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**LOOKING AWAY TO CHECHNYA: ON AMERICAN SOUTHERNERS' USE OF
LOST CAUSE MYTHOLOGY TO STRUCTURE NARRATIVES OF AGGRESSION
AND RESISTANCE/DEFENSE IN THE FIRST RUSSO-CHECHEN WAR (1994-1996)**

A Thesis in

Sociology

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the influence that stories about the past exert in shaping interpretations of current events. Building from theories of cultural trauma (e.g. Alexander 2004) and especially from James V. Wertsch's theory of the "schematic narrative template" (2002; 2008a; 2008b), I propose the idea of "mold narratives"—deeply culturally engrained stories about specific events in the past that serve as subconscious frameworks for making sense of current events. Analysis focuses on American Southerners' interpretations of the First Russo-Chechen War (1994-1996), and the ways in which those interpretations were shaped by a mold narrative based on the Lost Cause narrative of the American Civil War. Data are taken from 100 news articles about that First Russo-Chechen War that were written for Southern newspapers. Results show that patterns of Russian aggression and Chechen resistance/defense in these texts mirrors patterns of Northern (Union) aggression and Southern (Confederate) resistance/defense in the Lost Cause narrative.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	v
Acknowledgments.....	vi
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Chapter 2 Theoretical Basis and Argument	5
Chapter 3 The Importance of Lost Cause Mythology to American Southern Culture	17
Chapter 4 Aggression and Resistance/Defense in Lost Cause Mythology	21
Chapter 5 A Brief History of the First Russo-Chechen War	23
Chapter 6 Data and Method	29
Chapter 7 Results and Discussion.....	33
The Totalizing Nature of Russian Aggression	38
Imperialism or Conquest	45
Russia Began the War	51
Chapter 8 Summary and Conclusions	58
References	62
Data Sources.....	68

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Number of Articles by State of Origin32

Table 2. Breakdown of Russian and Chechen Aggression and Defense/Resistance34

Table 3. Breakdown of Russian and Chechen Aggression and Defense/Resistance; Subset of
Texts.....38

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Atque in perpetuum, gratias ago tibi, Domine, quia fui in hoc mundo.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The topic of substantive interest in this research project is the First Russo-Chechen War (1994-1996). There are many potential ways of interpreting this war, in which the constituent republic of Chechnya won democratic home-rule (in this case, *de facto* independence) from the Russian Federation. It is possible, for instance, to read the history of the conflict as a modern example of the David and Goliath myth: tiny Chechnya—a region of about 6,700 square miles (roughly the combined size of Connecticut and Rhode Island) and approximately one million people—stood up to the Russian behemoth and emerged victorious. Similarly, the outcome of the War could be viewed as a just consequence of the hubris of the Russian government. The Kremlin, after all, had vastly underestimated the Chechens and overestimated its own military prowess—hadn't Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev predicted that the twenty-month conflict would be won “in two hours with one parachute regiment” (Siren 1998:111)? For followers of Huntington's (1993) thesis, the Chechen conflict might be an illustration of the “bloody borders” of the Islamic civilization. Chechens are distinct from Russians in part due to religious heritage: Russia is a traditionally Orthodox nation, whereas Chechnya has been predominately Muslim since at least the thirteenth century (Halbach 2001:97). It is equally possible to consider the First Russo-Chechen War as a prelude to the insurgency tactics and terrorist acts which characterized the wars in the Middle East that dominated the next decade. In contrast to the traditionally-organized Russian military, the Chechen rebels fought in small, self-organized groups with no evident chain of command between them, and major Chechen victories resulted from operations

which directly targeted civilians rather than combatants—among these, Shamil Basayev’s¹ deadly hostage-taking raid on Budyonovsk hospital in June 1995. Yet another interpretation might focus on the situation in Chechnya as a humanitarian crisis. It is estimated that the First Russo-Chechen War claimed around 100,000 lives, many of them civilians, and displaced at least four times as many (Lapidus 1998:21). Reports of human rights violations, particularly on the part of the Russian army, also were widespread (Finch 1998:12; Lapidus 1998:22).

Interpretations of the First Russo-Chechen War are at the heart of this research project. Specifically, this paper addresses the role *historical narratives* played in shaping interpretations of the conflict. I focus my analysis on the influence of a specific narrative about another, older war of secession—namely the Lost Cause of the South, or the Confederate-sympathetic account of the American Civil War. Briefly stated, the Lost Cause narrative holds that the Confederate States of America, who formed a distinct ethno-cultural nation, seceded from the United States in order to protect their rights of self-determination (states’ rights); that the resulting war was a gallant and noble fight, especially on the part of the brave and chivalrous men who made up the Confederate Army and the saintly generals who led them; and that, though the Confederacy lost its independence, it was never defeated militarily, but only forced to cede to the overwhelming numbers of the better-equipped Union army (see Nolan 2000 for a more detailed summary). The Lost Cause narrative permeates the American South; even 150 years after war’s end, it is still the defining feature of the Southern cultural landscape (see, e.g., Bohland 2013; Davis 1996; Goldfield 2002; Hale 2013; Kaufman 2006). I argue that this culturally encompassing narrative structured American Southerners’ contemporary interpretations of the First Russo-Chechen War. More to the point, I hold that, as the smaller, seceding territory involved in the conflict, Southern

¹ Basayev also organized the September 2004 attack on School Number One in Beslan during the Second Russo-Chechen War of 1999-2009, although he was not among the attackers in that raid.

interpretations of the First Russo-Chechen War cast Chechnya into a role narratively equivalent to that of the Confederacy within the Lost Cause narrative. Russia, conversely, and as the larger political entity from which Chechnya fought to break away and which itself fought to prevent Chechnya from seceding, took on a role equivalent to that of the Union.

My analysis focuses on one particular aspect of the Lost Cause narrative and of the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War: the question of aggression. As discussed in further detail below, the Lost Cause narrative insists that the Union was the sole party to aggress during the Civil War. The Confederacy, in contrast, is depicted as fighting a primarily resistive war in defense of home and freedom. Thus, this paper looks specifically at patterns of Russian aggression and Chechen resistance/defense in the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War. If the myth of the Lost Cause did play an important role in shaping the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War, I should expect to find three things: (1) Depictions of Russian aggression are at least meaningfully more common in the Southern narrative of the First-Russo Chechen War than are depictions of Chechen aggression, if not represented to the preclusion of depictions of Chechen aggression. (2) Depictions of Chechen resistance/defense are at least meaningfully more common in the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War than are depictions of Russian resistance/defense, if not represented to the preclusion of depictions of Russian resistance/defense. (3) The forms in which depictions of Russian aggression and Chechen resistance/defense appear in the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War mirror the themes of, respectively, Union aggression and Confederate resistance/defense as they appear in the myth of the Lost Cause. Support for all three of these propositions is shown below.

Data for this project is taken from articles that were written for newspapers in Southern states and that to some extent discuss the events of the First Russo-Chechen War. Newspaper

articles are useful for this purpose in that they provide a record of contemporary interpretations of the war not otherwise available. Though news coverage is a peculiar genre of narrative building to itself, moreover, this does not mean that it cannot serve as a workable proxy for general Southern narratives about the war. Journalism is not sealed off from cultural influences; journalists, rather, draw upon the same sense-making structures as non-journalists in order to craft their news stories (see, e.g. Kitch 2008). If Lost Cause mythology did play a structuring role of the First Russo-Chechen War among American Southerners, I should expect to find evidence of this in Southern news reporting and commentary about the war, as well.

This paper proceeds in seven sections. In Chapter 2, I review existing theoretical literature on narrative building and present my argument as to why a story about the past (the Myth of the Lost Cause) would play a structuring role in American Southerners' interpretations of an ongoing current event (between 1994 and 1996, the conflict in Chechnya). I then touch on the importance of Lost Cause mythology to Southern culture in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, I briefly explain the role of Northern aggression and Southern resistance/defense in the Lost Cause narrative. A short history of the First Russo-Chechen War follows on that (Chapter 5). In Chapter 6, I overview the data and method used in this analysis. In Chapter 7, I present, and discuss the findings of, the analysis. Finally, I summarize the analysis and offer some conclusions (Chapter 8).

Chapter 2

Theoretical Basis and Argument

The premise on which I begin is the central place that narrative—that *stories*—holds in human existence. Mankind is “essentially a story-telling animal” (MacIntyre 1984:216); we are *Homo narrans* just as much as we are *Homo sapiens* (Fisher 1987). Stories underlie and permeate all aspects of human life, at all “levels of scale, from the personal...to the cultural” (Maines 1993:22; see also Richardson 1990). “[W]e dream in narrative, day-dream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate, and love [all] by narrative” (Hardy 1968:5). We also use narratives to create and maintain national identities (Anderson 2006:204-205; Bell 2002) and to engage in community discourse and decision making (Maines and Bridger 1992). Stories similarly drive social movements, and connect social movements of the past to current and ongoing policy debates (Polletta 1998).

Most importantly, stories perform a sense-making function for social life. I mean by this, as others have argued before me (see esp. Bruner 1986, 1987, and 1991; MacIntyre 1984; Somers 1994) that people, both as individuals and together as collectivities, experience and interpret the world in the form of story, that we all “make sense of what has happened and is happening...by attempting to assemble or in some way to integrate these happenings within one or more narratives” (Somers 1994:614). As Bruner points out, “[w]e seem to have no other way of describing ‘lived time’” (1987:12). Stories allow us to link together the events that make up the social world (generally, in temporal sequence) in order to create from them a comprehensible

and meaningful whole.² These two descriptors bear emphasizing, as they both refer to the essential work of stories. “By definition,” McCall (1990:147) observes, “a story tells *what happened* (or will happen or is happening).” Stories offer us descriptions of the world; they organize our knowledge of events and of actors who precipitated those events (or were involved in them, or were affected by them, or attempted to contravene in them, etc.), and situate both actors and events in a context of “physical and social place” (McCall 1990:149). They also situate events in the context of each other: The arrangement of events in temporal order implies interactions among them, and thus “allows for the explanation of causal processes” (Bridger and Maines 1998:321)—i.e. of “why and how events happened,” or are happening, or will happen (Maines and Bridger 1992:365).³ In other words, stories allow us to approach the world intelligibly; they make our experiences (and our knowledge of the experiences of others) *comprehensible*. “But a story is also...a way of explaining the *meaning of what happened*” (McCall 1990:147, emphasis in original). To the extent that the various events of which a story is composed *are* organized in relation to one another, every story involves a plot. If this seems redundant, it is only because plot is so essential to the function of a story. Plot elevates the organization of events “above the level of mere succession” and thus allows the story to express

² There is a wide and interesting debate as to whether, in doing so, we are imposing a narrative structure on the world artificially (e.g. Mink 1978; White 1980) or recognizing a preexisting and inherent narrative aspect of social life (e.g. Carr 1986; MacIntyre 1984). I have no desire to wade into this debate at present. Suffice it to say that such distinctions matter very little for the purposes of the current study. Whether they hold that narratives are imposed or uncovered, both sides of the debate at least recognize that people *interpret* the world by way of stories. This is also the extent of my claim.

³ As a simplistic illustration, consider the causality implied in the arrangement of the following two events: “Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States declared war on Japan on December 8, 1941.” This (very) brief recounting of the United States’ entry into the Second World War does not make any explicit causal claim (as it would if “Following” were replaced with “In response to,” for example). At the most literal reading, the only information it offers is that the declaration of war occurred later in time than the Pearl Harbor attack. However, because the two events are placed in relation to one another, even someone entirely ignorant of twentieth-century history nevertheless would assume upon reading this statement that the attack somehow prompted the United States to declare war.

some theme, point, or perspective about the events and the world in which they occur (Bridger and Maines 1998:321; Maines and Ulmer 1993:112; Polkinghorne 1988:143). Every plot, and therefore every story, is *stance-laden*. Inasmuch as stories allow us to make sense of the world, they necessarily cause us to make sense of it from a particular point-of-view.

This itself raises a further point about stories and sense-making: Because the stance from which a story is told is intertwined so utterly with the organization of events in the story, every change in stance changes that organization. And since the organization of events in the story explains the “why and how” of those events, and their place in the world they occupy, each change in stance also changes the description of the world that the story presents. Framing theory has been particularly helpful in enunciating this insight. The framing perspective recognizes first that the social world is highly complex; every social situation contains far too much information for any one person to apprehend in its entirety (Scheufele 2000:300-301). In order to understand events in the social world, people therefore must select some slices of this information to which to attend, and other slices of information to ignore (must “selectively appropriate” some information to which to pay attention [Somers 1994:618]). Once people make these selections, furthermore, framing theory also acknowledges that they do not treat each chosen slice equally. Rather, people emphasize or make salient some slices of information over others (Entman 1993:52-53); this, in turn, necessarily changes the arrangement of the information, and thereby also changes the description of the world included in that information. Accordingly, the social world presents itself as “a kaleidoscope of potential realities, any one of which can be readily evoked” by selecting and emphasizing different slices of information (Edelman 1993:232). There is no single, “correct” story to tell about any social situation, but instead myriad different ways of explaining what is happening at any given time (Van Gorp

2007:62-63, 67). Given this, the question naturally follows: When making sense of a situation, how do people choose which story to apply?

