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Building a History: A Case Study of Manufactured History in Texas

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BUILDING A HISTORY: A CASE STUDY OF MANUFACTURED HISTORY IN TEXAS

A Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract: *Building a History* is a case study that seeks to examine Texas mytho-history, and the subsequent historical memory it engenders, from the perspective of Nationalism. This paper addresses two periods in Texas' historical past – beginning with the period of Anglo colonialization of Texas and the ensuing rebellion against Mexican authority, (1820 – 1836), and transitioning to the progressive era, (1890 – 1936).

This thesis demonstrates that during progressive era, Anglo-Texans began manufacturing an alternative historical narrative that blended Judeo-Christian and Puritan mytho-symbolism with Euro-centric notions of socio-political and ethnic superiority. This process of manufacturing and legitimizing historical myth in Texas reveals a characteristic similarity to methods of nation-building and the theories of constructivist scholars of nationalism – signifying that the study of nationalism has applications that extend beyond the traditional nation/state.

DEDICATION

First and foremost, I owe a debt of gratitude to my grandfather, Robert Berry Carter, and father, Gregg L. Carter Sr. These two individuals helped create for me a life that defies explanation. Their hard work provided me with countless opportunities that I dare say might not have otherwise come my way. While I doubt either one of them possessed patients enough to read such a long and laborious text such as this, I know they would be proud of the accomplishment.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Building a History is a case study that seeks to examine Texas mytho-history and the subsequent historical memory it engenders from the perspective of Nationalism, drawing parallels between the construction and preservation of Texas historical myth and the tendency of the nation to fabricate historical truth appropriate to the aspirations and ambitions of the nation's dominant, high culture. Specifically, this thesis attempts to validate the application of nationalism studies to the study of non-national entities. As such, this work addresses two periods in Texas' historical past – beginning with the period of Anglo colonialization and subsequent Revolutionary period, (1820 – 1836), and transitioning to the progressive era, (1890 – 1936). These two eras of Texas history are vital in their relationship to one another due to the latter's dependence on the former as a source of legitimacy.

This thesis demonstrates that during the latter, progressive period, Texas undertook a process of manufacturing an alternative historical narrative that blended Judeo-Christian and Puritan mytho-symbolism with romantic notions of Texas' revolutionary origins.[1] This manufacturing process created a malleable grand narrative that originated as a means of redefining Texans as exceptional, following the humiliating loss during the Civil War, then

[1] In the context of this text, the term romantic history refers to the process of sanitizing a historical narrative to present an idealized, one-sided interpretation of a nation's past that glosses over inconvenient truths and fosters notions of exceptionalism. See Alun Munslow. *A History of History.* New York: Routledge, 2012.

shifted into a means of defining and legitimizing the parameters for socio-political and economic order within the state – as well as delineating the limits of inclusion and exclusion therein.

It is this process of manufacturing and legitimizing historical myth in Texas that reveals a characteristic similarity to the process of nation-building and the theories of constructivist scholars of nationalism, such as Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, and Benedict Anderson. However, to grasp the importance of analyzing Texas mytho-history through the lens of nationalism, it is relevant to first consider how nationalism benefits and is subject to the nation's ability to create for itself a past that validates its present and future.

Indeed, nationalism depends a great deal on history as a source of socio-political and economic legitimacy. So much so, that in the absence of an applicable historical narrative, one may be, and often is, created in its place. Ernest Gellner regarded nationalism as a recent phenomenon that came into being as a response to the societal shift from agrarian to industrial economies. To Gellner, agrarian society was a 'zero-sum' game, which was beneficial to the established social order since such a society was inherently hierarchical and socially inert.[2] This is not the case in industrialized society, where free flow of information fuels the economic growth and governments survive based on their ability to deliver constant growth.

Gellner states that within industrial societies, there exists what he refers to as members of the high culture – whom he defines as those possessing access to complex literacies. Within the scope of the industrialized society, aspiration to this high culture becomes the norm and is achieved through the process of universal education. However, the process of maximizing access to the high culture through social mobility has the effect of weakening societies' traditional ties based on kinship and replaces them with those based on vocation. As such, socio-

[2] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism: New Perspectives on the Past.* 2nd Edition. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009., 1998), 17.

political boundaries blend to form homogeneous entities that in turn engage in competition with one another. According to Gellner, this act of competition equates to national consciousness.

Moreover, Gellner argues that nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy that essentially fills the void created after the loss of the Divine as the source of state authority in the wake of social secularization, and is fundamentally a false state of consciousness.[3] Indeed, an intricate part of nation-building is the nation's ability, or willingness, to interpret its history wrong. Put more succinctly, nation-building is a product of historical amnesia. The aim of the nationalist is to create a national myth that reflects a society's unitary origins, in which present socio-political and economic constraints are portrayed as ideologically congruent with that society's cultural antecedents.

Implied within the nationalist's historical narrative is a caveat – the national narrative cannot be contradicted or undermined by the historical record, especially when said record evidences examples of diversity, heterogeneity, or conflict that stands in opposition to the dominant philosophical themes espoused by the national narrative. Therefore, nationalism, in the context of its use as a means for creating and maintaining social stratification, is more than a false consciousness; it is a route through which a high culture imposes its will upon members of the low culture – often at the expense of the low culture.

Thus, the study of nationalism shares three functions that connect to the study of manufactured mytho-history in Texas:

1. Nationalism seeks to create a 'usable past', around which the state's high culture legitimizes their social, political, and economic dominion over Texas.
2. Nationalism seeks to create a founding narrative that fosters historical amnesia regarding any unseemly aspects of the state's historical past.

[3] Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1.

3. Nationalism seeks to create a sense of exceptionalism among its people, which emphasizes those unique qualities that characterize, in the case of Texas, the state's origins in relation to the other forty-nine states of the union – reinforcing the core values of American citizenship via a narrative of similarity, (i.e.: shared method of origin, shared language and symbols, shared socio-political philosophy, and shared enthusiasm for the future.)

Furthermore, the act of a minority high-culture imposing itself upon a majority low-culture is a primary function derived from the manufacturing and legitimizing the Texas historical myth. As such, history becomes a tool through which notions of Otherness are identified and defined – changing over time to reflect the changing notions of Otherness, as deemed necessary by the high culture. Today, Texas mytho-history seems little more than a means through which to market the concepts of rugged individualism to somewhat historically disenfranchise modern consumer. The spirit of Texas is sold and experienced vicariously in Texas Edition Trucks, various foods and beverages, and most notably within the constructs of an independent music scene that profoundly altered the way that music is currently bought and sold in contemporary society. However, as will be demonstrated throughout this text, late nineteenth century efforts to reinterpret the state's past were far less benign.

The reasons for this study are two-fold: first, scholars of nationalism understandably focus their attention to the consideration of how and under what circumstances do nations come into existence and what the nation's existence says about a given society. Scholars from sociology, history, and political science are marred by their inability to arrive at a consensus definition regarding what constitutes a nation and under what conditions is a nation formed. Yet, despite this lack of a consensus, scholars of nationalism are unwilling to acknowledge the relevance of expanding the parameters of their analysis to include non-national entities that display the character traits typical of the nation/state.

Second, Texas state historians, while often willing to pay lip service to similarities/parallels between nationalism and Texas mytho-history, they nonetheless dismiss the similarities as isolated, and therefore more a product of coincidence. Thus, Texas state historians often understate and underappreciate the influence of nationalism and the social, political, and economic ramifications of its influence on the manufacturing of the states' historical narrative. As an exploration of manufactured history in Texas, this thesis represents an attempt to bridge the gap that separates the study of nationalism with current studies on cultural identity in Texas, a topic presently popular with many scholars of Texas state history.

This study is not an attempt to prove nationalistic intent or a latent desire on the part of past or present Texans to unilaterally construct an independent nation – although the legacy of the state's mytho-history has, and continues to encourage both separatist organizations and public officials alike to overtly embrace the rhetoric of nationalism and the possibilities implied therein. Rather, this thesis is an attempt to show the malleability of nationalism and its modus operandi, and perhaps suggest an analytical application beyond the analysis of traditional nation/states.

Chapter II of this thesis focuses on Texas during the period of Anglo colonization and addresses the factors that led a portion of the population living in Mexico's Northern frontier region to engage in a revolution that resulted in the formation of the independent Republic of Texas. Histories of Texas written during the early twentieth century often depict the Anglo-American colonists who settled the region as honest, hard-working people who carved civilization out of the wild, and mostly untouched, region of Northern Mexico. Moreover, the Anglo-American colonists who came to Texas sought a peaceful existence. However, it was only when threatened by a tyrannical Mexican government who sought to deprive these settlers

of their freedom, that Anglo-Texans took up arms against their oppressors and won their independence. [4]

Indeed, narratives such as this are endearing to Euro-Americans on many levels, mostly because they frame the founding of Texas as the triumph of good over evil – thus, reaffirming Anglo-European socio-political and racial superiority. These narratives likewise serve as a means to an end - justifying the exploitation, or in the case of the Native American, extermination of all non-Anglo populations who are deemed products of an inferior culture – enemies of freedom and progress. However, a close examination of Texas during the colonial era reveals a far more complexity that is completely, if not intentionally, overlooked by many historians during the early twentieth century. During this period, Texas contained a diverse, often interdependent, population motivated by self-interest and, by extension, a desire for political and economic stability, and it was self-interest that formed the foundation of social and political loyalty in colonial Texas.

The Republic of Texas is likewise portrayed by early twentieth century historians as a spunky little nation that, against all odds, prevailed before eventually taking its place as a part of the United States. Advocates of this highly romanticized interpretation Texas history often cite the Republic's recognition and diplomatic rapport with France and England as evidencing national legitimacy. Others point to the Republic's ability to field an army and navy as suggesting the same. However, this too is an oversimplification of the historical narrative. Indeed, during the years of the Republic of Texas, necessity, due in large part to the reluctance of

[4] I use the term Anglo-Texans throughout this work to describe the Euro-American settlers of Texas. As such, I do so out of convenience; however, I do not wish to imply that all Anglo-Texan colonists advocated for revolution and secession from Mexico. On the contrary, the vast amount of research on the subject of the Texas Revolution suggests that the choice to revolt against Mexico originated with recent Anglo-American arrivals to the region, and that many of the original Anglo-colonists followed suit only after war became unavoidable.

the United States to annex the territory, formed the foundation of the young nation's cultural identity. While the young nation managed to endure the hardships of nationhood during its tenure as such, its survival was often more a matter of good fortune than a product of social or political superiority. Nevertheless, interpretation of Texas history, such as the abovementioned – many written between 1890 and 1936 – continue to influence the way Texans viewed themselves and their history in relation to the rest of the world.

Chapter III contains an analysis of the contribution made by print capitalism to the formation of Texas Mytho-history. The legend and myth of Texas is a product of the imagination, and this imagination, while manufactured by writers of the period, was fueled by a population fascinated by romanticized stories of exotic, alien locations and cultures. One of the great ironies is that most of the writers who helped create the myth of Texas never once set foot in the territory, yet their writings fueled the flames that defined Texas as unique, individualistic, exotic, and increasingly American.

Chapter IV considers how Texas Historical Myth is legitimized through school texts, academic histories, and in popular culture. Moreover, this chapter likewise demonstrates evidence of Texas Mytho-history's durability in its ability to resist efforts at revision, and its malleability in relation to its ability to evolve to address evolving notions of Otherness within Texan and American society. This last point is most evident during an examination of the various films produced during the early twentieth century and the way each is framed to address the dominant social anxiety of its day.

Chapter V address how places of public memory and symbols of Texas help reinforce and perpetuate the state's mythic past and project it into the future. In each case, they epitomize constructivist theories of nationalism because they are products of Texas high culture, and as

such they depict a vision of Texas history that is congruent with the socio-political and moral ideology of the culture from which they came into existence. Thus, the history they convey is that which is deemed desirable to the Anglo-dominant culture in Texas.

Nationalism and Texas Mytho-History

The concept of national identity refers to a socially cohesive, group identity bolstered by collective notions of place, tradition, and language. This variation of social cohesion can develop from shared cultural values, social interaction, or out of political necessity. Thus, the idea of the nation becomes a product of the people within a given society who identify themselves as being a part of a group, the foundations for which perpetuate through historical narratives. In terms of its connection to the concept of the nation, nationalism is largely a product of Western political theory, the debate over which describes two distinct theories concerning the idea of the nationhood: the conservative theory, which supports the notion of nationalism as ascending from hegemonic cultural origins that predate the state as a political creation; and the liberal theory, which views the origins of nationalism as a political phenomenon.

To historians and political scientists, nationalism is an ideology that doubles as a political mechanism; the combination of the two implies the enduring presence of specific values that mobilize the political will of a people or population. On the other hand, sociologists often view nationalism from the context of the social movement, the attitudes and ideologies of which characterize the behavior of nationalities engaged in a struggle to achieve, maintain, or enhance their position in the world. Despite their differences, there exist specific points of agreement that

are critical to each conceptualization of nationalism: the presence of a common language, a shared history, and a public education system through which language and history are cultivated and disseminated to members of the nation.

Thus, there exists an inherent challenge to those who seek to study nationalism in all its manifestations, which is its tendency toward ambiguity. Indeed, it is difficult to find any two scholars who agree on a set of criteria for separating nationalism from other cultural, social, or religious loyalties. Thus, the question of where and under what circumstances nationalism occurs is often difficult to define, and can differ greatly depending on which theory of nationalism is applied. It is perhaps ironic, then, that the most notably unique example of nationalism is found in a nation that no longer exists.

The study of nationalism, as it occurs in the United States, compounds this set of challenges regarding the inherent ambiguity surrounding what it means to be American. Relatively young in relation to the other nations of the world, the U.S. lacked many of the influences that promote socio-political cohesion and feelings of cultural unity – such as a shared history. Gary Gerstle describes American nationalism as a blend of political nationalism, the notion of America as a land of "…political freedom and economic opportunity…", and racial nationalism, which envisions America as a people, "…held together by common blood and skin color… implying an inherent fitness for self-government…"[5]

The process of creating a sense of national unity is just that – a process. Nationalism finds legitimacy in the nation's past. If a useable past is not available, one may be created. The manufacturing of a usable past is about selective remembering and strategic forgetting. As such, there are several tools available to the nationalist, which help to facilitate socio-political

[5] Gary Gerstle. *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002. (4)

cohesion and fidelity to the nation/state. The spoken and written word is of the greatest importance to the process of nation building, since it is through the recounting of great achievements and heroic ancestors that the inherent strength of a peerless society is spread. However, there exists a darker side to nationalism, one in which historical narratives and cultural traditions work to foster forms of social interaction that justify and rationalize the systematic marginalization of groups within that society. Thus, the actions of one group against another often finds justification through the manipulation of the historical framework within which the action occurred, creating an illusion that supports the action as being a right and proper means to an end. The national narrative of the United States, for instance, is that of a hard-won, though inevitable, victory between the forces of good and evil. However, an interpretation of U.S. history as inherently good is possible only after omitting a wealth of unseemly episodes that occurred throughout the nation's history. For instance, it seems almost unfathomable that an institution as morally corrosive as slavery, or the genocidal quest to eliminate the Native American Tribes who, according to the national narrative, impeded Anglo-American westward migration, can be overshadowed and devalued by simply refocusing the public's attention on to something more benign – but this is exactly what happens.

However, most histories undergo periodic revision as time places greater distance between a people and the events of their past. Several recent studies on Texas reference C. Vann Woodward's contention that histories undergo a process of revision every twenty years[6]. While this may be the rule of thumb in most instances, scholars of Texas history might beg to differ. Indeed, the history of Texas, as told from the perspective of the Anglo-American settlers who began migrating to the region during the early 1820's, continues to attract adherents despite

[6] C. Vann Woodward, *Thinking Back: The Perils of Writing History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1986). (13)

numerous attempts to revise the historical narrative over the years. The Texas myth is that of a brave, resilient, and perhaps unique people who not only confronted the wilderness to settle an uncharacteristically hostile land, but ultimately wrested control of that land from a vastly more powerful nation in the name of freedom and liberty – the American Grand Narrative in miniature.

According to the state's historical myth, Texan's possess a seemingly unique social identity, one that suggests there is nothing that makes a person more special than the fact that they are from Texas. There is a reason for this creed of exceptionalism that extends far beyond the tall tales of Texas frontiersmanship and the state's revolutionary past. The history of Texas is often portrayed as that of a pioneering, freedom-loving people who brought progress and civilization to an uncivilized land, and when provoked, fought against impossible odds to secure liberty and independence from an evil Mexican despot. It is a narrative created with specific intent – to mirror the plight of the Thirteen Colonies and their fight to secure independence in 1776.

Narratives such as this are created to form the foundation of a culture's collective memory and, by extension, provide a population with a usable past that seeks to foster an aura of exceptionalism, which links a cultures optimism for the future to the merit of their society's past.[7] This 'useable past', in turn, is used to create a shared historical memory of the societies origins, great deeds, struggles, and triumphs that define the legitimize the rightness of their societies social and political philosophy. A shared historical memory builds within a society a collective memory, which "comprises a body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to

[7] Gregg Cantrell & Elizabeth Hayes Turner, ed. *Lone Star Pasts: Memory and History in Texas.* College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2006. 4

each society in each epoch, whose cultivation serves to stabilize and convey a society's self-image."[8] Thus, collective memory is a mutual possession, which assigns importance to past events and thus gives them meaning. Moreover, changes in collective consciousness will likewise change historical interpretation of events, often resulting in the struggle for dominance over collective memory. Nevertheless, it is important to study and understand collective memory in cultures and groups because it offers insight to how groups use history to shape identity and establish place in the present.[9] Memory shapes an individual's perception of the past, and in turn, determines how they perceive the present. It originates with those who witness an event, and is perpetuated through those who speak and write of these events for years to come. Several variables contribute to the development of collective memory that when combined work to form the foundation of what Benedict Anderson termed an imagined community.[10]

The myth of Texas and the exceptionalism of the Anglo settlers who came to dominate the socio-political and rhetorical landscape of the territory is an extension of the American national myth and its corresponding concepts of exceptionalism. It is this concept of exceptionalism that reinforces the foundation that supports American national identity – the narrative for which emphasizes the nation's uniqueness from its European antecedents due to

[8] Cantrell & Turner, ed. *Lone Star Pasts: Memory and History in Texas*. 6 For more discussion on the topic of collective memory in Texas see: Robert A Calvert, Walter L Buenger, ed. *Texas Through Time: Evolving Interpretations.* 1st. Austin, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1991; Robert F. O'Connor, ed. *Texas Myths.* 1st. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1986.; Glen Sample Ely. *Where the West Begins: Debating Texas Identity.* Lubbuck , TX: Texas Tech University Press, 2011.; Sylvia Ann Grider,. "How Texans Remember the Alamo." In *Usable Pasts*, by Tad Tuleja, 274-292. Logan: Utah State University Press, 1997.; Flores, Richard R. "Memory-Place, Meaning, and the Alamo." *American Literary History* (Oxford University Press) Vol. 10, no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 428-445.; & Flores, Richard R. "Private Visions, Public Culture: The Making of the Alamo." *Cultural Anthropology* (Wiley on behalf of the American Anthropological Association) Vol. 10, no. 1 (Feb. 1995): 99-115.

[9] Cantrell & Turner: "Collective Memory in Texas" 4

[10] Cantrell & Turner: "Collective Memory in Texas" 9

America's ability to avoid the terrors of authoritarianism, the class conflict, and the poverty plagued European society. However, this concept of exceptionalism as a reinforcing byproduct of nationalism in the United States is not unique to the Anglo-American, nor by extension – Anglo-Texan, experience. This is a sentiment espoused by all nations.

In terms of its connection to the concept of the nation, nationalism is largely a product of Western political theory, the debate over which describes two distinct theories concerning the idea of the nation: the conservative theory, which supports the notion of nationalism as arising from a hegemonic cultural origin that predate the state as a political creation; and the liberal theory, which views the origin of nationalism as a political entity. To historians and political scientists, nationalism is an ideology that doubles as a political mechanism that designates an enduring presence of specific values that mobilize the political will of a people or population. On the other hand, sociologists often view nationalism from the context of the social movement, the attitudes and ideologies of which characterize the behavior of nationalities engaged in a struggle to achieve, maintain, or enhance their position in the world. Despite their differences, there exist specific points of agreement that are critical to each conceptualization of nationalism: among them are the presence of a common language, a shared history, and a system of public education.

Review of Literature: Nationalism

Adeed Dawisha defines nationalism as a form of collective identity that a population connects with in the same way it might connect to other such forms seen in society.[11] He notes,

[11] Adeed Dawisha. 2002. "Nation and Nationalism: Historical Antecedents to Contemporary Debates." *International Studies Review* Vol. 4 (1): 3-22. Accessed 11 16, 2013. (3).

however, that scholars of nationalism continue to debate over what might best be explained as the variables of nationhood – such as the constituent elements of a nation and the interrelationship between these elements. To better understand the ideological antecedents that perpetuate this debate, Dawisha identifies three primary schools of thought that typify the study of nationalism. He begins with the primordialist, who conceive of the nation as real rather than imagined, and that national identity cannot be created or altered by means of any social construct. Primordialists tend to associate most closely with ethnicity, arguing that the nation is grounded by concepts of common ethnic origins, which Dawisha believes stem from the erosion of Medieval Christian universalism and the subsequent claims of nationhood made by various ethnic groups in Europe that focused on ethnic homogeneity.[12] From here he moves on to describe the position of the constructivist, who view the nation as existing when a significant number of a given population believe in its existence. As such, the constructivist believe that national identity fluctuates in response to changes in social interactions within the community. Thus, from this point of view, the nation is a psychological entity created from a combination of the populations multiple interests, their perceptions, and identities. In much the same way, the Instrumentalist's feel that social cohesion is something that is "shaped and nurtured" with purposeful intent.[13] Therefore, according to the instrumentalist theory, group identity is manufactured to establish historical continuity and solidify collective identity within a society.

Ernest Gellner is yet another advocate of the so called instrumentalist conceptualization of nationalism. He notes a tendency among nationalists to use what he refers to as, "pre-existing,

[12] Dawisha, (4). For analysis and criticism of the Primordialist and Constructivist theories of nationalism, see Anthony D. Smith's *Nationalism and Modernism.* New York, NY: Routledge, 1998. & Kramer, Lloyd. "Historical Narratives and the Meaning of Nationalism." *Journal of the History of Ideas* (University of Pennsylvania Press) Vol. 58, no. 3 (July 1997): 525-545.
[13] Dawisha (5).

culturally inherited", experiences as a nations foundation for constructing a shared cultural identity.[14] Thus, through a process of selective remembering, a nation can form, and more importantly transform, its historical past so that it will fit the needs of present society. Nations, in this conceptualization, are therefore creations of the nationalist, nurtured and sustained, often through the telling and retelling of stories depicting event of the past. This process of storytelling involves the creation of myths, heroes, and achievements of the nation as it sought to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles during its inception. However, the creation of a national myth is not so much about what is remembered, but about the less seemly events the nation chooses to forget. Ultimately, the narrative of the nation is the nation, and its portrayal creates what is often referred to as a grand narrative that anchors and inspires the populous, instilling within them a reverence of the moral and idealistic principles which define its existence.

Benedict Anderson defines the nation as, "an imagined political community", and shows how nationalism, in all its various incarnations, developed and spread around the world, and continues to persist to this day amongst competing ideological boundaries.[15] As a product of the imagination, Anderson views the nation differs from other more tangible definitions forwarded by Marxist or liberal theorists, and points to two major forces that supplanted older notions of social unity and allowed for a new conventionalization of the national community: print capitalism and the consolidated state.[16]

[14] Ernest Gellner. 2009. *Nations and Nationalism: New Perspectives on the Past.* 2nd Edition. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. (54)
[15] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* Kindle Edition. New York, NY: Verso, 2006 (6)
[16] Anderson: (45-47)

According to Anderson, it was the advent of the printed book, representing the first modern-style mass produced industrial commodity, that encouraged people to conceptualize events as occurring in homogeneous, empty time – a concept which implies that events constantly move in linier fashion from one to the other. Since homogeneous, empty time is the element in which novels and newspapers are written, readers begin to understand their spatial orientation as existing at a certain date and within a certain social structure along this timeline.[17] Thus, when print capitalism turned to the publishing of novels, the nature of the medium itself created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, one bounded by common definitions of insider and outsider and situated in a recognizable arena. Anderson goes on to argue that the consolidated state, in the form of common or shared experiences cemented by a state language common to those who traveled great distances away from their homeland, facilitated the imagination of community, even when far from home.[18]

Eric Hobsbawm argues that nations, as we know them today, are new and essentially unnatural creations, and that nationalism manifests itself in a variety of forms. As such, he addresses nationalism from an evolutionary perspective, since the development of national consciousness has evolved unevenly throughout the world.[19] Hobsbawm explores the central problem of how historical and political abstractions become matters for collective enthusiasm. His text functions as a synoptic vision to the phenomenon of nationalism as it has occurred over a 200-year period, exposing many of the inadequacies and generalizations that seem to plague scholarly works on the subject. Drawing upon the notion of the "imagined community", Hobsbawm stresses the impact resulting from improved means of communication and the spread

[17] Anderson: (25 & 26)
[18] Anderson: (65)
[19] Hobsbawm, Eric. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780.* Kindle Edition. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013. (12)

of literacy to the development of "proto-national" cohesion and the concept of national language. Hobsbawm concludes by stating that nationalism is a revolting phenomenon in that it depends greatly on believing in popular myth.

Liah Greenfield contends that nationalism is, likewise, a political ideology, which centers on the idea that a given population consists of a homogeneous, sovereign people.[20] However, she maintains that nationalism only takes hold when a group, (often one struggling with an identity crisis), feels that they gain an advantage from its adoption. She maintains that this first occurs in 16th century England, when Henry VIII's new aristocracy sought justification for their rapid social ascent. Conversely, Greenfield believes that French nationalism holds a chronologically subordinate and morally inferior place, arriving in France in the eighteenth century. Essentially, French society was traditionally linked closely to its relationship to the Church of Rome, and as their national identity shifted from loyalty to the Church to the new absolute monarch and the state, Frenchness was redefined. However, as French Absolutism advanced, the nobility developed as identity crisis that made the notion of nationalism appealing. This "noble reaction" took place during a time when many of the great socio-political thinkers began to argue that the true source of sovereignty lay, not with the king, but with the state – an idea that culminated in the French Revolution.[21]

Like Anderson, Partha Chatterjee maintains that models of nationalism are grounded in traditional Western thought and experiences, and as such are to blame for much of India's misery. As such, he seeks to fashion a new theory of Nationalism based on a combination of the post-modernist analysis of the Enlightenment, and Anderson's concept of the imagined

[20] Liah Greenfield. *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993. (11)
[21] Greenfield: (93, 178, & 183)

community.[22] Thus, he deviates from Anderson's thesis by insisting that the imagined communities that form the backbone of nationalism in Asia and Africa are not deviations of American and European models; rather, he believes them to be products of a sovereign domain rooted in the spiritual domain of the society. Hence, they are autonomous from the larger material domain of political nationalism.[23] Chatterjee believes that the new cultural theory of India must focus on the re-creation of the social identity that had been so violently interrupted by Western intrusions in the past. This new identity must be rooted outside of Western notions of nationalism and based solely on what the author refers to as Indian exceptionalism, which the author believes will be fundamentally inclusive rather than exclusive.

Anthony D. Smith defines nationalism as "a named human community living in a perceived homeland, having common myths and a shared history, a distinct public culture and common laws and customs for all members." [24] As such, Smith focuses his analysis of nationalism around ethnicity and a cultures ethnic ties to the past. Smith believes that the modern nation evolved from culture-rich communities that maintain their "myths of ethnic origins and bonds."[25] While Smith is not a constructivist by any stretch of the imagination, he is included because his analysis and criticism of post-modern, constructivist theories of nationalism are of significant value to this study.

Still, it is difficult to find any two scholars who agree on a set of criteria for separating nationalism from other cultural, social, or religious loyalties. Thus, the question of where and under what circumstances nationalism occurs can vary greatly depending on which theory of

[22] Partha Chatterjee. *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993. (5)
[23] Chatterjee: (75)
[24] Anthony D. Smith. *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History.* 2nd Edition. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2010. (13)
[25] Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*: (xxxi)

nationalism is applied. Perhaps the most notably unique example of nationalism's influence on the formation of cultural identity and historical memory, the remnants of which resonate to this day, is found in a state and not a nation.

Review of Literature – Texas

To date, there exists only one work that looks at the history of Texas from the perspective of nationalism. Mark Nackman's, *A Nation Within a Nation: The Rise of Texas Nationalism,* is a "case study of nationalism in an infant nation."[26] He argues that the struggles and trials endured by the Anglo-American settlers of Texas, which eventually saw the founding of the Republic of Texas as an independent nation, also had the effect of creating within its population an *esprit de corps*, or national identity that to this day helps shape the identity of Texans. Nackman defines nationalism as, "a love of place, a fierce loyalty to the state, and a desire to advance its power and prestige."[27] He goes on to state that, "nationalism can be both a sentiment and a movement." The latter, acting as a political instrument, "requires territorial autonomy or nation-state status" that seeks to "maintain national independence…territorial aggrandizement, or the repatriation of punitive nationals living in contested territory."[28]

Nackman notes that nationalism as it appears in Texas is fluid and, with the passage of time, changes in relation to the sociopolitical circumstances that characterized early Texas history. Furthermore, it is the remnants of Texas nationalism that continues to serve as the foundation of the Texan's unique sense of self and reinforces their concept of social identity.

