



Damnatio Memoriae or Sic Transit Gloria Mundi: The Impact of Creating a Public Pedagogy by Memorialization of War in Post-Civil War Alabama and Post-World War II Berlin

Alicia Moreno, History and American Studies, Spring 2021

Intellectual Achievement and Research

SUMMARY

I examined Civil War memorials of and to the Confederacy in and around the original capital of the Confederate States of America – Montgomery, Alabama - as well as World War II monuments in Berlin, Germany – the capital of Nazi Germany and the current capital of the Federal Republic of Germany. I compared and contrasted how these two regions responded to memorialization of a historical period of war founded on what we now understand to be flawed social values. I also inspected how communal memorialization shapes the internalized identity of those in a region as well as what those monuments say about the ideals of a society.

Interviews of citizens raised near the sites of each city shed light on the impact of what growing up in the shadow of a particular memorial may have wrought.



Monument to COL. Nathan Bedford Forrest, Old Live Oak Cemetery, Selma, AL, USA, A. Moreno 2019

SPICES

This research project properly exemplifies the Intellectual Achievement and Research category of SPICES because I accessed resources outside of the subject of history, including art and sociology, in order to more completely consider the state of popular opinion and possible mass marginalization through memory construction

HERBS

This project demonstrates the concept of Equity by researching a topic that is focused on how we can consider a continued evolution of public history that neither exalts inhumane ideals nor denigrate individuals or causes that we now understand to be ignorant of or powerless to rebut.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

My research may shed light on how the evolution of public history must strive to meet the needs of the current social values while ensuring that historical events are neither whitewashed nor “forgotten”.

This research topic is important because it contributes to the continued conversation of both public history and objects of power and subjugation as well as memory and identity construction.



stolpersteine, Berlin, Germany, A. Moreno 2019

IMPACT

It is important to understand how or if demographic groups of power perpetuate patterns of power and patterns of marginalization through displays of public history and how or if communities or historians should choose which pieces of history to display.

The recognition of patterns such as these leads to heightened awareness of power abuses and encourages advocacy towards equity as well as encouraging public participation in establishment of policies that reflect current social paradigms.

ADVICE

I would advise anyone hoping to do research in a field that encompasses social justice to be willing to remove themselves from the privilege that they have in order to more fully embrace the new information gleaned in the research process.