A next material premise for the argument I present here borrows a common answer to this question: that people prefer the potential stories that overlap with stories they already know (for a strong articulation of this argument, see Schank and Abelson 1995:16-26). Using familiar stories to make sense of new situations simplifies the interpretive process, as the descriptions of the world and meanings that these stories offer already are clear; it takes much less cognitive effort to apply a known story to a new situation than it does to create a new story out of whole cloth to explain the new situation (e.g. Wertsch 2012). Thus, MacIntyre (1984:216) argues that we all approach the world through the lens of a culturally inherited “stock of stories”—what he also calls a “tradition” (1984:221)—that guides our expectations about social life. A similar idea has been advanced by Bridger and Maines (1998), Evans and Maines (1992) and Maines (1999), who suggest that our possibilities for new stories are bounded by our communities’ and cultures’ existing “narrative structures,” or “cultural frames and ideologies that prefigure some [possible and potential] stories insofar as group beliefs and values contain already-articulated plots” (Maines 1999:318). MacIntyre and others have indicated that certain of these structures are the archetypal patterns that populate mythology—stories of “heroes, Marthas, tricksters” (Bruner 1987), “wicked stepmothers, lost children, good but misguided kings” (MacIntyre 1984:216), scapegoats, floods, good mothers (Lule 2001), and so forth. But more importantly for my argument (and this is the essential point that Bridger and Maines [1998], Evans and Maines [1992], and Maines [1999] all make), narrative structures also include the stock of stories that arise from “collective understandings of pivotal moments in a community’s history” (Bridger and Maines 1998:323)—that is, from what sociology terms collective memories. Narrative

structures based on these stories about community and cultural pasts draw members' attention to the informational slices of new events that resemble what is "known" about the historical events on which they are based—even if only superficially so (Bridger and Maines 1998:336)—and thus prompt community and culture members to perceive the new events as a repetition of the past. The present thereby becomes a case of "the same thing happening all over again," with all the meanings and descriptions of the world that go along with "the same thing."

Stories about the past naturally can interact with, and structure, the stories people create about the present in a variety of ways. By and large, previous research that has addressed their influence has focused on the overt mechanisms by which social actors consciously tie together stories about past and present in order to impart specific meanings about, and descriptions of, current events. For instance, previous studies have discussed social actors' coopting of historical imagery (Schwartz 1996; Schwartz 1997) and use of literary depictions of historical events (Schwartz, Zerubavel, and Barrett 1986) to craft stories about their nows. Particular attention has been paid to the ways in which social actors rely on explicit analogies between the present and the past in order to make sense of, or influence perceptions about, current issues (e.g. Berkowitz and Raaii 2010; Connor 2012; Edy 1999; Noon 2004; Paris 2002). But no less important are the implicit mechanisms by which stories about the past play this figuring role. Oddly, though sociologists have acknowledged that stories about the past indeed can and do work latently to affect the possible ways that people can understand the present (e.g. Bridger and Maines 1998; Maines 1999), the discipline largely has left the means by which this work is accomplished unaddressed. It therefore is necessary to look elsewhere for insight into these implicit mechanisms.

Perhaps the most useful perspective comes from the field of cultural anthropology—specifically, from the work of James V. Wertsch. Based on his research about collective memory and national myth-making in Russia and the former Soviet Union (Wertsch 2002), Wertsch has argued that the stories any given culture group tells about its past and present tend to repeat themselves quite heavily. Actors, places, and events change from story to story, but the plot that each one of these stories relates remains the same. This is understandable, according to Wertsch, in that people within the culture group “mediate” their understandings of all the events these stories describe through the same “*schematic narrative template*,” a concept he developed based on insights both from structuralist studies of folklore (esp. Propp 1968) and from psychological research about schematic thinking and knowledge structures (esp. Bartlett 1932; see Wertsch 2002:60-62). A schematic narrative template “is schematic in the sense that it exists at an abstract level involving few details about specific actors, times, places and so forth; it is a template in the sense that this abstract form provides a pattern for interpreting multiple episodes from the past [and the present]” (Wertsch 2008:65). Borrowing considerably from Vladimir Propp’s (1968) analysis of Russian fairytales, Wertsch explains that each schematic narrative template is composed of a set of roles (character-types, or what Propp referred to as the “*dramatis personae*”) and functions for these roles (actions that the character-types/*dramatis personae* carry out). People within the culture group form the “specific narratives” they tell about their past—i.e. the stories that are tied to “specific settings, characters, and events” (Wertsch 2002:60)—simply by slotting historical actors and actions into these roles and functions. Of consequence for this study, stories about new events are tied to these old stories in just the same way: People within the culture group substitute current actors and actions into the

roles and functions to take the place of the historical personages and events that occupied them before (Wertsch and Karumidze 2009).

To give an illustrative example of the concept, Wertsch has identified what he terms the “Expulsion of Foreign Enemies” schematic narrative template, which holds a central place in Russian culture, and which consists of four main episodes: (1) “An initial situation in which Russia is peaceful and not interfering with others;” (2) a sudden, malicious, and unprovoked attack by a treacherous foreign invader; (3) a dark hour in which all appears to be lost and the Russian civilization seems to be doomed; and (4) and a final, heroic triumph accomplished through the exceptionalism of the Russian people (Wertsch 2008:66). Russians use this template to explain events ranging from the Tartar-Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century to the Napoleonic War of 1812 and the Eastern Front of the Second World War, and even to some events that are surprising for a non-Russian observer—the Russian Civil War, for instance, and the five-day war between Russia and the Republic of Georgia in August 2008 (Wertsch 2002; Wertsch 2008; Wertsch 2008a; Wertsch and Karumidze 2009). By this narrative means, Georgia equates to Hitler, who equates to the White Army (and its international supporters), which equates to Napoleon, who himself equates to the Golden Horde, insofar as all of these actors play the role of the foreign invader, who fulfills the function of mounting the unprovoked attack.

Importantly, Wertsch describes schematic narrative templates as a form of “deep collective memory” (Wertsch 2008a). Deep collective memory is “deep” in two senses: First, it is thoroughly embedded into the meaning structures of the culture group to which it belongs—and, indeed, often is an essential component of the culture group’s collective identity. Deep collective memory is a pattern of thinking about a culture group’s past, which is bound up with a grand theme about the group that its history is deemed to communicate. Second, because deep

collective memory is so thoroughly embedded in those meaning structures, it also is “largely inaccessible to conscious reflection” on the part of culture group members (Wertsch 2008a:142). As such, the work of schematic narrative templates (and all other forms of deep collective memory) is both preemptive and surreptitious. People who rely on a schematic narrative template to make sense of current or past events generally do not realize that they are doing so. Rather, they instinctively tell the story about those events that fits the schematic narrative template simply because it is the story that makes the most sense—and therefore also is the most believable version of the events—within their cultural context (Wertsch 2008:68).

Though schematic narrative templates, and deep collective memory more generally, thus provide valuable starting points for understanding the implicit ways in which stories about the past shape stories about the present, they in themselves are insufficient for the argument I am making in this study. As the above description indicates, schematic narrative templates and deep collective memory are not dependent on any specific event in a culture group’s history. “A past [or present] that is imagined through narrative templates is one in which interpretation relies heavily on abstract-meaning structures not anchored in specific places, times, characters or events” (Wertsch 2008a:142). Though in the example above, for instance, the contemporary story Russians tended to tell about the war between Russia and Georgia was tied in structure and meaning to stories they tend to tell about the Nazi, Napoleonic, and Tartar invasions and to the Russian Civil War, the meaning and description of the world that the story about the 2008 war conveyed did not arise from any one of those other four stories. Rather, the meanings and descriptions of the world involved in *all five* stories developed out of the schematic narrative template that shaped them, and the general pattern of history (deep collective memory) that that template implicates. This directly contradicts the stated proposition at question in this study—

namely, that a “specific narrative” about a particular event within American Southern history (the Lost Cause narrative of the American Civil War) structured the stories American Southerners told about a current event (the First Russo-Chechen War).

When Wertsch’s basic model is sifted together with more conventional, sociological theories of collective memory, however, a helpful and workable model by which to support this proposition emerges. Cultural trauma theory is especially salient for this purpose. Most basically, the idea of cultural trauma centers on the stories culture groups tell about a single event (however long or broadly encompassing) within their histories that the group defines as somehow “horrendous” (Alexander 2004:1)—violent, tragic, or otherwise dangerous to the culture group’s collective “sense of self.”⁴ A cultural trauma arises when a culture group embraces one of these stories and perceives the event about which it tells⁵ to have affected the group in a way that neither can be ignored nor erased (Alexander 2004:1; Smelser 2004:44). Because of this perceived indelibility, the story thereafter becomes an integral part of the culture group’s identity structures and frameworks of thinking (see especially Eyerman 2004; 2004a). What cultural trauma theory describes, then, plainly is quite similar to the idea of deep collective memory—particularly in the first sense by which deep collective memory is “deep.” Again, stories about a culture group’s past are deemed to communicate some unifying meaning about

⁴ That it is indeed the *story* about the “horrendous” event, and not the event in itself, that is important for the creation of cultural trauma is something about which cultural trauma theorists are quite emphatic. Alexander is most explicit in his refutation of the “naturalist fallacy” of thinking about cultural trauma: “[Events] do not, in and of themselves, create collective trauma,” he writes. “Events are not inherently traumatic. Trauma is a socially mediated attribution” (2004:8). In just the same way, Alexander and Breese argue that “Collective traumas are reflections neither of individual suffering nor actual events, but *symbolic renderings that reconstruct and imagine them* in a relatively independent way” (2011:xxvii, emphasis added). Eyerman (2004) makes a similar point. In describing the role the social trauma of slavery played in creating African American identity, he writes that it was slavery “*not so much as experience, but as a form of memory*, [that] was a focal point of reference in this process” (2004:166, emphasis added).

⁵ Naturally, this also refers to the specific plot by which the story tells about that event.

the group, which colors group members' apprehensions of present and other past situations (for a discussion of the latter function, see Alexander and Dromi 2011). Cultural trauma theory simply substitutes the general pattern of thinking about the past found in deep collective memory with a pattern of thinking tied to a story about a specific historical event.

If specific narratives can give rise to a phenomenon closely analogous to deep collective memory—as cultural trauma theory suggests they can—it stands to reason that specific narratives also can create phenomena that closely mirror the various forms deep collective memory takes, including schematic narrative templates. This is the crux of the argument I am making in this study. I argue that when a specific narrative does take on the culturally permeating and constitutive role of deep collective memory, it also can develop into what I shall term a *mold narrative*. Like schematic narrative templates, mold narratives allow culture group members to impose ready-made shapes on their perceptions of the social world, just as a mold imparts its own shape on its corresponding cast. The process, I suggest, works in this way: As a specific narrative becomes embedded into a culture group's meaning structures, the characters and events that make up that story are reduced to more general roles and functions, correlative to those of schematic narrative templates. The culture group's members also substitute later actors and actions into these roles and functions in order to structure their interpretations of subsequent happenings. As it is in the case of a schematic narrative template, moreover, I argue that this substitution process is a subconscious one; again, because the specific narrative that engenders the mold narrative has become deeply embedded into the culture group's frameworks of thinking, group members see the stories about new events that fit the mold narrative simply as the most logical and believable versions of the events in question. Unlike in the case of stories formed from a schematic narrative template, however, the descriptions of the world and

meanings that stories formed from a mold narrative convey always are tied to the descriptions of the world and meanings communicated in the original specific narrative from which the mold narrative developed.

While the ideas are somewhat similar, what I am describing should be differentiated from Schwartz's (1996; 1997) concept of "keying." First, though keying also involves the use of specific and highly accessible stories about the past to shape meanings about the present, Schwartz's work indicates that it is a thoroughly conscious and active process in which social actors deliberately engage. This runs contrary to a basic assumption of the argument above—namely, that mold narratives work surreptitiously through their culturally pervasive nature rather than through considered decisions to invoke the past. Second, Schwartz describes keying as a very visible process, which "arranges cultural symbols" (1996:911) of the past and the present to mirror each other.⁶ Again, this differs from the idea of mold narratives; as do the schematic narrative templates from which I build the idea, I argue that mold narratives work at the structural level, rather than the surface level, of narrative building, and often appear without any direct reference to the specific narrative from which they arose.