[26] Mark E Nackman. *A Nation Within a Nation: The Rise of Texas Nationalism.* 1st Edition. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1975. (3)
[27] Nackman: (4)
[28] Ibid

Nackman argues that Texas identity was a product of common experience born from the difficulty of settling in an inherently hostile and inhospitable environment, which brought settlers into close contact with alien cultures. As such, Nackman notes several parallels between Texas and early U.S. history, stating that each possesses a tradition of war and independence, which in turn created hollowed traditions and national heroes that worked to produce a group consciousness and led to a heritage of nationalism. That said, Nackman's work is, in large part, superficial in relation to its methods and conclusions. His text lacks theoretical grounding and his narrative, rather than demonstrating the process of nation-building in Texas, perpetuates Texas mytho-history and concepts of exceptionalism found therein.

Indeed, it is difficult to find a work on Texas history published before 1990 that is not susceptible to the lure of Texas mytho-history. However, during the 1990's, regional histories moved from the fringe of the professional spectrum to the center, as a new generation of historians specializing in fields such as boarder and identity studies rose to prominence. Unlike the United States, whose historical narrative endures periods of revision every twenty or so years, the history of Texas has changed little since its conception in the late 1830's. However, only recently have scholars of Texas history attempted to explain this phenomenon. Moreover, those who addressed the influence of Texas past on present generations are reluctant to affix the term nationalism to the process that informs identity in Texas.

Laura Lyons McLemore's book, *Inventing Texas: Early Historians of the Lone Star State*, is one of many recent works that examine the influence of Texas history writers on the creation and perpetuation of the myths that shape collective memory in Texas. She notes that most historians attribute the larger-than-life image to Texans that, to this day, remains a significant part of their character. This image originated and continues to disseminate in the

writings of past historians. As such, myth has always played a part in the history of Texas, mostly because it attracts attention to the region. Her examination of the evolution of histories produced about the State of Texas seeks to determine from where the state's mythology came, as well as the motivations that drove its proliferation. Texas history myths survive to this day because the romantic tendencies of the nineteenth century manage to resist revision in the twentieth century. Most notably, McLemore argues that Texas myth is not unique; rather, it is identical as those held by countless Americans who came to the New World seeking refuge from a flawed humanity. Rather, these myths prevail, not because they epitomize American values, but due to the overwhelming desire on the part of Texans to remain unique.

Lone Star Past, a work edited by Gregg Cantrell and Elizabeth Hayes Turner, is a collection of essays that consider the topic of historical memory in relation to Texas History, and how popular perception works to shape social identity in Texas. All the essays operate under a core assumption: that groups construct memories to meet the present need, rather than out of an attempt to preserve the past. The authors refer to this tendency as a Third-Generation characteristic of memory.[29] The theme of the work focuses over the debate over whether Texas identity is characteristically southern or western. The solution to this question becomes problematic since myth and history tend to overlap at times, making distinguishing between the two a precarious task. Like myth, collective memory depends on emotional and cultural needs, which is why it possesses the power to influence a population's view of their nation and of themselves in the present. The argument made in *Lone Star Past* is that Texas myth rests on the belief that the state is an exceptional place in the world, and that simply hailing from Texas makes a person a better person. As such, Texans draw their collective memories from the

[29] Gregg Cantrell & Elizabeth Hayes Turner, ed. Lone Star Past: Memory and History in Texas. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2006. (20)

nineteenth century, suggesting that the period just prior to the turn of the century provide historians an excellent example of what is refers to as the entanglement of memory and history in Texas. For instance, Anglo's remember their arrival in Texas in terms of the march of civilization westward across America. As settlers arriving from the U.S. to an unpopulated land, Anglo Texans believe they brought progress and prosperity to the wilderness.[30] Conversely, Mexican-Americans remember the arrival of Anglos differently, viewing the advent of Stephen F Austin's colonial venture in the region as an event that brought land grabbers to Texas who stole property from Mexican families.

Where the West Begins: Debating Texas Identity, is a work by Glenn Sample Ely that examines notions of cultural identity in Texas, providing readers with a solid argument regarding the concept of "West" as implying both a geographical boundary and cultural badge. Ely suggests that East and West Texas are as culturally different, "as [are] the average citizens of any two states in the union."[31] He goes on to say that, persistent notions of Texas as a culturally unified region exist because of efforts seeking to distance the state from its southern identity during slavery and reconstruction. Ely describes what he refers to as a "shatterbelt" region, which extends vertically down the center of the state, as the location where southern and western identities collide.[32] West of the hundredth meridian, the climate and culture of Texas resembles that of most western states, where the land is dry and best suited for grazing cattle. Conversely, the land east of the ninety-eighth meridian, where sufficient rainfall totals allow for unirrigated farming, resembles that of the southern United States. Fittingly, the large agricultural operation located in East Texas depended a great deal on slave labor, and thus its population tended to

[30] Cantrell & Turner: (270)
[31] Glen Sample Ely. *Where the West Begins: Debating Texas Identity.* Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 2011. (34)
[32] Ibid

associate itself with the social constructs of the southern, slave-holding states. This was not so much the case in West Texas, where much of the population opposed both slavery and the southern secession movement.

Of the texts that address the formation of identity in Texas, only Andres Resendez applies the theories of nationalism to his analysis of pre-revolutionary Texas and New Mexico. Addressing the variables that affected national identities in Texas prior to the onset of the Revolution, Resendez book, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier*, begins by rejecting the traditional argument that cites Manifest Destiny was the primary reason for the United States annexation of Texas, and instead argues that loyalty shifted because of a human tendency to base decisions on self-interest rather than national loyalty.[33] Thus, it was the power of America's market economy, as well as the political instability of Mexico, that weakened the ties between Mexico's northern frontier region and the rest of the country and redirected the loyalty of the regions loyalty toward the more affluent United States. Most notably, Resendez challenges Benedict Anderson's contention that national awareness resulted due to the advent of print capitalism and the subsequent proliferation of print new papers in Spanish America. Resendez disputes this theory and demonstrates rather effectively that economic self-interest fostered mutually beneficial connections between peoples of differing cultural and ethnic orientation long before print capitalism became accessible in all parts of Texas.

As mentioned earlier, studies of Texas History, those focusing on cultural identity and its formation, often pay lip service to the constructs of nationalism as they appear throughout the state's history; however, the clear majority of Texas state-history scholars are reluctant to affix the term nationalism to an analysis of the state and its culture. This is understandable because

[33] Andrés Reséndez. *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. (6)

Texas is, after all, is not technically a nation. Nonetheless, the reluctance of scholars to address nationalistic constructs and tendencies in studies of Texas history and the formation of collective identity is potentially limiting

Indeed, an examination of manufactured history Texas reveals a wealth of evidence suggesting that, were it an independent nation, scholars of nationalism – particularly those from the constructivist and instrumentalist schools – might view the state as a prime subject from which to analyze the process of nation-building. There is but one obstacle that prevents this from happening – the general principal of nationality – which essentially negates the prospect of any such analysis taking place due to the academic community's inability to agree on how a nation should be defined. Since, as mentioned earlier, Texas is but one of the fifty states that comprise the United States of America, it fails to meet the necessary criteria for the study of nationalism to apply.

Yet, the same might be said of most of the nations that garner attention from scholars of nationalism. Paul Quigley wrestles with this problem in his analysis of Southern nationalism during the Civil War, arguing that "if the conventional rational of nationalism is to align a nation with a state, proving that a given group of people is a nation requires proving that they possess a national identity."[34] Nevertheless, he goes on to say that, while there are criteria common to the study of nationalism, he rejects the contention that there exists a "normal route to nationalism for either groups of people or for individuals."[35] If so, then there is relevance to be found in the application of nationalism studies to certain non-national entities.

[34] Paul Quigley. *Shifting Grounds: Nationalism and the American South, 1848-1865.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012. (12).
[35] Quigley: (13).

Charles Tilly provides some criteria that sheds light on the process through which Texas mytho-history became legitimized. He argues that not only are national identities manufactured, once in existence, the state itself takes an active interest in the process of "purveying and perpetuating" the various elements that contribute to and constitute national existence.[36] In his analysis of the foundational origins of nationalism in Europe, Tilly lists five tools used by the nationalist to instill notions of collective homogeneity and cohesion within its population. Consider the following:

1) Invention and reinforcing national symbols, traditions, rituals, and holidays.
2) Establishment of public education and subsidizing of history textbooks.
3) Constructing places of public memory that glorify the nation's historical past.
4) Employ powerful means of mass communication to cultivate and proliferate image and heritage of nation.
5) Enlist the support of social elite as a means of establishing the legitimacy of the national narrative.

These agencies are common to scholars of nationalism and cultural identity, alike. In each case, their function is the same - they enable the state/nationalist to manufacture, legitimize, and disseminate an interpretation of the nation's past – one which encourages collective unity within a society the same way as religious myth and dogma connect the faithful to the tenets of their religion.[37]

[36] Charles Tilly. 1994. "States and Nationalism in Europe 1492-1992." *Theory and Society* (Springer) 23 (1): 131-146. Accessed July 15, 2017. http://www.jstor.org/stable/657814. (132)
[37] Tilly: (133)

CHAPTER II

GRAVITATIONAL FORCES

Scholars of nationalism from the late 1970s to the 90s, particularly those with Marxist leanings, began focusing their analysis of nationalism on its economic origins and the pecuniary forces that encourage socio-political unity and loyalty within a nation. Eric Hobsbawm argues that nationalism prompted the creation of industrial economies, thus aiding the transition from local, agrarian economies of old to the industrial economic systems symbolize the modern nation. The creation of national economies led to the integration of larger territories and populations into socio-economically unified institutions. Hobsbawm goes on to say that the economic value of nationalism often responds to the needs of elites who shared racial or linguistic traits, while conveniently ignoring differences and conflicts within a society that might otherwise hamper the development of new economic processes. However, new economic opportunities often bring with them new social anxieties that beget new legitimizing ideologies.[38] Ernest Gellner, on the other hand, adopts a noticeably anti-Marxist approach to his study of nationalism that deviates from Hobsbawm on several key points. Both Gellner and Hobsbawm believe that nationalism is deeply intertwined in the story of capitalism; however, Gellner feels the central characteristic of historical modernity is the transition of a society's economy from

[38] Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, 28-29, 38-41; Lloyd Kramer. "Historical Narratives and the Meaning of Nationalism." *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol. 58 (3): 525-545 (1997), 530.

agrarian to industrial.[39] In other words, nationalism, which is inspired by changing economic realities within a society, reflects the historical processes that contribute to the modernization of said society. Gellner goes on to note that societies are inescapably affected by economic realities, and that these experiences facilitate and reflect the complex divisions that define a modern society. The ability of economic realities to alter the status of occupations and social groups, as well as modes of production, suggest the power of economics to define how and to whom people in a society express their loyalty.

A Crossroads of Culture, Economics, and Spatial Imagination

The people of Texas laid the foundations of a national identity in a period of anti-colonialist movements during the Age of Revolution. Rebellions and wars were occasions when frontier residence faced a choice concerning loyalty and allegiance amid powerful and often contradicting forces with far-reaching consequences. Individual identity choices tended to follow a logic informed by situational variables, where peoples living in frontier regions imagined multiple identities. This collective ambiguity that afflicted pre-revolutionary Texas harbored within it both the seeds of secession from Mexico —or annexation by the United States —— due to the large number of commercial and speculative activities that gradually drew Mexico's far northern territories into orbit around the U.S. economy.[40] The psyche of the frontier peoples therefore revolved around their desire for political stability and economic prosperity.

[39] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, 1983), 27-29.
[40] Andrés. Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850* (New York: Cambridge University Press2004), 3.

The frontier region was where the Mexican state and U.S. markets collided, forcing both frontier populations to deal with a consistent set of identity choices and tensions. The process began at the end of Spain's colonial tenure in North America. The Spanish Crown laid the foundations for the development of a national identity in Texas by introducing the institution, language, and customs that presented the complicated and diverse population of their far north territories with a sense of unity. Later, the Mexican government built upon these bureaucratic foundations from the Spanish era and expanded upon the institutional constructs by promoting new civic and religious rituals and forging networks of patronage that included civil, military, and church apparatuses. However, efforts to nationalize Mexico's northern frontier region were complicated by the complex economic conditions that persisted within these territories.

The U.S. acquisition of the Louisiana territory placed New Spain's northern regions in close proximity to the increasingly fertile economic markets of the United States. While the Spanish Crown initially barred the population of Texas from engaging in trade outside the Spanish Empire, the Bourbon monarchs eased trade restrictions in 1760 resulting in the emergence of regional markets throughout the frontier region that gradually began to gravitate toward the U.S. during the 1820s. The elimination of trade restrictions spurred Anglo-American immigration to the region of Texas, launching a flood of new economic activities that displaced most Spanish, and later Mexican, merchants. As a result, Texas became a crossroad of cultural and economic exchange and a strategic hub connecting U.S. and Mexican markets.

However, Mexico's economic growth stagnated in the years following its fight to gain independence from Spain. As a result, the far northern territories gravitated toward the more prosperous U.S. markets, causing the region's population to become increasingly dependent on maintaining open lines of communication and trade between Texas and the U.S. This economic

reorientation that occurred in the Northern Mexican territories proved problematic to Mexican nationalist politicians who sought ways of securing the far northern region of Mexico more firmly within their national sphere of influence.

Unfortunately, for those within the Mexican government who sought a unified nation, the invisible hand that governed the U.S. free-market system proved too seductive to an already conflicted populous unwilling to sacrifice their self-interest for the good of a distant nation that seemed more alien than kin at times. The population found itself compelled to maneuver within what it must have interpreted as powerful political and economic limitations; a condition that kindled the economic integration of Mexico's far northern territory with the U.S. economy during the 1820s and 30s, promoting numerous mutually beneficial, inter-ethnic frontier alliances, while also exacerbating tensions between Mexican nationalists and the northern-territory's frontier inhabitants who sought to capitalize on commercial opportunities to the north.

Indeed, the historical experiences of the U.S. – Mexican border land during the nineteenth century reflects a typical frontier situation during the modern era. The rise of nationalism throughout the late nineteenth century coincided with the spread of industrialism. However, on occasion, the ambitions of state and market fall out of sync with one another, creating potentially dangerous situations for those who lived in frontier regions.

During the early 1800s, both the U.S. and Mexico compared favorably with one another in terms of population and economic output. However, Mexico's large indigenous population and widespread social inequality proved a weakness as time progressed. The nation-state was relatively new to the human experience and peoples' conceptualization of geographical boundaries was ill-defined and underdeveloped. These manufactured constructs of nationhood

often abstruse and were frequently substituted with regional conceptions of spatial belonging, political enfranchisement, or economic self-interest.

In the 1820s, and later in the 1830s, the U.S. government made attempts to acquire Texas, first from Spain, and later from Mexico. Furthermore, the process of decolonization in North America during the late 1700s witnessed the rise of the nation's frontier region as a defining characteristic of the new American nation-state. In European, nation-states often enjoyed the luxury of natural, or pre-existing, boundaries that worked to divide the peoples of a nation from one another. Such boundaries were less well-defined in North America, resulting in vaguely defined lines of delineation. To remedy such vagaries, the U.S. and Mexico signed a Boundary Treaty in 1828 that required the respective governments to commission parties to explore, mark, and map the border between each nation in its entirety.[41] The Mexican government appointed General Manuel de Mier y Teran to head their boundary commission. Teran's report noted that throughout the Texas/Louisiana region, the lines of separation along the national boarder were lacking in consistency, due in large part to the 1806 Neutral Ground agreement.[42]

In the early 1800s, the Spanish speaking population in Texas totaled just over 2,000 people – most settling in and around the San Antonio and Goliad region. Outside of these regions, the Mexican presence in Texas was, according to Lieutenant Jose Sanchez – a member of the Teran Expedition – hardly recognizable. The Spanish speaking population who settled near San Antonio and Goliad lived a simple existence, and their lack of education meant they were culturally out of tune with their fellow countrymen to the south. All the same, Teran

[41] Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier,* 19.
[42] General Manuel de Mier y Terán. *Texas by Terán: The Diary Kept by General Manuel de Mier y Terán on His 1828 Inspection of Texas.* Edited by Scooter Cheatham, Jack Jackson, et al. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 79.

attributed the social incompatibility of the Tejano population, not to mention the "corruption" of the Spanish they spoke, to the region's proximity to the U.S., its distance from Mexico, and the regions increasing exposure to American socio-economic influences.[43]

By far, the largest and most diverse population in Texas was that of the Native American tribes, who occupied and controlled vast expanses of territory throughout the region. These tribes, while comprised of both small and large groups, functioned like separate, independent nations, and each represented a formidable challenge to any government craving cultural cohesion. Andres Resendez cites an 1827 report by the U.S. consul in Texas that note a total of ten thousand Native-American warriors from thirty-one nation/tribes. Based on this number, Resendez estimates the Native population of Texas to be approximately forty-thousand.[44]

Of equal concern to the Mexican Boundary Commission was the flood of Anglo-American immigrants coming to Texas. Between 1823 and 1830, Anglos immigrated to Texas at a rate of 1000 person per year. By the 1830s, this number would increase three-fold, growing to approximately 3000 per year. The Texas/U.S. border was so porous, that on the eve of the Texas Revolution, Anglo-Texan settlers and their slaves increased the population of Texas by some 24,700 souls.[45] In fact, Anglo immigrants to the region began outnumbering the Tejano population at a rate of 10 to 1.[46] These Anglo settlers of Texas colonized primarily in the coastal regions of East Texas. Their presence, while seemingly innocuous, helped to blur the boundary lines between the territory of Northern Mexico and the newly acquired U.S. territory of Louisiana. Indeed, it was the Mexican government's desire to establish a more concrete

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[43] Reséndez, 21.
[44] Resendez, 21.
[45] According to historian, David A. Williams' text, *Bricks Without Straw: A Comprehensive History of African Americans in Texas,* Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1997. (9), Texas had a slave population of approximately 5,000.
[46] Resendez, 22; Also see: Randolph B. Campbell, *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Gerald E. Poyo, ed. *Tejano Journey, 1770-1850* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2010).

conceptualization of their national domain that led officials in Mexico to take steps intended to refashion Texas as a possession of the Mexican nation.

In September of 1829, General Mier y Teran was appointed commander of Mexico's East Interior Provence – a post that included Texas. His first act in his new position was to call for a ring of military garrisons to be stationed strategically throughout Texas to enforce national laws, regain control of Anglo migration, and establish control over the native population. He suggested that two of these locations (Galveston Bay and Brazos Inlet), should serve as customs houses to collect duties on goods coming into the region from the United States. The duties collected at these customs houses were intended to finance Mexico's military presence throughout Texas. Second, Teran sought to promote European and Mexican immigration to Texas to counterbalance the ever-increasing Anglo and Native American populations. The above-mentioned efforts became the foundation for the Law of April 6, 1830, which adopted all Teran's recommendations while expanding on aspects of Mexico's previous immigration policy: it rescinded all impresario contracts that had not been filled and forbade any further immigration of U.S. citizens to Texas.[47] In retrospect, it is not difficult to see how the repercussions of this law became a catalyst for the Texas Revolution.

Colonel Juan Davis Bradburn became post commander of the Galveston Bay customs house, where his actions toward the Anglo-American colonists quickly tested the limits of Mexican sovereignty in the region. Responding to the warnings of Gen. Teran, Colonel Bradburn, on behalf of the Mexican government, denied 120 prospective Texas settlers the right to disembark their ship and enter the territory – citing the newly enacted laws against American immigration. The immigrants in question were part of a pool of settlers recruited by the

[47] Resendez, 22; Terán, 181

Galveston Bay and Texas Land Company – an organization based out of New York with powerful investor backing. While these settlers were eventually allowed to settle Texas, the effort to block immigration for the U.S. irritated the Anglo population already living in the territory, compelling some to militant action. Several families living in and around Galveston Bay planned an attack on the Mexican garrison at Anahuac; however, the plan was abandoned at the last minute and bloodshed was averted. All the same, Texans resented the burden of the new tariffs levied upon them by the Mexican Government given that, during the early years of colonization, Anglo-Texans were exempt from such financial obligation by a government who saw their presence as a welcome means to an end.

The appointment of George Fisher as tariff administrator in Galveston exacerbated the situation due to his reputation as a national crusader for the Mexican national cause. Upon his arrival in Galveston, Fisher considered himself to be surrounded by enemies. American merchant ships immediately began running the blockade, and in 1830, exchanged fire with Mexican guards stationed at Galveston. Later that same month, Anglo merchants armed with sticks and guns left Fisher and ten of his men under siege for three days. Although able to eventually evade their tormentors, eighteen months of intermittent hostility between Texans and Mexican government officials prompted Fisher to ask to be relieved of his assignment. Not long after, the fort at Anahuac was captured by a group of Anglo-Texans. By assessing taxes on goods brought from abroad and turning back Anglo-American immigrants' intent on settling in Texas, the Mexican Federal Government asserted its own geographic imagination over Texas.[48]

Indeed, state and local officials in Texas were the most consistent critics of the geographic designs advanced by federalist leaders in Mexico upon Texas. What is more, local

[48] Resendez, 25.

officials seemed unconcerned with issues such as boundary definition. Colonel Antonio Elozua, who was the regional officer in charge of enforcing the border between Texas and the United States, stated as much when he noted that people cross the Sabine River, (the accepted boundary separating the two nations), without thought or apprehension. Colonel Elozua's lack of concern revolved around a shared belief held by many of his fellow Tejanos: – that Anglos represented an industrious people who simply sought fertile land.[49] Indeed, Tejanos imagined themselves in relation to their geographic location – living on the edge of the Spanish world, at the edge of Christian civilization, in North America. Their experience conjured a history filled with hardship and inherent danger, constantly surrounded and under threat by so-called heathen nations bent on rolling back Tejano settlements in the region. They subsequently blamed their slow socio-economic growth on this hostile environment in which they lived. Moreover, the restrictive tendencies of the Mexican National government exacerbated these issues and prompted Father de la Garza—the first deputy from Texas to serve in Mexico's National Congress—to seek freedom of commerce between Texas and the United States.

The Mexican National Congress accepted de la Garza's proposal and went so far as to exempt Texans from paying import duties on goods brought in from the U.S.[50] Therefore, when the Mexican government sought to reassert its dominance throughout the region by reestablishing regulatory control over commerce and immigration, their actions were met with resentment from the local population. In large part, state and local leaders equated the economic prosperity they enjoyed throughout the region as being directly linked to their ability to attract foreign colonists and turn them into law abiding Mexican citizens. Certainly, Anglo settlers were the best and fastest means of populating and pacifying such a large region. The 1825

[49] Resendez, 25.
[50] Resendez, 27

Coahuila y Texas Law was the articulation of a dream aimed at dotting the territory with new communities of foreigners, (including nomadic Native-American tribes, though it neglected to detail the procedure for providing land to these tribes), willing to embrace Catholicism and Mexican rule.[51] Thus, the 1830 prohibition of Anglo settlement by Mexico's federal government threatened the socio-economic underpinnings that were integral to the Law of 1825, demonstrating the contradictory understanding of Texas geography and borders held by Tejanos as compared to those of bureaucrats in Mexico City. Consequently, while some fearing Anglo incursion advocated enforcement of a strict national boundary, most Tejanos supported a porous border policy for economic reasons. Thus, during the 1820s and 30s, Anglo-American settlers in Texas carved a peculiar space for themselves within the region, and like the Tejano's who preceded them, they fashioned a spatial understanding that represented a *de facto* antecedent of what became the American Southwest.

As mentioned earlier in this section, Anglo-American immigration to Texas began just prior to the end of Spain's tenure in North America. Initially, the Anglo population was welcomed by local Tejano leadership and primarily settled along the Texas east coast and Louisiana border in communities that, despite a law calling for ethnically mixed populations, were primarily Anglo. In addition, impresarios in these territories, most of whom were Anglo themselves, found it easier to recruit settlers from the Southern United States, resulting in the founding of numerous plantations along the Texas seaboard.[52] An article from the *Texas Gazette*, (1820), framed the success of these settlements in the context of Anglo settlers re-claiming land from an unpopulated wilderness. However, the proximity of Anglo-Texan

[51] Eugene C. Barker, "Mexican Colonization Laws" *TSHA Online.* Uploaded on June 15, 2010. Modified on May 10, 2016 https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ugm01 (accessed October 12, 2017).
[52] Terán, 207.

settlements to the economic opportunities found in Louisiana, suggested to many in the Mexican government, that Anglo-American colonies in Texas developed as commercial outposts in the service of American merchants.

Without doubt, Anglo colonists imported everything from New Orleans, from building supplies to fine china. In turn, they sold all the products of their toils, (cotton, cattle, etc.) in the markets of Louisiana. Mexico was essentially excluded from the economic loop. Accordingly, the presence of free trade between Mexico's northern territory and Louisiana created an economic dependence in Texas on these markets in the United States, causing Anglo-American colonists to envision Texas and Louisiana as being connected rather than separated by an international border. Further confusing the situation, Anglo settlers in Texas often felt inclined to use the American courts in Natchitoches to conduct official business, thus expanding U.S. *de facto* jurisdiction into Mexican territory.

Thus the absence of clear boundaries in East Texas, along with the effect of economic tendencies within the region on notions of geography, presented Mexico with a serious challenge to its sovereignty. Furthermore, Anglo-American "squatters", many of whom began settling between the Sabine and Attoyac Rivers as early as 1821, met with no initial opposition from local Mexican authorities. In fact, the Anglo-American Alcalde of Nacogdoches, James Dill, went so far as to personally grant one hundred sixty-eight families permission to settle this area. This lack of opposition to these settlers' presence encouraged others to follow suit.[53]

In 1824, the National Law of Colonization represented the Mexican Government's belated attempt to prohibit further colonization in the region between the Sabine and Attoyac Rivers; however, settlements in this region were firmly rooted and were producing

[53] Resendez, 41.

approximately 16,000 arrobas of cotton per year. Mexican officials reluctantly agreed that the removal of settlers so firmly established would require a military force of significant size. As a result, there existed "a stark disjuncture between the national imagination and the situation on the ground."[54]

Ironically, Mexican colonization efforts extended far into North America by this time; however, their inability to travel freely and safely between settlements limited their ability to spread influence throughout the region. Native American tribes who held control over this territory most likely perceived the presence of Mexican settlements as mere clumps of isolated and exposed communities rather than a nation with established borders. General Mier y Teran noted that several native tribes who lived in Texas for decades maintained ties to Spanish – Mexican government; however, he further noted that most recent Native-American arrivals tended to remain independent from the Mexican government.[55]

Native-American migration into northern Mexico happened for various reasons. Wichita, Utes, and Comanche tribes pushed Eastern Apache groups south into Texas. Later, the powerful Comanche confederation secured control of the territory around the Llano Estacado region south of the Arkansas River and into Mexico. They proceeded to form alliances with Kiowa, Kiowa-Apache, Arapaho, and Cheyenne tribes to retain control of the Arkansas basin. Their dominion over this region formed a barrier to south-moving Native-American tribes and West-moving Anglo-American groups well into the 1860s.[56] The strength of Native American control throughout this region is revealed in Spanish and Mexican defensive strategies for the region. The initial establishment of presidios along the Rio Grande was not so much an effort at

[54] Resendez, 41.
[55] Terán, 93 and 228.
[56] Resendez, 49.

assimilating and Christianizing the native population as it was a defensive strategy intent on stopping Native incursion into the interior of Spanish Mexico. The fact that Texas remained outside this protective barrier suggests Spanish, and later Mexican officials, recognized the challenges of confronting an entrenched and well-established Native-American presence throughout the territory.[57]

In spite of the aforementioned efforts to stave off Native incursion into Mexican territory, several groups, in particular Comanche, managed to extend their influence into the interior of northern Mexico, eventually crossing the Rio Grande and forcing Mexican authorities to relocate the presidios at Monclova and Agua Verde to safer locations.[58] The gradual migration of Native-American groups into Spanish Texas brought them increasingly into contact with French, and especially Anglo-American traders, who ventured west in search of new economic opportunities following the U.S. acquisition of the Louisiana territory. Groups like the Lipan, Wichita, Comanche, and Kiowa purchased arms in abundance from these French and Anglo merchants, becoming re-invigorated as a result.

At the same time, internal turmoil began to weaken Spanish authority in North America, leading to Mexico's emancipation from European control. While Native expansion into Texas occurred at the expense of Mexico, many Native groups established individual trade networks with Mexican villas. Some groups went so far as to recognize the new government of Mexico, pledging their allegiance to the Mexican Nation and acknowledging the federal government as the highest authority. In return, these Native groups received salaries and Authority Canes, which they used for their own internal power struggles.[59] Even so, some officials within the

[57] Resendez, 49.
[58] Pekka Hamalainen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 227.
[59] Resendez, 50.

