and the Myth of America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).
- 46 Rosenzweig and Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, 28–29.
- 47 While the idea of women serving the nation as representatives is one referenced by a number of feminist theorists, Chandra Mohanty states this explicitly. See Mohanty, "Crafting Feminist Genealogies: On the Geography and Politics of Home, Nation, and Community," *Talking Visions*, 1998, 495. Also worth noting is the reception Greenhow and Boyd supposedly received during their travels south and at their respective receptions upon arrival in Richmond, the seat of the Confederacy. Both women assert that they were greeted with overwhelming enthusiasm. See Greenhow, *My Imprisonment* 125–27 and Boyd, *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison*, 148.
- 48 For more on the violence and passionate nationalism of Southern women, see Victoria E. Bynum, "'The Women is as Bad as the Men': Women's Participation in the Inner Civil War" in *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992). Additionally, George Rable cites Union soldiers who were surprised at the passion exhibited by Southern women and wondered "if these Southern girls can love as they hate?" George C. Rable, "'Missing in Action': Women of the

Confederacy,” in *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War*, eds. Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 144.

49 I use the word “reduces” here to indicate that traditional academic and mainstream discourse has considered style as not only separable from substance, but also as somehow much less significant, not to suggest that I understand “style” as a denigrating description or conception.

50 For more on Katie King’s use of the term “heritage culture” see the text of her unpublished talk “Historiography as Reenactment: metaphors and literalizations of TV documentaries” given at Vanderbilt University April 3, 2004. Text available online at <http://www.womensstudies.umd.edu/wmstfac/kking/present/vanderbilt04.html> (accessed May 14, 2005).

51 Particularly useful is a recent collection edited by Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh, eds. *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 2004, and a full-length treatment of representations and memories of the Civil War in film, music, and other aspects of contemporary American culture, by Jim Cullen, *The Civil War in Popular Culture* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995).

52 Lieven specifically addresses the ways in which contemporary Southern identity are bound up with the legacy of the Civil War, the Lost Cause and the fact that the American South has long been seen as a nation unto itself within the United States—the butt of jokes, the ultimate loser and the political embarrassment of the nation. See Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*.

53 Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, 10. While some historians have argued that the Confederacy and its imagined community were almost seamlessly re-integrated into the Union, Jesse James biographer T.J. Stiles argues that in fact ex-Confederates were kept from voting in the years immediately following the Civil War, and that in some locations voting rights were only granted upon an individual’s willingness to take an oath of loyalty to the Union, an act which would have caused former Confederates and Southern sympathizers alike great humiliation, as well as making them a target of fellow ex-Confederates who had no wish to rejoin the Union politically or otherwise. See T.J. Stiles, *Jesse James: Last Rebel of the Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002).

54 Political scientist Murray Edelman, also concerned with the meaning-making properties of politics and political communication, argues that political events and symbols are often used to silence public debate. For more information on political quiescence, see Murray Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1964).

55 Richard Hofstadter, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics.” in *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (New York: Knopf, 1965), 4. British scholar of citizenship, Derek Heater references the gendered etymology of the word “virtue” in his explication of civic republicanism and its four “virtues”: temperance, justice, courage and wisdom. For more paradigms of citizenship and their applications in contemporary international politics, see Derek Heater, *What Is Citizenship?* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999), 60.

56 Only one of a number of McVeigh biographers to privilege a focus on the bomber’s personal triumphs and failures as a means of discovering the causes of his political ideologies, Richard A. Serrano looks more closely at McVeigh’s personal life than he does at his cultural and political contexts. See Richard Serrano, *One of Ours: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing* (New York: Norton, 1998). For a text which considers the broader cultural significance of McVeigh’s ideologies, intentions and actions, see Edward T. Linenthal, *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). Finally, for an analysis of the broader ideologies and political styles of contemporary paramilitary groups, see Kenneth S. Stern, *A Force upon the Plain: The American Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996). Stern also makes explicit the connection between American mainstream military culture and its more infamous stepchild, the state militias, referencing the large number of militia members and leaders who have a record of honorable service in the United States Army and the elite Green Berets.

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