The model that I expect to find, then, is as follows. The myth of the Lost Cause served as a mold narrative for American Southerners. Its various elements ("the South" [actor] "seceded to protect states' rights" [action]) were simplified into general roles ("the identifiably, and justifiably, separate region") and functions ("broke away from a larger entity to take the sovereignty it deserved"). Certain slices of information about the First Russo-Chechen War were

⁶ Examples in Schwartz 1997—in which the author studies the use of stories about Abraham Lincoln, and the Civil War more broadly, to frame the American experience of the First World War—include propaganda posters juxtaposing images of Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson or displaying images of Lincoln gazing down on American servicemen; poetry that imagines a ghostly Lincoln reappearing in 1917, unable to rest in his grave while the Great War persists; and a sermon that reworded Lincoln's "House Divided" speech to characterize the situation in Europe (divided between the freedom of democracy and the "slavery" of German militarism).

then cast into the roles (“Chechnya”) and functions (“declared itself independent from Russia”). This structured information about the conflict, and turned an otherwise unfamiliar and confusing happening into a comprehensible and familiar story.

Chapter 3

The Importance of Lost Cause Mythology to American Southern Culture

Perhaps needless to say, a central assumption on which the model presented above rests is that the myth of the Lost Cause is indeed an essential element and encompassing aspect of American Southern culture. This is far from a controversial claim. Killian (1970:21) argues that the distinctiveness of Southern identity (in his conception, part of a “minority psychology” that pitches Southerners against the rest of American society) is attributable in no small part to the “Legends of the Defeated South” that served as a “salve for the wounds” of the vanquished Confederacy. Writing some twenty-five years later, Reed asserts that “[e]ven today, identification with the South appears to have something to do with ancestral, if not one’s personal, sympathy with the Confederate cause” (1996:31). “[T]here is something different down in Dixie,” Goldfield agrees, “the difference is real and deep, grounded in the region’s distinctive past” (2013:13) “[H]ow white southerners remembered the Civil War and its aftermath defined and distinguished the South for the next century” (Goldfield 2013:16).

The outward signs of the continued influence of Lost Cause mythology are not hard to identify. They can be seen in monuments across the South—those to Generals Robert E. Lee and Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson and to Confederate President Jefferson Davis on Richmond’s Monument Avenue, for instance (Hale 2013) and the countless statues to the Confederate soldier that adorn town and courthouse squares throughout the Southern states (Radford 1992; Winberry 1982). They haunt the official regalia of state. The Confederate battle flag flew above the South Carolina State House until the year 2000, and was incorporated in the state flag of Georgia in some degree until 2003 (Kaufman 2006:85). It is still part of the state flag of Mississippi, and its design underlies those of the Alabama and Arkansas state flags. Georgia’s current flag,

moreover, mirrors the national flag of the Confederacy (the “Stars and Bars”), as does the state flag of North Carolina. Between 1993 and 2010, April was “Confederate History Month” in Virginia, a celebration that was marked with official proclamations from the governor, who at least once dubbed its Confederate years the “defining chapter in Virginia’s history” (Weinberg 2011:64). Along with several other Southern states, Virginia similarly still celebrates Lee-Jackson Day as an official holiday in January (Davis 1996:173; Weinberg 2011). Confederate Memorial Day is observed in the spring or early summer.

The education system, too, bears the imprint of the Lost Cause. Bohland (2013) particularly identifies it in the ongoing veneration of Jackson and Lee at the Virginia Military Institute and Washington and Lee University. Lee’s role especially extends beyond university walls, as Bohland observes that “elementary and secondary school children from the region make frequent visits to the [Lee Chapel] museum” at Washington and Lee, which promotes the general’s idealized image, “on field trips” (2013:276-277). This should not be surprising, particularly in Virginia, where Lost Cause interpretations of history dominated in state approved textbooks well into the 1970s (Dean 2009). Southern colleges and universities also boast high participation in the Kappa Alpha Order, “a college fraternity with an explicitly Confederate heritage” (Reed 1993:21), for whom the Confederate battle flag was an official symbol until 2001 and whose “Old South Balls’... [are] the major gala events of their school year” (Bohland 2013:280). Of the eleven former Confederate states, ten host at least five Kappa Alpha chapters, as do the two border states of Kentucky and Missouri. Only one other state (California) boasts such high participation in the Kappa Alpha Order; only six others (Arizona, Indiana, Maryland, Ohio, Oklahoma, and West Virginia) support even a single chapter (Reed 1993:22). Again, though, this should not surprise; Confederate-heritage organizations maintain high levels of

participation outside university walls as well. The venerable Sons of Confederate Veterans and United Daughters of the Confederacy, of course, remain, but their ranks also have been swollen with more radical Johnny-come-latelies like the League of the South (founded 1994) and the Southern National Congress (founded 2008).

Perhaps the most telling sign is the appropriation of Confederate imagery into Southern popular culture. In popular music, the mere titles of Southern rock songs—“The South’s Gonna Do It Again,” or “If the South Woulda Won (We’d Have Had It Made),” for instance—frequently evoke Lost Cause ideals (Kaufman 2006:80-81). Lost Causism has made inroads into Southern sports, nigh epitomized by University of Mississippi athletics. “Ole Miss’s” football fans are surrounded by a “sea of Confederate [battle] flags” as they cheer on a team called the Rebels, who were represented by the Confederate icon Colonel Reb until 2003 (Newman 2007). The Confederate battle flag is an ever-popular insignia outside of sport, as well; it appears on t-shirts, baseball caps, and even swimsuits (see Kaufman 2006:75). Business and advertising, too, bear the Lost Cause mark. Rebel Yell Kentucky Bourbon—created in 1936 and still sold to the present—references the Confederate battle-cry (Kaufman 2006:89), just as the countless “Stonewall Restaurants” and “Lee-Jackson Motels” that dot the “highways and backroads of Virginia” commemorate their respective Confederate generals (Davis 1996:173). More generally, Reed notes that “businesses across the South, depending on the clientele they hope to attract, proudly display the [Confederate battle] flag for customers and passersby alike” (2002:84).

Though these and various other signs certainly attest to the importance of the Lost Cause for Southerner culture, a fair observer might nevertheless argue that they bespeak its importance only for *white* Southerners particularly. It might be said—again, fairly—that this assessment

ignores the Southern-ness of narratives shared among, most especially, black Southerners, who generally reject and object to the Lost Cause narrative, for obvious reasons (barring a few exceptions such as H.K. Edgerton and Nelson W. Winbrush). It is for this reason perhaps best to consider the South through Bell's conception of the "mythscape," or "the discursive realm, constituted by and through temporal and spatial dimensions, in which [stories about the past] are forged, transmitted, reconstructed and negotiated" (2003:75). A mythscape is a diverse space, in which is located both the "myth"—Bell's term for the dominant story about a culture group's past, which communicates meanings of group membership (similar to deep collective memory)—and any and all of its various counter-stories ("memories" in Bell's words). Diverse though it may be, however, Bell recognizes that the myth always is (and must be) the mythscape's most dominating feature. Although memories may directly contradict the myth, it is only with extreme difficulty that they ever provide any real challenge to it. As such, we may recognize that, in addition to the myth of the Lost Cause, the Southern Civil War mythscape most certainly includes stories of the Emancipation Cause (the North went to war with the South to free the slaves) and the Union Cause (the North went to War with the South to preserve the integrity of the Union) (see Gallagher 2008), among still other opposing viewpoints. But we also must recognize that none of these memories interferes with the hegemonic, mythic position of the Lost Cause within that mythscape. To refer to the cultural importance of the Lost Cause in Southern culture, then, is not to deny the existence or cultural value of other stories in that region. It is simply to acknowledge that, despite these stories, the Lost Cause still remains the most prominent narrative aspect of Southern culture on the whole.

Chapter 4

Aggression and Resistance/Defense in Lost Cause Mythology

Having established the continued cultural importance of the myth of the Lost Cause, I turn now to the substance of the narrative itself. As noted, I am interested in one aspect of that substance for the purposes of this paper—namely, the theme of aggression and resistance/defense.

The meaning of this theme in Lost Cause mythology is summed up perhaps best in one of the alternate names for the Civil War: the War of Northern Aggression. As this epithet indicates, Lost Cause mythology casts the North as the sole aggressor in the conflict and its buildup. To begin, while the story might admit that secession was the ultimate cause of the war (Janney 2014), it nevertheless absolves the South of any blame for secession. Blame rather falls on the North and the intolerable political situation it had created in the years leading up to 1861, which had forced the South's hand—"provoked" them into seceding (Nolan 2000:27). As Heyse quotes from a UDC catechism, "The North would not grant [the South] constitutional rights, nor would they let [the South] alone, the South could no longer submit to the tyranny and oppression of the North" (Heyse 2008:425). Even after secession occurred, moreover, Lost Cause adherents attest that conflict still could have been avoided but for two decisions by the Union government: First, while the South had wanted to resolve the secession crisis diplomatically, the North—embodied in President Lincoln—refused to call the Constitutional convention which would have allowed for this possibility (Heyse 2008:423). Second, even without resolving the secession crisis at all, the North could have decided not to go to war. The tenets of the Lost Cause hold that the Confederate states had the right to secede. According to the myth, the Constitution as a contractual agreement ("compact" is the term usually used) into which the several, independent states had entered with one another without relinquishing their individual sovereignty (states'

rights) (Davis 1996:180; Heyse 2008:424; Hunter 2000:207; Janney 2013:147; Nolan 2000:18). In seceding, the Confederate states simply were withdrawing from the contract. As the contract itself never stipulated that the states were not to withdraw—nowhere in the Constitution is secession ever directly prohibited (Davis 1996:186)—this was entirely within rights of each sovereign state. Thus, the Union had no cause or power to demand that Confederate states return; the Federal government rather could and should have chosen not to fight the South, but instead simply allowed the newly formed CSA to develop in peace. Nevertheless, the North did invade, “not for any patriotism or high motives, but to gratify [its] ambition and lust for power” over the Southern states (Hunter 2000:206-207). The South fought only in self-defense against this invasion and to protect the freedoms and autonomy which it had seceded to preserve from Northern tyranny.

When this aspect of the myth is taken to its extreme, Davis (1996) notes that even the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter is not considered an act of aggression on the part of the South. Instead, it was Lincoln who first aggressed when he insisted on reinforcing the fort, thus “forcing the Charlestonians to open fire” (187-188).

In terms of mold narratives, then, this theme suggests the following roles and functions:
Role: The larger political entity (Union equivalent) **Function:** unnecessarily forced the breakaway territory (Confederacy equivalent) into war, and afterward **Function:** fought an offensive, aggressive war against the breakaway territory in order to assert unlawful power over it. (Or, stated in converse, **Role:** The breakaway territory **Function:** was coerced into hostilities, and thereafter **Function:** fought a defensive war of resistance to protect itself and its freedom from the invading and belligerent larger political entity.)

Chapter 5

A Brief History of the First Russo-Chechen War (1994-1996)

A full history of warfare between Russia and Chechnya would cover several centuries: the first Russian military incursions into the area of the Northern Caucasus now known as Chechnya occurred in 1732, and conflict between the two regions has occurred almost continually ever since. The origins of the First Russo-Chechen War specifically, however, can be traced to November 1991, when, as the Soviet Union was collapsing, newly elected Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev declared independence for Chechnya, which was then an autonomous republic within the USSR. After an initial, failed attempt by Russian President Boris Yeltsin to return the republic to Russian control by force in the weeks immediately following (Hayden 1999:35), this declaration went largely uncontested for the next three years. Though it was never recognized by the international community, Chechnya became, de facto, an independent state.

The reprieve ended on November 25, 1994, when “some 40 helicopters with Russian markings launched an attack on Grozny airport” in connection with a coup attempt by a pro-Moscow oppositional group, through whom the Kremlin had been engaged in covert warfare against the Dudayev regime since December 1993 (Siren 1998:116). The next day, two columns of tanks rolled into Grozny (Hall and de Waal 1998:155-156). “Dudayev’s National Guard decisively repulsed the assault” (Hayden 1999:48), and in the process captured “[t]wenty-one Russians servicemen” (Hall and de Waal 1998:157). Despite the presence of the Russian helicopters, the Kremlin tried to deny involvement in the incident; in response, “the Chechen government paraded captured Russian military personnel live on television” (Lapidus 1998:19). This proved to be the catalyst for war. After the public embarrassment of the failed coup attempt, Yeltsin’s government approved a switch from covert to overt military action to unseat

Dudayev (Finch 1998:6; Lapidus 1998:19). The First Russo-Chechen War officially began on December 11, 1994 at 7:00 a.m., when three columns of Russian troops (about 40,000 men) crossed the border into Chechnya.