Mexican government held reservations about the way the new federal government conducted business with the Native population in Texas. Tadeo Ortiz, successor to General Teran in Texas, criticized what he believed was a diplomatic inconsistency in Mexico's Indian Policy. Ortiz argued that Mexico's strategy concerning Native American populations in Texas devastated Mexico's northern territory, advocating instead a military campaign to drive Native groups out of the region.[60]

In retrospect, the impact of Native-American expansion into Mexico's northern frontier became detrimental to Mexico's national imagination. Tejano and Anglo-American settlers of the region considered the space they inhabited as existing in opposition to that which was inhabited by the various Native groups. Contemporary newspaper accounts and personal correspondence frequently depict Anglo and Tejano settlements as surrounded by "Indian Nations"[61] Consequently, each of the above-mentioned groups viewed one another in seemingly unambiguous spatial terms: sedentary vs. nomadic, Christian vs. heathen, national vs. tribal, civilized vs. savage. Even so, social conceptualizations during the Spanish and Mexican periods were by no means as clear cut as they may have appeared. In the eyes of Spanish authorities, Native Americans seeking to receive the privileges of Spanish citizenship need only become Hispanicized by acquiring a land grant, marrying into a Hispanic family, or performing a legal service for the Crown.

During the Mexican period, officials streamlined this process of assimilation by omitting any mention of racial or ethnic categories from their official paperwork. Hence, Native Americans wishing to become Mexican citizens merely had to settle in a fixed location, convert

[60] Arnoldo de León, "Mexican Texas." *Handbook of Texas Online.* Uploaded on June 15, 2010. Modified on January 30, 2017 https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/npm01 (accessed September 7, 2017)
[61] Resendez, 52.

to Catholicism, and pledge loyalty to the Federal government. Contrariwise, it was equally simple to exit the national body, if an individual felt so inclined. The ease with which individuals/groups moved in and out of the national community helped define the national imagination. The population residing in Mexico's far northern territory seemingly dissolved into a mélange of adjacent groups of various shades.

Between 1820 and 1830, an assortment of spatial understandings continued to evolve as Mexican Federal authorities proceeded with efforts to explore, map, and delineate Mexico's national boundaries. All the while, American merchants and settlers continued immigrating in ever increasing numbers to Texas, establishing commercial ventures and adopting lifestyles that depended on the continuation and proliferation of ties to markets in the United States. Similarly, Tejanos and their allies profited from the economic conditions created by the integration of the frontier region into U.S. markets.[62] Spatial configurations created by the encroachment of nomadic Native-American groups into Mexican territory were made possible by the comparatively low Tejano and Anglo-American population in Texas at the start of this period. However, by the start of the 1930s, the assorted spatial and demographic schemes that materialized and evolved in preceding years began to collide with one another – producing a series of rebellions over the question of who was entitled to what.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the economies of the U.S. and Mexico were vastly different. In the period between 1800 and 1860, Mexico's national income declined 10% while U.S. income increased approximately 1270%.[63] Mexico's industrial stagnation was punctuated by a sizable population that hovered around six million during this period. Conversely, the United States, swept up in the economic tsunami following revolutions in both

[62] Resendez, 55.
[63] Resendez, 90.

industry and transportation, grew from five to thirty-two million people during this same span of time.[64] Unlike the majority of Mexico, the nation's northern frontier experienced significant economic growth, propelled primarily by foreign immigration, the opening of trade routes to the U.S. allowing for the importation of cheap goods, and the exploitation of Texas as a crossroads of exchange. Accordingly, economics and the liberalization of trade policy from the formerly restrictive policies that prevailed during the Spanish era played a significant role shaping the demographic, political, material-culture, and identity in Texas. While Mexico's economy stagnated, its far northern territory of Texas prospered and increasingly gravitated toward an expanding U.S. economy.

In the United States, the market onslaught of the Jacksonian era had an equally transformative effect on the nation's social foundation – altering notions of race, class, and gender in an already rigidly hierarchical society; and Mexico's far northern territory became the perimeter of this economic revolution. The lifting of economic restrictions in 1820 shifted Mexico's frontier economy from one of subsistence to that of a commercial structure, thus further re-orienting the regions commercial ties toward the U.S. In Texas, a handful of Anglo merchants, who initially sought to supply goods to a growing population of Anglo settlers, quickly gained favor with Tejano and Mexican Texans in the region. This, in turn, enabled them to extend their influence in Mexican states like Tamaulipas and Coahuila.

By 1826, Anglo merchants dominated trade in San Antonio and Goliad, many of whom settled permanently in Texas and married into prominent Tejano families. The Anglo-Texan's connection to U.S. markets not only benefited Anglo merchants, it worked to limit competition from Tejano and Mexican merchants who lacked the wherewithal to conduct business in the

[64] Resendez, 93.

United States. However, as Texas increasingly found itself at the junction of international trading routes coordinated from states such as Louisiana and Missouri, the doors of financial prosperity that were once closed to Tejanos began to open – allowing them, for the first time, to effectively compete with Anglo merchants. Businessmen like Jose Casiano, who as a sailor in the U.S. navy ventured into New Orleans where he achieved success as a merchant, used his influence in the U.S. to establish Tejano and Mexican merchants in Texas. Within this economic environment, Anglo and Tejano merchants and politicians profited from the region's economic relationship with U.S. markets – suggesting that social and political power in Texas was strengthened by the infectious spirit of free enterprise that swept through Texas during this period.[65] What is more, Anglo and Tejano merchants were not the only ones to profit from U.S. economic encroachment.

Native groups in Texas were not immune to this spirit of merchant enterprise sweeping through the Texas frontier during this period, as many groups found economic conditions within the territory offered a host of new means through which to benefit financially, most previously unavailable to them. In 1822, the Mexican government began allowing the free traffic of mules and horses between Texas and the U.S., a concession that increased demand for each throughout the frontier region. Comanche tribes in Texas became the chief beneficiaries from this equestrian boom by driving huge herds of horses and mules via the Camino Real from San Antonio and Goliad to Louisiana. Indeed, the market revolution in the Texas frontier touched the lives of all residents living in the region, and in turn worked to realign sociopolitical and economic interests of all frontier residents. Most importantly, the desire for economic prosperity trumped all other causes for contention between Anglo and Tejano merchants, often resulting in

[65] Resendez, 103.

the formation of mutually beneficial, cross-cultural alliances in which Anglo-Americans paved the way for their Hispanic counterparts in Louisiana and Missouri. Hispanic traders returned the favor by helping their Anglo counterparts contend with Mexican laws and customs officials. Relations between the two further solidified as each were often obliged to travel with one another and extend each other credit. Intermarriage between Anglos and Tejanos essentially sealed profitable business and personal relationships. In addition, Tejano and Mexican Texan political officials also established strong ties with Anglo impresarios based on mutually beneficial economic foundations.

The new frontier economy that swept through Texas, while beneficial in the context of Anglo-Tejano relations, proved antagonistic when it came to Anglo relations with the region's Native American tribes. The new commercial environment gradually began to deteriorate the tenuous peace that existed between the Hispanic and Native populations during the Spanish period. The arrival of French and Anglo merchants to Texas frontier region during the early nineteenth century shattered Native American dependency on bartering their goods in local Spanish settlements. As these nomadic tribes increasing encountered French and Anglo merchants, they began to acquire arms, which they in turn used to conduct raids on Spanish villages.

The abovementioned situation degenerated as new economic conditions in the Texas frontier created markets in which marauding tribes could profit off the spoils of their raids.[66] This changing relationship between ethnic groups within the region coincided with increasing concern among many in government officials in Mexico City that the fate of the frontier as Mexico's far northern region was becoming precarious as the territory became increasingly dependent on the

[66] Resendez, 104.

U.S. economy. As early as 1820, the Mexican Boundary Commission warned that the Anglo population in Texas outnumbered that of Tejanos in the region, and that the communities these settlers founded appeared devoted to pursuing commercial ventures in Louisiana. While commercial liberalization worked to stimulate trade between Coahuila and Texas, the increased economic integration of markets and trade between Texas and the U.S. prompted fears of Americanization throughout Mexico's northern frontier.

Thus, the conditions that led to the Texas Revolution were not simply the result of Mexican despotism seeking to impose the will of the federal government upon the hapless Anglo-American population of Texas. Rather, the Mexican government reacted to Anglo-American social and economic incursion in a manner that was predictable, in retrospect. If so, the Anglo-Texan response to the Mexican government's attempt to reassert political authority within the region is less justifiable, and Anglo-Texan accusations of despotism on the part of the Mexican government seems somewhat precarious. Subsequently, the legitimacy of the Texas Revolution is increasingly ambiguous.

CHAPTER III

LEGITIMIZING A NATIONAL NARRATIVE

Nations are built upon a populations belief in the uniqueness of their historical and philosophical beliefs. Thus, the spoken and written word is of great importance, since it is through the recounting of great achievements and heroic ancestors that the inherent strength of a peerless society is spread. Consequently, historical narratives and cultural traditions work to foster forms of social interaction that tend to justify and rationalize the historical marginalization of groups within a society who, for whatever reason, pose a threat to the socio-political or economic ambitions of the nation's high culture. Thus, the actions of one group against another often become justified through the manipulation of the historical context within which the action occurred, creating an illusion in support of the action as being a right and proper means to an end. In the United States, the national narrative is that of a hard-won, though inevitable, victory over evil; however, this narrative can only exist if less seemly episodes from the nation's past, such as institutionalized slavery or Native-American genocide, are excluded from the equation. The above-mentioned notwithstanding, there exists an inherent challenge to those who seek to study nationalism in all its manifestations; this is of course its tendency toward ambiguity.

Scholars of nationalism often point to examples of the rhetorical dissemination of the national ideal as a means of explaining how concepts of nationhood and identity circulate throughout modern societies. In doing so, they recognize that collective notions of nationhood rely a great deal on the circulation of information within a society; thus, accounting for the

wealth of studies focusing on communication and the narratives that promote national identity.[67] In 1953, Karl Deutsch argued that an individual's involvement within a society is defined by their ability to communicate effectively on a large scale. Thus, the nation is shaped by modern methods of communication that enable ideas and interests of a social elite to spread over large territories and among the population found therein.[68]

Building upon Deutsch's thesis, Benedict Anderson focused his study of nationalism on the pivotal role played by the advent and evolution of print capitalism, which allowed vast populations to conceive of themselves as connected to one another through the dissemination of ideas via newspapers, books, and the establishment of state bureaucracies.[69] He argues that new technologies allowed information to spread more rapidly in modern societies, which in turn led to the creation of legal and educational institutions that fostered modes of collective identification over large territories. However, it was the emergence of print capitalism, along with the standardizations of erstwhile linguistic diversity that laid the groundwork for the creation of new cultural narratives, disseminated in the form of newspapers and novels, that ushered in the modern nation. Thus, stories of the nation read by members of the community allowed these individuals to identify with people and places beyond their immediate sphere of influence. Anderson goes on to say that the imagined nation assumes many forms, from narratives written by national novelists to maps studied by students in schools, and each sharing one defining characteristic: they carry the influence of the intellectual class, who seeks to impose the will of the intelligentsia upon the imagination of the masses.

[67] Lloyd Kramer, "Historical Narratives and the Meaning of Nationalism." *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol. 58, no. 3 (July 1997): 525-545. 526.
[68] Kramer, 532.
[69] Anderson, 15 and 49.

Post-structuralist scholars such as Homi Bhabha extend this literary approach to nationalism by emphasizing the importance of language and writers in the formation of national identity. Like every cultural practice, the meaning of the 'nation' is constructed through narrative in the form of novels, films, and historical texts. Bhabha, like Anderson, sees the nations as a textual construct; however, Bhabha goes beyond Anderson, stressing the challenges of contradictions and alien supplements that resist accommodation within the master narratives that seek to construct cohesive national identities.[70] In short, nationalist texts are burdened by assumptions that seek to repress peoples, events, or ideas that might contradict the grand narrative upon which a nation's identity is built. Therefore, the modern nation is a manufactured concept created through a "vast process of writing that can never overcome the ambivalence that haunts notions of nationhood, the language of those who write it, and the lives of those who live it."[71]

Indeed, the history of the nation is the history of conflict over competing narratives that seek to define the social community. Subsequently, these narratives face a dialectical struggle between those who seek a coherent narrative of a community's existence, and those whose presence disrupts or undermines the soundness of the national narrative. However, Bhabha believes that nationalisms depend on difference, and that the presence of otherness give meaning to the search for unity within a nation or against other nations. The nation, Bhabha argues, "is internally marked by cultural difference and the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples", so that there are always limits to cohesive cultural constructs found within the nations.[72]

[70] Homi Bhabha, "Introduction: Narrating the Nation." In *Nation and Narration*, edited by Homi K. Bhabha (New York: Routledge, 1990).
[71] Bhabha, 1.
[72] Bhabha, 299.

By the same token, the underpinnings of identity in Texas are as much contrived as they are reality. Texas is a vast landscape comprised of almost every topographical variation found on earth; however, it is also a set of beliefs from which Texans perceive the world around them. Texans view themselves as culturally unique, enthusiastically endorsing notions that they are heirs to a legacy won by mythological figures – both exotic and heroic in form and action. Indeed, the rhetoric of Texas boasts many things: rugged individualism mixed with unwavering loyalty to family and friends, love of land and power, admiration for hard work and courage, biblical faith and generosity combined with utter disdain for rules dictated by outsiders. For better or worse, the rhetoric of Texas is part of its heritage and serves as the foundation of the state's collective identity.

Writing the Identity of Texas

Prior to the 1820s, Anglo-American connected Texas to colonial Spain, and later Mexico. Moses Austin's venture to San Antonio de Bejar was the catalyst that began the process of association that linked Texas to notions of land and adventure in the Anglo-American collective conscience. For those willing to brave the hardships, Texas became a land where fortunes could be made and live begun anew. In terms of European influence, Texas was sparsely populated. The Spanish saw little value in the region and made only a handful of ill-conceived, half-hearted attempts at colonization until the threat of French incursion compelled the Spanish to act and prompted the construction of frontier outposts. The advent of the Mexican nation found Texas similarly neglected, not so much from a lack of desire, but mostly due to the lack of resources in Mexico. Thus, the opening of Austin's colony came at the perfect time for

the Anglo-Americans. Land policies in the U.S. at the time made it difficult for all but the wealthiest to acquire property. The economic panic of 1819, in part exacerbated by excessive land speculation and the unrestrained issuance of paper money, resulted in the financial downfall of many in the United States. Many of the victims of this financial crisis looked to Texas as a place to rebuild their shattered lives and escape their creditors – after all, land was cheap, and the laws of the United States did not apply. Thus, Texas became a place of opportunity for many Anglo-Americans, despite the inherent dangers and foreign rule.

The first Anglo immigrants to Texas spoke of a vast land of unbridged rivers, un-cleared wilderness, and uncut forests – ruled by men who spoke a foreign language whose seat of government was a thousand miles to the south.[73] Moreover, Texas was not a vacant territory, it contained no less than three established settlements, the largest of which, San Antonio de Bexar, had a population of some 1,500 residence as of 1821.[74] Along with Goliad and La Bahia del Espiritu Santo, the total Mexican population in Texas was between 2,500 and 3,500 at the time of the first Anglo migration to the region. Indeed, time and distance make a unique contribution to the formation of identity in Texas, both past and present. They are variables that must be considered, especially when a modern traveler driving at an average speed of seventy miles per hour can spend an entire day driving before they cross the state line. Such was the case with the early Anglo-American colonists, whose settlements were, at best, separated by days of travel from nearest Mexican government authorities. While these colonies were part of the Mexican nation and subject to its laws, distance between the colonists and Mexican government officials insulated Anglo settlements and developed therein a tendency on the part of the colonists to

[73] Carol Lea Clark. *Imagining Texas: Pre-Revolutionary Texas Newspapers 1829-1836* (El Paso, Texas Western Press, 2002), 4.
[74] Randolph B. Campbell, *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 58.

discount numerous aspects of the centuries-old Spanish culture in which they lived. Subsequently, colonists began fashioning an identity of their own that reflected the image of the land they called home, as well as the social and political beliefs they were raised to embrace as former residents of the United States.[75]

The establishment of newspapers often coincided with the founding of communities in the United States. This tradition of free press was a deeply ingrained construct of Anglo identity, and this construct followed the first Anglo colonists to Texas. In frontier societies, newspapers acted as agents of social cohesion and change, accelerating cultural stability as publishers advocated for public education, civic responsibility, and economic development. Similarly, newspapers, like literature and music, functioned as mirrors of a society in that they tended to reflect popular attitudes and beliefs of a community about itself and the world around them. The first permanent English publication in Texas was the *Texas Gazette*, established in September 1829, by Godwin Brown Cotton in the town of San Felipe.

The paper illustrated a tradition typical in the nineteenth century press in that it was little more than a propaganda piece for those with a vested interest. In fact, the *Texas Gazette* was funded by Stephen F. Austin to report *His* version of events in relation to his dealings with the Mexican government to promote the advancement of Anglo settlers and to attract additional setters to the region.[76] The next major English language publication to appear in Texas made its debut on the eve of the Texas Revolution. It was in this context that *The Telegraph and Texas Register* became an integral part of not only the Revolution it helped to inspire, but of the Republic whose identity it helped to establish. Without question, it was the invasion of Texas by the Mexican Army that necessitated a need for a 'faithful' accounting of events to aid Texans

[75] Clark, 10.
[76] Clark, 10.

through the hardships and fog of war. Before continuing, it should be noted that the newspapers that appear in Texas between 1829 and 1836 bear little resemblance to modern papers read today. They did not contain articles or feature stories by trained journalists as we conceive of them, simply because such individuals were rare. Rather, publishers printed stories based on whatever information came through their door. In fact, stories often spread faster by word of mouth; thus, editors often filled their pages with opinion editorials, government documents, and various works of literature.[77] It was common practice for papers to borrow stories from one another, so stories from other towns or states were published along with local commentary. Thus, each issue represented a dialogue between printed voices with an imagined audience of readers – all contributing to an ongoing conversation.[78]

The prevalence of visual evidence that depicted an ongoing conversation about Texas made the ideas expressed on these pages real, permanent, and true in a way oral dialogue found itself incapable of doing. Because words seen in print carry with them an air of implied credibility, they are often accepted without question by the reader and thus become real. This reality helped the individual by offering them a way to organize or conceptualize ideas in context. Each conceptualization of Texas existed until replaced by another, more compelling conceptualization was verbalized and made real. Thus, any book or article written about Texas or Texans during that period contributed to the formation of a collective imagination for both the people living in and outside the region. The term rhetoric, as it appears in this text, is defined as a language construction or system of thinking that allows us to conceptualize and understand the world and our surroundings.[79] The rhetoric of Texas therefore became a process that enabled the

[77] Clark, 32; Andrea Kökény, "The Construction of Anglo-American Identity in the Republic of Texas, as Reflected in the "Telegraph and Texas Register" *Journal of the Southwest* 46, no. 2, pp.283-308 (2004): 284.
[78] Clark, 8.
[79] Clark, 126.

colonists of Texas to comprehend their environment and, in doing so, fashion a cultural identity in the process. Hence, the rhetorical identity of a place is not an abstract, it is an assigned interpretation that can often be traced back to past rhetoric's commonly found in the cultural conscience of a given period.

As mentioned earlier, Anglo immigrants to Texas brought with them pre-existing notions and attitudes shared by many in the U.S. and Western Europe, which helped fulfill the need for a verbal system of understanding culture and identity Texas colonists were manufacturing. In this fashion, much of the rhetoric of Texas was an adaption of ideas and images previously experienced by the Anglo colonists, which were later combined with more localized experiences and cultural interactions from which meaning was assigned to places, people and events that impacted the population. Among other things, the Anglo settlers of Texas brought with them deeply ingrained notions of social superiority encouraged by the success of U.S. cultural expansions; however, to say that Anglo-Texans were uninfluenced by contact with Mexican culture is naive, at best. Tejano residents of Texas learned to cope with the inherently hostile Texas environment long before the Anglo settlers arrived, developing traits of ruggedness, egalitarianism, swagger, and courage in the face of danger along the way. They had a legacy of rugged individualism, and it was somewhat unceremoniously coopted by the Anglo population as indicative of the Texas character.

In much the same way, Anglo colonists adopted Tejano clothing, (boots, saddles, and cowboy hats), and language. Indeed, the cultural interaction between the Tejano and Anglo populations of Texas resulted in a divided rhetoric, one in which the Anglo settlers ceased being American, and yet neither were they Mexican or Native-American – they became Texans. However, it was the Texas Revolution that solidified element of Texas rhetorical identity during

the period between 1829 and1836. The trauma of that event redefined the verbal fabric of Texas, and out of necessity it spawned a more powerful rhetoric, generated to make its effect understandable.[80]

The story of Texas was likewise influenced in no small part by Fredrick Jackson Turner's thesis, which argues that the existence of a frontier functions as a foundation upon which American character was built. According to Turner, Western movement into this frontier forced Americans to discard traditional characteristics of their European ancestors and replace them with newly fashioned traits of strength and self-reliance.[81] Subsequently, the closing of the frontier, (circa 1890), brought a close to the first chapter in American history. However, echoes of Turner are found in the early histories of Texas and, most notably, in those produced by Eugene C. Barker, whose work underscored and perpetuated notions of American exceptionalism and the march of democracy.

Texans found themselves uniquely located in the spatial and rhetorical conceptualizations of outsiders whose knowledge of life on the frontier region was based, not upon experience, but rather on that which they read in the literature of the period. The absence of an acknowledged population and geographically fixed border between the U.S. and Mexico, Texas was perceived as both accessible and strange – enough so to inspire fascination on the part of curious would-be immigrants and news seekers. It was this discernment of Texas as 'other' that made the region and its population fair game for commentary by contemporary writers of popular fiction. As a result, the image of Texas these writers fashioned was that of an exotic, isolated region – images that were eagerly assimilated by readers in the U.S. and England. In turn, immigrants to Texas

[80] Clark, 89; Kökény, exact page number
[81] David J. Weber, "Turner, the Boltonians, and the Borderlands." *The American Historical Review* 91 (1): pp. 66-81 (1986).

seemed to draw inspiration from the creation of such labels, relishing the idea to the extent that they overtly embraced the 'otherness' of their environment and proceeded to refashion it into something familiar.[82] It was not, however, the popular conceptualization of Texas as a wilderness that made it unique; rather, it was the presence of another complex culture in the region that, at the time, was in the process of forming its own identity following independence from European colonial control.

The concept of Mexicans as 'Other' was underpinned by American notions of *The Black Legend,* which portrayed Spaniards as sexually depraved, bloodthirsty tyrants.[83] Americans found it easy, if not all together beneficial, to simply transfer these negative stereotypes to the blood-descendants of Spanish Conquistadores, whose depravity no doubt mixed with and confounded the worst traits of Native-American, Mestizo, and Creole populations. Perhaps it is ironic that such stereotypical conceptualizations prevailed despite the numerous political and economic interests shared by both Tejanos and the Anglo emigrants in the region. More ironic still was a tendency among the Tejano population to view Anglo-Texans as 'Other' in much the same way that they themselves were portrayed.[84]

For years, the region that comprised modern-day Texas functioned as little more than a buffer, insulating Mexico from the numerous Native American tribes that dominated the territory. The Spanish before them viewed Texas in much the same way, as a protective barrier against French, and later U.S. incursion. Both the Spanish, and their Mexican successors, made efforts to establish settlements in the region; however, only the latter achieved any success, albeit

[82] Kökény, 285; Glen Sample Ely, *Where the West Begins: Debating Texas Identity* (Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 2011), 19.
[83] Benjamin Keen, "The Black Legend Revisited: Assumptions and Realities." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 49 (4): pp. 703-719 (1969)
[84] Clark,79.

limited. Thus, prior to Anglo settlement of Texas, the region existed as a partially expendable frontier whose greatest value existed in its strategic position. Mary Austin Holley stated as much when she referred to Texas in her 1833 publication of the same name, calling it a land upon which "clouds and darkness have rested" due to a Spanish government that discouraged all attempts to explore the territory.[85] The Otherness of Texas was not simply limited to socio-political factors, it was also a product of print capitalism and a desire of authors, such as Holley, to cater to a reading public starved for stories accounting exotic adventures in faraway lands. The British, for their part, were similarly fascinated by tales of adobe cities, trackless forests, and vast deserts.

Americans, in the wake of the military and industrial successes they enjoyed during this period of history, began cultivating British-like, Euro-centric notions that inspired a fascination in the differences between a highly civilized Eastern seaboard and a Western frontier that seemed void of the tenets that defined civil society. The result was an Eastern reading public that consumed stories about their own exotic frontier with great enthusiasm. When the Texas Revolution began, romanticized conceptualizations of the American frontier became deeply entrenched in Anglo-American imagination, so much so that it became difficult for many in the U.S. to separate Texas' fight for independence from their own war for liberation waged against England in the not-so-distant past. One reviewer from *Western Literary Journal*, commenting on Mary Austin Holley's work, referred to Mexicans as "Usurpers" and "Despots", stating that while "Texas may never become part of the United States, it was her destiny to become a free republic."[86]

[85] Marry Austin Holley, *Texas Observations, Historical, Geographical and Descriptive, in a Series of Letters, Written During a Visit to Austin's Colony with a View to Permanent Settlement in that Country in the Autumn of 1831* (Baltimore: Armstrong & Plaskitt, 1833).

However, sentiments such as those of the abovementioned author, while common, were by no means exclusive. Harriet Martineau, for instance, believed the Revolt in Texas to be an act of theft, "the most high-handed of modern times." John W. Croker, a British essayist and political figure, considered the Anglo-Americans in Texas to be little more than adventurers who fought for the promise of land. He concluded that the rebels waging war against Mexican despotism had, "no pretenses or right to the name of Texans – much less the right to erect a country…into an independent state." Crocker equated the revolution to "unbridled freedom", arguing that the "lack of a monarchy allowed lower class morality to decay the will of the majority."[87]

All the same, the prevailing attitude of Anglo-Americans was that Texas would, at some point, assume its place as part of the United States – the only question was how and when this would take place. Moreover, while the destiny of Texas may not have been in doubt, justification for fighting a war for independence against Mexico seemed difficult for many to defend. One article in *Western Monthly Magazine* argues that settlers in Texas knew what they were getting into when they signed up, and by doing so, they took their chances. The author goes on to say that had they felt ill-treated by the Mexican government, it might have been easier to simply return to the U.S., rather than initiate a military revolt. The article concludes by pointing out that the Texas colonists fought not for freedom, but for land and the profits to be found therein.[88]

However, Americans, per the dicta of their mythology, do not fight wars for profits; hence, the Anglo-Texan revolutionaries, while outwardly echoing patriotic sentiments from America's revolutionary past, found themselves represented, outside of Texas, as anything but heirs to this patriotic legacy. In fact, a more palatable option for may opinionated writers was for

[87] Clark, 80
[88] Clark, 84 - 85.

the U.S. to purchase Texas in much the same way it acquired the Louisiana territory. Similarly, European writers chose another issue to underpin their opposition to the Anglo revolt in Texas – the presence and desire to perpetuate institutionalized slavery. An article in the British journal, *Eclectic Review*, condemned British negotiations with Texas due to the new republic's insistence on continuing their slave policy, stating that the institution, "brought out the bestiality in its adherents."[89] In making its point, the article detailed the cruelty American slaveholders inflicted upon the human property, which included slowly burning live slaves by fire and the practice of breeding slaves to sell in newly colonized areas. While the British, much like their American counterparts, described Texas as a landscape unparalleled in beauty and potential, European, particularly British, writers tended to feel that the beauty of the region was spoiled by what it labeled as "the presence of slave-holding squatters."[90]

The *Eclectic Review* article mentioned above offered a likewise different interpretation on the legality of the conflict between Mexico and Anglo-Texas colonists, stating that Anglo settlers were in rebellion against the just laws of Mexico and in doing so, Texans were simply taking advantage of Mexico's preoccupation with its own instability resulting from the Mexican war for independence against Spain.[91] Many writers in the U.S. and Europe echoed the belief that the Texan's defeat of the Mexican army was less an act of divine providence than it was the result of Santa Anna's lack of military experience and knowledge of his foe, and that the revolution in Texas "extended not civilization, but savage slavery…disrupting the balance of power in the Americas."[92] The only positive commentary focused on the treatment of Mexican

[89] Mary Lee Spence, "British Impressions of Texas and the Texans." *The Southwest Historical Quarterly*, pp. 163-183 (1966): 171.
[90] Reséndez,. *Changing National Identities at the Frontier*,24.
[91] Spence, 177.
[92] Clark, 89-90.

president, Santa Anna, following his defeat and capture at San Jacinto. Numerous articles praised the Texan's restraint, suggesting that Santa Anna was indebted to their reluctance to massacre prisoners of war, despite the several examples supplied by the president during the brief struggle.

Notwithstanding such scathing accusations, American scholars, until recently, have opted to accept Eugene C. Barker's assertion that slavery had little impact on Texan's decision to rebel against Mexico. Barker and his likeminded colleagues suggest that for many years, despite numerous efforts by the Mexican government in 1824 to end slavery, Anglo-Texans managed to circumvent these attempts and continue the practice. Barker likewise asserts that slaves in Texas, with technically the property of their white masters, possessed the right to petition the Mexican government, and thus retained a measure of judicial privilege previously unheard of in the United States.

However, recent studies have flatly contradicted the assertions of Barker and his disciples. Paul Lack, for example, argues that deteriorating relations between Anglo-Texas colonists and Mexico brought with it a fear among the Anglo population that the Mexican government might renew its attempts to abolish slavery, thus endangering their economic lifestyle and social order.[93] In addition, Lack notes that many slaveholders voiced fears over potential slave revolts as relations between Anglos and Mexico continued to sour. However, the rhetoric of Texans during the revolutionary period continued to depict the struggle as a conflict between freedom and bondage – specifically, the freedom of Anglo-American colonists, not of the Negro.

[93] Paul D. Lack, *The Texas Revolutionary Experience: A Political and Social History, 1835-1836* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992), 139.

There is much irony to be found in any study of Texas; however, in the context of interpreting the formation of identity as a rhetorical construct, few are as telling as what follows. Of all the articles published in the United States and Europe of the subject of Texas during the Revolutionary era, most of the authors who wrote about Texas never set foot in the territory. Thus, most writings produced about the place, the people and the conflict with Mexico were a product of an imagined Texas. While their writings often depicted an image of Texas that seemed contradictory, these contradictions produced a foundation of mystery upon which the 'otherness' of Texas identity is built. To be sure, many who wrote about Texas during this period were motivated by personal, and/or political agendas.

Nonetheless, writers who sought to describe the revolution in Texas faced the challenge of classifying and assimilating places and events that were distant and unfamiliar to many readers in the United States and Europe. They felt compelled to use traditional representations to accommodate the new. In other words, writers took those elements of Texas that were out of the ordinary in Western European and American culture, and incorporated them into pre-existing notions of exotic Otherness already in use to fashion mental realities of the Orient and the New World, particularly those that included projections of sexual deviation or violent impulses.[94]

In fact, American and Western European acceptance of these pre-existing conceptualizations of otherness made it that much easier for them to accept descriptions of Texans as bestial adventurers, thus enhancing the premise of Texans as the tragic or dark hero.[95] Above all, it is clear that writers of the period manufactured their own definition(s) for the reality of Texas. Neither they, nor their readers, seemed to care that what got Texans into trouble was

[94] Clark, 92.
[95] Benjamin Keen, "The Black Legend Revisited: Assumptions and Realities." *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol 49, no. 4, pp. 703-719 (1969): 707.

their dogmatic belief in Anglo-American traditions on government and political representation. British and American writers indulged their readers' fascination with Texas while simultaneously using Texas otherness as a means of protecting their own fears about armed rebellion, slavery, and other such issues. The existence of strange lands and peoples, as well as the colonial potential implied therein, helped reinforce earlier concepts of national identity by offering a method of juxtaposing the superiority of established European and American social normalcy against the chaotic inferiority that defined the underdeveloped frontier wilderness. Therefore, writers during this period helped perpetuate contemporary spatial conceptualizations by reinforcing this man-made boundary separating civilized culture from the outer world regarded as 'Other'. Texas, while not imaginary, was in a constant state of change in the years leading up to its revolt against Mexico. As such, its reality, the majority stemming from those on the outside looking in, was colored by the individual's perception, and thus was man-made.

It has been one hundred sixty-one years since the abovementioned events took place, and the Otherness that defined Texas and Texans has evolved from exotic to quaint. All the same, social identity of Texans was constructed upon residual conceptualizations of Otherness created during the state's revolutionary experience during an age of global socio-political revolution.

Spinning the Romantic Texas Hero

Prior to the Revolution, Texans were viewed as a peaceful people whose sole occupation was building a life for themselves and their families. However, when threatened, Carol Clark contends that these peaceful settlers displayed a predisposition for violence, which she believes is the result of Texans having been rhetorically conditioned to act in ways that their culture

considered heroic.[96] Anglo-American patriotism of the nineteenth century derived from America's struggle for freedom from European rule. The fact that they won their freedom by defeating arguably the most powerful nation on earth made the victory seems both the product of cultural exceptionalism on the part of the colonials and divine intervention. Revolutionary heroes such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were deified by an American society who wished to see in themselves those qualities attributed to their 'founding fathers'. The Anglo-American settlers who colonized Texas spent their formative years being indoctrinated in the mythology that defines what it means to be American. It matters not that these colonists gave up the benefits of American citizenship to become citizens of Mexico; at their core, they were the product of their country of origin. As such, they came to Texas with pre-existing, deeply entrenched connections to the language of heroism and the occasions that necessitated a heroic response – the precedent having been established by the Founders when they sought to secure their inalienable rights from a foreign power.

The pride of being descendants of those who won their independence by defeating a superior British army strengthened Anglo-Texans' own sense of identity; and while early Anglo settlers of Texas, whose arrival pre-dates hostilities with Mexico, made every effort to assimilate into Mexican society, the seeds of potential rebellion remained ever-present. However, the Anglo-American pattern for heroic rebellion demands that the grievances against the enemy be legitimate. Thus, necessity dictated that the foundations of the Texas Revolution be built upon the belief that the insurrection was justified.

Indeed, the Mexican government seemed to be in a constant state of flux as it struggled under the strain of its own internal conflicts – mostly due to the recent expulsion of Spanish rule.

[96] Clark, 122; Kökény, 300.

Consequently, Mexico, unsure of Anglo-American intentions and anxious about protecting their own interests, began a series of decisions that resulted in government essentially legislating themselves into the prototypical role of the oppressor. In 1824, the Federal Constitution of the United State of Mexico established a relatively weak central government, providing considerable autonomy to states to govern their own affairs as they saw fit. As mentioned in chapter II of this text, Anglo-Texas immigrants found such accommodations agreeable and tended to resent attempts by the Federal government to assert control over their colonies. The Mexican government intensified efforts to regain control of Texas following a report submitted by Colonel Mier y Teran outlining the findings of his investigatory expedition through the territory. Teran's report noted that Americans were flocking to Texas in vast numbers, often settling outside impresario-contracted lands.[97]

Teran went on to say that most of these immigrants were making no attempt to assimilate into Mexican culture, instead asserting their own traditions – including efforts towards self-government. The Mexican government responded to this perceived threat by enacting the Law of April 6, 1830, which essentially banned Anglo immigration into the territory and, in turn, increasing tensions between Anglo settlers and Mexican officials. Moreover, Anglo-Texans were accustomed to economic and political stability, and view the political unrest that plagued the Mexican government at the time with alarm. The pervasiveness of economic disorder compounded the problem of Anglo-Texan assimilation, leaving the population of Texas with little choice but to gravitate toward the economic stability of the United States.

In Mexico, the political ascension of Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna to the presidency, and his subsequent abolition of the Constitution of 1824, resulted in a series of insurrections

[97] Terán, (38)

throughout the nation that were violently subdued. The Anglo-American immigrants in Texas believed that they pledged loyalty to the liberal constitution of 1824; and its nullification, coupled with the actions of Santa Anna in his quest to destroy republican government in Mexico, made Santa Anna, and by default, the people of Mexico, the enemy. Moreover, Anglo-Texans were soon consumed by rumors of a Mexican army coming to re-establish Federal control in Texas. Reactionaries, such as William Travis, openly sought opportunities to defy symbols of the Mexican federal government in Texas, justifying through their actions the government's suspicion of Anglo motives and intentions. When General Martin Perfecto de Cos set off with an army for Texas in 1835, it was interpreted by the Anglo population as an attempt by the Federal government to oppress the region, free slaves, and devastate the lives and property of Anglo settlers. Thus, Anglo-Texan's found justification for revolution in Mexico's attempt to reestablish social and political dominance in its northern territory.

Echoing the sentiments mentioned above, James Crisp argues in his book, *Race, Revolution, and the Texas Republic*, that Anglo-Texans viewed themselves as "hearty Anglo-Saxons battling against enslavement by their inferiors", likening their fight for freedom to that of their ancestors in the American colonies.[98] In fact, the editors at the *Telegraph and Texas Register* were so certain of the rightness of the cause, they believed it would attract the sympathies and admiration of millions, and that their actions, "are to become a part of the history of mankind."[99] By connecting the struggle of Anglo-Texans against Mexico to that of the American colonies against England in the Revolutionary War, Texans gave their cause an air of

[98] James E. Crisp, "Race, Revolution, and the Texas Republic: Toward a Reinterpretation," in *The Texas Military Experience*, Ed. Joseph F. Dawson, Jr. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995)
[99] Henry Stuart Foote, *Texas and the Texans* (Philadelphia: Thomas, Cowperthwait AIT & Co. 1841) 135; *Telegraph and Texas Register*, October 26, 1835.

legitimacy and a claim to Anglo-American concepts of romantic heroism, which they deems so necessary.

Evidence of this is found in the initial call for volunteers by the Texas army in 1836, which appealed to Anglo-American nationalistic sentiment motivated by the spirit of freedom and economic gain. Indeed, throughout the struggle, Texans wrote themselves as the good guys, as evidenced in an article that appeared in *Telegraph and Texas Register* assuring Texans that the U.S. was sure to intervene in the conflict with Mexico:

> "…The very fact that we are not the aggressors…contending for our rights guaranteed to us in the Republican institutions under which we were received as citizens of this country…"[100]

The same article goes on to state that, while U.S. intervention was certain, Texans must show themselves worthy by taking up arms, to do otherwise would earn for them, "…the contempt of every patriot…"[101] The author attempts to draw parallels between the Texas Revolution and the Revolutionary War when he suggests that Texans must prove themselves worthy countrymen of Washington. However, Texans were most effective in their depiction of Mexicans as the enemy. The war itself was deemed one of, "…extermination on the part of the enemy…", allude to Santa Anna's announcement of his intention to clear Anglo-Americans for Texas. Thus, for Anglo-Texans and Tejanos alike, participation was unavoidable – regardless of whether the individual felt the inclination to fight.[102] This point was driven home when the General Council of Texas printed a warning in the *Telegraph and Texas Register* that left little doubt in the mind of its intended audience: "…he who is not the active friend of Texas, the Convention will…determine is her enemy…"[103] The implication was, if patriotism or

[100] *Telegraph and Texas Register*, October 26, 1835.
[101] *Telegraph and Texas Register*, October 26, 1835.
[102] *Telegraph and Texas Register*, October 26, 1835.
[103] *Telegraph and Texas Register*, March 2, 1836.

nationalism proved an insufficient instrument of motivation, the desire for self-preservation following cessation of hostilities would move the reluctant to act.

Those who answered the call to arms in Texas organized themselves into small units, with officers elected from within to lead. All the same, the army of Texas was essentially a loosely organized, undisciplined mob; and yet under the direction of Ben Milam, they managed to drive General Cos and his troops from San Antonio de Bejar in December of 1835. In the months following the expulsion of Cos and his army, the Texas army, believing the war to be over, lingered near San Antonio making vague attempts at organizing itself into something resembling a fighting force. On February 23, 1834, to the great surprise to the Texan volunteers, Santa Anna surrounded the remaining Texans in the Alamo with some 6,000 soldiers' intent on reclaiming the region from rebellious Anglos and ridding the territory of American influence.

At the time of Santa Anna's arrival in San Antonio, the mission named San Antonio de Valero, or Alamo as it is commonly referred, was a half-completed vestige of the Spanish colonial experience in Texas. As a fortress, the Alamo was ill-suited; however, in the months preceding Santa Anna's arrival, efforts to fortify the mission were made by its commanding officer, Col. J.C. Neill, along with requests for reinforcements to help defend the town. However, the only reinforcements to respond to Neill's call came in the form of Col. James Bowie, who arrived in San Antonio with a company of men and orders to destroy the mission and remove the artillery lest it fall into enemy hands. However, Bowie felt that the improvements made by Neill were sufficient to make a viable defense of the city. Likewise, both Bowie and Neill believed that the defense of San Antonio was crucial to the success of the Revolution; thus, they decided to stay and make their stand. However, neither Sam Houston, nor the provisional government of Texas, were willing to commit resources to defend the town. Thus, only a few

answered the call for reinforcements – among them was Colonel William Travis, who arrived February 3rd with some thirty men and a small group of frontiersmen that included former U.S. congressman David Crockett of Tennessee.

In late February, Neill left the Alamo for personal reasons and Travis assumed command of the Alamo garrison. During his tenure as commander, Travis made numerous pleas for help, most famous perhaps was his letter of February 24, 1836, which was addressed "To the People of Texas & All Americans in the World." His words appealed to Anglo-American beliefs in liberty and patriotism – common themes in the grand narrative of U.S. mythology. His most famous letter concludes in such a way that martyrdom in the wake of defeat became a certainty – "Victory or Death", further reinforcing Anglo-American notions of heroism that deify the willingness to sacrifice one's life for a greater cause.[104]

Travis' declaration foreshadows the characteristics of the 'Lost Cause' and derives its power from beliefs that glorify the nobility of the underdog – both concepts that Anglo-American's find irresistible because they underpin notions of exceptionalism that define Anglo-American culture. It is the Lost Cause quality that allowed Travis' words to linger in the collective memory of Texans and Anglo-Americans. Implied in these words are concepts of self-sacrifice for high ideals and the greater good – all grand tenets of romanticism and the rhetoric of nationalism.

The drama of the events unfolding in Texas during the revolution were rife with themes and archetypical characters' that the reading public from the nineteenth century craved and longed to immolate. Indeed, the tragic hero of the romantic period possessed a credibility lacking in previous heroes, their flaws and fallibilities made them accessible in the mind of the

[104] William Barrett Travis, "William Barret Travis' Letter from the Alamo." Page last modified: March 22, 2016. *https://www.tsl.texas.gov/treasures/republic/alamo/travis-full-text.html* (retrieved on November 24, 2017).

average reader. Thus, a sizable portion of the population in the U.S. perceived a connection, however thin, to stories of heroic sacrifice, such as those depicted through the accounts of the Anglo-Texan revolutionaries. Accordingly, the concept of self-sacrifice in a fight against impossible odds was seamlessly incorporated into the Texas revolutionary narrative.

Perhaps the best example of this is seen in narratives associated with the Alamo battle. While it is true that the Texans lost the Battle of the Alamo, the loss became a victory in term of its function and place in the grand narrative of American civilization and in the historical memory of the Anglo population. Defeat of the Alamo defenders, along with the execution of all prisoners taken during the final stage of the battle, immediately fueled a wave of patriotic rhetoric in publications throughout Texas and the United States. An article in the *Telegraph and Texas Register* referred to the fall of the Alamo as an event "…so lamentable, and yet so glorious to Texas…that we shall never cease to celebrate it…" Those who died defending the mission were deemed heroes, "…who perished at the Thermopylae of Texas…"[105] Conversely, Santa Anna and the Mexican army were demonized in the minds of the reader. The article notes that James Bowie was "murdered", not killed, in his bed and "his remains mutilated." The writer goes on to say that the Mexican army denied the dead, "the right to a Christian burial", and simply stripped the Alamo defenders, tossed them in a pile, and burned them. The images the author's word depicts seek to reinforce concepts of Mexican otherness, suggesting despite all knowledge to the contrary, that the Mexicans heathens, void of any sense of compassion or chivalry. He laments that, "…Humanity shudders at describing these scenes…"[106]

To this day, popular interpretations of the battle tend to focus on depicting the event according to Euro-centric, romantic ideals popular at the time. Rather than admitting defeat,

[105] *Telegraph and Texas Register*, March 24, 1836.
[106] *Telegraph and Texas Register*, March 24, 1836.

Anglo-Texans spin the battle into a more palatable interpretation by focusing on how it took eighteen hundred Mexican troops thirteen days to defeat one hundred eighty-eight Alamo defenders, at the cost of 600 of their own men. Popular history goes a step further by emphasizing themes of sacrifice for the greater good, asserting that the defenders of the Alamo gave their lives to buy valuable time for Sam Houston to prepare, and in the process, leaving him with a much-weakened Mexican army with which to contend. This, in turn, led directly to Houston's rout of Mexican forces on 21 April 1836.

To explain this interpretation, Clark argues that Texans, like their American relatives of the period, were influenced by romantic ideals tempered by Scottish pragmatism, which suggests that indulgence in pure romanticism has the potential to negatively impact a society. However, she notes that in the context of the Revolution, Texans viewed the romantic quest for freedom as acceptable when, "lauding the virtues of freedom or the hero who was willing to give his life to protect the freedom of others."[107] She states that it is doubtful that Travis or Bowie set out to achieve martyrdom in lieu of achieving their goal in defending San Antonio. In fact, up until their deaths, both these men believed that help was forthcoming and that somehow, they would survive the encounter. Yet they are portrayed as individuals who, not only sought self-sacrifice, but did so with great enthusiasm and little concern for themselves. This interpretation is simply not believable, yet it continues to linger in Texas mythology.

In the context of the hyper-patriotic rhetoric that defines the Alamo's place in Anglo-American culture, another point often omitted from the discussion is that most of the Alamo defenders were recent arrivals from the United States. In fact, few of the early settlers of Texas sought a war for independence against Mexico; rather, war was forced upon them by newer,

[107] Clark, 112.

more belligerent arrivals to the territory. Unlike their predecessors who made efforts to assimilate into Mexican culture, these new arrivals were the product of nineteenth century ideals of American cultural superiority and exceptionalism. Hence, the ascension of the Alamo defenders to heroic mythology is a product of contemporary Anglo-American social ideology, which outwardly cultivated a facade of cultural exceptionalism while at the same time struggling with a sense of inferiority stemming its lack of literary and cultural traditions.

The Cult of Nationality

The nation's origins are often shrouded in mystery, symbolized by the actions of semi-mythic figures – the depiction of which resemble mysteries found in the study of religious dogma if viewed in terms of structural similarities. Ernest Renan argued that "nations depend on myths of origin", which flourish in the wake of the nation's unknown or forgotten past.[108] The process of forgetting the brutality in a nation's past makes celebrating the virtues and sacrifices of national heroes an act that promotes solidarity within the society. Legends of sacrifice made by past generations instill a willingness among present and future generations to behave in a similar fashion, should the need arise. The nationalist creed universally celebrates the individual willingness to sacrifice for a higher cause, thus affirming in action and deed the nation's ritual of collective thought.[109]

In this context, Renan personifies the nation's existence by likening the need for daily authentication to that of the individual's perpetual need for affirmation. Carlton Hayes defines

[108] Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?", text of a conference delivered at the Sorbonne on March 11th, 1882, in Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?* Translated by Ethan Rundell (Paris, Presses-Pocket, 1992).
[109] Kramer, 532

nationalism as a religion of modernity that assumes the need of all people to believe in something greater than themselves.[110] Nationalism described as religious modernity springs from the emergence of Enlightenment science and reason and ensuing weakening of faith in traditional Christianity. However, as faith in the Church continued to wane, a spiritual void was created in its wake – the rise of secular humanism in modern society resulted in the individual offering their allegiance to the nation; which, like a god, demands allegiance, gives purpose to the individual, and existed prior to the person's birth and continues to exist long after their death. Therefore, the power of the nation is comparable to the power of the church in terms of its ability to provide a sense of collective faith in its mission and direction. The most powerful evidence in support of this concept of nationalism as the new religion of modernity is found in the number of people willing to die for their nation during times of war. Indeed, nationalism appropriates religious tradition by giving meaning to death, assuaging human anxiety about their own mortality and connecting sacrifice to the perpetuation of the national spirit – thus, linking nationalism to themes of religion on an emotional level.[111]

Without doubt, the myth becomes essential to the existence of a society because it provides a people with the patterns and designs that encourage participation in communal order by endowing the actions and sacrifices made by past, present, and future members of the society with meaning. Myth, therefore, becomes the purveyor of social codes and functions as a powerful tool by allowing the individual to forego logic and reason in order that abstract concepts can be more easily grasped and the totality of their purpose understood.[112]

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[110] Carlton J. H. Hayes. *Nationalism: A Religion.* Kindle Edition. New York, NY: Routledge, 2017. 8
[111] Kramer, 533; David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002); Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002).
[112] Louise Cowan, "Myth in the Modern World." In *Texas Myths*, edited by Robert F. O'Connor, 3-22. (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University, 1986).

Furthermore, myths and nationalism share a common characteristic in that they are transportable, in that migrating societies create new myths that reflect their experiences in their new surroundings; however, these myths are constructed based on those from their previous society. Western myth, for example, has proven exceptionally durable and flexible in its ability to evolve as needed, and yet retain its ancient value and wisdom.[113]

The American colonists migrated from Europe steeped in European tradition and lore; however, new experiences brought about by changes in their culture and the environment in which they lived combined to give a new form to the old heritage. Thus, Anglo-American colonists ceased being European when they fashioned new cultural myths that reflected their experiences and interactions in and with their environment. What ultimately sets Anglo-American myth apart for its European antecedent is its effort to contend with understanding people "demonstrably other to ourselves." [114] In fact, even a cursory assessment of historical and literary texts produced by American authors in the eighteenth and nineteenth century reveals the influence of Anglo-America's confrontation with otherness. In much the same way that Western myth became transplanted from Europe and redefined to fit the realities of Anglo-Colonial life in the region, the Anglo-American colonists of Texas carried with them their American experiences and its European underpinnings, upon which they fashioned a new myth based on their experiences and interactions with this new land and its inhabitants.

Perhaps this might well be said about every settler who followed the progression of U.S. westward expansion throughout the nineteenth century. There is little doubt that, given that no two territories offered identical experiences for their respective inhabitants, it seems only natural that peoples from each of these different regions incorporated the influence of their reality to

[113] Cowan, 16.
[114] Cowan, 19.

their pre-existing myths that they brought with them. What makes Texas different from other Western territories, and the reason it serves as the focus of this study, is that Texas had a founding, which in turn lent itself to the creating of a myth that has not only proven to be freakishly resilient to time and historical revision, it serves as perhaps one of the best examples of the constructivist and instrumentalist forms of nation-building in existence. While Laura McLemore is correct in her assertion that Texans, contrary to the mythology, are not exceptional, there is something very exceptional about a myth that continues to maintain its cultural appeal despite its overt cultural bias, and persistence as the foundation of the state's social identity.

Anglo-Texans of the Revolutionary era grew up in an America that was experiencing a growing spirit of nationalism. This spirit demanded the development of new American legends and epics to replace traditional European cultural precepts upon which much of New World cultural identity was fashioned. American identity needed to sever its European umbilical cord; however, to do so, replacements for European myths and legends were needed. Whether these were true or not mattered little, so long as they reanimate America's past events and invigorate the nation's imagination. Texans were doubly affected by this quest to establish a unique cultural identity. In much the same way that Americans were essentially transplanted Englishmen, Texans were transplanted Americans; and as such, they suffered from a similar sense of cultural inferiority that was every bit as strong as that felt in the U.S.

Texas needed a legacy to call its own, with its own mythology and heroes with which to identify. The Texas Revolution lent itself to this sort of endeavor. Anglo-Texan propaganda labeled the revolutionary struggle as a heroic struggle between the forces of good and evil; an interpretation that, if properly sanitized, echoes many themes found in the grand narrative of

American Mythology.[115] Frequent attempts to draw parallels between Austin or Houston and George Washington, Lamar and Thomas Jefferson, and the shared revolutionary history in which the underdog achieved victory against impossible odds. In fact, that both Revolutions led to victories against armies far superior in strength and quality, divine providence is often credited as having preordained the outcome – thus, providing additional credence to the concept of nationalism as new religion of modern societies. Numerous biographies on historical personalities, like Washington and Lincoln, seem less interested in providing the reader with a critical analysis of the individual lives and their influence on American society, than they are in reattributing almost Christ-like characteristics to these figures, sanitizing their stories through a process of actively forgetting anything judged indecorous, so that they seamlessly fit into popular interpretations of American history.

Hero worship in the context of Texan's collective memory differs slightly in that it often acknowledges the flaws of its heroes; however, the flaws are redeemed due to the sacrifices these figures made, in pursuit of their high ideals and for the greater good, when faced with extraordinary situations. One of the benefits of the flawed hero is that it makes the process of collective identification and thematic assimilation less complicated. Fallibility makes the hero authentic; however, it also placed their deeds in the realm of possibility to the average person, who more than anything wishes to imagine that they might also find the wherewithal to be heroic under similar circumstances. Much of what was written about Texans in newspapers during the revolutions resembles this modified version of myth-making, favoring variations of selective memory rather than engaging in total sanitation. However, this is not to say that sanitation does not occur.

[115] Gerstle, 7 and 12.

The process of selective remembering and forgetting is an ever-present process during the manufacturing of any national narrative. The process of heroic beatification, this likes of which permeate Anglo-American historical narratives, is somewhat problematic in that it creates a metaphorical distance between the individual and the heroic figure, and invites criticism from those whose historical experiences differ. What is more, if the conflicting narrative can gain acceptance, purveyors of the pervious interpretation, as well as past adherents, implicate themselves in the process of actively marginalizing the cultural minority.

Unquestionably, the trauma of the Texas Revolution fixed the rhetoric of Texas to the degree that it can easily be described as mythic. Though often thought of the negative, myths in this context are simply stories labeled sacred by a given society – frequently associated with the advent of a culture's rhetorical reality. This rhetorical reality separates itself from historical reality by offering a framework for expanding what is painful or inexplicable.[116] Such is the case with Texas mythology. Paul Lack describes the Texas Revolution as "a time of dislocation and grief, which…the eventual outcome of the battle did not heal."[117] The privations of war weakened support for the Texas army and provincial government. Many Texans were left with an unfortunate choice: abandon their families and property to fight against seemingly impossible odds, or stay home, protect their families, and risk the ire of their neighbors, who will view them as cowards. Even after the defeat of the Mexican army at San Jacinto, Texans faced as uncertain a future as that which they experienced during the revolution. Thus, the myths that were created during this period offered a means for later Texans to understanding certain events of the past and connect these events to their conceptualization of the world around them. Furthermore, the

[116] Clark, 114.
[117] Lack, xiii; Clark, 121.

placing events that describe the beginnings of Texas in narrative form articulate and define value judgements that assigned meaning to the occurrences.

Over the years, the rhetorical myths about Texas were told and retold until characters and incidents that did not exist in 1836, replace those that did and saturate contemporary conceptualization of the state and its people.[118] It is the shelf-life of Texas mythology that is perhaps the most impressive and confounding characteristic of the state's cultural identity. The heroic legacy of the Alamo defenders, if not all those who participated in Texas' revolutionary past, assume a place of reverence in the imagination of modern Texans. This is particularly true of Anglo-Texans; whose uncritical acceptance of the state's heroic mythology exhibits a resilience of mythic proportion – even when confronted with overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

The Texas creation myth is a prime and enduring example of a nationalistic construct, a product of Anglo-American immigrants, who sought a means of laying claim to a new nation while, at the same time, extracting a former territory from its ties to Mexico. Until recently, Anglo narratives of Texas made no distinction between Spanish, Mexican, or Tejano – all eventually, and by necessity, assume the role of enemy, despot, executioner, and other. Part of what makes the narrative of Texas so potent and persistent, at least in Anglo-Texan imagination, is that it creates heroes out of mercenaries and celebrates the sacrifices that made in the name of freedom while, at the same time, working toward the construction of a society that depended on the exclusion of ethnic minorities to survive.

For Anglo-Texans, there is a pride that is found in belonging to a society that produces larger-than-life, albeit flawed, heroes; and this pride becomes a legacy that assigns a place to the

[118] Clark, 125.

individual in the social hierarchy, in turn. The pride felt by contemporary Texans works to not only perpetuate the state's heroic mythology, it likewise guarantees the perpetuation of the narrative, as well. It is this narrative, the collection of words and ideas that constructed the cultural identity that is Texas, took shape on the pages of the books and newspapers produced and circulated throughout Europe and America on the eve of the Texas Revolution. The language that defined Texas as revolutionary and heroic is ever evolving and adapting with the passage of time, yet it persists despite itself due to its ability to create and perpetuate hierarchies of value that categorize Texas culture in terms of historical difference and contrasting patterns of good and bad development.

Texas: It is Like a Whole Other Mythology

The term myth is every bit as complex and multifaceted a concept as that of nation or nationalism, in that it lacks a precise definition. Twentieth century humanists tend to link conceptions of myth with truth and valor, reflecting in their narratives beliefs of a people held in high regard. However, its popular connotation struggles for legitimacy in the wake of the scientific revolution, which regarded anything lacking scientific evidence as contrary to fact. Contemporary use of the term myth in political discourse and news media has achieved an almost pejorative connotation for the word, as it is often used to patronize or discredit an adversary. Recent scholarly attention, though, has found a connection between myth and social identity – effectively reclassifying popular conceptualizations of myth and the role it plays in defining and perpetuating a culture's sense of self.[119]

[119] Louise Cowan, "Myth in the Modern World" in O'Connor, Robert F., ed. *Texas Myths* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), 3-4.