From the first, the war was a military disaster. Rather than an actual battle, Russia had expected that the invasion would be a show of force to cow the Chechens into compliance, akin to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The Kremlin's preparations for the maneuver therefore were virtually nonexistent, and the troops the Russian government sent to Grozny were poorly trained, poorly equipped, and almost entirely inexperienced. Directly contrary to Moscow's expectations, these troops found themselves facing a well-organized Chechen military, made up of veteran fighters who had been planning for the eventuality of a Russian invasion at least since August 1994 and who were quite able and willing to resist once it arrived. Instead of the quick, "bloodless blitzkrieg" that Russian officials had predicted (Lapidus 1998:20), the first Battle of Grozny raged on for almost two months. The city finally fell on February 22, 1995, not before Dudayev and his government managed to escape (Dash 1995:372; Siren 1998:118; Blandy 2003:426).

After the fall of Grozny, the Chechen forces moved the conflict into the countryside, where it developed into an increasingly brutal guerrilla war (Dash 1995:372; Siren 1998:119). While the Chechens "defended every town and village they could on the plains" (Gall and de Waal 1998:247), they suffered a series of major losses over the course of the next three months (Siren and Fowkes 1998:180). By May, a Chechen defeat appeared inevitable.

A major turning point in the war therefore occurred on June 14, 1995, when Chechen commander Shamil Basayev, accompanied by about 150 volunteers and in an unsanctioned operation, slipped through the Russian border and attacked Budyonnovsk, a town in the

Stavropol region of Russia, where he “seized thousands of people from the street and their homes in the largest hostage raid in modern times” (Gall and de Waal 1998:257). Basayev and his forces held the hostages in the local hospital, which they also seized in the attack. As they promised, the hostages would be released in return for cessation of hostilities in Chechnya, total Russian military withdrawal from the republic, and direct negotiations between the Kremlin and Dudayev (Gall and de Waal 1998:258-259; Oliker 2001:28). “If the Russians refused or made any attempt to resolve the situation by force, the hostages would die” (Oliker 2001:28). After attempting negotiations for three days, Russian forces twice tried to storm the hospital; Basayev’s men repulsed them both times (Gall and de Waal 1998:264-270; Oliker 2001:28). Finally, on June 18, Russian negotiators had agreed to Basayev’s demands (Gall and de Waal 1998:271). Basayev released the hostages the next day, after further negotiating safe passage back to Chechnya for himself, his men, and an additional 150 hostages as insurance (whom Basayev released after he and his men had crossed the border into Chechnya) (Gall and de Waal 1998:271-274). By the end of the whole event, around 150 people were dead, 121 of them civilians (Gall and de Waal 1998:270; Oliker 2001:29). For all its brutality, however, Basayev’s attack “nullified the success of the Federal [i.e. Russian] mountain operations” of the months before and reinvigorated the Chechen resistance (Blandy 2003:426). It also forced Russia and Chechnya to the negotiating table for the first time since the independence declaration of 1991.

Two months of negotiations followed. By July 30, 1995, the two governments had hammered out an armistice agreement, with the promise of a political agreement to be signed at a later date (Gall and de Waal 1998:280-282; Siren and Fowkes 1998:180). However, the peace talks fell apart by the end of August. “Russian forces had resumed bombardment of villages in

the mountains,” and, in October, a series of car bombs tore through Grozny (Gall and de Waal 1998:283-286). War resumed soon after.

The reopening of hostilities in Chechnya heralded a new set of Chechen offensives. In December 1995, Chechen forces under Salman Raduyev—Dudayev’s nephew by marriage—attacked Gudermes, “Chechnya’s second largest city, believed to be firmly under Russian control” (Oliker 2001:29). Raduyev’s men penetrated Russian defenses into the center of the city, and “surrounded the Russian headquarters” (Gall and de Waal 1998:287). For ten days, the Chechen forces held off Russian attacks, before they finally forced a stalemate (Gall and de Waal 1998:288; Oliker 2001:29). Then, on January 9, 1996, Raduyev crossed the Chechen border into Dagestan with 200 Chechen fighters, where, “in a copy-cat version of Basayev’s deadly raid,” he attacked the town of Kizlyar and took almost 3,000 hostages, whom he again held in the local hospital (Gall and de Waal 1998:289; Siren and Fowkes 1998:180). Negotiations lasted less than two days before Raduyev and his men were granted their unhindered return to Chechnya—and allowed to bring 160 hostages with them to confirm their safe passage—in return for the safe release of the remainder of the hostages (Gall and de Waal 1998:293; Siren and Fowkes 1998:181). The Chechen forces made it as far Pervomayskoye, a village just on the Dagestani side of the border with Chechnya, before they were stopped by Russian helicopter fire. There, they found themselves surrounded by Russian troops, who demanded they release the hostages, which the Chechens refused (Gall and de Wall 1998:293-296; Siren and Fowkes 1998:181). In response, the Russian military launched a full and indiscriminate assault on the village five days later, but were unable to break in (Gall and de Wall 1998:297-300; Siren and Fowkes 1998:181). After three days of fighting, Raduyev’s forces and about eighty of the hostages escaped under cover of darkness in the early hours of January 18 (Gall and de Waal

1998:301-304). These eighty were “released on Chechen territory” on January 24 (Siren and Fowkes 1998:181). About seven weeks later, Basayev and a contingent of unknown size “rode directly into the Grozny central train station on a captured train” and proceeded to attack MVD (Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, or Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del) strongholds throughout the city (Oliker 2001:29). Five days of fighting followed before the Chechens finally retreated (Siren and Fowkes 1998:181; Oliker 2001:29).

It was at this time that, confronting the prospect of a presidential election in the face of a widely unpopular war, Yeltsin announced a new peace plan (Lapidus 1998:22-23). On March 31, he proposed a unilateral cease-fire and agreed to meet with Dudayev (Lapidus 1998:23; Siren and Fowkes 1998:181). The latter concession was not to be; the Chechen president was killed in a Russian rocket attack on April 21, 1996. Zelimkhan Yandarbiev, then Vice President of Chechnya, officially took power on April 25 (Siren and Fowkes 1998:181). The leadership change appeared to be a step forward in the Chechen-Russian peace process, as Yandarbiev proved more willing to negotiate with Yeltsin than Dudayev ever had been (Gall and de Waal 1998:325). The two presidents signed a cease-fire agreement on May 27 (Gall and de Wall 1998:327; Siren and Fowkes 1998:181). Just as the 1995 armistice, however, this agreement would not hold: “Russian planes bombed the village of Makhkety” on July 9, igniting the conflict once again (Gall and de Wall 1998:329). To add insult to injury, it was around this time that the newly-reelected Yeltsin began to claim that the war was over, and that Russia had won (Lapidus 1998:23).

These claims were belied when, at dawn on August 6, 1996, some 1,500 Chechen fighters attacked Grozny “in a carefully orchestrated assault” (Gall and de Waal 1998:331). They attacked strategically, beginning with the railroad stations, the police stations, and the Russian

army posts, and “moving toward the center of the town” (Gall and de Waal 1998:331; Oliker 2001:30). By the end of the day, the Chechen forces had all but sealed the capital off from the inside (Oliker 2001:30). It took five days for a column of Russian reinforcements to breach the center of the city successfully, and even then very little progress was made (Gall and de Waal 1998:338-340; Oliker 2001:31). “Fighting continued for nearly two more weeks,” until stalemate became the only possible conclusion (Lapidus 1998:23; Oliker 2001:31).

On August 22, 1996, Aslan Maskhadov, the top military commander in Chechnya, and General Aleksandr Lebed, Yeltsin’s newly appointed National Security Advisor, therefore signed the ceasefire agreement that ended all hostilities of the First Russo-Chechen War (Siren and Fowkes 1998:181; Oliker 2001:31). This cease-fire was strengthened when, on August 31, Lebed and Maskhadov signed an additional agreement in Khasavyurt, Dagestan, which “resulted in the departure of Federal [Russian] armed forces from Chechnya, the introduction of elections in Chechnya and the installation of a parliament and president through a democratic process” (Lapidus 1998:23; Siren and Fowkes 1998:181; Blandy 2003:427). Although a full peace treaty would not be signed for another year (Lapidus 1998:23)—and though even that treaty would leave the question of Chechnya’s official political status open for another five (Fowkes 1998:20)—the war was over. Until Vladimir Putin’s invasion three years later, Chechnya had won its (de facto) independence once more.

I now approach my analysis of the manner in which these events entered into the American Southern understanding. I begin with a description of the data and method, and then turn to the analysis itself.

Chapter 6

Data and Method

As noted above, data for this project were taken from 100 articles that in some way discussed the events of the First Russo-Chechen War and were written for newspapers in the American South.

“Where is the South?” has been a question of much contention, to which multiple answers have been given over the years (see e.g. Lynch 1947; Reed 1976; Reed et al. 1990; Conkin 1998). As this study is focused on the role of Civil War narratives, the South initially is defined as the eleven former Confederate states. Following Jansson (2003), two states, Florida and Texas, are eliminated. At best, these states are “ambiguously southern” (Jansson 2003:356). Garreau (1981) has pointed out that peninsular Florida has more in common with the island nations of the Caribbean than with the South. Texas arguably is a region unto itself, with a distinct and consciously maintained cultural identity (see, e.g., Avraham and Daugherty 2012). As Johnstone (1990) notes, an important aspect of this identity is Texas’ “contradistinction from the South,” evidenced in part by Texans’ disinclination to label themselves as “Southerners” (508). Furthermore, an additional state—namely, Kentucky—is added. Although Kentucky was not part of the CSA, it developed a strong and enduring Confederate identity in the years after the Civil War, leading to the now-cliché that Kentucky “wait[ed] until the war was over to secede” (Coulter 1926 [1966], cited in Marshall 2010:3, Marshall 2010; Lee 2013). If the South is to be defined based on the importance of Lost Cause mythology, then, clearly Kentucky must be included. Thus, in the final analysis, the South for the purposes of this research project comprises ten states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia

The dataset was compiled from a search on the online news archive NewsBank for all instances of the words “Chechnya,” “Chechen,” “Grozny,” “Dudayev,” “Maskhadov,” and “Basayev” in articles in newspapers published in the ten states noted above between December 11, 1994 (when Russian tanks first crossed into Chechnya) and September 15, 1996 (two weeks after the Khasavyurt Accords were signed). The search produced 2,493 news articles. Of these 2,493, 100 articles were selected for the final sample. Sampling was conducted according to the following process: The articles were listed in reverse chronological order, and each article was assigned a number corresponding to its list position. An online random number generator (www.random.org) was set to produce numbers between 1 and 2,493. As each number was produced, the article with the matching number was selected for the sample. If the matching article was deemed unfit for the sample (for reasons described below), a new number was produced and a new article selected. The number generation process was repeated until 100 articles were chosen.

There were two classes of articles which were deemed outside the sample range. First, I rejected articles which made only passing reference to Chechnya and did not index any stance or perspective on the war—for example, an article from a Virginian newspaper which used disinterest in the Chechen war to criticize college students’ lack of engagement with current events and a list of McArthur Award winners who included a human rights activist in Chechnya. More common than these, however, were articles reprinted from non-Southern news sources (e.g. the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*), articles reprinted from wire services (e.g. Associated Press, Reuters, McClatchy), or syndicated columns written by non-Southern writers.

I eliminated these because I cannot reasonably expect these stories to present a Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War.⁷

In the final accounting, that sample included nine articles drawn from newspapers published in Alabama, nineteen articles from newspapers published in Georgia, and eighteen articles from papers published in Louisiana. Thirty-four articles—by far the most from any one state—originated in newspapers published in North Carolina, while the fewest articles originated in newspapers published in South Carolina (only two out of the 100). Three articles were taken from Tennessee newspapers, and fifteen articles were taken from Virginia newspapers. By chance of the sampling method, no articles were taken from newspapers published in Mississippi or Kentucky. This is little loss. Only 106 out of the total 2,493 articles appeared in Mississippi newspapers (about 4.25% of the total number of articles), and all of these have bylines from news services (two from Knight-Ridder, one from both Knight-Ridder and Scripps Howard, and the rest from the Associated Press). Although articles from Kentucky newspapers accounted for a larger portion of the sampling frame (173 articles, or about 6.9% of the total), all but a handful of them also were syndicated columns or articles from news services or newswires. Arkansas newspapers similarly were unrepresented in the final sample. Newsbank's earliest holdings from that state were not published until 1998—two years after the war's end. A breakdown of the final sample by state of origin can be seen in Table 1.

⁷ A potential weakness of this research project derives from the fact that newspapers may not always note which articles are reprinted from newswires or whether a column is syndicated (and had not been written explicitly for the newspaper in question). The 100 articles in my sample therefore inadvertently might include non-Southern narratives of the war, which could attenuate the results.