According to this new interpretation, myth contains within it the constructs, which lay the patterns and designs that encourage and promote the individual's participation in communal order by endowing the acts, of those who agree upon the myths interpretation, with meaning. Thus, myth becomes essential to the existence of a society; and as the purveyor of social codes, myth becomes a powerful tool that permits the individual to forgo logic and reason in order that abstract concepts can be more easily grasped, and the totality of their purpose understood.[120] Moreover, myths are transportable, allowing a migrating people to create new myths based on those from their previous society. Western myth, for example, has proven particularly flexible and durable in its ability to evolve according to the needs of its purveyors, yet still retaining its ancient value and wisdom.[121]

The American colonists migrated from Europe steeped in European tradition and lore; however, circumstances of culture and environment combined to give a new form to the old heritage. Accordingly, Anglo-American colonists ceased being European when they began fashioning new cultural myths that reflected their experiences and interactions in and with their environment on top of those from their European land of origin. What sets the Anglo-American myth apart from its European antecedent is its effort to cope with and understand people that appear, "demonstrably other than ourselves."[122]

Just as Western myth was transplanted across Europe and brought to the Americas, Anglo-American colonists carried with them their American experience and its European foundations to Texas, upon which the sum of their subsequent involvements and interactions fashioned a new myth. Perhaps this might be said of every settler who followed the Westward

[120] Richard Bauman, *The Transmission of Texas Myth*, 26-27.
[121] Cowan, 16.
[122] Cowan, 19.

progression of Anglo-American expansion in the United States, for certainly no two territories offered identical experiences for their respective inhabitants, and its seems only natural that the peoples who settled in the different regions of the North American frontier incorporated the realities of their regional experiences into the pre-existing myth that followed the migration.

However, Texas differs from other Western territories in one distinct way: Texas had a founding with thematic parallels to, not only the Colonial Revolution of 1776, but literary and biblical themes popular during that period of history. Texas' founding, therefore, lent itself to the creation of a myth – one exceptional enough to influence the formation of an identity that defies logic regarding its longevity and ability to resist reinterpretation. As a result, the Alamo myth, which was constructed upon the foundation of the Anglo-American myth that followed Anglo-American colonial migration to Texas, has now come full circle – symbolizing not merely Texas exceptionalism, but that of the exceptionality of American culture.

The Texas creation myth depicts the Battle of the Alamo as a strategic defeat, in which a band of patriotic Texans, fully aware of the hopelessness of their situation, yet dedicated to the worthiness of its importance to the cause of Texas independence, defend the Alamo against the Mexican Army for thirteen days, ultimately sacrificing themselves to buy General Sam Houston the time he needs to train the Texas Army and defeat Santa Anna. Except for one man, Moses Rose, whose experience in the Napoleonic Wars swayed his resolve, the defenders of the Alamo were slaughtered to the last man, but go down fighting and kill at least two Mexicans for every one of the Texans. The Alamo defenders, having purchased for Sam Houston the time he so desperately needed with their blood, are ultimately avenged, and their cause vindicated, with the defeat of the Mexican Army at San Jacinto. By God! That is Heroic! Who on earth would not want to lay claim to a legend of that caliber as the origin of their cultural legacy? The story of the

Alamo is an unqualified example of the quintessential romantic narrative, complete with mythic heroes and diabolical villains, archetypical narrative conflict with man battling nature, himself, and other men, martyrdom and sacrifice for greater good, and ultimately redemption and the triumph of good over evil.[123]

Hence, the story of the Alamo is the story of Texas told in biblical fashion. In this context, the Alamo becomes the "metaphorical alter on which the Alamo defenders…offer their lives", in exchange for Texas Liberty. As such, the Alamo "was baptized in the fire of battle and the blood of heroes."[124] Certainly, the Alamo is the centerpiece of the Texas creation myth that begins in December 1835, with Texas militia under the command of General Edward Burleson awaiting orders to attack the Mexican army in San Antonio under the command of General Martin Perfecto de Cos. Colonel Ben Milam, unwilling to leave the Mexican army in control of San Antonio, disobeys Burleson's order to retreat and leads a detachment of men in a house to house fight that forces Cos to surrender. Though victorious, Milam's death in the battle makes him the first martyr to the cause of liberty and Texas independence.

General Cos and his men are ordered to leave Texas and never return. In the months that follow, the Texans begin preparing to defend San Antonio should the Mexican army decides to return. The Misión San Antonio de Valero, or Alamo as it was commonly referred, was little more than a relic from region's Spanish colonial era; however, it offered what appeared to be the most strategically viable location in the city. General Sam Houston believes defending San Antonio to be a poor strategy and sends Colonel James Bowie with orders to demolish the Alamo and return with its garrison. Bowie, upon seeing the fortress, is unwilling to destroy the old

[123] N.A. 2011. *Narrativefirst.com.* Dec. 5. Accessed February 18, 2017. https://narrativefirst.com/articles/series/conflict.
[124] Brear, 24; For additional information on myth and legend of the Alamo see: Sylvia Ann Grider, "How Texans Remember the Alamo." In *Usable Pasts*, by Tad Tuleja, 274-292. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1997).

mission and, along with the newly appointed commander of the Texas Regular Army, decides to make a stand against the Mexican Army in San Antonio. The pair is soon joined by legendary frontiersman, David Crockett, and a group of volunteers from Tennessee.

All the while, General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna was marching an army toward the Alamo and the Texan in San Antonio. Upon his arrival, Santa Anna raises a blood red flag above the church tower of San Fernando Cathedral signifying that no quarter would be given to the Alamo defenders. In response, Colonel Travis fires the Alamo canon as an inspirational gesture to his men and a symbol of his defiance and resolve to fight. Bowie, Travis, Crockett, along with their fellow defenders, effectively preoccupy a Mexican Army that seems bent on their destruction. Travis writes numerous appeals for reinforcements; however, when it becomes clear that help is not coming, he calls forth his men and presents them with a choice: fight and die with him defending the Alamo, or slip over the wall and escape under cover of darkness. To this end, Travis draws a line in the sand with his sword, and all but one of the Alamo defenders crossed the line and chose to stay and fight.[125] On the twelfth night of the siege, the Mexican guns stopped firing enabling Travis and the Alamo defenders to sleep for the first time since the advent of hostilities. As they slept, the Mexican army took advantage of the darkness and crept into position for the final assault.

Dawn of the thirteenth day broke with the sound of trumpets and shouts of "Viva Santa Anna" as the Mexican army stormed the Alamo. Travis, upon hearing the commotion emanating from the Mexican soldiers, commenced to rallying the mission's defenders. However, as he raced to meet the Mexican onslaught, he was cut down by a bullet to the forehead. Crockett, who was defending the south side of the mission compound, fired "Old Betsy" for as long as he

[125] Legend states that Moses Rose, after surviving numerous battles serving in Napoleons army, said that he had seen enough of war and chose to leave the Alamo.

could, then used his rifle into a club before being cut down by a sabre blow to the head. Bowie, bedridden due to illness, awaited the oncoming Mexican soldiers, with two pistols and his legendary knife, in a room of the long barracks. Killing the first wave of Mexican to enter the room, he lunged at those who followed with his remaining strength before being bayonetted and carried off by the surviving soldiers. Huddled in the mission's church, Suzanna Dickenson tried in vain to save the life of the last Alamo defender, but the "blood-thirsty" Mexican soldiers stabbed the man with their bayonets and carried him off screaming in agony. When the dust settled, all 185 Alamo defenders lay dead as a triumphant Santa Anna paraded the field expressing to his men that he victory was "but a small affair."

However, according to the myth, the so-called small affair cost the Mexican Army two weeks and the lives of close to one thousand of their men. Of the men who died defending the Alamo, Santa Anna ordered that they be stacked in a pile and burned – thus denying them a Christian burial. The Mexican president demonstrated his cruelty when, twelve days after the fall of the Alamo, he ordered that Colonel James Fanin and his men, who recently surrendered Goliad to General Urrea, be executed and their bodies disposed of in similar fashion. However, the sacrifice of the Alamo and Goliad defenders inspired Texas delegates meeting at Washington on the Brazos to declare for the independence of Texas.

As Santa Anna advanced in pursuit of the Texas army, General Houston continued to retreat despite accusation of cowardice emanating from within his own ranks. However, only Houston knew the importance of his actions, and upon arriving at the San Jacinto River, the General made camp and awaited the arrival of Santa Anna and his army. On April 21st, at half past three in the afternoon, Houston was informed that the Mexican soldiers stacked their rifles and intended to take a *siesta*. Upon hearing this news, Houston assembled his men and gave the

order to attack and the Texas army charged the Mexican lines shouting, "Remember the Alamo!", "Remember Goliad!" Taking their adversary by surprise, the Texas army routed Santa Anna and his soldiers in the span of eighteen minutes. Santa Anna fled, but was eventually captured and taken to General Houston offered to spare his life in exchange for his signing away Mexican claim to Texas.[126]

Indeed, the Texas creation myth depicts a violent birth for the Texas nation – with the Alamo functioning as a metaphorical alter upon which the mission's defenders exchanged their lives for our freedom. The blood of the Alamo defenders metaphorically baptizes new born Texas liberty, thus sowing the seeds of a new nation. Texas creation narrative focus a great deal of time on the Alamo, its defenders, and their fate for good reason, to secure victory in the wake of defeat. Throughout the story, the defenders of the Alamo are never depicted as surrounded but never trapped by Santa Anna and the Mexican army. On the contrary, every time a messenger is sent from the besieged mission, they seem to elude capture with relative ease. Thus, the Alamo defenders died not because they were out-classed or out-smarted on the battlefield, they died because it was their choice to do so and for the good of the cause – an independent Texas and liberty. As such, the Alamo defenders were not defeated; rather, they allowed the Mexican army to carry out the sacrifice, thus securing their cultural and moral superiority through the framing of the narrative.

Since myths often deal with forces, beings, and events believed by adherents to be sacred, there exists a strong connection "between religious belief and the practices of a people"[127] This is often evident in the stories told about Texas by its inhabitants. William Goetzman contends

[126] Stephen L. Hardin, "March 2, 1836: Myth and Meaning of Texas Independence." 1998, *Texianlegacy.com.* Accessed July18, 2017. http://www.texianlegacy.com/march2.html.
[127] Bauman, 23.

that biblical scripture figured heavily in Anglo-American, and by extension, Anglo-Texan myth because it, "enjoined them", (Euro-Americans), to "have dominion" and "be fruitful…multiply, and subdue the earth…"[128] Referring to Anglo-Texans as a tribe, Goetzman connects patterns in Anglo-Texas mythology to popular themes found in the stories of the Old Testament Bible – and much like the Israelites of ancient times who followed Moses in search of the promised land, Anglo-Texans followed Moses Austin into a land that no doubt seemed bigger than creation itself. [129] The Alamo battle provide Texas creation myth with its holy trinity, with Travis depicted as the Son, Bowie as the Father, and Crockett as the Spirit. In doing so, Texas creation mythology combines frontier Puritan ideology with romantic notions of the White, Southern cavalier.

In the role of the Son, Travis represents the advent of a new order. It is for this reason that he commits himself to the defense of the Alamo; however, like Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, he calls for help, but can find "no one to take his cup from him." He is compelled to carry the burden of the sacrifice and has metaphorically crossed the line between living and dead.[130] When the rest of the Alamo defenders join Travis by crossing over his line in the sand; the Alamo accepts Travis' offer of salvation and their sacrifice is likewise deified. Similarly, Bowie, cast in the role of the Father, represents ancient hero and the ancestral ways of the old social order. Bowie's connection to his knife as his weapon of choice symbolizes the old conceptualization of the frontier as savage and dark. Like the frontier of old, Bowie is untamed, primordial, and a dying commander, who ultimately must surrender his authority to Travis. Finally, Crockett, cast as in the role of Spirit, represents the essence and conviction of the new

[128] Goetzman, *Keep the White Lights Shining*, 70.
[129] Goetzman, 70.
[130] Matthew, 26, 36-46; Brear, 35.

frontier, as well as the rightness of Anglo-American western migration. Forming a symbolic link between old and new, Crockett's connection to the old frontier is depicted, not as dark and primordial like that of Bowie, as light in that he has sought to prepare the frontier for those who will seek to settle it in the future. As a symbol of the modern frontier spirit, Crockett conveys a need to quantify his worth, thus Mexicans join bear as fit and proper targets for his rifle.[131] In the context of the Alamo myth, Crockett racks up a considerable body count prior to his demise, making his as much the sacrifice as the one being sacrificed. Once again, the Alamo myth inverts itself to save southern notions of masculinity amid defeat in battle. However, in a fascinating narrative twist, the role of the platonic female, with whom the spirit will join in creating the new order, is found in Crockett's rifle and Houston's canons – "Old Betsy" and "The Twin Sisters." Like Bowie's knife, Crockett's rifle is his "wilderness companion", and stands as the means through which to rid barriers to Anglo-American westward expansion. Along with Houston's "Twin Sisters", these steel women control the power of life and death – the possession of which provide men power naturally reserved for women. [132]

Western mythology is known for producing exceptional villains and defectors, and the Texas myth produces two of exceptional quality. First, the defector – Lewis (Moses) Rose. Rose claimed to have served in the French army during the Napoleonic Wars and, therefore declined Travis' offer of salvation, choosing instead to flee the Alamo. Rose, who was of European descent and Jewish, is said to represent the old, morally corrupt European order. As such, he is depicted as Judas, who abandoned Christ in his hour of darkness. Santa Anna, in a fashion somewhat like Moses Rose, represents old European order that is morally and culturally corrupt. As the antithesis of Anglo-American socio-political ideology and westward ambitions, Santa

[131] Brear, 25.
[132] Brear, 26.

Anna symbolizes the decaying of old world society that, though still powerful, knows it is in decline and on the verge of extinction. This is demonstrated in Santa Anna's unwillingness to take prisoners. It is not the individual he must destroy; it is the ideas his enemies embrace that pose the greatest threat to his order. To preserve his power, Santa Anna must destroy Anglo-American notions of political freedom and manifest destiny – a process he sets out to accomplish with savage enthusiasm and an arrogance that makes him ripe for the fall. However, in the Texas Creation Myth, while Santa Anna is portrayed primarily as death incarnate, he possesses a fatal flaw – women are his Achilles Heel.

The abovementioned notwithstanding, women do play an important part in the Texas creation narrative, one that overtly replicates gender association common in Southern Patriarchal society. Emily West, commonly referred to as Emily Morgan, is the unsung heroin of the Texas Revolution for two reasons: first, she was the mulatto servant of James Morgan, and second, her heroism is not the result of her valor in the face of danger, but her aesthetic beauty and sexual promiscuity. According to the myth, Santa Anna became smitten with the young girl and as a result, focused his attention on romantic pursuits than on fighting Houston and his army. Subsequently, the Mexican President was purportedly entertaining her in his tent when the Texas army attack during the battle of San Jacinto. Thus, Emily is accorded partial credit for Houston's victory that secured Texas independence – hence her nom de l'affection, The Yellow Rose of Texas.

The legend of Emily West (Morgan) continues to reflect thematic consistencies between the Texas creation mythology and Judeo-Christian narrative tradition, which portrays women as either evil or virtuous. Sexually, women possess power over men and are, in this context, deemed evil. Asexually, women present no threat to patriarchal social structure and become

symbols of virtue – valuable in their capacity to create a new society. The popular perception of woman as a source of potential chaos was strong during the early nineteenth century. The depiction of women in Anglo myth seems contradictory in that it necessitates the subjugation of women to preserve male social authority, but it likewise depicts woman as the symbolic foundation of moral virtue within the society, the preservation of which they seek to defend. However, in Texas mythology, the narrative theme of chaos and evil embodied in Emily West aesthetic appeal is inverted when it becomes beneficial to the Texas cause, yet reinverted in the context of her ethnicity and the circumstances surrounding her act of heroism. Thus, the problem with myth is that it tends only to reflect the moral and social inclinations of the dominant culture, often at the expense of those believed by that culture to be Other. Such is the case with the Texas creation myth and the conflict from which it grew. The narrative themes within these romantic depictions of fearlessness, suffering and sacrifice in battle are dominated by Western European, Judeo-Christian concepts of sacrifice, heroism, loyalty, and cultural superiority.

CHAPTER IV

PROPAGATING CONSTRUCTED NOTIONS OF THE PAST

In his second theory on nationalism, Ernest Gellner discusses the importance of establishing and cultivating a standardized, education-based, literate culture – or high culture.[133] As mentioned frequently in this study, nationalism is a process, and the nation itself is the expression of high culture in social and political spheres. Thus, nationalism is the aspiration to obtain and retain high culture and make it ideologically compatible with the state.[134] Gellner believes that publicly funded education provides the state with the means and method of sustaining a literate high culture and instilling ardent loyalty for the nation in its citizens. Of equal importance, publicly funded education placed the state, as well as the social elite within a society, in a position from which to influence the standards and curriculum in subjects, such as history, government, and literature, that contribute directly to the construction of collective memory and identity. Such was the case in France following its defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. An effort to reinvigorate and reshape national consciousness, the French government authorized the standardization of historical textbooks that provided students with a reinterpretation of historical events that influenced a generation of French school children. The textbooks essentially reshaped national consciousness by glorifying grandeur of French nation

[133] Gellner, 95.
[134] Smith, 38.

and advocated the importance of maintaining its territorial integrity. It is not difficult to see the potential value of public education to the nationalist cause when we consider that most large-scale public education systems exist in nationalist states. Once a nationalist movement comes to power, public education become a product of its existence, not a cause.[135]

Public Education as Propaganda

On Dec. 21, 1838, newly elected present of the Republic of Texas, Mirabeau Lamar, delivered the second of two addresses to the congress of the young Republic to outline the goals he wished to accomplish during his time in office. The young nation was in somewhat of a precarious position, and while it had recently won the right to secede from its previous owner, Mexico, economic woes at home, threats of invasion from Mexico, and a reluctance on the part of the United States to annex the territory, made the Republic's chances for survival bleak. President Lamar could not have cared less. Regarding the latter two issues afflicting Texas at the time, Lamar demonstrated his penchant for the rhetoric of nationalism and a desire to see it flourish during his administration. After all, Lamar sought the presidency due in large part to his opposition to the fiscally conservative, socially benign policies championed by his predecessor, Sam Houston. If the Mexicans want a fight, he promised to oblige them. If the United States did not want Texas, then not only would Texas not seek annexation by the United State, it would actively compete against her sister nation.

However, for his vision of Texas to be realized, Lamar knew that the state needed to create a means of educating the population on mass, something deemed unnecessary by both the

[135] Smith, 39.

Spanish and Mexican government in the years prior to the Revolution. Thus, he called for the legislature to exercise their duty and "adopt a comprehensive and well-regulated system of mental and moral culture" if they wished, as he did, to establish a permanent republican government. Lamar went on to say that a, "cultivated mind is the guardian genius of democracy" and while "guided and controlled by virtue, [is] the noblest attribute of man."[136] Lamar believed that the establishment of public education in Texas would serve as "the foundation of great moral and intellectual edifice", hailed by future generations as the "chief ornament and blessing of Texas." He concludes his discourse on education with a warning, that without a means of educating the population, "deliberations of a government like ours", would be, "perilous and insufficient."[137]

Lamar desired to establish a state funded system of education to create a high culture that could in turn, legitimize national values and perpetuate a Republican form of government in Texas. Between 1839 and 1840, the congress of the Republic began the process of setting aside funds for a public-school system, as well as the founding of two colleges or universities. In 1845, the Texas Legislature went a step further and made the establishment of public schools mandatory, setting aside one tenth of the Republic's tax revenue for educational purposes.[138] However, Lamar's call for the establishment of a public-school system in Texas merely demonstrates an awareness on the part of the government of the Republic about the potential benefits of public education.[139] The relevance found in the interacting between state and its means of education is most noticeable in the aftermath of the Civil War as the southern states

[136] Ernest Wallace, David M Vigness, and George B Ward, ed. *Documents of Texas History.* Second (Austin, TX: Texas Historical Association, 1963, 1994, & 2002), 127.
[137] Wallace, et al. 127-9
[138] S.S. McKay, *Handbook of Texas Online. Republic of Texas Constitution of 1845.* Web. Ed. (Austin, TX: Texas State Historical Association, June 12, 2010).
[139] The 1949 Gilmer-Aikin Acts set up a new system in State Education that granted the power of oversight to the State Government.

grapple with the disintegration of their cultural constructs, and the challenge of reconciling with their past.

As previously mentioned, to the nationalist, schools function not only as a path for social inclusion and participation in the political process, but as potential tool of the state for the promotion of national allegiance and veneration of its governing principles. In the wake of the American Civil War, States of the Southern United States found themselves in a precarious position – they were on the wrong side of the American Grand Narrative, which depicts the Western movement of Anglo-American society as a hard fought, yet inevitably victorious battle between the forces of good and evil.

Histories written during this time, both state and national, took on what Laura McLemore called a "self-conscience form" that would profoundly influence collective memory throughout the South, though most noticeably in Texas.[140] The process of Southern reintegration into American culture began with the stroke of a pen. Texas follow suit; however, rather than embracing the America's Revolutionary history, Texans sought redemption in the state's revolutionary history and the principles that founded the Republic. Even before the Texas Revolution, promoters of Texas and the Texas myth sought to secure the sympathies of U.S. population by directing the reading public's attention to the thematic connections that link the Texas Revolution to that of the American Colonies in 1776. Thus, like the rest of the southern states, Texas began a process of historical reinterpretation, a premeditated process that sought to reframe the state's status in the context of the American Grand Narrative, but ultimately facilitated a surge of nationalism so appealing to Texans that it instilled notions of

[140] Laura Lyons McLemore, *Inventing Texas: Early Historians of the Lone Star State* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2004). 17

exceptionalism in the collective imagination of the state's population that rivaled that of the United States.

Southern secession and the war that followed invalidated the South's claim to the Anglo-American metanarrative and generated a deep-seated sense of self-consciousness in the region's population. By demonstrating a connection between the revolution of 1776 and their own quest to gain independence, Southerners sought to preserve a measure of lost pride in the knowledge that their actions were in keeping with the founding principles of the United States. Thus, post-Civil War histories written by Southerners reflect the region's cultural anxiety. Their subsequent efforts at revising the historical narrative establish a pattern that formed the foundation of regional identity in the years to come. Southern revisionist histories soon became the standard curriculum in the region's public schools for the next hundred years, anchoring the social identity of generations of southerners by reinforcing notions of racial hierarchy alongside hyper-patriotic loyalty to the United States.

Meeting little opposition from northern historical writer at the time, southern revisionist writers could take great liberty in their reinterpretation of past events, framing southern secession as the purist expression of American revolutionary ideals, and depicting slavery as a benevolent institution beneficial to master and slave alike. In time, Southern revisionary history became the history of the south, and any attempt at contradicting the southern historical narrative met with considerable opposition. During the latter quarter of the nineteenth century, the effort to ensure the preservation of southern cultural constructs and legitimize elite control of social, economic, and political life in the south led to civic organizations such as the United Confederate Veterans (UCV), Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV), and the United Daughters of the Confederacy

(UDC) campaigning to regulate school curriculum, and in doing so, they ensured the permanence of southern identity for the foreseeable future.

In Texas, defeat in the Civil War and association with the South led to a rekindling of nationalism in the former republic. Histories of Texas produced after the Civil War were characteristically romantic in their portrayal of the past, primarily focusing on the state's revolutionary origins and its stint as an independent republic. In addition, Texas authors actively sought to distance the state form its secessionist past by openly deriding Jefferson Davis and his administration during the war. Perhaps the best example of this rise in Texas nationalistic rhetoric is found in the work of James Morphis, whose work exemplifies the influence of Texas' Revolutionary history and its ability to generate a usable past, redirecting popular attention away from the southern legacy of defeat in the Civil War and focusing the attention of Texans on a heroic past that inspires admiration. The overarching theme in Morphis' work was the notion that the U.S. was lucky to have a state like Texas. Indeed, Morphis' work was an example of manufactured history, in which historical figures and events were framed in a manner palatable to Texans. His treatment of the Civil War mirrored that often attributed to the Battle of the Alamo, the loss of the war ultimately benefited Texas and therefore, cannot be considered a loss.[141] Morphis' method of historical reinterpretation appealed to the populous and led to his book being well received, and before long, this revisionary trend in popular history filtered down to school textbooks.

Homer S. Thrall's, *A History of Texas* is a prime example of this new trend found in Texas state historical textbooks. According to Thrall, the history of Texas does not begin with Native American migration or Spanish colonization; rather, the author reveals his racial

[141] McLemore, 72 & 98

animosity toward the traditional antagonists of Anglo-Texans and begins his narrative with an analysis of La Salle's failed attempt to establish a colony near Galveston Bay.[142] In his treatment of pre-Civil War Texas, Thrall devotes a grand total of two paragraphs to the topic of slavery in Texas, arguing that the institution was never popularly accepted by the people of the state. In comparison, *A History of Texas,* dedicates three pages to Native Americans in Texas, three pages to the Battle of San Jacinto, and six pages to the Battle of the Alamo.[143]

Thrall's treatment of the Alamo and San Jacinto is revealing. His apparent desire to linger on his analysis of the Texan's defeat suggests that martyrdom possesses greater value to the nationalist in terms of value as a tool for defining the values of a society, especially if the defeat is ultimately vindicated in a heroic fashion. The willingness of the individual to die for a specific cause or belief elevates the perceived value and reverence for that belief in the public's imagination. Likewise, it connects the belief to notions of righteousness and sanctifies both the individual's willingness to die in its defense, but likewise their willingness to kill to ensure the preservation of the nation's cause or beliefs. Thus, a perceived connection linking a population to such actions and events creates a fraternal sense of legacy that can be inclusive or exclusive – depending on the desires of the society in question.

Conversely, Thrall's treatment of the Battle of San Jacinto suggests that victory in a battle framed as a conflict between competing ideals, while often portrayed as evidence of the victor's moral and cultural superiority, does not possess the emotional weight within a society as do acts of martyrdom. Thus, the defenders of the Alamo are most often deified in Texas

[142] Homer S. Thrall, *A History of Texas: From the Earliest Settlement to the Year 1885.* New York: University Publishing Co. 1895).
[143] Thrall. *A History of Texas: From the Earliest Settlement to the Year 1885*

mythology, with the occasion of their death defining the moral foundation of social identity, and the circumstances of their death defining the social construction of Texas culture.

Beginning in the 1890s, the Texas chapter of the UDC and UCV began actively campaigned for control of historical memory in the state of Texas. The State of Texas demonstrated its awareness of the power of education in shaping collective identity when it passed the 1897 Textbook Reform Law requiring cities with populations under 10,000 to purchase state mandated texts, and submit to curricular oversight. Confederate patriotic societies exerted considerable influence over the selection of textbooks in Texas and throughout the south, and the Textbook selection board chose only those books that had been censored and approved by the CVA and UDC. In an environment rivaled by that created during the Red Scare, these Confederate Patriotic organizations became the self-appointed keepers of southern identity and historical memory – and their influence was not limited to primary schools.

The revelation that the University of Texas history department was assigning Henry W. Elson's *History of the United States*, created a fury in Texas, as well as the rest of the south, due to its pro-northern treatment of the Civil War and veneration of Abraham Lincoln. The Texas chapters of the CVA and UDC pressured university executives, who in turn, demanded an explanation from the history department president, Eugene C. Barker. Barker responded by saying that the book was used merely for comparative reasons, and he assured the CVA and UDC of his loyalty to the South.[144] Elson's text was eventually replaced at the university. However, not long after the Elson controversy, president Barker came under attack for another text that was deemed offensive by the CVA, forcing its ultimate removal as well.

[144] Baily, 469.

The process of controlling state school curriculum was simplified with the passage of the 1897 Textbook Reform Law that gave preference to texts written by state authors, provided the price and merit be of equal quality. Sensing an opportunity for profit, state textbook publishers began commissioning authors from the state to produce suitable texts that "painted a vision of history carefully tinted to please Southern elite."[145] Thus, students in Texas schools learned a romanticized interpretation of history that glorified southern culture, justified slavery and white southern racial superiority, supported the constitutionality of secession, condemned reconstruction, and legitimized southern social hierarchy.

The result is as follows: glory in victory is nice, but its ability to inspire is short-lived. Death in pursuit of a cause, if properly nurtured and framed, is potentially immortal. One of the tenets of cultural nationalism is its tendency to encourage xenophobia and advocate for a closed society. Emotion is the fuel upon which this incarnation of nationalism runs, and this emotion is used to impart within a population allegiance to the principles of the nation above all others. This brand of nationalism reflects the victory of collective principal over that of the individual, and of putting loyalty and sacrifice before rational interests.[146] The use of history to cultivate or reinforce xenophobic inclinations within a society can be seen in throughout the pages of a seemingly benign Texas history textbook used during the first half of the twentieth century.

Beginning in 1928, a new textbook appeared in sixth grade Texas history classrooms across the state. *Texas History Movies*, replaced many of the romantic history text of the post-Civil War, Reconstruction era in Texas. *Texas History Movies* was essentially a state history text in graphic novel format. Authored and animated by John Rosenfield and Jack Patton, the text remained a fixture in Texas history classrooms until the late 1960s, and is credited with having a

[145] Baily, 469.
[146] A. D. Smith, 161-2

profound impact on shaping the historical memory and racial attitudes of Texans during the time of its use in the public-school system. Like most post-Civil War histories of Texas, *Texas History Movies* focuses most of its attention on the hero of the narrative, the Anglo-Texan, devoting 75 of the books 128 pages to the efforts made on the part of the Anglo population to settle and win independence for Texas between 1821 and 1846. In comparison, the authors devote one page to secession and the Civil War, one-half page to reconstruction, five pages to annexation, and fifty pages to French and American exploration of the region.[147] The Spanish and Mexicans are depicted as characteristically cruel and violent, while Native Americans, made to seem sneaky or childishly awkward, are used for comic relief. African-Americans lack an identity, all together – with only Moses Austin's slave referenced by name.[148]

James Crisp, reflecting on his personal experience with *Texas History Movies* as a sixth-grader in north Texas, lamented that "such images become part of the popular culture, they have powerful and long-lasting effect on a community's collective memory." Crisp does, however, see one redeeming quality in the book, it reveals how racial ideologies work to create a narrative that is "every bit as powerful as that produced in print or stone."[149] However, this process of cementing racial animosity, (southern historical revisionism and Anglo-Centric interpretation of Texas history), takes on somewhat of a different meaning when viewed in the context of nationalism studies. Social cohesion is most often achieved by the perception of an enemy, (internal or external), whose presence poses a threat to that society. The fear created by this threat unites the people of the society through a common desire to defend and preserve their cultural existence. The enemy of Anglo-Texans during the Revolutionary and Republic era was

[147] *Patton, Jack & John Rosenfield Jr. Texas History Movies. Dallas, TX: Pepper, Jones, & Martinez, Inc., 1970.*
[148] *Texas History Movies.* 76
[149] Crisp, "Memory, Truth, & Pain" from Gregg Cantrell & Elizabeth Hayes Turner, ed. *Lone Star Pasts: Memory and History in Texas.* College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2006. 78

the Native American, Mexican Centralist, and the threat of failure as an independent nation. Annexation to the United States alleviated the treat of Mexican invasion; however, Native-American tribes of Texas continued to imperil the lives, property, and ambitions of Anglo-Texans. The Civil War introduced the North as an enemy, but the failure of the Confederate government to provide Texans with adequate protection from Native American and Mexican insurgents, left Texans struggling to assimilate Southern Identity as well. Following the Civil War, the true enemy of Anglo-Texans, as well as the South, was fear, as Texans lost their identity after losing the war. Thus, the period between 1860 and 1920 witnessed the commencement of a battle in Texas, like most Southern states, to secure Anglo-Texan political and economic dominance within the state, and their place as a member of the American nation. The key to this process lay in the State's past, since a selective reinterpretation of revolutionary and national era in Texas history provided the perfect platform upon which to solidify a race-based social hierarchy to protect Anglo dominance in the State, and promote Texas exceptionalism as the ultimate manifestation of the American Spirit. The abovementioned process of reinterpreting the state's historical narrative was a top-down progression in which amateur and professional historian alike embraced and advanced romanticized interpretations of the state's heroic past – celebrating Anglo successes, minimizing their failures, deifying their martyrs and marginalizing the contribution of all groups falling into the category of otherness. This top down method gained popular acceptance among Anglo-Texans because it appealed to archetypal themes common in Judeo-Christian religious narratives, (the battle between good and evil, sacrifice and martyrdom for a divine cause of freedom, and the holy trinity of Crockett, Bowie, and Travis to name a few). This new Anglo-centric interpretation of Texas history soon found its way into school curriculum and state history text, where its narrative of Anglo-Texan

exceptionalism completed the process. This is perhaps best demonstrated in the Texas state history textbooks – in particular, *Texas History Movies*. Though the Native American, who by the time *Texas History Movies* was published, no longer posed a threat the social or economic order in Texas, the presence of a large Mexican-American population throughout the state posed a potential threat to Anglo social, political, and economic domination in the state, and the fear generated by this perceived threat to Anglo-American hegemony in Texas is reflected in the historical interpretation popular to this epoch in Texas history.

Efforts on behalf of the government of Texas, social activist groups, Texas publishers, and writers of Texas history, when viewed from the perspective of nationalism studies, have fulfilled one of the primary criteria of the constructivist theory – that nations are not naturally occurring phenomenon, but are constructed and exist as a product of our imagination. Whether all parties participated in the process with pre-meditated intent is not the issue. It is likely that some, if not most, of the actors, who participated in the drive to establish publicly funded schools, published texts used in the classrooms, or wrote the books upon which school textbooks are based, acted with overt intent. Most likely their beliefs were a product of their times and were expressed with all due sincerity. The exception is of course with the various Confederate patriotic organizations, who along with their political collaborators, engaged in a campaign that openly sought to distort the historical record to preserve a morally corrupt racial hierarchy and archaic social order. For its part, Texas followed suit with their efforts at southern historical revisionism; however, in doing so they rekindled popular fascination in the state's revolutionary past and its national legacy – reigniting a spirit of nationalism that lay dormant for years.

The ability of the state to control the history taught in state-funded schools gives profound power to the state in shaping collective memory and cultural norms within a society.

History, therefore functions as a vehicle through which the social elite, if given control over the dissemination of information, can manufacture a usable past and transmit this to a population on a grand scale through a system of public schools. The willingness of academic and popular historians to submit to bias or external social manipulation, such as that exerted by the UDC and CVA, must call into question the validity of their work. However, to the nationalist it provides an example of history as a tool – and those who control the narrative and its dissemination, have control over social and intellectual legitimacy within the society.

The Real Texas History Movies

During the early twentieth century, the advent of the motion picture provided a new means of redefining the constructs of racial culture in Texas and the United States. Visual cinema functioned as a bridge that linked symbols of Anglo socio-political dominance to interpretations of historical events and the formation of legitimized notions of collective memory. Indeed, early cinematic productions of the Alamo clearly reflect changing patterns in the relationship between Anglo-Texans and the state's Tejano and Mexican population during this period of history.

Symbols of Texas and American patriotism, such as Crockett and the Alamo, provide the nationalist with tools that help refocus popular images to solidify a nation's collective memory. Thus, there is value found in manufacturing a historical past that appeals to and arouses the dominant culture's imagination – the legitimacy of which seeks to maintain structural order within the society. Prior to the arrival of the motion picture, a population gained its information by means of written text – a format that depends heavily upon the imagination of the reader to

achieve its goal. The motion picture three-dimensionalized the process of storytelling by circumventing the reader's imagination and placing interpretive powers in the hands of the film makers. As such, images became as, if not more, powerful that the narrative itself in the context of shaping popular imagination of people and events. Moreover, motion pictures not only made it possible for information to be molded and shaped to fit an ideology, they made it possible to convey a story quickly and with greater effect on the viewer. Consider the context in which movies addressing the Battle of the Alamo occurred during the past century: 1911-1915 – Two films produced: *Immortal Alamo* (1911) and *Martyrs of the Alamo* (1915). During the early twentieth century, Texas was in the process of redefining its cultural identity in the wake of Reconstruction – distancing the state and its culture from its southern legacy by embracing a revolutionary past crafted to resemble that of the original thirteen colonies. Mexico was in the throes of a revolution, and Texas became a haven for political dissidents and refugees fleeing the violence that swept the nation. The influx of Mexican refugees led to the integration of Mexican national culture with that of the Tejano population in Texas – presenting a challenge to Anglo-Texan authority. Newspapers established by Mexican refugees during the period threatened Anglo-Texan status quo when they began to actively denounce treatment of Mexican immigrants and the state's Tejano population, calling for the preservation of traditional Mexican culture and encouraging the formation of labor organizations to protect Mexican and Tejano workers from the animosity of U.S. labor organizations who view Mexicans as a threat to their interests. This period also witnessed a rise in Socialist party membership that Anglo-Texans linked to the rise in Mexican immigration into the State – presenting perhaps the greatest to Anglo ideological and cultural dominance in the eyes of Anglo-Texans. The animosity between Anglo and Mexican

populations in Texas reached its peak when it was revealed that a faction within Mexico sought to take up arms against Anglo oppression with the Plan of San Diego.

1926 - 1939 – Four films produced: *Davy Crockett at the Fall of the Alamo* (1926), *Heroes of the Alamo* (1937), *The Alamo: Shrine of Texas* (1938), and *Man of Conquest* (1939). At the time, America was in an economic depression of mythic proportion and Americans needed to be reminded that their legacy had heroic individuals, who suffered and endured numerous hardships before they were ultimately able to prevail. Thus, Texas and Texas exceptionalism became a major theme in U.S. popular culture, especially in the years leading up to the rise of European dictators, Japanese territorial expansion, and America's involvement in the Second World War.

1953-1969 – Five films produced: *The Man from the Alamo* (1953), *The Last Command* and *Davy Crockett: King of the Wild Frontier* (1955), *The Alamo* (1960), and the satirical comedy *Viva Max!* (1969). The 1950s were decades defined by social and political paranoia in the United States. The coming of the Cold War between the U.S. and Soviet Union stoked conspiratorial fears of communist infiltration and indoctrination and appeared to threaten the socio-political fabric of American society, leading to a second Red Scare in the early 1950s. Numerous movies produced during the 1950s, including the abovementioned, reflect popular sentiment of the period while reinforcing traditional, romantic notions of American individualism and heroism, while reminding the public of the sacrifices their predecessors made to secure liberty and freedom to contemporary Americans. By the 1960s, American's attention focused on a growing conflict in Southeast Asia. *Viva Max!* is included in this list for no other reason than its satirical depiction of the Alamo Battle reflects the social and political disillusionment that characterized American society during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Richard Flores, author of *Remembering the Alamo,* identifies two Alamo films, (1915's *Martyrs of the Alamo* and 1960's *The Alamo),* that provide the best example for analyzing how the medium of cinema prompted a shift in the racial constructs of American social imagination and the resituating of Mexican-Americans within this changing social configuration. The visual configuration provided by these two films spread symbols of the Alamo beyond the borders of Texas, linking the historical events of 1836 to its role in fashioning cultural memory in Texas and the United States. Furthermore, these films likewise reflect the changing relationship between Anglos and Mexican-Americans during the forty-nine years that separate the production of each movie.

As previously mentioned, the resurgence of interest in the Alamo battle during the early 1900s marks that period as the moment the Alamo began to transcend its regional symbolism and assume its place as part of the American myth. Beginning in 1911, Gaston Melies' *Immortal Alamo* was a short film, which claimed to depict a historically accurate account of the iconic siege. While no copies of the film exist today, Flores argues that the movie was constructed around a thematic formula popular at the time – pretty girl, reluctant hero, and villain.[150] According to Flores, the film's rising action begins with an act of betrayal when a messenger, sent by Travis on a mission to contact Sam Houston, leaves his wife behind and unattended. Not long after his departure, the man's wife is sexually accosted by one of the Mexican residents of San Antonio; however, Travis intervenes in the nick of time to save the White damsel from her Mexican tormentor. Dejected, the scene's antagonist, one Senior Navarro, seeks an alternative means of achieving his goal and contacts Santa Anna to provide him with plans outlining the Alamo's defenses in exchange for being allowed to select a bride from the surviving Anglo

[150] *The Immortal Alamo.* Directed by Gaston Méliès. Performed by Francis, Edith Storey et al Ford. 1911; Flores, *Remembering the Alamo,* 96.

women. Following the battle, Santa Anna lives up to his word; but before Navarro can take his bride, her husband returns to defend her honor and rescues her from imminent disgrace.

In retrospect, *Immortal Alamo* seems less concerned with providing an account of the 1836 battle than it is with promoting notions of Otherness and the threat these foreigners pose to Western, Utopian ideal of cultural and sexual purity. Flores argues that "the future of the savage became relevant in the context of Anglos defending their Utopian ideals from foreign encroachment." As such, the future of Western colonization depended on the Anglo's ability to secure a "Utopic Elsewhere", and defend it from external threats.[151] The portrayal of Mexicans as savages and sexual deviants is thus introduced into the American collective subconscious and used as justification for their subsequent marginalization. Moreover, once introduced and reinforced by subsequent narratives, on stage and screen, the process of equating Mexicans to Otherness becomes encoded into American collective memory and eventually accepted as truth.

William Christy Cabanne's, *Martyrs of the Alamo,* is given as a premier example of this process in which fragmented representations of historical events are portrayed through a narrative script and accepted by viewers as complete and true. Such was the case in *Martyrs of the Alamo*, which sought to reduce the historical complexities surrounding the Alamo battle by offering instead fragmented, generalized renderings of the event that viewers eagerly accepted as factual. This process of generalizing complex historical variables invites casual viewers to overlook or ignore historical complexities – thus negating the effect of alternative interpretation on a given event or topic. History is subsequently removed from historical interpretation and replaced by the prevailing cultural proclivities of the period.[152]

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[151] Flores, *Remembering the Alamo*, 98.
[152] *Martyrs of the Alamo.* Directed by William Christy Cabanne. Performed by Sam, Douglas Fairbanks, et al De Grasse. 1915; Flores *Remembering the Alamo*, 99.

In *Martyrs of the Alamo*, the theme of the Mexicans as ill-mannered, socially and morally corrupt, and sexually deviant people, reinforces and adds on to likeminded tropes found in its predecessor, *Immortal Alamo*. However, *Martyrs*, takes the issue of racial animosity a step further by placing Mexican cultural and moral corruption as the rationale behind the Anglo-Texan rebellion in 1836. The catalyst for the confrontation between Mexico and Texas in the film is the product of an Anglo-Texan protecting his wife from the sexual advances of a savage Mexican soldier – ultimately resulting in the death of the Mexican soldier at the hands of the Anglo-Texan. Following the killing of one of his soldiers, Santa Anna confiscates all Anglo-Texan weapons he can find, and proceeds to leave for Mexico City, leaving General Cos in charge of San Antonio. In the absence of Santa Anna, the Mexican soldiers of San Antonio lapse into a state of drunken debauchery, prompting Travis, Bowie, and Crockett to take matters into their own hands via a cache of weapons they stashed earlier during the film. As Flores notes, as soon as the Anglo-Texans gain control of the town, the once surly Mexican population is pacified and the previously hostile interactions between Anglos and Mexicans become more genteel and respectful.[153]

What is most telling about the depiction of the Texas Revolution in *Martyrs of the Alamo* is that it portrays Texans as exclusively White and Mexicans as exclusively Brown. Furthermore, and contrary to the historical record, at no point during the film are Mexicans depicted as allied to or fighting alongside Anglo-Texans. Thus, the influence of political incompatibility, which existed between Texas and Mexico and served as the true catalyst of the conflagration, is ignored and replaced in the film by what might be best described as post-reconstructionist era opinions that associated social and sexual depravity with Otherness. Moreover, the linking of sexual

[153] Flores, *Remembering the Alamo*, 101.

immorality to Mexican Otherness reflects the flaws of a presumably culturally inferior people who, if left ungoverned by a superior White culture, present a threat to Anglo-Texan social tranquility and, more importantly, feminine sexual virtue.

The practice of portraying Otherness as sexually threatening to civilized society was common in America during the Reconstruction, Post-Reconstruction, and Progressive eras and as Flores mentions, "the need to control Mexican sexuality stigmatizes Mexicans" and "validates the construction of the patriarchal, heroic Anglo male."[154] Likewise, the treatment of Mexicans as incapable of civil behavior redirects attention away from the numerous contributions of Tejano culture that led to the founding of Texas and focuses scrutiny instead on the socio-cultural differences that exist primarily in the dominant cultural imagination, which then lays responsibility for the plight of the Mexican-American at their feet.

The themes of race and gender that appear in *Martyrs of the Alamo* echo those that appear in D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation.* Both films utilize similar systems for constructing notions of Whiteness that reproduce and reinforce hierarchical divisions within American society through their depictions of non-white servitude, colonial love tropes, and other narrative devices that equate purity and social order to concepts of the white family. *Martyrs* frames non-white servitude as an outcome, rather than byproduct, of the Alamo Battle. The visual texture of the film thus function as a means for mitigating white racial attitudes toward the Mexican Other and systematically legitimizing Anglo ambitions regarding Manifest Destiny through its depiction of non-whites as savages and, thus, ill-suited to govern themselves.[155] Indeed, *Martyrs* lends itself to the creation of a storyline that projects the social and racial attitudes of the era onto the events of 1836. Specifically, the film superimposes 1915 notions of white, male, patriarchal, social

[154] Flores, *Remembering the Alamo*, 103.
[155] Flores, *Remembering the Alamo*, 105.

order, the existence of which is threatened by the presence of a morally and culturally corrupt Other, and frames this narrative within pre-existing Alamo accounts that ascribe political incompatibility between Mexicans and Anglo-Texans as grounds for the Alamo Battle. It is within this paradigm that a correlation is found linking the process of redefining Mexican culture as Other within the constructs of Anglo-American socio-political normalcy, to the racialized representation of Mexican culture and ahistorical storyline presented in *Martyrs of the Alamo*. By circumventing history, *Martyrs* refocus popular attention on social and cultural differences between the Anglo-American and Mexican cultures, effectively restructuring the relationship between Mexicans and Americans and legitimizing the dominant culture's desire to marginalize and control the influence of Otherness within this new interpretation of cultural normalcy.

Still, themes advocating social dominance of White over Mexican, while a major leitmotif in *Martyrs of the Alamo* and its cinematic contemporaries, eventually give way to renderings of the battle that favor more nationalistic foci – particularly during the 1950s and 1960s. The repetition of racially motivated themes in early cinematic manifestation of the Alamo, culminating with the release of *Martyrs of the Alamo* in 1915, solidified the image of the Mexican as Other within Anglo-America's collective subconscious. Containment of the threat presented by Mexican Otherness provided purveyors of the Alamo narrative with an opportunity to use the Alamo as a symbol for addressing other sources of social anxiety or enmity in America.

Alamo films produced between 1920 and 1956 exploit the "fixivity" of racial attitudes in America and explore more pressing sources of social apprehension through the lens of the Alamo and its heroes.[156] Examples of this process include 1937's *Heroes of the Alamo*, which addresses

[156] Homi Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, 305.

social anxiety emanating from the Great Depression and the nation's inability to recover from the financial stagnation that plagued the American economic system. The dominant theme(s) addressed in 1955's, *Man from the Alamo*, centered on McCarthyism and the impact of the second Red Scare on American concepts of freedom and democracy. *The Last Command*, (1956), connected the Alamo narrative to the rise of the military industrial complex in America during the initial stages of the Cold War. However, the most famous and influential of the Cold War era representations of the Alamo story was originally a made-for-TV movie produced in three parts by Walt Disney Studio, but was eventually released as a full-length feature film in 1955.

The storyline for Disney's, *Davy Crockett: King of the Wild Frontier*, is erected atop the myth and heroic tradition of the Crockett legend. Portrayed by Fess Parker, Crockett's representation is intended to reflect the highest ideals of American heroism and virtue during a time of rising Cold War tension abroad, and growing social instability within, personified by the arrest of Rosa Parks and the advent of Rock-n-Roll music. As such, Crockett becomes a symbol of hope and optimism for an American society struggling to come to terms with post-WWII, geo-political changes occurring around the world at the time. This need for optimism in America is most noticeable through an analysis of the film's portrayal of the last battle, where Crockett is depicted as the lone surviving defender of the Alamo, fending off a seemingly endless onslaught of Mexican soldiers, using his rifle as a club. At his feet are the countless bodies of Mexican's who have fallen before him. As the camera fades to black, Crockett is still standing, holding his own against a seeming endless rush of oncoming Mexican soldiers. While such an interpretation of the last moments of Crockett's life tend to reinforce residual racial animosity, it is equally important to note their function in the context of world events. Disney's discussion to end the

movie prior to Crockett's demise enables the viewing public to avoid acknowledging the death of the man who at the time personified traditional American ideals of heroism and frontier individualism. Within the constructs of Disney's interpretation, Crockett lives on in the minds of all who embrace traditional Anglo-American patriarchal socio-political values. The influence of Disney's rendition of the Crockett story on American popular culture was profound, as interest in Crockett and the Alamo surged during the latter half of the 1950s.

However, if Disney's *Davy Crockett: King of the Wild Frontier* represents the highpoint of Crockett and the Alamo narrative in American popular imagination, John Wayne's 1960 rendition, *The Alamo,* epitomizes the assimilation of the Alamo narrative as a symbol of American exceptionalism, as well as Wayne's tool of choice for promoting his own private interpretation of American patriotic nationalism. Wayne's 1960 film, *The Alamo,* was a product of America's obsession with the legendary nineteenth century folk hero during the previous decade. Despite Crockett's apparent popularity, it took Wayne several years to secure the backing he needed to finance the epic production. Like its predecessors, *The Alamo,* made claims to historical accuracy; however, its lone accomplishment toward this goal was the movie's set, which was constructed on a private ranch located ninety miles west of San Antonio, that featured an exact replica of the Alamo mission and a scale mockup of 1836 San Antonio de Bexar.

All claims to the contrary, *The Alamo,* addresses themes that paralleled contemporary, Cold War conceptualizations of American patriotism and nationalism – thus reflecting the battles status as an adopted symbol of American exceptionalism and national identity – one which transcends its original function as a means of defining Mexican Otherness within the constructs

of America's hierarchical social organization, evolving into an archetype of the American nationalist narrative matrix that adapts to fit prevailing socio-political needs.

In the context of the Cold War, Wayne uses the events of 1836 as a narrative centerpiece around which concepts of freedom and obligation of the individual within a free society are addressed. This is reflected in Wayne's portrayal of Crockett as a man, who does not seek the role of a leader, yet is looked to by the common man for leadership. This contrast between the so called common man and their chosen leaders reflects a lingering 1950's era fear of big business and government infringement on individual freedom in America.[157] Brian Huberman, in his 1992 documentary, *John Wayne's The Alamo*, notes that Wayne's affinity for conservative notions of America as a democratic society and free market capitalism are reflected in his portrayal of Crockett. As an advocate of American social and political exceptionalism, Wayne naturally equated patriotism with anti-communism.[158]

Perhaps the most noteworthy contrast in the movie is between Travis and Crockett. Travis, portrayed by Laurence Harvey, is depicted in a strangely transparent fashion. While his character portrays himself as a man of meager means following his migration to Texas, his actions, appearance, and demeanor reveal an overt adherence to the social hierarchy that characterized Southern Antebellum society – in particular, his distrust of foreigners, (in this case, Juan Seguin), despite all knowledge to the contrary that corroborates their loyalty. In contrast, Wayne's portrayal of Crockett embraces the American national narrative and its archetypal Horatio Alger, rags to riches theme, that favors the individual, who from modest origins, achieves fame and notoriety – all the while, retaining a connection and sympathy for the

[157] Flores, *Remembering the Alamo*, 120.
[158] *John Wayne's The Alamo.* 1992. DVD. Directed by Brian Huberman. Produced by MGM-United Artists. Performed by John Wayne: et al. MGM Home Video.

common man. James Bowie is portrayed as residing somewhere between Crockett and Travis in the context of American social constructs. As a member of elite society, Bowie's character functions as a contrast to Travis' Southern aristocratic leanings. As such, Bowie is portrayed as a new kind of social elite, the Ranching Elite, who despite his socio-economic status, shares Crockett's ability to relate to both gentleman and commoner with equal effectiveness. Furthermore, his distaste for ritual and ceremony creates a literal and metaphorical distance between him and Travis and in a way, between Texas and the south. Unlike Crockett, Bowie is wealthy, and this along with his reputation places him in a position of leadership during the revolution. Together, the characters of Crockett, Bowie and Travis function as allegorical symbols of American social and political ideology during the Cold War and are portrayed in contrast to the communist threat – the fear of which dominated the social sub-conscious in the U.S. during that period.

Wayne's film, flawed as it was, differed significantly from its predecessors in its portrayal of the Mexican Army and Santa Anna – rejecting, as it were, overt attempts at depicting Mexican Otherness.[159] Part of this is due to the evolution of social attitudes in the United States during this period; it was simply not fashionable to project overt racial bias during this period of American history. The other part had to do with Wayne himself, who often displayed a high regard for Mexican culture – two of his three wives were of Latin heritage. Similarly, Wayne's interpretation of The Alamo reflects the changing of attitudes in American society regarding such complexities as Mexican involvement in the revolution, showing both Mexicans fighting alongside Texans inside the Alamo, as well as depicting Santa Anna in a manner that is considerably more respectable. In fact, Wayne's rendition of the Alamo battle,

[159] Flores, 122.

rather than serving as a platform for emphasizing racial difference, focuses the viewer's attention on the ideological and political incompatibility between Anglo and Mexican socio-political culture. It is this incompatibility that is given as the reason for the battle and the revolution, thus framing the narrative as a fight for freedom and the defense of liberty from oppression and tyranny.

While Wayne's *The Alamo* proved beneficial to Mexicans in the context of their representation in the Alamo narrative, evidencing in many ways a measure of change in the social consciousness of Anglo-Americans during the 1960s. Women, however, are not quite as fortunate. Indeed, Wayne's film reveals the lingering influence of romantic designs of the patriarchal, male-dominated social constructs that typified early nineteenth century America and Western Europe. The women who do appear in Wayne's interpretation of the Alamo are depicted in one of three ways: 1) the traditional housewife – women such as Susana Dickenson that symbolize traditional concepts of family as representing the foundation of American morality, the nurturer of future generations, and the perpetuator of the husband's name; 2) sexually provocative foreigners, women in this conceptualization present the most overt depiction of cultural difference between Mexican and American cultural morality; 3) the apolitical being – women characterized as politically ambiguous – with the exception of Flaca, Wayne's love interest in the film whose political animosity toward Santa Ana derives from her allegiance to family rather than personal or political ideology of her own. As Flores rightly notes, the act of portraying Mexican women as politically ambiguous leaves cultural difference as the only thing that separates Mexican women from everyone else.[160]

[160] Flores, 124

While Wayne's film avoids the overt practice, common in preceding productions of the Alamo, of assigning notions of Otherness to Mexicans, to say that Mexicans escape and equally maligning and marginalizing depiction in the film would be naïve. As mentioned above, Mexican women are viewed as little more than sexualized objects to be desired by the Anglo-Texans for their promiscuous nature. Mexican men, regardless of loyalties or allegiances, are nonetheless depicted as the enemy; or if nothing else, as untrustworthy by their Anglo-Texan compatriots. This tendency is revealed in Wayne's film through his depiction of Juan Seguin – a man who sacrificed his place and reputation in Mexican culture to side with the Anglo-Texan cause – and yet he is not above the suspicion of William Travis, who finds cause to doubt the advice of Seguin for reasons heavily influenced by his ethnicity.

Ultimately, Wayne's version of the Alamo battle is a product of Cold War antagonism and anxiety, one in which historical accuracy is negated in favor of purveying a social and political message that reaffirms democracy and freedom as the founding principles of American society, while suggesting conformity is thus the best defense against the communist threat. While it was the fear of communism as a direct threat to American democracy that inspire Wayne to incorporate themes of American nationalism into his production of *The Alamo*, the film's focus on cultural and political difference transcends the anti-communist rhetoric in the film – thus, interweaving into American consciousness the belief that difference equates to a threat to the American way of life.[161]

Regardless of the period in which they are produced, films depicting the Alamo battle are cultural performances through which concepts such as heroism and patriotism get constructed and reconstructed in accordance with the cultural mores of the producers of the films and the

[161] Flores, 128-129

dominant social attitudes of the period. Thus, the performance of such narratives and the process of assimilating the notions of morality they espouse into the collective subconscious of American society ensures the permanence of the national narrative and solidifies definitions of Otherness of marginalized groups within America's national narrative.[162] The process of restructuring narratives of the Alamo in accordance with the passage of time and the ever-changing socio-economic attitudes in Texas and American society reveals a connection between the manufacturing of legend and its acceptance as historical fact, as well as changing conceptualizations among Americans and Texans of the constructs of patriotism, loyalty, and cultural assimilation. The performance of the Alamo narrative, in all its various forms, becomes, in this context, a tool of the dominant culture for promoting and perpetuating loyalty and service to the nation, as well as its motives and interests.[163]

Benedict Anderson notes that members of the national community make the transition from knowing/imagining the nation to forming an emotional allegiance to the nation and its ideological foundation(s) to the ability of the nation's elite to link the idea of nationhood with their societies model of family – the concept representing the "domain of disinterested love, purity, and solidarity."[164] Families, like nations, have powerful interests, which find motivation from a desire to protect and preserve the survival and identity of the unit. It is from this desire to protect and preserve the identity and survival of the nation/family that inspires a sense of devotion strong enough to motivate citizens to sacrifice their lives, if not take the lives of others, in its defense.[165] Thus, nationalism feeds off the passions and violence it engenders in its

[162] Clemons, 15; Flores, 129.
[163] Flores, 145.
[164] A. D. Smith, 140.
[165] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.

members, instilling in them insurances against the threat of oblivion through its ability to connect and unite past, present, and future – the dead, the living, and the unborn – with the constructs of the nation's grand narrative. [166] As such, abstract, invented notions of nationalism foster, in turn, concrete, real communal connections that appeal to the nation's population in the same way religion did in the past – fashioning perceptions of a community of destiny whose socio-political morality is disseminated by means of the judgment of posterity. The result is a secular version of religion in which the individual finds security through their adoption into the nation and the nation's promise of immortality for the individual and their descendants.

However, nationalism must retain a malleable quality to adapt to periodic changes in ideology and needs of the nation's members. This, in turn, accounts for the shifting Alamo narratives that alter, not because of changes in the historical record, but in accordance with the needs of the dominant culture in Texas and the United States. As mentioned earlier, post-Civil War animosity between North and South prior to the turn of the century necessitated the redefinition of the constructs that defined concepts of American patriotism and heroism. This led to the restructuring of the Civil War narrative, not as a rebellion over the South's desire to preserve its "peculiar institution" of slavery, but as a heroic struggle between brothers who fought and died for differing beliefs concerning America's founding principles.