Table 1. Number of Articles by State of Origin

State	Number of Articles
Alabama	9
Arkansas	0
Georgia	19
Kentucky	0
Louisiana	18
Mississippi	0
North Carolina	34
South Carolina	2
Tennessee	3
Virginia	15
Total	100

My method of investigation was qualitative content analysis. Silverman (2006) describes content analysis as the method in which “researchers establish a set of categories and then count the number of instances that fall into each category” within a given sample of texts (159). While in quantitative content analysis the categories used are usually single words or specific phrases, “qualitative content analysis frequently involves broader and more subjective code categories” (Morgan 1993:115)—what Kuckartz calls “thematic categories” (2014:41). Because of the “squishy” nature of these categories, uncovering thematic categories often means utilizing discourse analytic tools; the line between qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis frequently is a blurred one (Prior 2008). Such is the case in this paper. My “thematic categories” were the role/function pairs discussed above. Findings and discussion are presented below.

Chapter 7

Results and Discussion

After initial analysis, it came to light that seventeen out of the 100 articles did not depict the war in such a way as to index either aggression or resistance/defense. These articles received no further analysis.

Of the remaining eighty-three articles, eighty-two depicted some form of aggressive warfare. The majority of these—fifty-one of them or 62.2%—attributed this aggression to Russia alone. In comparison, only thirteen articles (15.8% of the articles depicting aggression) positioned Chechnya as the lone aggressor in the conflict. According to the news narratives in the remaining eighteen articles, both Russia and Chechnya were engaging in aggressive warfare. In nine of them (half of the mixed-aggression articles and about 11% of the eighty-two articles in which aggression appears at all), indications of Russian aggression generally outweighed indications of Chechen aggression. Indications of Chechen aggression generally outweighed those of Russian aggression in about a quarter of the mixed-aggression articles (five articles, and about 6.1% of the eighty-two aggression articles). The remaining four articles presented a roughly equal mix of Russian and Chechen aggression (less than five percent of the eighty-two articles that feature aggression).

Articles in the sample were much more likely to make indication of aggressive warfare than defensive or resistance warfare. Only twenty-five articles (30.1% of the total eighty-three) positioned either Russia or Chechnya as fighting a war of resistance/defense. Indications of Chechen resistance/defense were exponentially more common than indications of Russian resistance/defense: nineteen of the twenty-five articles (76%) depicted the Chechens as the sole

party fighting defensively or resistively during the First Russo-Chechen. Interestingly, these include one of the thirteen articles that also depicted Chechnya as the sole aggressor in the conflict (“Leader of Chechens” 1995), as well as one of the five mixed-aggression articles in which indications of Chechen aggression outweighed indications of Russian aggression (Kunstel 1996) and one of the four articles that positioned Russia and Chechnya in roughly equal roles as the aggressor (Sizemore 1995). They also include something of an outlier case: the one article in the sample which clearly positions one side of the conflict (namely, of course, the Chechens) as engaging in resistance warfare, but which does not make any clear indication that either Russia or Chechnya ever aggressed (“Chechens on Run” 1995). Conversely, only four of the twenty-five articles (16%) portrayed Russia (and not Chechnya) as having engaged in defensive warfare. These were split evenly between articles that depicted the Chechens as the sole aggressors (“Attack by Chechen Rebels” 1996; “Russian President” 1996) and mixed-aggression articles in which Chechen aggression outweighed Russian aggression (Kunstel 1995a; “Russian Military on Watch” 1995). In just two of the twenty-five articles (8%), furthermore, are both Chechnya and Russia said to be on the defensive (Albright 1994 and “Russia Launches Attacks” 1996). These results are shown graphically in Table 2.

Table 2. Breakdown of Russian and Chechen Aggression and Defense/Resistance

	Number of Articles*	Percent
Aggressive Warfare Depicted	82	100.0
Russian Aggression, No Chechen Aggression	51	62.2
Chechen Aggression, No Russian Aggression	13	15.8
Mostly Russian Aggression, Some Chechen Aggression	9	11.0
Mostly Chechen Aggression, Some Russian Aggression	5	6.1
Roughly Equal Russian and Chechen Aggression	4	4.9
Defensive/Resistance Warfare Depicted	25	100.0
Chechen Resistance/Defense Only	19	76.0
Russian Resistance/Defense Only	4	16.0
Mixed Chechen and Russian Resistance/Defense	2	8.0

* Number of articles does not sum to eighty-three because articles frequently depicted both aggressive and defensive/resistance warfare.

Within these preliminary findings, we clearly do see a preponderance of Russian aggression over Chechen aggression and of Chechen resistance/defense over Russian resistance/defense. Russia's and Chechnya's positions as, respectively, aggressor and defender/resister in the narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War do indeed match those of the Union and the Confederacy in the Lost Cause narrative, as was expected. The roles are confirmed. But this in itself is insufficient. The roles of aggressor and defender/resister do not correspond to those of Union and Confederacy alone. Any number of underlying narrative structures to the Southern story of the First Russo-Chechen War—including those not based on stories about the past at all (the David and Goliath myth referenced in the introduction, for example)—could produce these results. Indeed, the world political situation in of 1994 might provide a more compelling explanation for just these numerical trends. For an American news reporter writing only three years after the Soviet collapse, the image of Russia behaving violently—especially toward one of its smaller neighbors—fulfills other longstanding cultural expectations. Thus, to support the idea that the Lost Cause myth did indeed serve as a mold narrative for the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War, we also must find that these roles fulfill the same functions in the latter narrative as they do in the former. A more thorough investigation of the *forms* Russian aggression and Chechen resistance/defense take in the Southern narrative about the First Russo-Chechen War is required. Should these forms mirror those in which Union aggression and Confederate resistance/defense appear within the myth of the Lost Cause, the structuring influence of the Lost Cause narrative will be substantiated.

Before engaging in this investigation, however, a further culling of the data is necessary. My interest is in the overall presentation of aggression and resistance/defense in the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War. Inasmuch as they contributed to this narrative,

however, nineteen articles out of the eighty-two mentioned above discussed only a single incident in the course of the war. For nine of these nineteen, the incident was a major event in the course of the war—the initial invasion and battle in Grozny, the Budyonnovsk hospital incident, the hostage crisis in Pervomayskoye, or the final battle for Grozny—the presentation of which clearly is essential for the creation and presentation of the narrative of the war on the whole. But for the other ten, the incidents were ordinary battles or raids, which were largely unremarkable in the context of the war. These in and of themselves communicated little about the overall patterns of aggression and defense in Chechnya: Even a defending or resisting army must attack enemy positions (i.e. play the aggressor) once in a while in the course of a war, just as an aggressing army must defend itself once in a while from enemy assaults. I therefore eliminated these ten from further analyses. Similarly, eight articles in the sample focused mainly on a single, unremarkable incident in the course of the war, but nevertheless also made some mention of the broader context in which those incidents occurred. An article that describes an otherwise commonplace battle that occurred in the town of Bamut, for instance, also notes that the city “has resisted repeated Russian offensives since the start of the 17-month war” (“Russians Attempt to Batter” 1996). While the largest part of this and the other seven similar articles is of little use for understanding Southerners’ narratives about the overall trends of aggression and resistance during the First Russo-Chechen War for the same reason as in the ten articles just discussed, the context tags do allow some insight into those patterns. In the following analyses, I therefore considered only the context tags in these eight articles; the remaining text was excluded. The remaining articles all presented either an overarching perspective on the war or, at the very least, implied a pattern of aggression or resistance. The texts of these articles were included in the remaining analyses in full.

After these eliminations, I am left with seventy-two texts—sixty-four articles, and eight context tags. Before commencing a more detailed analysis, it is first important to point out that, when the overarching patterns of aggression and resistance/defense are reconsidered within the subsample of texts, the numerical trends noted above are maintained—indeed, are strengthened. Depictions of Russian aggression with no mention of Chechen aggression now account for over seventy-three percent of the texts in which depictions of aggression appear (fifty-two out of seventy-one texts); in about another seven percent of the texts (five articles or context tags) depictions of Russian aggression generally outweighed Chechen aggression. This compares with only about eleven percent of the texts (eight texts) in which Chechnya was positioned as the sole aggressor, five and a half percent of the texts in which Chechen aggression generally outweighed Russian aggression (four texts), and slightly less than three percent of the texts in which roughly equal amounts of Russian and Chechen were depicted (two articles or context tags). In just the same way, roughly eighty-two-and-a-half percent of the twenty-three texts in the subset that depict resistance/defense depict only Chechen resistance/defense (nineteen articles or context tags). This compares to just over thirteen percent of the texts that depict only Russian resistance/defense (three texts) and slightly less than four-and-a-half percent that depict both Russian and Chechen resistance/defense (two texts). Table 3 displays the numerical trends of aggression and resistance/defense in the subset.

I turn now to the specific forms in which depictions of Russian aggression and Chechen resistance/defense appeared within the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War. These depictions centered on three main tropes: (1) Russian aggression was a totalizing feature of the First Russo-Chechen War; (2) Russia fought in Chechnya out of imperialist motives, while

Chechnya fought in defense of its sovereignty and freedoms; and (3) Russia is entirely to blame for the initiation of hostilities in Chechnya. I address each of these in turn.

Table 3. Breakdown of Russian and Chechen Aggression and Defense/Resistance; Subset of Texts

	Number of Texts*	Percent
Aggressive Warfare Depicted	71	100.0
Russian Aggression, No Chechen Aggression	52	73.2
Chechen Aggression, No Russian Aggression	8	11.3
Mostly Russian Aggression, Some Chechen Aggression	5	7.1
Mostly Chechen Aggression, Some Russian Aggression	4	5.6
Roughly Equal Russian and Chechen Aggression	2	2.8
Defensive/Resistance Warfare Depicted	23	100.0
Chechen Resistance/Defense Only	19	82.6
Russian Resistance/Defense Only	3	13.1
Mixed Chechen and Russian Resistance/Defense	1	4.3

*Number of texts sums to more than seventy-two because some texts included depictions of both aggressive and defensive/resistance warfare.

The Totalizing Nature of Russian Aggression

The trope that Russian aggression during the First Russo-Chechen War was a totalizing feature of the war appeared as two sub-tropes within the data. The first of these is the implication that Russian aggression was quasi an *ontological condition* of the conflict—that it was part of the war’s very nature and being itself. A strong illustration of this motif can be found in the appearance of nouns that explicitly reference Russian aggression. Most common among these nouns are mentions of Russian “assaults” (nine instances), “offensives” (nine instances), and “attacks” (eight instances). The newspaper texts also speak of a Russian “invasion” (twice), Russian “aggression” (once), and a both a “show of force” and a “display of force” from Russia (once each). These all are very value-laden, evocative words, which clearly do emphasize the aggressive role Russia plays in the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War. At the same time, they also are expected words in the context of war, which *per se* tell us little about the structuring of the Southern narrative; it would be quite difficult indeed to report on any war

without using the words “attack,” “assault,” or “invasion.” When these nouns are viewed in context, however, a much more interesting story emerges. In seventeen cases (roughly half), the authors of the sample texts used explicit nouns that reference Russian aggression to designated the war *on the whole*, rather than any specific Russian military action. We see, for example:

[Clinton] will hold critical talks with President Boris Yeltsin over such disputes as Russia's proposed nuclear reactor sale to Iran, its brutal **assault** on the renegade republic of Chechnya and its objections to the eastward expansion of NATO. (Cannon 1995)

In fact, before the Russian **offensive** began Dec. 11, most people had no idea where the tiny Muslim country [i.e. Chechnya] was. (Sizemore 1995)

[Lebed] staunchly opposed the ill-conceived **attack** on the break-away state of Chechnya. (“A Russian Run-off” 1996)

Does the Russian **display of force** against little Chechnya suggest that, despite all the smiles and speeches of friendship for the West, Moscow is secretly marshalling its resources to rebuild an "evil empire"? (“Russian Bear” 1994)

In these cases, then, the Southern news writers have attached the connotations of Russian aggression to the entire conflict. It is not that the Russian army is engaging in this-or-that action specifically that can be identified as aggressive (although a preponderance of specific instances of aggression certainly is an important part of this narrative). Rather, by identifying the war as an “assault on...Chechnya,” a “Russian offensive,” or a “display of force against little Chechnya,” the writers above are indexing that the *very existence of the war* is an instance of Russian belligerence. The war is in its very nature a “War of Russian Aggression.”