[166] A.D. Smith, 140.

CHAPTER V

REINFORCING A NATIONAL IMAGINATION

The nation is best understood through an analysis of its traditions, since the invention of tradition reflect a culture's ideological and moral foundations. Hobsbawm defines 'Invented Traditions' as "a set of practices…grounded by overtly or tacitly accepted rules of ritual and symbolic nature that seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior."[167] He goes on to state that symbolic connections or references to a nation's historical past that imply a sense of connectivity tend to be rooted in historical myth rather than record. As such, these traditions are manufactured rituals that establish an understanding of a historical interpretation through a process of repetition.

Hobsbawm maintains that nations are constructed from the top down by nationalists, and that the sole function of nationalism is the creation of the nation/state. As such, he identifies three forms of invented traditions relevant to the study of nationalism, as a socially constructed entity, and the process of nation-building: the first seeks to create group cohesion or a sense of belonging within a given society; the second legitimizes civic and cultural institutions and the status of authorities therein; and the third instills a system of values and behaviors within the culture's collective subconscious.[168]

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[167] Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, ed. *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1-2.
[168] Hobsbawm & Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 3.

Benedict Anderson's concept of nationalism as an imagined political community addresses the rise of print capitalism and how it influenced the standardization of previously regionalized dialects into a common vernacular governed by a set of accepted rules and limits. This, in turn, encouraged the growth of national consciousness by creating an awareness of a national past, as well as legitimizing linguistic standardization as a product constructed and governed by the dominant, high culture.[169] Indeed, Anderson's use of the term 'Imagined' in the title of his book alludes to this process of invention – a process that might play-out as follows: the standardization of language begets the creation and subsequent diffusion of narratives, manufactured by social and intellectual elites, that work to connect populations of otherwise unrelated regions within a territory and allows them to perceive a shared relation between one another.[170]

However, nationalistic narratives have their limitations. They require a means of reinforcing the concepts of nationhood they espouse, as well as a means for reaching the nation's illiterate population and providing them with an avenue for inclusion and, if nothing else, assimilation. Anderson addresses this rhetorical shortcoming, and reminds his readers that nations are characterized by symbols of commemoration, which in turn are themselves a product of social secularization and the corresponding tendency within modern societies to reinforce notions of a shared, collective national identity by using posterity as a means of perpetuating memory and overcoming the individuals fear of death and oblivion. Thus, the symbols of the nation not only function as a means of legitimizing a cultures civic and ideological institutions, they transform fatality into community by connecting the dead to future generations.[171]

[169] A.D. Smith, 137.
[170] Anderson, 11.
[171] Anderson, 11.

Therefore, if the nation is indeed a manufactured product of our imaginations, as Benedict Anderson contends, then its power and popular appeal are inspired by the dogmatic religious ideologies it replaced during the Enlightenment period. In much the same way that cultural identities are created using the individual's pre-existing identities as a model, nationalism uses pre-existing institutional and symbolic models employed by religion to broaden popular appeal and strengthen social ties within a society.[172]

In *Legends of People, Myths of State,* Bruce Kapfer demonstrates how nationalism replaced traditional religion; however, in doing so it incorporated many of the rites and symbols of religious ideology and used them as a means of connecting non-secular themes to the secular state. Kapfer uses, for his analysis, the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, Australia, build in honor of ANZAC (Australian and New Zeeland Army Command) soldiers. who died during the 1915 Gallipoli campaign during the First World War. He notes that the building itself follows the religious model and is adorned with stain-glass windows and thus, the building merges allusions of Christian doctrine and its celebration of suffering, death, sacrifice and rebirth, and links them with Australian nationalist theme of salvation of the community.[173]

Kapfer's analysis is important because it demonstrates not only the importance of both the past and future to the nationalist, he hints at a possible reason for nationalism's popular appeal over religion and other avenues of social identity. While religion, like nationalism, provides the individual a virtuous and moral path to follow, unlike nationalism, the individual must wait for death to reap the reward for their loyalty. In this context, nationalism becomes the religion of history.

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[172] Further discussion over the connection between religion and nationalism are found in Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1998).
[173] Bruce Kapferer, *Legends of People, Myths of State: Violence, Intolerance, and Political* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 352.

Places of Public Memory

Texans embrace their revolutionary past with an enthusiasm that at times rivals that afforded to the symbols of nationhood found in most of the countries of the world. Many of Texas revolutionary symbols and heroes have become assimilated into the national narrative of the United States. The symbols of Texas and Texas exceptionalism permeate popular culture – be it through Hollywood's portrayal of the Texan as a Cowboy with boots, spurs, and ten-gallon hat, Larry McMurtry's romantic tale of Texas Rangers and cattle drives, or the Texan as the eccentric, rich oil-baron of the J.R. Ewing style – each an expression of Texas that, (intentionally or not), reinforces pre-existing notions of what it is to be a Texan. Indeed, romanticized depictions of Texas history and the symbols implied therein underpin the lingering constructs of exceptionalism in Texas, and by extension, the United States. However, Texans have not always held their legendary heritage in such high regard. In fact, evidence suggests that romanticized understandings of the Lone Star State and its history are more a product of the early twentieth century than they are a product of the nineteenth century. If so, the process of constructing a desired history to achieve a given purpose fits nicely with the tenets of constructivist nationalism and how nations are manufactured.

In 2006, Gregg Cantrell expanded upon a thesis originally advanced by Walter Buenger that asserted Texans acquired a newfound fascination with the period of Anglo colonialization and Texas Revolutionary era during the early 1900s as part of an effort by Texans at the time to distance themselves from memories of the Civil War and its legacy of defeat, slavery and

military occupation.[174] Thus, the romantic frontiersman, revolutionary history of Texas was a narrative Texans molded through a process of selective remembering and strategic forgetting, disseminated through narratives generated by social and intellectual elite, legitimized through the repetitious performance of Texas cultural identity in, schools, museums, and related places of public memory. In short, the history of Texas is not so much a history of record as it is a history that Texans choose to remember – an intermingling, if you will, of fact and fiction, created and nurtured to serve the needs of the state's social and political elite.

Cantrell argues in *The Bones of Stephen F. Austin* that, while the Revolutionary heroes of Texas had not been forgotten by Texans during the early twentieth century, they were not very high on the average Texan's list of priorities. Many Texans simply fell out of touch with their past – partly due to lingering preoccupations with Confederate 'Lost Cause', and partly due to the public losing faith in leaders like Stephen F. Austin and Sam Houston. Questions over Austin's loyalty to the Texas cause arose from his affiliation with the Peace Party, who sought a negotiated peace with Mexico, prior to the revolution, as well as his noticeable absence from the region during the height of the conflict. Cantrell notes that in the seventy-five years following the Revolution, Austin was not the subject of a single biography and received mixed coverage in Texas history textbooks.

Prior to the turn of the century, attempts to recognize Austin's contribution to the settling of Texas met with little interest. However, this all began to change during the late 1890s, when

[174] Gregg Cantrell and Elizabeth Hayes Turner, ed. *Lone Star Past: Memory and History in Texas* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2006); Also see: Robert A Calvert and Walter L Buenger, ed. *Texas Through Time: Evolving Interpretations.* (Austin, Texas A&M University Press, 1991); Laura Lyons McLemore, *Inventing Texas: Early Historians of the Lone Star State* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2004); Randolph B. Campbell, *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2004); Walter L. Buenger, *The Path to a Modern South: Northeast Texas between Reconstruction and the Great Depression* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2001).

interest in the state's revolutionary era began to rise. As interest grew, so too did the efforts of such organizations as the Board of Lady Managers, and later the Daughters of the Texas Republic and United Daughters of the Confederacy, rekindle the desire to honor Austin's legacy.[175] It was not until 1910 that the labors of these women's patriotic organizations finally met with success, as the State of Texas agreed to allocate funds for the reinternment of Stephen F. Austin's remains from the Gulf Prairie Cemetery in Brazoria County, to the Texas State Cemetery in Austin.

The reinternment of Austin's remains is relevant for several reasons. First, Texans used the occasion as a springboard from which to reclaim control of the state's historical narrative and, by extension, redefine the state's image and promote its importance as a loyal member of the United States. Texans would reject their Southern, Confederate legacy of racism and secession and instead promote an image of the state that reflected progressive notions of racial harmony in the New South. Second, the pomp and circumstance that characterized the event set in motion a wave of enthusiastic interest in memorializing the state's revolutionary past. Not only did this enthusiasm profoundly influenced the way Texans remember their own history, it reaffirms W. Fitzhugh Brundage's contention that historical representations and interpretation constitute socio-political power.[176]

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[175] Cantrell, *The Bones of Stephen F. Austin*, 44.

[176] Cantrell, 47; W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "Contentious and Collected: Memory's Future in Southern History." *The Journal of Southern History* 75: 3, pp.751-766 (August 2009):.756. For more information on the connection between socio-political power and historical memory, see the following: David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Bruce Kapferer, *Legends of People, Myths of State: Violence, Intolerance, and Political* (New York, Berghahn Books, 2011); Robert A Calvert, Walter L Buenger, ed. *Texas Through Time: Evolving Interpretations.* (Austin, Texas A&M University Press, 1991). Richard R. Flores, "Memory-Place, Meaning, and the Alamo." *American Literary History* 10/ 3 pp.428-445 (Autumn 1998); Anita Kasabova, "Memory, Memorials, and Commemoration." *History and Theory* 47, no. 3, pp.331-350 (Oct. 2008); Paul D. H. Quigley, ""That History Is Truly the Life of Nations": History and Southern Nationalism in Antebellum South Carolina." *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 106/ 1, pp. 7-33 (January 2005).

October 18, 1910, was the first day of Austin's three-day journey to the Texas State Cemetery, and as the wagon carrying his remains made its way through Brazoria on that first day, the procession was flanked by both Black and White school children who showered the casket with white flowers as it moved slowly through town.[177] Gregg Cantrell maintains that the inclusion of Black children was the first of many spectacles meant to reinforce popular perceptions of the New South as a place no longer defined by racial animosity. Likewise, the commencement speakers who addressed the crowds gathered to witness this historical event compared the achievements of Austin to that of Moses leading his people to the Promised Land.[178]

After a similar reception in the town of Angleton, Austin's remains made their way to Houston, where the procession was adorned with state and national symbols of Texas and the United States. Those who attended the ceremony were reminded of Austin's role as the founding father of Texas. Austin arrived in the capital city on the third day in grand fashion. He was greeted at the train station by a band, honor guard, and a host of state political dignitaries. As his casket lie in state at the Capital Building, the once reviled impresario was granted new life in the historical memory of Texans. He was laid to rest the following day in a grave located atop the highest point on the Hill of Heroes.

Gregg Cantrell's analysis of Stephen F. Austin's reinternment demonstrates how the process of memorializing the heroes of the Texas Revolutionary era essentially redefined historical memory in Texas by refocusing public attention away from the guilt and shame associated with the Lost Cause and replacing it with a narrative every bit as heroic and romantic as that attributed to the founding of the United States. He notes that the inclusion of young

[177] Cantrell, 44.
[178] Cantrell, 44.

children in every phase of Austin's reinternment was a means of reigniting the admiration of present and future for the past – thus, providing the youth of Texas with "a usable past that pointed the way to a better future."[179] The event was a spectacle of specific intent, as the national symbols of state and nation intermingled within the same space and the songs of Texas were performed alongside the national songs of the United States, the history of Texas thus became intertwined with that of the United States.

Again, by drawing parallels between the Texas Revolution and American Revolutions, between Austin and Washington as founding fathers of their respective nations, and between Austin and Jefferson as worthy patriots and statesmen who were passed over for the presidency by the heroes of their respective revolutions, the narratives of Austin, Texas, and the state's Southern legacy were effectively reconfigured to emphasize Texans as both loyal Americans and equally exceptional. Therefore, Cantrell's analysis also demonstrates how Texans not only altered their historical memory to one more usable for future generations, he shows that in doing so they used a process common to the study constructivist nationalism. Nations seeking to rally popular sentiment and instill a sense of unity, pride, and loyalty, often engage in a process of reinterpreting – or if necessary manufacturing – their historical narrative to fit the needs and ambitions of the nation and its high culture.[180] The reinternment of Stephen F. Austin was but the first in a series of projects intended to memorialize the heroes of the Texas Revolution and celebrate the state's heroic heritage.

[179] Cantrell, 48.

[180] For further discussion on the topic of nationalism and manufactured history, see the following: Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People* (Brooklyn: Verso, 2010); Bruce Kapferer, *Legends of People, Myths of State: Violence, Intolerance, and Political* (New York, Berghahn Books, 2011); Eric Hobsbawm, and Terrence Ranger, ed. *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

Indeed, monuments echoing Texas' revolutionary legacy have been erected at numerous sites to commemorate the major battles of the 1836 revolution with Mexico. Locations such as Gonzales, Goliad, San Jacinto, and San Antonio play host to these places of public memory. The largest of these monuments is a massive column the towers 567 feet, overlooking the Houston shipping channel, the Battleship Texas, and the park that marks the decisive battle of the Texas Revolution. The San Jacinto Monument is an octagonal shaft topped with a 34-foot, 220-ton star symbolizing Texas and independence. Construction began on the monument in 1936, and was completed in 1939. Dedicated on April 21, 1939, the museum tells the story of Texas from the Spanish era to modernity. However, much of the museum's space is reserved for narrating Anglo-Texan colonization and the Revolutionary struggle for independence. As might be expected, a significant amount of space focuses visitor's attention on the battle that took place on that location, which severed Texas from northern Mexico.

Unlike the various narratives manufactured by previous generations that use the iconic Alamo as a tool for redefining concepts of heroism, loyalty, and inclusion in the state socio-political hierarchy, The San Jacinto Monument promotes a narrative that, when compared the other such places of public memory, appears inclusive. While one detail that is noticeably downplayed is the brutality of the battle; much focus is given to addressing the diversity of the Texas army, whose members hailed from twenty-five states and eleven countries according to an inscription at the memorial. If there is a villain portrayed in the narrative created at the monument, it focuses on Santa Anna and his treatment of Texas citizens. Indeed, discussion of his tyranny tends to undercut any mention of the Mexican government's trend of liberal policies that preceded Santa Anna's assent to political power. As such, Mexico – and by extension, Mexicans – remain the socio-political instigators of the conflict.

That said, the stated goal of the San Jacinto monument is to preserve and portray a national narrative that focuses on a correct interpretation of Texas' struggle for freedom from Mexican rule – "correct" being the key word in the context of its highly subjective connotation. All the same, the site's message of freedom and its symbolic role as the location upon which the Republic of Texas came into existence is necessary in that it not only legitimizes the site itself as sacred and historic, but likewise reaffirms the resulting socio-political paradigms that led Texas down the road to annexation by the United States in 1845.[181]

This process of vilifying the Mexicans while simultaneously working to legitimize the narrative of Texas as a republic and later a member of the United States of America is most noticeable when visiting the San Jacinto Museum theater, which features a slide show containing some three-thousand photos that depict the historical evolution of Texas. Narrated by Charlton Heston, *Texas Forever!! The Battle of San Jacinto,* is the story "from the earliest Spanish colonies to the day the West was won!" – focusing primarily on the importance of the Battle of San Jacinto, the heroism of Sam Houston and the Texan Army, but perhaps most noticeably, it focuses a great deal of attention on addressing the violence of the Mexican Army during their campaign in Texas.[182]

Not all the battlefields of the Texas Revolution present such fertile ground for sowing the seeds of exceptionalism. The monument commemorating the Battle of Coleto presented purveyors of Texas exceptionalism with some complications. As the site of the Goliad Massacre, the monument marks a site that possesses somewhat notorious overtones. The symbolism of the location is not one of bravery or sacrifice in defense of a strategically valuable

[181] Clemons, 21.
[182] San Jacinto Museum of History. *sanjacinto-museum.org.* 2017. http://www.sanjacinto-museum.org/Museum/Jesse_H_Jones_Theatre/ (accessed Nov 6, 2017).

position; rather, it is a monument whose symbolic underpinnings are that of overconfidence and perhaps even incompetence on the part of both the Texas and Mexican Armies.

James Fanin was the commander of the Texas Army at Goliad whose sluggish withdrawal in the face of an approaching enemy force found himself surrounded in a low-lying, open, and indefensible position by General Jose de Urrea and a sizable Mexican force. Recognizing the hopelessness of his situation, Fanin negotiated the surrender of his force under the assumption that they would receive fair treatment under the existing rules of war.

However, despite General Urrea's promise of leniency, Santa Anna sought to make an example of the rebellious Texans and ordered their execution. Thus, on March 27, 1836, Fanin and his men were marched in different directions out of Goliad and, save for a small number of soldiers saved by the efforts of Francita Alverez, they were executed. News of the execution(s) at Goliad terrified and enraged Texans – both during and after the conflict. However, in the years following the conflict, Goliad became to the Texas Revolution, what Little Big Horn became to the U.S. Army and Seventh Calvary – a mistake.[183] As such, the battle and subsequent massacre that occurred there have become little more than a footnote in the grand narrative of Texas. Goliad is, by far, the least well-known of the Texas Revolutionary battles and, by extension, the least celebrated – despite the location possessing a meager three architectural structures at the location.

The absence of commemoration at the site is a simple equation when considered in the context of the Texas national narrative. As a sight of defeat, it reflects neither heroism nor sacrifice – both of which are necessary for constructing the narrative of Texas exceptionalism and the perpetuation of the state's heroic legacy. However, that which the Goliad battle site does

[183] Clemons, 24.

contribute is still relevant to the national narrative. Goliad reminds Texans that not all enemies behave dishonorably, that freedom and heroism can be squandered, and that you cannot simply circumvent problematic events in history when they fail to live up to the desired standards. Indeed, the Goliad narrative negates racially contentious interpretations of Texas history that espouse the "us" vs. "them" binary, characteristic of those portrayed at the Alamo. However, the suppression of Goliad as a contributor to the Texas narrative intimates the racial underpinnings present in the nationalistic rhetoric and romantic interpretations of Texas' Revolutionary past – negating the contribution of Mexicans and Tejanos who fought alongside the Anglo-Texans during the conflict. [184] Perhaps no other site dedicated to the preservation of Texas historical memory acknowledges the cost of war as well as Goliad. As such, the apparent contradictions between historical record and the romantic interpretation of the heroism attributed to Texans during the revolution helps to reinforce a more accurate understanding of Texas history.[185]

As mentioned earlier, museums play a significant role in portraying the national narrative. As the nation's archive of cultural memory, the space they occupy and the structural aesthetics of the buildings themselves influence the construction of the Texas national narrative. Scholars of collective memory and museology attest to the power of museums and their ability to engage the public with the stories they tell. Indeed, the act of collecting and preserving national artifacts implies a political or ideological rational for creating an architectural place of memory.[186] As such, museums of Texas function as purveyors of the Lone Star State's romantic facade.

[184] For example, George Esparzo fought and died for the Texas cause at the battle of Goliad, Juan Seguin commanded an army of Texas Volunteers, and Panchita Alvarez, whose intervention on behalf of some of the condemned Texas soldiers saved lives.
[185] Clemons, 24.
[186] Clemons, 24.

The Bob Bullock Museum in Austin, Texas, is the most recent and grand example of the application of architecture as a means of propagating Texas memory. This structural metaphor for the vastness of the state of Texas was completed in 2001 at a cost of $80 million dollars and is a symbol of everything that is characteristically Texas. The somewhat eccentric spender of the structure emphasizes the importance of maintaining the romantic legacy of Texan's pioneering and revolutionary past. The museum's exhibits are divided amongst three stories, and the sheer size of the building makes it a challenge for many to view everything in a single day. The artifacts are arranged in a manner that reinforces a theme of excess – the content of which includes a full-scale mockup of a NASA moon lander, and full-size windmill, an oil derrick, an AT-6 Texan trainer, and a fifties-era movie theater with an IMAX. However, the image that establishes the museum's ambiance is the replica of the Alamo façade located on the second floor.

The Bullock Museum seeks to tell the story of Texas from the first Native settlers to present day – the message conveyed is that of a celebration of the state's heroic past intermingling with optimism for the future of Texas. The museum layout acts as a metaphor for delivering such a message – the ascension of the museum echoing the ascension of Texas in American culture. As home for Austin's first IMAX theater, fans of Texas history can attend, *Star of Destiny,* often described as an experience more akin to a rock concert than a historical documentary. All the same, the narrative created in, *Star of Texas,* though unquestionably exaggerated in terms of its grandeur, is legitimized all the same due to its connection to the museum space.

When considered in its entirety, the Bob Bullock Museum essentially blurs the line between art and cultural materials, as cultural artifacts are displayed and narrated within the

aesthetic space of a museum setting. Again, this process of blending products of other cultures within the aesthetic space of the museum effectively legitimizes the authority of the museum's narrative purpose, as well as its claim to the national narrative of Texas. It is through this assumption of authenticity that the imprinting of Texas exceptionalism as a unique occurrence existing within the framework of the American narrative is created and cultivated – and like a commodity that is bought and sold on the open market, the branding of Texas cultural identity necessitates a pliability that negates grounding itself in the historical record. Further adding to the process of legitimization is the attachment of Bullock's name to the site. Thus, the space becomes a reflection of Texas high culture, and the narrative created within the walls of the museum mirrors an historical interpretation that accommodates the needs of this culture.

While the importance of architectural spaces to the process of manufacturing and perpetuating the national narrative of Texas cannot be understated, there are some symbols of Texas that are too massive to house within the confines of a museum. The roadmap of Texas is littered with markers that focus attention on important structures, landmarks, and trails that likewise communicate the national narrative of Texas. The process of designating and marking historical landmarks throughout Texas was a byproduct of the 1936 Centennial Celebration.[187] Spearheaded by a desire to promote tourism throughout the state, the Centennial Commission set about the task of identifying locations that typify the state's natural beauty and historical importance. Over twelve thousand buildings and trails are marked all over the state, each identified by a subject marker or a Record of Texas landmark indicator. Subject markers have no legal designation and are meant for educational purposes. They function primarily as a means for supporting local or regional narratives. Record of Texas Landmarks are reserved for those

[187] Kenneth Baxter Ragsdale, *The Year America Discovered Texas: Centennial '36* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000) 112.

locations considered historically significant. As such, these sites must be preserved in their original condition and are therefore legally protected locations.[188]

Both Record of Texas Historical Landmarks (RTHL) and subject markers are marked with plaques that replicate the Alamo façade. Thus, by associating the recognizable image of Texas cultural identity with the location being marked, the importance of the location's status is reinforced and given credibility – creating, in turn, a narrative consistency within the landscape of Texas. To this end, markers can hold whatever symbolic meaning desired by those who hold influence over the historical narrative of Texas. As such, their contribution to the construction of cultural identity, while subtle, is nonetheless noteworthy.

As physical metaphors for the state and its population, these structures are larger than life and built to inspire awe and fascination whether the narrative they espouse is based on history or myth. As time passes, the distance between the past and present increases as well, changing how members within a society choose to interpret and assign importance to the event of their past. The process of designating a given space as hallowed essentially anchors a national narrative to that location and makes it something tangible. Thus, it is within these spaces that the idea of the Texan as the romantic hero is performed and the legend extended to future generations.

Above all, public buildings reflect the achievements of a given society, and in the context of the state, they reflect the character and genius of the people within said society. This sense of exceptionalism is especially powerful for populations living outside the nation in question. Similarly, the grandeur and style of a nation's architecture echoes the values of that society. In America, government buildings are particularly noteworthy because their construction tends to reflect our esteem for the democratic form of government that underpins our national narrative

[188] *Texas Historical Commission.* August 18, 2017. http://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/recorded-texas-historic-landmarks (accessed November 7, 2017).

and sense of exceptionalism. Public buildings not only reflect the character of the nation and its people, it was believed that they elevated the mental character and inspire popular imagination by influencing moral and intellectual habits within a society.[189] As Anglo-American settlers migrated to Texas, they brought with them the beliefs and experiences from their nation of birth and incorporated these themes into their interpretation of the Texas national narrative. Constructed between 1882 and 1888, the Texas State Capital Building reflects the pride of Texans for their state's culture, historical legacy, and an innate devotion to the democratic form of government, which migrated with them to Texas from the United States.

The first Texas Capital building (1840) was a Greek Revival structure constructed of yellow limestone, and though initially admired by locals, it soon came under scrutiny when it became clear that the building failed to live up to the aesthetic sophistication of other state buildings. In 1881, a fire caused by a faulty stovepipe destroyed the 1840 capital building and Austin architect, Fredrick Ruffin, was commissioned to build a temporary capital building while work began on a new permanent facility – one that projected an image more fitting of the Lone Star State.[190] State Building Commission officials announced a national competition and offered a $1700 prize for the architect who submits the winning design. Of the eleven submissions received, the Commission selected one tendered by Elijah Myers, the Detroit architect who designed the Michigan State Capital building.

Constructed of Texas red granite, the new Texas State Building was completed in 1888, (despite Myers' dismissal prior to the project's completion), and presented to the people of Texas on May 16th of that year. The new capital complex was essentially a visual metaphor for Texas –

[189] Willard B. Robinson, "Pride of Texas: The State Capital." *The Southern Historical Quarterly* 92/ 2, pp. 227-246 (October 1988): 227.
[190] Robinson, 232.

big in size and aesthetically awe inspiring. The structure was 562 feet in length and 287 feet deep. From the buildings baseline to the gilded star of the goddess liberty that topped the capitol dome, the structure was an imposing 311feet – 23 feet taller than the U.S. capitol building in Washington D.C.

Reporters of the period ranked the Texas Capitol complex as one of the greatest structures in the world – one which inspired awe in the minds of technical critics and laymen alike.[191] Moreover, the overt similarities between the Texas Capital complex and the U.S. Capital building suggests the former's influence on cultural identity in the state. Constructed in Renaissance style, the new Texas Capitol was touted as a "unique statement composed of a universal classical vocabulary."[192]

As a symbol of democratic government, the crown dome that tops the Texas Capital bears resemblance to that which tops the U.S. Capital Building, complete with the armed Lady Liberty, gave the structure an air of purpose and importance. Both the dome and the long axis of the state house are nods to the National Capitol in Washington D.C., and the topographical prominence of both buildings enhance the grandeur of their place and purpose as seats of political power. However, for all that the abovementioned symbols of the Texas national narrative do to perpetuate notions of the state's legacy of exceptionalism, the most iconic symbol of Texas is not found in a memorial, museum, or government building; though, it is found flying above these structures.

[191] 1883 Report of the Building Commissioners.
[192] Robinson, 241.

Symbols of the Nation

When speaking of nationalism in the context of a narrative that is constructed with the intent of creating a usable past that fosters social cohesion, cultivates collective identity, and promotes veneration of the nation-state, it is necessary to note that written histories and public education are but one of many tools used by the nationalist to generate allegiance to the state and its founding principles by connecting the past to the present. Historical presentism and endurantism is a process that necessitates the use of a variety of techniques that seek to preserve and propagate a given historical narrative. Gregg Cantrell and Elizabeth Hayes Turner credit Maurice Halbwach as the conceptual architect of collective memory and its subsequent connection to a group's conceptualization of space. They likewise credit Pierre Nora for postulating the theory of "Sites of Memory", which encompasses that within a given society, "epitomizes community and national character."[193] Nora equates his concept of "site of memory" to humanities, "self-conscience and deliberate attempt to preserve its historical ways", because of the inherent incongruity that exists between history and memory. Thus, memory has greater value than history because it, "accommodates only those facts that make the past relevant to the present."[194]

Places of public memory include such localities as museums, monuments, and national parks that function as a means of connecting a people with their national legacy. However, they likewise include all events, locations, and natural or man-made constructions that focus collective attention on the nation and the values it symbolizes. Anthony D. Smith suggests the popular potential to underestimate the power of such places of public memory in his critique of

[193] Cantrell and Turner, *Lone Star Past*, 4.
[194] Cantrell and Turner, 5.

Benedict Anderson's theory of national origins, which focus heavily on the importance of print capitalism and its contribution to the construction of national identity, all the while ignoring or marginalizing the importance of various other forms of media that aided in the creation of a national consciousness. Traditional media, such as dance, song, ritual objects, and art, serve equally influential roles in the formation of national consciousness, as did print capitalism. Furthermore, these traditional forms of media/communication convey a greater sense of authenticity because, unlike print, which was a tool most often reserved for members of the social elite, traditional media is accessible to, and shared by, the entire population.[195] Anderson, himself, admits that print capitalism possesses limitations, especially with the advent of newer and cheaper technology that is making alternative forms of communication, (audio text, TV, radio, and movies), more accessible to the people of the world.[196] In this sense, a society need no longer be comprised of a highly educated elite for nationalism to exist – it need now only a common language. Thus, places of public memory provide the nation and nationalist with yet another potent instrument with which to facilitate popular identification, or if desired, re-identification with the nation's historic legacy – thus, supporting popular re-acquisition of spirit, pride, and veneration for the state.

The act of re-identification is a necessary condition of recollection because the process of accessing and retrieving past experiences supports an awareness of ownership for the person doing the remembering.[197] Anita Kasabova believes that the process of re-identification is expressed by a cognitive state in recollection. As such, the individual, through the process of recollection, is judging whether an event is remembered and placing the remembered event in the

[195] A. D. Smith, 139.
[196] Anderson, 135
[197] Kasabova, Anita. 2008. "Memory, Memorials, and Commemoration." *History and Theory* (Wiley) 47 (3): 331-350. 347

context of space and time. Recollective judgements, in turn, demonstrate a relationship between the remembered and the individual who is remembering – thus, grounding the latter's current awareness of a past event.[198] Hence, at trip to the Alamo begets a process in which a person, upon encountering or reencountering the distinctive shape of the mission's edifice, begins to search their memory for previous knowledge, (books read, movies viewed, legends/stories heard), of or about the Alamo and the battle it symbolizes, all in a process of reconnecting the individual's present existence and spatial awareness with that of the Alamo and its literal and symbolic connection to the individual, as well as its place in the narrative of Texas and American history. The individual is, thus, able to resituate the present episode and place it in the context of their personal experience. Accordingly, recollective judgement functions as a method of confirming truth by reaffirming present experiences and making connections to the past – affirming one's access and assigning it value.[199]

In the absence of personal experience, the individual may complete the process of confirming truth and assigning value to an experience as they gain awareness through visceral engagement. James Crisp explores racial trends in early twentieth century Texas and the residual influence on contemporary society reflected in two well-known works of visual history that currently reside in the Governor's mansion and the Senate Chamber at the Texas State Capital. The two works in question exhibit racial attitudes spawned in the wake of southern reconstruction and reflect the influence of Southern historical revisionism and the resulting dissemination of racially biased, romanticized historical narratives.[200]

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[198] Kasabova: (347)
[199] Kasabova: (348)
[200] James Crisp "Memory, Truth, and Pain: Myth and Censorship in the Celebration of Texas History," in *Lone Star Pasts: Memory and History in Texas,* Gregg Cantrell and Elizabeth Hayes Turner, eds. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, year*),* 88; Also see the following for more information on the influence of Racism and the

Robert Onderdonk's, *The Fall of the Alamo*, hangs in the front portico of the Texas Governor's Mansion in Austin, Texas, where it has resided since 1981. Originally titled, *Crockett's Last Stand*, the painting was first unveiled to the public in 1903 and depicts a wave of Mexican soldiers pouring into the Alamo to engage the Alamo defenders who, led by Crockett, appear determined to fight to the death in the face of impossible odds. Onderdonk's depiction of the Mexican soldiers in the finished version of the painting, (noticeably dark skinned and menacing in appearance), differs from both his original rendering of the scene, and contemporary paintings depicting markedly light-skinned soldiers of the Mexican army that were made at the time of the Revolution. In addition, Crisp suggests that Onderdonk includes in his portrayal of Crockett fighting a doomed battle against a horde of dark-skinned savages, what he believes to be a visual illusion linking the legendary martyr of the Alamo narrative to George A. Custer, whose famous 'last stand' still lingered in the American collective imagination due to the popularity of Cassilly Adams' portrayal of the battle in his work, *Custer's Last Fight*.[201]

The over-arching theme in each Adam's and Onderdonk's work is a metaphorical battle between savage and civilized – encoded through the contrast of light versus dark. Thus, *Crockett's Last Stand*, fits within the grand narrative of American Westward migration and the Anglo-American, Judeo-Christian models concerning the ongoing battle between good and evil. In addition to Onderdonk's *Crockett's Last Stand*, there exists another work of equal character that hangs in the Senate Chamber of the Texas State Capital building. Henry A. McArdle's,

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Texas Revolutionary narrative in Texas historical memory: James Crisp, "Race, Revolution, and the Texas Republic: Toward a Reinterpretation," in *The Texas Military Experience*, ed. Joseph G. Dawson III (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, year); James Crisp, "Why 'How He Died' Became 'Who We Are': The Texan Identity and the Contested Iconography of Davy Crockett's Death at the Alamo" in Lucia Carle and Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux (eds.), *Situazioni D'Assedio/Cities Under Siege/Etats de Siège* (Firenze [Italy]: Pagnini e Martinelli, year), 385-397, 489-492; James Crisp. "Beyond the Battlefield: The Contending Legacies of San Jacinto," *Houston History* (Spring, 2007), 12-19.

[201] Crisp, "Memory, Truth, and Pain" in *Lone Star Past.* 88.

Dawn at the Alamo (1905), depicts the doomed defenders of the Alamo as they battle heroically against attackers who seem, according to Crisp, "almost ape-like" in their "ferociousness and stupidity."[202]

Crisp notes that in McArdle's original rendering of the scene, soldiers of the Mexican Army are portrayed as being light skinned, signifying the erosion of race relations between Anglo and Mexican populations in Texas – a product of contemporary trends seen in historical writing of the period as well. The image itself portrays a chaotic scene that reflects the chaos and fog of combat. Within this chaos are isolated struggles that play out the more famous narratives of the Alamo defenders. Crockett, Travis, and Bowie appear engaged in personal struggles for survival as the Mexican army pours through a breach in the wall. However, the rendering of the battle as such was not a random attempt at artistic interpretation, it reflects McArdle's conceptualization of Texas' historical narrative and the mythology that intermingles therein. As such, the painting is painfully lacking in terms of historical accuracy, despite claims by the artist to have devoted significant time and research on the battle.

The most obvious mistake centers on the placement of Crockett, Travis, and Bowie in the portrait. This is particularly true in the context of Travis, who was killed early on during the assault, and thus would not have been available for combat at this late stage of the battle. Moreover, Crockett was charged with defending a location on the opposite side of the mission from where Travis was killed, so it is, at best, highly unlikely that a scene such as that which McArdle portrayed ever occurred. Lastly, McArdle's depiction of Bowie is idealized by his own admission; however, the rendering of the legendary knife fighter having at his tormentors one

[202] Crisp, "Memory, Truth, and Pain" in *Lone Star Past.* 89.

last time with the blade which carries his name was, perhaps, more in tune with the spirit of the event than it was a true accounting of the man's death.[203]

An analysis of McArdle's depiction of the fall of the Alamo reflects a trend common to chroniclers of the iconic battle, regardless of the media or format. The image that he created, not to mention the story the artist sought to tell through this visual representation, necessitated the presentation of the Alamo heroes at the same place and time. As such, *Dawn at the Alamo,* illustrates the historical narrative of Texas according to the state's heroic myth – each figure symbolizing, not simple figures locked in a struggle for survival, but symbols of the Anglo-American national narrative of Westward migration, the spirit of rugged frontier individualism, and the inevitable victory in the fight between the forces of good and evil.[204]

The image of Travis symbolizes Romantic notions of genteel, educated, Southern society and reflects the struggle for dominance over the racial "Other" as civilization progressed into the uncivilized Western United States. Travis' location is atop the Alamo barracks, above the fighting taking place below between common soldiers from both sides. However, the bayonets Mexican soldiers draw the viewers' attention to the image of Travis in a manner that seems to emphasize his individual role as commander of the Alamo garrison. Dressed in formal attire, a nod to his cultural sophistication and social standing, he confidently confronts his attackers with sword and pistol in hand. Like Travis, Bowie and Crockett, as archetypes of American frontiersmen, are depicted in the thick of the fighting. Each clad in stereotypical buckskins, these two icons of freedom and frontier individualism appear to fight, not out of obligation, but according to their belief in the cause of liberty.

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[203] Cutrer, Emily Fourmy, ""The Hardy, Stalwart Son of Texas": Art and Mythology at the Capitol." *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 92/. 2, pp. 289-322 (October 1988): 304.
[204] Cutrer, 306.

Regardless of individual rank or motive, each of the Alamo defenders portrayed in McArdle's work face a common enemy – The Mexican. It is interesting to note that all the Anglo-Texans who appear in *Dawn at the Alamo* are characterized by their defiant, heroic posture – standing straight and upright with looks of determination upon their faces. Contrast this with the image of the Mexican soldiers, whose dark skin, hunched back posture, bearded face, and exposed teeth – theirs is the look of animalistic savagery. As the Texans' encounter their foe head on, the character of the Mexican is revealed when they appear to their Anglo adversary in a manner more akin to a wild animal – from behind.

The light that falls on the subjects portrayed in *Dawn at the Alamo* emphasizes the whiteness of the Anglo-Texans and the non-Whiteness of the Mexican soldiers. Subsequently, the painting is interpreted as representing a depiction of visual morality in which the forces of good and evil engage in battle.[205] In addition, the location of the flag in the center of the piece tends to focus the viewers' attention on the structure located in the center of the painting. The figures that man this central location, as well as the structure itself, depict what is referred to as a visual allegory. If interpreted in relation to the play between light and dark reflected in the sky and on the horizon, the central structure can be interpreted as the sacrificial alter upon which Anglo-Texans must sacrifice themselves upon for the cause of liberty. The sky and horizon, in turn, function as symbols that tell of what is to come in the wake of the battle. The sky above the Alamo is dark, thus symbolizing the emotional despair no doubt felt by both the Alamo defenders and those they sought to defend. However, the sky is tinted with shades of orange and gold, suggesting the sun is rising and symbolizing a new beginning for Texas.

[205] Cutrer, 308.

Figure 1: Henry McArdle's *Dawn at the Alamo* (1905)

Figure 2: Robert J. Onderdonk's *Fall of the Alamo (1903)*

Both *Dawn at the Alamo* and *Fall of the Alamo* typify the concept of the visual narrative reflecting the influence of myth not only on their creators, but on the hundreds and thousands of spectators that visit the state capital complex and view these images. Within each is found the narrative of Texas exceptionalism and Anglo-American racial and cultural superiority – notions that became increasingly dominant during the early twentieth century. As such, they reflect a desire, common during that period among the Anglo population of Texas, to reassert their social and political domination over minority populations within the state. To this end, the history of the Alamo battle underwent a strategic reinterpretation that emphasized Anglo superiority, and by extension, magnified Mexican Otherness. The process of reinventing the historical narrative of Texas, however, was not limited the selection of works that adorn the halls of government buildings; it spilled over and infected some of the most popular sites of historical memory in the state.

In the context of shaping historical narratives, battlefields represent perhaps the most popular and powerful tools for constructing historical memory and collective identity within a society. They are also the sites where history and the constructs of the national narrative are most frequently contested. Holly Beachley Brear argues that the Battlefields of a society's past "are the battlegrounds where current generations fight the war of words for control of historical narratives" against the social and political Other. In turn, the battle for control of the historical narrative create boundaries that subdivide a society, defining those who belong and those who do not.[206]

[206] Holly Beachley Brear, *Inherit the Alamo: Myth and Ritual at an American Shrine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 1.

Historians of cultural memory often note a tendency for memory to manipulate historical truth and, by extension, its relationship to the present.[207] Architectural spaces dedicated to the continuous performance of the national narrative thus reflect a culture's desire to maintain and preserve a measure of continuity in the narratives that underpin collective identity. As reservoirs for the nation's historical archives, these places of public memory function as geographic repositories for historical interpretation and the dissemination of a nation's core beliefs. Such is the case in Texas, where the process of historical interpretation and representation of the state's cultural identity combine to become what Leigh Clemons calls "the performing of Texas-ness."[208] As such, architectural sites – whether a memorial, museum, or physical reenactment of a historical event – create a pedagogical narrative for the event that defines identity and historical memory for Texans. Indeed, the process of reserving space for maintaining the national narrative of Texas tends to separate Texas from the rest of the United States.

The Alamo, as a symbol of Texas' birth as a nation, as well as the emergence of the United States as a continental power following the Mexican American War, is a focal point of identity in both Texas and the United States. The mission's symbolic importance to Texans is corroborated by the struggle that occur periodically for control of the Alamo and the battle's historical narrative. As mentioned earlier, traditional interpretations of the Battle of the Alamo echo themes and symbols that endorse Anglo-American social and cultural dominance. The claim to dominance made by the Anglo culture may seem a difficult one to make, especially when considering how Texas existed prior to Native American or European migration to the region and control of the territory has always been something vaguely defined.

[207] Clemons, 14.
[208] Clemons, 15.

Yet, according to the creation myth, Texas was born in 1836 due to the sacrifice of the Anglo-America colonists who were courageous enough to rid themselves of an oppressive, authoritarian ruler. Mexicans, who like their Spanish predecessors failed to successfully assert their dominance in the region, are depicted in the Texas creation myth as little more than executioners or cannon fodder for the Anglo Texan guns. Indeed, the cruelty of Santa Anna towards Texans at San Antonio and Goliad becomes justification for the impulsive killing of Mexican soldiers following the Battle of San Jacinto – a practice that likewise continued for decades following the Revolution. The framework of this narrative served as the foundation form Texans' collective identity, as well as a means for maintaining Anglo-American socio-political dominance within the state for generations. However, the true power of historical memory lies not in the remembering, but in the forgetting.

As mentioned on several occasions throughout this text, the Texas creation myth, in general, portrays the revolution as a war fought by freedom-loving, patriotic citizens of Texas who sought independence from a corrupt and oppressive Mexican government seeking to subjugate the people in Texas – a narrative interpretation that no doubt borrows heavily from the 1776 colonial revolution. However, unlike the 1776 Revolution, the Anglo-American settlers of Texas, as part of their agreement with the Mexican government prior to receiving permission to settle the region, renounced their American citizenship and signed a pledge of loyalty to Mexico and the laws by which it is governed. As suggested in a newspaper article published around the time of the Texas Revolution, the Anglo-Colonist in Texas knew the risks when they accepted Mexico's offer of citizenship. Furthermore, no one forced these people to settle Texas, they chose to move into a foreign land, and in doing so, accepted the inherent risk. If viewed from the perspective of the Mexican government, the Texas Revolution was little more than a rebellion in

which a regional population, dissatisfied with what they believed to be political and economic instability within their adopted country, felt mistreated when asked to contribute, (via taxes), to the national wellbeing and instigated an illegal war of secession in response. From this perspective, Mexico did not invade Texas, contrary to Texas myth. Rather, Mexican army ventured into Northern Mexico to defend its territory from Anglo-invaders, many of whom entered the country illegally, and their Tejano allies, whose loyalties lie in their ambition to profit off neighboring American markets. This is a narrative interpretation that sounds completely alien to the average Texan, yet remove the social and cultural implications that lurk beneath the surface of the story, and the legality of the revolution becomes difficult to justify.

Perhaps the point of greatest contention revolves around the death of the most famous of the Alamo defenders, David Crockett. The legend of Crockett at the Alamo is that of the prototypical frontier folk hero, dressed in buckskin garb and sporting a coonskin cap, and swinging "Old Betsy" as Mexican after Mexican soldier fell before him. However, this interpretation is in large part the product of a theatrical production, *Lion of the West*, that was loosely based on his prior exploits that was popular at the time of his death and is largely based on unsubstantiated information.[209] How Crockett met his end at the Alamo is, without doubt, a compelling topic, if for no other reason than the length of time the matter has been a focus of debate among historians and enthusiasts alike. In many ways, Crockett lived up to his reputation; at least, this was the image he sought to project. Originally from Tennessee, Crockett made a name for himself during the Creek Indian War, fighting in the Battle of Tallussahatchee as a member of the Franklin County Militia. He won election to the House of Representatives in 1827 and again in 1829, where he advocated for populist causes, most notably was his support of

[209] Crockett's image as the prototypical frontiersman was revived during the 1950s due to the popularity of a Television series produced by Walt Disney.

public land policies that benefited settlers – a position that placed him at odds with Jacksonian democrats. Often accused as being "too independent and too honest" to be effective as a politician, Crockett lose his bid for a third term in office. Disillusioned with his constituents and politics, he sought to relocate his family west. Thus, Crockett arrived in San Antonio, not to join the revolution, but to seek financial stability as a land agent.

Debate over the circumstances surrounding Crockett's death at the Alamo began within months of the event; however, the issue gained new life during the 1970s and 1980s, and through the 1990s – most of which involving the journal of Jose Enrique de la Pena, an officer in the Mexican army, and his description of Crockett's execution following the fall of the Alamo. Dan Kilgore addressed the debate in 1978 and concluded that, despite evidence from various sources that is often contradictory, Crockett was most likely executed following the battle, in accordance with the account presented in the de la Pena diary. Kilgore's revelation ignited a firestorm of controversy, he was accused of murdering a legend, while re-igniting the fight for control of the Alamo narrative.

The legend of Crockett's death at the Alamo was first conceived for political and financial gain – both the Whig party and Crockett's former publisher seeking to capitalize from his fame and reputation. However, Richard Flores believes that the true origins of Davy Crockett's popularity are the result of post-Civil War America's desire to heal the national rift brought on by Southern secession through a process of "redefining the contours of patriotism and heroism." Flores believes that Crockett's fame, like that of the Alamo, transcends Texas in its symbolic utility, and has "seeped into the American imagination,"[210] If Crockett's legend is considered from the perspective of motive – that is, the image of a patriotic hero constructed for

[210] Flores, 141.

political purposes – it becomes easier to rationalize why some factions within society cling to the myth with such enthusiasm. His legend delivers such a compelling narrative, the population of both the state and the nation actively choose to embrace the mythic hero over the historical figure. Flores argues that the public's desire to embrace the mythic over the historic stems from the advent of new, Reconstruction era concepts of patriotism and heroism, according to which the brave die first, and the last to die were last because they were afraid. It is for this reason that Crockett and Travis are portrayed as the first to fall in the Alamo myth, they fulfill a need on the part of the public to see the history they want to see. Thus, the heroic Crockett is a product of "broadening social and political ideologies" that emphasize the constructs of nationalism.[211]

As American concepts of honor, patriotism, and national service begin to change during the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction era. Patriotism no longer implied simply a willingness to die for the good of the country, it likewise embraced more radical notions of social and political equality. Because of this perceived attempt to radicalize national ideology, the era witnessed the rise of social organization, such as the Daughters of the American Revolution and Daughters of the Republic of Texas, who campaigned for the cause of historical preservation and the de-radicalization of national values. This period of American history also saw the rise of new enemies in the form of the Plains Indians and the Spanish, the emergence of whom drew upon these new understandings of patriotism in the U.S. and leading to a surge in Americanism. The rise in foreign immigration, along with the socio-political reconciliation between North and South, infused xenophobic predilections into American social consciousness. It was during this period that Texas struggled to redefine its social identity through the restructuring of the state's historical memory.

[211] Flores, 145.

Thus, the Texas Revolution, Crockett and the Alamo narrative became a tool of white culture, who increasingly viewed Mexicans as an obstacle, if not a threat, to their dominance of social, economic, and political power within the state. By constructing a romanticized interpretation of the state's historical past, Anglo-Texans found a means to rationalize trends of social evolution occurring at the time, while also legitimizing beliefs in racial superiority and segregation.

It is within this climate of socially and politically motivated historical revisionism that the Crockett and Alamo find their greatest relevance. As mentioned earlier, the integration of Texas myth and its history was a process in which romanticized interpretation of the heroic figures from Texas past were constructed interpretation of the state's history that created a race-based social hierarchy in Texas, which defined all non-Anglo Texans as Other. Thus, Crockett's heroic death as the Alamo continues to linger in the state's, if not the nation's, collective memory, becoming symbols of Texas and American patriotism that function as tools used to refocus the popular image and imagination on conceptualizations of society that perpetuate Anglo-American, patriarchal social order.

Adherents of the Texas creation myth argue that the Alamo is the "Cradle of Texas Liberty", and those who sacrificed their lives in its defense, decimating the Mexican army in the process, bought Houston the time he needed to train the Texas army and prepare them to ultimately defeat Santa Anna at San Jacinto. Critics, on the other hand, believe the battle was unnecessary and that the Alamo held no strategic value.[212] What is more, critics often point out

[212] The following works offer contrasting views on the strategic value of the Alamo: Stephen L. Hardin. *Texian Iliad: A Military History of the Texas Revolution.* Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1996; Paul D. Lack. *The Texas Revolutionary Experience: A Political and Social History, 1835-1836.* College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992.; & Jose Enrique de la Pena. *With Santa Anna in Texas: A Personal Narrative of the Revolution.* Expanded Edition. Translated by Carmen Perry. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1997.

that the loss of life inflicted on the Mexican army was not as heavy as once believed, suggesting that many of the Mexican casualties were in fact victims of friendly fire and not the result of combat with the Alamo defenders. Dr. R. Bruce Winder, Alamo director of History and Curator, believes that an analysis of Sam Houston's actions during the time of the Alamo siege offers important insight concerning the validity of the myth.

Winder states that Houston, following his initial appointment to lead the Texas army, requested leave from his duties after finding himself with no army to command. During his furlough, he concluded a treaty with the Cherokee Indians and then returned to Washington on the Brazos as a delegate to the constitutional convention. Upon being reconfirmed as commander in chief of the Texas army, he rode to Gonzales to organize the relief of the Alamo garrison. However, when informed of the fort's fall, he took command of his forces and began his retreat to the east.[213] Considering Winder's account of Houston's activities, it is difficult to buy into any claim that the defenders of the Alamo sought to buy time for Houston to raise an army since much of Houston's time during those thirteen days was spent pursuing other objectives.

Moreover, when speaking of the Alamo as the cradle of Texas liberty, it begs the question: liberty for whom? The Tejano population suffered greatly during the Revolution, those who remained loyal to Mexico faced the same danger as those who remained neutral. Santa Anna's treatment of Anglo-Texans at San Antonio and Goliad fueled Anglo animosity toward Mexicans, which served to justify the murder and systematic theft of Tejano land in the decades that followed. Likewise, economic reorganization that took place at the turn of the century led to

[213] R. Bruce Winders. *Medium.com.* May 10, 2016. https://medium.com/@OfficialAlamo/alamo-myths-and-misconceptions-d13c31c19a72 (accessed July 20, 2017).
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the social displacement of the Latino population in Texas, a process given narrative weight by the romantic machination of Alamo benefactor Clara Driscoll and like-minded individuals within the Daughters of the Texas Revolution.[214] Ultimately, Anglo-Texans, and by extension their ethno-cultural brethren in the United States of America, reaped the greatest benefit from the Texas Revolution. The Alamo became the most iconic symbol of the conflict, if not the one that most lent itself to romantic reinterpretation. The mission's use as a tool upon which the "values, practices, and notions" of American identity supported the desire of the Anglo population to pursue efforts toward social and economic stratification, gains legitimacy from the creation mythology of Texas.

[214] Flores, 84-86.

CONCLUSION

Texas possess an historical narrative that is somewhat unique due to its ability to persevere amid an ever-increasing onslaught of efforts to revise its overtly Anglo-centric disposition. However, an analysis of Texas history for the perspective of nationalism suggests that the methods of preserving the structure of historical memory in Texas are akin to the process of manufacturing a history for the purpose of nation-building in several ways. First, the emphasis on the revolutionary origins of Texas taps into Anglo-American notions of social and political superiority, thus implying their right to excerpt dominance the region and its people. Likewise, the state's victory against Mexico during the Revolution, as well as it's tenure as a Republic, is often interpreted as being achieved by divine providence. Finally, the state's abnormally long shelf-life suggests that the historical narrative of Texas is embraced by a sizable portion of the state's social and intellectual elite. Thus, applying the tenets of nationalism to an analysis of Texas history demonstrates its relevance beyond the study of the nation/state.

Consider an interpretation of Laura McLemore's conclusion to her text, *Inventing Texas*, as viewed from the context of Nationalism. She poses the question; can an explanation be found in an examination of a nineteenth century text that explains the "phenomenal shelf-life of Texas history."[215] She proceeds to dismiss the claim of T.R. Fehrenbach that Romances of the nineteenth century are an essential lens through which Texans view themselves and their state's

[215] McLemore, 95.

future, as seemingly logical were it not for the number of Texans who are excluded by this interpretation. Scholars of Nationalism might view this act of exclusion as not only predictable, but desirable in the context of delineating the parameters of ethnic ascendency within a society. The process of exclusion is vital to ensuring dominance of society's high culture and by extension securing the socio-economic and political philosophy that legitimizes the high culture's beliefs and morals.

McLemore feels that to understand Fehrenbach's response – and by extension, the longevity of Texas Mytho-history – it is necessary to understand the origins of the myths, specifically, the intertwining of Judeo-Christian mythology in Texas historical narratives. She cites histories written between 1789 and 1899 as evidencing recurring themes that derive support from western-European Protestantism and its justification of materialism and socio-political bigotry.[216] The scholar of nationalism might reiterate that nationalism, as a modern idea which seeks to replace older religious constructs within secularized society, makes use of a culture's pre-existing beliefs, using them as the framework for establishing a deeper connection between people (high culture), territory, and governing ideologies. Moreover, by framing the history of Texas in Judeo-Christian terminology, (Texas as the "Promise land", Alamo heroes as Christ-like in their sacrifice, and Revolution and Indian Wars as battles between "good" and "evil"), the Nationalist can fit the story of Texas into pre-existing modes of understanding within a population. Thus, solidifying notions of otherness, justifying their marginalization, while reaffirming the legitimacy of Anglo socio-political philosophy and the rightness of their moral choices.

[216] McLemore, 94.

Perhaps by viewing Texas history through the lens of Nationalism, it is possible to demystify what McLemore refers to as "the dualistic tendency" of the "Texas mystic."[217] For instance, McLemore notes that Texan's are caught between the desire to maintain their pastoral heritage while simultaneously embracing the trappings of modernization. However, the act of maintaining a connection to Texans' pastoral origins accomplishes two things – it emphasizes the exceptionalism of progress over time, while perpetuating the illusion of arrested development amid socio-economic change. She likewise lists isolationism and community as an additional dualistic tendency common to Texans; however, it seems relevant to note that the isolationism to which McLemore refers, as a product of the vastness of Texas geography, builds the sense of community for those who experience and share an appreciation for it like that described by Anderson and his treatment of print capitalism and its unifying potential. Certainly, it must be acknowledged that, while Texans are no more or less unique than their fellow human beings, the historical narrative that they created has demonstrated a longevity that is, for lack of a better word, exceptional.

Such an interpretation of Texas history does not, and is not, an attempt to undermine McLemore's conclusions. Rather, it simply provides scholars of Texas history with another means of investigating the complexities that characterize the legacy of Texas and Texans. Ultimately, it provides an alternative reading of Texas history that begs the question: To whom does a narrative belong, and for what purpose does it exist. This is the question that should ring in the ears of every museum patron, every student of history, every movie goer – scholar or otherwise.

[217] McLemore, 95.

If nation-building and historical amnesia are little more than different verses from the same song, then it seems logical to suggest that any use of history to delineate and legitimize a socio-political or economic hierarchy in a non-national entity shares a kinship with the process of nation-building, and by extension, the desire of a nation's high culture to exert influence and impose its will upon a low culture with the intent of profiting off the imposition. However, critics may argue that this thesis is constructed upon a series of gross overgeneralizations, and that such an argument amounts to little more than a slippery slope upon which adherents might find themselves once again lost in the minutia of historical interpretation and the possible implications found therein. Indeed, all histories are manufactured in so much as they are products of historians who apply the methodologies of the profession to their analysis of primary and secondary sources to fashion a narrative based on a responsible interpretation of the available information.

The study of history is inherently burdened by two inescapable problems – the passage of time and the distance it creates between a people's past and present. As the distance between past and present increases, so too does the challenge for those who seek to preserve a nation's connection to its history. Thus, historical truth, (a concept that implies its own set of rhetorical challenges), becomes increasingly precarious given that historical interpretation is unavoidably compromised by the limitation of the human condition – chief among these limitations is the potential for historians to allow personal bias to influence their analysis of past events. However, historical truth is often counterproductive to the national interests and, thus is frequently sacrifice by purveyors of nationalism for the good of the nation.

If it is true that, like the religious ideologies that preceded it, nationalism is dependent on its ability to preserve and perpetuate a legitimizing historical narrative, then any attempt to

undermine the national narrative is inherently detrimental to the survival of the nation. As mentioned throughout this study, national narratives rely upon the nation's social / intellectual elite for defense against those who might challenge the prevailing national narrative to ensure national cohesion. Periodic challenges to the national narratives of the U.S. and Jewish nations, for example, have resulted in a wave of anti-intellectual rhetoric and sentiment to emerge in response. Such a response is often an effective tool for sowing the seeds of doubt by labeling efforts to revise traditional historical narratives as unreliable based on the author's assumed ethnic or socio-political bias. Scholars of nationalism view such efforts for what they are – the desire of the dominant culture to preserve social and political hegemony and maintain order through the control of the national narrative.

Perhaps it is reasonable then to conclude with the following: The purpose of this thesis, in retrospect, is not simply to demonstrate the utility of applying the analysis of nationalism to a non-national entity – it likewise seeks to test a theory that seems to appear in classroom discussions and casual conversations with a regularity that is impossible to particularize, yet it occurs with such frequency that it is impossible to ignore. In countless conversation with colleagues and peers, and in two separate graduate courses on nationalism in which the professor – after describing the characteristics of nationalism and its tendency to connect the nation's history to pre-existing constructs of religious doctrine with the intent of inspiring awe and admiration among a population for the nation's founding principles, its use of symbols and rhetorical slogans to produce feeling of exceptionalism within a population – the inevitable thought will arise in the mind of anyone familiar with the history of lone star state - a description of nationalism invariably reminds Texans of Texas.

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