In further evidence of the pattern stands the authors’ use of possessive nouns and attributive adjectives to ascribe the war on the whole to Russian action. These appear in nineteen separate texts (26.4% of the subsample). In five texts, the war on the whole is described as

‘Russia’s;’⁸ in another four, plus one of the texts that also used the possessive, the conflict is said to be ‘Russian.’⁹ The possessive form of ‘Russian military’¹⁰ appears before the reference to the war in an additional text. Four more attribute ownership of the war to the Russian government—in three cases, as ‘the Kremlin’¹¹ and in one as ‘Moscow.’¹² These forms strongly establish Russian agency in the war; Russia is the carrier and the driver of the conflict. They also *remove* a degree of agency from Chechnya. In the phrases in which the possessives and attributives appear, Chechnya is cast not as an active belligerent in the First Russo-Chechen War, but as an unwitting victim that is caught up in Russia’s military machinations. This is made most evident in the grammatical position of Chechnya in these constructions. Most commonly, Chechnya appears as the prepositional object of the referent to the conflict. We see that the conflict is a ‘Russian war **on breakaway Chechnya**’ (‘Yeltsin’s Choice’ 1995), a ‘Russian display of force **against little Chechnya**’ (‘Russian Bear’ 1995), the ‘Russian military’s slaughter **of the Chechen rebels**’ (Mackenzie 1996), and ‘Russia’s conflict **with Chechnya**’ (‘Clinton May’ 1995). In all of these cases, Chechnya is acted upon, is affected by

⁸ These were: ‘**Russia’s war** with the people of Chechnya...’ (Ashely 1996); ‘**Russia’s conflict** with Chechnya...’ (‘Clinton May’ 1995); ‘**Russia’s bloody civil war** with breakaway Chechnya...’ (‘Resilient Yeltsin’ 1996); ‘**Russia’s 2-month-old war** to hold onto the breakaway republic of Chechnya...’ (Sizemore 1995); and ‘**its brutal assault** on the renegade republic of Chechnya’ (Cannon 1995) in a sentence that already had referenced Russia.

⁹ The contexts of the attributive are: ‘Does the **Russian display of force** against little Chechnya...’ (‘Russian Bear’ 1994); ‘Before the **Russian offensive** began Dec. 11...’ (Sizemore 1995); ‘If lives weren’t being lost, the **Russian military misadventure** in Chechnya...’ (Teepen 1995); ‘The **Russian assault** on the Chechen Republic is not ‘civil war in Russia?...’ (Woodward 1995); and ‘The **Russian war** on breakaway Chechnya is proving to be a brutal embarrassment...’ (‘Yeltsin’s Choice’ 1995).

¹⁰ ‘Defense Secretary William Perry endorsed the **Russian military’s slaughter** of the Chechen rebels’ (Mackenzie 1996).

¹¹ The specific instances in which these possessives occur are: ‘**The Kremlin** is unlikely to accept Dudayev’s offer since the state goal of **its war** in Chechnya...’ (‘Chechen Leader’ 1995); ‘...**the Kremlin’s military campaign** in Chechnya’ (‘Relief Worker’s Brother’ 1995); and ‘...**the Kremlin’s Chechen campaign**, which has killed thousands of civilians’ (Salome 1995).

¹² ‘**Moscow’s invasion** of Chechnya has caused apprehensive [sic] among the 12 former Soviet republics...’ (‘Yeltsin Seeks’ 1995).

Russian action; unlike Russia, it does not act. Taken together, the two sides of these constructions become very much reminiscent of the Lost Cause tenet that the Confederate states were “innocent and peaceful victims of Northern aggression” (Heyse 2006). By removing agency from Chechnya, the constructions also eliminate any possibility that Chechnya might be involved in aggression of its own. Chechnya is, in meaning as well as grammatically, the *object* of aggression, not its perpetrator. Inasmuch as they place ownership for the conflict on Russia’s shoulders, furthermore, the texts also identify the perpetrator of that aggression. Chechnya is a victim of Russia’s aggression.

In the five other texts that contain possessives, responsibility for the conflict is attributed to Boris Yeltsin.¹³ In terms of narrative function, these fulfill the same purpose as the nine texts mentioned above. Yeltsin stands in as the embodiment of the Russian government. But these examples serve another Lost Cause purpose as well: Formulations such as “Boris Yeltsin’s Stupid Little War” (Yardley 1995) and “his [referring to Yeltsin] military action” (“Chechnya: Yeltsin’s Dilemma” 1994) call to mind the appellation “Lincoln’s War,” another Confederate-partisan-preferred term for the Civil War (Davis 1996:178).

The second sub-trope hearkens to an additional Lost Cause theme, which, while it does not equate with the theme discussed above, certainly dovetails it: the demonization of the Union Army for its engagement in total warfare. Within Lost Cause mythology, particular emphasis is placed on the scorched earth tactics in which Union soldiers under Generals Butler, Sheridan, and, most (in)famously, Sherman engaged, and on the destruction they left in their wake (Campbell 2014; Gallagher 2008:23-24; Nolan 2000:31). The “barbarians,” “vandals,” “bushwhackers,” and “guerrilla warriors” that make up the Lost Cause depiction of Union army

¹³ The five texts are “Chechnya: Yeltsin’s Dilemma” 1994; Ezzard 1995; “Russia, the West” 1996; Yardley 1995; and Yardley 1995a.

typically are seen burning homes and farms, defiling churches and graveyards, and stealing livestock, food, and other property (e.g. silverware or weapons) from Confederate civilians (Bailey 1991:525; Gallagher 2008:23-24; Henken 2003; Nolan 2000:31). Importantly, the myth rarely (if ever) depicts these scorched earth policies as serving any tactical purpose. Rather, from the perspective of the Lost Cause, Union soldiers simply were “bad people” who perpetrated on the people of the South senseless violence and destruction for only their own sake (Nolan 2000:31).

A similar storyline evidently underlies the depictions of Russian aggression in Chechnya. As above, two main patterns arise here. The first emphasizes the wanton brutality of the Russian military action. Indeed, the word “brutal” and its related forms (“brutality” and “brutalized”) appear in conjunction with references specifically to Russian military activities in seven separate texts, or 9.7% of the subsample (Cannon 1995; McHenry 1995; “Politics Is Hell” 1996; Salome 1995; Thomasson 1995; Yardley 1995a; “Yeltsin’s Choice” 1995). Additionally, Russian attacks are deemed “savage” in two texts (“Russian Troops” 1995; Yardley 1995a), “ferocious” in another one (“Russian Forces” 1995), and “grim” in one more (“Yeltsin’s Choice” 1995). The adjective “ruthless” and its nounal counterpart “ruthlessness” describe the Russian fighting in two texts (“Chechen Hope” 1996; “Chechnya Cleanup” 1995). Again, the words used to reference Russian aggression explicitly also contribute to the pattern. Among the less “expected” epithets Southern writers used to characterize the war overall are “slaughter” (Mackenzie 1996), “decimation” (Thomasson 1995), and “genocide”—once clearly (Woodward 1995) and once by implication (Geshwiler 1995).¹⁴ In a more specific instance, the Russian

¹⁴ “Russia only rarely scolds the Bosnian Serbs for their atrocities and lately has clammed up about its own troubles in Chechnya, where Russian armed forces have snuffed out 25,000 civilian lives. **For it to**

response to the Budyonovsk hospital incident is called a “bloodbath” (Kunstel 1995b)—a word that become especially interesting and telling with the realization that the text in which it occurs does not contain a single similarly negative term to describe the initial hostage-taking to which Russian forces were responding.¹⁵ In verb form, we see “slaughter” again in three texts (Flynn 1995; Mackenzie 1996; Thomasson 1995), “murder” in one (Flynn 1995), and, twice, “snuff out” (Geshwiler 1995; Kunstel 1995b). These references and the adjectives that describe them do not simply index aggression. Rather, they connote a specific type of aggression: senseless, criminal, and—especially in the case of “genocide”—indefensible.

The second pattern highlights Russia’s dependence on scorched earth warfare. Most explicit here are the mentions of “Russia’s grim free-fire practices” (“Yeltsin’s Choice” 1995) and of “the slash-and-burn tactics of Boris Yeltsin’s army” (Sizemore 1995). Similar are the characterization of Russia’s strategy in Chechnya as “a policy of destruction” (“The Eastern Front” 1995) and the image of “Russian forces...blasting everything in their path” (Kunstel and

accuse others of genocide would be funny, in a bitter sort of way, if it weren't so pathetic”
(Geshwiler 1995).

¹⁵ This text on the whole is quite telling about the structuring of Russian aggression versus Chechen aggression in the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War. While the fact that Russian “troops killed dozens of civilians this weekend when they stormed a hospital filled with hostages” appears in the very first sentence of the article, that it was the Chechen military that seized these hostages does not appear until about three-quarters of the way through. Even then, the information is mentioned only off-handedly in a section which focuses on the Russian public’s and parliament’s then-rising doubts about Yeltsin’s military and leadership judgment. Chechen aggression clearly is deemphasized in this text, while Russian aggression clearly is emphasized.

Also interesting is the specific sentence in which the epithet quoted above appears: “The bloodbath in Budyonovsk, an unassuming city of 100,000 in southern Russia, culminated a long series of missteps by Yeltsin’s government in trying to snuff out the Chechen republic’s 3-year-old bid for independence” (Kunstel 1995b). Again, the assaults on the hospital are placed in no relation to the initial hostage taking. The text instead rather illogically implies that the attacks were part of Russia’s larger wartime strategy, and thus strengthens further the idea that Russia’s entire operation in Chechnya was fundamentally brutal. The sentence also recaps the innocent-victims-of-Russian-aggression image mentioned above. In describing Budyonovsk as “unassuming,” the author images it as peaceful, guileless, and entirely unprepared for the Russian “bloodbath” she has described. That the city was an innocent victim to Basayev’s aggression first, of course, goes unremarked.

Albright 1995). Much attention is given to the destruction of Grozny—Chechnya’s Atlanta if ever there were one. We are told that Russia has “blast[ed] Grozny into dust” (Victory in Moscow” 1995) and that the city “has been reduced to rubble” (Martin 1995) and “virtually leveled by overwhelming Russian firepower” (Sizemore 1995)¹⁶ during the first battle; during the battle that ended the war, we read that Russian “government ministers call[ed] down fire and brimstone on Grozny” (“Chechen Hope” 1996). Between the two assaults, the capital is described as “ruined” (“Russian Troops” 1995) and “an open graveyard” (Kunstel 1995); its buildings are “bombed out” (Thomasson 1995), “crumbled” (Kunstel 1995), and “guttled” (Kunstel 1995a), and “[e]ven orphanages have been leveled” (Martin 1995).

Just as in the pattern above, the verbs that explicitly reference Russian aggression also are important signals of this second pattern. In this case we see: four instances of “crush” (Ashley 1996¹⁷; “Chechnya Cleanup” 1995; Kunstel and Albright 1995; Sizemore 1995), two instances of “pound” (“The Eastern Front” 1995; “History’s Return” 1995) and of “destroy” (Aderhold 1996; Cannaday 1995), and one instance each of “rain destruction” (“The Eastern Front” 1995) and “obliterate” (Ashley 1996). While these verb forms are not quite as connotatively-loaded as their counterparts above (barring the last two, perhaps), they nevertheless communicate the actions of a military force bent on ruin. Similar to depictions of Union scorched earth warfare in the Lost Cause narrative, moreover, this Russian ruin rarely is paired with any tactical purpose. Even when it is, the scorched earth policies are not depicted as tactically necessary in

¹⁶ His construction (particularly the phrase “overwhelming Russian firepower”) also is notable for its invocation of an additional theme of the Lost Cause narrative that I do not address in this project—that the Confederacy was never defeated militarily, but simply overrun by the Union’s superior numbers and materiel. Within the subsample, see also Ashley 1996: “[the Chechens] have repeatedly been crushed by the **overwhelming force** of the Russian military” [emphasis added].

¹⁷ See note 16.

themselves; they are overkill, savage add-ons to the necessary practices of war. Consider, for example, the following excerpt:

Russian forces around the village of Pervomayskaya [sic] currently are obliterating the place with Grad rockets, artillery shells and helicopter gunships because Russian ground troops could not oust some 150-250 Chechen fighters armed with automatic weapons and grenade launchers in three days of fighting.

To state the obvious, the Russians said they have no hope of saving any of the hostages that the Chechens hold. (Ashley 1996)

The author does not deny that the Russian attack is a legitimate military action, carried out with real purposes in mind. The tactical aims of removing enemy troops from a territory and retrieving civilian hostages are not questioned. However, there is a clear underlying tone of ridicule in his comparison between Russia's "Grad rockets, artillery shells and helicopter gunships" and the Chechens' "automatic weapons and grenade launchers," which signals to the reader that the Russians' decision to use all that cannonry at Pervomayskoye was excessive and unwarranted. Indeed, the author indicates that it is even *counterproductive* to the legitimate tactical purposes of the attack. The snide "to state the obvious" in the second paragraph communicates that it is *because of* their deployment of artillery against the village that the Russians anticipate that they will be unable to retrieve any of Raduyev's hostages. With the tactical justifications for these policies thus removed, the only possible interpretation of the Russian military's decision to employ them is that, like Sherman's troops of old, they, too, were simply a group of bad people, who carried out violent destruction for no other reason but that they could.

Imperialism or Conquest

As discussed above, a tenet within the theme of Northern aggression in the Lost Cause narrative is that the Confederacy's purpose in both secession and the war was the defense of states' rights,

also understandable as state sovereignty or what Heyse (2006) refers to as “home-rule.” Because the states had not surrendered this sovereignty upon ratifying the Constitution (indeed, the Lost Cause narrative argues that the Constitution explicitly guarantees it), the Southern states had every right to secede peacefully (as the Lost Cause narrative claims was their intent [Heyse 2006 and 2008]). As such, the North had no right to prevent Confederate secession, let alone to prevent it violently. However, “lust for power” (Hunter 2000:208) drove the Union to war with the Confederacy—a war that was aimed at the “subjugation” of the Southern states to the “tyranny” of Federal power (Janney 2013:147). Thus, Union aggression during the Civil War also was *imperialist* aggression, which, in the more extreme depictions of the Lost Cause, “turned the South into a colonial province of the Yankee empire, which it remains to this day” (Kaufman 2006:74, internal quotations omitted).

That Russia similarly fought from imperialist motives in Chechnya accounts for the second trope of note within the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War. Depictions of Russian imperialism or conquest appeared in twenty-five of the seventy-two texts in the subsample (34.7% of the texts).

In seven texts (roughly a third of those that depict Russian imperialism and slightly less than ten percent of the total subsample) this theme presents itself in a curious choice of word:

The war in Chechnya is described as a Russian “campaign.”

The brutality of this **campaign** is the best evidence that Mr. Yeltsin is taking too much advice from (or perhaps delegating too much authority to) former KGB officials and others whose mentality characterized the Evil Empire. (Thomasson 1995)

Clinton and Major were among those who boycotted a parade of modern military hardware because of the Kremlin's Chechen **campaign**, which has killed thousands of civilians. (Salome 1995)

Russian troops seized a rebel stronghold in southeast Chechnya, killing at least 16 Chechens on the first anniversary of the military **campaign** against the breakaway republic, the military said Tuesday (“16 Die” 1995)

Strictly speaking, the word “campaign” refers to a series of military operations that reasonably can be counted as a single and distinct stage of a war, and in this sense unquestionably applies to the Russian military action in Chechnya. Connotatively speaking, however, the term “campaign” conjures images of wars of conquest, especially among the European and colonial empires of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One conceivably might speak of the Napoleonic campaigns of the first decade of the 1800s or of the British campaigns into India at the end of the eighteenth century. It is far less likely, however, that one would speak of the Mexican Republican campaign against the French in the late 1860s. The implication of imperialism that accompanies the term is illustrated quite effectively in the first excerpt quoted above. The “campaign” into Chechnya, the news writer says, calls to mind the brutality of the recently-fallen Soviet system. Out of the many Cold War-era descriptors or allusions he might have chosen to represent that system (e.g. Stalinism, the Gulag, the east side of the Iron Curtain), moreover, the author particularly selects the phrase “Evil Empire.” We see, then, that the war is a “campaign,” and, as a campaign, it is characteristic of an “Empire” (evil or otherwise). QED, Russia must be acting imperialistically as it fights in Chechnya.

Even more closely tied to the Lost Cause conception of Northern imperialism are the ten instances that argue expressly that Russia’s purpose in the war was to prevent Chechen independence. Among these:

Refugees like these in Shatoi are gorged into cities and hamlets across the region, having fled the battling that began when **Russian troops stormed into Chechnya on Dec. 11 in an effort to end the rebel republic's bid for independence.** (Kunstel 1995)

When Russian troops poured into the region in mid-December **to crush the Chechens' bid for independence**, Ioannisyán said, “it all blew up like a volcano.” (Sizemore 1995)

Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev has offered to step down, but only if Moscow recognizes the sovereignty of his breakaway republic, a top Russian negotiator said Monday. The Kremlin

is unlikely to accept Dudayev's offer since **the stated goal of its war in Chechnya is to end the republic's three years of self-declared independence.** (“Chechen Leader” 1995)

Dead or alive, Zandarbiyev was scarcely making his presence felt in Chechnya, a province the size of Connecticut that has suffered nearly 30,000 civilian casualties in the 16 months since **Russian troops intervened to quash an independence drive.** (Albright 1996)

Similarly situated, and presented from the opposite perspective, are the three instances in which Russia is explicitly said to desire control over Chechnya.

The Russian government, successor to the old Soviets, has spent 1 trillion rubles it can't spare **to hold the Chechens in Moscow's control.** (“Chechnya” 1995)

Russia's botched **efforts to regain control over the breakaway Chechen** republic suffered another deep wound Saturday... (Kunstel and Albright 1995)

What keeps Yeltsin in power is money. He can't promise oil to his international masters unless he can control it. **He must control Chechnya.** (Woodward 1995)

These two patterns hardly require explanation. In the latter three excerpts, the idea of Russian power lust is communicated quite blatantly: it was indeed a desire for control that drove the Kremlin to move militarily on Chechnya, rather than any higher aim. Note especially that in two out of the three texts no further explanation is given as to *why* Russia might have wanted to maintain control over Chechnya; control and power appear as ends in themselves. In the single excerpt in which an explanation is given, moreover, Russia's ultimate motive still is a prototypically imperialist one—namely, greed and the desire for a conquered territory's natural resources (in this case, oil)¹⁸. And as the first pattern indicates in equal clarity, this power lust prompted Russia to infringe wantonly on the self-rule of the Chechen people—“to crush” or “to quash” (strong verbs indeed) their movement toward independence. Important to note, the three texts that refer to that movement itself do so in generally peaceful terms. This was a “bid for

¹⁸ Interestingly, this motive itself reflects a claim among some Lost Cause accounts that the Union prompted the Civil War out of economic impulses. See, for instance, the image Hunter (2000:206) describes of a “Cavalier South [that] was forced to take up arms again money-seeking Puritan [read: Northern] invaders.”

independence” or an “independence drive”—both of which imply only heightened and sustained effort, rather than a call to arms—not a “revolt,” a “rebellion,” or even a “revolution.”

It also should be noted, moreover, that these characterizations are by no means inevitable. True, historical reality indicates that the Kremlin’s purpose in the conflict was to unseat Dudayev and to prevent Chechnya from breaking away from the Russian Federation. But this purpose need not necessarily translate to an imperialist urge. Indeed, alternative interpretations appear in more than one article in the sample analyzed here. In an editorial from Alabama, for instance, Yeltsin’s motives behind the invasion of Chechnya are deemed to arise not from a desire for power over Chechnya, but from a need “to hold together as much as possible of his fractious country” (“Russian Bear” 1994). Perhaps fittingly, this description strikingly resembles the “Union Cause” perspective on the Civil War mentioned above. Similarly, according to a second column from the same editorial staff, Russian troops entered Chechnya not “to quash an independence dive,” but to “put down [an] insurrection” (“Politics Is Hell” 1996). As in the case of “campaign” above, there is nothing *denotatively* troublesome about describing the pre-war movement in Chechnya as an insurrection; it certainly was a rebellion against a state authority, the strict definition of that word. *Connotatively*, however, this choice of word signals two things. First, it indicates that the Chechen independence movement was *not* a peaceful one; the word “insurrection” generally brings to mind an *armed* uprising, not diplomatic resistance or even unarmed movement politics. Second (and perhaps more importantly), the word also signals clear disapproval for the Chechens’ cause. In Buckle’s words, “insurrections are generally wrong; revolutions are always right” (1873:593). Considering these alternative possibilities, that the parallels between the Lost Cause narrative of the Civil War and the Southern narrative of the

First Russo-Chechen War appear so strongly here should not be written off as a mere coincidence of history. An interaction between the two narratives evidently is at play.

For this motif truly to mimic the Lost Cause theme discussed above, however, the necessary flipside of the trope of Russian imperialism in Chechnya is that the Chechens indeed were fighting to protect their freedom and autonomy from the Russian attack—just as the Confederates were fighting to “maintain the noble principles of self-government” against the Yankee assault (Hunter 2000:208). This is indeed visible within the depictions of Chechen resistance/defense in the subsample. As was the case with Russian aggression in the previous trope, the words used to reference Chechen resistance/defense again are quite important here. Though the word most commonly used was, quite simply, the noun “resistance” (seven times, or about thirty-five percent of all explicit references to Chechen resistance/defense)—which, on its own, tells us little if anything about the form Chechen resistance takes in the Southern narrative about the First Russo-Chechen War—an interesting pattern arises in the verb-form references. Three out of the ten verbs or verb phrases that explicitly denote Chechen resistance are in the negative. Resistance is characterized by what Chechnya is *not* doing, rather than what it *is* doing. From these texts we learn that Chechnya does not “give in,” that it “refuses to heel,” and that it “refuses to submit.” The resistance indexed in these phrases is every bit political as it is military. The Chechens are not simply holding against a Russian military onslaught; they are opposing the Russian claim to authority over their republic—a claim that Chechnya *ought to heel* and *ought to submit* both to the incoming Russian force and to the Kremlin government it represents.

In a second indication, a number of texts connected the war of the 1990s to a larger history of Chechen resistance against Russia and struggle for national liberation:

The issue today is what it was [in 1857]: Chechnya's freedom. Only the weapons have changed. (Martin 1995)

It would be refreshing to hear the truth about this new round of genocide against **a people who have been fighting for their freedom for 400 years**. (Woodward 1995)

Everybody tends to blame Russia's war with the people of Chechnya on the tiny republic's declaration of independence three years ago. Actually, **the Chechens have been fighting to be free of the Russians since the 1780s**. (Ashley 1996)

The employment of the perfect progressive tense in the latter two excerpts is especially useful for making this connection. The perfect progressive denotes that an action has occurred in the past and continues to occur in the present—i.e. that the Chechens “have been fighting to be free” means both that the Chechens previously fought for self-rule from Russia and that they still are fighting for self-rule currently. This temporal dimension situates Chechnya in what might be thought of as a “tradition” of freedom seeking. It certainly suggests that a desire for autonomy is a pivotal and ongoing component of Chechen culture. This itself evidences an additional overlap between the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War and the myth of the Lost Cause. Lost Cause tradition depicts the Confederate secession drive as the rightful successor to the American Revolution (Hunter 2000:207-208; Janney 2013:147); like Washington and his fellows, the Southerners were acting on that most American value of supporting self-rule in defiance of an unjust authority. In figuring the Chechen fighters as fellow carriers of this value the Southern authors above are cementing the narrative equivalence between Chechnya and the Confederacy.

Russia Began the War

I noted above that the Lost Cause narrative puts particular value on the idea that the North began hostilities during the Civil War, going even so far as to reinterpret the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter as a response to Northern aggression in order to support this notion (Davis 1996:187-

188). The reason for this emphasis is fairly obvious. The initiation of hostilities is among the most aggressive actions any belligerent can take in a time of war; a narrative, such as the Lost Cause, that is highly invested in casting one party to the conflict as the sole aggressor during a conflict would be undermined greatly if it were to admit that the other party shot first. With this in mind, the emphasis the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War places on the fact that Russia began the war also speaks to the underlying structuring power of the Lost Cause narrative on Southern interpretations of this conflict. About eighteen percent of the texts in the subsample (thirteen texts) indicated in some way that Russia was responsible for the initiation of hostilities. In a quarter of these twelve (three texts), the indications were explicit statements that Russia's invasion opened the warfare between Russia and Chechnya:

Refugees like these in Shatoi are gorged into cities and hamlets across the region, having fled the **battling that began when Russian troops stormed into Chechnya** on Dec. 11 in an effort to end the rebel republic's bid for independence. (Kunstel 1995)

The war in Chechnya began in December 1994, when Russian President Boris Yeltsin ordered about 40,000 troops into the mostly Muslim southern republic in a bid to end its three-year drive for independence... ("Russians, Rebels" 1996)

Fighting started last December, when Russian troops poured into the republic, which had declared itself independent three years earlier. (Kunstel 1995a)

In an additional quarter, the beginning of the war was described in simple, declarative sentences, which *per se* make no direct attribution of blame or instigation.

About 40,000 Russian troops poured into Chechnya on Dec. 11, 1994, to put down a separatist drive and unseat Dzhokhar Dudayev, who declared Chechnya independent after his 1991 election as president. ("16 Die" 1995)

Russian troops entered Chechnya in December to put down an independence drive. ("Protestors Reach Grozny" 1995)

Dead or alive, Zandarbiyev was scarcely making his presence felt in Chechnya, a province the size of Connecticut that has suffered nearly 30,000 civilian casualties in the 16 months since Russian troops intervened to quash an independence drive. (Albright 1996)

The placement of these three sentences within their respective texts, however, bespeaks an additional purpose behind them. All three sentences sit at the very end of the news stories in which they appeared. In two cases, they were the very last sentence of the news story; in one case, the penultimate. As briefly noted above, these sorts of sentences serve primarily as context tags, which situate the news story as part of a larger narrative, and explain to the reader “how we got here” (Edy 1999:80)—or, for that matter, even where “here” is. For instance, the second excerpt quoted above comes from a news article about anti-war demonstration (“Protestors Reach Grozny” 1995). The obvious question requiring context is “Against which war were they protesting?” The next statement, that “Russian troops entered Chechnya in December...,” serves as an answer to that question. Despite their neutral appearances, by virtue of their employment with the other information in each text, these simple statements thus nevertheless communicate blame towards Russia for initiating hostilities during the First Russo-Chechen War.

It is tempting, as above, to write off this emphasis as an inevitable consequence of the facts on which the narrative is built. Yeltsin’s invasion of Chechnya undeniably was the act that brought the hostilities between the two territories to a head. Doing so, however, ventures into the grounds of a naturalistic understanding of narrative building, and ignores the basic insights of the framing perspective—most particularly, that of selective appropriation. It would be quite possible to craft a story about the First Russo-Chechen War in which Russia’s decision to invade Chechnya is deemphasized or ignored—see, for example, Kunstel 1995a in the given sample, in which a single mention of the Russian invasion is hidden in the midst of a text that both begins and ends with discussion of Chechen aggression. The focus on Russia’s initiation of the conflict that I find in this sample of texts therefore should be treated as narratively important.

Indeed, two other sub-tropes in the data can serve to demonstrate just how strongly the attribution of blame to Russia for initiating the war within the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War mimics the attribution of blame to the Union for initiating hostilities during the Civil War within the Lost Cause narrative. The first of these—which appears in yet another three texts—is the argument that Russia began the war unnecessarily. Consider first the following two instances of this theme:

President Boris Yeltsin chose to ignore the rebellion until last month when he launched his ill-fated assault on Chechnya... The quixotic Yeltsin had not bothered to explain to the Russian people why, after three years of rebellion by the Muslim republic, he had suddenly decided to invade it. (Yardley 1995)

Russia has had three years to settle differences. It chose the dead of winter to destroy Chechnya to create the maximum misery of its citizens. Thus, our next “Marshall Plan.” (Cannady 1995)

Both of these excerpts highlight the three year gap between Dudayev’s declaration of Chechen independence and Yeltsin’s invasion of Chechnya. The thrust of their authors’ arguments—as most clearly communicated in the first excerpt—is that this gap in itself is proof that Yeltsin did not need to go to war. Three years of Chechen independence had past, evidently without any disaster or pressing need for Russia to put a stop to it. Why, then, should Chechen secession suddenly be a threat now? This underlying argument is quite closely aligned with the Lost Cause argument that, even after secession, the Civil War was avoidable—specifically, because the Union also could and should have allowed the Southern states to leave in peace. Recall that, according to Lost Cause arguments, the lawfulness of secession meant that the North had neither right nor cause to demand that the Southern states remain in the Union. In any event, it meant that the secession of the Confederacy was no real threat to the Union. The three years it took for Yeltsin to move on Chechnya, according to the excerpts above, showed that Chechen secession

likewise was no real threat to the Russian Federation. Yeltsin too, then, had neither right nor cause to demand that Chechnya stay.

The third instance of this sub-trope reflects the other side of this Lost Cause argument: that secession itself could have been avoided, or at least that the secession crisis could have been solved, through diplomatic means. According to the Lost Cause narrative, the Southern states desired a national constitutional convention, in which North and South might resolve their differences without resorting to hostilities. Abraham Lincoln, however, refused to call the convention, preferring instead to resort to conflict (Heyse 2008:423). The author of the following excerpt places a similar shape on Yeltsin's handling of the Chechen crisis.

This war need not have happened; Russia misplayed Chechnya from the start. Moscow could have recognized Chechnya's aspirations, which likely could have been satisfied short of absolute independence. Russian intransigence, fortified by a heavy hand, led Chechnya to conclude it had no choice but to take up arms. As the aphorism says, war is not a crime. It is the punishment of a crime. ("The Eastern Front" 1995)

There is, first, the stated assumption that diplomacy could have avoided the military showdown between Russia and Chechnya altogether. Moscow could have "played" Chechnya differently—i.e. could have come to a negotiated agreement that would have addressed some of Chechnya's grievances and, presumably also held together the Russian Federation. But more than this, the reader is also left with the impression that the fault lies entirely with Moscow that these negotiations never occurred. It was Russia that "misplayed" the situation—Chechnya's role in the lead-up to the war is never addressed nor questioned. In just the same way, it was "*Russian intransigence*" that brought the trouble between Russia and Chechnya to the point of arms. The implication here is that a negotiated settlement between Russia and Chechnya *would have occurred*, except that Russia was too pigheaded to allow it. Left unsaid but also heavily implied is that Chechnya wanted negotiations, but were cheated out of their chance for diplomacy. Like

the Lost Cause's Confederacy, Chechnya wanted a peaceful solution; like its Lincoln, Yeltsin preferred combat.

This excerpt also evidences the second sub-trope: the idea that Russia "provoked" the First Russo-Chechen War.¹⁹ For all that the author of this text lays fault on Russia for the war's beginning, he nevertheless implies that Chechnya shot first—it is the Chechens who "took up arms." But the author also includes that Chechnya "concluded it had no choice." Yeltsin had maneuvered the Chechens into a position where, the author implies, fighting was the only option available in order to protect their rights to home-rule (as the author indicates was their cause in his note that "Chechnya's aspirations...could have been satisfied short of *absolute* independence"). This is very reminiscent of the Lost Cause explanation for the Battle of Fort Sumter: The Confederacy only shot first because, by refortifying Sumter, Lincoln had forced their hand, "put them in a position from which they either had to shoot or back down" from their claims to nationhood (Davis 1996:187). Even if the Confederacy was the first to open fire, the Union was still the aggressor; even if Chechnya was the one to "take up arms," Russia is still responsible for the war's beginning.

The Lost Cause narrative also contends that Northern provocation began long before 1861; Northern provocation is deemed responsible for Southern secession in the first place. Intrusions into the Southern states' rights with the promise of more to come (Davis 1996:180; Heyse 2008:422-423), paired with a sectional crisis "manufactured" by radical Northern abolitionists (Nolan 2000:16) had created a political situation so insufferable that the South "could not do otherwise [but secede] under the circumstances" (Heyse 2008:424). The parade of historical

¹⁹ This sub-trope appeared in three texts in the subsample. One of these texts, however, referred to Russia "provoking" Chechnya into a resumption of hostilities after the second cease-fire, rather "provoking" Chechnya into the war on the whole. I therefore do not address that text here.

horribles in in the following excerpt implies that similar forces were at play in Chechen secession:

Although the Caucasus no longer echoed with the drum, drum, drum made by the hoofs of charging cavalry, resentment did not fade into silence. Communism made Russia's many national problems worse. The commissars abused the Caucasus and other regions proud of their independence. Stalin deported the Chechens to wastelands where they died or were kept alive by memories of ancient rituals among the mountains' seductive gloom. Moscow's harsh hand almost guaranteed that blood once again would spill. The recent fighting did not emerge from a void. ("History's Return" 1995)

Unlike in the excerpt above, the author here is not suggesting a case of "fight or back down;" *immediate* provocation is not the issue. What is suggested—indeed, argued flat out—is that Russia had created a situation so oppressively and tyrannously intolerable that Chechnya had to fight back at some point. We hear in this the echo of the Lost Cause. Inroads on Chechnya's right to sovereignty again are implicated in creating this situation, in accordance with the Lost Cause's emphasis on "states' rights"—note how the author specifically highlights that these Russian abuses were committed against "regions proud of their independence." But the influence of the narrative rests at a much more structural level than that. What is essential in this excerpt is the assessment that Russia had created the conditions for Chechen secession, and thus for the resulting war. Even if the Chechens might have initiated this round of bloodshed (the author makes no strong case either way), Russia still would hold responsibility.

Chapter 8

Summary and Conclusions

In this paper, I have addressed the role the myth of the Lost Cause might play in shaping American Southerners' perceptions of the First Russo-Chechen War. I argued that the Lost Cause, as a culturally encompassing narrative in the South, provided Southerners with what I have termed a *mold narrative*—a pattern for crafting stories about new events by tying them to familiar stories about old events, unconsciously and at a structural level. This paper particularly investigated whether and how that mold narrative affected depictions of aggression and defensive/resistance in specific narratives about the First Russo-Chechen War. If the Lost Cause did indeed affect (and even effect) Southerners' perceptions of the First Russo-Chechen War, I proposed that: (1) Russia would be cast into the role of aggressor in the conflict, as, like the Union, it was the larger political entity from which another, smaller entity—i.e. Chechnya—seceded; (2) Chechnya, as the smaller, seceding entity, would be cast into the role of defender/resister; and (3) the forms in which Russian aggression and Chechen resistance/defense would appear in the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War also would resemble the manifestations of Union aggression and Southern resistance/defense in the Lost Cause narrative.

I utilized texts about the First Russo-Chechen War written for Southern newspapers to investigate these conditional propositions. Of the one hundred news articles initially included in the sample, eighty-two were found to include depictions of aggressive warfare or of resistance/defense. Out of these eighty-two, seventy-two communicated a story either about the war on the whole or about a single but highly important event in the course of the war (the initial invasion of Chechnya and First Battle of Grozny, the hostage-taking and siege at Budyonovsk hospital, the hostage-taking in Kizlyar and subsequent siege at Pervomayskoye, or the final battle

for Grozny). The final subsample of seventy-two texts received full analysis. By and large, I found evidence of all three consequents within these texts. Depictions of Russian aggression appeared meaningfully more frequently in these texts than depictions of Chechen aggression, just as depictions of Chechen resistance/defense appeared meaningfully more frequently than depictions of Russian resistance/defense (see Table 3). Depictions of both Russian aggression and Chechen resistance/defense also reflected the ways in which Union aggression and Confederate resistance/defense appear in the Lost Cause narrative. I identified three main tropes in which the overlap between the Lost Cause narrative and the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War could be identified. First, Russian aggression is cast both as an ontological condition of the war and as unwarranted violence for violence's own sake—both in line with Lost Cause depictions of Yankee warfare during the “War of Northern Aggression.” Like the Confederate states in the Lost Cause narrative, Chechnya is seen as an innocent victim of this brutal aggression. Second, discursive patterns worked to present Russia as engaging in the war out of an imperialist urge for power, rather than from any “high motive” (Hunter 2000:207). Texts that depicted this motif also signaled that the Chechens were fighting to retain their sovereignty (i.e. their “home-rule” [Heyse 2006 and 2008]) from Russian encroachment. Third, the texts emphasized that Russia, not Chechnya, initiated the hostilities. Encompassed in this last trope are the sub-tropes that Russia began the war unnecessarily and that it provoked the Chechens into hostilities they did not desire. Based on the presence of the consequents, I am inclined to accept the antecedent: that the Lost Cause narrative did structure Southerners’ narratives about the First Russo-Chechen War in an important way.

The analysis above focused most heavily on depictions of Russian aggression; much less was said about patterns of Chechen resistance/defense. This was a reflection of the data

themselves. Texts that discussed Russian aggression outnumbered those that discussed Chechen resistance/defense by a margin of almost ten to three in the full sample (sixty-nine texts to twenty-one, see Table 2), and by a margin of about three to one in the subset of texts (sixty-three texts to twenty, see Table 3). This incongruence might be an artifact of the sample itself; in a larger sample of texts I might find a closer mix of aggression and defense. It also might be a function of the genre of texts from which the sample is built. American news readers and reporters were (and still are), much more familiar with Russia than they were (and still are) with Chechnya, especially prior to the 1994-1996 war. It stands to reason, then, that news coverage from the war would have focused more heavily on Russia than on Chechnya. As was one of the driving forces behind the argument presented in this paper, people—news reporters and news consumers included—are much more amenable to stories for which they already have a frame of reference.

But it is also possible that the paucity of stories detailing Chechen resistance/defense is a genuine reflection of the relative importance of that theme in the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War. The Southern interpretation of the war on the whole—not just the news reporting—may have focused on Russia's role in the conflict, rather than Chechnya's. This possibility would raise serious, though interesting, questions in regard to the importance of the Lost Cause in structuring the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War. The Lost Cause narrative is, of course, told from the perspective of the Confederacy, and, though it includes descriptions of and meanings about the Union as well, it is ultimately on the Confederacy that its focus lies. Could a story about a different event based structurally on the Lost Cause shift this focus? If it does shift focus, is the story still structured around the Lost Cause? Once the Lost Cause has been reduced to the roles and functions of a mold narrative,

could the role of the larger political entity (Union equivalent) become the (anti)protagonist's role? To this last I am inclined to say no. But what if that role still fulfills all (or most) of its narrative functions? In that case, would the fundamental narrative structure have been preserved? Should the disparities in focus between Chechen resistance/defense and Russian aggression observed in these data be an accurate representation of those in the Southern narrative of the First Russo-Chechen War on the whole, these are questions that merit further discussion in future scholarship.

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